

## CHAPTER XXXII

### *How God in this World compensates a Suffering Man for His Suffering*

ONE joyful Easter Day, the Servant felt gladness in his heart, as he was sitting resting for a while, as was his custom. Then he asked God what compensation is received from God in this life by those who for His sake have undergone manifold sufferings.

Then, in an ecstasy, God enlightened him thus: 'Rejoice and be of good cheer, all ye suffering and detached men. Their patience<sup>1</sup> shall be gloriously praised; and just as they have been an object of compassion to many men, so also shall many rejoice with God eternally in their worthy praise and eternal glory. They have died with Me, and they shall also rise again joyfully with Me.'

'I will give them three special gifts: they are so noble that no one can value their worth. The first is this: I will give them their heart's desire in heaven and on earth, so that everything they desire will take place. The second is, that I will give them My divine peace, which neither angels, devils, nor men, nor any creature can take away from them. The third is, that I will kiss them so affectionately and embrace them so lovingly that I shall be they, and they shall be I,<sup>2</sup> and we two shall be united in one for ever. And as long delay pains restless hearts, this love shall not be saved up just for this present hour which only lasts for a single moment, but it is to begin now, and they shall enjoy it for ever, as far as mortal men,

<sup>1</sup> The sudden change from second to third person is in the original.

<sup>2</sup> One hesitates to think that Suso wrote these exact words. See John, xvii, 21-3.

each according to his nature, can bear more or less of it.'

The Servant rejoiced at these glad tidings, and when he had come to himself, he sprang up and laughed heartily, so that it echoed loudly in the chapel in which he was, and he said joyously to himself: 'Let anyone who has suffered come forward and complain! God knows that for myself I v<sup>o</sup>w that I feel as if I had never suffered on earth. I do not know what suffering is, but I do know what bliss and joy is. I am given all I can desire, which many an erring heart must needs lack. What more can I desire?'

Thereupon he turned in his mind to Eternal Truth and spoke thus: 'Ah, Eternal Truth, reveal to me now this hidden mystery, as far as one can express it in words. The truth is so completely unknown to many a blind man.' Then he was inwardly instructed thus: 'Behold, those men, with whom it fares well at the breaking through, which man must undergo, by dying to himself and all creatures, these men (and there are not many of them), are so completely lost in soul and mind in God that, so to speak, they know nothing else of themselves save that they apprehend themselves and all things in their prime origin.

'And for this reason they have as much pleasure and delight in everything that God does, as if God stood apart free and inactive, and had permitted them to carry it out according to their own intention. In this manner they have their heart's desire in themselves, for heaven and earth serve them, and all creatures are obedient to them, each one doing what they do, and leaving undone what they leave. Such men never feel sorrow in their hearts for any cause, by this I mean such pain or grief in the heart from which the will, with prudent deliberation, would like to be released. For, as regards external things, they certainly feel pleasure and pain like other people, in fact

sometimes they feel them more deeply than others, because of their refined susceptibility, but these emotions have no permanent place in them. Hence outwardly they stand fast and unmoved. Having died to themselves, they are raised above, as far as is possible, so that their joy is full and unchanging in all things. For in the divine being, into which their hearts have passed, if they have found the right way, there is no place for pain or grief, but only for peace and joy.

‘In the same measure as thy own frailty leads thee astray, so that thou dost commit sin, as a result of which, pain and grief rightly come to every man, who indulges therein, to that same extent thou shalt still lack this blessedness. But in so far as thou shalt avoid sin and in this respect thou dost die to thyself, and pass in to that state in which thou canst have neither pain nor suffering, inasmuch as pain is there no longer pain and suffering is no longer suffering, but all things are pure peace, then truly all is well with thee. All this takes place when thy own will is abandoned; for such persons are driven out of themselves by the thirst of longing to the will of God and to His righteousness.

‘The will of God tastes so sweet to them and they obtain so much glory from it that everything that God decrees for them makes them so joyous that they neither wish nor desire anything else. This is not to be taken to mean that man is forbidden to ask or pray to God, for it is God’s will that prayers should be addressed to Him. It is to be understood in the sense of the lawful outgoing from self-hood into the will of the high Godhead, as has been explained. But here there is a hidden impediment which causes many men to stumble: ‘Who knows’, they say, ‘whether it be God’s will?’ Behold, God is a cause transcendent over all things, which is more inward and present to everything than that thing can be to itself, and

against Whose will nothing can subsist nor continue to exist for a moment. Therefore, those who ever strive against God's will and would gladly further their own wills, must feel pain. They have no more peace than is to be had in hell, for they are always in tribulation and sadness. On the other hand, to a liberated spirit, God and peace are ever present, in disagreeable as in pleasant circumstances, for it is He indeed Who does everything, and Who is everything.

'How then can the sight of suffering be hard for them to bear, since they see God in it, find God, carry out God's will, and do not know their own wills? I will say nothing of all the illumination, comfort and divine joy, with which God often upholds His suffering friends in secret. These men are, as it were, in heaven; whatever God does in all His creatures, or refrains from doing, all works for good in them. Thus it is that a man who knows how to suffer properly is rewarded in part for his sufferings in this world, for he gains peace and joy in all things, and after death, eternal life is his portion.' Amen.