

St. Teresa's Arguments of the Chapters.

J.H.S. Chapter I.³⁹³⁹ St. Teresa wrote no title, either of the whole book or of the Preface, but only the monogram J.H.S., which is repeated at the beginning of the first chapter and at the end of the last, previous to the letter with which the volume concludes.—In which she tells how God⁴⁰⁴⁰ "El Señor" is everywhere translated by "God" in distinction to "Nuestro Señor," "Our Lord." began to dispose this soul from childhood for virtue, and how she was helped by having virtuous parents.

Chapter II.—How she lost these virtues and how important it is to deal from childhood with virtuous persons.

Chapter III.—In which she sets forth how good company was the means of her resuming good intentions, and in what manner God began to give her some light on the deception to which she was subjected.

Chapter IV.—She explains how, with the assistance of God, she compelled herself to take the (Religious) habit, and how His Majesty began to send her many infirmities.

Chapter V.—She continues to speak of the great infirmities she suffered and the patience God gave her to bear them, and how He turned evil into good, as is seen from something that happened at the place where she went for a cure.

Chapter VI.—Of the great debt she owes God for giving her conformity of her will (with His) in her trials, and how she turned towards the glorious St. Joseph as her helper and advocate, and how much she profited thereby.

Chapter VII.—Of the way whereby she lost the graces God had granted her, and the wretched life she began to lead; she also speaks of the danger arising from the want of a strict enclosure in convents of nuns.

Chapter VIII.—Of the great advantage she derived from not entirely abandoning prayer so as not to lose her soul; and what an excellent remedy this is in order to win back what one has lost. She exhorts everybody to practise prayer, and shows what a gain xxiv it is, even if one should have given it up for a time, to make use of so great a good.

Chapter IX.—By what means God began to rouse her soul and give light in the midst of darkness, and to strengthen her virtues so that she should not offend Him.

Chapter X.—She begins to explain the graces God gave her in prayer, and how much we can do for ourselves, and of the importance of understanding God's mercies towards us. She requests those to whom this is to be sent to keep the remainder (of this book) secret, since they have commanded her to go into so many details about the graces God has shown her.

Chapter XI.—In which she sets forth how it is that we do not love God perfectly in a short time. She begins to expound by means of a comparison four degrees of prayer, of the first of which she treats here; this is most profitable for beginners and for those who find no taste in prayer.

Chapter XII.—Continuation of the first state. She declares how far, with the grace of God, we can proceed by ourselves, and speaks of the danger of seeking supernatural and extraordinary experiences before God lifts up the soul.

Chapter XIII.—She continues to treat of the first degree, and gives advice with respect to certain temptations sometimes sent by Satan. This is most profitable.

Chapter XIV.—She begins to explain the second degree of prayer in which God already gives the soul special consolations, which she shows here to be supernatural. This is most noteworthy.

Chapter XV.—Continuing the same subject, she gives certain advice how one should behave in the prayer of quiet. She shows that many souls advance so far, but that few go beyond. The matters treated of in this chapter are very necessary and profitable.

Chapter XVI.—On the third degree of prayer; she declares things of an elevated nature; what the soul that has come so far can do, and the effect of such great graces of God. This is calculated to greatly animate the spirit to the praise of God, and contains advice for those who have reached this point.

Chapter XVII.—Continues to declare matters concerning the third degree of prayer and completes the explanation of its effects. She also treats of the impediment caused by the imagination and the memory.

Chapter XVIII.—She treats of the fourth degree of prayer, and begins to explain⁴¹⁴¹ "In an excellent manner," scored through by the Saint herself. in what high dignity God holds a soul that has attained this state; this should animate those who are given to xxv prayer, to make an effort to reach so high a state since it can be obtained in this world, though not by merit but only through the goodness of God⁴²⁴² "To be read with great care, as it is explained in a most delicate way, and contains many noteworthy points," also scored through by St. Teresa herself..

Chapter XIX.—She continues the same subject, and begins to explain the effects on the soul of this degree of prayer. She earnestly exhorts not to turn back nor to give up prayer even if, after having received this favour, one should fall. She shows the damage that would result (from the neglect of this advice). This is most noteworthy and consoling for the weak and for sinners.

Chapter XX.—She speaks of the difference between Union and Trance, and explains what a Trance is; she also says something about the good a soul derives from being, through God's goodness, led so far. She speaks of the effects of Union.⁴³⁴³ "This is most admirable," scored through by the Saint.

Chapter XXI.—She continues and concludes this last degree of prayer, and says what a soul having reached it feels when obliged to turn back and live in the world, and speaks of the light God gives concerning the deceits (of the world). This is good doctrine.

Chapter XXII.—In which she shows that the safest way for contemplatives is not to lift up the spirit to high things but to wait for God to lift it up. How the Sacred Humanity of Christ is the medium for the most exalted contemplation. She mentions an error under which she laboured for some time. This chapter is most profitable.

Chapter XXIII.—She returns to the history of her life, how she began to practise greater perfection. This is profitable for those who have to direct souls practising prayer that they may know how to deal with beginners, and she speaks of the profit she derived from such knowledge.

Chapter XXIV.—She continues the same subject and tells how her soul improved since she began to practise obedience, and how little she was able to resist God's graces, and how His Majesty continued to give them more and more abundantly.

Chapter XXV.—Of the manner in which Locutions of God are perceived by the soul without being actually heard; and of some deceits that might take place in this matter, and how one is to know which is which. This is most profitable for those who are in this degree of prayer, because it is very well explained, and contains excellent doctrine.

Chapter XXVI.—She continues the same subject; explains and tells things that have happened to her which caused her to lose fear and convinced her that the spirit which spoke to her was a good one.

Chapter XXVII.—Of another way in which God teaches a soul, and, without speaking, makes His Will known in an admirable manner. She goes on to explain a vision, though not an imaginary one, and a great grace with which God favoured her. This chapter is noteworthy.

Chapter XXVIII.—She treats of the great favours God showed her, and how He appeared to her for the first time; she explains what an imaginary vision is, and speaks of the powerful effects it leaves and the signs whether it is from God. This chapter is most profitable and noteworthy.

Chapter XXIX.—She continues and tells of some great mercies God showed her, and what His Majesty said to her in order to assure her (of the truth of these visions), and taught her how to answer contradictors.

Chapter XXX.—She continues the history of her life, and how God sent her a remedy for all her anxieties by calling the holy Friar Fray Pedro de Alcantara of the Order of the glorious St. Francis to the place where she lived. She mentions some great temptations and interior trials through which she sometimes had to pass.

Chapter XXXI.—She speaks of some exterior temptations and apparitions of Satan, and how he ill-treated her. She mentions, moreover, some very good things by way of advice to persons who are walking on the way of perfection.

Chapter XXXII.—She narrates how it pleased God to put her in spirit in that place of Hell she had deserved by her sins. She tells a little⁴⁴⁴⁴ "Una cifra," a mere nothing. of what she saw there compared with what there was besides. She begins to speak of the manner and way of founding the convent of St. Joseph where she now lives.

Chapter XXXIII.—She continues the subject of the foundation of the glorious St. Joseph. How she was commanded to have nothing (further) to do with it, how she abandoned it, also the troubles it brought her and how God consoled her in all this.

Chapter XXXIV.—She shows how at that time it happened that she absented herself from this place and how her Superior commanded her to go away at the request of a very noble lady who was in great affliction. She begins to tell what happened to her there, and the great grace God bestowed upon her in determining through her instrumentality a person of distinction to serve Him truly; and how that person found favour and help in her (Teresa). This is noteworthy.

Chapter XXXV.—Continuation of the foundation of this house of our glorious Father St. Joseph; in what manner our Lord ordained that holy poverty should be observed there; the reason xxvii why she left the lady with whom she had been staying, and some other things that happened.

Chapter XXXVI.—She continues the same subject, and shows how the foundation of this convent of the glorious St. Joseph was finally accomplished, and the great contradictions and persecutions she had to endure after the Religious had taken the habit, and the great trials and temptations through which she passed, and how God led her forth victorious to His own glory and praise.

Chapter XXXVII.—Of the effects which remained when God granted her some favour; together with other very good doctrine. She shows how one ought to strive after and prize every increase in heavenly glory, and that for no trouble whatever one should neglect a good that is to be perpetual.

Chapter XXXVIII.—She treats of some great mercies God showed her, even making known to her heavenly secrets by means of visions and revelations His Majesty vouchsafed to grant her; she speaks of the effects they caused and the great improvement resulting in her soul.

Chapter XXXIX.—She continues the same subject, mentioning great graces granted her by God; how He promised to hear her requests on behalf of persons for whom she should pray. Some remarkable instances in which His Majesty thus favoured her.

Chapter XL.—Continuation of the same subject of great mercies God has shown her. From some of these very good doctrine may be gathered, and this, as she declares, was, besides compliance with obedience, her principal motive (in writing this book), namely to enumerate such of these mercies as would be instructive to souls. This chapter brings the history of her Life, written by herself, to an end. May it be for the glory of God. Amen.