MEDIEVAL LIBRARY

# Catherine of Siena

## *Collected Works*

DELPHI CLASSICS

*The Collected Works of*

# CATHERINE OF SIENA

(1347-1380)

## Contents

*The Translations*

The Dialogue of Divine Providence (c. 1377)
The Letters (1377)

*The Original Text*

The Dialogue of Divine Providence (Italian Text)

*The Dual Text*

A Treatise of Divine Providence (Italian and English Text)

*The Biographies*

Life of Saint Catharine of Sienna (c. 1382) by Raymond of Capua
Saint Catherine of Siena (1859) by Thomas Adolphus Trollope
Saint Catherine (1911)
Saint Catherine of Siena (1913) by Edmund Garratt Gardner

*The Delphi Classics Catalogue*

*© Delphi Classics 2026*

Version 1

*Medieval Library*

# CATHERINE OF SIENA

*By Delphi Classics, 2026*

# COPYRIGHT

*Collected Works of Catherine of Siena*

First published in the United Kingdom in 2026 by Delphi Classics.

© Delphi Classics, 2026.

Cover illustration: detail from *Saint Catherine of Siena* by Lo Spagna (Giovanni di Pietro), 1515, Art Institute of Chicago.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without the prior permission in writing of the publisher, nor be otherwise circulated in any form other than that in which it is published.

ISBN: 978 1 80170 294 2

Delphi Classics
is an imprint of
Delphi Publishing Ltd
Hastings, East Sussex
United Kingdom
Contact: sales@delphiclassics.com

DELPHI CLASSICS

www.delphiclassics.com

# The Translations

*Siena, a city in Tuscany, central Italy — Saint Catherine's birthplace*

*Late medieval depiction of Siena*

# The Dialogue of Divine Providence (c. 1377)

*Translated by Algar Thorold, 1907*

One of the foremost figures of medieval Catholicism, Saint Catherine of Siena was born Caterina di Jacopo di Benincasa on 25 March 1347, shortly before the Black Death ravaged Europe. She was the daughter of Jacopo di Benincasa, a cloth dyer, and Lapa Piagenti, a daughter of a local poet. Lapa was about forty years old when she gave birth prematurely to her 23rd and 24th children, twin daughters, named Catherine and Giovanna. After the birth, Giovanna was handed over to a wet nurse and died soon after. Catherine was nursed by her mother and developed into a healthy child. As a child, she was reportedly so merry that the family gave her the pet name of "Euphrosyne" (Greek for *joy).* She experienced her first vision of Christ at the age of five or six, when she and one of her brothers were on the way home from visiting a married sister. She is said to have seen Christ seated in glory with the Apostles Peter, Paul and John. By the age of seven, Catherine vowed to give her whole life to serving God.

When she was 16, her older sister Bonaventura died in childbirth; already anguished by this, Catherine soon learned that her parents wanted her to marry Bonaventura's widower. She was absolutely opposed and commenced a strict fast. Besides fasting, she further disappointed her mother by cutting off her long hair in protest of being encouraged to improve her appearance to attract a husband. A vision of Dominic de Guzmán gave strength to Catherine, but her wish to join his order was no comfort to her mother, who took her to the baths in Bagno Vignoni to improve her health. Catherine fell seriously ill with a violent rash and fever, which convinced her mother to accept her wish to join the "Mantellate", the local association of devout women. The Mantellate taught Catherine how to read and she lived in almost total silence and solitude in the family home.

Catherine often gave away clothing and food without asking anyone's permission, drawing on her family finances significantly. Shortly after joining the Mantellate, she started to fast for longer periods, but found it challenging. While tending to a woman with cancerous breast sores, she was disgusted. Intending to overcome this repulsion, she gathered the sore pus into a ladle and drank it all. That night, she was visited by Jesus, who invited her to drink the blood gushing out of his pierced side. It was with this visitation that her stomach "no longer had need of food and no longer could digest."

According to an early biographer, at the age of twenty-one in 1368, Catherine experienced what she described in her letters as a "Mystical Marriage" with Christ, which would later become a popular subject in art. This marriage is likened to a fusion with Christ's physicality, equating the wedding ring of a virgin with the flesh of Jesus. Raymond of Capua, a leading member of the Dominican Order that served as its Master General from 1380 until his death, records that she was told by Christ to leave her withdrawn life and enter the public life of the world. Therefore, she rejoined her family and began helping the ill and the poor, where she took care of them in hospitals or homes. Her early pious activities in Siena attracted a group of followers that gathered around her.

Between the years 1367 and 1374, Catherine devoted herself to helping the sick and incarcerated of Siena. With her help in the Hospital of Santa Maria della Scala

and within the neighborhood that she was living, Catherine's acts of charity became well-known. This led to her being known as *santa donna* or a holy woman. Her burgeoning reputation for holiness and charity eventually led to her involvement in politics and a hearing with the Pope.

She made her first journey to Florence in 1374, where she was interviewed by the Dominican authorities at the General Chapter held in Florence, though this is disputed by some. At this time she acquired Raymond of Capua as her confessor and spiritual director. Next, she started travelling with her followers throughout northern and central Italy, while advocating reform of the clergy and advising people that repentance and renewal could be done through "the total love for God." In Pisa in 1375, Catherine used what influence she had to sway that city and Lucca away from alliance with the anti-papal league whose force was gaining momentum and strength. She also lent her enthusiasm toward promoting the launch of a new crusade. It was during this time, according to Raymond of Capua's biography, that she received the stigmata (visible, at Catherine's request, only to herself).

From 1375 onward, she began dictating letters to scribes. They were intended to reach men and women of her circle, increasingly widening her audience to include figures in authority, as she sought for peace between the republics and principalities of Italy and for the return of the Papacy from Avignon to Rome. Catherine maintained a long correspondence with Pope Gregory XI, asking him to reform the clergy and the administration of the Papal States.

In June 1376 Catherine went to Avignon as ambassador of the Republic of Florence to make peace with the Papal States (on 31 March 1376 Gregory XI had placed Florence under interdict). She was unsuccessful and disowned by the Florentine leaders, who sent ambassadors to negotiate on their own terms as soon as Catherine's work had paved the way for them. Catherine sent a withering letter back to Florence in response. While in Avignon, she also tried to convince Pope Gregory XI, the last Avignon Pope, to return to Rome. Gregory did indeed return his administration to Rome in January 1377; to what extent this was due to Catherine's influence is still a topic of much debate.

Catherine returned to Siena and spent the early months of 1377 founding a women's monastery of strict observance outside the city in the old fortress of Belcaro. She spent the rest of 1377 at Rocca d'Orcia, about 20 miles from Siena, on a local mission of peace-making and preaching. During this period, she had the experience that led to the composition of her *Dialogue*, chiefly relying upon her secretaries for her correspondence.

In late November 1378, with the outbreak of the Western Schism, the new Pope, Urban VI, summoned Catherine to Rome. She stayed at his court and tried to convince nobles and cardinals of his legitimacy, both meeting with individuals at court and writing letters to persuade others.

For many years Catherine had accustomed herself to a rigorous abstinence and she received the Holy Eucharist almost daily. This extreme fasting appeared unhealthy in the eyes of the clergy and her own sisterhood. Her confessor, Raymond, ordered her to eat properly. However, she replied that she was unable to, describing her inability to eat as an *infermità* (illness). From the beginning of 1380, Catherine could neither eat nor swallow water. On 26 February she lost the use of her legs. She died in Rome on 29 April 1380, at the age of thirty-three, having suffered a massive stroke eight days earlier, which paralysed her from the waist down. Her last words were, "Father, into Your Hands I commend my soul and my spirit".

Catherine's writings, all of which were dictated, include around 380 letters, 26 prayers and the four treatises of *Il libro della divina dottrina*, better known as *The Dialogue*. The record of her ecstatic experiences illustrates her doctrine of the "inner cell" of the knowledge of God and of self into which she withdrew. Her major treatise, *The Dialogue of Divine Providence*, the first part of *The Dialogue*, is thought to have been begun in October 1377 and finished by November 1378. Contemporaries of Catherine are united in asserting that much of the text was dictated while she was in ecstasy, though it is possible she re-edited many passages. The treatise serves as a dialogue between God and a soul.

*Birth of Catherine and Jeanne, as depicted on an anonymous Nuremberg School manuscript, 'Legenda Maior', 1466, Berlin, Prints and Drawings, Hs. 78. A. 14, f. 2v.*

*Leaf from an anonymous French translation of the 'Legenda Major' by Raymond of Capua, depicting the vision of the mystic wedding of Catherine and Christ, Bruges Public Library, MS 767*

*Stigmatisation of Saint Catherine by Domenico Beccafumi, Getty Museum, c. 1540*

# CONTENTS

A TREATISE OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE
A TREATISE OF DISCRETION
A TREATISE OF PRAYER
A TREATISE OF OBEDIENCE

Laurentij Legari et amicorum

AL NOME DE Iesu christo crucifixo & d' ma
na dolze & del glorioso patriarcha Dominico .

LIBRO DE LA diuina prouidētia cōposto in ulgare da la Seraphi
ca Chaterina da siena suore del terzo ordie d' sāctoDominico.essēdo
taua al suo scriptore rapta ī sigular excesso & abstratōe de mēte.In que
uiene il parlamēto tra dio padre & la uerzene chaterina per modo de
modo de parlare che iteruiene tra doi persone .Et in esso se cōtiene
mi secreti diuini.

EVANDOSI una a
nima ansietata d' grā
distimo desiderio uer
so lo honore de dio et
la salute del le anime
uene ad exercitarse per
alcuno spatio de tēpo nela uertu habi
tuata et habitata stete nela cella del co
gnoscimēto di se medxma p meglio
cognoscere la bōtade de dio in si.per
che a lo cognosimēto seguita lamōe
& amando cercha de seguitāe & uestī
se de la ueritad' ¶ ma ī nesuno modo
la creatura gusta tāto et e iluminata d'
quella uerita quanto colmezo de la o
ratōne humile & continua fundata in
lo cognoscimento de si & de dio per
ho che la oratione exercitandola per
lo modo ditto conzūge lanima ī dio
seguitādo le uestigie de xpo crucifixo
& cosi per desiderio & affecto et uni
one de amore ne fa uno altro si. ¶
Questo per che dicesse xpo quando

le per lequale possem
ueritade.che per affett
nima douenta uno al
uederlo piu chiarame
d' auere audito da un
che estendo in oratōn
de eleuatōne de mēte
ua a lochio del intell
che lui haueua ali seru
nifestaua & tra le altre
Apri lochio de lo iu
in mi & uederai la d
leza dela mia creatura
ne. ¶ & tra labelleza
a lanima creandola ala
li tudine mia resguīda
no uestidi del uestimē
de la caritad adornate
de liqli unidi sono c
E perho te digho ch
dassi mi chi sono co
chel diceua el dolze a
sono uno altro mi.p

A 1475 printing of The Dialogue

*Eighteenth century depiction of Pope Gregory XI —Gregory XI (c. 1329-1378) was head of the Catholic Church from 30 December 1370 to his death. He was the seventh and last Avignon pope and the most recent French pope. In 1377, Gregory XI returned the papal court to Rome, ending nearly 70 years of papal residency in Avignon, in modern-day France.*

*Posthumous portrait of Urban VI by Onofrio Panvinio, c. 1560 — Urban VI (c. 1318-1389) was head of the Catholic Church from 8 April 1378 to his death. He was the last pope elected from outside the College of Cardinals. His pontificate was marked by immense conflict between rival factions as a part of the Western Schism, with much of Europe, such as France, the Iberian Kingdoms of Castile and Aragon, and Scotland recognizing Clement VII, based in Avignon, as the true pope.*

# A TREATISE OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE

*How a soul, elevated by desire of the honor of God, and of the salvation of her neighbors, exercising herself in humble prayer, after she had seen the union of the soul, through love, with God, asked of God four requests.*

THE SOUL, WHO is lifted by a very great and yearning desire for the honor of God and the salvation of souls, begins by exercising herself, for a certain space of time, in the ordinary virtues, remaining in the cell of self-knowledge, in order to know better the goodness of God towards her. This she does because knowledge must precede love, and only when she has attained love, can she strive to follow and to clothe herself with the truth. But, in no way, does the creature receive such a taste of the truth, or so brilliant a light therefrom, as by means of humble and continuous prayer, founded on knowledge of herself and of God; because prayer, exercising her in the above way, unites with God the soul that follows the footprints of Christ Crucified, and thus, by desire and affection, and union of love, makes her another Himself. Christ would seem to have meant this, when He said: *To him who will love Me and will observe My commandment, will I manifest Myself; and he shall be one thing with Me and I with him*. In several places we find similar words, by which we can see that it is, indeed, through the effect of love, that the soul becomes another Himself. That this may be seen more clearly, I will mention what I remember having heard from a handmaid of God, namely, that, when she was lifted up in prayer, with great elevation of mind, God was not wont to conceal, from the eye of her intellect, the love which He had for His servants, but rather to manifest it; and, that among other things, He used to say: "Open the eye of your intellect, and gaze into Me, and you shall see the beauty of My rational creature. And look at those creatures who, among the beauties which I have given to the soul, creating her in My image and similitude, are clothed with the nuptial garment (that is, the garment of love), adorned with many virtues, by which they are united with Me through love. And yet I tell you, if you should ask Me, who these are, I should reply" (said the sweet and amorous Word of God) "they are another Myself, inasmuch as they have lost and denied their own will, and are clothed with Mine, are united to Mine, are conformed to Mine." It is therefore true, indeed, that the soul unites herself with God by the affection of love.

So, that soul, wishing to know and follow the truth more manfully, and lifting her desires first for herself — for she considered that a soul could not be of use, whether in doctrine, example, or prayer, to her neighbor, if she did not first profit herself, that is, if she did not acquire virtue in herself — addressed four requests to the Supreme and Eternal Father. The first was for herself; the second for the reformation of the Holy Church; the third a general prayer for the whole world, and in particular for the peace of Christians who rebel, with much lewdness and persecution, against the Holy Church; in the fourth and last, she besought the Divine Providence to provide for things in general, and in particular, for a certain case with which she was concerned.

*How the desire of this soul grew when God showed her the neediness of the world.*

This desire was great and continuous, but grew much more, when the First Truth showed her the neediness of the world, and in what a tempest of offense against God

it lay. And she had understood this the better from a letter, which she had received from the spiritual Father of her soul, in which he explained to her the penalties and intolerable dolor caused by offenses against God, and the loss of souls, and the persecutions of Holy Church.

All this lighted the fire of her holy desire with grief for the offenses, and with the joy of the lively hope, with which she waited for God to provide against such great evils. And, since the soul seems, in such communion, sweetly to bind herself fast within herself and with God, and knows better His truth, inasmuch as the soul is then in God, and God in the soul, as the fish is in the sea, and the sea in the fish, she desired the arrival of the morning (for the morrow was a feast of Mary) in order to hear Mass. And, when the morning came, and the hour of the Mass, she sought with anxious desire her accustomed place; and, with a great knowledge of herself, being ashamed of her own imperfection, appearing to herself to be the cause of all the evil that was happening throughout the world, conceiving a hatred and displeasure against herself, and a feeling of holy justice, with which knowledge, hatred, and justice, she purified the stains which seemed to her to cover her guilty soul, she said: "O Eternal Father, I accuse myself before You, in order that You may punish me for my sins in this finite life, and, inasmuch as my sins are the cause of the sufferings which my neighbor must endure, I implore You, in Your kindness, to punish them in my person."

*How finite works are not sufficient for punishment or recompense without the perpetual affection of love.*

Then, the Eternal Truth seized and drew more strongly to Himself her desire, doing as He did in the Old Testament, for when the sacrifice was offered to God, a fire descended and drew to Him the sacrifice that was acceptable to Him; so did the sweet Truth to that soul, in sending down the fire of the clemency of the Holy Spirit, seizing the sacrifice of desire that she made of herself, saying: "Do you not know, dear daughter, that all the sufferings, which the soul endures, or can endure, in this life, are insufficient to punish one smallest fault, because the offense, being done to Me, who am the Infinite Good, calls for an infinite satisfaction? However, I wish that you should know, that not all the pains that are given to men in this life are given as punishments, but as corrections, in order to chastise a son when he offends; though it is true that both the guilt and the penalty can be expiated by the desire of the soul, that is, by true contrition, not through the finite pain endured, but through the infinite desire; because God, who is infinite, wishes for infinite love and infinite grief. Infinite grief I wish from My creature in two ways: in one way, through her sorrow for her own sins, which she has committed against Me her Creator; in the other way, through her sorrow for the sins which she sees her neighbors commit against Me. Of such as these, inasmuch as they have infinite desire, that is, are joined to Me by an affection of love, and therefore grieve when they offend Me, or see Me offended, their every pain, whether spiritual or corporeal, from wherever it may come, receives infinite merit, and satisfies for a guilt which deserved an infinite penalty, although their works are finite and done in finite time; but, inasmuch as they possess the virtue of desire, and sustain their suffering with desire, and contrition, and infinite displeasure against their guilt, their pain is held worthy. Paul explained this when he said: *If I had the tongues of angels, and if I knew the things of the future and gave my body to be burned, and have not love, it would be worth nothing to me*. The glorious Apostle thus

shows that finite works are not valid, either as punishment or recompense, without the condiment of the affection of love."

*How desire and contrition of heart satisfies, both for the guilt and the penalty in oneself and in others; and how sometimes it satisfies for the guilt only, and not the penalty.*

"I have shown you, dearest daughter, that the guilt is not punished in this finite time by any pain which is sustained purely as such. And I say, that the guilt is punished by the pain which is endured through the desire, love, and contrition of the heart; not by virtue of the pain, but by virtue of the desire of the soul; inasmuch as desire and every virtue is of value, and has life in itself, through Christ crucified, My only begotten Son, in so far as the soul has drawn her love from Him, and virtuously follows His virtues, that is, His Footprints. In this way, and in no other, are virtues of value, and in this way, pains satisfy for the fault, by the sweet and intimate love acquired in the knowledge of My goodness, and in the bitterness and contrition of heart acquired by knowledge of one's self and one's own thoughts. And this knowledge generates a hatred and displeasure against sin, and against the soul's own sensuality, through which, she deems herself worthy of pains and unworthy of reward."

The sweet Truth continued: "See how, by contrition of the heart, together with love, with true patience, and with true humility, deeming themselves worthy of pain and unworthy of reward, such souls endure the patient humility in which consists the above-mentioned satisfaction. You ask me, then, for pains, so that I may receive satisfaction for the offenses, which are done against Me by My Creatures, and you further ask the will to know and love Me, who am the Supreme Truth. Wherefore I reply that this is the way, if you will arrive at a perfect knowledge and enjoyment of Me, the Eternal Truth, that you should never go outside the knowledge of yourself, and, by humbling yourself in the valley of humility, you will know Me and yourself, from which knowledge you will draw all that is necessary. No virtue, my daughter, can have life in itself except through charity, and humility, which is the foster-mother and nurse of charity. In self-knowledge, then, you will humble yourself, seeing that, in yourself, you do not even exist; for your very being, as you will learn, is derived from Me, since I have loved both you and others before you were in existence; and that, through the ineffable love which I had for you, wishing to re-create you to Grace, I have washed you, and re-created you in the Blood of My only-begotten Son, spilt with so great a fire of love. This Blood teaches the truth to him, who, by self-knowledge, dissipates the cloud of self-love, and in no other way can he learn. Then the soul will inflame herself in this knowledge of Me with an ineffable love, through which love she continues in constant pain; not, however, a pain which afflicts or dries up the soul, but one which rather fattens her; for since she has known My truth, and her own faults, and the ingratitude of men, she endures intolerable suffering, grieving because she loves Me; for, if she did not love Me, she would not be obliged to do so; whence it follows immediately, that it is right for you, and My other servants who have learnt My truth in this way, to sustain, even unto death, many tribulations and injuries and insults in word and deed, for the glory and praise of My Name; thus will you endure and suffer pains. Do you, therefore, and My other servants, carry yourselves with true patience, with grief for your sins, and with love of virtue for the glory and praise of My Name. If you act thus, I will satisfy for your sins, and for those of My other servants, inasmuch as the pains which you will endure will be sufficient, through the virtue of love, for satisfaction and reward, both in you and in others. In yourself you

will receive the fruit of life, when the stains of your ignorance are effaced, and I shall not remember that you ever offended Me. In others I will satisfy through the love and affection which you have to Me, and I will give to them according to the disposition with which they will receive My gifts. In particular, to those who dispose themselves, humbly and with reverence, to receive the doctrine of My servants, will I remit both guilt and penalty, since they will thus come to true knowledge and contrition for their sins. So that, by means of prayer, and their desire of serving Me, they receive the fruit of grace, receiving it humbly in greater or less degree, according to the extent of their exercise of virtue and grace in general. I say then, that, through your desires, they will receive remission for their sins. See, however, the condition, namely, that their obstinacy should not be so great in their despair as to condemn them through contempt of the Blood, which, with such sweetness, has restored them.

"What fruit do they receive?

"The fruit which I destine for them, constrained by the prayers of My servants, is that I give them light, and that I wake up in them the hound of conscience, and make them smell the odor of virtue, and take delight in the conversation of My servants.

"Sometimes I allow the world to show them what it is, so that, feeling its diverse and various passions, they may know how little stability it has, and may come to lift their desire beyond it, and seek their native country, which is the Eternal Life. And so I draw them by these, and by many other ways, for the eye cannot see, nor the tongue relate, nor the heart think, how many are the roads and ways which I use, through love alone, to lead them back to grace, so that My truth may be fulfilled in them. I am constrained to do so by that inestimable love of Mine, by which I created them, and by the love, desire, and grief of My servants, since I am no despiser of their tears, and sweat, and humble prayers; rather I accept them, inasmuch as I am He who give them this love for the good of souls and grief for their loss. But I do not, in general, grant to these others, for whom they pray, satisfaction for the penalty due to them, but, only for their guilt, since they are not disposed, on their side, to receive, with perfect love, My love, and that of My servants. They do not receive their grief with bitterness, and perfect contrition for the sins they have committed, but with imperfect love and contrition, wherefore they have not, as others, remission of the penalty, but only of the guilt; because such complete satisfaction requires proper dispositions on both sides, both in him that gives and him that receives. Wherefore, since they are imperfect, they receive imperfectly the perfection of the desires of those who offer them to Me, for their sakes, with suffering; and, inasmuch as I told you that they do receive remission, this is indeed the truth, that, by that way which I have told you, that is, by the light of conscience, and by other things, satisfaction is made for their guilt; for, beginning to learn, they vomit forth the corruption of their sins, and so receive the gift of grace.

"These are they who are in a state of ordinary charity, wherefore, if they have trouble, they receive it in the guise of correction, and do not resist over much the clemency of the Holy Spirit, but, coming out of their sin, they receive the life of grace. But if, like fools, they are ungrateful, and ignore Me and the labors of My servants done for them, that which was given them, through mercy, turns to their own ruin and judgment, not through defect of mercy, nor through defect of him who implored the mercy for the ingrate, but solely through the man's own wretchedness and hardness, with which, with the hands of his free will, he has covered his heart, as it were, with a diamond, which, if it be not broken by the Blood, can in no way be broken. And yet, I say to you, that, in spite of his hardness of heart, he can use his free will while he has time, praying for the Blood of My Son, and let him with his own hand apply It to the diamond over his heart and shiver it, and he will receive the

imprint of the Blood which has been paid for him. But, if he delays until the time be past, he has no remedy, because he has not used the dowry which I gave him, giving him memory so as to remember My benefits, intellect, so as to see and know the truth, affection, so that he should love Me, the Eternal Truth, whom he would have known through the use of his intellect. This is the dowry which I have given you all, and which ought to render fruit to Me, the Father; but, if a man barters and sells it to the devil, the devil, if he choose, has a right to seize on everything that he has acquired in this life. And, filling his memory with the delights of sin, and with the recollection of shameful pride, avarice, self-love, hatred, and unkindness to his neighbors (being also a persecutor of My servants), with these miseries, he has obscured his intellect by his disordinate will. Let such as these receive the eternal pains, with their horrible stench, inasmuch as they have not satisfied for their sins with contrition and displeasure of their guilt. Now, therefore, you have understood how suffering satisfies for guilt by perfect contrition, not through the finite pain; and such as have this contrition in perfection satisfy not only for the guilt, but also for the penalty which follows the guilt, as I have already said when speaking in general; and if they satisfy for the guilt alone, that is, if, having abandoned mortal sin, they receive grace, and have not sufficient contrition and love to satisfy for the penalty also, they go to the pains of Purgatory, passing through the second and last means of satisfaction.

"So you see that satisfaction is made, through the desire of the soul united to Me, who am the Infinite Good, in greater or less degree, according to the measure of love, obtained by the desire and prayer of the recipient. Wherefore, with that very same measure with which a man measures to Me, do he receive in himself the measure of My goodness. Labor, therefore, to increase the fire of your desire, and let not a moment pass without crying to Me with humble voice, or without continual prayers before Me for your neighbors. I say this to you and to the father of your soul, whom I have given you on earth. Bear yourselves with manful courage, and make yourselves dead to all your own sensuality."

*How very pleasing to God is the willing desire to suffer for Him.*

"Very pleasing to Me, dearest daughter, is the willing desire to bear every pain and fatigue, even unto death, for the salvation of souls, for the more the soul endures, the more she shows that she loves Me; loving Me she comes to know more of My truth, and the more she knows, the more pain and intolerable grief she feels at the offenses committed against Me. You asked Me to sustain you, and to punish the faults of others in you, and you did not remark that you were really asking for love, light, and knowledge of the truth, since I have already told you that, by the increase of love, grows grief and pain, wherefore he that grows in love grows in grief. Therefore, I say to you all, that you should ask, and it will be given you, for I deny nothing to him who asks of Me in truth. Consider that the love of divine charity is so closely joined in the soul with perfect patience, that neither can leave the soul without the other. For this reason (if the soul elect to love Me) she should elect to endure pains for Me in whatever mode or circumstance I may send them to her. Patience cannot be proved in any other way than by suffering, and patience is united with love as has been said. Therefore bear yourselves with manly courage, for, unless you do so, you will not prove yourselves to be spouses of My Truth, and faithful children, nor of the company of those who relish the taste of My honor, and the salvation of souls."

*How every virtue and every defect is obtained by means of our neighbor.*

“I wish also that you should know that every virtue is obtained by means of your neighbor, and likewise, every defect; he, therefore, who stands in hatred of Me, does an injury to his neighbor, and to himself, who is his own chief neighbor, and this injury is both general and particular. It is general because you are obliged to love your neighbor as yourself, and loving him, you ought to help him spiritually, with prayer, counseling him with words, and assisting him both spiritually and temporally, according to the need in which he may be, at least with your goodwill if you have nothing else. A man therefore, who does not love, does not help him, and thereby does himself an injury; for he cuts off from himself grace, and injures his neighbor, by depriving him of the benefit of the prayers and of the sweet desires that he is bound to offer for him to Me. Thus, every act of help that he performs should proceed from the charity which he has through love of Me. And every evil also, is done by means of his neighbor, for, if he do not love Me, he cannot be in charity with his neighbor; and thus, all evils derive from the soul’s deprivation of love of Me and her neighbor; whence, inasmuch as such a man does no good, it follows that he must do evil. To whom does he evil? First of all to himself, and then to his neighbor, not against Me, for no evil can touch Me, except in so far as I count done to Me that which he does to himself. To himself he does the injury of sin, which deprives him of grace, and worse than this he cannot do to his neighbor. Him he injures in not paying him the debt, which he owes him, of love, with which he ought to help him by means of prayer and holy desire offered to Me for him. This is an assistance which is owed in general to every rational creature; but its usefulness is more particular when it is done to those who are close at hand, under your eyes, as to whom, I say, you are all obliged to help one another by word and doctrine, and the example of good works, and in every other respect in which your neighbor may be seen to be in need; counseling him exactly as you would yourselves, without any passion of self-love; and he (a man not loving God) does not do this, because he has no love towards his neighbor; and, by not doing it, he does him, as you see, a special injury. And he does him evil, not only by not doing him the good that he might do him, but by doing him a positive injury and a constant evil. In this way sin causes a physical and a mental injury. The mental injury is already done when the sinner has conceived pleasure in the idea of sin, and hatred of virtue, that is, pleasure from sensual self-love, which has deprived him of the affection of love which he ought to have towards Me, and his neighbor, as has been said. And, after he has conceived, he brings forth one sin after another against his neighbor, according to the diverse ways which may please his perverse sensual will. Sometimes it is seen that he brings forth cruelty, and that both in general and in particular.

“His general cruelty is to see himself and other creatures in danger of death and damnation through privation of grace, and so cruel is he that he reminds neither himself nor others of the love of virtue and hatred of vice. Being thus cruel he may wish to extend his cruelty still further, that is, not content with not giving an example of virtue, the villain also usurps the office of the demons, tempting, according to his power, his fellow-creatures to abandon virtue for vice; this is cruelty towards his neighbors, for he makes himself an instrument to destroy life and to give death. Cruelty towards the body has its origin in cupidity, which not only prevents a man from helping his neighbor, but causes him to seize the goods of others, robbing the poor creatures; sometimes this is done by the arbitrary use of power, and at other times by cheating and fraud, his neighbor being forced to redeem, to his own loss, his own goods, and often indeed his own person.

“Oh, miserable vice of cruelty, which will deprive the man who practices it of all mercy, unless he turn to kindness and benevolence towards his neighbor!

“Sometimes the sinner brings forth insults on which often follows murder; sometimes also impurity against the person of his neighbor, by which he becomes a brute beast full of stench, and in this case he does not poison one only, but whoever approaches him, with love or in conversation, is poisoned.

“Against whom does pride bring forth evils? Against the neighbor, through love of one’s own reputation, whence comes hatred of the neighbor, reputing one’s self to be greater than he; and in this way is injury done to him. And if a man be in a position of authority, he produces also injustice and cruelty and becomes a retailer of the flesh of men. Oh, dearest daughter, grieve for the offense against Me, and weep over these corpses, so that, by prayer, the bands of their death may be loosened!

“See now, that, in all places and in all kinds of people, sin is always produced against the neighbor, and through his medium; in no other way could sin ever be committed either secret or open. A secret sin is when you deprive your neighbor of that which you ought to give him; an open sin is where you perform positive acts of sin, as I have related to you. It is, therefore, indeed the truth that every sin done against Me, is done through the medium of the neighbor.”

*How virtues are accomplished by means of our neighbor, and how it is that virtues differ to such an extent in creatures.*

“I have told you how all sins are accomplished by means of your neighbor, through the principles which I exposed to you, that is, because men are deprived of the affection of love, which gives light to every virtue. In the same way self-love, which destroys charity and affection towards the neighbor, is the principle and foundation of every evil. All scandals, hatred, cruelty, and every sort of trouble proceed from this perverse root of self-love, which has poisoned the entire world, and weakened the mystical body of the Holy Church, and the universal body of the believers in the Christian religion; and, therefore, I said to you, that it was in the neighbor, that is to say in the love of him, that all virtues were founded; and, truly indeed did I say to you, that charity gives life to all the virtues, because no virtue can be obtained without charity, which is the pure love of Me.

“Wherefore, when the soul knows herself, as we have said above, she finds humility and hatred of her own sensual passion, for she learns the perverse law, which is bound up in her members, and which ever fights against the spirit. And, therefore, arising with hatred of her own sensuality, crushing it under the heel of reason, with great earnestness, she discovers in herself the bounty of My goodness, through the many benefits which she has received from Me, all of which she considers again in herself. She attributes to Me, through humility, the knowledge which she has obtained of herself, knowing that, by My grace, I have drawn her out of darkness and lifted her up into the light of true knowledge. When she has recognized My goodness, she loves it without any medium, and yet at the same time with a medium, that is to say, without the medium of herself or of any advantage accruing to herself, and with the medium of virtue, which she has conceived through love of Me, because she sees that, in no other way, can she become grateful and acceptable to Me, but by conceiving, hatred of sin and love of virtue; and, when she has thus conceived by the affection of love, she immediately is delivered of fruit for her neighbor, because, in no other way, can she act out the truth she has conceived in herself, but, loving Me in truth, in the same truth she serves her neighbor.

“And it cannot be otherwise, because love of Me and of her neighbor are one and the same thing, and, so far as the soul loves Me, she loves her neighbor, because love towards him issues from Me. This is the means which I have given you, that you may exercise and prove your virtue therewith; because, inasmuch as you can do Me no profit, you should do it to your neighbor. This proves that you possess Me by grace in your soul, producing much fruit for your neighbor and making prayers to Me, seeking with sweet and amorous desire My honor and the salvation of souls. The soul, enamored of My truth, never ceases to serve the whole world in general, and more or less in a particular case according to the disposition of the recipient and the ardent desire of the donor, as I have shown above, when I declared to you that the endurance of suffering alone, without desire, was not sufficient to punish a fault.

“When she has discovered the advantage of this unitive love in Me, by means of which, she truly loves herself, extending her desire for the salvation of the whole world, thus coming to the aid of its neediness, she strives, inasmuch as she has done good to herself by the conception of virtue, from which she has drawn the life of grace, to fix her eye on the needs of her neighbor in particular. Wherefore, when she has discovered, through the affection of love, the state of all rational creatures in general, she helps those who are at hand, according to the various graces which I have entrusted to her to administer; one she helps with doctrine, that is, with words, giving sincere counsel without any respect of persons, another with the example of a good life, and this indeed all give to their neighbor, the edification of a holy and honorable life. These are the virtues, and many others, too many to enumerate, which are brought forth in the love of the neighbor; but, although I have given them in such a different way, that is to say not all to one, but to one, one virtue, and to another, another, it so happens that it is impossible to have one, without having them all, because all the virtues are bound together. Wherefore, learn, that, in many cases I give one virtue, to be as it were the chief of the others, that is to say, to one I will give principally love, to another justice, to another humility, to one a lively faith, to another prudence or temperance, or patience, to another fortitude. These, and many other virtues, I place, indifferently, in the souls of many creatures; it happens, therefore, that the particular one so placed in the soul becomes the principal object of its virtue; the soul disposing herself, for her chief conversation, to this rather than to other virtues, and, by the effect of this virtue, the soul draws to herself all the other virtues, which, as has been said, are all bound together in the affection of love; and so with many gifts and graces of virtue, and not only in the case of spiritual things but also of temporal. I use the word temporal for the things necessary to the physical life of man; all these I have given indifferently, and I have not placed them all in one soul, in order that man should, perforce, have material for love of his fellow. I could easily have created men possessed of all that they should need both for body and soul, but I wish that one should have need of the other, and that they should be My ministers to administer the graces and the gifts that they have received from Me. Whether man will or no, he cannot help making an act of love. It is true, however, that that act, unless made through love of Me, profits him nothing so far as grace is concerned. See then, that I have made men My ministers, and placed them in diverse stations and various ranks, in order that they may make use of the virtue of love.

“Wherefore, I show you that in My house are many mansions, and that I wish for no other thing than love, for in the love of Me is fulfilled and completed the love of the neighbor, and the law observed. For he, only, can be of use in his state of life, who is bound to Me with this love.”

*How virtues are proved and fortified by their contraries.*

"Up to the present, I have taught you how a man may serve his neighbor, and manifest, by that service, the love which he has towards Me.

"Now I wish to tell you further, that a man proves his patience on his neighbor, when he receives injuries from him.

"Similarly, he proves his humility on a proud man, his faith on an infidel, his true hope on one who despairs, his justice on the unjust, his kindness on the cruel, his gentleness and benignity on the irascible. Good men produce and prove all their virtues on their neighbor, just as perverse men all their vices; thus, if you consider well, humility is proved on pride in this way. The humble man extinguishes pride, because a proud man can do no harm to a humble one; neither can the infidelity of a wicked man, who neither loves Me, nor hopes in Me, when brought forth against one who is faithful to Me, do him any harm; his infidelity does not diminish the faith or the hope of him who has conceived his faith and hope through love of Me, it rather fortifies it, and proves it in the love he feels for his neighbor. For, he sees that the infidel is unfaithful, because he is without hope in Me, and in My servant, because he does not love Me, placing his faith and hope rather in his own sensuality, which is all that he loves. My faithful servant does not leave him because he does not faithfully love Me, or because he does not constantly seek, with hope in Me, for his salvation, inasmuch as he sees clearly the causes of his infidelity and lack of hope. The virtue of faith is proved in these and other ways. Wherefore, to those, who need the proof of it, My servant proves his faith in himself and in his neighbor, and so, justice is not diminished by the wicked man's injustice, but is rather proved, that is to say, the justice of a just man. Similarly, the virtues of patience, benignity, and kindness manifest themselves in a time of wrath by the same sweet patience in My servants, and envy, vexation, and hatred demonstrate their love, and hunger and desire for the salvation of souls. I say, also, to you, that, not only is virtue proved in those who render good for evil, but, that many times a good man gives back fiery coals of love, which dispel the hatred and rancor of heart of the angry, and so from hatred often comes benevolence, and that this is by virtue of the love and perfect patience which is in him, who sustains the anger of the wicked, bearing and supporting his defects. If you will observe the virtues of fortitude and perseverance, these virtues are proved by the long endurance of the injuries and detractions of wicked men, who, whether by injuries or by flattery, constantly endeavor to turn a man aside from following the road and the doctrine of truth. Wherefore, in all these things, the virtue of fortitude conceived within the soul, perseveres with strength, and, in addition proves itself externally upon the neighbor, as I have said to you; and, if fortitude were not able to make that good proof of itself, being tested by many contrarieties, it would not be a serious virtue founded in truth."

# A TREATISE OF DISCRETION

*How the affection should not place reliance chiefly on penance, but rather on virtues; and how discretion receives life from humility, and renders to each man his due.*

"THESE ARE THE holy and sweet works which I seek from My servants; these are the proved intrinsic virtues of the soul, as I have told you. They not only consist of those virtues which are done by means of the body, that is, with an exterior act, or with diverse and varied penances, which are the instruments of virtue; works of penance performed alone without the above-mentioned virtues would please Me little; often, indeed, if the soul perform not her penance with discretion, that is to say, if her affection be placed principally in the penance she has undertaken, her perfection will be impeded; she should rather place reliance on the affection of love, with a holy hatred of herself, accompanied by true humility and perfect patience, together with the other intrinsic virtues of the soul, with hunger and desire for My honor and the salvation of souls. For these virtues demonstrate that the will is dead, and continually slays its own sensuality through the affection of love of virtue. With this discretion, then, should the soul perform her penance, that is, she should place her principal affection in virtue rather than in penance. Penance should be but the means to increase virtue according to the needs of the individual, and according to what the soul sees she can do in the measure of her own possibility. Otherwise, if the soul place her foundation on penance she will contaminate her own perfection, because her penance will not be done in the light of knowledge of herself and of My goodness, with discretion, and she will not seize hold of My truth; neither loving that which I love, nor hating that which I hate. This virtue of discretion is no other than a true knowledge which the soul should have of herself and of Me, and in this knowledge is virtue rooted. Discretion is the only child of self-knowledge, and, wedding with charity, has indeed many other descendants, as a tree which has many branches; but that which gives life to the tree, to its branches, and its root, is the ground of humility, in which it is planted, which humility is the foster-mother and nurse of charity, by whose means this tree remains in the perpetual calm of discretion. Because otherwise the tree would not produce the virtue of discretion, or any fruit of life, if it were not planted in the virtue of humility, because humility proceeds from self-knowledge. And I have already said to you, that the root of discretion is a real knowledge of self and of My goodness, by which the soul immediately, and discreetly, renders to each one his due. Chiefly to Me in rendering praise and glory to My Name, and in referring to Me the graces and the gifts which she sees and knows she has received from Me; and rendering to herself that which she sees herself to have merited, knowing that she does not even exist of herself, and attributing to Me, and not to herself, her being, which she knows she has received by grace from Me, and every other grace which she has received besides.

"And she seems to herself to be ungrateful for so many benefits, and negligent, in that she has not made the most of her time, and the graces she has received, and so seems to herself worthy of suffering; wherefore she becomes odious and displeasing to herself through her guilt. And this founds the virtue of discretion on knowledge of self, that is, on true humility, for, were this humility not in the soul, the soul would be indiscreet, indiscretion being founded on pride, as discretion is on humility.

"An indiscreet soul robs Me of the honor due to Me, and attributes it to herself, through vainglory, and that which is really her own she imputes to Me, grieving and murmuring concerning My mysteries, with which I work in her soul and in those of My other creatures; wherefore everything in Me and in her neighbor is cause of scandal to her. Contrariwise those who possess the virtue of discretion. For, when they have rendered what is due to Me and to themselves, they proceed to render to their neighbor their principal debt of love, and of humble and continuous prayer, which all should pay to each other, and further, the debt of doctrine, and example of a holy and honorable life, counseling and helping others according to their needs for salvation, as I said to you above. Whatever rank a man be in, whether that of a noble, a prelate, or a servant, if he have this virtue, everything that he does to his neighbor is done discreetly and lovingly, because these virtues are bound and mingled together, and both planted in the ground of humility which proceeds from self-knowledge."

*A parable showing how love, humility, and discretion are united; and how the soul should conform herself to this parable.*

"Do you know how these three virtues stand together? It is, as if a circle were drawn on the surface of the earth, and a tree, with an off-shoot joined to its side, grew in the center of the circle. The tree is nourished in the earth contained in the diameter of the circle, for if the tree were out of the earth it would die, and give no fruit. Now, consider, in the same way, that the soul is a tree existing by love, and that it can live by nothing else than love; and, that if this soul have not in very truth the divine love of perfect charity, she cannot produce fruit of life, but only of death. It is necessary then, that the root of this tree, that is the affection of the soul, should grow in, and issue from the circle of true self-knowledge which is contained in Me, who have neither beginning nor end, like the circumference of the circle, for, turn as you will within a circle, inasmuch as the circumference has neither end nor beginning, you always remain within it.

"This knowledge of yourself and of Me is found in the earth of true humility, which is as wide as the diameter of the circle, that is as the knowledge of self and of Me (for, otherwise, the circle would not be without end and beginning, but would have its beginning in knowledge of self, and its end in confusion, if this knowledge were not contained in Me). Then the tree of love feeds itself on humility, bringing forth from its side the off-shoot of true discretion, in the way that I have already told you, from the heart of the tree, that is the affection of love which is in the soul, and the patience, which proves that I am in the soul and the soul in Me. This tree then, so sweetly planted, produces fragrant blossoms of virtue, with many scents of great variety, inasmuch as the soul renders fruit of grace and of utility to her neighbor, according to the zeal of those who come to receive fruit from My servants; and to Me she renders the sweet odor of glory and praise to My Name, and so fulfils the object of her creation.

"In this way, therefore, she reaches the term of her being, that is Myself, her God, who am Eternal Life. And these fruits cannot be taken from her without her will, inasmuch as they are all flavored with discretion, because they are all united, as has been said above."

*How penance and other corporal exercises are to be taken as instruments for arriving at virtue, and not as the principal affection of the soul; and of the light of discretion in various other modes and operations.*

“These are the fruits and the works which I seek from the soul, the proving, namely, of virtue in the time of need. And yet some time ago, if you remember, when you were desirous of doing great penance for My sake, asking, ‘What can I do to endure suffering for You, oh Lord?’ I replied to you, speaking in your mind, ‘I take delight in few words and many works.’ I wished to show you that he who merely calls on me with the sound of words, saying: ‘Lord, Lord, I would do something for You,’ and he, who desires for My sake to mortify his body with many penances, and not his own will, did not give Me much pleasure; but that I desired the manifold works of manly endurance with patience, together with the other virtues, which I have mentioned to you above, intrinsic to the soul, all of which must be in activity in order to obtain fruits worthy of grace. All other works, founded on any other principle than this, I judge to be a mere calling with words, because they are finite works, and I, who am Infinite, seek infinite works, that is an infinite perfection of love.

“I wish therefore that the works of penance, and of other corporal exercises, should be observed merely as means, and not as the fundamental affection of the soul. For, if the principal affection of the soul were placed in penance, I should receive a finite thing like a word, which, when it has issued from the mouth, is no more, unless it have issued with affection of the soul, which conceives and brings forth virtue in truth; that is, unless the finite operation, which I have called a word, should be joined with the affection or love, in which case it would be grateful and pleasant to Me. And this is because such a work would not be alone, but accompanied by true discretion, using corporal works as means, and not as the principal foundation; for it would not be becoming that that principal foundation should be placed in penance only, or in any exterior corporal act, such works being finite, since they are done in finite time, and also because it is often profitable that the creature omit them, and even that she be made to do so.

“Wherefore, when the soul omits them through necessity, being unable through various circumstances to complete an action which she has begun, or, as may frequently happen, through obedience at the order of her director, it is well; since, if she continued then to do them, she not only would receive no merit, but would offend Me; thus you see that they are merely finite. She ought, therefore, to adopt them as a means, and not as an end. For, if she takes them as an end she will be obliged, some time or other, to leave them, and will then remain empty. This, My trumpeter, the glorious Paul, taught you when he said in his epistle, that you should mortify the body and destroy self-will, knowing, that is to say, how to keep the rein on the body, macerating the flesh whenever it should wish to combat the spirit, but the will should be dead and annihilated in everything, and subject to My will, and this slaying of the will is that due which, as I told you, the virtue of discretion renders to the soul, that is to say, hatred and disgust of her own offenses and sensuality, which are acquired by self-knowledge. This is the knife which slays and cuts off all self-love founded in self-will. These then are they who give Me not only words but manifold works, and in these I take delight. And then I said that I desired few words, and many actions; by the use of the word ‘many’ I assign no particular number to you, because the affection of the soul, founded in love, which gives life to all the virtues and good works, should increase infinitely, and yet I do not, by this, exclude words, I merely said that I wished few of them, showing you that every actual operation, as such, was finite, and therefore I called them of little account; but they please Me when they are performed as the instruments of virtue, and not as a principal end in themselves.

“However, no one should judge that he has greater perfection, because he performs great penances, and gives himself in excess to the slaying of his body, than he who

does less, inasmuch as neither virtue nor merit consists therein; for otherwise he would be in an evil case, who, from some legitimate reason, was unable to do actual penance. Merit consists in the virtue of love alone, flavored with the light of true discretion, without which the soul is worth nothing. And this love should be directed to Me endlessly, boundlessly, since I am the Supreme and Eternal Truth. The soul can therefore place neither laws nor limits to her love for Me; but her love for her neighbor, on the contrary, is ordered in certain conditions. The light of discretion (which proceeds from love, as I have told you) gives to the neighbor a conditioned love, one that, being ordered aright, does not cause the injury of sin to self in order to be useful to others, for, if one single sin were committed to save the whole world from Hell, or to obtain one great virtue, the motive would not be a rightly ordered or discreet love, but rather indiscreet, for it is not lawful to perform even one act of great virtue and profit to others, by means of the guilt of sin. Holy discretion ordains that the soul should direct all her powers to My service with a manly zeal, and, that she should love her neighbor with such devotion that she would lay down a thousand times, if it were possible, the life of her body for the salvation of souls, enduring pains and torments so that her neighbor may have the life of grace, and giving her temporal substance for the profit and relief of his body.

"This is the supreme office of discretion which proceeds from charity. So you see how discreetly every soul, who wishes for grace, should pay her debts, that is, should love Me with an infinite love and without measure, but her neighbor with measure, with a restricted love, as I have said, not doing herself the injury of sin in order to be useful to others. This is St. Paul's counsel to you when he says that charity ought to be concerned first with self, otherwise it will never be of perfect utility to others. Because, when perfection is not in the soul, everything which the soul does for itself and for others is imperfect. It would not, therefore, be just that creatures, who are finite and created by Me, should be saved through offense done to Me, who am the Infinite Good. The more serious the fault is in such a case, the less fruit will the action produce; therefore, in no way should you ever incur the guilt of sin.

"And this true love knows well, because she carries with herself the light of holy discretion, that light which dissipates all darkness, takes away ignorance, and is the condiment of every instrument of virtue. Holy discretion is a prudence which cannot be cheated, a fortitude which cannot be beaten, a perseverance from end to end, stretching from Heaven to earth, that is, from knowledge of Me to knowledge of self, and from love of Me to love of others. And the soul escapes dangers by her true humility, and, by her prudence, flies all the nets of the world and its creatures, and, with unarmed hands, that is through much endurance, discomfits the devil and the flesh with this sweet and glorious light; knowing, by it, her own fragility, she renders to her weakness its due of hatred.

"Wherefore she has trampled on the world, and placed it under the feet of her affection, despising it, and holding it vile, and thus becoming lord of it, holding it as folly. And the men of the world cannot take her virtues from such a soul, but all their persecutions increase her virtues and prove them, which virtues have been at first conceived by the virtue of love, as has been said, and then are proved on her neighbor, and bring forth their fruit on him. Thus have I shown you, that, if virtue were not visible and did not shine in the time of trial, it would not have been truly conceived; for, I have already told you, that perfect virtue cannot exist and give fruit except by means of the neighbor, even as a woman, who has conceived a child, if she do not bring it forth, so that it may appear before the eyes of men, deprives her husband of his fame of paternity. It is the same with Me, who am the Spouse of the soul, if she do

not produce the child of virtue, in the love of her neighbor, showing her child to him who is in need, both in general and in particular, as I have said to you before, so I declare now that, in truth, she has not conceived virtue at all; and this is also true of the vices, all of which are committed by means of the neighbor."

*How this soul grew by means of the divine response, and how her sorrows grew less, and how she prayed to God for the Holy Church, and for her own people.*

"Then that soul, thirsting and burning with the very great desire that she had conceived on learning the ineffable love of God, shown in His great goodness, and, seeing the breadth of His charity, that, with such sweetness, He had deigned to reply to her request and to satisfy it, giving hope to the sorrow which she had conceived, on account of offenses against God, and the damage of the Holy Church, and through His own mercy, which she saw through self-knowledge, diminished, and yet, at the same time, increased her sorrow.

"For, the Supreme and Eternal Father, in manifesting the way of perfection, showed her anew her own guilt, and the loss of souls, as has been said more fully above. Also because in the knowledge which the soul obtains of herself, she knows more of God, and knowing the goodness of God in herself, the sweet mirror of God, she knows her own dignity and indignity. Her dignity is that of her creation, seeing that she is the image of God, and this has been given her by grace, and not as her due. In that same mirror of the goodness of God, the soul knows her own indignity, which is the consequence of her own fault. Wherefore, as a man more readily sees spots on his face when he looks in a mirror, so, the soul who, with true knowledge of self, rises with desire, and gazes with the eye of the intellect at herself in the sweet mirror of God, knows better the stains of her own face, by the purity which she sees in Him.

"Wherefore, because light and knowledge increased in that soul in the aforesaid way, a sweet sorrow grew in her, and at the same time, her sorrow was diminished by the hope which the Supreme Truth gave her, and, as fire grows when it is fed with wood, so grew the fire in that soul to such an extent that it was no longer possible for the body to endure it without the departure of the soul; so that, had she not been surrounded by the strength of Him who is the Supreme Strength, it would not have been possible for her to have lived any longer. This soul then, being purified by the fire of divine love, which she found in the knowledge of herself and of God, and her hunger for the salvation of the whole world, and for the reformation of the Holy Church, having grown with her hope of obtaining the same, rose with confidence before the Supreme Father, showing Him the leprosy of the Holy Church, and the misery of the world, saying, as if with the words of Moses, 'My Lord, turn the eyes of Your mercy upon Your people, and upon the mystical body of the Holy Church, for You will be the more glorified if You pardon so many creatures, and give to them the light of knowledge, since all will render You praise when they see themselves escape through Your infinite goodness from the clouds of mortal sin, and from eternal damnation; and then You will not only be praised by my wretched self, who have so much offended You, and who am the cause and the instrument of all this evil, for which reason I pray Your divine and eternal love to take Your revenge on me, and to do mercy to Your people, and never will I depart from before Your presence until I see that you grant them mercy. For what is it to me if I have life, and Your people death, and the clouds of darkness cover Your spouse, when it is my own sins, and not those of Your other creatures, that are the principal cause of this? I desire, then, and beg of You, by Your grace, that You have mercy on Your people, and I adjure You

that You do this by Your uncreated love which moved You Yourself to create man in Your image and similitude, saying, "Let us make man in our own image," and this You did, oh eternal Trinity, that man might participate in everything belonging to You, the most high and eternal Trinity.'

"Wherefore You gave him memory in order to receive Your benefits, by which he participates in the power of the Eternal Father; and intellect that he might know, seeing Your goodness, and so might participate in the wisdom of Your only-begotten Son; and will, that he might love that which his intellect has seen and known of Your truth, thus participating in the clemency of Your Holy Spirit. What reason had You for creating man in such dignity? The inestimable love with which You saw Your creature in Yourself, and became enamored of him, for You created him through love, and destined him to be such that he might taste and enjoy Your Eternal Good. I see therefore that through his sin he lost this dignity in which You originally placed him, and by his rebellion against You, fell into a state of war with Your kindness, that is to say, we all became Your enemies.

"Therefore, You, moved by that same fire of love with which You created him, willingly gave man a means of reconciliation, so that after the great rebellion into which he had fallen, there should come a great peace; and so You gave him the only-begotten Word, Your Son, to be the Mediator between us and You. He was our Justice, for He took on Himself all our offenses and injustices, and performed Your obedience, Eternal Father, which You imposed on Him, when You clothed Him with our humanity, our human nature and likeness. Oh, abyss of love! What heart can help breaking when it sees such dignity as Yours descend to such lowliness as our humanity? We are Your image, and You have become ours, by this union which You have accomplished with man, veiling the Eternal Deity with the cloud of woe, and the corrupted clay of Adam. For what reason? — Love. Wherefore, You, O God, have become man, and man has become God. By this ineffable love of Yours, therefore, I constrain You, and implore You that You do mercy to Your creatures."

*How God grieves over the Christian people, and particularly over His ministers; and touches on the subject of the Sacrament of Christ's Body, and the benefit of the Incarnation.*

Then God, turning the eye of His mercy towards her, allowing Himself to be constrained by her tears, and bound by the chain of her holy desire, replied with lamentation— "My sweetest daughter, your tears constrain Me, because they are joined with My love, and fall for love of Me, and your painful desires force Me to answer you; but marvel, and see how My spouse has defiled her face, and become leprous, on account of her filthiness and self-love, and swollen with the pride and avarice of those who feed on their own sin.

"What I say of the universal body and the mystical body of the Holy Church (that is to say the Christian religion) I also say of My ministers, who stand and feed at the breasts of Holy Church; and, not only should they feed themselves, but it is also their duty to feed and hold to those breasts the universal body of Christian people, and also any other people who should wish to leave the darkness of their infidelity, and bind themselves as members to My Church. See then with what ignorance and darkness, and ingratitude, are administered, and with what filthy hands are handled this glorious milk and blood of My spouse, and with what presumption and irreverence they are received. Wherefore, that which really gives life, often gives, through the defects of those who receive it, death; that is to say, the precious Blood of My only-begotten

Son, which destroyed death and darkness, and gave life and truth, and confounded falsehood. For I give this Blood and use It for salvation and perfection in the case of that man who disposes himself properly to receive it, for It gives life and adorns the soul with every grace, in proportion to the disposition and affection of him who receives It; similarly It gives death to him who receives It unworthily, living in iniquity and in the darkness of mortal sin; to him, I say, It gives death and not life; not through defect of the Blood, nor through defect of the minister, though there might be great evil in him, because his evil would not spoil nor defile the Blood nor diminish Its grace and virtue, nor does an evil minister do harm to him to whom he gives the Blood, but to himself he does the harm of guilt, which will be followed by punishment, unless he correct himself with contrition and repentance. I say then that the Blood does harm to him who receives it unworthily, not through defect of the Blood, nor of the minister, but through his own evil disposition and defect inasmuch as he has befouled his mind and body with such impurity and misery, and has been so cruel to himself and his neighbor. He has used cruelty to himself, depriving himself of grace, trampling under the feet of his affection the fruit of the Blood which he had received in Holy Baptism, when the stain of original sin was taken from him by virtue of the Blood, which stain he drew from his origin, when he was generated by his father and mother.

"Wherefore I gave My Word, My only-begotten Son, because the whole stuff of human generation was corrupted through the sin of the first man Adam. Wherefore, all of you, vessels made of this stuff, were corrupted and not disposed to the possession of eternal life — so I, with My dignity, joined Myself to the baseness of your human generation, in order to restore it to grace which you had lost by sin; for I was incapable of suffering, and yet, on account of guilt, My divine justice demanded suffering. But man was not sufficient to satisfy it, for, even if he had satisfied to a certain extent, he could only have satisfied for himself, and not for other rational creatures, besides which, neither for himself, nor for others, could man satisfy, his sin having been committed against Me, who am the Infinite Good. Wishing, however, to restore man, who was enfeebled, and could not satisfy for the above reason, I sent My Word, My own Son, clothed in your own very nature, the corrupted clay of Adam, in order that He might endure suffering in that self-same nature in which man had offended, suffering in His body even to the opprobrious death of the Cross, and so He satisfied My justice and My divine mercy. For My mercy willed to make satisfaction for the sin of man and to dispose him to that good for which I had created him. This human nature, joined with the divine nature, was sufficient to satisfy for the whole human race, not only on account of the pain which it sustained in its finite nature, that is in the flesh of Adam, but by virtue of the Eternal Deity, the divine and infinite nature joined to it. The two natures being thus joined together, I received and accepted the sacrifice of My only-begotten Son, kneaded into one dough with the divine nature, by the fire of divine love which was the fetter which held him fastened and nailed to the Cross in this way. Thus human nature was sufficient to satisfy for guilt, but only by virtue of the divine nature. And in this way was destroyed the stain of Adam's sin, only the mark of it remaining behind, that is an inclination to sin, and to every sort of corporeal defect, like the cicatrice which remains when a man is healed of a wound. In this way the original fault of Adam was able still to cause a fatal stain; wherefore the coming of the great Physician, that is to say, of My only-begotten Son, cured this invalid, He drinking this bitter medicine, which man could not drink on account of his great weakness, like a foster-mother who takes medicine instead of her suckling, because she is grown up and strong, and the child is not fit to endure its bitterness. He

was man's foster-mother, enduring, with the greatness and strength of the Deity united with your nature, the bitter medicine of the painful death of the Cross, to give life to you little ones debilitated by guilt. I say therefore that the mark alone of original sin remains, which sin you take from your father and your mother when you were generated by them. But this mark is removed from the soul, though not altogether, by Holy Baptism, which has the virtue of communicating the life of grace by means of that glorious and precious Blood. Wherefore, at the moment that the soul receives Holy Baptism, original sin is taken away from her, and grace is infused into her, and that inclination to sin, which remains from the original corruption, as has been said, is indeed a source of weakness, but the soul can keep the bridle on it if she choose. Then the vessel of the soul is disposed to receive and increase in herself grace, more or less, according as it pleases her to dispose herself willingly with affection, and desire of loving and serving Me; and, in the same way, she can dispose herself to evil as to good, in spite of her having received grace in Holy Baptism. Wherefore when the time of discretion is come, the soul can, by her free will, make choice either of good or evil, according as it pleases her will; and so great is this liberty that man has, and so strong has this liberty been made by virtue of this glorious Blood, that no demon or creature can constrain him to one smallest fault without his free consent. He has been redeemed from slavery, and made free in order that he might govern his own sensuality, and obtain the end for which he was created. Oh, miserable man, who delights to remain in the mud like a brute, and does not learn this great benefit which he has received from Me! A benefit so great, that the poor wretched creature full of such ignorance could receive no greater."

*How sin is more gravely punished after the Passion of Christ than before; and how God promises to do mercy to the world, and to the Holy Church, by means of the prayers and sufferings of His servants.*

"And I wish you to know, My daughter, that, although I have re-created and restored to the life of grace, the human race, through the Blood of My only-begotten Son, as I have said, men are not grateful, but, going from bad to worse, and from guilt to guilt, even persecuting Me with many injuries, taking so little account of the graces which I have given them, and continue to give them, that, not only do they not attribute what they have received to grace, but seem to themselves on occasion to receive injuries from Me, as if I desired anything else than their sanctification.

"I say to you that they will be more hard-hearted, and worthy of more punishment, and will, indeed, be punished more severely, now that they have received redemption in the Blood of My Son, than they would have been before that redemption took place — that is, before the stain of Adam's sin had been taken away. It is right that he who receives more should render more, and should be under great obligations to Him from whom he receives more.

"Man, then, was closely bound to Me through his being which I have given him, creating him in My own image and similitude; for which reason, he was bound to render Me glory, but he deprived Me of it, and wished to give it to himself. Thus he came to transgress My obedience imposed on him, and became My enemy. And I, with My humility, destroyed his pride, humiliating the divine nature, and taking your humanity, and, freeing you from the service of the devil, I made you free. And, not only did I give you liberty, but, if you examine, you will see that man has become God, and God has become man, through the union of the divine with the human nature. This is the debt which they have incurred — that is to say, the treasure of the

Blood, by which they have been procreated to grace. See, therefore, how much more they owe after the redemption than before. For they are now obliged to render Me glory and praise by following in the steps of My Incarnate Word, My only-begotten Son, for then they repay Me the debt of love both of Myself and of their neighbor, with true and genuine virtue, as I have said to you above, and if they do not do it, the greater their debt, the greater will be the offense they fall into, and therefore, by divine justice, the greater their suffering in eternal damnation.

"A false Christian is punished more than a pagan, and the deathless fire of divine justice consumes him more, that is, afflicts him more, and, in his affliction, he feels himself being consumed by the worm of conscience, though, in truth, he is not consumed, because the damned do not lose their being through any torment which they receive. Wherefore I say to you, that they ask for death and cannot have it, for they cannot lose their being; the existence of grace they lose, through their fault, but not their natural existence. Therefore guilt is more gravely punished after the Redemption of the Blood than before, because man received more; but sinners neither seem to perceive this, nor to pay any attention to their own sins, and so become My enemies, though I have reconciled them, by means of the Blood of My Son. But there is a remedy with which I appease My wrath — that is to say, by means of My servants, if they are jealous to constrain Me by their desire. You see, therefore, that you have bound Me with this bond which I have given you, because I wished to do mercy to the world.

"Therefore I give My servants hunger and desire for My honor, and the salvation of souls, so that, constrained by their tears, I may mitigate the fury of My divine justice. Take, therefore, your tears and your sweat, drawn from the fountain of My divine love, and, with them, wash the face of My spouse.

"I promise you, that, by this means, her beauty will be restored to her, not by the knife nor by cruelty, but peacefully, by humble and continued prayer, by the sweat and the tears shed by the fiery desire of My servants, and thus will I fulfill your desire if you, on your part, endure much, casting the light of your patience into the darkness of perverse man, not fearing the world's persecutions, for I will protect you, and My Providence shall never fail you in the slightest need."

*How the road to Heaven being broken through the disobedience of Adam, God made of His Son a Bridge by which man could pass.*

"Wherefore I have told you that I have made a Bridge of My Word, of My only-begotten Son, and this is the truth. I wish that you, My children, should know that the road was broken by the sin and disobedience of Adam, in such a way, that no one could arrive at Eternal Life. Wherefore men did not render Me glory in the way in which they ought to have, as they did not participate in that Good for which I had created them, and My truth was not fulfilled. This truth is that I have created man to My own image and similitude, in order that he might have Eternal Life, and might partake of Me, and taste My supreme and eternal sweetness and goodness. But, after sin had closed Heaven and bolted the doors of mercy, the soul of man produced thorns and prickly brambles, and My creature found in himself rebellion against himself.

"And the flesh immediately began to war against the Spirit, and, losing the state of innocence, became a foul animal, and all created things rebelled against man, whereas they would have been obedient to him, had he remained in the state in which I had placed him. He, not remaining therein, transgressed My obedience, and merited eternal death in soul and body. And, as soon as he had sinned, a tempestuous flood

arose, which ever buffets him with its waves, bringing him weariness and trouble from himself, the devil, and the world. Every one was drowned in the flood, because no one, with his own justice alone, could arrive at Eternal Life. And so, wishing to remedy your great evils, I have given you the Bridge of My Son, in order that, passing across the flood, you may not be drowned, which flood is the tempestuous sea of this dark life. See, therefore, under what obligations the creature is to Me, and how ignorant he is, not to take the remedy which I have offered, but to be willing to drown."

*How God induces the soul to look at the greatness of this Bridge, inasmuch as it reaches from earth to Heaven.*

"Open, my daughter, the eye of your intellect, and you will see the accepted and the ignorant, the imperfect, and also the perfect who follow Me in truth, so that you may grieve over the damnation of the ignorant, and rejoice over the perfection of My beloved servants.

"You will see further how those bear themselves who walk in the light, and those who walk in the darkness. I also wish you to look at the Bridge of My only-begotten Son, and see the greatness thereof, for it reaches from Heaven to earth, that is, that the earth of your humanity is joined to the greatness of the Deity thereby. I say then that this Bridge reaches from Heaven to earth, and constitutes the union which I have made with man.

"This was necessary, in order to reform the road which was broken, as I said to you, in order that man should pass through the bitterness of the world, and arrive at life; but the Bridge could not be made of earth sufficiently large to span the flood and give you Eternal Life, because the earth of human nature was not sufficient to satisfy for guilt, to remove the stain of Adam's sin. Which stain corrupted the whole human race and gave out a stench, as I have said to you above. It was, therefore, necessary to join human nature with the height of My nature, the Eternal Deity, so that it might be sufficient to satisfy for the whole human race, so that human nature should sustain the punishment, and that the Divine nature, united with the human, should make acceptable the sacrifice of My only Son, offered to Me to take death from you and to give you life.

"So the height of the Divinity, humbled to the earth, and joined with your humanity, made the Bridge and reformed the road. Why was this done? In order that man might come to his true happiness with the angels. And observe, that it is not enough, in order that you should have life, that My Son should have made you this Bridge, unless you walk thereon."

*How this soul prays God to show her those who cross by the aforesaid Bridge, and those who do not.*

Then this soul exclaimed with ardent love,— "Oh, inestimable Charity, sweet above all sweetness! Who would not be inflamed by such great love? What heart can help breaking at such tenderness? It seems, oh, Abyss of Charity, as if you were mad with love of Your creature, as if You could not live without him, and yet You are our God who have no heed of us, Your greatness does not increase through our good, for You are unchangeable, and our evil causes You no harm, for You are the Supreme and Eternal Goodness. What moves You to do us such mercy through pure love, and on account of no debt that You owed us, or need that You had of us? We are rather Your guilty and malignant debtors. Wherefore, if I understand aright, Oh, Supreme and

Eternal Truth, I am the thief and You have been punished for me. For I see Your Word, Your Son, fastened and nailed to the Cross, of which You have made me a Bridge, as You have shown me, Your miserable servant, for which reason, my heart is bursting, and yet cannot burst, through the hunger and the desire which it has conceived towards You. I remember, my Lord, that You were willing to show me who are those who go by the Bridge and those who do not; should it please Your goodness to manifest this to me, willingly would I see and hear it."

*How this Bridge has three steps, which signify the three states of the soul; and how, being lifted on high, yet it is not separated from the earth; and how these words are to be understood: "If I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all things unto Me."*

Then the Eternal God, to enamor and excite that soul still more for the salvation of souls, replied to her, and said: "First, as I have shown you that for which you wished, and ask Me, I will now explain to you the nature of this Bridge. I have told you, My daughter, that the Bridge reaches from Heaven to earth; this is through the union which I have made with man, whom I formed of the clay of the earth. Now learn that this Bridge, My only-begotten Son, has three steps, of which two were made with the wood of the most Holy Cross, and the third still retains the great bitterness He tasted, when He was given gall and vinegar to drink. In these three steps you will recognize three states of the soul, which I will explain to you below. The feet of the soul, signifying her affection, are the first step, for the feet carry the body as the affection carries the soul. Wherefore these pierced Feet are steps by which you can arrive at His Side, Which manifests to you the secret of His Heart, because the soul, rising on the steps of her affection, commences to taste the love of His Heart, gazing into that open Heart of My Son, with the eye of the intellect, and finds It consumed with ineffable love. I say consumed, because He does not love you for His own profit, because you can be of no profit to Him, He being one and the same thing with Me. Then the soul is filled with love, seeing herself so much loved. Having passed the second step, the soul reaches out to the third — that is — to the Mouth, where she finds peace from the terrible war she has been waging with her sin. On the first step, then, lifting her feet from the affections of the earth, the soul strips herself of vice; on the second she fills herself with love and virtue; and on the third she tastes peace. So the Bridge has three steps, in order that, climbing past the first and the second, you may reach the last, which is lifted on high, so that the water, running beneath, may not touch it; for, in My Son, was no venom of sin. This Bridge is lifted on high, and yet, at the same time, joined to the earth. Do you know when it was lifted on high? When My Son was lifted up on the wood of the most Holy Cross, the Divine nature remaining joined to the lowliness of the earth of your humanity.

"For this reason I said to you that, being lifted on high, He was not lifted out of the earth, for the Divine nature is united and kneaded into one thing with it. And there was no one who could go on the Bridge until It had been lifted on high, wherefore He said,— '*Si exaltatus fuero a terra omnia traham ad me ipsum*,' that is, '*If I am lifted on high I will draw all things to Me*.' My Goodness, seeing that in no other way could you be drawn to Me, I sent Him in order that He should be lifted on high on the wood of the Cross, making of it an anvil on which My Son, born of human generation, should be re-made, in order to free you from death, and to restore you to the life of grace; wherefore He drew everything to Himself by this means, namely, by showing the ineffable love, with which I love you, the heart of man being always attracted by love. Greater love, then, I could not show you, than to lay down My life for you;

perforce, then, My Son was treated in this way by love, in order that ignorant man should be unable to resist being drawn to Me.

"In very truth, then, My Son said, that, being lifted on high, He would draw all things to Him. And this is to be understood in two ways. Firstly, that, when the heart of man is drawn by the affection of love, as I have said, it is drawn together with all the powers of his soul, that is, with the Memory, the Intellect, and the Will; now, when these three powers are harmoniously joined together in My Name, all the other operations which the man performs, whether in deed or thought, are pleasing, and joined together by the effect of love, because love is lifted on high, following the Sorrowful Crucified One; so My Truth said well, '*If I am lifted on high*,' &c., meaning, that if the heart and the powers of the soul are drawn to Him, all the actions are also drawn to Him. Secondly, everything has been created for the service of man, to serve the necessities of rational creatures, and the rational creature has not been made for them, but for Me, in order to serve Me with all his heart, and with all his affection. See, then, that man being drawn, everything else is drawn with him, because everything else has been made for him. It was therefore necessary that the Bridge should be lifted on high, and have steps, in order that it might be climbed with greater facility."

*How this Bridge is built of stones which signify virtues; and how on the Bridge is a hostelry where food is given to the travelers; and how he who goes over the Bridge goes to life, while he who goes under It goes to perdition and death.*

"This Bridge is built of stones, so that, if the rain come, it may not impede the traveler. Do you know what these stones are? They are the stones of true and sincere virtues. These stones were not built into the walls before the Passion of My Son, and therefore even those who attempted to walk by the road of virtue were prevented from arriving at their journey's end, because Heaven was not yet unlocked with the key of the Blood, and the rain of Justice did not let them pass; but, after the stones were made, and built up on the Body of My sweet Son, My Word, of whom I have spoken to you, He, who was Himself the Bridge, moistened the mortar for its building with His Blood. That is, His Blood was united with the mortar of divinity, and with the fortitude, and the fire of love; and, by My power, these stones of the virtues were built into a wall, upon Him as the foundation, for there is no virtue which has not been proved in Him, and from Him all virtues have their life. Wherefore no one can have the virtue given by a life of grace, but from Him, that is, without following the footsteps of His doctrine. He has built a wall of the virtues, planting them as living stones, and cementing them with His Blood, so that every believer may walk speedily, and without any servile fear of the rain of Divine justice, for he is sheltered by the mercy which descended from Heaven in the Incarnation of this My Son. How was Heaven opened? With the key of His Blood; so you see that the Bridge is walled and roofed with Mercy. His also is the Hostelry in the Garden of the Holy Church, which keeps and ministers the Bread of Life, and gives to drink of the Blood, so that My creatures, journeying on their pilgrimage, may not, through weariness, faint by the way; and for this reason My love has ordained that the Blood and the Body of My only-begotten Son, wholly God and wholly man, may be ministered to you. The pilgrim, having passed the Bridge, arrives at the door which is part of the Bridge, at which all must enter, wherefore He says: '*I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life, he who follows Me does not walk in darkness, but in light*.' And in another place My Truth says, '*That no man can come to Me if not by Him*,' and so indeed it is.

Therefore He says of Himself that He is the Road, and this is the truth, and I have already shown you that He is a Road in the form of the Bridge. And He says that He is the Truth, and so He is, because He is united with Me who am the Truth, and he who follows Him, walks in the Truth, and in Life, because he who follows this Truth receives the life of grace, and cannot faint from hunger, because the Truth has become your food, nor fall in the darkness, because He is light without any falsehood. And, with that Truth, He confounded and destroyed the lie that the Devil told to Eve, with which he broke up the road to Heaven, and the Truth brought the pieces together again, and cemented them with His Blood. Wherefore, those who follow this road are the sons of the Truth, because they follow the Truth, and pass through the door of Truth and find themselves united to Me, who am the Door and the Road and at the same time Infinite Peace.

"But he, who walks not on this road, goes under the Bridge, in the river where there are no stones, only water, and since there are no supports in the water, no one can travel that way without drowning; thus have come to pass the sins, and the condition of the world. Wherefore, if the affection is not placed on the stones, but is placed, with disordinate love, on creatures, loving them, and being kept by them far from Me, the soul drowns, for creatures are like water that continually runs past, and man also passes continually like the river, although it seems to him that he stands still and the creatures that he loves pass by, and yet he is passing himself continually to the end of his journey — death! And he would gladly retain himself (that is his life, and the things that he loves), but he does not succeed, either, through death, by which he has to leave them, or through my disposition, by which these created things are taken from the sight of My creatures. Such as these follow a lie, walking on the road of falsehood, and are sons of the Devil, who is the Father of Lies; and, because they pass by the door of falsehood, they receive eternal damnation. So then you see, that I have shown you both Truth and Falsehood, that is, My road which is Truth, and the Devil's which is Falsehood."

*How traveling on both of these roads, that is the Bridge and the River, is fatiguing; and of the delight which the soul feels in traveling by the Bridge.*

"These are the two roads, and both are hard to travel. Wonder, then, at the ignorance and blindness of man, who, having a Road made for him, which causes such delight to those who use It, that every bitterness becomes sweet, and every burden light, yet prefers to walk over the water. For those who cross by the Bridge, being still in the darkness of the body, find light, and, being mortal, find immortal life, tasting, through love, the light of Eternal Truth which promises refreshment to him who wearies himself for Me, who am grateful and just, and render to every man according as he deserves. Wherefore every good deed is rewarded, and every fault is punished. The tongue would not be sufficient to relate the delight felt by him who goes on this road, for, even in this life, he tastes and participates in that good which has been prepared for him in eternal life. He, therefore, is a fool indeed, who despises so great a good, and chooses rather to receive in this life, the earnest money of Hell, walking by the lower road with great toil, and without any refreshment or advantage. Wherefore, through their sins, they are deprived of Me, who am the Supreme and Eternal Good. Truly then have you reason for grief, and I will that you and My other servants remain in continual bitterness of soul at the offense done to Me, and in compassion for the ignorant, and the loss of those who, in their ignorance, thus offend Me. Now you have seen and heard about this Bridge, how it is, and this I have told you in order to explain

My words, that My only-begotten Son was a Bridge. And thus, you see that He is the Truth, made in the way that I have shown you, that is — by the union of height and lowliness."

*How this Bridge, having reached to Heaven on the day of the Ascension, did not for that reason have the earth.*

"When My only-begotten Son returned to Me, forty days after the resurrection, this Bridge, namely Himself, arose from the earth, that is, from among the conversation of men, and ascended into Heaven by virtue of the Divine Nature and sat at the right hand of Me, the Eternal Father, as the angels said, on the day of the Ascension, to the disciples, standing like dead men, their hearts lifted on high, and ascended into Heaven with the wisdom of My Son— '*Do not stand here any longer, for He is seated at the right hand of the Father!*' When He, then, had thus ascended on high, and returned to Me the Father, I sent the Master, that is the Holy Spirit, who came to you with My power and the wisdom of My Son, and with His own clemency, which is the essence of the Holy Spirit. He is one thing with Me, the Father, and with My Son. And He built up the road of the doctrine which My Truth had left in the world. Thus, though the bodily presence of My Son left you, His doctrine remained, and the virtue of the stones founded upon this doctrine, which is the way made for you by this Bridge. For first, He practiced this doctrine and made the road by His actions, giving you His doctrine by example rather than by words; for He practiced, first Himself, what He afterwards taught you, then the clemency of the Holy Spirit made you certain of the doctrine, fortifying the minds of the disciples to confess the truth, and to announce this road, that is, the doctrine of Christ crucified, reproving, by this means, the world of its injustice and false judgment, of which injustice and false judgment, I will in time discourse to you at greater length.

"This much I have said to you in order that there might be no cloud of darkness in the mind of your hearers, that is, that they may know that of this Body of Christ I made a Bridge by the union of the divine with the human nature, for this is the truth.

"This Bridge, taking its point of departure in you, rose into Heaven, and was the one road which was taught you by the example and life of the Truth. What has now remained of all this, and where is the road to be found? I will tell you, that is, I will rather tell those who might fall into ignorance on this point. I tell you that this way of His doctrine, of which I have spoken to you, confirmed by the Apostles, declared by the blood of the martyrs, illuminated by the light of doctors, confessed by the confessors, narrated in all its love by the Evangelists, all of whom stand as witnesses to confess the Truth, is found in the mystical body of the Holy Church. These witnesses are like the light placed on a candlestick, to show forth the way of the Truth which leads to life with a perfect light, as I have said to you, and, as they themselves say to you, with proof, since they have proved in their own cases, that every person may, if he will, be illuminated to know the Truth, unless he choose to deprive his reason of light by his inordinate self-love. It is, indeed, the truth that His doctrine is true, and has remained like a lifeboat to draw the soul out of the tempestuous sea and to conduct her to the port of salvation.

"Wherefore, first I gave you the Bridge of My Son living and conversing in very deed amongst men, and when He, the living Bridge, left you, there remained the Bridge and the road of His doctrine, as has been said, His doctrine being joined with My power and with His wisdom, and with the clemency of the Holy Spirit. This power of Mine gives the virtue of fortitude to whoever follows this road, wisdom

gives him light, so that, in this road, he may recognize the truth, and the Holy Spirit gives him love, which consumes and takes away all sensitive love out of the soul, leaving there only the love of virtue. Thus, in both ways, both actually and through His doctrine, He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life; that is, the Bridge which leads you to the height of Heaven. This is what He meant when He said, '*I came from the Father, and I return to the Father, and shall return to you';* that is to say, 'My Father sent Me to you, and made Me your Bridge, so that you might be saved from the river and attain to life.' Then He says, '*I will return to you, I will not leave you orphans, but will send you the Paraclete'* — as if My Truth should say, 'I will go to the Father and return; that is, that when the Holy Spirit shall come, who is called the Paraclete, He will show you more clearly, and will confirm you in the way of truth, that I have given you.' He said that He would return, and He did return, because the Holy Spirit came not alone, but with the power of the Father, and the wisdom of the Son, and the clemency of His own Essence.

"See then how He returns, not in actual flesh and blood, but, as I have said, building the road of His doctrine, with His power, which road cannot be destroyed or taken away from him who wishes to follow it, because it is firm and stable, and proceeds from Me, who am immovable.

"Manfully, then, should you follow this road, without any cloud of doubt, but with the light of faith which has been given you as a principle in Holy Baptism.

"Now I have fully shown to you the Bridge as it actually is, and the doctrine, which is one and the same thing with it. And I have shown it to the ignorant, in order that they may see where this road of Truth is, and where stand those who teach it; and I have explained that they are the Apostles, Martyrs, Confessors, Evangelists, and Holy Doctors, placed like lanterns in the Holy Church.

"And I have shown how My Son, returning to Me, none the less, returned to you, not in His bodily presence, but by His power, when the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples, as I have said. For in His bodily presence He will not return until the last Day of Judgment, when He will come again with My Majesty and Divine Power to judge the world, to render good to the virtuous, and reward them for their labors, both in body and soul, and to dispense the evil of eternal death to those who have lived wickedly in the world.

"And now I wish to tell you that which I, the Truth, promised you, that is, to show you the perfect, the imperfect, and the supremely perfect; and the wicked, who, through their iniquities, drown in the river, attaining to punishment and torment; wherefore I say to you, My dearest sons, walk over the Bridge, and not underneath it, because underneath is not the way of truth, but the way of falsehood, by which walk the wicked, of whom I will presently speak to you. These are those sinners for whom I beg you to pray to Me, and for whom I ask in addition your tears and sweat, in order that they may receive mercy from Me."

*How this soul wondering at the mercy of God, relates many gifts and graces given to the human race.*

Then this soul, as it were, like one intoxicated, could not contain herself, but standing before the face of God, exclaimed, "How great is the Eternal Mercy with which You cover the sins of Your creatures! I do not wonder that You say of those who abandon mortal sin and return to You, '*I do not remember that you have ever offended Me.'* Oh, ineffable Mercy! I do not wonder that You say this to those who are converted, when You say of those who persecute You, 'I wish you to pray for such, in order that

I may do them mercy.' Oh, Mercy, who proceeds from Your Eternal Father, the Divinity who governs with Your power the whole world, by You were we created, in You were we re-created in the Blood of Your Son. Your Mercy preserves us, Your Mercy caused Your Son to do battle for us, hanging by His arms on the wood of the Cross, life and death battling together; then life confounded the death of our sin, and the death of our sin destroyed the bodily life of the Immaculate Lamb. Which was finally conquered? Death! By what means? Mercy! Your Mercy gives light and life, by which Your clemency is known in all Your creatures, both the just and the unjust. In the height of Heaven Your Mercy shines, that is, in Your saints. If I turn to the earth, it abounds with Your Mercy. In the darkness of Hell Your Mercy shines, for the damned do not receive the pains they deserve; with Your Mercy You temper Justice. By Mercy You have washed us in the Blood, and by Mercy You wish to converse with Your creatures. Oh, Loving Madman! was it not enough for You to become Incarnate, that You must also die? Was not death enough, that You must also descend into Limbo, taking thence the holy fathers to fulfill Your Mercy and Your Truth in them? Because Your goodness promises a reward to them that serve You in truth, You descended to Limbo, to withdraw from their pain Your servants, and give them the fruit of their labors. Your Mercy constrains You to give even more to man, namely, to leave Yourself to him in food, so that we, weak ones, should have comfort, and the ignorant commemorating You, should not lose the memory of Your benefits. Wherefore every day You give Yourself to man, representing Yourself in the Sacrament of the Altar, in the body of Your Holy Church. What has done this? Your Mercy. Oh, Divine Mercy! My heart suffocates in thinking of you, for on every side to which I turn my thought, I find nothing but mercy. Oh, Eternal Father! Forgive my ignorance, that I presume thus to chatter to You, but the love of Your Mercy will be my excuse before the Face of Your loving-kindness."

*Of the baseness of those who pass by the river under the Bridge; and how the soul, that passes underneath, is called by God the tree of death, whose roots are held in four vices.*

After this soul had refreshed a little her heart in the mercy of God, by these words, she humbly waited for the fulfilment of the promise made to her, and God continuing His discourse said: "Dearest daughter, you have spoken before Me of My mercy, because I gave it you to taste and to see in the word which I spoke to you when I said: 'these are those for whom I pray you to intercede with Me,' but know, that My mercy is without any comparison, far more than you can see, because your sight is imperfect, and My mercy perfect and infinite, so that there can be no comparison between the two, except what may be between a finite and an infinite thing. But I have wished that you should taste this mercy, and also the dignity of man, which I have shown you above, so that you might know better the cruelty of those wicked men who travel below the Bridge. Open the eye of your intellect, and wonder at those who voluntarily drown themselves, and at the baseness to which they are fallen by their fault, from which cause, they have first become weak, and this was when they conceived mortal sin in their minds, for they then bring it forth, and lose the life of grace. And, as a corpse which can have no feeling or movement of itself, but only when it is moved and lifted by others, so those, who are drowned in the stream of disordinate love of the world, are dead to grace. Wherefore because they are dead their memory takes no heed of My mercy. The eye of their intellect sees not and knows not My Truth, because their feeling is dead, that is, their intellect has no object before it but

themselves, with the dead love of their own sensuality, and so their will is dead to My will because it loves nothing but dead things. These three powers then being dead, all the soul's operations both in deed and thought are dead as far as grace is concerned. For the soul cannot defend herself against her enemies, nor help herself through her own power, but only so far as she is helped by Me. It is true indeed, that every time that this corpse, in whom only free-will has remained (which remains as long as the mortal body lives), asks My help, he can have it, but never can he help himself; he has become insupportable to himself, and, wishing to govern the world, is governed by that which is not, that is by sin, for sin in itself is nothing, and such men have become the servants and slaves of sin. I have made them trees of love with the life of grace which they received in Holy Baptism; and they have become trees of death, because they are dead, as I have already said to you. Do you know how this tree finds such roots? In the height of pride, which is nourished by their own sensitive self-love. Its branch is their own impatience, and its offshoot indiscretion: these are the four principal vices which destroy the soul of him who is a tree of death, because he has not drawn life from grace. Inside the tree is nourished the worm of conscience, which, while man lives in mortal sin, is blinded by self-love, and therefore felt but little; the fruits of this tree are mortal, for they have drawn their nourishment, which should have been humility, from the roots of pride, and the miserable soul is full of ingratitude, whence proceeds every evil. But if she were grateful for the benefits she has received, she would know Me, and knowing Me would know herself, and so would remain in My love: but she, as if blind, goes groping down the river, and she does not see that the water does not support her."

*How the fruits of this tree are as diverse as are the sins; and first, of the sin of sensuality.*

"The fruits of this death-giving tree, are as diverse as sins are diverse. See that some of these fruits are the food of beasts who live impurely, using their body and their mind like a swine who wallows in mud, for in the same way they wallow in the mire of sensuality. Oh, ugly soul, where have you left your dignity? You were made sister to the angels, and now you are become a brute beast. To such misery come sinners, notwithstanding that they are sustained by Me, who am Supreme Purity, notwithstanding that the very devils, whose friends and servants they have become, cannot endure the sight of such filthy actions. Neither does any sin, abominable as it may be, take away the light of the intellect from man, so much as does this one. This the philosophers knew, not by the light of grace, because they had it not, but because nature gave them the light to know that this sin obscured the intellect, and for that reason they preserved themselves in continence the better to study. Thus also they flung away their riches in order that the thought of them should not occupy their heart. Not so does the ignorant and false Christian, who has lost grace by sin."

*How the fruit of others is avarice; and of the evils that proceed from it.*

"A fruit of the earth belongs to some others, who are covetous misers, acting like the mole, who always feeds on earth till death, and when they arrive at death they find no remedy. Such as these, with their meanness, despise My generosity, selling time to their neighbor. They are cruel usurers, and robbers of their neighbor; because in their memory they have not the remembrance of My mercy, for if they had it they would not be cruel to themselves or to their neighbor; on the contrary, they would be compassionate and merciful to themselves, practicing the virtues on their neighbor

and succoring him charitably. Oh, how many are the evils that come of this cursed sin of avarice, how many homicides and thefts, and how much pillage with unlawful gain, and cruelty of heart and injustice! It kills the soul and makes her the slave of riches, so that she cares not to observe My commandments.

"A miser loves no one except for his own profit. Avarice proceeds from and feeds pride, the one follows from the other, because the miser always carries with him the thought of his own reputation, and thus avarice, which is immediately combined with pride, full of its own opinions, goes on from bad to worse. It is a fire which always germinates the smoke of vainglory and vanity of heart, and boasting in that which does not belong to it. It is a root which has many branches, and the principal one is that which makes a man care for his own reputation, from whence proceeds his desire to be greater than his neighbor. It also brings forth the deceitful heart that is neither pure nor liberal, but is double, making a man show one thing with his tongue, while he has another in his heart, and making him conceal the truth and tell lies for his own profit. And it produces envy, which is a worm that is always gnawing, and does not let the miser have any happiness out of his own or others' good. How will these wicked ones in so wretched a state give of their substance to the poor, when they rob others? How will they draw their foul soul out of the mire, when they themselves put it there? Sometimes even do they become so brutish, that they do not consider their children and relations, and cause them to fall with them into great misery. And, nevertheless, in My mercy I sustain them, I do not command the earth to swallow them up, that they may repent of their sins. Would they then give their life for the salvation of souls, when they will not give their substance? Would they give their affections when they are gnawed with envy? Oh, miserable vices that destroy the heaven of the soul. Heaven I call her (the soul) because so I made her, living in her at first by grace, and hiding Myself within her, and making of her a mansion through affection of love. Now she has separated herself from Me, like an adulteress, loving herself, and creatures more than Me, and has made a god of herself, persecuting Me with many and diverse sins. And this she does because she does not consider the benefit of the Blood that was shed with so great Fire of Love."

*How some others hold positions of authority, and bring forth fruits of injustice.*

"There are others who hold their heads high by their position of authority, and who bear the banner of injustice — using injustice against Me, God, and against their neighbor, and against themselves — to themselves by not paying the debt of virtue, and towards Me by not paying the debt of honor in glorifying and praising My Name, which debt they are bound to pay. But they, like thieves, steal what is Mine, and give it to the service of their own sensuality. So that they commit injustice towards Me and towards themselves, like blind and ignorant men who do not recognize Me in themselves on account of self-love, like the Jews and the ministers of the Law who, with envy and self-love, blinded themselves so that they did not recognize the Truth, My only-begotten Son, and rendered not His due to the Eternal Truth, who was amongst them, as said My Truth: '*The Kingdom of God is among you*.' But they knew it not, because, in the aforesaid way, they had lost the light of reason, and so they did not pay their debt of honor and glory to Me, and to Him, who was one thing with Me, and like blind ones committed injustice, persecuting Him with much ignominy, even to the death of the Cross.

"Thus are such as these unjust to themselves, to Me, and to their neighbor, unjustly selling the flesh of their dependents, and of any person who falls into their hands."

*How through these and through other defects, one falls into false judgment; and of the indignity to which one comes.*

"By these and by other sins men fall into false judgment, as I will explain to you below. They are continually being scandalized by My works, which are all just, and all performed in truth through love and mercy. With this false judgment, and with the poison of envy and pride, the works of My Son were slandered and unjustly judged, and with lies did His enemies say: '*This man works by virtue of Beelzebub*.' Thus wicked men, standing in self-love, impurity, pride, and avarice, and founded in envy, and in perverse rashness with impatience, are forever scandalized at Me and at My servants, whom they judge to be feignedly practicing the virtues, because their heart is rotten, and, having spoiled their taste, good things seem evil to them, and bad things, that is to say disorderly living, seem good to them. Oh, how blind is the human generation in that it considers not its own dignity! From being great you have become small, from a ruler you have become a slave, and that in the vilest service that can be had, because you are the servant and slave of sin, and are become like unto that which you do serve.

"Sin is nothing. You, then, have become nothing; it has deprived you of life, and given you death. This life and power were given you by the Word, My only-begotten Son, the glorious Bridge, He drawing you from out of your servitude when you were servants of the devil, Himself becoming as a servant to take you out of servitude, imposing on Himself obedience to do away the disobedience of Adam, and humbling Himself to the shameful death of the Cross to confound pride. By His death He destroyed every vice, so that no one could say that any vice remained that was not punished and beaten out with pains, as I said to you above, when I said that of His Body He had made an anvil. All the remedies are ready to save men from eternal death, and they despise the Blood, and have trampled It under the feet of their disordinate affection; and it is for this injustice and false judgment that the world is reproved, and will be reproved on the Last Day of Judgment.

"This was meant by My Truth when He said: '*I will send the Paraclete, who will reprove the world of injustice and false judgment*.' And it was reproved when I sent the Holy Spirit on the Apostles."

*Of the words that Christ said: "I will send the Holy Spirit, who will reprove the world of injustice and of false judgment;" and how one of these reproofs is continuous.*

"There are three reproofs. One was given when the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples, who, as it is said, being fortified by My power, and illuminated by the wisdom of My beloved Son, received all in the plenitude of the Holy Spirit. Then the Holy Spirit, who is one thing with Me and with My Son, reproved the world by the mouth of the Apostles, with the doctrine of My Truth. They and all others, who are descended from them, following the truth which they understand through the same means, reprove the world.

"This is that continuous reproof that I make to the world by means of the Holy Scriptures, and My servants, putting the Holy Spirit on their tongues to announce My truth, even as the Devil puts himself on the tongues of his servants, that is to say, of those who pass through the river in iniquity. This is that sweet reproof that I have fixed forever, in the aforesaid way, out of My most great affection of love for the salvation of souls. And they cannot say 'I had no one who reproved me,' because the truth is revealed to them showing them vice and virtue. And I have made them see the

fruit of virtue, and the hurtfulness of vice, to give them love and holy fear with hatred of vice and love of virtue, and this truth has not been shown them by an angel, so that they cannot say, 'the angel is a blessed spirit who cannot offend, and feels not the vexations of the flesh as we do, neither the heaviness of our body,' because the Incarnate Word of My Truth has been given to them with your mortal flesh.

"Who were the others who followed this Word? Mortal creatures, susceptible of pain like you, having the same opposition of the flesh to the Spirit, as had the glorious Paul, My standard-bearer, and many other saints who, by one thing or another, have been tormented. Which torments I permitted for the increase of grace and virtue in their souls. Thus, they were born in sin like you, and nourished with a like food, and I am God now as then. My power is not weakened, and cannot become weak. So that I can and will succor him who wishes to be succored by Me. Man wants My succor when he comes out of the river, and walks by the Bridge, following the doctrine of My Truth. Thus no one has any excuse, because both reproof and truth are constantly given to them. Wherefore, if they do not amend while they have time, they will be condemned by the second condemnation which will take place at the extremity of death, when My Justice will cry to them, 'Rise, you dead, and come to judgment!' That is to say, 'You, who are dead to grace, and have reached the moment of your corporal death, arise and come before the Supreme Judge with your injustice and false judgment, and with the extinguished light of faith which you received burning in Holy Baptism (and which you have blown out with the wind of pride), and with the vanity of your heart, with which you set your sails to winds which were contrary to your salvation, for with the wind of self-esteem, you filled the sail of self-love.' Thus you hastened down the stream of the delights and dignities of the world at your own will, following your fragile flesh and the temptations of the devil, who, with the sail of your own will set, has led you along the underway which is a running stream, and so has brought you with himself to eternal damnation."

*Of the second reproof of injustice, and of false judgment, in general and in particular.*

"This second reproof, dearest daughter, is indeed a condemnation, for the soul has arrived at the end, where there can be no remedy, for she is at the extremity of death, where is the worm of conscience, which I told you was blinded self-love. Now at the time of death, since she cannot get out of My hands, she begins to see, and therefore is gnawed with remorse, seeing that her own sin has brought her into so great evil. But if the soul have light to know and grieve for her fault, not on account of the pain of Hell that follows upon it, but on account of pain at her offense against Me, who am Supreme and Eternal Good, still she can find mercy. But if she pass the Bridge of death without light, and alone, with the worm of conscience, without the hope of the Blood, and bewailing herself more on account of her first condemnation than on account of My displeasure, she arrives at eternal damnation. And then she is reproved cruelly by My Justice of injustice and of false judgment, and not so much of general injustice and false judgment which she has practiced generally in all her works, but much more on account of the particular injustice and false judgment which she practices at the end, in judging her misery greater than My mercy. This is that sin which is neither pardoned here nor there, because the soul would not be pardoned, depreciating My mercy. Therefore is this last sin graver to Me than all the other sins that the soul has committed. Wherefore the despair of Judas displeased Me more, and was more grave to My Son than was his betrayal of Him. So that they are reproved of this false judgment, which is to have held their sin to be greater than My mercy, and,

on that account, are they punished with the devils, and eternally tortured with them. And they are reproved of injustice because they grieve more over their condemnation than over My displeasure, and do not render to Me that which is Mine, and to themselves that which is theirs. For to Me, they ought to render love, and to themselves bitterness, with contrition of heart, and offer it to Me, for the offense they have done Me. And they do the contrary because they give to themselves love, pitying themselves, and grieving on account of the pain they expect for their sin; so you see that they are guilty of injustice and false judgment, and are punished for the one and the other together. Wherefore, they, having depreciated My mercy, I with justice send them, with their cruel servant, sensuality, and the cruel tyrant the Devil, whose servants they made themselves through their own sensuality, so that, together, they are punished and tormented, as together they have offended Me. Tormented, I say, by My ministering devils whom My judgment has appointed to torment those who have done evil."

*Of the four principal torments of the damned, from which follow all the others; and particularly of the foulness of the Devil.*

"My daughter, the tongue is not sufficient to narrate the pain of these poor souls. As there are three principal vices, namely: self-love, whence proceeds the second, that is love of reputation, whence proceeds the third, that is pride, with injustice and cruelty, and with other filthiness and iniquitous sins, that follow upon these. So I say to you, that in Hell, the souls have four principal torments, out of which proceed all the other torments. The first is, that they see themselves deprived of the vision of Me, which is such pain to them, that, were it possible, they would rather choose the fire, and the tortures and torments, and to see Me, than to be without the torments and not to see Me.

"This first pain revives in them, then, the second, the worm of Conscience, which gnaws unceasingly, seeing that the soul is deprived of Me, and of the conversation of the angels, through her sin, made worthy of the conversation and sight of the devils, which vision of the Devil is the third pain and redoubles to them their every toil. As the saints exult in the sight of Me, refreshing themselves with joyousness in the fruit of their toils borne for Me with such abundance of love, and displeasure of themselves, so does the sight of the Devil revive these wretched ones to torments, because in seeing him they know themselves more, that is to say, they know that, by their own sin, they have made themselves worthy of him. And so the worm of Conscience gnaws more and more, and the fire of this Conscience never ceases to burn. And the sight is more painful to them, because they see him in his own form, which is so horrible that the heart of man could not imagine it. And if you remember well, you know that I showed him to you in his own form for a little space of time, hardly a moment, and you chose (after you had returned to yourself) rather to walk on a road of fire, even until the Day of Judgment, than to see him again. With all this that you have seen, even you do not know well how horrible he is, because, by Divine justice, he appears more horrible to the soul that is deprived of Me, and more or less according to the gravity of her sin. The fourth torment that they have is the fire. This fire burns and does not consume, for the being of the soul cannot be consumed, because it is not a material thing that fire can consume. But I, by Divine justice, have permitted the fire to burn them with torments, so that it torments them, without consuming them, with the greatest pains in diverse ways according to the diversity of their sins, to some more, and to some less, according to the gravity of their fault. Out

of these four torments issue all others, such as cold and heat and gnashing of the teeth and many others. Now because they did not amend themselves after the first reproof that they had of injustice and false judgment, neither in the second, which was that, in death, they would not hope in Me, nor grieve for the offense done to Me, but only for their own pain, have they thus so miserably received Eternal Punishment."

*Of the third reproof which is made on the Day of Judgment.*

"Now it remains to tell of the third reproof which is on the Last Day of Judgment. Already I have told you of two, and now, so that you may see how greatly man deceives himself, I will tell you of the third — of the General Judgment, when the pain of the miserable soul is renewed and increased by the union that the soul will make with the body, with an intolerable reproof, which will generate in it confusion and shame. Know that, in the Last Day of Judgment, when will come the Word — My Son, with My Divine Majesty to reprove the world with Divine Power, He will not come like a poor one, as when He was born, coming in the womb of the Virgin, and being born in a stable amongst the animals, and then dying between two thieves. Then I concealed My power in Him, letting Him suffer pain and torment like man, not that My divine nature was therefore separated from human nature, but I let Him suffer like man to satisfy for your guilt. He will not come thus in that last moment, but He will come, with power, to reprove in His Own Person, and will render to everyone his due, and there will be no one in that Day who will not tremble. To the miserable ones who are damned, His aspect will cause such torment and terror that the tongue cannot describe it. To the just it will cause the fear of reverence with great joy; not that His face changes, because He is unchangeable, being one thing with Me according to the divine nature, and, according to the human nature, His face was unchangeable, after it took the glory of the Resurrection. But, to the eye of the damned, it will appear such, on account of their terrible and darkened vision, that, as the sun which is so bright, appears all darkness to the infirm eye, but to the healthy eye light (and it is not the defect of the light that makes it appear other to the blind than to the illuminated one, but the defect of the eye which is infirm), so will the condemned ones see His countenance in darkness, in confusion, and in hatred, not through defect of My Divine Majesty, with which He will come to judge the world, but through their own defect."

*How the damned cannot desire any good.*

"And their hatred is so great that they cannot will or desire any good, but they continually blaspheme Me. And do you know why they cannot desire good? Because the life of man ended, free-will is bound. Wherefore they cannot merit, having lost, as they have, the time to do so. If they finish their life, dying in hatred with the guilt of mortal sin, their souls, by divine justice, remain forever bound with the bonds of hatred, and forever obstinate in that evil, in which, therefore, being gnawed by themselves, their pains always increase, especially the pains of those who have been the cause of damnation to others, as that rich man, who was damned, demonstrated to you when he begged the favor that Lazarus might go to his brothers, who were in the world, to tell them of his pains. This, certainly, he did not do out of love or compassion for his brothers, for he was deprived of love and could not desire good, either for My honor or their salvation, because, as I have already told you, the damned souls cannot do any good to their neighbor, and they blaspheme Me, because their life ended in hatred of Me and of virtue. But why then did he do it? He did it because he was the eldest, and had nourished them up in the same miseries in which he had lived,

so that he was the cause of their damnation, and he saw pain increased to himself, on account of their damnation when they should arrive in torment together with him, to be gnawed forever by hatred, because in hatred they finished their lives."

*Of the glory of the Blessed.*

"Similarly, the just soul, for whom life finishes in the affection of charity and the bonds of love, cannot increase in virtue, time having come to naught, but she can always love with that affection with which she comes to Me, and that measure that is measured to her. She always desires Me, and loves Me, and her desire is not in vain — being hungry, she is satisfied, and being satisfied, she has hunger, but the tediousness of satiety and the pain of hunger are far from her. In love, the Blessed rejoice in My eternal vision, participating in that good that I have in Myself, everyone according to his measure, that is that, with that measure of love, with which they have come to Me, is it measured to them. Because they have lived in love of Me and of the neighbor, united together with the general love, and the particular, which, moreover, both proceed from the same love. And they rejoice and exult, participating in each other's good with the affection of love, besides the universal good that they enjoy altogether. And they rejoice and exult with the angels with whom they are placed, according to their diverse and various virtues in the world, being all bound in the bonds of love. And they have a special participation with those whom they closely loved with particular affection in the world, with which affection they grew in grace, increasing virtue, and the one was the occasion to the other of manifesting the glory and praise of My name, in themselves and in their neighbor; and, in the life everlasting, they have not lost their love, but have it still, participating closely, with more abundance, the one with the other, their love being added to the universal good, and I would not that you should think that they have this particular good, of which I have told you, for themselves alone, for it is not so, but it is shared by all the proved citizens, My beloved sons, and all the angels — for, when the soul arrives at eternal life, all participate in the good of that soul, and the soul in their good. Not that her vessel or theirs can increase, nor that there be need to fill it, because it is full, but they have an exultation, a mirthfulness, a jubilee, a joyousness in themselves, which is refreshed by the knowledge that they have found in that soul. They see that, by My mercy, she is raised from the earth with the plenitude of grace, and therefore they exult in Me in the good of that soul, which good she has received through My goodness.

"And that soul rejoices in Me, and in the souls, and in the blessed spirits, seeing and tasting in them the beauty and the sweetness of My love. And their desires forever cry out to Me, for the salvation of the whole world. And because their life ended in the love of the neighbor, they have not left it behind, but, with it, they will pass through the Door, My only-begotten Son in the way that I will relate to you. So you see that in those bonds of love in which they finished their life, they go on and remain eternally. They are conformed so entirely to My will, that they cannot desire except what I desire, because their free-will is bound in the bond of love, in such a way that, time failing them, and, dying in a state of grace, they cannot sin any more. And their will is so united with Mine, that a father or a mother seeing their son, or a son seeing his father or his mother in Hell, do not trouble themselves, and even are contented to see them punished as My enemies. Wherefore in nothing do they disagree with Me, and their desires are all satisfied. The desire of the blessed is to see My honor in you wayfarers, who are pilgrims, forever running on towards the term of death. In their

desire for My honor, they desire your salvation, and always pray to Me for you, which desire is fulfilled by Me, when you ignorant ones do not resist My mercy. They have a desire too, to regain the gifts of their body, but this desire does not afflict them, as they do not actually feel it, but they rejoice in tasting the desire, from the certainty they feel of having it fulfilled. Their desire does not afflict them, because, though they have it not yet fulfilled, no bliss is thereby lacking to them. Wherefore they feel not the pain of desire. And think not, that the bliss of the body after the resurrection gives more bliss to the soul, for, if this were so, it would follow that, until they had the body, they had imperfect bliss, which cannot be, because no perfection is lacking to them. So it is not the body that gives bliss to the soul, but the soul will give bliss to the body, because the soul will give of her abundance, and will re-clothe herself on the Last Day of Judgment, in the garments of her own flesh which she had quitted. For, as the soul is made immortal, stayed and established in Me, so the body in that union becomes immortal, and, having lost heaviness, is made fine and light. Wherefore, know that the glorified body can pass through a wall, and that neither water nor fire can injure it, not by virtue of itself, but by virtue of the soul, which virtue is of Me, given to her by grace, and by the ineffable love with which I created her in My image and likeness. The eye of your intellect is not sufficient to see, nor your ear to hear, nor your tongue to tell of the good of the Blessed. Oh, how much delight they have in seeing Me, who am every good! Oh, how much delight they will have in being with the glorified body, though, not having that delight from now to the general Judgment, they have not, on that account, pain, because no bliss is lacking to them, the soul being satisfied in herself, and, as I have told you, the body will participate in this bliss.

"I told you of the happiness which the glorified body would take in the glorified humanity of My only-begotten Son, which gives you assurance of your resurrection. There, they exult in His wounds, which have remained fresh, and the Scars in His Body are preserved, and continually cry for mercy for you, to Me, the Supreme and Eternal Father. And they are all conformed with Him, in joyousness and mirth, and you will all be conformed with Him, eye with eye, and hand with hand, and with the whole Body of the sweet Word My Son, and, dwelling in Me, you will dwell in Him, because He is one thing with Me. But their bodily eye, as I told you, will delight itself in the glorified humanity of the Word, My only-begotten Son. Why so? Because their life finished in the affection of My love, and therefore will this delight endure for them eternally. Not that they can work any good, but they rejoice and delight in that good which they have brought with them, that is, they cannot do any meritorious act, by which they could merit anything, because in this life alone can they merit and sin, according as they please, with free-will.

"These then do not await, with fear, the Divine judgment, but with joy, and the Face of My Son will not seem to them terrible, or full of hatred, because they finished their lives in love and affection for Me, and good-will towards their neighbor. So you see then, that the transformation is not in His Face, when He comes to judge with My Divine Majesty, but in the vision of those who will be judged by Him. To the damned He will appear with hatred and with justice. And to the saved with love and mercy."

*How, after the General Judgment, the pain of the damned will increase.*

"I have told you of the dignity of the Righteous, so that you may the better know the misery of the damned. For this is another of their pains, namely, the vision of the bliss of the righteous, which is to them an increase of pain, as, to the righteous, the

damnation of the damned is an increase of exultation in My goodness. As light is seen better near darkness, and darkness near light, so the sight of the Blessed increases their pain. With pain they await the Last Day of Judgment, because they see, following it, an increase of pain to themselves. And so will it be, because when that terrible voice shall say to them, 'Arise, you dead, and come to judgment,' the soul will return with the body, in the just to be glorified, and in the damned to be tortured eternally. And the aspect of My Truth, and of all the blessed ones will reproach them greatly, and make them ashamed, and the worm of conscience will gnaw the pith of the tree, that is the soul, and also the bark outside, which is the body. They will be reproached by the Blood that was shed for them, and by the works of mercy, spiritual and temporal, which I did for them by means of My Son, and which they should have done for their neighbor, as is contained in the Holy Gospel. They will be reproved for their cruelty towards their neighbor, for their pride and self-love, for their filthiness and avarice; and when they see the mercy that they have received from Me, their reproof will seem to be intensified in harshness. At the time of death, the soul only is reproved, but, at the General Judgment, the soul is reproved together with the body, because the body has been the companion and instrument of the soul — to do good and evil according as the free-will pleased. Every work, good or bad, is done by means of the body. And, therefore, justly, My daughter, glory and infinite good are rendered to My elect ones with their glorified body, rewarding them for the toils they bore for Me, together with the soul. And to the perverse ones will be rendered eternal pains by means of their body, because their body was the instrument of evil. Wherefore, being their body, restored, their pains will revive and increase at the aspect of My Son, their miserable sensuality with its filthiness, in the vision of their nature (that is, the humanity of Christ), united with the purity of My Deity, and of this mass of their Adam nature raised above all the choirs of Angels, and themselves, by their own fault, sunk into the depths of Hell. And they will see generosity and mercy shining in the blessed ones, who receive the fruit of the Blood of the Lamb, the pains that they have borne remaining as ornaments on their bodies, like the dye upon the cloth, not by virtue of the body but only out of the fullness of the soul, representing in the body the fruit of its labor, because it was the companion of the soul in the working of virtue. As in the mirror is represented the face of the man, so in the body is represented the fruit of bodily toils, in the way that I have told you.

"The pain and confusion of the darkened ones, on seeing so great a dignity (of which they are deprived), will increase, and their bodies will appear the sign of the wickedness they have committed, with pain and torture. And when they hear that terrible speech, *'Go, cursed ones, to the Eternal Fire*,' the soul and the body will go to be with the Devil without any remedy or hope — each one being wrapped up in diverse filth of earth, according to his evil works. The miser with the filth of avarice, wrapping himself up with the worldly substance which he loved disordinately, and the burning in the fire; the cruel one with cruelty; the foul man with foulness and miserable concupiscence; the unjust with his injustice; the envious with envy; and the hater of his neighbor with hatred. And inordinate self-love, whence were born all their ills, will be burnt with intolerable pain, as the head and principle of every evil, in company with pride. So that body and soul together will be punished in diverse ways. Thus miserably do they arrive at their end who go by the lower way, that is, by the river, not turning back to see their sins and My Mercy. And they arrive at the Gate of the Lie, because they follow the doctrine of the Devil, who is the Father of Lies; and this Devil is their Door, through which they go to Eternal Damnation, as has been said, as the elect and My sons, keeping by the way above, that is by the Bridge, follow

the Way of Truth, and this Truth is the Door, and therefore said My Truth, *'No one can go to the Father but by Me*.' He is the Door and the Way through which they pass to enter the Sea Pacific. It is the contrary for those who have kept the Way of the Lie, which leads them to the water of death. And it is to this that the Devil calls them, and they are as blind and mad, and do not perceive it, because they have lost the light of faith. The Devil says, as it were, to them: 'Whosoever thirsts for the water of death, let him come and I will give it to him.'"

*Of the use of temptations, and how every soul in her extremity sees her final place either of pain or of glory, before she is separated from the body.*

"The Devil, dearest daughter, is the instrument of My Justice to torment the souls who have miserably offended Me. And I have set him in this life to tempt and molest My creatures, not for My creatures to be conquered, but that they may conquer, proving their virtue, and receive from Me the glory of victory. And no one should fear any battle or temptation of the Devil that may come to him, because I have made My creatures strong, and have given them strength of will, fortified in the Blood of my Son, which will, neither Devil nor creature can move, because it is yours, given by Me. You therefore, with free arbitration, can hold it or leave it, according as you please. It is an arm, which, if you place it in the hands of the Devil, straightway becomes a knife, with which he strikes you and slays you. But if man do not give this knife of his will into the hands of the Devil, that is, if he do not consent to his temptations and molestations, he will never be injured by the guilt of sin in any temptation, but will even be fortified by it, when the eye of his intellect is opened to see My love which allowed him to be tempted, so as to arrive at virtue, by being proved. For one does not arrive at virtue except through knowledge of self, and knowledge of Me, which knowledge is more perfectly acquired in the time of temptation, because then man knows himself to be nothing, being unable to lift off himself the pains and vexations which he would flee; and he knows Me in his will, which is fortified by My goodness, so that it does not yield to these thoughts. And he has seen that My love permits these temptations, for the devil is weak, and by himself can do nothing, unless I allow him. And I let him tempt, through love, and not through hatred, that you may conquer, and not that you may be conquered, and that you may come to a perfect knowledge of yourself, and of Me, and that virtue may be proved, for it is not proved except by its contrary. You see, then, that he is my Minister to torture the damned in Hell, and in this life, to exercise and prove virtue in the soul. Not that it is the intention of the Devil to prove virtue in you (for he has not love), but rather to deprive you of it, and this he cannot do, if you do not wish it. Now you see, then, how great is the foolishness of men in making themselves feeble, when I have made them strong, and in putting themselves into the hands of the Devil. Wherefore, know, that at the moment of death, they, having passed their life under the lordship of the Devil (not that they were forced to do so, for as I told you they cannot be forced, but they voluntarily put themselves into his hands), and, arriving at the extremity of their death under this perverse lordship, they await no other judgment than that of their own conscience, and desperately, despairingly, come to eternal damnation. Wherefore Hell, through their hate, surges up to them in the extremity of death, and before they get there, they take hold of it, by means of their lord the Devil. As the righteous, who have lived in charity and died in love, if they have lived perfectly in virtue, illuminated with the light of faith, with perfect hope in the Blood of the Lamb, when the extremity of death comes, see the good which I have prepared for them, and

embrace it with the arms of love, holding fast with pressure of love to Me, the Supreme and Eternal Good. And so they taste eternal life before they have left the mortal body, that is, before the soul be separated from the body. Others who have passed their lives, and have arrived at the last extremity of death with an ordinary charity (not in that great perfection), embrace My mercy with the same light of faith and hope that had those perfect ones, but, in them, it is imperfect, for, because they were imperfect, they constrained My mercy, counting My mercy greater than their sins. The wicked sinners do the contrary, for, seeing, with desperation, their destination, they embrace it with hatred, as I told you. So that neither the one nor the other waits for judgment, but, in departing this life, they receive every one their place, as I have told you, and they taste it and possess it before they depart from the body, at the extremity of death — the damned with hatred and with despair, and the perfect ones with love and the light of faith and with the hope of the Blood. And the imperfect arrive at the place of Purgatory, with mercy and the same faith."

*How the Devil gets hold of souls, under pretense of some good: and, how those are deceived who keep by the river, and not by the aforesaid Bridge, for, wishing to fly pains, they fall into them; and of the vision of a tree, that this soul once had.*

"I have told you that the Devil invites men to the water of death, that is, to that which he has, and, blinding them with the pleasures and conditions of the world, he catches them with the hook of pleasure, under the pretense of good, because in no other way could he catch them, for they would not allow themselves to be caught if they saw that no good or pleasure to themselves were to be obtained thereby. For the soul, from her nature, always relishes good, though it is true that the soul, blinded by self-love, does not know and discern what is true good, and of profit to the soul and to the body. And, therefore, the Devil, seeing them blinded by self-love, iniquitously places before them diverse and various delights, colored so as to have the appearance of some benefit or good; and he gives to everyone according to his condition and those principal vices to which he sees him to be most disposed — of one kind to the secular, of another to the religious, and others to prelates and noblemen, according to their different conditions. I have told you this, because I now speak to you of those who drown themselves in the river, and who care for nothing but themselves, to love themselves to My injury, and I will relate to you their end.

"Now I want to show you how they deceive themselves, and how, wishing to flee troubles, they fall into them. For, because it seems to them that following Me, that is, walking by the way of the Bridge, the Word, My Son, is great toil, they draw back, fearing the thorn. This is because they are blinded and do not know or see the Truth, as, you know, I showed you in the beginning of your life, when you prayed Me to have mercy on the world, and draw it out of the darkness of mortal sin. You know that I then showed you Myself under the figure of a Tree, of which you saw neither the beginning nor the end, so that you did not see that the roots were united with the earth of your humanity. At the foot of the Tree, if you remember well, there was a certain thorn, from which thorn all those who love their own sensuality kept away, and ran to a mountain of Lolla, in which you figured to yourself all the delights of the world. That Lolla seemed to be of corn and was not, and, therefore, as you saw, many souls thereon died of hunger, and many, recognizing the deceits of the world, returned to the Tree and passed the thorn, which is the deliberation of the will. Which deliberation, before it is made, is a thorn which appears to man to stand in the way of following the Truth. And conscience always fights on one side, and sensuality on the

other; but as soon as he, with hatred and displeasure of himself, manfully makes up his mind, saying, 'I wish to follow Christ crucified,' he breaks at once the thorn, and finds inestimable sweetness, as I showed you then, some finding more and some less, according to their disposition and desire. And you know that then I said to you, 'I am your God, unmoving and unchangeable,' and I do not draw away from any creature who wants to come to Me. I have shown them the Truth, making Myself visible to them, and I have shown them what it is to love anything without Me. But they, as if blinded by the fog of disordinate love, know neither Me nor themselves. You see how deceived they are, choosing rather to die of hunger than to pass a little thorn. And they cannot escape enduring pain, for no one can pass through this life without a cross, far less those who travel by the lower way. Not that My servants pass without pain, but their pain is alleviated. And because — by sin, as I said to you above — the world germinates thorns and tribulations, and because this river flows with tempestuous waters, I gave you the Bridge, so that you might not be drowned.

"I have shown you how they are deceived by a disordinate fear, and how I am your God, immovable, who am not an Acceptor of persons but of holy desire. And this I have shown you under the figure of the Tree, as I told you."

*How, the world having germinated thorns, who those are whom they do not harm; although no one passes this life without pain.*

"Now I want to show you to whom the thorns and tribulations, that the world germinated through sin, do harm, and to whom they do not. And as, so far, I have shown you the damnation of sinners, together with My goodness, and have told you how they are deceived by their own sensuality, now I wish to tell you how it is only they themselves who are injured by the thorns. No one born passes this life without pain, bodily or mental. Bodily pain My servants bear, but their minds are free, that is, they do not feel the weariness of the pain; for their will is accorded with Mine, and it is the will that gives trouble to man. Pain of mind and of body have those, of whom I have narrated to you, who, in this life, taste the earnest money of hell, as My servants taste the earnest money of eternal life. Do you know what is the special good of the blessed ones? It is having their desire filled with what they desire; wherefore desiring Me, they have Me, and taste Me without any revolt, for they have left the burden of the body, which was a law that opposed the spirit, and came between it and the perfect knowledge of the Truth, preventing it from seeing Me face to face. But after the soul has left the weight of the body, her desire is full, for, desiring to see Me, she sees Me, in which vision is her bliss; and seeing she knows, and knowing she loves, and loving she tastes Me, Supreme and Eternal Good, and, in tasting Me, she is satisfied, and her desire is fulfilled, that is, the desire she had to see and know Me; wherefore desiring she has, and having she desires. And as I told you pain is far from the desire, and weariness from the satisfaction of it. So you see that My servants are blessed principally in seeing and in knowing Me, in which vision and knowledge their will is fulfilled, for they have that which they desired to have, and so are they satisfied. Wherefore I told you that the tasting of eternal life consisted especially in having that which the will desires, and thus being satisfied; but know that the will is satisfied in seeing and knowing Me, as I have told you. In this life then, they taste the earnest money of eternal life, tasting the above, with which I have told you they will be satisfied.

"But how have they the earnest money in this present life? I reply to you, they have it in seeing My goodness in themselves, and in the knowledge of My Truth, which

knowledge, the intellect (which is the eye of the soul) illuminated in Me, possesses. This eye has the pupil of the most holy faith, which light of faith enables the soul to discern, to know, and to follow the way and the doctrine of My Truth — the Word Incarnate; and without this pupil of faith she would not see, except as a man who has the form of the eye, but who has covered the pupil (which causes the eye to see) with a cloth. So the pupil of the intellect is faith, and if the soul has covered it with the cloth of infidelity, drawn over it by self-love, she does not see, but only has the form of the eye without the light, because she has hidden it. Thus you see, that in seeing they know, and in knowing they love, and in loving they deny and lose their self-will. Their own will lost, they clothe themselves in Mine, and I will nothing but your sanctification. At once they set to, turning their back to the way below, and begin to ascend by the Bridge, and pass over the thorns, which do not hurt them, their feet being shod with the affection of My love. For I told you that My servants suffered corporally but not mentally, because the sensitive will, which gives pain and afflicts the mind of the creature, is dead. Wherefore, the will not being there, neither is there any pain. They bear everything with reverence, deeming themselves favored in having tribulation for My sake, and they desire nothing but what I desire. If I allow the Devil to trouble them, permitting temptations to prove them in virtue, as I told you above, they resist with their will fortified in Me, humiliating themselves, and deeming themselves unworthy of peace and quiet of mind and deserving of pain, and so they proceed with cheerfulness and self-knowledge, without painful affliction. And if tribulations on man's account, or infirmity, or poverty, or change of worldly condition, or loss of children, or of other much loved creatures (all of which are thorns that the earth produced after sin) come upon them, they endure them all with the light of reason and holy faith, looking to Me, who am the Supreme Good, and who cannot desire other than good, for which I permit these tribulations through love, and not through hatred. And they that love Me recognize this, and, examining themselves, they see their sins, and understand by the light of faith, that good must be rewarded and evil punished. And they see that every little sin merits infinite pain, because it is against Me, who am Infinite Good, wherefore they deem themselves favored because I wish to punish them in this life, and in this finite time; they drive away sin with contrition of heart, and with perfect patience do they merit, and their labors are rewarded with infinite good. Hereafter they know that all labor in this life is small, on account of the shortness of time. Time is as the point of a needle and no more; and, when time has passed labor is ended, therefore you see that the labor is small. They endure with patience, and the thorns they pass through do not touch their heart, because their heart is drawn out of them and united to Me by the affection of love. It is a good truth then that these do taste eternal life, receiving the earnest money of it in this life, and that, though they walk on thorns, they are not pricked, because as I told you, they have known My Supreme Goodness, and sought for it where it was to be found, that is in the Word, My only-begotten son."

*How this soul was in great bitterness, on account of the blindness of those who are drowned below in the river.*

Then that soul, tormented by desire, considering her own imperfections and those of others, was saddened to hear of and to see the great blindness of creatures, notwithstanding the great goodness of God, in having placed nothing in this life, no matter in what condition, that could be an impediment to the salvation of creatures, but rather arranged for the exercising and proving of virtue in them. And,

notwithstanding all this, she saw them, through self-love and disordinate affection, go under by the river and arrive at eternal damnation, and many who were in the river and had begun to come out, turn back again, scandalized at her, because they had heard of the sweet goodness of GOD, who had deigned to manifest Himself to her. And, for this, she was in bitterness, and fixing the eye of her intellect on the Eternal Father, she said: "Oh, Inestimable Love, great is the delusion of Your creatures. I would that, when it is pleasing to Your Goodness, You would more clearly explain to me the three steps figured in the Body of Your only Son, and what method should be used so as to come entirely out of the depths and to keep the way of Your Truth, and who are those who ascend the staircase."

*How the three steps figured in the Bridge, that is, in the Son of GOD, signify the three powers of the soul.*

Then the Divine Goodness, regarding with the eye of His mercy, the hunger and desire of that soul, said: "Oh, My most delightful daughter, I am not a Despiser, but the Fulfiller of holy desire, and therefore I will show and declare to you that which you ask Me. You ask Me to explain to you the figure of three steps, and to tell you what method they who want to come out of the river must use, to be able to ascend the Bridge. And, although above, in relating to you the delusion and blindness of men, tasting in this life the earnest-money of Hell, and, as martyrs of the Devil, receiving damnation, I showed you the methods they should use; nevertheless, now I will declare it to you more fully, satisfying your desire. You know that every evil is founded in self-love, and that self-love is a cloud that takes away the light of reason, which reason holds in itself the light of faith, and one is not lost without the other. The soul I created in My image and similitude, giving her memory, intellect, and will. The intellect is the most noble part of the soul, and is moved by the affection, and nourishes it, and the hand of love — that is, the affection — fills the memory with the remembrance of Me and of the benefits received, which it does with care and gratitude, and so one power spurs on another, and the soul is nourished in the life of grace.

"The soul cannot live without love, but always wants to love something, because she is made of love, and, by love, I created her. And therefore I told you that the affection moved the intellect, saying, as it were, '*I will love, because the food on which I feed is love.*' Then the intellect, feeling itself awakened by the affection, says, as it were, 'If you will love, I will give you that which you can love.' And at once it arises, considering carefully the dignity of the soul, and the indignity into which she has fallen through sin. In the dignity of her being it tastes My inestimable goodness, and the increate charity with which I created her, and, in contemplating her misery, it discovers and tastes My mercy, and sees how, through mercy, I have lent her time and drawn her out of darkness. Then the affection nourishes itself in love, opening the mouth of holy desire, with which it eats hatred and displeasure of its own sensuality, united with true humility and perfect patience, which it drew from holy hatred. The virtues conceived, they give birth to themselves perfectly and imperfectly, according as the soul exercises perfection in herself, as I will tell you below. So, on the contrary, if the sensual affection wants to love sensual things, the eye of the intellect set before itself for its sole object transitory things, with self-love, displeasure of virtue, and love of vice, whence she draws pride and impatience, and the memory is filled with nothing but that which the affection presents to it. This love so dazzles the eye of the intellect that it can discern and see nothing but such glittering objects. It is the very

brightness of the things that causes the intellect to perceive them and the affection to love them; for had worldly things no such brightness there would be no sin, for man, by his nature, cannot desire anything but good, and vice, appearing to him thus, under color of the soul's good, causes him to sin. But, because the eye, on account of its blindness, does not discern, and knows not the truth, it errs, seeking good and delights there where they are not.

"I have already told you that the delights of the world, without Me, are venomous thorns, and, that the vision of the intellect is deluded by them, and the affection of the will is deluded into loving them, and the memory into retaining remembrance of them. The unity of these powers of the soul is so great that I cannot be offended by one without all the others offending Me at the same time, because the one presents to the other, as I told you, good or evil, according to the pleasure of the free will. This free will is bound to the affection, and it moves as it pleases, either with the light of reason or without it. Your reason is attached to Me when your will does not, by disordinate love, cut it off from Me; you have also in you the law of perversity, that continually fights against the Spirit. You have, then, two parts in you — sensuality and reason. Sensuality is appointed to be the servant, so that, with the instrument of the body, you may prove and exercise the virtues. The soul is free, liberated from sin by the Blood of My Son, and she cannot be dominated unless she consent with her will, which is controlled by her free choice, and when this free choice agrees with the will, it becomes one thing with it. And I tell you truly, that, when the soul undertakes to gather together, with the hand of free choice, her powers in My Name, then are assembled all the actions, both spiritual and temporal, that the creature can do, and free choice gets rid of sensuality and binds itself with reason. I, then, by grace, rest in the midst of them; and this is what My truth, the Word Incarnate, meant, when He said: *'When there are two or three or more gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them*.' And this is the truth. I have already told you that no one could come to Me except by Him, and therefore I made of Him a Bridge with three steps. And those three steps figure, as I will narrate to you below, the three states of the soul."

*How if the three aforesaid powers are not united, there cannot be perseverance, without which no man arrives at his end.*

"I have explained to you the figure of the three steps, in general, as the three powers of the soul, and no one who wishes to pass by the Bridge and doctrine of My Truth can mount one without the other, and the soul cannot persevere except by the union of her three powers. Of which I told you above, when you asked Me, how the voyagers could come out of the river. There are two goals, and, for the attainment of either, perseverance is needful — they are vice and virtue. If you desire to arrive at life, you must persevere in virtue, and if you would have eternal death, you must persevere in vice. Thus it is with perseverance that they who want life arrive at Me who am Life, and with perseverance that they who taste the water of death arrive at the Devil."

*An exposition on Christ's words: "Whosoever thirsts, let him come to Me and drink."*

"You were all invited, generally and in particular, by My Truth, when He cried in the Temple, saying: *'Whosoever thirsts, let him come to Me and drink, for I am the Fountain of the Water of Life*.' He did not say *'Go to the Father and drink*,' but He said *'Come to Me*.' He spoke thus, because in Me, the Father, there can be no pain, but in My Son there can be pain. And you, while you are pilgrims and wayfarers in

this mortal life, cannot be without pain, because the earth, through sin, brought forth thorns. And why did He say *'Let him come to Me and drink'?* Because whoever follows His doctrine, whether in the most perfect way or by dwelling in the life of common charity, finds to drink, tasting the fruit of the Blood, through the union of the Divine nature with the human nature. And you, finding yourselves in Him, find yourselves also in Me, who am the Sea Pacific, because I am one thing with Him, and He with Me. So that you are invited to the Fountain of Living Water of Grace, and it is right for you, with perseverance, to keep by Him who is made for you a Bridge, not being turned back by any contrary wind that may arise, either of prosperity or adversity, and to persevere till you find Me, who am the Giver of the Water of Life, by means of this sweet and amorous Word, My only-begotten Son. And why did He say: *'I am the Fountain of Living Water'?* Because He was the Fountain which contained Me, the Giver of the Living Water, by means of the union of the Divine with the human nature. Why did He say *'Come to Me and drink'?* Because you cannot pass this mortal life without pain, and in Me, the Father, there can be no pain, but in Him there can be pain, and therefore of Him did I make for you a Bridge. No one can come to Me except by Him, as He told you in the words: *'No one can come to the Father except by Me*.'

"Now you have seen to what way you should keep, and how, namely with perseverance, otherwise you shall not drink, for perseverance receives the crown of glory and victory in the life everlasting."

*The general method by which every rational creature can come out of the sea of the world, and go by the aforesaid holy Bridge.*

"I will now return to the three steps, which you must climb in order to issue from the river without drowning, and attain to the Living Water, to which you are invited, and to desire My Presence in the midst of you. For in this way, in which you should follow, I am in your midst, reposing, by grace, in your souls. In order to have desire to mount the steps, you must have thirst, because only those who thirst are invited: '*Whosoever thirsts, let him come to Me and drink*.' He who has no thirst will not persevere, for either fatigue causes him to stop, or pleasure, and he does not care to carry the vessel with which he may get the water, and neither does he care for the company, and alone he cannot go, and he turns back at the smallest prick of persecution, for he loves it not. He is afraid because he is alone; were he accompanied he would not fear, and had he ascended the three steps he would not have been alone, and would, therefore, have been secure. You must then have thirst and gather yourselves together, as it is said, '*two or three or more*.'

"Why is it said *'two or three or more'?* Because there are not two without three, nor three without two, neither three nor two without more. The number one is excluded, for, unless a man has a companion, I cannot be in the midst; this is no indifferent trifle, for he who is wrapped up in self-love is solitary.

"Why is he solitary? Because he is separated from My grace and the love of his neighbor, and being, by sin, deprived of Me, he turns to that which is naught, because I am He that is. So that he who is solitary, that is, who is alone in self-love, is not mentioned by My Truth and is not acceptable to Me. He says then: *'If there be two or three or more gathered together in My name, I will be in the midst of them.'* I said to you that two were not without three, nor three without two, and so it is. You know that the commandments of the Law are completely contained in two, and if these two are not observed the Law is not observed. The two commandments are to love Me

above everything, and your neighbor as yourself, which two are the beginning, the middle and the end of the Law. These two cannot be gathered together in My Name, without three, that is without the congregation of the powers of the soul, the memory, the intellect, and the will; the memory to retain the remembrance of My benefits and My goodness, the intellect to gaze into the ineffable love, which I have shown you by means of My only-begotten Son, whom I have placed as the object of the vision of your intellect, so that, in Him, you behold the fire of My charity, and the will to love and desire Me, who am your End. When these virtues and powers of the soul are congregated together in My Name, I am in the midst of them by grace, and a man, who is full of My love and that of his neighbor, suddenly finds himself the companion of many and royal virtues. Then the appetite of the soul is disposed to thirst. Thirst, I say, for virtue, and the honor of My Name and salvation of souls, and his every other thirst is spent and dead, and he then proceeds securely without any servile fear, having ascended the first step of the affection, for the affection, stripped of self-love, mounts above itself and above transitory things, or, if he will still hold them, he does so according to My will — that is, with a holy and true fear, and love of virtue. He then finds that he has attained to the second step — that is, to the light of the intellect, which is, through Christ crucified, mirrored in cordial love of Me, for through Him have I shown My love to man. He finds peace and quiet, because the memory is filled with My love. You know that an empty thing, when touched, resounds, but not so when it is full. So memory, being filled with the light of the intellect, and the affection with love, on being moved by the tribulations or delights of the world, will not resound with disordinate merriment or with impatience, because they are full of Me, who am every good.

"Having climbed the three steps, he finds that the three powers of the soul have been gathered together by his reason in My Name. And his soul, having gathered together the two commandments, that is love of Me and of the neighbor, finds herself accompanied by Me, who am her strength and security, and walks safely because I am in the midst of her. Wherefore then he follows on with anxious desire, thirsting after the way of Truth, in which way he finds the Fountain of the Water of Life, through his thirst for My honor and his own salvation and that of his neighbor, without which thirst he would not be able to arrive at the Fountain. He walks on, carrying the vessel of the heart, emptied of every affection and disordinate love of the world, but filled immediately it is emptied with other things, for nothing can remain empty, and, being without disordinate love for transitory things, it is filled with love of celestial things, and sweet Divine love, with which he arrives at the Fountain of the Water of Life, and passes through the Door of Christ crucified, and tastes the Water of Life, finding himself in Me, the Sea Pacific."

*How this devoted soul looking in the Divine mirror saw the creatures going in diverse ways.*

Then that soul, tormented with intense desire, gazing into the sweet Divine mirror, saw creatures setting out to attain their end in diverse ways and with diverse considerations. She saw that many began to mount, feeling themselves pricked by servile fear, that is, fearing their own personal pain, and she saw others, practicing this first state, arriving at the second state, but few she saw who arrived at the greatest perfection.

*How servile fear is not sufficient, without the love of virtue, to give eternal life; and how the law of fear and that of love are united.*

Then the goodness of God, wishing to satisfy the desire of that soul, said, "Do you see those? They have arisen with servile fear from the vomit of mortal sin, but, if they do not arise with love of virtue, servile fear alone is not sufficient to give eternal life. But love with holy fear is sufficient, because the law is founded in love and holy fear. The old law was the law of fear, that was given by Me to Moses, by which law they who committed sin suffered the penalty of it. The new law is the law of love, given by the Word of My only-begotten Son, and is founded in love alone. The new law does not break the old law, but rather fulfills it, as said My Truth, '*I come not to destroy the law, but to fulfill it*.' And He united the law of fear with that of love. Through love was taken away the imperfection of the fear of the penalty, and the perfection of holy fear remained, that is, the fear of offending, not on account of one's own damnation, but of offending Me, who am Supreme Good. So that the imperfect law was made perfect with the law of love. Wherefore, after the car of the fire of My only-begotten Son came and brought the fire of My charity into your humanity with abundance of mercy, the penalty of the sins committed by humanity was taken away, that is, he who offended was no longer punished suddenly, as was of old given and ordained in the law of Moses.

"There is, therefore, no need for servile fear; and this does not mean that sin is not punished, but that the punishment is reserved, unless, that is to say, the person punish himself in this life with perfect contrition. For, in the other life, the soul is separated from the body, wherefore while man lives is his time for mercy, but when he is dead comes the time of justice. He ought, then, to arise from servile fear, and arrive at love and holy fear of Me, otherwise there is no remedy against his falling back again into the river, and reaching the waters of tribulation, and seeking the thorns of consolation, for all consolations are thorns that pierce the soul who loves them disordinately."

*How, by exercising oneself in servile fear, which is the state of imperfection, by which is meant the first step of the holy Bridge, one arrives at the second step, which is the state of perfection.*

"I told you that no one could go by the Bridge or come out of the river without climbing the three steps, which is the truth. There are some who climb imperfectly, and some perfectly, and some climb with the greatest perfection. The first are those who are moved by servile fear, and have climbed so far being imperfectly gathered together; that is to say, the soul, having seen the punishment which follows her sin, climbs; and gathers together her memory to recollect her vice, her intellect to see the punishment which she expects to receive for her fault, and her will to move her to hate that fault. And let us consider this to be the first step and the first gathering together of the powers of the soul, which should be exercised by the light of the intellect with the pupil of the eye of holy faith, which looks, not only at the punishment of sin, but at the fruit of virtue, and the love which I bear to the soul, so that she may climb with love and affection, and stripped of servile fear. And doing so, such souls will become faithful and not unfaithful servants, serving Me through love and not through fear, and if, with hatred of sin, they employ their minds to dig out the root of their self-love with prudence, constancy, and perseverance they will succeed in doing so. But there are many who begin their course climbing so slowly, and render their debt to Me by such small degrees, and with such negligence and ignorance, that

they suddenly faint, and every little breeze catches their sails, and turns their prow backwards. Wherefore, because they imperfectly climb to the first Step of the Bridge of Christ crucified, they do not arrive at the second step of His Heart."

*Of the imperfection of those who love GOD for their own profit, delight, and consolation.*

"Some there are who have become faithful servants, serving Me with fidelity without servile fear of punishment, but rather with love. This very love, however, if they serve Me with a view to their own profit, or the delight and pleasure which they find in Me, is imperfect. Do you know what proves the imperfection of this love? The withdrawal of the consolations which they found in Me, and the insufficiency and short duration of their love for their neighbor, which grows weak by degrees, and oftentimes disappears. Towards Me their love grows weak when, on occasion, in order to exercise them in virtue and raise them above their imperfection, I withdraw from their minds My consolation and allow them to fall into battles and perplexities. This I do so that, coming to perfect self-knowledge, they may know that of themselves they are nothing and have no grace, and accordingly in time of battle fly to Me, as their Benefactor, seeking Me alone, with true humility, for which purpose I treat them thus, without drawing from them consolation indeed, but not grace. At such a time these weak ones, of whom I speak, relax their energy, impatiently turning backwards, and sometimes abandon, under color of virtue, many of their exercises, saying to themselves, *This labor does not profit me*. All this they do, because they feel themselves deprived of mental consolation. Such a soul acts imperfectly, for she has not yet unwound the bandage of spiritual self-love, for, had she unwound it she would see that, in truth, everything proceeds from Me, that no leaf of a tree falls to the ground without My providence, and that what I give and promise to My creatures, I give and promise to them for their sanctification, which is the good and the end for which I created them. My creatures should see and know that I wish nothing but their good, through the Blood of My only-begotten Son, in which they are washed from their iniquities. By this Blood they are enabled to know My Truth, how, in order to give them eternal life, I created them in My image and likeness and re-created them to grace with the Blood of My Son, making them sons of adoption. But, since they are imperfect, they make use of Me only for their own profit, relaxing their love for their neighbor. Thus, those in the first state come to naught through the fear of enduring pain, and those in the second, because they slacken their pace, ceasing to render service to their neighbor, and withdrawing their charity if they see their own profit or consolation withdrawn from them: this happens because their love was originally impure, for they gave to their neighbor the same imperfect love which they gave to Me, that is to say, a love based only on desire of their own advantage. If, through a desire for perfection, they do not recognize this imperfection of theirs, it is impossible that they should not turn back. For those who desire Eternal Life, a pure love, prescinding from themselves, is necessary, for it is not enough for eternal life to fly sin from fear of punishment, or to embrace virtue from the motive of one's own advantage. Sin should be abandoned because it is displeasing to Me, and virtue should be loved for My sake. It is true that, generally speaking, every person is first called in this way, but this is because the soul herself is at first imperfect, from which imperfection she must advance to perfection, either while she lives, by a generous love to Me with a pure and virtuous heart that takes no thought for herself, or, at least, in the moment of death, recognizing her own imperfection, with the purpose, had she

but time, of serving Me, irrespectively of herself. It was with this imperfect love that S. Peter loved the sweet and good Jesus, My only-begotten Son, enjoying most pleasantly His sweet conversation, but, when the time of trouble came, he failed, and so disgraceful was his fall, that, not only could he not bear any pain himself, but his terror of the very approach of pain caused him to fall, and deny the Lord, with the words, '*I have never known Him*.' The soul who has climbed this step with servile fear and mercenary love alone, falls into many troubles. Such souls should arise and become sons, and serve Me, irrespective of themselves, for I, who am the Rewarder of every labor, render to each man according to his state and his labor; wherefore, if these souls do not abandon the exercise of holy prayer and their other good works, but go on, with perseverance, to increase their virtues, they will arrive at the state of filial love, because I respond to them with the same love, with which they love Me, so that, if they love Me, as a servant does his master, I pay them their wages according to their deserts, but I do not reveal Myself to them, because secrets are revealed to a friend, who has become one thing with his friend, and not to a servant. Yet it is true, that a servant may so advance by the virtuous love, which he bears to his master, as to become a very dear friend, and so do some of these of whom I have spoken, but while they remain in the state of mercenary love, I do not manifest Myself to them. If they, through displeasure at their imperfection, and love of virtue, dig up, with hatred, the root of spiritual self-love, and mount to the throne of conscience, reasoning with themselves, so as to quell the motions of servile fear in their heart, and to correct mercenary love by the light of the holy faith, they will be so pleasing to Me, that they will attain to the love of the friend. And I will manifest Myself to them, as My Truth said in these words: *'He who loves Me shall be one thing with Me and I with him, and I will manifest Myself to him and we will dwell together*.' This is the state of two dear friends, for though they are two in body, yet they are one in soul through the affection of love, because love transforms the lover into the object loved, and where two friends have one soul, there can be no secret between them, wherefore My Truth said: '*I will come and we will dwell together*,' and this is the truth."

*Of the way in which GOD manifests Himself to the soul who loves Him.*

"Do you know how I manifest Myself to the soul who loves Me in truth, and follows the doctrine of My sweet and amorous Word? In many is My virtue manifested in the soul in proportion to her desire, but I make three special manifestations. The first manifestation of My virtue, that is to say, of My love and charity in the soul, is made through the Word of My Son, and shown in the Blood, which He spilled with such fire of love. Now this charity is manifested in two ways; first, in general, to ordinary people, that is to those who live in the ordinary grace of God. It is manifested to them by the many and diverse benefits which they receive from Me. The second mode of manifestation, which is developed from the first, is peculiar to those who have become My friends in the way mentioned above, and is known through a sentiment of the soul, by which they taste, know, prove, and feel it. This second manifestation, however, is in men themselves; they manifesting Me, through the affection of their love. For though I am no Acceptor of creatures, I am an Acceptor of holy desires, and Myself in the soul in that precise degree of perfection which she seeks in Me. Sometimes I manifest Myself (and this is also a part of the second manifestation) by endowing men with the spirit of prophecy, showing them the things of the future. This I do in many and diverse ways, according as I see need in the soul herself and in other creatures. At other times the third manifestation takes place. I then form in the mind

the presence of the Truth, My only-begotten Son, in many ways, according to the will and the desire of the soul. Sometimes she seeks Me in prayer, wishing to know My power, and I satisfy her by causing her to taste and see My virtue. Sometimes she seeks Me in the wisdom of My Son, and I satisfy her by placing His wisdom before the eye of her intellect, sometimes in the clemency of the Holy Spirit and then My Goodness causes her to taste the fire of Divine charity, and to conceive the true and royal virtues, which are founded on the pure love of her neighbor."

*Why Christ did not say "I will manifest My Father," but "I will manifest myself."*

"You see now how truly My Word spoke, when He said: '*He who loves Me shall be one thing with Me*.' Because, by following His doctrine with the affection of love, you are united with Him, and, being united with Him, you are united with Me, because We are one thing together. And so it is that I manifest Myself to you, because We are one and the same thing together. Wherefore if My Truth said, '*I will manifest Myself to you*,' He said the truth, because, in manifesting Himself, He manifested Me, and, in manifesting Me, He manifested Himself. But why did He not say, '*I will manifest My Father to you'?* For three reasons in particular. First, because He wished to show that He and I are not separate from each other, on which account He also made the following reply to S. Philip, when he said to Him, '*Show us the Father, and it is enough for us*.' My Word said, '*Who sees Me sees the Father, and who sees the Father sees Me*.' This He said because He was one thing with Me, and that which He had, He had from Me, I having nothing from Him; wherefore, again, He said to Judas, '*My doctrine is not Mine, but My Father's who sent Me*,' because My Son proceeds from Me, not I from Him, though I with Him and He with Me are but one thing. For this reason He did not say 'I will manifest the Father,' but 'I will manifest Myself,' being one thing with the Father. The second reason was because, in manifesting Himself to you, He did not present to you anything He had not received from Me, the Father. These words, then, mean, the Father has manifested Himself to Me, because I am one thing with Him, and I will manifest to you, by means of Myself, Me and Him. The third reason was, because I, being invisible, could not be seen by you, until you should be separated from your bodies. Then, indeed, will you see Me, your GOD, and My Son, the Word, face to face. From now until after the general Resurrection, when your humanity will be conformed with the humanity of the Eternal Word, according to what I told you in the treatise of the Resurrection, you can see Me, with the eye of the intellect alone, for, as I am, you cannot see Me now. Wherefore I veiled the Divine nature with your humanity, so that you might see Me through that medium. I, the Invisible, made Myself, as it were, visible by sending you the Word, My Son, veiled in the flesh of your humanity. He manifested Me to you. Therefore it was that He did not say '*I will manifest the Father to you*,' but rather, '*I will manifest Myself to you*,' as if He should say, '*According as My Father manifests himself to Me, will I manifest myself to you, for in this manifestation of Himself, He manifests Me*.' Now therefore you understand why He did not say '*I will manifest the Father to you*.' Both, because such a vision is impossible for you, while yet in the mortal body, and because He is one thing with Me."

*How the soul, after having mounted the first step of the Bridge, should proceed to mount the second.*

"You have now seen how excellent is the state of him who has attained to the love of a friend; climbing with the foot of affection, he has reached the secret of the Heart,

which is the second of the three steps figured in the Body of My Son. I have told you what was meant by the three powers of the soul, and now I will show you how they signify the three states, through which the soul passes. Before treating of the third state, I wish to show you how a man becomes a friend and how, from a friend, he grows into a son, attaining to filial love, and how a man may know if he has become a friend. And first of how a man arrives at being a friend. In the beginning, a man serves Me imperfectly through servile fear, but, by exercise and perseverance, he arrives at the love of delight, finding his own delight and profit in Me. This is a necessary stage, by which he must pass, who would attain to perfect love, to the love that is of friend and son. I call filial love perfect, because thereby, a man receives his inheritance from Me, the Eternal Father, and because a son's love includes that of a friend, which is why I told you that a friend grows into a son. What means does he take to arrive thereat? I will tell you. Every perfection and every virtue proceeds from charity, and charity is nourished by humility, which results from the knowledge and holy hatred of self, that is, sensuality. To arrive thereat, a man must persevere, and remain in the cellar of self-knowledge in which he will learn My mercy, in the Blood of My only-begotten Son, drawing to Himself, with this love, My divine charity, exercising himself in the extirpation of his perverse self-will, both spiritual and temporal, hiding himself in his own house, as did Peter, who, after the sin of denying My Son, began to weep. Yet his lamentations were imperfect and remained so, until after the forty days, that is until after the Ascension. But when My Truth returned to Me, in His humanity, Peter and the others concealed themselves in the house, awaiting the coming of the Holy Spirit, which My Truth had promised them. They remained barred in from fear, because the soul always fears until she arrives at true love. But when they had persevered in fasting and in humble and continual prayer, until they had received the abundance of the Holy Spirit, they lost their fear, and followed and preached Christ crucified. So also the soul, who wishes to arrive at this perfection, after she has risen from the guilt of mortal sin, recognizing it for what it is, begins to weep from fear of the penalty, whence she rises to the consideration of My mercy, in which contemplation, she finds her own pleasure and profit. This is an imperfect state, and I, in order to develop perfection in the soul, after the forty days, that is after these two states, withdraw Myself from time to time, not in grace but in feeling. My Truth showed you this when He said to the disciples '*I will go and will return to you*.'

"Everything that He said was said primarily, and in particular, to the disciples, but referred in general to the whole present and future, to those, that is to say, who should come after. He said '*I will go and will return to you;*' and so it was, for, when the Holy Spirit returned upon the disciples, He also returned, as I told you above, for the Holy Spirit did not return alone, but came with My power, and the wisdom of the Son, who is one thing with Me, and with His own clemency, which proceeds from Me the Father, and from the Son. Now, as I told you, in order to raise the soul from imperfection, I withdraw Myself from her sentiment, depriving her of former consolations. When she was in the guilt of mortal sin, she had separated herself from Me, and I deprived her of grace through her own guilt, because that guilt had barred the door of her desires. Wherefore the sun of grace did not shine, not through its own defect, but through the defect of the creature, who bars the door of desire. When she knows herself and her darkness, she opens the window and vomits her filth, by holy confession. Then I, having returned to the soul by grace, withdraw Myself from her by sentiment, which I do in order to humiliate her, and cause her to seek Me in truth, and to prove her in the light of faith, so that she come to prudence. Then, if she love

Me without thought of self, and with lively faith and with hatred of her own sensuality, she rejoices in the time of trouble, deeming herself unworthy of peace and quietness of mind. Now comes the second of the three things of which I told you, that is to say: how the soul arrives at perfection, and what she does when she is perfect. This is what she does. Though she perceives that I have withdrawn Myself, she does not, on that account, look back, but perseveres with humility in her exercises, remaining barred in the house of self-knowledge, and, continuing to dwell therein, awaits, with lively faith, the coming of the Holy Spirit, that is of Me, who am the fire of charity. How does she await me? Not in idleness, but in watching and continued prayer, and not only with physical, but also with intellectual watching, that is, with the eye of her mind alert, and, watching with the light of faith, she extirpates, with hatred, the wandering thoughts of her heart, looking for the affection of My charity, and knowing that I desire nothing but her sanctification, which is certified to her in the Blood of My Son. As long as her eye thus watches, illumined by the knowledge of Me and of herself, she continues to pray with the prayer of holy desire, which is a continued prayer, and also with actual prayer, which she practices at the appointed times, according to the orders of Holy Church. This is what the soul does in order to rise from imperfection and arrive at perfection, and it is to this end, namely that she may arrive at perfection, that I withdraw from her, not by grace but by sentiment. Once more do I leave her, so that she may see and know her defects, so that, feeling herself deprived of consolation and afflicted by pain, she may recognize her own weakness, and learn how incapable she is of stability or perseverance, thus cutting down to the very root of spiritual self-love, for this should be the end and purpose of all her self-knowledge, to rise above herself, mounting the throne of conscience, and not permitting the sentiment of imperfect love to turn again in its death-struggle, but, with correction and reproof, digging up the root of self-love, with the knife of self-hatred and the love of virtue."

*How an imperfect lover of GOD loves his neighbor also imperfectly, and of the signs of this imperfect love.*

"And I would have you know that just as every imperfection and perfection is acquired from Me, so is it manifested by means of the neighbor. And simple souls, who often love creatures with spiritual love, know this well, for, if they have received My love sincerely without any self-regarding considerations, they satisfy the thirst of their love for their neighbor equally sincerely. If a man carry away the vessel which he has filled at the fountain and then drink of it, the vessel becomes empty, but if he keep his vessel standing in the fountain, while he drinks, it always remains full. So the love of the neighbor, whether spiritual or temporal, should be drunk in Me, without any self-regarding considerations. I require that you should love Me with the same love with which I love you. This indeed you cannot do, because I loved you without being loved. All the love which you have for Me you owe to Me, so that it is not of grace that you love Me, but because you ought to do so. While I love you of grace, and not because I owe you My love. Therefore to Me, in person, you cannot repay the love which I require of you, and I have placed you in the midst of your fellows, that you may do to them that which you cannot do to Me, that is to say, that you may love your neighbor of free grace, without expecting any return from him, and what you do to him, I count as done to Me, which My Truth showed forth when He said to Paul, My persecutor— '*Saul, Saul, why persecute you Me?*' This He said, judging that Paul persecuted Him in His faithful. This love must be sincere, because it is with the same

love with which you love Me, that you must love your neighbor. Do you know how the imperfection of spiritual love for the creature is shown? It is shown when the lover feels pain if it appear to him that the object of his love does not satisfy or return his love, or when he sees the beloved one's conversation turned aside from him, or himself deprived of consolation, or another loved more than he. In these and in many other ways can it be seen that his neighborly love is still imperfect, and that, though his love was originally drawn from Me, the Fountain of all love, he took the vessel out of the water, in order to drink from it. It is because his love for Me is still imperfect, that his neighborly love is so weak, and because the root of self-love has not been properly dug out. Wherefore I often permit such a love to exist, so that the soul may in this way come to the knowledge of her own imperfection, and for the same reason do I withdraw myself from the soul by sentiment, that she may be thus led to enclose herself in the house of self-knowledge, where is acquired every perfection. After which I return into her with more light and with more knowledge of My Truth, in proportion to the degree in which she refers to grace the power of slaying her own will. And she never ceases to cultivate the vine of her soul, and to root out the thorns of evil thoughts, replacing them with the stones of virtues, cemented together in the Blood of Christ crucified, which she has found on her journey across the Bridge of Christ, My only-begotten Son. For I told you, if you remember, that upon the Bridge, that is, upon the doctrine of My Truth, were built up the stones, based upon the virtue of His Blood, for it is in virtue of this Blood that the virtues give life."

*End of Sample*