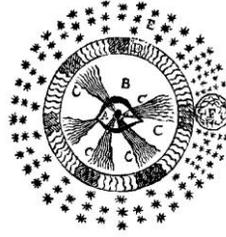


# Spirit's Day Studies

The Writings of Jane Lead,  
17<sup>th</sup> Century Christian Mystic



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## THE LETTERS OF MADAM GUYON.

BEING SELECTIONS OF HER RELIGIOUS THOUGHTS AND  
EXPERIENCES, TRANSLATED AND RE-ARRANGED  
FROM HER PRIVATE CORRESPONDENCE

By P. L. UPHAM.

*Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth  
alone; but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit.*

BOSTON:  
HENRY HOYT, No. 9 CORNHILL.

Entered according to Act of Congress in the year 1858, by HENRY HOYT,  
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**Spirit's Day Version**  
With Chapter and Paragraph numbering

Edited by Diane Guerrero

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## PREFACE.

[Letters P:1] Madam Guyon's correspondence was very extensive, occupying five printed volumes. Her style of writing is somewhat diffuse. In giving religious advice to many persons, there would necessarily be frequent repetitions. It has, therefore, occurred to the writer, that a selection and re-arrangement of thoughts, such as is found in this little volume, would be more acceptable and useful, than a literal and full translation of her letters. This selection necessarily involved much re-writing and condensing. Great care, however, has been taken to reach her true sentiments, and to give a just relation of her religious experience.

[Letters P:2] In the interesting preface to her letters, published in 1767, the writer remarks: "Next to the Holy Scriptures, we do not believe there has been given to the world, any writings, so valuable as Madam Guyon's; and of all these precious treasures, her letters are the most rare. All who have received the unction of the Holy One, whereby they know the truth, are agreed upon her divine writings."

[Letters P:3] If the writer may be permitted to add her humble testimony, having enjoyed the privilege of reading her writings in the original for several years, she would say, there are no writings, excepting the Sacred Oracles, from which she has received so much spiritual benefit. It is on this account, she has endeavored, with divine assistance, to portray to others, Madam Guyon's deep religious feelings. May the same spirit of devotion to her Lord and Master which she possessed, rest upon the heart of the reader.

Happy are they in whose hearts burns the flame of divine love. P.L.U.

## SKETCH OF HER LIFE.

[Letters P:4] Jeannie Marie Mothe, the maiden name of Madam Guyon, was born at Montargis, in France, April 13, 1648. She was married to M. J. Guyon, in 1664, and became the mother of four children. In July, 1676, she was separated from her husband by death. Madam Guyon was one of that number, who, in advance of the common standard of piety, are called to be *Reformers*; and on this account, she suffered great persecutions. She was several times imprisoned. At one time eight months; and subsequently four years in one of the towers of the celebrated Bastile. After her release from prison, she was banished for the remainder of her days to Blois, on the river Loire. At the time of her release from the Bastile, she was fifty-four years of age. Her sufferings from the cold, damp walls of the prison, in winter, and the confined air in summer, with other privations and hardships, greatly impaired her constitution, and rendered her a sufferer to the close of her days. She died June 9, 1717, aged sixty-nine years.

[Letters P:5] During her imprisonment, she wrote her Autobiography, which has been translated into English. Another work of hers, "The Torrents," has recently been translated, very happily, by Mr. Ford. Also two essays, "Method of Prayer," and "Concise View of the Way of God," by J. W. Metcalf. It is not known by the writer, that her other works have been translated, with the exception of some of her poems by William Cowper; and "The Life and Experience of Madam Guyon," in two volumes, written by my husband.

P. L. UPHAM. Brunswick, Me., April, 1858.

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## 1. REIGN OF CHRIST IN THE HEART.

[Letters 1:1] I have read your letter, my dear brother, with great pleasure. It is my highest happiness to see the reign of Jesus Christ extending itself in the hearts of God's people. An external religion has too much usurped the place of the religion of the heart. The ancient saints—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Enoch, Job—lived interiorly with God. The reign of Christ on earth is nothing more nor less than the subjection of the whole soul to himself. Alas! the world are opposed to this reign. Many pray, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven," but they are unwilling to be crucified to the world, and to their sinful lusts. God designs to bring his children, naturally rebellious, through the desert of crucifixions—through the temptations in the wilderness, into the promised land. But how many rebel, and choose rather to be bond-slaves in Egypt, than suffer the reductions of their sensual appetite.

[Letters 1:2] Since Jesus Christ appeared on earth, there is a general belief that the kingdoms of this world will ultimately be subject to his dominion. But we may ask, who hastens his coming, by now yielding up his own heart to his entire control?

[Letters 1:3] Our Lord imposed no rigorous ceremonies on his disciples. He taught them to enter into the closet; to retire within the heart; to speak but few words; to open their hearts, to receive the descent of the Holy Spirit.

[Letters 1:4] The holy Sabbath has not only an external, but a deeply spiritual meaning. It symbolises the rest of the holy soul, in union with God. Oh! that all Christians might know the coming of Jesus Christ in the soul! Might live in God, and God in them!

God alone knows how much I love you.

## 2. TURN FROM SELF TO CHRIST

[Letters 2:1] You are not forgotten, my dear E. God has engraven you on my heart. If you have not consented to the thoughts that have crossed your mind, do not be afflicted on account of them. The examination and dwelling upon these thoughts, brings them again to life. Be on your guard against everything that entangles you in self. God is a Father who bears with the innocent faults of his children, and wipes away the stains they have contracted. The greatest wrong you can do to God is to doubt his love. He regards the simplicity and purity of the intention. It is right to cherish great self-distrust, to realise your weakness and helplessness; but do not stop here. Confide as much more in God, as you hope less from yourself.

[Letters 2:2] Do not afflict yourself, because you do not at all times realise a *sensible* confidence in God, and other consoling, happy states. Walk by faith, and not by sight, or positive perception of the good you crave. Let us, my dear E., be closely united, and walk together; not according to the way we might choose, but according to the way God chooses for us.

I love you tenderly.

### 3. ASSURANCE.

[Letters 3:1] Notwithstanding all that is said to me, my dear M., in opposition to my state, I cannot have one doubt of its reality. There is within me an inward testimony to the truth; so deep, that all the world could not shake it. It is the work of God upon my heart, and partakes of his own immutability. It seems to me that all the difficulties of theologians concerning this state, arise from viewing it, not in the light of divine truth and power, but in the light of the creature. It is true, the creature, in itself, is only weakness and sin; but when it pleases God to new-create the soul, and make it one with himself, it is then transformed into the likeness of Christ.

[Letters 3:2] Who will dare limit the power of God? Who will say that God, whose love is infinite as it is free, cannot give such proofs of love as he pleases, to his creatures? Has he not the right to love me as he does? Yes, he loves me, and his love is *infinite*. I do not doubt it. And he loves you, too, dear M., in the same manner. This is eternal love manifested,—the heart of God drawn out,—*expressed* towards his creature.

[Letters 3:3] In this state, we understand the mutual secrets of the Lover and the beloved. Who will so deny the truth of the Lord, as to question this? When I hold my beloved in my arms, in vain does one assert, "It is not so,—I am deceived." I smile inwardly and say, "*My beloved is mine and I am his!*" "If we receive the witness of men, how much greater is the witness of God?"

### 4. HUMILITY THE EFFECT OF LOVE.

[Letters 4:1] I assure you, you are very dear to me. I rejoice very much in the progress of your soul. When I speak of progress, it is in descending, not in mounting. As when we charge a vessel, the more ballast we put in, the lower it sinks, so the more love we have in the soul, the lower we are abased in self. The side of the scales which is elevated, is empty; so the soul is elated only when it is void of love. "Love is our weight," says St. Augustine. Let us so charge ourselves with the weight of love, as to bring down self to its just level. Let its depths be manifested by our readiness to bear the cross, the humiliations, the sufferings, which are necessary to the purification of the soul. Our humiliation is our exaltation. "Whosoever is least among you shall be the greatest," says our Lord.

[Letters 4:2] I love you, my dear child, in the love of the Divine Master, who so abased himself by love! Oh! what a weight is love, since it caused so astonishing a fall, from heaven to earth,—from God to man! There is a beautiful passage in the Imitation of Christ, "Love to be unknown." Let us die to all but God.

## 5. DIVINE COMMUNICATIONS.

[Letters 5:1] God communicates himself to pure souls, and blesses, through them, other souls, who are in a state of receptivity. All these little rills, which water others, little compared with the fountain from which they flow, have no determinate choice of their own, but are governed by the will of their Lord and Master. The nature of God is communicative. God would cease to be God if he should cease to communicate himself, by love, to the pure soul. As the air rushes to a vacuum, so God fills the soul emptied of self.

[Letters 5:2] The seven blessed spirits around the throne, are those angels who approach nearest to God, and to whom he communicates himself the most abundantly. St. John, perhaps, was better prepared than any of the apostles to receive the Word, incarnate, dwelling in the soul.

[Letters 5:3] On the bosom of Jesus,—in close affinity with him,—John learned the heights and depths of divine love. It was on this account our Lord said to his mother, "seeing the disciple stand by whom he loved, Woman behold thy Son." He knew the loving heart of John would give her a place in his own home.

[Letters 5:4] God communicates himself to us in proportion as we are prepared to receive him. And in proportion as he diffuses himself in us, we are transformed in him, and bear his image. O, the astonishing depths of God's love! giving *himself* to souls disappropriated of self, becoming their end, and their final principle, their fulness, and their all.

## 6. JOY IN PERSECUTIONS.

[Letters 6:1] I am very grateful to you, my dear sir, for your sympathy in my apparent ills. God has not permitted that I should consider them otherwise than blessings. I trust what appears to destroy the truth will, in the end, establish it. Those who maintain the inward reign of the Holy Spirit will yet suffer many persecutions. There is nothing of any value but the love of God, and the accomplishment of his will. This is pure and substantial happiness. This joy no man taketh from us.

[Letters 6:2] It is my only desire to abandon myself into the hands of God, without scruples, without fears, without any agitating thoughts.

[Letters 6:3] Since I am there, O Lord, how can I be otherwise than happy? When divine Love has enfranchised the soul, what power can fetter it? How small the world appears to a heart that God fills with himself! I love thee, my Lord, not only with a sovereign love, but it seems to me I love thee alone, and all creatures only for thy sake. Thou art so much the soul of my soul, and the life of my life, that I have no other life than thine. Let all the world forsake me; my Lord, my Lover lives, and I live in him. This is the deep abyss where I hide myself in these many persecutions. O, abandonment! blessed abandonment! Happy the soul who lives no more in itself,

but in God. What can separate my soul from God? Surely, none can pluck me from my Father's hands. All is well, when the soul is in union with him.

## **7. LIBERTY IN CHRIST.**

[Letters 7:1] "If the Son make ye free, ye shall be free indeed." When the man of sin is destroyed, and the new man established in the soul, it finds itself in perfect liberty. As a bird let loose from its cage, the soul goes forth, unfettered, to dwell in the immensity of God. The natural selfish life restricts the soul at every point; and even God, the great *I am*, is unseen, or deprived of his glory.

[Letters 7:2] When Paul asked, "Who shall deliver me from this body of death?" he added, "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." That is, when by the grace of God, the new man is established in my soul, I shall be delivered. And, subsequently, when deliverance came, he cried out in transport, "I live, and yet not I. Christ liveth in me!" He was now no more occupied of himself, but let Jesus Christ live and act in him; he was animated by him, as the body is of the soul. If another soul animated our body, the body would obey this new soul; it would become the moving-spring of its operations. Thus Jesus Christ becomes the life of the new man. And what can be more free, more enlarged, than the soul of Jesus? His nature is divine, eternal, boundless. Alas! to what a narrow point does self reduce us! Who that looks at the freedom and expansion of the soul, as it puts on the new man, Christ Jesus, will not crush the reptile self to the dust, that the life of God may again, as in its first creation, animate the soul?

[Letters 7:3] This liberty is as the eagles' wings, of which the prophet speaks, which carries the soul on high. The dove that lighted on Jesus, was an emblem, not only of innocence, but of freedom,—of liberty of spirit to soar and dwell in God. May it please God to give you an experience of this liberty. Quit self, and you will find the freedom and enlargement of the All in All.

## **8. MELANCHOLY AVOIDED.**

[Letters 8:1] I assure you, my dear M., I sympathize deeply in your sufferings; but I entreat you, give no place to despondency. This is a dangerous temptation,—a refined, not a gross temptation of the adversary. Melancholy contracts and withers the heart, and renders it unfit to receive the impressions of grace. It magnifies and gives a false coloring to objects, and thus renders your burdens too heavy to bear. Your ill-health and the little consolation you have from friends, help to nourish this state. God's designs, regarding you, and his methods of bringing about these designs, are infinitely wise.

[Letters 8:2] There are two methods of serving little children. One is, to give them all they want for present pleasure. Another is, to deny them present pleasure for greater good. God is a wise Father, and chooses the best way to conduct his children.

[Letters 8:3] A sad exterior is more sure to repel than attract to piety. It is necessary to serve God, with a certain joyousness of spirit, with a freedom and openness, which renders it manifest that his yoke is easy; that it is neither a burden nor inconvenience.

[Letters 8:4] If you would please God, be useful to others, and happy yourself, you must renounce this melancholy disposition. It is better to divert your mind with innocent recreations, than to nourish melancholy. When I was a little child, a nephew of my father's, a very godly man, who ended his days by martyrdom, said to me, "It is better to cherish a desire to please God, than a fear of displeasing him." Let the desire to please God, and honor him, by an exterior all sweet, all humble, all cordial and cheerful, arouse and animate your spirit: For this I pray. Ever yours.

## 9. GOD'S CARE OF THE SOUL COMMITTED TO HIM.

[Letters 9:1] O, that you could realize, my dear friend, how much God loves you. As a painter draws upon his canvas what image pleases him, so God is now preparing your soul, by these inward crucifixions, to draw upon it his own likeness, He cherishes you as the mother her only son. He would have you yield readily to his will, even as the branches of the tree are moved by the light breath of the wind. In proportion to your abandonment to God, he will take care of you. When you yield readily to his will, you will be less embarrassed to discern the movements of God. You will follow them naturally, and be led, as it were, by the providencies of God. God will gently arrest you if you mistake. God has the same right to incline and move the heart as to possess it. When the soul is perfectly yielding, it loses all its own consistency, so to speak, in order to take any moment the shape that God gives it; as water takes all the form of the vases in which it is put, and also all the colors. Let there be no longer any resistance in your mind, and your heart will soon mingle in the ocean of love; you will float easily, and be at rest.

## 10. POWER OF THE ADVERSARY.

[Letters 10:1] I am deeply afflicted that so many, at the present day, and even some good persons, allow themselves to be openly seduced by the Evil One. Has not our Lord warned us against "false prophets, and the lying wonders of the *last days*?" All true prophets have spoken in the name of the Lord—"Thus saith the Lord." Nothing gives the enemy greater advantage than the love of extraordinary manifestations. I believe these external movements are a device of the evil one, to draw away souls from the Word of God, and from the interior tranquil way of faith.

[Letters 10:2] The tendency of all communications from God, is to make the soul die to self. An eminent saint remarks, that she had often experienced illuminations from the angel of darkness, more pleasing, more enticing, than those that came from God. Those delusory manifestations, however, leave the soul in a disturbed state, while those that come from God humble,

tranquillise and establish the soul in Him. The most dangerous seductions are those, which assume the garb of religion and have the semblance of truth.

[Letters 10:3] Elias appeared alone among four hundred prophets of Baal. These prophets were much agitated, attracting great attention, "crying aloud," etc.

[Letters 10:4] When Elias was told by the angel, that he would see the Lord in Mount Horeb, he *hid himself* in a cave. He saw a great trembling of the earth. God was not there. There came a great whirlwind. God was not there. Then there came a little zephyr. *God was in the still small voice.*

[Letters 10:5] The only true and safe revelation, is the internal revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ in the soul. "My sheep hear my voice." This involves no disturbance of our freedom, of the natural operations of the mind; but produces a beautiful harmonious action of all the powers of the soul. I beseech you, my friend, in the name of the Lord, to separate yourself from all these delusions of the adversary.

## 11. UNCTION OF GRACE.

[Letters 11:1] Friday morning, the 15th, I suffered very much, on account of *the individual*, whom you know. It seemed to me, that God wished that *the all of self* in him should be destroyed. I perceived, that although the truths be uttered, proceeded from the inward work of the spirit upon his heart, his reasoning faculty operated so powerfully, without his perceiving it, that the effect of these truths was in some degree lost. Souls are won more by the unction of grace—by the weapons of love—than by the power of argument.

[Letters 11:2] Are not the truths you utter, my friend, too much elaborated by the intellect, and polished by the imagination? Their effect seems to be lost, for want of simplicity and directness. They fall pleasantly on the ear, as a lovely song, but do not reach and move the heart. There is a lack of unction. Are you not always laboring for something new and original, thus exhibiting your own powers of mind, rather than the simple truth?

[Letters 11:3] Receive this suggestion, and light will be given you upon it. Do I speak too plainly? To speak the truth, and the truth only, is all I desire. I have this morning prayed, rather to be taken out of the world, than to disguise the truth. I have proclaimed it, in its purity, in the great Congregation, and it will be seen that Thou, O Lord, hast distilled it in my heart; or rather, O Sovereign Truth, that Thou art there thyself, to manifest thyself plainly, and that Thou dost make use of weak things to confound the strong. God is truth and love. In Him yours.

## 12. SPIRITUAL ONENESS.

[Letters 12:1] My union with you, my dear child, is steadily increasing. I bear you in my heart with a deep and absorbing interest, and seem anxious to communicate to you the abundant grace poured into my own soul. How close, how dear is the union of souls, made one in Christ! Our Savior beautifully expressed it, when he said, "Whosoever shall do the will of my Father, the same is my mother, sister and brother." There is no union more pure, more strong, than the union of souls in Christ! In this manner, pure as delightful, the saints in Heaven possess each other in God;—a union which does not interrupt the possession of God, although it is distinct from God.

[Letters 12:2] Let your soul have within it, a continual *Yes*. When the heart is in union with God, there is no *Nay*,—it is *Yes, be it so*, which reverberates through the soul. This *Yes*, this sup-  
pleness, renders the heart agreeable to the heart of the Spouse. It was thus with Mary, the mother of our Lord, when the angel messenger came to her, she replied, "Behold, the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to thy word." It was thus with the child-like soul of Samuel, when he said, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." It was thus with our divine Lord, "Lo, I come to do thy will."

Yours in the fellowship of the Saints.

## 13. VICISSITUDES IN EXPERIENCE.

[Letters 13:1] As the outgoings of life proceed from the living man, while we live in ourselves, we have a strong will and eager desires, and many fluctuating states. But in proportion as our will passes into the will of God, the desires which are the offspring of the will, are subjugated, and the soul is reduced to unity in God.

[Letters 13:2] As the soul advances in the life of God, its natural or selfish movements decrease; and it depends less on mere emotional exercises, and there is really less *variation* of the emotions.

[Letters 13:3] Rest assured, it is the same God who causes the scarcity and the abundance, the rain and the fair weather. The high and low states, the peaceful and the state of warfare, are each good in their season. These vicissitudes form and mature the interior, as the different seasons compose the year. Each change in your inward experience, or external condition, is a new test, by which to try your faith and love; and will be a help towards perfecting your soul, if you receive it with love and submission.

[Letters 13:4] Leave yourself therefore in the hands of Love. Love is always the same, although it causes you often to change your position. He who prefers one state to another, who loves abundance more than scarcity, when God orders otherwise, loves the gifts of God more than God himself.

[Letters 13:5] God loves you; let this thought equalise all states. Let him do with us as with the waves of the sea, and whether he takes us to his bosom, or casts us upon the sand, that is, leaves us to our own barrenness, all is well.

[Letters 13:6] For myself, I am pleased with all the Lord orders for me. I hold myself ready to suffer, not only imprisonment but death; perils everywhere—perils on the land—perils on the sea—among false brethren; all is good in Him, to whom I am united forever.

#### **14. PATIENCE WITH THE FAULTS OF OTHERS.**

[Letters 14:1] I love you very much, my dear M. If my love could be of any avail, it would console you, for I feel a greater tenderness and sympathy for you, than I am able to express. I am more certain than ever, that God designs you for himself. Live exteriorly with N., as being entirely reconciled. Make not too much account of his coldness, his passionate temper, his contempt. It is not by these you are to regulate your conduct, but by a motive more elevated—God and his glory. Let your heart endure his bitterness, for the love of Him, who preferred grief to pleasure. At the same time, do no violence to your own sacred feelings, to accommodate yourself to him, in order to give him a pleasure he cannot appreciate. Regard your present condition, as a means God has given you, to manifest your love to himself, by a willingness to sacrifice yourself. Reject not this cross, shall I not rather say *crown*, and let all be accomplished between God and your soul, in such a quiet manner, that the struggle with your own feelings will not be perceived.

[Letters 14:2] While you are bearing this daily cross—this real crucifixion—I am certain God will sustain you, from the fulness of his love. All is alike good, when God is with us. I love you tenderly. God loves you; let this make amends for all. In Him devotedly yours.

#### **15 .HOW TO DISTINGUISH THE MOVEMENTS OF GOD.**

[Letters 15:1] You enquire, how one who desires to follow the movements of God's spirit, may distinguish these movements, from the natural operations of the mind. There is not, at all times, a positive certainty regarding divine movements. If it were so, we should become infallible as the angels; that is, if we were as pure in our intentions. We must walk with God, in entire abandonment and uncertainty, at the risk of sometimes making mistakes, which in the infancy of experience is unavoidable. He who wishes for a particular inspiration, or direction in common matters, which his own reason and judgment can determine, is liable to deception.

[Letters 15:2] A pure soul acts in simplicity, and without certainty, being persuaded that what is good comes from God, and what is not good from self. The greater the simplicity,—the more separate from the mingling of self-activity—the purer are these operations; because the soul in this state is only a simple instrument, that the Word, which is in her, moves, so that it is the Word which speaks and not herself. This manner of speaking, relates to matters of importance,

and not to the minute concerns of every-day life. The divine Word, *in all exigencies*, is found in the soul, that is wholly consecrated to Christ. "When they bring you before magistrates and kings, etc., it shall be given you in *that hour* what ye shall speak." This method of divine leading—by the hour and by the moment—leaves the soul always free and unencumbered, and ready for the slightest breath of the Lord. This breath, in the pure soul, is as the gentle zephyr, and not as the whirlwind, which shakes the earth. Do not then expect to have anticipated movements, or movements beforehand from God. I have an experience of many years, that God often makes known his will, only in the time of action.

[Letters 15:3] If a pure soul, wholly sacrificed to God, should undertake something contrary to the will of God, it would feel a slight repugnance, and desist at once. If one does not feel this repugnance, let the act be performed in simplicity. A mother who holds her child by a leading-string, loosens it, that it may walk; but if about to make a mis-step, she draws the string. The repugnance which a holy soul feels to do a thing, is as when the mother draws the leading-string.

## 16. STATE OF SIMPLICITY.

[Letters 16:1] I experienced recently, a marked perception of your state, as one in which God took delight, and upon which he had infinite designs, regarding himself and his glory. I saw clearly the state to which God desired to bring you—the means to be used, and the obstacles in the way—the mutual sympathy and confidence he required between us—and the openness and freedom of communication necessary for our mutual benefit, and that we should not hesitate to speak freely of each other's faults.

[Letters 16:2] The peculiarity you remark in my experience, needs some explanation. You say I do not seem to be wounded, nor blame myself when reprov'd for a fault. To which I reply simply, there is no more of self remaining in me to be wounded. This indifferent state you notice in me, arises from the state of innocency and infancy in which I find myself. Our Lord holds me so far removed from myself, or from my natural state, that it is impossible for me to take a painful view of myself. When a fault is committed by me, it leaves no traces on the soul; it is as something external, which is easily removed. Do not infer that I am blind to my faults. The light of truth is so subtle and penetrating, that it discovers the slightest fault. Souls which are in the natural life, have real faults, as a paper written over with ink is strongly marked, therefore they see and feel them. But souls, transformed into God, have faults, as a writing traced on sand when the wind is high, the wind defacing it as soon as it is traced. This is the economy of divine wisdom, relating to souls in union and harmony with God. Oh! the greatness and simplicity of the way of Truth! How unlike the world's apprehension of it!

## 17. QUENCHING THE SPIRIT.

[Letters 17:1] Desiring to follow closely the divine leading, I expressed to you the other day, some sentiments you were not able to receive. I perceived at once, that on account of your re-

sistance, I could say no more. From this experience, although painful as regards yourself, I learnt the extreme delicacy of the spirit that seeks to aid others; and the strength of man's freedom to oppose this operation. I realized, also, my inability to act of myself; for, as soon as the spirit in me was silent, I had nothing to say. I had, however, the extreme satisfaction of knowing, that this good spirit alone conducted me; and that I would not, in the least degree, add, nor diminish from its operations.

[Letters 17:2] It was from a knowledge, gained by experience, of the extreme delicacy and purity of this divine spirit, that I remarked to you, the other day, that if you did not receive the instructions I then imparted, I should have nothing farther to communicate to you. O, how pure and how unlike the impetuous operation of man's spirit, is this operation of God!

### **18. SUFFER THE CRUCIFIXIONS AND REDUCTIONS OF SELF.**

[Letters 18:1] All the graces of the Christian, spring from the death of self. Let us, then, bear patiently the afflictions, which reduce this overflowing life. There is a suffering in connection with confusions and uncertainties, very trying to bear. Unbounded patience is necessary, to bear not only with ourselves, but with others, whose various tempers and dispositions are not congenial with our own. "Offences,"—wounds of spirit will occur while we live in the flesh. These offences must be borne in silence, and thus subjugated and controlled by the spirit of grace. By a law of our nature, we feel, more or less, the influence of the spheres in which we move.

[Letters 18:2] While we honor, we think, the true cross, the affliction that comes from God, let us remember, that these instruments, so disagreeable, are the true cross that providence daily furnishes us.

[Letters 18:3] Do not sully the cross and mar its operations, by your murmurs and reflections. Let us welcome any trials, that teach us what we are, and lead us to renounce ourselves and find our all in God.

[Letters 18:4] Jesus Christ says, "He who renounces not all that he hath, cannot be my disciple." Of all possessions, that of ourselves is the most dangerous.

[Letters 18:5] Please present my cordial regards to your brother. I sympathize deeply in his misfortunes. I use this expression, in conformity to common usage, but it does not express the sentiments of my heart. I am convinced that the loss of wealth, worldly honor, persecutions, are the best instruments to unite us to Jesus Christ. All evils, or apparent evils, are great blessings when they unite us to our All in All. I pray God, to sustain him. His sufferings only increase my sympathy and love for him in our Lord. My health is still feeble, but all is well in the depths of my heart. God is there.

## 19. REPROVE IN LOVE.

[Letters 19:1] It is important to use great care and sweetness in reproving others. Reprove only when alone with the person, and take not your own time, but the moment of God. As we are not free from faults ourselves, we must not expect too much from others. Be yourself very humble and child-like, and this character will act sympathetically on others. Jesus Christ was full of sweetness and charity. How patiently did he bear with his imperfect disciples, even with Judas, without anger, without bitterness, and even without coldness.

[Letters 19:2] How lowly was Jesus! He "did not break the bruised reed." He imparts to his little ones no tyrannic power. They use no violence in dealing with souls, but say with John, "Behold the *Lamb of God*, who taketh away the sins of the world." Our Lord, "rejoiced in spirit," in an unusual manner, such as we find nowhere else in Scripture, when he said, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto *babes*." How happy are we in the presence of a little child; how much at ease! It imposes on us no burden of restraint, of fear, of management! It is in this childlike disposition of meekness, of sweetness, of innocency, that we should seek to benefit others.

In the love of Jesus, yours.

## 20. SILENT OPERATION OF GRACE.

[Letters 20:1] I perceive, by your letter, you are in doubt about the grace which passes interiorly from heart to heart. We notice an illustration of this in the woman who touched our Lord, when he said: "I perceive that virtue is gone out of me." In a similar manner, without words, one heart may communicate grace to another heart, as God imparts grace to the soul. But if the soul is not in a state to receive it, the grace of the interior is not communicated, as is expressed in another passage; "If they are not children of peace, your peace will return to you again." This illustrates, according to my view, pure interior communications of the grace of God, from heart to heart, which the soul relishes in silence, and which silence is often more efficacious than a multitude of words.

[Letters 20:2] At our last interviews I had an inclination for silence, but finding in you an aversion to silent communion, I entered into conversation, but without any interior correspondence on my part, and, evidently, without any benefit to you. God would teach you, my dear child, there is a silence of the soul through which he operates, filling it with the unction of grace, to be diffused on other hearts who are in a state of receptivity, often more efficacious than words to replenish the soul.

[Letters 20:3] We find this still harmonious action in nature. The sun, the moon, and stars, shine in silence. The voice of God is heard in the silence of the soul. The operation of grace is in silence, as it comes from God, and may it not reach and pass from soul to soul without the noise of words? O, that all Christians knew what it means to *keep silence* before the Lord!

## 21. LIMIT NOT YOUR SPHERE.

[Letters 21:1] Let me urge you, my child, to enlarge your heart; or, rather, suffer it to become enlarged by grace. This contraction shuts you up in yourself, and hinders an agreeable openness which we should ever maintain, even towards those who have no particular affinity with ourselves. An open, frank exterior wins confidence. Let it not appear, that you have so much relish for yourself, as not to think of others. What seems to us a virtue is sometimes regarded by God as a fault; and which we shall so perceive, when we have clearer light.

[Letters 21:2] You seem to mark out for yourself a certain sphere, and if you go beyond it, you think you do yourself an injury. Thus, while you have an apparent movement, you are only describing a circle, whose centre and circumference is self. I entreat you, pass beyond the narrow bounds of self;—suffer yourself to be led out of self into the will and way of God. Thus you will be much more happy and useful. If I loved you less, I should be less severe.

[Letters 21:3] Let God be the sovereign Master over our hearts, and instruct, and reprove, and operate in us, by himself, or through others, as pleases him.

Adieu. God bless you, my child.

## 22. SECRET OF DIVINE OPERATIONS UPON THE SOUL.

[Letters 22:1] Do not suppose, Dear Sir, that you are to be purified by great trials and extraordinary events. All is accomplished in you by the suppleness of your will,—by the state of infancy. It must be so on account of the pride of your natural reason. God conducts the soul in a way opposed to human philosophy. Hence the necessity of being reduced to the state of infancy, and to the subjection of the will. What we call the *death* of the *will*, is the passage of our will into the will of God. This change implies not only a change in externals, but the inward subjection of the desires and sentiments of the heart. Here most persons, who commence the religious life, stop short. They cannot submit to the interior crucifixion, which lays prostrate the whole of the natural carnal life, and consequently there follows a mingling of the spirit of the flesh with grace, and it is this which produces such monsters in the religious world. Do we not read in Scripture, that in consequence of the alliance of the sons of God with the daughters of men, giants were born, who so filled the earth with wickedness, they drew down a deluge of wrath upon the world? It is from this abominable alliance of the flesh with the spirit, that all those who appear in the world, as "mighty men, men of renown," are produced and sustained. One may be full of the natural life, while apparently dead to the external things of the world. Thus they are dead to inferior things, and alive in the most essential points—dead in name, but not in reality.

[Letters 22:2] By an authority as gentle as efficacious, God accomplishes his will in us, when we have surrendered our souls to him. The consent we give to his operations, and our relish of them, is sweet and sustaining, in proportion to the perfection of our abandonment. God does not arrest the soul with violence. He adjusts all things in such a manner, that we follow him happily,

even across dangerous precipices. So good is this Divine Master, so well does he understand the methods of conducting the soul, that it runs after him, and makes haste to walk in the path he orders.

[Letters 22:3] Suppleness of soul is, therefore, of vital consequence to its progress. It is the work of God to effect this. Happy are the souls, who yield to his discipline. God renders the soul, in the commencement, supple to follow illuminated reason; afterwards to follow the way of faith. He then conducts the soul by unknown steps, causing it to enter into the wisdom of Jesus Christ which is so different from all its former experience, that without the testimony of divine filiation, which remains in the soul in a manner hidden, and the ease and liberty the soul finds in this unknown way, it would consider itself as being separated continually from God, being left, as it were, to act of itself. Human wisdom being here lost, and the powers of the soul controlled by the wisdom of Jesus Christ, born in the soul, it increases in its proportions, even unto the stature of a perfect man in Christ Jesus.

[Letters 22:4] The soul, having now passed into God, is in its proper place, and will be happy, provided it remains fixed and separate from its former manner of acting.

[Letters 22:5] Reason may at times oppose with all its strength, and cause some fears, some hesitations; but, being fixed in God, it is impossible for the soul to change its course; and, after the experience of many useless sufferings, having their origin in self, it suffers itself to be drawn in the current of love. There is now no more of violence to nature. The soul is in its natural state. The ease and naturalness of this state causes, at times, some fear, some anxiety. It is as much the nature of man, originally, and in his new creation in the likeness of Christ, to be in God, and to be there in perfect enlargement, simplicity, and innocence, as it is the nature of water to flow in its channel. When man is as he should be, his state is one of infinite ease and without limitations, because he is created sovereign, or master of himself, and cannot be subjected by anything created, although he is subjected to God, if that may be called subjection, which brings the soul into affinity with God, and makes it partaker of his nature.

[Letters 22:6] Be therefore persuaded, that God uses no violence in dealing with the soul. This commotion in the soul, arises from the resistance of man's will to divine operations. When the soul is disenfranchised of all that is opposed to the will of God; when it is not arrested either by desires or repugnancies, it runs without stopping or weariness in the way. This is what is called death,—death to self; but the soul was never so much alive; it now lives the true life, the life of God.

[Letters 22:7] When the soul becomes one with God by the loss of its own will and life, it has purposes, and it is important to follow them; but they are purposes in God, and have in them nothing of self. All that has rapport to self is no more, and God is all. Being passed into God, the soul is changed and transformed in him. This is what the mystics call *Resurrection*. But the word used in this way, does not bear its usual signification. To resuscitate is to revive the former life. But in this case, the will, or natural life is consumed, and gives place to the will or life of God.

Thus the Holy Spirit operates effectively in the soul, transforming it into the likeness of the Son of God.

[Letters 22:8] Now the soul participates in the qualities of God, one of which qualities, is that of communicating itself to other souls. Or rather, it is as a stream, which, being lost in a large river, follows the course of the river, communicating itself where the river communicates, watering where it waters, drawing into itself all the smaller rivers, which are destined alike to lose themselves in the great ocean of Love. These streams have no independent life, but proceed from, and flow back into their origin. Here is the consummation of souls in oneness, as Jesus Christ has expressed it,—"*One in us.*"

[Letters 22:9] There is divine reality in this truth. Blessed are those who comprehend it! How many walk side by side along these rivers, and yet never mingle their waters! And many there are, also, who haste with eagerness, to precipitate themselves into this divine stream, and flow together, as the souls of the celestial ones, in the fulness of divine love.

[Letters 22:10] This is not a chimera of the fancy; it is the wonderful economy of divinity. It is the end and object of the creation of the soul—the end and compass of all the efforts of God, regarding his creatures. Here is consummated all the glory, God derives from their existence. All beside are only the means approaching this final end, this glorious termination, and absorption of the soul in Deity. Here is the light which ravishes the soul. A light which does not precede, but follows the soul in its progress; unfolding more and more, as a man in a dark cavern, discovers the concealed places, only when he has remained in it for some time.

[Letters 22:11] This is the pure Theology in which God instructs the angels and the saints. It is the Theology of Experience, that God teaches only to his children, who having abandoned their own wisdom, he has himself become their wisdom and their life. This is the law of wisdom, my friend, for us,—the way of the Lord in us. In him we are one.

### **23. NO UNION WITH SELFISH SOULS.**

[Letters 23:1] There are some souls which cause me great suffering. These are selfish souls, full of compromises, speculations and human arrangements, and desiring others to accommodate themselves to their humors and inclinations. I find myself unable to administer in the least degree to their self-love; and when I would be a little complaisant, a Master, more powerful than myself, restrains me. I cannot give such persons any other place in my heart, than God gives them. I cannot adapt myself to their superficial state, neither respond to their professions of friendship; these are very repulsive to my feelings.

[Letters 23:2] The love which dwells in my heart, is not a natural love, but arises from a depth which rejects, what is not in correspondence with it, or rather what is not in unison with the heart of God. I cannot be with a child without caressing it, nor with a child-like soul without a tender attachment. I do not regard the exterior, but the state of the soul; its affinity and oneness with

God. The only perfect union, is the union of souls in God; such as exists in heaven, and on earth after the resurrection, life takes effect in the soul.

#### **24. NEVER YIELD TO DISCOURAGEMENT.**

[Letters 24:1] Do not be disheartened, my friend, on account of your slow progress. A long martyrdom is sometimes necessary, in order to purify our souls from the concealed faults of self-love—faults interwoven in our nature, and strengthened by long indulgence. As you cannot control at once the agitations of nature, arm yourself with patience, to accomplish the task little by little; not in the way of direct effort, but rather by ceasing from effort, remaining quiet, permitting neither gestures nor words to betray your feelings.

[Letters 24:2] Could we enter into the highest state of grace, as we enter into a room, it might be easily accomplished. But alas! the door is straight, and there are many deaths to pass; in a word, death to self. It is this long martyrdom, or dying of the old man of sin, which causes all the pains of the interior life. It is rare to find persons, who are willing to die entirely to self, and therefore few reach the highest state of grace.

[Letters 24:3] Have good courage. It is a great work to draw a large ship from her moorings, but when she is in the waters, how easily she rolls! What happiness, when by perseverance, you have triumphed over nature, to find yourself in the abundant waters of grace! I pray God to put his own hand to the work. He will.

In Him, devotedly yours.

#### **25. WEAKNESS AND IMPERFECTION.**

[Letters 25:1] I reciprocate your friendship, madam, with all my heart. Our divine Master knows how happy I am to serve you in any possible way. Oh! madam, it is better to be feeble, when God leaves us in our weakness, than to have a strength which is our own. I once thought, that the pure soul was free from all faults, but I now see otherwise. God clothes his children with frailties, that they may be humble in their own eyes, and be concealed from the eyes of the world. The Tabernacle was covered with the skins of the beasts, while the Temple of Herod was ornamented with gold. Let us not afflict ourselves on account of our littleness and infirmities, since God so orders it, but become as little children. When a little child falls, it cannot raise itself, but lets another do for it all that it needs.

[Letters 25:2] It does not depend on ourselves to make the presence of God more or less sensible. Let the desire for a lively sense of this presence, be crucified to the will of God. Take what is given you. Be as the little child, who eats and sleeps and grows. God gives you the best nourishment, although not always the sweetest to the taste. Adieu! my heart sympathises with you.

## **26. ADVANCEMENT.**

[Letters 26:1] During the process of the soul's purification and advancement, it loses sight not only of itself, but of all things else; except God; and even of the distinct apprehension of our Lord, in his humanity. That is, there are no longer distinct, bounded views and perceptions of Christ, the soul becoming identical with Christ. This is necessary in order to draw the soul into oneness with God. Let all go in the divine order. When the soul has returned to its end and origin, and is lost in God, it finds all it lost, without going out from God.

[Letters 26:2] When the soul is yet in itself, it draws all things to itself, and sees God and all creatures in itself. But when the soul is in oneness with God, it carries all creatures with it in God, and sees nothing separate from God. Seeing all in God, it sees all things in the true light, as with the eye of God. This is what David calls, "Seeing light in thy light."

[Letters 26:3] May God give you understanding of what I say, and docility and acquiescence in the truths, which he causes to penetrate your soul. I make no reserves, but express freely all my thoughts. The least reserve for self, is as a strong breath against a mirror, it obstructs the view of God. My soul, it seems to me, is clear and transparent, reflecting only what the Master presents; and the execution of his will renders the soul always increasingly pure and transparent. May God be all in all to you.

## **27. GREATNESS OF SPIRITUAL POVERTY.**

[Letters 27:1] Do not measure yourself by others, who may not be led as you are. God chooses to enrich some souls with brilliant gifts, but he has chosen you, stripped of all, in the depths of spiritual poverty. This is the perfect self-renouncement, without which, one cannot be the disciple of the Lord Jesus. All other states, however elevated they may be, are inferior to this pure, naked state of the soul. It is a state, which despoils the lover of all he possesses in favor of his Beloved. It is a state in which the soul is shielded from all inroads of the enemy; who can reach only what remains of self in the creature, and not what is enclosed in God.

[Letters 27:2] God has chosen you for himself alone. You are the sanctuary, which is open only to the high priest, in which is contained the ark of the covenant—the essential, will of God—the sacred place, encompassed by the clouds, where the glory of God appears. Oh! blessed poverty of spirit, in which state the soul is enriched with the best gifts a God can bestow!

[Letters 27:3] Measure not your advancement by relation to the road passed over, but by rapport to the end. There yet remains a great road to pass over, since God himself is the way.

The more fully you enter into his designs, the more I love you.

## 28. ASSISTANCE RENDERED BY ONE SOUL TO ANOTHER.

[Letters 28:1] The interest I feel in your spiritual welfare, my dear F., is very great—so deeply absorbing, that I slept but little during the past night, presenting you in prayer before our Lord. I have an inward conviction, that God is enriching your heart by my humble instrumentality; thus, while he elevates you on one side, he debases you on the other, by communicating his grace through so unworthy a channel as myself. The Spirit has revealed to me your state, when I have received no intelligence from you. God has thus ordered it, for his own glory; and when many years hence, this method of God's operations will be better known—the assistance rendered by one soul to another, without the mediation of the body—the use he has made of this feeble instrument to communicate to you his grace, will serve to substantiate this divine truth and heavenly mode of operation.

[Letters 28:2] There is therefore for you, a means of interior advancement, which no distance of place can interrupt. It will be only from lack of correspondence on your part, that it will be diverted. God desires it, at least for a time, until your soul is entirely in union with himself. This method of communication is only a superior fountain discharging itself into another; or, as two rivers bearing each other to the same sea.

[Letters 28:3] Receive then this poor heart in the fulness of Christ's love, and believe me, no one can be more fully united to you than I am.

## 29. SIMPLICITY AND POWER OF THE WORD.

[Letters 29:1] You enquire, my friend, why I do not use obscure terms and extraordinary expressions, in explaining the Scriptures. My Lord teaches me, that while there are no writings so profound as the Gospels, there are none so simple. And further, that simplicity of soul gives simplicity of expression. When we speak of a state beyond our experience, we do so with difficulty, and have recourse to learning to aid us, and use forced expressions.

[Letters 29:2] In the natural, simple expressions of Scripture, there are deep sentiments, adapted to the wants of each soul—to those less and more advanced.

[Letters 29:3] The word of God enters the centre of the soul; it has a penetrating quality; an operative efficiency. No words of man can produce the same effect; at least, none but such as come from souls, who are pure channels of the word of God. It is the good pleasure of our Lord, to express and reproduce himself upon the self-abandoned soul. Who does not admire the profound mystery of the creation of the world, where God produced all things by his word? When God created man, he formed him of the dust of the earth—the lowest form of matter—made of dust, that he might not rob God of his glory! But man thus created, received *the spirit*—the breath of the Word. This dust of the earth became the living breath of God. When Jesus Christ is formed in the soul, he imparts not only a clear understanding of the word, but is himself the Word, reproduced in the soul. Those only in whom Christ dwells, fulfill the word, or have the

word accomplished in them. Such only are able fully to interpret the word. It is not learning which best explains the truths of God, but the reproduction of these truths in the life—the experience of them.

### **30. FORGETFULNESS OF SELF.**

[Letters 30:1] I cannot compliment you, dear sir, and I am persuaded, that you will expect from me, only the simplicity of the Christian. This simplicity leads me to say, only what our Lord gives me. You need more of this simplicity. The frequent self-returns you make, dwelling so much on your unworthiness, although it may have the appearance of humility, is only a refined self-love. True simplicity regards God alone; it has its eye fixed upon him, and is not drawn towards self; and it is as pleased to say humble as great things.

[Letters 30:2] All our uneasy feelings and reflections, arise from self-love, whatever appearance of piety they may assume. The lack of simplicity inflicts many wounds. Go where we will, if we remain in ourselves, we shall carry everywhere our sins and our distresses. If we would live in peace, we must lose sight of self, and rest in the infinite and unchangeable God. These self-returns have a tendency to establish the soul more and more in itself, and hinder it from running into its great original. But it is to this, God is calling you. You withhold from God the only thing he desires—*the possession of your heart*. The time is short; wherefore spend it in the compass and surroundings of self? The single eye sees only God. You act as a person who being called before a king, instead of regarding the king and his benefits, is occupied only with his own dress and appearance. God wishes to disarrange you—to destroy self; and you wish to preserve what he would destroy. Be more afraid of self than of the evil one. It is the spirit of Satan to exalt self above God, and this spirit is fostered by these continual returns you make upon your own doings and misdoings, which leaves no place in your mind for the occupation of God.

### **31. DIVERSITY OF MEANS OF SANCTIFICATION.**

[Letters 31:1] Although there are impenetrable mysteries in God's dealings with souls, in order to promote their sanctification, it is true that each soul, aside from the ordinary means, common to all, has a specific training, and this method of the divine order can alone accomplish the work. The means that sanctifies another may not sanctify you. You, my friend, will not be led by great crosses and severe sufferings, but in the way of helpless infancy. The child-like, yielding soul is necessary for you; therefore God has chosen a child, myself, to be your helper. Forget yourself as the man to whom many eyes are turned, and become the little, helpless one, who cannot take care of itself, but lets another care for it. The pride, presumption and vanity, of the natural man, must give place to the littleness and simplicity of the child. Says our Saviour, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven." O, when shall we learn that it is littleness, and not greatness, that God requires of his child!

[Letters 31:2] God has given me a maternal yearning for your soul. I sympathize deeply in your wants and burdens. Be assured, the eyes of the God of Love are upon you. I entreat you, yield to the influences which are in operation to restore your soul to God. I can offer no apology for my letter; for in all things, I obey my Lord.

### 32. COMFORT IN AFFLICTION.

[Letters 32:1] I assure you, Dear Sir, I sympathize deeply in your afflictions. With all my heart I present you before our Lord. I have prayed, and still pray, that if you are called to participate in the sufferings of Jesus Christ, you may partake also of his patience and submission. You will find the Lord at all times near your heart, when you seek him by a simple and sincere desire to do and suffer his will. He will be your support and consolation in this time of trouble, if you go to him, not with fear and agitation of spirit, but with calm, confiding love.

[Letters 32:2] Jesus said to the blind man, whose eyes he anointed with clay, "Go wash in the waters of Siloam"—waters soft and tranquil. O, that you might experience the abiding peace which Christ gives. O, that you might become reduced to the simplicity of the little child! It is the child who approaches the nearest to Jesus Christ. It is the child whom he takes in his arms and carries in his bosom. O, how lovely, how attractive, is child-like simplicity! May the sufferings you are now experiencing, render you, child-like and submissive to all the will of your Father. My ill health forbids my writing more fully. God loves you, and you are very dear to me in him. Amen. Jesus, help.

### 33. BEARING FRUIT IN UNION WITH CHRIST.

[Letters 33:1] God has united my soul to yours in the oneness of his own nature, and when all the obstructions on your part are removed, you will realize this same divine union. "We have many masters, as said St. Paul, but only *one Father in Christ*." This Father unites himself to us by the impartation of his own nature, and from this communication, of himself to the soul, proceeds our spiritual paternity; or the power by which we communicate to others what we receive from him. We are not always sensible how this power, or aid we render others, is imparted. In some individuals it is more manifest than in others. It always adapts itself to the subject who receives it. All the gifts and graces of the spirit are either more sensible and apparent, or more spiritual and inward, according to the power of receptivity in the individual.

[Letters 33:2] It seems to me that when I am with you, there is only a simple, imperceptible transmission from my soul to yours. You do not perceive any marked results, and they are not great, because you are not in a state to receive much, and often interrupt me by speaking, which causes in me a vacillation of grace. If we were together some considerable time without distraction, you would perceive more marked results. It is the desire of God that there should be, between us, perfect interchange of thoughts, of hearts, of souls;—a flux and reflux, such as there

will be when souls are new-created in Christ Jesus. At present, my soul in rotation to yours, is as a river which enters into the sea, to draw and invite the smaller river to lose itself also in the sea.

[Letters 33:3] This truth,—the fruitfulness of souls who are in God, whereby they communicate grace,—however much it is rejected, is, nevertheless, a truth. This flux and reflux of communication, like the ebbing and flowing of the great ocean-current, is the secret of the heavenly hierarchy, and makes a communication from superior orders to inferior,—and of equality, between angels of the same order.

[Letters 33:4] During all eternity, the communication of God the Father, and the Son, to angels and saints, and their reciprocal communication to each other, will be a well-spring of blessedness. The design of God, in the creation of men, has been to associate to himself living beings, to whom he could communicate himself. He could create nothing greater than likenesses of himself. All the splendor of angels and saints, is but light reflected from God.

[Letters 33:5] God could not see himself reflected in saints, without their participating of these two qualities, fruitfulness and reciprocal communication. In this life all perfection consists, in that which makes the consummation of this same perfection in heaven, No one can be perfect, if he is not perfect *as* the Father in heaven is perfect; that is, partaking of his nature.

[Letters 33:6] Jesus Christ is the Father of souls; his generation, or the souls that are begotten of him, are eternal in their nature as he is. The figure, "giving us his flesh to eat," is the nourishment he gives the soul in communication with himself; or himself reproduced, or begotten in us. The eternal Word is the essential, undying life of the soul.

### **34. DESOLATE STATE.**

[Letters 34:1] Believe me, dear madam, I take a deep interest in your spiritual welfare, and I earnestly hope your confidence in God will not fail, on account of your present desolate state. As the winter plunges still deeper the roots of the trees in the earth, so the wintry state of the soul plunges it deeper in humiliation. Remember the confidence of Job, "Although he slay me, I will trust in him." Although stripped of all consolation, and left in the desolation of nothingness, you may yet rejoice in God—out of, and separate from, self. Let the earth be stripped of her foliage; let neither flowers nor fruit appear; yet *God is*, therefore you may be happy. The mother loves to sacrifice herself for her child, and finds her life in what affords it happiness; thus die to self, in relation to God.

[Letters 34:2] When your weaknesses rise up before you, when you would weep over some error in judgment, or some unguarded expression, do as the little child, who having fallen into the mud, carries its hands to its mother, who cheerfully wipes them, and consoles him after the fall. Can you not believe God loves you, as much as you love the little one enfolded in your arms? Does he not say, "A mother may forget, yet I will never forget thee!"

[Letters 34:3] The discovery of your weakness and emptiness, is an evidence of God's love; and while it is ground for humiliation, it is also of thanksgiving. When it pleases God to fill this void with his grace, it is cause of thankfulness; but if we realized at all times this fullness, we should be in danger of appropriating the grace of God to ourselves. Thus, our times of desolation are necessary, and we should accept them joyfully, as a portion of the bread our father gives us.

Yours in tender sympathy.

### **35. SELF-ABANDONMENT.**

[Letters 35:1] The death of self is not accomplished at once. It is for some time a living death. Its opposite, spiritual life, is represented by Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones. First, the bones were rejoined; afterwards covered with sinews; then the flesh appeared; and finally, the spirit of the Lord animated them. When the soul begins to incline towards God, it finds many obstructions; but in proportion as we yield to the will of God, these obstructions are removed. The following simile will help to illustrate my idea. The rivers empty themselves into the sea; before they lose themselves there. Wave by wave following its course, seems to urge onward the river, to lose itself in the sea. God imparts to the soul some waves of pure love, to urge on the soul to himself; but as the river does not lose itself in the sea, until its own waters are exhausted, so the soul reaches God, and loses itself in God, only when the means of supply from self are at an end. As the waves, which are precipitated into the sea, roll many times before they are lost in the sea, so the soul undergoes many changes, before it is received into God.

[Letters 35:2] The results of self-crucifixion are happy, because God then becomes all to the soul. We lose self, and substitute God in its place. We take away the finite, and receive the Infinite. This is blessed.

### **36. NO DEPENDENCE ON INSTRUMENTS.**

[Letters 36:1] What shall I say regarding the state in which you find yourself, in relation to me? I have no movement either to promote our re-union, or hinder it. Let God direct. Are you leaning upon him, or upon the creature? If on the creature, it is a bruised reed, which will fail you. God sometimes makes use of instruments, whom he finds it necessary afterwards to reject. If he designs to remove me from you, can I have any wish to retain you? God forbid. He may design this separation, to make you die to any confidence in the creature. He may no longer design to use me for your benefit. I might have mingled my own impurity, with his pure light flowing through me. If God permit me to err, it is on account of my pride. I have never given you any assurance of my infallibility. What am I but an erring creature? Leave me, leave me, and unite yourself only to God, who will never mislead you. Means are good, only in the order of God. They injure us, if we rest in them. If God remove me from you, acquiesce in his will, with a devotion worthy of a child of God. Be humble, and courageous enough to own your fault, in leaning on an arm of flesh. Men of the world may be obstinate, but the child of God should be sup-

ple. Whatever separation there may be between us, believe me, you will always be dear to me in our dear Lord. I hope, when you are lost in him, you will find this little drop of water, (myself) in the same great ocean of love.

### **37. CHILD OF GOD SOON TO DIE.**

[Letters 37:1] I have had a presentiment that you would not survive this illness. I lose in you the most faithful, and the only friend on whom I could rely, in the persecutions which threaten me. I feel my loss, but rejoice in your happiness, I could envy you. Death only lends a helping hand to rend away the veil, which hides infinite beauties. Our Lord has strongly cemented our souls. May the benediction of the divine Master rest upon you. Go, blessed soul, and receive the recompense prepared for all those, who are wholly the Lord's. Go, we separate in the name of the Lord; I cannot say a last adieu, for we shall be forever united in him. I hope, in the goodness of God, to be present with you in heart and spirit, at the time of your departure, and to receive with you, the divine Master who is waiting for you. Be my ambassador in the courts above, and say to him I love him.

### **38. UNION OF SOULS IN GOD.**

[Letters 38:1] The assurance you give me of the union of your soul with mine, is a great consolation. It is a union to which my heart fully responds, not in a way of emotional transport, but in the depths of peace; there is nothing of nature in it. It is a union in Jesus Christ. We are one in a sense of our lost condition, and one in self-abandonment. Oh! blessed oneness with Christ, where all evils perish; and there remains only the casualties inseparable from the state of humanity. How wonderful is this operation—the sacred mingling of a poor creature with its God, where all the evils of our fallen nature, are removed from the depths of the soul, and the soul, in its elemental being is lost in its original! There all the little ones are united in Him,—these little drops of water reassembled in the divine ocean! How swiftly do the streams embrace each other, and flow into one channel, when the obstructions are removed! When souls become pure in Jesus Christ, they flow into one another with the same rapidity. Purity of soul consists in an entire separation from self, and re-union with God. The soul *can* return to self; it has the power, and therefore is not infallible.

[Letters 38:2] Our union, my dear friend, is independent of the relish or disrelish of all created things and events. You could not be separated from me without being separated from God; for it seems to me, that I am one with him, and inseparable, and you are the same; and thus, we are one in Him, and one with each other.

Ever yours, in the heart of Jesus.

### 39. SECRET OPERATIONS OF GRACE.

[Letters 39:1] My heart has been tenderly united to you, during all my bodily sufferings. In proportion as the outward man has been reduced, God seems to be more the life of my soul. Although the operations of God upon your soul may be less marked than formerly, they are no less real. There is a secret fire in your heart, which burns continually, although imperceptibly. This keen and continual operation enfeebles you, because it consumes so rapidly the more sensible and marked operations of the soul. This is, I apprehend, your ordinary state; with occasionally the unction of the oil of grace poured upon the concealed fire, to give you a sweet and clear manifestation of the loving presence of God.

[Letters 39:2] You bear two marked results of the divine presence—interior recollection, and a continual *amen* in your heart; a true and just response to all God's dealings with your soul.

[Letters 39:3] I realise a very close union with you. This union is not in the emotions, and not in the will of man, but in the will of God. It is a union, from which I could no more separate myself, than from God; it is a fulfillment of the prayer of our Lord, "that they may be one, as we are one." It is a union which death cannot interrupt, but will substantiate more and more fully in God.

Ever yours, in our Lord.

### 40. TO A YOUNG FRIEND.

[Letters 40:1] You are very dear to me, my child. Do not think I have forgotten you. God alone can render you happy. Give yourself wholly to him, never more to take yourself back. Love him with all your heart. Retire often within the closet of your heart to commune with God. Do not pray to him in a constrained and formal manner, but all simple and natural. God loves better the affectionate language of the heart, than, the cold and discursive thoughts of the intellect. The prayer of love softens the heart.

[Letters 40:2] Do not shrink from your ordinary duties. We are often more united to God, in our daily avocations, than in retirement. The reason is, our good Father holds us more closely, when we are most exposed to temptations. Endeavor to maintain, at all times, harmony and oneness with God. You have only to abandon yourself wholly to divine love, and perform all the duties that devolve upon you. Do not be restive, and thus mar God's beautiful design and operation upon your soul. Place in his bosom of rest, all your inquietudes, and allow him to carry you, as a little child is borne by its mother. This little one has only to regard, lovingly, the smiles of its tender mother.

[Letters 40:3] God will give you a wise discernment as to food and drink, and all the pleasures of life. He calls us to a temperate life, but not to a life too austere. We should avoid the *too much* and the *too little* in eating and drinking.

I pray our divine Lord, to enlighten, strengthen and comfort your heart.

#### **41. LETTER TO HER SPIRITUAL GUIDE.**

[Letters 41:1] The state in which I find myself, my Father, takes away from me entirely, the liberty to address you any longer as my Spiritual Guide. I realize so great a detachment from all things, that there remains in me only a triumphant, dominant love, which acknowledges no master but Love. It is my experience, that the closer the union of the soul with God, the more it is separated from all dependence on the creature. I find also, that the secret operations of divine love upon the soul, cannot be expressed. These operations do not consist in sweet and flattering expressions, neither in consolations, in the ordinary way, but in the discovery of mysterious truths; truths, which give so profound a knowledge of God, that the soul can find no language to give expression to these views.

[Letters 41:2] To speak, and to act, is the same thing with God. "He spake, and it was done." When the divine Word operates in the soul, without any obstruction, the soul becomes what this Word wills it should become. When Mary Magdalene was made whole, it was no more Mary Magdalene, but Jesus Christ, who lived in her. St. Paul says, "I live, yet not I, Christ liveth in me." In the same manner, the Word is incorporated into my soul.

[Letters 41:3] Some time since, there was given me a view of the States of Mary, the mother of our Lord. I was alone in my chamber, and my soul was completely filled with divine love. The divine Word seemed to say within me, "I will show thee the chief work of my hands,—a perfect nothing in itself,—the heart of Mary." In this manner was conveyed to me, the inexpressible love of God for men—his operation in pure souls. It was shown me, that her silence and acquiescence in the will of God; her entire self-crucifixion and hidden life were worthy of imitation; and that this same love which had operated so powerfully upon this soul, emptied of self, desired to draw other souls also to her states, and to make an effusion of the same grace and love in them, as in her. O divine love! how great are thy wonders, how marvellous thy operations on human hearts! My soul is lost in the depths of thy secret wonders! Silence, silence—only silence!

[Letters 41:4] I write to you, my Father, for the last time, to bid you a final adieu. I can no longer listen to any other teachings, than this divine Word of eternal Truth, which is spoken in the depths of my heart. But however far separated from you, in the relation of Director, you are very near and dear in the affections of my heart; in that pure love, which is alone the operation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

#### **42. GLORY OF GOD THE ONE DESIRE.**

[Letters 42:1] What have we to desire in heaven and on earth, only the glory of God? But it is necessary to desire the glory of God as he desires it. He who has absolute power over the heart

of man, has a plan of operations; he does all things in their time; he waits until the hour is come. In coming into the world, our Lord could have converted the world at once, and destroyed all its vices; but the economy of his wisdom did not so direct. When I hear our Lord say, "*Mine hour is not yet come*," and wishing neither to advance nor retard, for a moment, the hour that his Father had appointed, I am plunged into my nothingness. We are only instruments in his hands, which he may lay aside, or use according to his good pleasure. We should be so dead to self, as to be indifferent, whether he makes use of us or not.

[Letters 42:2] Remain, therefore, my dear friend, in the hand of God. Let him accomplish in you, and by you, all his good pleasure, whether to cast down, or build up. God knows how much I love you.

### 43. SPIRITUAL UNION AND AID.

[Letters 43:1] Spiritual union, is a state of the soul very clear in my perception, although I may not be able to give you a definite impression of this state. In order to benefit you, it became necessary for me to enter into your state, to have an experimental knowledge, an endurance and suffering of the same state. By this experience I have been brought into closer relation to God, partaking more fully of the Christ-like nature by being rendered capable of bearing the infirmities of others. And I have had, also, a clearer idea of that quality of God, whereby he multiplies holy souls, by the communication of himself. In this experience, the soul appears to be in God, and God in her, as first cause, drawing and penetrating the soul nearest to himself, and by penetration, in this soul, drawing, through her instrumentality, many other Souls.

[Letters 43:2] Although, by these powerful rays the soul itself may seem to penetrate and draw other souls, yet it is God who draws them by his efficiency; and he communicates this efficiency, most powerfully, to those in closest contact with himself. So pure and transparent is this soul, that there seems to be no space between the first Mover and the souls moved by the agent or instrumentality. There is a difference between the ray and the body of the sun, although it is difficult to separate the ray from the sun. It is the divine ray, which is transmitted through this soul, as the natural ray through the medium of the atmosphere. These same rays, transmitted through many souls, and from soul to soul, unite them in one common centre, and thus the bond of filiation is complete in God. I may not express myself so as to be understood. May your light supply, what is wanting in clearness of expression.

### 44. LIVE IN THE PRESENT.

[Letters 44:1] Do not expect, my dear E., that the will of God will be made apparent to you in any extraordinary way. The most remarkable events occur naturally. It was by an order of the Emperor, that Joseph, being of the house and lineage of David, went to be taxed at Bethlehem, where the holy child Jesus was born. The fountain of water was near to Hagar, when she laid down the child to die with thirst. Behold God, my friend, in the present arrangement of his prov-

idence for you, and submit wisely to passing events. He sees the end from the beginning, and plans wisely for his children. O, how good to submit our limited view to his far sight, reaching through time and eternity!

[Letters 44:2] Remember, the present moment comes to you, as the moment of God. Use it for his glory, and every succeeding moment. Thus the present becomes the eternal moment, for which we must render account to God. May God be All in All to us in every passing moment, now and forever.

#### **45. HOW TO ADMINISTER REPROOF.**

[Letters 45:1] A single word, spoken in the spirit of Christ, with humility and sweetness, will have more weight, in correcting others, than many words uttered in our own spirit. The reason is this: when passion mingles with correction, although the truth may be spoken, Jesus Christ does not coöperate with us. Therefore, the person is not corrected by what we say, but, being opposed to the manner of correction, is more confirmed in the evil. In proportion as Jesus Christ speaks by us, without us, or without the minglings of self, his word is efficacious, and turns the heart of the person to whom we speak, to receive what we say. I know there are some who resist, knowingly, *his* word, but our passionate zeal does not correct them.

[Letters 45:2] It is important to wait the moment of God to collect others. We may see real faults, but the person may not be in a state to profit by being told their faults. It is not wise to give more than one can receive. This is what I call *preceding the light*,—the light shines so far in advance of the person, that it does not benefit him. Our Lord said to his apostles, "I have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now."

[Letters 45:3] The prophet says, the Lord carries his children in his arms, as a nurse. A nurse could wish that the child could walk alone, but she waits in patience the time. Let us do the same, and never discourage the weak. Let us not destroy the good grain with the tares. Who does not admire "the long suffering patience of God?" And I may add to St. Paul's words, all unworthy as I am, and of those who admire it, how few imitate it! If those to whom God has given so much grace, have so many faults themselves, with how much patience should they bear with those who are less favored.

#### **46. BEARING THE STATES OF CHRIST.**

[Letters 46:1] During my late severe illness, a strong impression rested on my mind, that I was called to participate in the last sufferings of Jesus Christ. The language of my heart was, I am ready, O, Father, to suffer all thy will! In thus yielding my heart, as Abraham when called to sacrifice his beloved Isaac, I realized a new bond of alliance with Christ, and these words, "I will betroth thee unto me forever," was the voice of the Bridegroom to my soul.

[Letters 46:2] When Paul said, "I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus," he did not refer to any external marks in the flesh, but to bearing the states of Jesus Christ. In David are expressed all the states of Christ, with the difference only there is between the type and the original. Job was an eminent instance of being reduced to nothingness, and also of exaltation by the favor of God. Those who pass through the furnace, and suffer with Christ, are prepared to wear the white robe, which adorns the bride, the Lamb's wife. Their souls become the dwelling-place of the Most High.

[Letters 46:3] Are not those beautiful subterranean palaces, which we read of in fable, and which are reached after crossing deep caverns, and so hidden that none can find them, only those to whom the secret is revealed, representative of the interior palace of the soul, where the Lord inhabits. "The king's daughter is all glorious within."

#### **47. OUR IMPERFECTIONS SHOULD NOT HINDER OUR LABORS FOR OTHERS.**

[Letters 47:1] Although I am so weak and unworthy in myself, God uses me for the good of others. The many defects of our temperament, should not hinder our labors in behalf of others. These faults have nothing to do with the grace, which operates effectively on the souls for whom we labor. God reveals himself, through the fathers and mothers in Israel, and thus increases confidence in them; while, at the same time, their weaknesses forbid placing too much dependence on them.

[Letters 47:2] Although our Lord acquaints us with his designs regarding others, and the aid we may render them, yet this should not give us the least desire to aid them, only in the order of his providence. Neither should we be arrested in his work, although the souls we aid repulse the effort. God will make good the results in due time. It implies great death to self, never to put our hand selfishly to the work of the Lord, as it does, also, never to go a step out of the path in which he leads us. When we mingle self, we retard, rather than advance, his work. Nature is so corrupt that it deeply infests spiritual things, and so subtle as to conceal itself under all artifices.

I do not know why I have written you thus. God knows, and that is sufficient.

#### **48. DEATH, RESURRECTION.**

[Letters 48:1] This is no time to be disheartened. When the sinful lusts rebel, leave them to their disorderly cravings. Let them cry, as a child from whom we take away a dangerous yet pleasing toy. Strengthen yourself for crosses and humiliations. You will soon be made alive in Jesus Christ.

[Letters 48:2] The extraordinary peace you have tasted, is the commencement of the resurrection-life. This peace is not invariable, because the new life is given little by little, yet, I assure you, it will soon fill your whole soul. As God has rapidly advanced inward death, and caused

you to run, with a giant step, in the way of self-crucifixion, and this, notwithstanding all the oppositions of the carnal man, he will also thus rapidly advance the resurrection.

[Letters 48:3] The loss, of all things of the earthly life, which follows the resuscitated life, will be deep and extended. The death and burial which precede the resurrection, cannot compare with that total loss, which follows the resuscitated life. This is something different, and in a new state. You will arise from the sepulchre, as the Spouse of the Beloved.

[Letters 48:4] All is consumed in myself, not in the ordinary way, but in a total loss; so that there remains nothing which can be named or known. It seems to me, the death of self is carried almost to infinity, it makes so many unknown steps. Since this morning, this unworthy creature experiences a still greater reduction of self than ever before. Die, live; lose yourself, and find yourself again; then you will have experience of this state.

#### **49. GRACE DEEPLY INTERIOR.**

[Letters 49:1] While you perceive nothing sensible, or apparent, in your religious state, there is, at the same time, evidence to others of a hidden spring of life within your soul. God does not give you the sweet rain which, falling, clothes all the surface of the soul with verdure, but he gives you the deep well-spring, by which means you live and flourish, and produce, not herbs and flowers, which are born and die in the same day, but substantial fruits, ripening for eternity. David said, the life of man upon the earth is as grass, which groweth up in the morning, and withers in the evening. This refers to the natural life, but it is also true of the selfish life of man. It flourishes in the morning of the spiritual life, but no sooner does the sun of righteousness arise in his warmth, than this life withers and is cut down. The righteous are as a tree planted by the rivers of water, whose leaf is always green. This is because the roots are well watered by the deep-flowing current.

[Letters 49:2] God never ceases to operate in your heart. The calm, resigned state of your soul is proof of this.

[Letters 49:3] Take good care of your health. Do not labor beyond your strength. God will abundantly reward you for your labors of love in behalf of others. These are labors he never fails to recompense. I pray God, my dear F., to preserve you for his work. I have many things to say, but I forbear. Your time is precious.

#### **50. SELF-RENUNCIATION.**

[Letters 50:1] God designs you, my friend, for himself, but he will lead you by a way, entirely opposed to what you have marked out. He does this in order to destroy your self-love. This is accomplished only by the overthrow of all your purposes, preconceived views, natural reason and sagacity. Self-love has many hiding-places. God alone can search them out. You seek the

honor that cometh from man, and love to occupy a high position. God wishes to reduce you to littleness, and poverty of spirit. Believe me, dear sir, you will grow in grace, not by knowledge acquired from books; not from reasonings upon divine truths, but by an efflux from God. This efflux will reach and fill your soul, in proportion as you are emptied of self. You are so much occupied of yourself in speaking, reading and writing, that you give no place to God. Make room, and God will come in.

[Letters 50:2] You speak of your many cares. If you will give yourself wholly to God, these cares will be greatly diminished. God will think for you, and arrange by his Providence, what you cannot effect by long years of planning. In the name of God, I entreat you to renounce your own wisdom, your self-leading, and yield up yourself to God. Let Him become your wisdom. You Will then find the place of rest, you so much need.

[Letters 50:3] May you read this letter, with dependence on the Spirit, which has dictated it, and without regard to the instrument, and your heart will testify to the truth of what I have written. Take courage, and be persuaded that if God destroys the natural life, it is only to give you himself. Endeavor to be nothing, that God may be all. When void, God himself fills the space.

## 51. UNEXPECTED FAULTS.

[Letters 51:1] Yesterday, after I left the parlor, I uttered some words hastily, and suffered very much in consequence; a suffering not like the pangs of penitence I formerly experienced, but more subtle and interior; and the soul was more acquiescent. Whether it was the words I uttered too precipitately, or the reflections that followed, which caused this suffering, I could not determine. A part of myself seemed to be thrown out of God, as we see the ocean reject certain things, which it receives again more deeply into its bosom. Thus I seemed to myself to be rejected, and without any power to make the least movement to return, and without even a regret that I was rejected. I was willing to remain where God placed me, until the moment he received me again to himself. If I should afflict myself on account of this experience, which was new and unexpected, I believe it would be wrong, and sully still more the soul. The depths of my soul remain unchanged—fixed in God. He removes the impurity, that has exteriorly sullied it, and holds the soul still his own.

## 52. APOSTOLIC STATE.

[Letters 52:1] I have read your letter, my dear F., with great pleasure. The true Apostolic state is to become all things to all men; that is, to impart to each one spiritually, according to his necessities. Only those who are reduced to littleness and simplicity, have this power of communicating grace. They have also the ability to sympathise deeply in the states of others; of bearing in some measure their burdens, and are sometimes in great heaviness on their account. This communication of grace and aid, is not necessarily restricted to the personal presence of the individual. We may be "absent in body, yet present in spirit," after the manner of God's operations; and

as the angelic powers communicate to us. It is only by the enlightening of God's Spirit, that we realise the state of those to whom we are spiritually united.

[Letters 52:2] Unity of souls is experienced, not only with those in the body, who have affinity with ourselves, but also with those out of the body. I realise with the holy prophet David, a correspondence and unity, which renders our souls one in God. You will experience this unity with the saints more fully, when all perception of self is taken away. St. Paul says, "*Ye are come to an innumerable company of angels—to the spirits of just men made perfect.*" David was in the Old Testament, what Paul was in the New. They were both deeply interior Christians. The Apostles, after having received the Holy Ghost, spake all languages. This has also a spiritual meaning. They communicated grace, according to the necessities of each one. This is speaking the word—the efficacious word, which replenishes the soul. This nourishing, life-giving word is represented by the manna, and the reality is found in the Lord Jesus Christ, who is himself the bread of life in the soul. Amen, Jesus!

### **53. PAINFUL EXPERIENCE.**

[Letters 53:1] To-day my health is better, and I find myself able to reply to your letter. Let the view of yourself that God gives you, be accepted, whether it relates to your fallen condition in general, or to particular faults; but add nothing to this view by your own reflections. These continual reflex acts of the mind, do not help you; they do not remove the faults. I am not surprised, that you find in yourself so many evils; evils which render you almost insupportable to yourself. When God accomplishes the work of purification, he removes all that is opposed to the divine inflowing life.

[Letters 53:2] These evils of your nature, which are now apparent, and which were deeply concealed, are perceived by you, only because they are passing out from their hiding-places. All persons do not have so deep a knowledge of themselves; therefore do not suffer so much, because all are not destined to so profound a death and burial while in the body. Be silent, and drink the bitter cup. These humiliations will endure until your state is in some degree perfected; after which they will become more and more slight, and only at intervals, until the death and burial is consummated.

### **54. ECSTASY OF THE MIND, AND THE WILL OR HEART.—THE DIFFERENCE.**

[Letters 54:1] The intellectual part of man can be in some degree united to God; but the soul loses itself in God, only by the loss of the will and by love. This loss of the will is the true ecstasy, which is a permanent state, and is effected without any violence to nature. When love is the controlling exercise, the will follows, and the soul is reduced to unity; as in the natural exercise of love, the stronger the love, the greater the submission of the soul to the object beloved. Sacred love does not bind parts, but draws it fully, until it is absorbed wholly in this divine oneness.

[Letters 54:2] The mind may tend towards its divine object, with ardor, but the will not concurring, causes dissonance and swooning, or impetuous transports. I call this momentary ecstasy; it cannot long endure without separating the soul from the body.

[Letters 54:3] The difference between these two states is, as that of water, retained in the air by a machine, and of a river, running naturally into the sea, as ordered by the grand Architect of the universe. Love, which carries the will in its train, changes the whole man; this is the divine, the true ecstasy. This is what is called transformation, and loss of the soul in God. It is certain, however, that the creature always remains a being distinct from God.

### 55. A VIEW OF SELF.

[Letters 55:1] The activity of the natural selfish life, is the greatest obstacle to your progress. Allow of nothing which gives sustenance to this life. Be on your guard against applause. Applaud not yourself when you have done well. Admit no reflections in regard to the good you have accomplished, so that all that nourishes self-complacency may die.

[Letters 55:2] Possess your soul in peace as much as possible; not by effort, but by ceasing from effort; by letting go everything that troubles you. Be quiet, that you may settle, as we leave water to settle when agitated. When you discover your errors and sins, do not stop, under whatever good pretext, to remedy them. Rather abandon yourself at once to God, that he may destroy, in you, all that is displeasing to him. I assure you, you are not capable of yourself, to correct the least fault. Your only remedy is abandonment to God, and remaining quiet in his hands. If you discovered the depth of inward corruption in your heart, your courage would fail! On this account, God conceals from us, in part, the view of our sins, and discovers them to us, only as he destroys them.

[Letters 55:3] Rest assured, God loves you. He will take care of you. Have faith in his love and mercy. You will see farther by and by. When you are in trouble, do not fail to write me. Have good courage, and all will be well. You are very dear to me in our Lord.

### 56. STATE OF A SOUL IN UNION WITH GOD.

[Letters 56:1] Although, in the latter part of my life, I do not perceive those marked states of abandonment and submission, neither of interior sorrows, such as I formerly experienced, this does not prove that these distinct states no longer exist; but the soul having become more fully established in God, it makes less account of them, or is less affected by external impressions. As pure flowing water leaves no trace where it passes, so these *distinct* states leave no durable impression. The soul seems to have lost its own qualities of resistance and aversion, and runs, without ceasing into its Original. It is on this account I cannot write so fully of my states of mind as formerly. My soul, in its depths, rests in God. "My peace, says Christ, *I give unto you.*"

[Letters 56:2] I pray for the church; I mourn at times that God is so little known and loved; but these feelings are transient, and the soul is ready to take any impression that God gives it. While it seems to have no consistency of its own, so to speak, it adapts itself to the state of others with wonderful facility. Sometimes even relating amusing stories, to children, and to those who cannot be entertained in any other way.

[Letters 56:3] The soul, in this state of union with God, is sometimes permitted to foretell things to come, which appear very obscure to man, but which are, nevertheless, infallibly true, because proceeding from God. The knowledge of the event, and its full explanation, will come in the fulness of time. The soul is ready for anything; ready for nothing. All that is true comes from God; what is not true, from the creature. The soul does not seek to justify itself, nor produce humiliation, but passes on, disregarding self, and absorbed in God.

### **57. STATE OF REST IN GOD.**

[Letters 57:1] If I do not reply to you, Dear Sir, as soon as you might expect, it is because I hold myself in reserve, until I have a movement to write, and not from any want of regard to you. Relative to the distinct, voluntary acts of resignation, renouncement, it would be difficult, in my present state, to make such acts, because such acts would seem to imply something of self-appropriation still remaining; whereas, I have given to my Sovereign, all that I am; and as far as I know, I have nothing more to give him. My soul is at rest in his will.

[Letters 57:2] It is the same in regard to prayer, or petitions. The soul having a very simple method of prayer, all other prayer seems foreign to it. When it would make a request, and as soon as the soul knows distinctly what it demands, there is something which goes before to accomplish it, without the utterance of words. When the soul utters words, or makes petitions, if the spirit accompanying approves, the prayer is made with ease. If the spirit do not coöperate, the words are uttered with difficulty, or not at all. God takes the place of self in the soul, and there prays for things agreeable to his will. This is a state of the soul, in which it has no desire to originate prayer, but loves to be silent in the presence of God. This is an experience more satisfactory than I am able to express. O, that all the earth knew what it means to keep silence before the Lord!

### **58. GREAT HUMILIATIONS.**

[Letters 58:1] I have a clear discernment of your state. It seems to me, I see it in some measure as God sees it; that is, in the pure light of truth,—the reasons why you suffer, and the blessed results of these sufferings. I have known that the period of discipline would be long, and very long, because you suffer not only on your own account, but also for the benefit of others. God destines you to accomplish great things for his glory, and exterior humiliations in your case not being suited to his designs, he makes use of concealed humiliations, known only to yourself and

God. I will repeat to you the words addressed by our Lord to St. Paul. "My grace is sufficient for thee; my strength is made perfect in weakness."

[Letters 58:2] It will be in companionship with humiliations, that you will be saved from falling into sin and error, and be prepared to become a vessel fit for the Master's use. You will experience from time to time, a return of these humiliating states, and when you may think they have entirely passed away, they will suddenly revive. But the greater your humiliation, the more God will use you to perform his most excellent works. In this state of entire self-reduction and humiliation, your words will be clothed with power.

[Letters 58:3] "I am come," says our Lord, "to bring fire on the earth." O martyr of Pure Love,—*a sacrifice* for the good of others, what if the fires be already kindled in your bosom, shrink not! If you were less to God, he might spare you.

[Letters 58:4] Do not hesitate to speak to me of your sufferings, because it appears to you useless. It is not so. If you speak of them in simplicity, your heart will be relieved, and strengthened. I know how to sympathise with you. God bless you.

## 59. REPOSE OF THE SOUL IS GOD.

[Letters 59:1] Having given up myself wholly to God, and loving Him far better than myself, how can I find any opposition to his good pleasure? How can I do otherwise than yield to one I love better than myself? How can a soul withdraw from the dominion of a Sovereign, that it loves with the whole heart? "What can separate us from the love of God, in Christ Jesus?" Although, while we remain in this life, there is a possibility of sinning, and of separation from God, and it is true, that the soul remains in oneness with Him, only by the continuance of his mercy, and that if he should leave it, it would immediately fall into sin, yet I cannot have the least fear, that my God will leave me, or that I shall ever separate myself in any degree from his love.

[Letters 59:2] The creature can take no glory to itself, to whatever state it may arrive. O that you might comprehend what I cannot express—the sense I have of the goodness of God, to keep what is his own! How jealous, how watchful he is over the soul! God seems so truly all things to me, that I seem to see nothing, to love nothing, relish nothing, only what he causes me to see, love and relish in himself. I am only capable of loving and submitting to him, so much is he my life. I believe God blindfold, without questioning or reasoning. *God is*; this is sufficient. How immense is the freedom of the soul in him! O may you not doubt, that when all of self is taken away from the creature, there remains only God. O God, can I have any self-interest, or appropriate aught as mine? In what can I take it? How strange the thought! how far removed from the possession of God! I am lost. God is.

## **60. POWER OF CASTING OUT EVIL SPIRITS.**

[Letters 60:1] Although for many years, profound truths have been revealed to me, and God has manifested his power through me, in an extraordinary manner, my state has invariably been one of infancy, simplicity and candor. God's grace has rendered me equally willing to lie concealed, or to execute his will more publicly. During seven years, without my knowing how it was accomplished, as soon as I have approached some persons, possessed by demons, the evil spirits have departed. I have realised simply a desire to relieve them, and this desire, or prayer, has been answered in a way unknown to myself. Of myself, I have no goodness nor power at all. I have only the capacity of a child—of letting myself be used by God, as pleases Him. My life appears natural. I am encompassed with infirmities. My health is greatly impaired. My infirmities are a balance-wheel, a counterpoise to exaltation. Yet life is ever flowing, without any thought of the means of sustaining it, as we live in the air, without thinking of the air we breathe.

## **61. STATE OF A SOUL RE-UNITED TO GOD.**

[Letters 61:1] In reply to your enquiry, my dear children, concerning my state, I would say, that exteriorly, I am open, simple, childlike. My interior resembles a drop of water, mingling and lost in the ocean, and no more discerning itself,—the sea not only surrounding, but absorbing it. In this divine immensity, the soul discerns and enjoys all objects in God. All is darkness and obscurity in respect to itself; all is light on the part of God. Thus, *God is all* to me. This has been my state more than thirty years, although in latter years I have realized greater depths in these experiences. Think of the bottomless sea; what is thrown therein, continues sinking, without ever reaching the end. Thus divine love is the weight of the soul, that sinks it deeper and deeper in God. "God is Love, and he who dwells in love, dwells in God, and God in him." O immensity!

[Letters 61:2] Jesus Christ, the embodiment of truth and love, has explained the Scriptures by fulfilling them. So when the soul has passed into God, the Word is fulfilled in the soul, as it was in Christ. O Love! thou art thyself the pure, naked, simple truth, which is expressed, not by me, but by thyself, through me. Amen.

## **62. CONCISE VIEW OF THE INTERIOR WAY.**

[Letters 62:1] *The soul seeks God in faith not by the reasonings of the mind and labored efforts, but by the drawings of love; to which inclinations God responds, and instructs the soul, which co-operates actively. God then puts the soul in a passive state, where he accomplishes all, causing great progress, first by way of enjoyment, then by privation, and finally by pure Love.*

[Letters 62:2] What do we understand by the Interior way? It is to seek the kingdom of God within us. Luke 17, 21. We find this kingdom only where God has placed it, *within the soul*. It becomes necessary, then, to withdraw the eyes of the soul from external landmarks and observations, which man, in the pride of reason, has located around it, and rest the eye in faith, on the

Word of the Lord,—"*Seek and ye shall find.*" This seeking, involves an interior activity of the soul; a desire, a determination, and searching after what is hidden.

[Letters 62:3] When the soul has thus earnestly sought the kingdom of God within, this kingdom is developed little by little. Interior recollection becomes less difficult, and the presence of God more perceptible and agreeable. Formerly it was supposed, that the presence of God was only the thought of God, and that it was necessary to force the mind—to concentrate the thoughts with violence to find God. This is true in some sense, but, as the soul cannot long endure this tension, and as the kingdom of God is not found in the external vestments of the soul, but in its depths, this labor is of little avail. So little progress is made, the soul becomes discouraged, and the evil one, who fears nothing so much as the reign of God in the soul, makes an effort to draw the soul to externalities.

[Letters 62:4] In order to accomplish this object, he takes two methods, either by excessive labors, persuading the soul that this is the way to find God, and thus choking the internal process of the interior life, or, by this tension of the mind, of which I have spoken. Neither of these methods open in the soul, the interior way.

[Letters 62:5] You reply, how, then, is this life accomplished? I answer, God, seeing the heart of him who seeks him within, draws near to him, and teaches him a just moderation in all things; and, by this retrenchment of all excess in externals, the soul begins to perceive the peaceful kingdom. It realizes within itself a guide, who provides for its necessities, according to divine laws, who takes away the burdens that sin imposes; a guide who does not foster corrupt nature, nor forbid innocent pleasures.

[Letters 62:6] When the soul begins to perceive this kingdom, and that the King himself is manifested in some degree, it thus communes, (and we may call this the second step), O, my Beloved, I have sought thee with all the strength of my heart, in the place where thou hast taught me to seek thee, and I have there found thee! Days and nights have I passed in seeking thee. All the desires of my heart go after thee. But now I have found thee. I pray thee to reign as Sovereign, to establish thine empire in my soul. I will do thy will alone. I will resign to thee all the right I have to myself; all that thou, by thy goodness, hast given to me.

[Letters 62:7] At this stage of progress, the soul ceases from self. Its work is to regard, lovingly, the operation of God, without a desire either to advance it, or place any obstacle in the way of its progress. The soul has been active, in the first stage, to destroy, with all its power, that which might hinder the kingdom of God within; and this was a great effort; for habit had rendered interior recollection very difficult, and the powers of the soul did not easily reunite themselves in one centre.

[Letters 62:8] Now the soul seeks no longer to combat the obstacles, which hindered its return within, but lets God combat and act in the soul. Saying, it is time O, Lord, that thou shouldst take possession of thy kingdom! Do so, I pray thee, exclusively. I desire, on my part, only to observe thine operation.

[Letters 62:9] This commencement of the reign of God, and of the passive way, is very highly relished by the soul. The soul passes days, and even years, separated from creature enjoyments without weariness. It advances very much more by this way, in little time, than by all the efforts of many years. It is not without faults and imperfections, but divine love diminishes them little by little, or does not permit the soul to become disturbed by them, lest it become discouraged and its love hindered. This state is called passive love. The soul sees no cause to fear; it supposes that all the work is done, and that it has only to pass into eternity, and to enjoy this good Sovereign, who already gives himself to the soul in so much fulness.

[Letters 62:10] But in the onward progress of the soul, it becomes no longer doubtful, whether the soul is to remain in the passive enjoyment of God and his communications. The soul begins to feel a drawing, to let God not only be all things in the soul, but there to reign separate from the soul's enjoyment of his gifts. The soul now experiences what is called, by the author of the Imitation of Christ, *the exile of the heart*. It hears a voice in the depth of the soul, or, rather, has an impression, that God reigns there alone. This exile is at first very painful, for it is important to notice, that, from the commencement of seeking God in the depth of the soul to the possession of him, there are many trials, temptations, sorrows. *Every successive state is marked by a purifying process*. Persons often mistake, and take the first purification for the last. When God reigns alone in the soul, separate from the action of self, and self is destroyed, it is beyond any previous state.

[Letters 62:11] When the soul has ceased from its own selfish operations, and the man of sin is exterminated, its defects become more apparent, because God wishes it to comprehend what it is by itself, and what it would be without him. The soul is thus afflicted, believing it has lost the virtues, acquired with so much care, and seems to have faults that it had not before perceived. It says, with the spouse in the Canticles, "I have washed my feet, how shall I sully them?" You do not perceive, O, soul beloved, that you do not sully them in going to "open to the spouse," and that if you contract some slight impurity, he will remove it so perfectly, that you will become more beautiful. In the mean time, it is not the desire of the spouse to become beautiful in her own eyes, but to see only the beauty of her Lover. When the soul is faithful in this state, and really desires to die to itself, she is pleased only with the beauty of her Beloved, and says his beauty shall be my beauty. But it is necessary to advance beyond this, for, after being despoiled of her beauty, it would be a selfishness much greater to appropriate to herself, the beauty of her Beloved. His beauty must remain untarnished, unappropriated by her; she must leave him all, and remain in her nothing, for the nothing is her proper place. This is Perfect Love, which regards God alone.

SELECTIONS FROM HER POETRY.

A LITTLE BIRD I AM.

"A little bird I am,  
Shut from the fields of air;  
And in my cage I sit and sing  
To Him who placed me there;  
Well pleased a prisoner to be,  
*Because, my God, it pleases thee.*

"Nought have I else to do;  
I sing the whole day long;  
And He, whom most I love to please,  
Doth listen to my song;  
He caught and bound my wandering wing,  
But still he bends to hear me sing.

"Thou hast an ear to hear;  
A heart to love and bless;  
And, though my notes were e'er so rude,  
Thou wouldst not hear the less;  
Because though knowest as they fall,  
That Love, sweet Love, inspires them all.

"My cage confines me round,  
Abroad I cannot fly;  
But, though my wing is closely bound,  
My heart's at liberty.  
My prison walls cannot control  
The flight, the freedom of the soul.

"Oh! it is good to soar,  
These bolts and bars above,  
To Him whose purpose I adore,  
Whose Providence I love;  
And in thy mighty will to find  
The joy, the freedom of the mind."

GOD EVERYWHERE, TO THE SOUL THAT LOVES HIM.

"Oh! Thou by long experience tried,  
Near whom no grief can long abide;  
My Lord! how full of sweet content,  
*I pass my years of banishment.*

"All scenes alike engaging prove,  
To souls impressed with sacred love;  
Where'er they dwell, they dwell in Thee,  
In Heaven, in earth, or on the sea.

"To me remains nor place nor time,  
My country is in every clime,  
I can be calm and free from care  
On any shore, since God is there.

"While place we seek, or place we shun,  
The soul finds happiness in none;  
But with a God to guide our way,  
'Tis equal joy to go or stay.

"Could I be cast where Thou art not,  
That were indeed a dreadful lot;  
But regions none remote I call,  
Secure of finding God in all.

"My country, Lord, art Thou alone;  
No other can I claim or own;  
The point where all my wishes meet,  
My law, my love; life's only sweet.

"I love my God, but with no love of mine,  
For I have none to give;  
I love thee, Lord; but all the love is thine,  
*For by thy life I live.*  
I am as nothing, and rejoice to be  
Emptied, and lost, and swallowed up in thee.

"Thou, Lord, alone, art all thy children need,  
And there is none beside;  
From thee the streams of blessedness proceed;  
In thee the bless'd abide.  
Fountain of life, and all-abounding grace,  
Our source, our centre, and our dwelling-place."