

CHAPTER VIII

Declaring the State in which God Placed Most Holy Mary by Continual Abstractive Vision of the Divinity After Her Triumph over the Demons, and the Manner in which She Labored Therein.

533. To the extent in which the mysteries of the infinite and eternal Wisdom were being fulfilled in most holy Mary, so also was the great Lady raised in the sphere of total sanctity above the rest of creatures beyond all human thought. Since her triumphs over the infernal dragon were gained under the conditions and circumstances I have described, and resulted in the rewards I have mentioned, and since all these events of her life were the sequel of the mysteries of the Incarnation and Redemption, and of all the rest in which She had associated with her divine Son, it is impossible for our lowly human faculties to even faintly comprehend the effects of these mysteries upon the most pure Heart of this divine Mother. She conferred within Herself concerning these works of the Lord and weighed them with the scales of her most exalted wisdom. The devouring flame of her celestial love grew into a conflagration which excited the astonishment of all the angels and courtiers of heaven, and her natural powers of life could not have withstood the impetuous onsets of her desire to annihilate Herself entirely in the essence of the Divinity if She had not been preserved by a miracle. At the same time She was drawn toward men by her most sweet and maternal charity, for they all depended upon Her just as plants depend upon the sun which vivifies and nourishes them. She therefore lived in a state of violent longing to unite both of these objects of her love in her bosom.

534. In this disposition most holy Mary found Herself after the victories over the dragon. Even though during the entire course of her life from the first instant of her existence She had at all times operated what was most pure, holy and exalted, without ever being hindered by her travels, labors and cares for her most holy Son and her neighbors, yet at this juncture there arose as it were a contest in her Heart between her love of God and love of souls. In all her works of charity She felt the force of her aspirations drawing Her to new and higher gifts and workings of grace. On the one hand She desired to detach Herself from all sensible things in order to wing her flight to the supreme and continual union with the Divinity without the hindrance or medium of creatures, imitating the comprehensors, and much more the state of her divine Son when He lived on earth, in all things except the enjoyment of the beatific vision which the soul of Christ possessed in virtue of the hypostatic union. And though this latter was not possible to the heavenly Mother, yet the height of her sanctity and love seemed to demand all that was immediately next to it and below the state of comprehensors. Yet on the other hand her love of the Church called Her to hasten to the relief of the faithful in all their necessities, for without thus being engaged in this office of a Mother of this family She could scarcely rest satisfied with the favors and delights of the Most High; and since these activities of Martha required time, She continued to study how She could adjust her life in order to be lacking neither in the active nor the contemplative life.

535. The Most High allowed this solicitude of his Blessed Mother so the new favor and state He had prepared for Her by his powerful arm would bring Her more opportune relief. Therefore He spoke to Her and said: "My Spouse and my Friend, the solicitude and aspirations of thy most ardent love have wounded my Heart, and by the power of my right hand I desire to operate in Thee a work which I have done with no other generation, nor shall ever do, since Thou art my only and chosen One for my delights among all creatures. I have prepared for Thee alone a state

and place by Thyself in which I shall nourish Thee with my divinity as one of the Blessed, though in a different way; in it Thou shalt enjoy my continual sight and my embraces in solitude, peace and tranquility, without being hindered by created things or by thy condition as a viator. To this habitation Thou shalt wing thy flight freely, where Thou shalt discover the infinite spaces required by thy overflowing love so it may expand without measure or limit, and from there Thou shalt also fly to my holy Church, of which Thou art Mother. Laden with my treasures Thou shalt deliver them to thy brethren, distributing them according to thy disposition and will in their necessities and labors, so by Thee they receive the remedy.”

536. This is the favor benefit I pointed out in the last chapter (518) and which the Evangelist St. John encloses in these words (Apoc. 12:6): *And the Woman fled into the wilderness, where She had a place prepared by God, that there they should feed Her a thousand two hundred sixty days.* And a little farther on he says: *And there were given to the Woman two wings of a great eagle, that She might fly into the desert unto her place, where She was nourished* (Ib. 14). It is not easy to make myself understood regarding this mystery, for it contains many supernatural effects which have no counterpart in any other creature, and which are wonders reserved by God exclusively for the faculties of most holy Mary. And since faith teaches us we cannot measure or comprehend the power of the Almighty, it is proper to confess He can operate in Her much more than we can understand, and we need only deny such excellence in Her as would imply an evident and manifest contradiction. In what has been shown to me for the purpose of recording it in this History, supposing I understand it, I do not see any contradiction in the way I see it, though the proper terms for recording it fail me in what I write.

537. I say then that after the battles and victories which our Captainess and Mistress gained against the great dragon and his demons, God raised Her to a state in which He manifested to Her the Divinity, not by intuitive vision like that of the Blessed, but by another clear vision through created species, which in this History I have always called abstractive vision because it depends not upon the actual presence of the object seen, nor moves the understanding by the object itself, but by other species which present the object as it is in itself, although absent, for example in the same manner as God could show me the city of Rome as it is in itself by infusing into my mind all the images and likenesses of that city. This kind of vision of the Divinity most holy Mary had before during the course of her life, as throughout this History I have repeated many times; and though in substance it was not new to Her, since for example She had this kind of vision at the moment of her Conception (as I said in its place),* yet it was now new in two conditions. First, from this time on it was permanent and continual, enduring until her death when She passed into the beatific vision, while before this time it had been occasional and passing; and second, from this time it continued to increase in intensity day by day, and thus reached a degree more exalted, admirable and excellent than before, and beyond all created thought and measure.

538. For this purpose all her faculties were touched by the fire of the sanctuary, causing new effects of the Divinity, illuminating and exalting Her above Herself, for this state was to be a participation of the vision possessed by the comprehensors and the Blessed, yet at the same time different from theirs; thus it is important to note how it was similar and how it was different from theirs. The likeness consisted in seeing the same object of the Divinity and the same attributes which they enjoy by secure possession, only She understood them more deeply than they. The differences consisted in three points. First, the Blessed see God face to face and by intuitive

* cf. *Conception* 228, 236 [Ed.]

vision, whereas most holy Mary saw Him by abstractive vision as described. Second, the beatific vision of the saints in the fatherland and their essential fruition, in which the glory of the understanding and the will consists, cannot increase, whereas the abstractive vision of most holy Mary in her pilgrimage had no limit or restriction, for her knowledge of the infinite attributes and the divine essence increased day by day; and for this She was given the wings of an eagle by which She could continually soar in this interminable ocean of the Divinity, where there is infinitely more and more to know and no end to that which can be comprehended.

539. The third difference was that the saints can neither suffer nor merit, this being incompatible with their state, whereas our Queen could suffer and accumulate merit in her state of vision since She was still a wayfarer. Without this possibility this state would not have been so great and valuable in her eyes, nor for the Church, for the meritorious works of so great a Lady in this state of such great grace and sanctity were of the most inestimable value and price for all men. She presented a new and wonderful spectacle to the angels and saints, a sort of portrait of her divine Son, for as Queen and Lady She had the power to dispense and distribute the treasures of grace, and at the same time add to them by her own ineffable merits. And though She was not a comprehensor as the saints in heaven, yet in her state of pilgrimage She held a place so near to Christ and so like to his on earth that if compared with Him She was indeed a pilgrim in body and soul, but if compared to the other pilgrims on earth She seemed a comprehensor and one of the Blessed.

540. This state required all the harmony of her senses and other faculties to be of another order and capable of operations proportionate to her condition. Hence the manner of her activity experienced an entire change, and this in the following way: All the species or impressions of creatures, which through her senses had been admitted into her understanding, were terminated and blotted out from her soul, though as I have said above in this third Part (126) the great Lady had not admitted any images or species except only those which were necessary for the exercise of charity and other virtues. Now even these, insofar as they were terrestrial and partook of the sensitive in entering her understanding, the Lord abolished, purging and distilling them of all they yet contained of their origin in the senses. In place of the images and impressions which from that time on She could receive through the natural activity of her sensitive and intellectual faculties, the Lord infused into her mind other species more pure and immaterial, and by means of these her perception and understanding were raised to a more exalted level.

541. This wonder will not be difficult to understand for the learned; yet to make a fuller statement for all I wish to note that when we call to action the five bodily senses by which we hear, see and taste, etc., we receive certain impressions of the objects presented to them; these impressions are passed on to another interior and corporeal faculty, called the common sense, phantasy, imaginative or estimative power, in which all the impressions of the exterior senses are united and perceived or felt, and are deposited and kept in reserve as in a storehouse of the five senses. Up to this point our perception is like that of the animals, although with some difference. After these impressions of the common sense or phantasy have thus been stored within us, who are rational animals, our mind, by means of the natural workings of its faculties, cooperates with them and enables the intellect to become active, distilling from them other spiritual or immaterial images, and by means of these spiritual images which it produces within itself it naturally comes to know and understand what first entered through the senses. Hence philosophers say that in understanding our mind speculates upon the phantasy in order to draw from it the images of what it is to understand according to the natural routine of our acting faculties. This routine is maintained because the soul is united to the body and depends upon it in its operations.

542. But in most holy Mary, after entering this new state, this mode of procedure was not entirely preserved, for the Lord miraculously supplied for her intellect another mode of action, independent of the phantasy and the general sense. In place of the species which her understanding was naturally to draw from the impressions of exterior objects through the senses, He infused into Her other kinds of images which represented exterior objects in a more exalted manner, whereas those which She acquired by the senses remained in the storehouse of the phantasy without passing into the workshop of the imaginative power, which was instead furnished with and illumined by the supernatural species. These her understanding made use of in its activity, while at the same time those received and stored in the general phantasy served Her for the feeling of pain and sensible afflictions. Thus in this temple of most holy Mary was fulfilled what happened in its figure long before: The stones were shaped and wrought outside the temple, whereas within was heard neither hammer nor stroke (III Kg. 6:7); likewise the animals were killed and sacrificed upon the altar outside the precincts of the sanctuary (Ex. 40:27), while within it were offered only the holocaust of the incense and spices burned in the sacred fire (Ib. 25).

543. Through the workings of this miracle in our great Queen and Lady the stones of her virtues for her adornment were hewn and polished in the lower sensitive faculties of her soul, while in the vestibule of the common senses were offered up the hardships, sorrows and pains which She bore for the faithful in her labors for the Church. But in the holy of holies of her intellect and will were offered up only the perfume of her contemplation and vision of the Divinity and the fire of her incomparable love. For this reason the species which enter by the senses, representing objects in a more earthly manner and with the racket they cause, were not appropriate; therefore the divine power excluded them entirely and gave other infused and supernatural species representing the same objects, yet more pure in order to serve for the contemplation of the abstractive vision of the Divinity and to assist in the understanding She had of the being of God, whom She incessantly gazed upon and loved in the calmness, tranquility and serenity of inviolable peace.

544. These infused species were dependent upon the essence of God, since they represented all things to the understanding of most holy Mary just as a mirror represents objects to our eyes and makes them known to us without obliging us to inspect them directly. In this manner She was aware in all things of whatever was for the good of the children of the Church and what She was to do for them in their labors and difficulties, and of the manner in which She was to promote the fulfillment of the divine will on earth as it is in heaven. Favored by this kind of vision She was enabled to make her petitions in such a way as to have them all granted by the Lord. From this kind of insight the Lord exempted in Her the works which She was to perform in obedience to the commands of St. Peter and St. John, and sometimes requested by some of the other Apostles. For this exemption the Mother herself had besought the Lord in order not to interrupt the practice of obedience which She loved so much, and also because She understood that through obedience the will of God is known with such certainty and security that there is no need for the obedient person to have recourse to other means or roundabout ways to know the will of God better than knowing the one who commands has the authority and is the superior, for that is without doubt what His Majesty desires and commands, and is therefore proper.

545. Except for what pertained to obedience, including the reception of Holy Communion, in all her other doings the understanding of most holy Mary did not depend upon her interaction with sensible creatures, nor upon the images of the senses; from all of them She remained free and with interior solitude, enjoying the abstractive vision of the Divinity without interruption,

either awake or asleep, working or resting, without need of forethought or reasoning about what was most exalted in perfection or most agreeable to the Lord, and regarding the necessities of the Church and the time and manner of coming to its aid. All this She knew by the vision of the Divinity like the Blessed know by the beatific vision they have. And just as the least important of the knowledge of the Blessed is that concerning creatures, so also our great Queen and Lady, besides what She knew of the state of the holy Church and its government of all souls, knew the incomprehensible mysteries of the Divinity as the principal object of her vision, more than the highest Seraphim and Saints. With this heavenly bread and nourishment She was sustained in that solitude prepared for Her by the Lord. In it She was solicitous for the Church without being disturbed, active without inquietude, attentive without distraction, and in all things She was filled with God within and without, clothed with the purest gold of the Divinity, immersed and absorbed in this incomprehensible sea; yet at the same time She was attentive to all of her children and their remedy, since without this care her maternal charity could not rest completely.

546. This was the reason why two wings of a great eagle were given to Her, for by them She raised Herself to the solitude and state where the thoughts of neither angels nor men could ever soar, and so from that eminent habitation She could descend and fly to the aid of mortals, not gradually but light and accelerated flight. O prodigy of the omnipotence of God! O unheard-of wonder which thus manifests his infinite grandeur! Words fail me, speech is suspended, and our capacity is exhausted in the consideration of such a hidden sacrament. Happy, golden ages of the early Church which rejoiced in such goodness, and fortunate would we be if we could come to merit that in our own unhappy times the Lord would renew these signs and wonders through his most blessed Mother to the degree possible and as our necessities and miseries demand!

547. The happiness of that age and the manner in which most holy Mary used her powers will be better understood if we summarize some practical instances of the assistance rendered by Her to souls. One example was a man living in Jerusalem and well known in the city because he held a prominent position and was endowed with a more than ordinary mind and some moral virtues. As for the rest, he was a zealous upholder of the ancient law like St. Paul, and a bitter opponent of the teachings and law of Christ our Savior. Most holy Maryr knew this in the Lord, and through her intercession God had prepared the way for his conversion. Due to his good standing in the opinion of others the most pure Lady desired very much to convert and save him; this She asked of the Most High with ardent love and fervor, and the Lord granted Her request. Before most holy Mary entered the state of which I have spoken She had applied her great prudence and insight to find means of converting this soul; but now this kind of study was no longer necessary, for She needed only to attend to the Lord, where at her request all that She had to do for his conversion was made clearly manifest.

548. She saw this man was to come to Her through the preaching of St. John, and that She need only tell St. John to preach where this Jew would hear him. The Evangelist obeyed her orders, and at the same time the Guardian Angel of that man inspired him with the desire of seeing the Mother of the Crucified, whom all praised as a loving, modest and pious Woman. That man could not at that time fathom the spiritual good which could ensue from that visit because he had not the divine light for such knowledge; but without proposing to himself any such ends he desired to visit the great Lady out of calculating curiosity, merely in order to see who this Woman might be who was so much spoken of by others. But when he came into the presence of most holy Mary and looked upon Her, while with heavenly prudence She spoke to him, he was entirely changed into a new man. He immediately prostrated himself at the feet of the great Queen, confessing Christ as the Savior of the world and asking to be baptized. He received

Baptism then and there at the hands of St. John, and while the words of Baptism were pronounced the Holy Ghost came in visible form upon this man, who from that time on was distinguished for his holy life. The heavenly Mother sang a hymn of thanksgiving for this great and wonderful favor.

549. Another inhabitant of Jerusalem, deceived by her cousin versed in witchcraft, apostatized from the faith. Our great Queen took notice of the fall of that soul, since She knew all things in the vision of the Lord. In great affliction She applied Herself to tearful prayers and exercises of atonement for the return of this woman, for She knew such willful falling away in those who have once given themselves to the pursuit of eternal life always makes a return much more difficult. Yet the prayers of most holy Mary obtained the remedy for this soul deceived by the serpent. Immediately the Queen saw this woman must be warned and exhorted by St. John in order to bring her to a sense of her evil deed. St. John spoke to her, she listened, and confessed her sin to him, thus being restored to grace. Most holy Mary afterwards exhorted her to persevere and resist the demon.

550. Lucifer and his demons dared not disturb the Church in Jerusalem during the presence of the Queen, whom they feared to approach because her power filled them with fear and drove them to flight; instead they sought to make conquests among the baptized of those parts of Asia where St. Paul and the other Apostles were preaching. They perverted some so they apostasized, and disturbed or hindered the preaching of the Gospel. The most zealous Princess knew of the machinations of the dragon and asked the Lord for assistance, if it would be proper under the circumstances. She received answer that She could act as the Mother, Queen, and Mistress of all creation, and that She had found grace in the eyes of the Most High. Thus encouraged from on high She clothed Herself with invincible strength, and like the faithful spouse who rises from the couch, leaves the bridal chamber and the throne of her bridegroom, and arms herself to defend him against his assailants, so the valorous Lady, armed with divine power, rose up against the dragon, snatched the prey from his maw, wounding him by the power of her virtues, and commanding him again to sink into the abyss; and as She commanded, so it was fulfilled. Many other innumerable wonders wrought by our Queen could be cited, but these will suffice to indicate the state in which She was then constituted and the way in which She operated in it.

551. The computation of the years in which most holy Mary received this benefit must be made for the greater adornment of this History, summarizing what has been said above in other chapters. When She went from Jerusalem to Ephesus She was fifty-four years, three months and twenty-six days old, and her voyage took place in the year forty of the birth of Christ, on the sixth of January (366). She remained in Ephesus two and a half years (465), returning in the year forty-two on the sixth of July, being then fifty-six years and ten months old. The first Council mentioned above (496) was held by the Apostles two months after the Queen returned from Ephesus, so during that Council most holy Mary reached fifty-seven years old. Then followed the battles and triumphs and her elevation to the exalted state herein described (535) in the beginning of her fifty-eighth year, and in the year of Christ our Savior forty-two and nine months. This state lasted twelve hundred sixty days, as mentioned by St. John in Apocalypse chapter XII (v. 6), and then She passed to another state which I shall describe farther on (601, 607).

*INSTRUCTION GIVEN ME BY THE QUEEN
OF HEAVEN, MARY MOST HOLY.*

552. My daughter, no mortal has any excuse for not ordering their lives in imitation of the life of my divine Son and of my own, for we were an example and model for all. No one can be without blame if in his own state he is not perfect, having before his eyes the incarnate God, who became the Teacher of holiness for all states of life. Some souls, however, are chosen and set apart from the common order by the divine will so the fruit of his blood may be more fully realized in them, so the imitation of his life and mine may be more perfectly preserved, and so his divine goodness, omnipotence and mercy may shine forth more resplendently in the holy Church. Whenever these souls chosen for such ends correspond to the Lord with fidelity and fervent love, only very ignorant worldlings could wonder that He would demonstrate Himself so generous and powerful in granting them benefits and favors above human thought. Whoever doubts this wishes to impede the glory which God himself intends to obtain from his works, and desires to measure them by the shortsightedness and baseness of human capacity, which in such incredulous souls is ordinarily greatly depraved and obscured by sins.

553. And if the chosen souls themselves are so rude as to doubt his benefits, or do not dispose themselves to receive and use them prudently or with the esteem and appreciation due to the operations of God, then no doubt they offend His Majesty much more than others to whom no such blessings or talents are distributed. The Lord does not desire the bread of the children to be cast to the dogs (Mt. 15:26), nor his pearls to those who tread them under foot or abuse them (Mt. 7:6), for these blessings of special grace are the reserves of his highest Providence and the principal of the price of the Redemption. Reflect then, my dearest, that such faults are committed by those souls who with mistrust allow themselves to weaken in adverse or more arduous events, or who shrink from the Lord or impede Him by not serving Him in these works as the instruments of his power for all that is for his service. Their sin is still more reprehensible when they do not desire to confess Christ in these works out of human fear of the labor which may follow, and what the world may say concerning such new undertakings. In this way they only desire to serve the Lord and accomplish his will when it coincides with their own; and if they must undertake any work of virtue it must be accompanied by such and such conveniences; and if they must perform works of love it must not oblige them to leave the tranquility which they crave; and if they are to believe and esteem these benefits they must be rejoiced by caresses; and upon encountering adversity or labor in order to suffer it for God they immediately enter into discontent and sorrow, resentment and impatience, by which the Lord is thwarted in his desires, and they make themselves incapable of perfection in virtue.

554. All this is a deficiency of prudence, knowledge, and true love, which prevents these souls from looking to their own and their neighbor's advance, for they look to themselves rather than to God, and are governed more by self-love than by divine love and charity. Tacitly they are guilty of great presumption, since they attempt to direct the will of God and even to reprehend it, professing their readiness for great labors in his service under such and such conditions and their inability under other conditions. They are unwilling to risk their reputation* and their comfort even for the common good and the glory of God; yet because they do not proclaim this so clearly they think they do not commit this very audacious sin which the demon conceals from them, so they ignore it when they commit it.

* cf. Rom. 9:3 [Ed.]

555. In order for thee, my daughter, to avoid falling into this monstrous sin, thou must discreetly ponder what I give thee to understand and record, and how much I desire thee to imitate me. I could not fall into such sins, yet in continual watchfulness* I prayed to the Lord to govern me in all my actions according to his holy will and pleasure only, and I gave myself no liberty of doing anything which was not according to his greater approval; and for this reason I sought on my part the forgetfulness of all creatures and seclusion from them. Thou art subject to sin and knowest how many snares the dragon, by himself and through creatures, has laid in order to lead thee into it; hence thou hast good reason for ceaselessly beseeching the Almighty to govern thee in all thy actions, and for closing the portals of thy senses in such a way as to exclude from thy interior every image or figure of mundane and earthly things. Renounce therefore thy free will into the hands of thy God, and yield it to every pleasure of the Lord and mine. In what thou must necessarily transact with creatures for the fulfillment of the divine law and charity admit no image except what is unavoidable, and immediately ask for the remembrance of what is not necessary to be blotted out of thy mind. Regarding all thy works, words and thoughts consult with God, with thy Angels, and with me, for we are always with thee, and consult also with thy confessor whenever possible, and without this consultation regard all thou dost do or resolve upon as suspicious and dangerous; and by comparing thy actions and resolutions with my teachings thou shalt know whether they disagree with or conform to the will of God.

556. Above all and in everything never lose sight of the essence of God, for the light and faith which thou hast received regarding this must serve especially for this purpose. Since this is to be thy last end I desire thee even in mortal life to attain this vision as far as possible to thee with divine grace. It is indeed time for thee to cast out the fears and vain fantasies by which the enemy has sought to hinder and detain thee from giving constant credit to the blessings and favors of the Lord. Begin to be prudent and strong in this confident faith, and deliver thyself entirely to the pleasure of His Majesty so He may do with thee and in thee what shall be best for his service.

* cf. Mk. 13:37 [Ed.]