

CHAPTER II

Declaration of the Manner in which the Lord Manifested to My Soul these Mysteries and the Life of the Queen of Heaven in the State in which His Majesty Placed Me.

12. In order to make clear and declare for the rest of this work the manner in which the Lord reveals these wonders to me, it has seemed appropriate to place this chapter at the beginning, where I shall explain it as I am able and according to the understanding given to me.

13. Ever since I have had the use of reason I have felt one benefit of the Lord, which I consider the greatest of those which his liberal hand has bestowed upon me, namely His Highness has granted me a deep and great fear of losing Him; and this has urged and moved me to strive after the better and more secure way, and to always work toward it and implore it from the Most High, who has pierced my flesh with this arrow because I fear his judgments (Ps. 118:120), and I live continually with this dread whether I shall lose the friendship of the Almighty or still possess it. My bread day and night has been the tears caused by this solicitude (Ps. 41:4), from which it has occurred to me in these last times which hasten on (when it is necessary for the disciples of the Lord who profess virtue to keep them hidden, and not exhibit them*) to make great petitions to God, soliciting the intercession of the Queen and Virgin most pure, supplicating Him with all my heart to guide and direct me on a straight path and hidden from the eyes of men.

14. To these repeated petitions the Lord responded: "Do not fear, soul, nor afflict thyself, for on my part I shall give thee a state and a way of light and security so hidden and precious that thou shalt recognize Me as its Author. From this day all that is exterior and dangerous shall be withdrawn from thee, and thy treasure shall remain hidden; guard it on thy part, and preserve it by a perfect life. I shall place thee on a hidden path, clear, true and pure; walk on it." Since then I have recognized a change in my interior, and a highly spiritualized state. To the understanding was given a new light, which communicated and infused into it a knowledge by which it knows all things in God, and what they are in themselves and their operations, and are revealed to it according to the will of the Most High that it should know and see them. It is this understanding and light which illumines it, holy, sweet and pure, subtle, piercing, noble, sure and undefiled (Wis. 7:22), causing the love of good and rejection of evil. It is a vapor of the power of God (Ib. 25) and a simple emanation of his light, which is placed before the understanding as a mirror, and with the superior part of the soul and interior vision I see many things; for the object, by the light which reflects from it, is known to be infinite, though the eyes are limited, and the understanding falls short. This vision is as it were the Lord seated upon a throne of great majesty, where his attributes are known with distinction, always subordinated to the limit of mortality; for a covering like purest crystal intervenes, and through it these wonders and attributes or perfections of God are known and distinguished with great clarity and distinction, although through that veil or medium, which is like crystal as I have said, which impedes the entire, immediate, intuitive and unveiled vision. Yet the understanding of what it covers is not painful but admirable for the understanding, for it is understood the object is infinite and the beholder limited, and it gives hope that if the soul earns it the veil will be lifted and the medium removed when the soul is stripped of the mortality of the body (II Cor. 5:4, 6).

* cf. Mt. 6:1 [Ed.]

15. In this understanding there are modes or degrees of seeing imparted by the Lord according to the divine will showing it, because it is a voluntary mirror. Sometimes He manifests Himself more clearly, at other times less. At times some mysteries are revealed, while other great ones are hidden. This difference usually corresponds to the disposition of the soul; for if the soul is not entirely tranquil and at peace, or has committed some fault or imperfection, however small, this light cannot be seen in the way I described, in which the Lord is known with such clarity and certainty that it leaves no doubt about what is understood. Yet first and foremost the soul knows the being of God is present, and understands all His Majesty says; and this knowledge produces a sweet, strong and efficacious urge to love, serve and obey the Most High. In this clarity the soul knows great mysteries, such as the value of virtue and how precious it is to possess it and work by it; the soul knows the perfection and security of virtue, feeling a power and force which impels it toward the good, and opposes and battles against evil and the passions, often vanquishing them. If the soul rejoices in this light and vision, and does not lose it, it will not be conquered (Wis. 7:30), because it gives encouragement, fervor, security and joy. Diligent and attentive, it calls and elevates, gives lightness and vigor, drawing after it the superior part of the soul from the inferior; and even the body becomes lighter and remains as if spiritualized during that time, its burden and weight suspended.

16. As the soul perceives and feels these sweet effects, with loving affection it says to the Most High: *Trahe me post te** (Cant. 1:3), and we shall run together; for united to its Beloved it does not feel the earthly operations. Carried away by the odor of these ointments of its Beloved, it comes to live more where it loves than where it lives. It deserts the inferior part of its being, and when it returns to search it, it is in order to perfect it, reforming and as it were cutting off these animal appetites of the passions;† and if at any time they seek to rebel, the soul will quickly cast them out, for already *not I live, but Christ liveth in me* (Gal. 2:20).

17. In this state there is felt, in a certain way, in all the holy operations and activities the assistance of the spirit of Christ, who is God and the life of the soul (I Jn. 5:11-12), being known by the fervor, the desire, the light, and the efficacy in working with an interior strength which only God can produce. The continuation and power of this light can be felt, and the love which it causes, and an intimate conversation with God, living and continuous, which focuses the attention to all that is divine and withdraws it from what is earthly. Christ manifests Himself living in me, with his power and light which always shine in the darkness. This is indeed being in the courts of the house of the Lord, because the soul is within sight where the clearness of the lamp of the Lamb is reflected (Apoc. 21:23).

18. I do not say this is the whole light, but a part of it; and this part is a knowledge beyond the forces and power of the creature. For this vision the Most High invigorates the understanding, giving it a quality and light by which this faculty is proportioned to the knowledge which is above its forces, and which is also known and understood in this state with the certainty with which other divine matters are believed or known; yet here faith also accompanies it, and in this state the Almighty reveals to the soul the value of this knowledge and the light He infuses. His light *cannot be put out*, and *all good things came to me together with it* (Wis. 7:10-11), and by his hands a rectitude of great worth. This lamp goes before me, straightening my paths; I apprehended it without pretense, and desire to communicate it without envy, nor have I concealed its rectitude (Ib. 12-13). It is a participation in God, and its exercise is great delight

* *Draw me after thee* [Ed]

† cf. Mt. 5:29-30 [Ed.]

and joy (Wis. 8:16, 18). It teaches many things and softens the heart, and with powerful force leads it away and separates it from what is deceitful, in which, just by looking upon it in this light, one finds an immensity of bitterness, by which it moves further away from what is momentary, and fleeing the soul rushes to the sacred refuge of eternal truth, entering the cellar of fermented wine (Cant. 2:4) where the Most High orders charity within me. In it He urges me to be patient and without envy (I Cor. 13:4), to be kind without offending anyone, not to be proud or ambitious, not to be angry or think evil of my neighbor, but to suffer and bear all things. It always puts forth its voice (Prov. 8:1), admonishing me in secret with powerful force to work what is most holy and pure, teaching me in all things; and if I fail even in what is slightest, it reprehends me without masking anything.

19. This is the light which at one and at the same time enlightens, raises to fervor, teaches and reprehends, mortifies and enlivens, calls and deters, warns and urges, teaches the distinction between good and evil, the height and the depth, the length and the breadth (Eph. 3:18); the world, its state and disposition, its deceits, fantasies and fallacies of its inhabitants and devotees. Above all this light teaches me to trample the world underfoot, and to raise myself to the Lord, looking upon Him as the supreme Master and Governor of all things. And in His Majesty I see and recognize the ordering of all things (Wis. 7:17-20), the beneficial qualities of the elements, the beginning, the middle, and the end of time, its changes and variations, the course of the years, the harmony of all creatures and their qualities; all that is hidden regarding men, their operations and thoughts, and how distant they are from those of the Lord;* the dangers in which they live, and the sinister paths upon which they run; the nations and governments, their momentary firmness and little stability; their entire beginning and end, and what is true or false about them. All this is seen and known distinctly in God through this light, knowing persons and conditions. But descending to another more inferior state, which the soul ordinarily has, it makes use of the substance and habit of this light, though not with entire clarity; in this state there is a certain limitation of that so exalted knowledge, and of persons, states, and secret thoughts as I have mentioned, for here in this lower state I have no more knowledge than is necessary to escape danger and flee from sin, feeling compassion for people with true tenderness, without being given permission to speak specifically with anyone, nor reveal what I know. Nor could I do so, since it seems I become mute, except at times when the Author of this light gives me permission, and commands me to admonish one of my neighbors; yet this must not be done by revealing how I know such things, but by speaking to the heart with plain, simple, common and charitable reasonings found in God, and praying for this necessary knowledge, which is taught to me for this purpose.

20. And though all these things were made known to me with clarity, never has the Lord revealed to me the evil end of any soul which has been condemned. This knowledge is withheld by Divine Providence, because God is so just, and does not reveal the condemnation of anyone without some great purpose, and because if I knew it I believe I would die of sorrow. This would be the effect of the knowledge of this truth, for it causes great compassion to see any soul forever separated from God. I have begged Him not to show me anyone who is condemned; and if I could liberate anyone who is in sin by my own life I would not refuse the labor, or what the Lord would reveal to me; yet may I not see any who cannot be helped.

21. This light is not given me to reveal my secrets in particular, but in order to make use of it with prudence and wisdom. This light remains with me as a substance which vivifies (though this

* cf. Is. 55:8-9 [Ed.]

is incidental), which emanates from God, and as a habit to be used for Him, ordering well the senses and the inferior part of the spirit; yet in the superior part I constantly enjoy a vision and habitation of peace, and I recognize intellectually all the mysteries and sacraments revealed to me regarding the life of the Queen of heaven, and many other mysteries of the faith, which I have almost incessantly present to me, or at least the light is never lost from view. And if at any time I descend, as a creature, with attention to human conversation, the Lord immediately calls me with rigor and sweet force, and returns me to the attention to his words and expressions, and to the understanding of these sacraments, graces and virtues, and to the exterior and interior works of the Virgin Mother, as I will explain.

22. In this manner, and in the states and light which I have described, I also see and recognize the Queen herself, our Lady, when She speaks with me, and the holy Angels, their nature and excellence. Sometimes I see and recognize them in the Lord, and at other times in themselves; yet there is a difference, for in recognizing them in themselves I descend to a more inferior degree of vision, which I also recognize, which results from the difference between the objects and the manner of moving the understanding. In this more inferior degree of vision I see, speak to, and understand the holy Princes, who converse with me and explain many of the mysteries which the Lord has revealed to me; and the Queen of heaven explains and manifests to me the mysteries of her most holy life, and the wonderful events in it. With distinction I recognize each one of these persons in themselves, feeling the divine effects which each one respectively works in the soul.

23. In the Lord I see these same persons as in a voluntary mirror, His Majesty showing me the Saints whom He desires to show, and as is pleasing to Him, with great clarity and more exalted effects for my soul; for the Lord himself is known by this admirable light, and also the Saints and their excellent virtues and wonders, and how they performed them by grace, by which they were capable of all these things (Philip. 4:13). In this knowledge the creature remains most abundantly and appropriately filled with joy, which imbues it with greater power and satisfaction, and it remains as if at rest in its center; for the more intellectual and less corporeal or imaginary the vision is,* the stronger is the light and more exalted are the effects, and greater is the essence and certainty which is experienced. Yet also here there is a difference, for the vision or knowledge of God himself, and of his attributes and his perfections, is known to be more superior, and its effects are most sweet and ineffable, while to see and know creatures, even in the Lord himself, is of a more inferior degree. This inferiority, it seems to me, arises in part from the soul itself, since its vision is so limited that it cannot attend to or know God as well when seeing Him together with creatures as when seeing His Majesty without them; and this vision of God alone seems to have greater fullness of joy than to see creatures in God. So delicate is this recognition of the Divinity that paying attention to anything else somewhat impedes it, at least while we are mortal.

24. In the other state, more inferior to the one of which I have spoken, I see the most holy Virgin in Herself, and the Angels; I know and understand the manner of teaching me, speaking to me, and enlightening me, which is similar and in the manner which the Angels themselves give light, communicate and speak with each other, and the superiors enlighten the inferiors. The Lord gives this light as the first cause; but a part of that participation, which this Queen enjoys with such fullness, She communicates to the superior part of the soul, and I know Her Highness, and her prerogatives and sacraments, in the manner which the inferior Angel knows what the

* For an explanation of intellectual, imaginary and corporeal visions, see par. 631ff. [Ed.]

superior communicates. I also recognize Her by the doctrine She teaches, by the efficacy it has, and by other qualities which are felt and tasted indicating the purity, elevation and truth of the vision, in which nothing impure, obscure, false or suspicious is recognized, and nothing that is holy, immaculate and true is left unrecognized. The same happens to me in its manner with the holy Princes, and the Lord has revealed to me many times that their communication with and enlightenment of my interior is similar to what they have with each other. Many times it happens to me that the enlightenments pass through all these channels and conduits: The Lord gives the light and understanding, or the object of it, the most holy Virgin reveals it to me, and the Angels give me the terms. At other times (and most commonly) the Lord does all, and teaches me the doctrine, sometimes it is done by the Queen, who gives all, and sometimes by the holy Angels; they also typically give me only the intelligence, and I must find the terms for declaring what I hold in the understanding. In this I can err, if the Lord permits it, since I am an ignorant woman, and I rely on what I have heard; and when I have any difficulty in declaring these enlightenments, I turn to my master and spiritual father, especially in the more difficult and arduous matters.

25. I rarely have corporeal visions at these times and in these states, but I do have some imaginary visions; and these are of a much lower degree than the intellectual visions of which I have until now spoken, which are vastly superior and more spiritual. But what I can affirm is this: In all the enlightenments great or small, lower or higher, from the Lord, the most blessed Virgin, or the holy Angels, in all of them I receive most abundant light and very beneficial instruction, in which I see and know the truth, and greater perfection and sanctity; and I experience a heavenly strength and light which urges me to desire greater purity of soul and the grace of the Lord, and to be willing to die for it, and to labor in everything the best I can. And by these degrees and modes of enlightenment which I have mentioned, I know all the mysteries of the life of the Queen of heaven with great benefit and joy of my spirit. Therefore, with all my heart and mind I magnify the Almighty, I thank Him, adore Him, and confess Him as the holy and omnipotent God, strong and admirable, worthy of praise, magnificence, glory and reverence forever and ever. Amen.