

The Sixth Dwelling Places

Chapter 8 (summary)

Interior Castle

Saint Teresa of Avila

Discusses how God communicates Himself to the soul through an intellectual vision, gives some counsels. Tells about the effects such a vision causes if it is genuine.

Recommends secrecy concerning these favors.

... The further the soul advances the more it is accompanied by the good Jesus ... When His Majesty desires we cannot do otherwise than walk always with Him. This is evident in the ways and modes by which His Majesty communicates Himself to us and shows us the love He bears us.

He does this through wonderful apparitions and visions ...

I would like to briefly mention something of these visions ... so you might not be frightened if He grants you some of these and so that we might praise Him ... He desires to communicate thus with a creature.

2. It will happen ... that the soul will **feel** Jesus Christ, our Lord, beside it. Yet, it **does not see**, either with the eyes of the body or with those of the soul. This is called an intellectual vision; I don't know why.

The person ... does not see anything and can't understand the nature of the vision.

She **knew** it was Jesus Christ, our Lord ...

Whether it was from God or not, though she had **great effects** to show it was, she was still afraid.

She had never heard of an intellectual vision but understood clearly that it was the same Lord who had often spoken to her. Until this favor, she never knew who was speaking to her, though she understood the words.

3. This vision isn't like the imaginative one that passes quickly, but lasts many days and sometimes more than a year. She went to her confessor worried.

He asked that if she didn't see anything how did she know it was our Lord ... She told him she didn't know...

Though some put many fears in her, she was unable to doubt especially when the Lord said to her: "Do not be afraid, it is I." These words had so much power that she could not doubt the vision ... and was left

strengthened and **happy** over such good company. She saw clearly that the vision was a **great help** toward **walking with the habitual remembrance of God** and a deep concern about avoiding anything displeasing to Him for it seems He was always looking at her...

Each time she wanted to speak with His Majesty in prayer, and even outside of it, she felt He was so near He couldn't fail to hear her ... She felt He was walking at her right side ... This vision comes in another unexplainable, more delicate way than the senses. It is so certain and leaves much **certitude** ...

In the visions that come through the senses one can be deceived, but not in the intellectual vision. This vision brings great interior benefits and effects ... The soul goes about with such **peace** and **continual desires** to please God, and with so much contempt for everything that does not bring it to Him...

4. Nonetheless,...she didn't know why so much good had come to her ... She was filled with **intense confusion** and **humility** ... The vision is definitely understood to be a **gift from God** ... a good given by the hand of God ... that bears with it a particular **knowledge of God**.

This **continual companionship** gives rise to a most **tender love** for His Majesty, and to some, desires to surrender oneself totally to His **service** and to a **great purity of conscience** because the presence at its side makes the soul pay attention to everything...

The Lord **awakens the soul to His presence** beside it ... The soul goes about almost continually with **actual love** for the One who it sees and understands is at its side.

5. In sum, as for the **soul's gain**, the vision is seen to be a most wonderful ... favor. The soul thanks the Lord ... and **would not exchange the blessing** for any **earthly treasure or delight**. Thus, when the Lord takes the vision away, the soul feels very much **alone**...

6. ... How if nothing is seen, does one know that it is Christ, or a saint, or His most glorious Mother? This, the soul will not know how to explain, nor can it understand how it knows, but it does know with the greatest certitude...

Let the one to whom His Majesty gives these favors receive them with **admiration and praise** for Him. He grants the soul particular **graces** through these **favors** and they are not granted to all, they should be **highly esteemed**. One should strive to **perform greater services** since God in so many ways helps the soul to perform these services. The soul doesn't think itself greater because of this, but rather that it is the one who serves God the **least**. It feels itself more obligated to Him than anyone, and any **fault** it commits **pierces** to the **core of its being**.

7. The **effects** from the vision... can be recognized by anyone the Lord has brought by this road. Through them you can know the vision is **not** an illusion ...

A vision caused by the devil would not last as long nor clothe the soul with so much **interior peace** ... The soul goes about so **attached to God** and with its thoughts so **occupied in Him** ...

God is so **faithful** that He will not allow the devil much leeway with a soul that doesn't aim for anything else but to please Him and spend its life for His honor and glory.

8. ... His Majesty will make the soul be the one to **gain**. If He permits the devil to tempt the soul, he will be defeated ... Do not be astonished. It is good that there be **fear** and that we walk with more **care**. Nor should you be **self-confident**, for since you are so favored you could grow more **careless**.

In the beginning, it is good that this vision be spoken of under the **seal of confession**...

If you are told that your vision is **fancied**, do not be concerned... If you are told that your vision is from the devil, it will be a greater **trial** ... though if the effects are present. know that the Lord will console and assure you and give the confessor light.

9. If the confessor ... has not been led by this path, he will be afraid and condemn it ... Once you have spoken with the prioress and a confessor, be quiet and don't try to confer about the matter with others; at times the devil may cause excessive **fears** causing the soul not to be satisfied with one consultation, especially if the confessor has little experience ... and makes the visions publicly known. As a result, many troublesome things happen to the soul and could happen to its religious order... Hence, a great deal of discretion is necessary in this matter...

10. A prioress should not think that since a Sister has experiences like these she is better than the others. The Lord leads each one as He sees is necessary. This **path** is a **preparation** for becoming a very good **servant of God** ... Sometimes God leads the weakest along this path ... One should consider the **virtues** and who it is who serves our Lord with greater **mortification, humility, and purity of conscience**; this is the one who will be the **holiest**. Yet, little can be known here below with **certitude**; we must wait until the true Judge gives to each one what is merited. In heaven we will be **surprised** to see how **different His judgment** is from what we can understand here below. May He be forever praised, amen.