

will learn to say your vocal prayers well, *I mean, as they ought to be said*—and little by little, persuasively and methodically, you will get your soul used to this, so that it will no longer be afraid of it. Remember that many years have passed since it went away from¹ its Spouse, and it needs very careful handling before it will return home. We sinners are like that: we have accustomed our souls and minds to go after their own pleasures (or pains, it would be more correct to say) until the unfortunate soul no longer knows what it is doing. When that has happened, a good deal of skill is necessary before it can be inspired with enough love to make it stay at home; but unless we can gradually do that we shall accomplish nothing.² Once again I assure you that, if you are careful to form habits of the kind I have mentioned, you will derive³ such great profit from them that I could not describe it even if I wished.⁴ Keep at the side of this good Master,⁵ then, and be most firmly resolved to learn what He teaches you; His Majesty will then ensure your not failing to be good disciples, and He will never leave you unless you leave Him. Consider the words uttered by those Divine lips: the very first of them will show you at once what love He has for you, and it is no small blessing and joy for the pupil to see that his Master loves Him.

CHAPTER XXVII

Describes the great love shown us by the Lord in the first words of the Paternoster and the great importance of our making no account of good birth if we truly desire to be the daughters of God.

“Our Father, which art in the Heavens.” O my Lord, how Thou dost reveal Thyself as the Father of such a Son, while Thy Son reveals Himself as the Son of such a Father! Blessed be Thou for ever and ever. Ought not so great a favour as this, Lord, to have come at the end of the prayer? Here, at the very beginning, Thou dost fill our hands and grant us so great a favour that it would be a very great blessing if our understanding

¹ E.: “went away, having fled from.”

² E.: “a good deal of skill is necessary to make it conceive fresh love for its Spouse [*lit.*: “Husband”] and become accustomed to staying at home: this has to be done gradually and by means of love—otherwise we shall accomplish nothing.”

³ E. begins the sentence: “And be quite sure that if you accustom yourselves carefully to the idea that you have this Lord with you, and speak to Him frequently, you will derive.”

⁴ E.: “that, even if I want to describe it to you, you will perhaps not believe me.”

⁵ E.: “of your Master.”

could be filled with it so that the will would be occupied and we should be unable to say another word. Oh, how appropriate, daughters, would perfect contemplation be here! Oh, how right would the soul be to enter within itself, so as to be the better able to rise above itself, that this holy Son might show it the nature of the place where He says His Father dwells—namely, the Heavens! Let us leave earth, my daughters, for it is not right that a favour like this should be prized so little, and that, after we have realized how great this favour is, we should remain on earth any more.

O Son of God and my Lord! How is it that Thou canst give us so much with Thy first word? It is so wonderful that Thou shouldst descend to such a degree of humility as to join with us when we pray and make Thyself the Brother of creatures so miserable and lowly! How can it be that, in the name of Thy Father, Thou shouldst give us all that there is to be given, by willing Him to have us as His children—and Thy word cannot fail?¹ [It seems that] Thou dost oblige Him to fulfil Thy word, a charge by no means light, since, being our Father, He must bear with us, however great our offences.² If we return to Him, He must pardon us, as He pardoned the prodigal son,³ must comfort us in our trials, and must sustain us,⁴ as such a Father is bound to do, for He must needs be better than any earthly father, since nothing good can fail to have its perfection in Him. *He must cherish us; He must sustain us;*⁵ and at the last He must make us participants and fellow-heirs with Thee.

Behold, my Lord, with the love that Thou hast for us and with Thy humility, nothing can be an obstacle to Thee. And then, Lord, Thou hast been upon earth and by taking our nature upon Thee hast clothed Thyself with humanity: Thou hast therefore some reason to care for our advantage.⁶ But behold, Thy Father is in Heaven, as Thou hast told us, and it is right that Thou shouldst consider His honour. Since Thou hast offered Thyself to be dishonoured by us, leave Thy Father free. Oblige Him not to do so much for people as wicked as I, who will make Him such poor acknowledgment.⁷

¹ E. adds: “but must be fulfilled.”

² T. deletes: “a charge by no means light” and has here: “He must bear with our offences, however great they be.”

³ E.: “If we return to Him, as did the prodigal son, He must pardon us.”

⁴ E. omits: “and must sustain us.”

⁵ E. adds: “for He has the wherewithal,” which spoils the rhythm of the sentence and is not explicit enough to be a valuable addition.

⁶ E.: “and the part Thou dost play seems to oblige Thee to do us good.” Originally this read: “and after the part Thou playest with us I do not know how Thou canst have so much humility.” The alteration is in St. Teresa’s hand.

⁷ E. adds: “and there are also others who do not make Him good [acknowledgment].”

O good Jesus! How clearly hast Thou shown that Thou art One with Him and that Thy will is His and His is Thine! How open a confession is this, my Lord! What is this love that Thou hast for us? Thou didst deceive the devil, and conceal from him that Thou art the Son of God, but Thy great desire for our welfare overcomes all obstacles to Thy granting us this greatest of favours. Who but Thou could do this, Lord? I cannot think how the devil failed to understand from that word of Thine Who Thou wert, beyond any doubt.¹ I, at least, my Jesus, see clearly that Thou didst speak as a dearly beloved son both for Thyself and for us,² and Thou hast such power that what Thou sayest in Heaven shall be done on earth. Blessed be Thou for ever, my Lord, Who lovest so much to give³ that no obstacle can stay Thee.

Do you not think, daughters, that this is a good Master, since He begins by granting us this great favour so as to make us love to learn what He teaches us? Do you think it would be right for us,⁴ while we are repeating this prayer with our lips, to stop trying to think of what we are saying, lest picturing such love⁵ should tear our hearts to pieces? No one who realized His greatness could possibly say it would be. What son is there in the world who would not try to learn who his father was if he had one as good, and of as great majesty⁶ and dominion, as ours? Were God not all this, it would not surprise me if we had no desire to be known as His children;⁷ for the world is such that, if the father is of lower rank than his son, the son feels no honour in recognizing him as his father.⁸ This does not apply here: God forbid that such a thing should ever happen in this house—it would turn the place into hell. Let the sister who is of the highest birth speak of her father least; we must all be equals.

O College of Christ, in which the Lord was pleased that Saint Peter, who was a fisherman, should have more authority than Saint Bartholomew, who was the son of a king!⁹ His Majesty knew what a fuss would be made in the world¹⁰ about who was

¹ T. omits this sentence.

² E.: "and for all."

³ T. ends the sentence here, deleting the words which follow.

⁴ E., more bluntly: "Would it be right for us . . .?" T. deletes the reading in the text and substitutes: "It would be right for us."

⁵ E. reads: "lest so great a favour."

⁶ E.: "goodness, majesty."

⁷ E.: "daughters."

⁸ E.: "than his son, in two words he will not recognize him as his father." In the next sentence, T. has "affect us" for "apply".

⁹ "I do not know where she found this," observes P. García de Toledo (not P. Bález, as the Paris Carmelites say) in the margin of V. There seems, in fact, to be no foundation for the assertion in the text. T. inserts "they say".

¹⁰ E. omits: "in the world."

fashioned from the finer clay—which is like discussing whether clay is better for bricks or for walls.¹ Dear Lord, what a trouble we make about it!² God deliver you, sisters, from such contentions,³ even if they be carried on only in jest; I hope that His Majesty will indeed deliver you. If anything like this should be going on among you, apply the remedy immediately, and let the sister concerned fear lest she be a Judas among the Apostles.⁴ *Do what you can to get rid of such a bad companion. If you cannot, give her penances heavier than for anything else until she realizes that she has not deserved to be even the basest clay.* You have a good Father, given you by the good Jesus:⁵ let no other father be known or referred to here.⁶ Strive, my daughters, to be such that you deserve to find comfort in Him and to throw yourselves into His arms. You know that, if you are good children, He will never⁷ send you away. And who would not do anything rather than lose such a Father?

Oh, thank God, what cause for comfort there is here! Rather than write more about it I will leave it for you to think about; for, however much your thoughts may wander, between such a Son and such a Father there must needs be the Holy Spirit.⁸ May He enkindle⁹ your will and bind you to Himself with the most fervent love, since even the great advantage you gain will not suffice to do so.¹⁰

CHAPTER XXVIII

Describes the nature of the Prayer of Recollection and sets down some of the means by which we can make it a habit.

Consider now what your Master says next: "Who art in the Heavens."¹¹ Do you suppose it matters little what Heaven is and

¹ E.: "for mud or for bricks."

² E.: "what great blindness!" T.: "what great nonsense!"

³ E.: "from such conversations."

⁴ E.: "among you, do not allow it in the house, for it is (like having a) Judas among the Apostles."

⁵ E.: "The good Jesus gives you a good Father."

⁶ E. continues, repeating what has just been said: "save Him Whom your Spouse gives you."

⁷ E.: "He has the obligation never to." T. deletes much of this and the last sentence and substitutes: "deserve to imitate Him in something; for, if you are good children, He will never."

⁸ In T. this reading is altered to the following: "for, your thoughts being between such a Son and such a Father, the Holy Spirit will come (to you)."

⁹ E.: "May He work in."

¹⁰ E.: "with the strongest love, supposing that the advantage you will gain does not bind you (to Him)."

¹¹ E.: "in Heaven."

will not¹ fail to hear you; and you may be sure that you are truly praising Him and hallowing His name, since you are glorifying the Lord as a member of His household and praising Him with increasing affection and desire so that it seems you can never forsake His service. *So I advise you to be very cautious about this, for it is of the greatest importance.*

Calls for the transformation of earth into heaven

CHAPTER XXXII

Expounds these words of the Paternoster: "Fiat voluntas tua sicut in coelo et in terra."² Describes how much is accomplished by those who repeat these words with full resolution and how well the Lord rewards them for it.³

Now that our good Master has asked on our behalf, and has taught us ourselves to ask, for a thing so precious that it includes all we can desire on earth, and has granted us the great favour of making us His brethren, let us see what He desires us to give to His Father, and what He offers Him on our behalf, and what He asks of us, for it is right that we should render Him some service in return for such great favours. O good Jesus! Since Thou givest so little (little, that is to say, on our behalf)⁴ how canst Thou ask [so much] for us? What we give is in itself nothing at all by comparison with all that has been given us and with the greatness of Our Lord.⁵ But in truth, my Lord, Thou dost not leave us with nothing to give and we give all that we can—I mean if we give in the spirit of these words: "Thy will be done; as in Heaven, so on earth."

Thou didst well, O our good Master,⁶ to make this last petition, so that we may be able to accomplish what Thou dost promise in our name. For truly, Lord, hadst Thou not done this, I do not think it would have been possible *for us to accomplish it*. But, since Thy Father does what Thou askest Him in granting us His Kingdom on earth, I know that we can truly fulfil Thy word by giving what Thou dost promise in our name. For since my earth has now become Heaven, it will be possible for Thy will to be done

¹ E.: "and cannot."

² "Thy will be done: as in Heaven, so on earth."

³ The title of this chapter, the first two paragraphs and part of the third paragraph are not found in T. P. Silverio supplies the corresponding text of the Évora edition.

⁴ Évora adds: "because of our weakness", but there is no means of telling if this is an addition made by St. Teresa or no.

⁵ E.: "of (our) King."

⁶ E.: "O good Master and Lord."

in me. Otherwise, on an earth so wretched as mine, and so barren of fruit, I know not, Lord, how it could be possible. It is a great thing that Thou dost offer.¹

When I think of this, it amuses me that there should be people who dare not ask the Lord for trials,² thinking that His sending them to them depends upon their asking for them! I am not referring to those who omit to ask for them out of humility because they think themselves to be incapable of bearing them, though for my own part I believe that He who gives them love enough to ask for such a stern method of proving it will give them love enough to endure it. I should like to ask those who are afraid to pray for trials lest they should at once be given them what they mean when they beg the Lord to fulfil His will in them. Do they say this because everyone else says it and not because they want it to be done? That would not be right,³ sisters. Remember that the good Jesus is our Ambassador here, and that His desire has been to mediate between us and His Father at no small cost to Himself: it would not be right for us to refuse to give what He *promises and* offers on our behalf⁴ or to say nothing about it. Let me put it in another way. Consider, daughters, that, whether we wish it or no, God's will must be done,⁵ and must be done both in Heaven and on earth. Believe me, then, do as I suggest and make⁶ a virtue of necessity.

O my Lord, what a great comfort it is to me that Thou didst not entrust the fulfilment of Thy will to one so wretched as I! Blessed be Thou for ever and let all things praise Thee. May Thy name be for ever glorified. I should indeed have had to be good, Lord, if the fulfilment or non-fulfilment of Thy will [in Heaven and on earth] were in my hands. But as it is, though my will is not yet free from self-interest, I give it to Thee freely.⁷ For I have proved, by long experience, how much I gain by leaving it freely in Thy hands. O friends,⁸ what a great gain is this—and how much we lose through not fulfilling our promises to the Lord in the Paternoster, and giving Him what we offer Him!

¹ "For that reason, daughters," adds E., "I should like you to understand this."

² E. reads: "who say that it is not well to ask the Lord for trials", and continues: "(saying) that this shows little humility. And I have found some persons so pusillanimous that, even without making this pretext of humility, they have not the courage to pray for trials, because they think that these would be given them at once. I should like to ask them what they understand this will to mean which they ask His Majesty to fulfil in them. Do they say, etc."

³ E.: "That would be very wrong, daughters."

⁴ T. ends the sentence here.

⁵ E.: "See, sisters, and do as I suggest: it will have to be, whether you wish it or no."

⁶ E.: "Believe me, then, and make."

⁷ T. adds: "with Thy help."

⁸ E.: "O daughters."

Before I tell you in what this gain consists, I will explain to you how much you are offering, lest later you should exclaim that you had been deceived and had not understood what you were saying. Do not behave like some religious among us,¹ who do nothing but promise, and then excuse ourselves for not fulfilling our promises by saying that we had not understood what we were promising.² That may well be true,³ *for it is easy to say things and hard to put them into practice, and anyone who thought that there was no more in the one than in the other certainly did not understand.*⁴ It seems very easy to say that we will surrender our will to someone, until we try it and realize that it is the hardest thing we can do if we carry it out as we should. Our superiors do not always treat us strictly when they see we are weak; and sometimes they treat both weak and strong in the same way. That is not so with the Lord; He knows what each of us can bear, and, when He sees that one of us is strong, He does not hesitate to fulfil His will in him.

*So I want you to realize with Whom (as they say) you are dealing and what the good Jesus offers on your behalf to the Father, and what you are giving Him when you pray that His will may be done in you: it is nothing else than this that you are praying for.*⁵ Do not fear that He will give you riches or pleasures or great honours or any such earthly things; His love for you is not so poor as that. And He sets a very high value on what you give Him and desires to recompense you for it since He gives you His Kingdom while you are still alive. Would you like to see how He treats those who make this prayer from their hearts? Ask His glorious Son, Who made it thus in the Garden. Think with what resolution⁶ and fullness of desire He prayed; and consider if the will of God was not perfectly fulfilled in Him through the trials, sufferings, insults and persecutions which He gave Him, until at last His life ended with death on a Cross.

So you see, daughters, what God gave to His best Beloved, and from that you can understand what His will is.⁷ These, then, are His gifts in this world. He gives them in proportion to

¹ E. reads "like some nuns" and continues in the third, not, like V., in the first person.

² E.: "and, when they fulfil nothing, say that, when they made their profession, they did not understand what they were promising."

³ E.: "I quite believe it."

⁴ E. continues: "Make those who profess here understand, by means of a long probation, that they must not only talk but act as well. So I want you to realize, etc."

⁵ V. abridges this passage to read: "I want to counsel you and remind you what His will is."

⁶ E.: "with what truth."

⁷ E. continues: "Consider what you are doing: try not to let the prayers, etc."

the love which He bears us. He gives more to those whom He loves most, and less to those He loves least; and He gives in accordance with the courage which He sees that each of us has and the love we bear to His Majesty. When He sees a soul who loves Him greatly, He knows that soul can suffer much for Him, whereas one who loves Him little will suffer little. For my own part, I believe that love is the measure of our ability to bear crosses, whether great or small. So if you have this love, sisters, try not to let the prayers you make to so great a Lord be words of mere politeness but brace yourselves to suffer what His Majesty desires. For if you give Him your will in any other way, you are just showing Him a jewel,¹ making as if to give it to Him and begging Him to take it, and then, when He puts out His hand to do so, taking it back and holding on to it tightly.

Such mockery is no fit treatment for One who endured so much for us. If for no other reason than this, it would not be right to mock Him so often—and it is by no means seldom that we say these words to Him in the Paternoster. Let us give Him once and for all the jewel which we have so often undertaken to give Him. For the truth is that He gives it to us first² so that we may give it back to Him. *Ah, my God! How well Jesus knows us and how much He thinks of our good! He did not say we must surrender our wills to the Lord until we had been well paid for this small service. It will be realized from this how much the Lord intends us to gain by rendering it to Him: even in this life He begins to reward us for this, as I shall presently explain.* Worldly people will do a great deal if they sincerely resolve to fulfil the will of God. But you, daughters, must both say and act, and give Him both words and deeds, as I really think we religious do. Yet sometimes not only do we undertake to give God the jewel but we even put it into His hand³ and then take it back again. We are so generous all of a sudden, and then we become so mean, that it would have been better if we had stopped to think before giving.

The aim of all my advice to you in this book is that we should surrender ourselves wholly to the Creator, place our will in His hands and detach ourselves from the creatures. As you will already have understood how important this is, I will say no more about it, but I will tell you why our good Master puts these words here. He knows how much we shall gain by rendering this

¹ E. continues: "and telling Him to take it, and then, etc."

² E. ends the sentence here. Both E. and V. have: "He does not give to us first", a reading which may be thought to find some support in the following sentences of E., but in the context of V. would be inexplicable. It seems to me likely that the negative was inserted in error.

³ E.: "Yet sometimes we put the jewel into the Lord's hand."

service to His Eternal Father. We are preparing ourselves for the time, which will come very soon, when we shall find ourselves at the end of our journey¹ and shall be drinking of living water from the fountain I have described. Unless we make a total surrender of our will² to the Lord, *and put ourselves in His hands* so that He may do in all things what is best for us in accordance with His will, He will never allow us to drink of it. This is the perfect contemplation of which you asked me to write to you.

In this matter, as I have already said, we can do nothing of ourselves, either by working hard or by making plans,³ nor is it needful that we should. For everything else⁴ hinders and prevents⁵ us from saying [with real resolution], "Fiat voluntas tua": that is, may the Lord fulfil His will in me, in every way and manner which Thou, my Lord, desirest. If Thou wilt do this by means of trials, give me strength and let them come. If by means of persecutions and sickness and dishonour and need, here I am, my Father, I will not turn my face away from Thee nor have I the right to turn my back upon them. For Thy Son gave Thee this will of mine⁶ in the name of us all and it is not right that I for my part should fail. Do Thou grant me the grace of bestowing on me Thy Kingdom so that I may do Thy will, since He has asked this of me. Dispose of me as of that which is Thine own, in accordance with Thy will.

Oh, my sisters, what power this gift has! If it be made with due resolution, it cannot fail to draw the Almighty to become one with our lowliness and to transform us into Himself⁷ and to effect a union between the Creator⁸ and the creature. Ask yourselves if that will not be a rich reward for you, and if you have not a good Master. For, knowing how the good will of His Father is to be gained, He teaches us how and by what means we must serve Him.

The more *resolute we are in soul and the more* we show Him by our actions that the words we use to Him are not words of mere politeness, the more and more does Our Lord draw us to Himself and raise us above all *petty* earthly things, and above ourselves, in order to prepare us to receive great favours *from Him*, for His

¹ T. adds: "as can be seen here on earth."

² E.: "of ourselves."

³ T. ends the sentence here.

⁴ "If by our own industry and skill we try to attain to Quiet," adds P. B  n  ez.

⁵ T. has a semi-colon after "hinders" and continues: "it suffices to say, with real, etc."

⁶ T.: "gave Thee my will."

⁷ T.: "to draw our lowliness to become one with the Almighty, and to transform it into God."

⁸ E.: "the Maker." T.: "the creature and the Creator." Neither this emendation nor that of the last note is by St. Teresa.

rewards for our service will not end with this life. So much does He value this service of ours that we do not know for what more we can ask, while His Majesty never wearies of giving. Not content with having made this soul one with Himself, through uniting it to Himself,¹ He begins to cherish it, to reveal secrets to it, to rejoice in its understanding of what it has gained and in the knowledge which it has of all He has yet to give it. He causes it gradually to lose its exterior senses so that nothing may occupy it. This we call rapture. He begins to make such a friend of the soul that not only does He restore its will to it but He gives it His own also. For, now that He is making a friend of it, He is glad to allow it to rule with Him, as we say, turn and turn about. So He does what the soul asks of Him, just as the soul does what He commands, only in a much better way, since He is all-powerful and can do whatever He desires, and His desire never comes to an end.

But the poor soul, despite its desires, is *often* unable² to do all it would like, nor can it do anything at all unless it is given the power.³ And so it grows richer and richer; and the more it serves, the greater becomes its debt; and often, growing weary of finding itself subjected to all the inconveniences and impediments and bonds⁴ which it has to endure while it is in the prison of this body, it would gladly pay something of what it owes, for it is quite worn out. But even if we do all that is in us, how can we repay God, since, as I say, we have nothing to give save what we have first received? We can only learn to know ourselves and do what we can⁵—namely, surrender our will and fulfil God's will in us.⁶ Anything else must be a hindrance to the soul which the Lord has brought to this state. It causes it, not profit, but harm, for nothing but humility is of any use here, and this is not acquired by the understanding but by a clear perception of the truth, which comprehends in one moment what could not be attained over a long period by the labour of the imagination—namely, that we are nothing and that God is infinitely great.

¹ E. reads: "through converting it to Himself", but the word "converting" was crossed through and "uniting" substituted by P. Garc  a de Toledo and the author incorporated the correction in the text of V.

² T.: "is unable always."

³ Lit.: "given it." E. continues: "Its debt becomes greater all the time; and often, etc."

⁴ E. omits: "and impediments and bonds."

⁵ T. adds: "with the favour of God."

⁶ The rest of this paragraph is not found in E., which ends it on a more personal note: "Since, as I have said, the nature of this prayer has already been described elsewhere, together with the way in which the soul should behave at such a time, and since a great deal has been said about what the soul feels and how it knows this to be the work of God, I do no more here than touch on these details of (the life of) prayer so as to show you how to repeat this prayer, the Paternoster."