

ained permission of Alvarez de Mendoza, then Bishop of Avila, to lodge in a little chamber which opened into the church. There it was her chief delight to pass the day and night in adoration before the Holy Sacrament. Prayer and mortification were now almost her sole occupation. She seldom went abroad except for confession to the church of the Jesuits, and to visit some pious ladies, who, though of high rank, delighted in cultivating the acquaintance of this humble servant of God. Desirous to profit by her pious converse, they contrived to find out her residence, so that Mary had now the mortification to see her holy exercises interrupted by their visits. But it was only leaving God for God; for her visitors were greatly edified, and often returned home amazed at her great lights on the mysteries of faith and the secrets of the interior life, which she could only receive from the Spirit of God.

Her humility (and we know that this is the basis of all virtue,) was now exposed to great danger, from the esteem in which she was held. Let us bless her divine Protector, who "jealous for her soul with great jealousy," preserved his own work, placing against public veneration the counterpoise of drynesses, disgusts, temptations and interior pains; sometimes permitting the devil to appear to her in frightful shapes. Mary supported with great courage and resignation this painful

state. She contented herself by saying, in all the simplicity of a saint, "Ah! Lord, surely you will not abandon me, since I have given you all I had to bestow." It is a great consolation for souls whom our Lord tries in the crucible, to meet confessors who understand the ways of, and act in concert with, the Spirit of God. Her director was no other than the celebrated Father Balthasar Alvarez, of the Society of Jesus, a person of consummate sanctity, and endowed in an eminent degree with the discernment of spirits. It was he who assured St. Teresa, whose confessor he was, that her visions, &c. which were then a problem in Spain, were of the divine spirit; and she declares in her writings, that she had never treated with him of any state of prayer, however sublime, with which he was not acquainted.

This good father soon saw that Mary Diaz was a strong and generous soul, who needed not the milk of children, but could live on the hard bread of tribulation and pain. Hence, in order to make her die to herself, and to perfect in her the work of God, he exercised her in every species of mortification, and treated her with great severity. She experienced nothing from him at times, but reprimands and humiliations. Sometimes he refused to answer her questions, or replied to them so harshly, that she was overwhelmed with grief. One day, that he saw her enter the church with