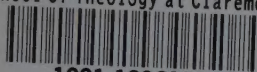


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Little Book of Contemplation

¶ S. AVGVSTI-

nes Manuell, or litle booke
of the Contemplation of Christ,
or of Gods worde, whereby the
remembraunce of the heauen-
ly desires whiche is falne a
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AT LONDON

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1577.

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LITTLE BOOK
of
CONTEMPLATION

Edited and Revised into Modern English
by
JOSEPH WITTKOFSKI

Augustinus, Aurelius, Saint,
bp. of Hippo. Spurious
and doubtful works.



Morehouse-Gorham Co.

New York

1950

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Little Book of Contemplation

Foreword

THE *Little Book of Contemplation* is a very much neglected classic which holds an extremely important position in the continuation of the Anglican mystical tradition. The purpose of this new edition is not the reissuing of an ancient book for curiosity's sake, but it is the revising of an old English text into modern usage so that the little book again may become attractive and effective in the spiritual lives of people. Hence, this is not intended to be a work for the libraries of scholars, but under new dress the editor hopes that it will serve a useful purpose in the lives of many of the household of God.

Without doubt, some of the most sublime passages of all mystical literature can be found on the pages of this almost unknown writing. Many old English words and much of the sentence structure in the former editions make accurate comprehension, today, doubly difficult. For this reason, many revisions of the authorized translation of the Bible have been made. The work under discussion is a revision and not a new translation from the older

Latin version. The editor has greatly changed the sentence structure but, at the same time, he has endeavored to preserve the original cadence and meanings. By this means, he has sought to place these rare jewels of mystical thought in a fresh and modern setting.

The world of religious thought gradually is coming to recognize the great English mystical tradition. During the past several generations, the individual English mystic has been more or less considered to be a segregated exception. Further study and research indicates that the British tradition from St. Anselm to Evelyn Underhill is continuous and generally harmonious. It is inferior neither to the German, nor to the French, nor to the Spanish schools. As far as Anglo-Saxon mentality and prevailing modern thought are concerned, the English tradition is from every point of view the most acceptable.

The present revision of the *Little Book of Contemplation* is based upon an edition which was published with the royal permission of Queen Elizabeth. The fact that there were at least ten editions of this work in the Elizabethan age clearly shows that it deeply nurtured the spiritual lives of many during the somewhat stagnant period of the Ref-

ormation. Although of foreign origin, the book in its English translations may be considered as a Reformation-link between the mysticism of the Middle Ages and that of modern times. Before the Reformation, England boasted of a great line of mystical writers which included St. Anselm, Margery Kempe, Richard Rolle, Walter Hilton, and Juliana of Norwich. The post-Reformation group is no less great and, among others, it embraces Lancelot Andrewes, Augustine Baker, John Donne, Thomas Traherne, Joseph Hall, Jeremy Taylor, William Law, the erratic William Blake, and Evelyn Underhill. We can hardly doubt that Miss Underhill, as a mystical writer, will be awarded a niche not far below that of the great St. Teresa of Avila.

What is the origin of the *Little Book of Contemplation*? For several centuries, it was attributed to St. Augustine of Hippo. No Augustinian scholar, today, accepts that authorship. He who was responsible for this work tells us that he has sought to make "a short and handy abridgement of the chosen sayings of the holy fathers, concerning God." Subsequent scholarship has found that this is exactly what he has done. The British Museum possesses an early printed Latin edition which was published

in 1471. From beginning to end, this book is only a compilation of verbal quotations from many earlier writers, among whom we find St. Cyprian, St. Augustine, St. Gregory, St. Bernard, St. Anselm, John of Fécamp, William of Dijon, Hugh of St. Victor, and Pseudo-Alcuin. The only original passages are occasional connecting clauses. In producing this little masterpiece of the spiritual life, it is evident that the compiler was a wise and devout man who knew good material when he found it. To keep alive the fires of love in his own life, he made this valuable collection and ordered it.

In the Middle Ages, after the example of St. Peter Damian (1007-1072), works of this fashion became very popular. Little devotional handbooks of meditations and prayers were issued by St. Anselm, William of Volterra, John of Fécamp, William of St. Thierry, and by many others. Most of these works were of French origin. The *Little Book of Contemplation* uses an interpolated version of St. Anselm, common in France, but not in England. It, therefore, appears likely that this is also a French compilation. Since the work includes many quotations from Hugh of St. Victor (1096-1141) and nothing from Richard of St. Victor (died 1173) who would have furnished much excel-

lent matter of this type, there are grounds to suspect that the collection was made in the second half of the twelfth century. Equally important in this determination is the fact that no authors beyond this period are cited in the text.

The first translator of the work into English, like the original compiler, is not known, but Iohn Daye of London issued an English edition in 1574, and another in 1575, while this present revision is made from his edition of 1577. Daye's book was entitled, *S. Augustines Manuell or litle booke of the Contemplation of Christ, or of Gods worde, whereby the remembraunce of the heauenly desires whiche is falne a sleepe may be quickned up agayne*. As the work became popular, new editions were made, often in conjunction with other supposititious works of St. Augustine. In 1581, Henrie Denham brought out a new translation with the following descriptive title: *A right Christian Treatise entitled S. Augustines Praiers: Published in more ample sort than yet hath bin in the English tong by Thomas Rogers. Whereunto is annexed S. Augustines Psalter: Translated by the same T. R. (S. Augustines Manuell. Containing special and piked meditations, and godlie praiers.) Corrected, translated, and adorned by Thomas Rogers*. In 1585 and in 1586, Iohn

Wolfe of London, for the assignees of Richard Day, published two editions which he called, *Certaine Select Prayers, gathered out of S. Augustines Meditations, which he calleth his private talks with God.* Also his *Manuell, or booke of contemplation of Christ.* In 1591, Richard Yardley and Peter Short published another edition of Rogers' translation.

With the coming of the seventeenth century, many more editions made their appearance. It is interesting to note that Short's edition of Rogers' translation of 1600, for the first time, questioned the Augustinian authorship. This phrase, at that time, was added to the title: *Written, as some thinke, by S. Augustine.* Other editions of Rogers' work were published by the Companie of Stationers in 1612 and 1616. A Roman Catholic version was published by Iohn Heigham in 1624 at St. Omer. It was titled, *A Heauenly Treasure of Comfortable Meditations and Prayers written by S. Augustin in three seuerall treatises of his Meditations, Soliloquies, and Manual. Faithfully translated in English by Antony Batt.* The Manual again appeared in a book of translations, which were made by George Stanhope, Dean of Canterbury, and was first published in 1701. His work was titled, *Pious Breathings, Being the Meditations of St. Augustine, his*

Treatise of the Love of God, Soliloquies, and Manual. To which are added select contemplations from St. Anselm & St. Bernard. This book was often reprinted by many different publishers.

Under some aspects, the *Little Book of Contemplation* can be considered as a valuable "missing-link," for it clearly shows that even during the fierce fires of the Reformation, a virile interest in mysticism continued to flourish in the English Church. The Anglican synthesis often is considered to be confused and without a clear and definite reason for existence. This situation results when clergy and laity lose sight of that Church's deep mystical teaching. Very much like Orthodox Christianity, the Anglican Communion is vitally dependent upon its mystical elements. When these are completely lost from view, confusion must be the sure and devastating result.

In some ways, this work can be more important for us than it was for the readers of the early English editions. With the breaking of the Atomic Age, the eyes of mankind again are turning toward biotheology or mystical philosophy and theology. During the last ten years, many reprints of the classics in this field have reappeared and more new books on this subject have found their way into the

book market. If the present growing trend continues, the last half of the twentieth century may rival the early part of the fourteenth century in the production of mystical writings, and, we may hope, in living according to the precepts of this sacred knowledge. Intuitively or subconsciously, mankind seems slowly to be coming to the conclusion that the greatest bulwark against any threatening atomic destruction is the internal ordering of the hearts of mankind.

Mysticism, in recent years, has unfortunately been confused with magic, astrology, and other phenomena which are beyond the ordinary grasp of the popular mind. Such a situation has made many undesirable complications in modern civilization. Now, however, many more among us are coming to believe that if individual human beings are to live according to the predestined plan of the Creator, then each man and woman must learn the surpassing value of mystical experience. Mysticism itself has always been the vibrant heart of religion and without it religious belief becomes almost useless. The great religious teachers of every age point out that this same mystical experience is the actual and vital union of an individual human being with the eternal Godhead, who is the absolute reality

beneath all created things. Truly, the substance of God never becomes the substance of creation, but in the wondrous Actuality, all are brought into the One. The original translator of this little book used a word which has been preserved in this revision. He speaks of the creature as being knit into God. In this mystical communion, the human being really becomes a partaker of the unique divine nature, not alone by mere knowledge and vision, but by a true and actual contact.

The divine embrace can never be fully described in the emptiness of human words. As a personality loses itself in God, the individual develops a new awareness in which the world no longer appears dead and stratified, but it becomes wonderfully alive and it pulsates with the all-embracing divine Presence. Eternal life is no longer a mere possibility of the future but rather it becomes a present possession. In the fountain-source of Being, the creature begins to understand the operation of the basic laws and principles by which the created universe unfolds. Here are the everlasting secrets in which man may find his present and enduring salvation.

The *Little Book of Contemplation* can do very much to stimulate the interior lives of many. Al-

though all people can profit from reading it, this book will mean far more to the pilgrim who has some previous knowledge of the spiritual way to the eternal life of God. For the novice, the editor recommends his own recently published book, The Secret Way, or Evelyn Underhill's work, Practical Mysticism. After the basic elementary truths are both learned and inwardly digested, the *Little Book of Contemplation* will become valuable beyond human measure. This is not a book which can be successfully read with haste. Being one of the finest compilations of religious and mystical literature, it endures like a well which never runs dry. Each time the reader goes over it, he will discover truths which before he did not see. Indeed, here is a handbook of the contemplative way and its riches are inexhaustible. In his gleanings concerning the Way to God, the anonymous collector has left a fruitful little guidebook to all who would follow in that Way.

JOSEPH WITTKOFSKI

Preface to the Edition of A.D. 1577

FORASMUCH as we are set in the midst of snares, we easily become cold in the desire for heavenly things. Therefore, we have need of continual defence, that when we are depressed, we may be wakened to run back again to our true God, the supreme goodness. In the consideration of these facts, not through a rash presumption, but for the great love that I bear for my God, I have undertaken this work to His glory, to the intent that I might always have with me a short and handy abridgment of the chosen thoughts of the holy fathers which deal with God. By the fire of these readings, may His love be kindled in me as often as it waxes cold within me.

Assist me now, I beseech You, my Lord God, whom I seek, whom I love, whom I praise and worship with mind, mouth, and all the strength which I possess. My mind is bowed down before You and is inflamed with Your love. Sighing for desire of You, gazing after You, and longing to see more of You, I have no pleasure in anything but to speak of You, to hear You, to write of You, to

confer with You, and frequently to consider Your glory. May Your remembrance always be some refreshment to me among the storms of this world. I therefore most earnestly call upon You. From the bottom of my heart, loudly I cry unto You. When I truly call upon You, I clamor after You within myself. I would not exist at all except You are in me. If I were not in You, then You would not be in me. You are within me because You ever abide in my mind. Hence, I know You and therein I find You. Whenever I remember You, I am also delighted in You and by You, of whom, by whom, and in whom all things exist.

I

The Excellent Being of God

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.—JAMES 1:17.

YOU, Lord, fill heaven and earth. Bearing up all things, You are not burdened. You fill all things and You are never enclosed by them. Constantly You are at work while You ever remain at rest. Continually You gather but not for any need. Always You are seeking and yet You lack nothing. You are loving without dotage and You are zealous without a trace of anxiety. You may be sorry but You can never be grieved. Your creatures may make You angry but You are never out of patience. Through eternity, You may change Your works, but Your purpose always remains the same.

You receive that which You have sought out, and yet You had never lost it. You are in no wise needy but You delight in Your gain. You are never covetous and yet You always demand whatever is

Your strict due. You correct us when we often see no reason for Your visitation. But who has anything that is not Your possession? You pay debts and yet You cannot be in debt to any of Your creatures. You forgive Your debtors and in the process You lose nothing.

You are everywhere and in all places You remain whole. You may be perceived but You cannot be fully comprehended. Nowhere are You absent, and yet You are far from the thoughts of the wicked. Nay, behold, where You are far off, You are never away, since where You are absent by grace, You are present by justice. Indeed, You are present in all places but You ever remain most difficult to find. You stand still when we follow Your shadow but we cannot overtake You. By Your Being, You hold all things, fill all things, encompass all things, surmount all things, and sustain all things.

You teach the hearts of the faithful without the sound of words. You are not divided by people and places, nor altered by passing times, nor swayed to and fro. You dwell in unapproachable light which man has never seen nor can see. Abiding at rest in Yourself, You go everywhere about the world without being severed or divided since You are indeed

but One. Although You may be comprehended in part, You are the indivisible whole which maintains the whole, fills the whole, enlightens the whole, and entirely possesses the whole.

II

The Knowledge of God

He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heaven by his understanding.

—JEREMIAH 51:15.

MY GOD, although the whole world be filled with books, yet Your unspeakable knowledge can never be uttered. Since You are absolutely unspeakable, in no way can You be put in writing or in human comprehension. You are the fountain-source of Godly light and the sun of everlasting brightness. Completely unmeasurable, You are great without quantity. Absolute goodness, You are without quality. Hence, being the supreme and only good, no man is good except in and through You. Whatever You wish, that is within Your power to do. You have created all things from nothing, and by Your knowledge alone, You made them. You possess all Your creatures without any want of them; You govern their movement without exertion on Your part; without any weariness, You rule

and order them; and there is nothing that may trouble the establishment of Your government from the highest things to the lowest.

Containing all things without enclosure, by Your living wisdom, You are in all places without place. Without coming or going, You are present everywhere. You are not the author of any kind of evil because You can do nothing evil. Surely, You can do everything except that which is not of Your thinking. By Your goodness, we are made; by Your justice, we are punished; and by Your mercy, we are again delivered. Entire almightiness governs, rules, and fills all things which it has made. Yet, I do not mean that by Your filling all things, they therefore contain You. Rather, You contain them. Neither do You fill all things in part, nor can it be thought that each creature receives You according to its size, the larger things more and the smaller things less. You are completely whole in all things and everything is fully in You. Whole and almighty understanding encloses all things and no man can find any way to escape from Your power. He who does not come to possess Your favor shall never escape Your displeasure.

III

The Desire of the Soul for God

As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?—PSALM 42:1-2.

O MOST merciful God, I call upon You for my soul, which You have made ready to receive Yourself through the continual desire which You breathe into it. Enter into it, O Jesus of Nazareth, and make my soul into a fit dwelling for Yourself. Possess that which You have made and later renewed. May I have You as the living seal upon my heart. O most pitiful Lord, I entreat You, forsake not Your creature who calls upon You. Before I could summon You, already You have called and sought me, Your servant, that I would seek after You; and seeking, find You; and finding, love You.

Lord, I have truly sought and found You. More than anything else, I desire to love You. Increase this desire in me, for unless You do so, my life shall be consumed in sorrow and my soul in mourn-

ing. Grant to me that which I crave. If You gave me all the things which You have made, it would not suffice unless You include Your uncreated Self. Give that sweetness of Your life to me. Permit me to taste more and more of You for I cannot live without You. Give me Yourself, O my God, restore Yourself unto me. Behold, how I long for You! If my love is too small, pour Your grace into me. Reach out Your hand and open the eyes of Your brightness that I may be yet more in Your love. I am bound to Your unfathomable love. I burn with desire for You. Your sweet remembrance is my ever present delight.

When I raise my mind to You and when I consider Your untold loving kindness, the weight of my flesh is less burdensome, the turmoils of passing life cease, and the weaknesses of human mortality lose their meaning. In You, every appetite is satisfied and all the world is calm. My heart glows, my mind rejoices, my memory is fresh, my understanding is clear, and my whole spirit is kindled with Your devouring flame. My whole being is ravished with the love of Your invisible working. Let my spirit take the wings of an eagle and fly without ceasing. Let it speed until it comes to the beauty of Your house and the throne of Your glory, where

it may be fed at the dining table of Your saints in the place of full-feeding by the plentiful running streams.

You are our hope, our redemption, and our salvation. Be also our lasting joy. You who shall be our everlasting reward, be also our present rejoicing. Always, let my soul seek You, and grant that in searching for You I may never faint.

IV

The Desolation of the Selfish Soul

If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.

—1 JOHN 2:15-17.

UNHAPPY is that wretched soul which neither loves nor seeks Jesus Christ. Such a one remains dry and miserable. He, who does not love God, throws away his time of earthly life. He that refuses to live for You, O Lord, is nothing and he goes into eternal nought. He that declines to live in You is already dead. He who is not wise toward You is a fool in himself. Most merciful Lord, I yield, grant, and receive me unto Yourself, by whom I have being, life, and knowledge. I place my whole confidence, trust, and hope in You by whom I shall rise again, live again, and enjoy everlasting satisfaction. I desire, love, and worship You with whom

I shall dwell without ceasing, reign forever, and be eternally blessed.

The soul that does not seek nor love You, seeks and loves itself and transient world while it serves sin and is lost to vice. The selfish personality will never be at rest nor at ease. In view of this awful fact, let my mind be always in Your service. Let my wayfaring be always a journey toward You. Let my heart continue to burn with Your love. My God, permit my soul to find its perennial rest in You. Let it hasten out of itself to seize Your life-giving love. With joyfulness, let it sing Your praises. In my banishment, here is my comfort. Let my mind flee to the shadow of Your wings, away from the raging heat of worldly thoughts. Allow my heart to calm itself in You. I plead, let the great sea of my heart, that swells with the waves of worldliness, find its tranquillity in You. O God, who is rich in all delicacies, most bountiful bestower of heavenly repast, give meat to me who hungers; scattered, gather me up; from my prison, deliver me; and broken into pieces, make me new again. I stand at Your door and knock. I beseech You, by the great heart of Your mercy, who, as the day springing on high, visited us, bid the doors to be opened for me who knocks. Thus my soul may have

free passage to You and to eternal life wherein is the fountain of lively water. In You, may I find my rest and there may I be refreshed with Your heavenly nourishment.

You are the bread and unfailing fountain of life; You are the light of everlasting brightness; and You are all those things by which the righteous, who love You, live.

V

The Soul's Eternal Quest

There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest.

—HEBREWS 4:9-11.

O GOD, the light of the hearts that see, the life of the souls which love, and the strengthener of the thoughts in those who seek You, grant that I may continually abide in Your holy love. Come, I pray, into my heart and inebriate it with the abundance of Your unending delights so that I may forget all disorderly attachment to temporal things. I am ashamed and disgusted with my past abiding in the things of this world. All that I hear is to my grief. Help me, my Lord God, and plant Your enduring gladness into my heart, that in my knowing and possessing You I may be completely and everlastingly satisfied.

Come to me, O Jesus of Nazareth, visit Your servant in peace and overtake me that I may lay hold of You. Without doubt, too narrow is the

house of my soul. As You are well aware, until You come, it remains in the ruins of its selfishness. Enlarge and repair it, I pray, unless I am to die from the famine. Much which You will find there will disappoint Your eyes. I am beginning to know my weakness and gladly I confess it to You. Who can make me clean or unto whom but You shall I cry out my sorrow? Lord, wash away my innermost and hidden sins. Sweet Christ, for Your love, make me to lay aside the heavy and growing burden of my fleshly desires and earthly lusts.

Pour Your mercy upon my soul that it rule over my flesh; let reason have dominion over my soul; and let Your grace fully govern my reason. Without the richness of Your wonderful life in me, neither can my soul, nor flesh, nor reason please You in anything. Give me such grace that my heart, my tongue, and my flesh may serve in Your ceaseless praise. Enlarge my mind and lift up the eyesight of my heart that, in spite of my own self-will, I may attain to that everlasting wisdom which abides in all things. I beseech You, loose me from the fetters with which I have been shackled that I may become free from selfish affections. Take me entirely to Yourself where I may abide and dwell with You alone.

VI

The Burden of the Physical Body

For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.—PHILIPPIANS 3:20-21.

HAPPY is that soul which has been let loose from its earthly prison and hastens up into heaven where, most sweet Lord, it comes to behold You, face to face. No more is it made unhappy with any fear of death. It rejoices in the everlasting and unchanging glory. O Jesus of Nazareth, he who shares Your glory is safe and beyond all peril. He fears neither enemy nor death. The triumphant soul possesses You, merciful Lord, and it owns the goal of its seeking and loving. Joining with the heavenly choirs, it sings continually the sacred songs of everlasting gladness, to the glory and the praise of Your Name, which is great and wonderful in all of Your creation.

Beyond any human concept of happiness is that joy in the fellowship of heavenly citizens. Glorious is the greeting of all the wayfarers who return from the sorrowful travel of this earthly pilgrimage unto the pleasantness of perennial beauty, to the beauty of all brightness, and to the source of incomprehensible magnificence in which the saints behold You forever. These things You wish and these You have ordained for Your creatures. From Your first spoken word, all of these delights have been ordered. In Your glory, there is nothing which may trouble the mind, nothing inharmonious to the ear, and nothing displeasing to the eyes. All is good and pleasant. What songs, what instruments, what hymns, and what melody sounds there with the triumphant time-ending Alleluia! Most pleasant tunes may always be heard, most sweet melodies of the angels, and most wonderful words of songs which without end are sung to the glory of the heavenly inhabitants. You have ordained, O good Jesus, that no harshness nor bitterness should have any room in Your kingdom. There is neither evil doer nor evil deed; no adversaries nor accusers; neither is there any attraction to sin, nor need, nor shame, nor disagreeing, nor misuse, nor excusing, nor fear, nor unrest of mind, nor penalty, nor doubtfulness, nor

violence, nor discord, but there is perfect peace, derived of boundless love, continual rejoicing and praising of God, endless rest without slightest care, and everlasting gladness in the Holy Ghost.

How fortunate should I be, if I might hear the most pleasing carols of the saints which they sing to the eternal praise of the Most Blessed Trinity. But far more happy I would be, if I might attain to join that chorus and sing the sweet songs of Sion to our Lord Jesus Christ.

VII

The Joys of Heaven

Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

—1 CORINTHIANS 2:9.

O LIVELY life, everlasting and blessed life, where there is joy without sorrow, rest without labor, dignity without fear, riches without loss, health without sickness, abundance without want, life without death, continuation without corruption, and happiness without change! In beholding the face of God, here is the complete totality of knowledge. Likewise, the goodness of God appears and His enlightening light is made manifest to all the saints. Here, the ever deepening majesty of God is beheld and the minds of the beholders are fully satisfied with the living food of life. The more they see, the more they constantly desire to see. Yet, they desire without anxiety and they have their fill without weariness.

In the city of our God, the day sun of righteous-

ness cheers all men with the light of His beauty and so enlightens all the saints that they themselves shine forth with the reflected light of God, with a brilliance more dazzling than all the brightness of our day sun and the splendor of all the stars together. The citizens of heaven cling to the immortal Godhead and thereby they themselves are made immortal and incorruptible according to the promise of our Lord and Saviour, "Father, as for those whom You have given me, I will have them to be where I am, that they may see my glory, and that they may be all one, as You, Father, are in me, and I in You, and that they also may be one in us."

VIII

The Two Cities

And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it.—REVELATIONS 21:23-26.

O REALM of heaven, most happy state, domain without death, kingdom without end, where there is no succession of time, where, without night, day does not know the meaning of time, and where the struggling wayfarer is rewarded with unspeakable gifts which include the crown of Divinity upon his head. How happy should I be, if Christ of His heavenly pity, having revealed the burden of my sins, would command me, the least of His servants, to lay aside the body of this flesh! Then I might pass from this earthly city into the enduring joys of His city, to rest myself and to find the full

satisfaction of my faculties, to keep company with the holy host of angels and saints, and above all else to stand before the glorious majesty of my Creator with all of His blessed spirits.

With no haunting fear of a coming death, I would behold the glorious countenance of my God and I would rejoice in the permanent security of incorruptibility and everlasting immortality. Being joined to Him by a bond of love, I would forego all the blindness of my inborn ignorance. Apart from Him, I would not and could not esteem any earthly creature.

No more would I look upon this passing vale of tears nor remember it. The worldly sojourn is painful, corruptible, and full of both bitterness and evil. Here disease increases, here pain ever grows more intense; here the sun burns; here the air itself spreads sickness; here food makes ill; here fasting often makes bitter; here happiness does not endure; here beauty is consumed; here thinking becomes tiresome; here ease makes dull; here riches inflate while poverty pulls downward; here youth sets forth and old age brings a stop; here sickness defaces; here sorrow utterly thrusts down; and here the evil one continually remains in wait. Often the world flatters and the flesh is delighted, but in the

process the soul is blinded and the whole man is put out of order. After these and many other great evils, there follows that of death itself. In this manner, an end is brought to the vain and empty joys of the earthly city, which once past may be thought never to have existed at all.

IX

God's Comfort for the Disconsolate

He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory.

—ST. MATTHEW 12:19-20.

WHAT high praise and thanksgiving can we give to You, O Lord our God, who among the manifold miseries of our mortality does not cease to comfort us with the inexhaustible riches of Your life giving grace!

While I fear the ending of my life, while I consider my sins, while I stand in fear of Your justice, while I think upon the pains before death, while I shudder at the thought of destruction, while I realize how strictly You will judge all my words, while I am completely ignorant as to what end I will come, and while I think of these and many other forebodings in my heart, You, O Lord God, are ready at hand to comfort me in my many grievings. In the midst of all this unhappiness,

these never ending complaints, and these deep sighs of my heart, You lift up my sad and sorrow-depressed mind to the top of the highest mountains, even to the forest of sweetest spice. Here, You place me in a wonderful pasture by the rivers of sweet water as You prepare a deliciously furnished table for me. To refresh my anxious spirit and to cheer my heavy heart, You nourish from the store of Your own delicacies. In the embrace of Your love, I am completely refreshed and I completely forget all of my many miseries. Held high above the earthly city, I find and take my rest in You, where I discover my peace of mind, soul, and heart.

X

The Sweetness of Divine Love

The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying,
Yes, I have loved thee with an everlasting love:
therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee.

—JEREMIAH 31:3.

I LOVE You, my God, I love You! More and more I would love You. Fairest Lord Jesus, grant me to desire and to love You as much as I would together with the intensity that I should. Without any measure or limitation, You deserve to be loved by Your own which You first loved, which You saved from utter destruction, and for which You have prepared the eternal joys of Your loving communion.

O love which forever burns and is never quenched, sweet Christ, gracious Jesus, my God, who is love itself, kindle me with Your undying flame, with eternal love for You, with Your unselfish sweetness, with wild desire for You, with enduring joy and happiness in You, with Your kindness and mercy, and with unending delight in You. This love is

altogether holy, good, undivided, and chaste. Full of Your undefinable sweetness, may I always abide in Your love and be wholly kindled with its life-endowing flame. May I hold You, most sweet and satisfying Lord God, with all my heart, with all my soul, with all my strength, with all my faculties, with heartfelt sorrow and bitter tears, with reverence and trembling, having You in my heart, in my mouth, and always before my eyes, so that I may never know nor desire any counterfeit and unclean love.

XI

The Key to Pure Joy

But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.—1 JOHN 2:5-6.

O SWEET love and loving sweetness, permit me to taste and to be inebriated with the life-giving wine of Your love. Let my mind bring forth Your good words. O Charity, my God, sweeter than honey, whiter than milk, and bread of angels, make me to grow in Your love that I may ever eat more and more of Your delicacy. You are the life by which I live, the hope in which I abide, and the glory that I desire. Hold my heart, rule my mind, guide my understanding, magnify my love, lift up my soul, and bring my spirit to the heavenly fountain. Let the temptations of the flesh have their ending. Let the vain imaginations of land, water, air, and sky hold their peace. Take away daydreams, foolish revelations, tongues that speak, and signs which pass away.

Above all else, make my vacillating soul to be still and to go out from itself. Let it not think of itself but bring it to dwell upon its God who is its whole hope and unfailing trust. In You and in Your mystical body, most sweet, gracious, and merciful God, Lord Jesus Christ, is the portion, the blood, and the flesh of every human being. Where that portion dwells in me, there do I reign. Where Your blood circulates, there is my control. In whom my flesh is glorified, there am I glorious. Although I bound by selfishness, I trust in this communion of grace. Although my sins create a mighty barrier, my very subsistence requires me to dwell in You. My transgressions shut me out, but You have taken these away and You have made me to become a partaker of Your own nature.

XII

The Word Made Flesh

But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name. Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.—ST. JOHN 1:12-14.

THE Lord is not so self-hating as not to love His own flesh and His own members. Truly, I ought to despair for my many sins, vices, faults, and negligences which I have committed daily and continue to commit in heart, word, and deed according to my manifold human weakness. But the Word and Son of God became flesh and He dwells within redeemed humanity. By His grace, He continues to live and work in those who have become incorporated in Him. Now, I dare not despair because He was made absolutely obedient unto death, even to the death of the Cross, and His complete unselfishness has wiped away the handwriting of

my sins. Upon His Cross, He forever crucifies the devastating power of sin and death.

When I recall the Word made flesh, who now sits at the right hand of His Father and makes intercession for His human brethren, I have absolute and sure confidence in Him. Through Him, I am already risen with Him. Among the holy angels, I am now dwelling in eternity. The Son of God came into time to translate the sons of men into eternity. To You, O God, be praise, glory, honor, and thanks. Amen.

XIII

The Fruit of Contemplation

For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.

—HEBREWS 8:10-11.

MOST merciful Lord, who has loved and saved us, and who has enlivened and exalted us, how sweet is Your remembrance! The more that I think about You, the more sweet and amiable You become to me and the more I enjoy the secret goods of Your communion. With clear eyesight of mind and with the pure affection of divine love, according to my small ability, I continually desire to sue for Your tremendous love, while I behold Your invigorating beauty in this place of my pilgrimage. It little matters if I still abide in my perishable members.

I am wounded with the fiery dart of Your love;

I am wildly inflamed with desire for You; I gladly would come to You; and I long to see more and more of You. With waking eyes, as I sing in my heart, I will stand and wait. I will sing with my whole mind and with all of my strength. I will praise You who have made and renewed me. In secret desire, with my mind's eye, I will pierce the heavens and dwell with You. Although my body may be held to its earthly miseries, my thinking and my wishing will always be with You. Where the treasure of my desire reposes, there is my heart. My most gracious and merciful Lord, when I consider the glory of Your unmeasurable goodness and loving kindness, my heart is not strong enough for its task. Your glorious honor, Your inconceivable beauty, Your all-embracing power, Your undisputed dominion, Your tremendous majesty, and Your self-emptying love exceeds all understanding and human thinking. As the brightness of Your glory is inestimable, so Your love is unspeakable. To inherit the dowry of Your nature, You adopt the children which You have created from nothing and You knit them into Yourself forever.

XIV

The Tribulation to Obtain Christ

And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence come they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.—REVELATION 7:13-14.

GLADLY, we should suffer pain and endure the fires of hell for untold ages if eventually we might come to see Jesus Christ in His heavenly glory. No price is too much for us to pay if we are to gain an opportunity to become partakers of such a supreme benefit and so great a glory.

Let the evil ones do their worst; let them tempt while tempt they may; let fasting torture the body's selfish appetites; let coarse clothing grieve the often pampered flesh; let labor weary the body; let constant watchings wear it out; let this man and that one call upon me for my help; let cold make me miserable; let my conscience ever bark at me; let heat scorch me; let my head ache; let my heart

burn; let my stomach be distressed; let my face become pale; let physical health depart; let my life be consumed in sorrow; let my years pass away in sighing; and let my earthly body decay. Holding You firmly, my God, I will not fear awesome days of trouble nor the pruning which is necessary to shape me into the form of Your Son, Jesus Christ.

What glory shall the righteous have? How great shall be the wondrous joy of the saints when every face shall shine as the noonday sun! When Christ shall have ordered His people, He shall bring them into the glorious kingdom of His Father. Here, He shall give to His beloved people their rewards according to their deserving in Him. For earthly suffering, He shall bestow heavenly delights; for temporal tribulation, eternal joy; and for small sacrifices, unimaginable riches. Truly, happiness shall be heaped up full to the limit of every capacity, when the Lord shall bring His saints into the light of eternal glory and when He makes them dwell together in unity with Him, that God may be all in all.

XV

The Way to the Kingdom

Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

—ST. JOHN 14:5-6.

HAPPY blessedness and blessed happiness to see the mighty company of saints, to be with the saints, to be a saint, to see God, and to possess Him more and more forever! With diligent minds, therefore, let us recall our supernal destiny and with undivided hearts may we seek after it.

If you desire to find the way to life, or by what special deservings, or by what unfailing help it may be attained: hearken, O man. Your entrance into the kingdom of heaven requires no other price but the absolute and the complete sacrifice of self and your human selfishness. Hence, the full demand is that of yourself. Willingly and freely give yourself for it and you will most certainly obtain it. Why do you trouble yourself about the price of your eternal

destiny? Our Saviour, Jesus Christ, has fully and completely given Himself to purchase the kingdom of God for you. All that remains is the giving of yourself without reservation that you may meet the fundamental qualifications of your heavenly citizenship. Give sin or selfishness no place in the life of your mortal body that you may follow the unerring guidance of the Holy Spirit unto the present attainment of eternal life.

XVI

The Reward of Surrender

And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life, shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it.

—ST. MARK 8:34-35.

MY SOUL, let us again consider the heavenly city of which we are made free citizens. As we join the noble company of the saints in the household of God, we become the heirs of God and co-heirs with Jesus Christ. As far as is within our power, let us reflect upon the grandeur of our abiding city. With the prophet, let us say, "How glorious things are spoken of the city of our God!" Here is the dwelling place of all who rejoice, whose joy fills the expanding realm of eternity. Here, there is neither old age nor misery. Here are no crippled people, nor lame, nor crooked backs, nor misshapen bodies. All have grown up to perfect manhood after the full measure and the age of Christ.

What more blessed life can there be than that in which there is no fear of poverty nor weakness of disease? No man is harmed there in any way, nor displeased, nor envious. There is no burning of covetousness, no ambitious striving for honor and authority, no dread of the evil one, and no fear of an impending destruction. No longer, in the pleasant life of immortality, is there any fear of death to either body or soul. The saints shall agree in One, and all things having come into agreement, there shall be no contradiction nor debate. Where heavenly peace and happiness hold all things together, all is calm and all is quiet.

There is continual light in the city of the saints, not as in our earthly city, but it is so much the brighter as it is so much the more happy. We read, "That city shall need no sun, nor moon, because the Lord Almighty shall shine in it, and the lamb shall be the light of it." As the brightness of the evening sky, so shall shine the saints who have taught the ways of righteousness to their brethren. Thus, there can be no night, nor darkness, nor meeting of the clouds, nor pain of heat and cold. Only the blessed inhabitants of this city can know those magnificent surroundings, which eye has never seen, nor ear heard, nor mind conceived.

These are the names which have been written in the book of life from the very foundation of the world.

Far above the pleasing environment is the joyous fellowship of the angels, archangels, patriarchs, prophets, and all the saints which include those near to us and who have gone into that city before us. Glorious are these blessings, but it is far more wonderful to behold the present countenance of God against the dazzling of His infinite brightness. How tremendous shall be our ravishment when we shall see God Himself, both holding Him and having Him within ourselves, of whom we shall never have enough.

XVII

Man Is Made in the Divine Image

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

—GENESIS 1:26-27.

GOD the Father is the fount of Charity, God the Son is the reflected lovingness, and God the Holy Ghost is the mutual love of the Father and the Son. The supernatural man necessitates the formation of this Trinitarian image within himself. In the order of grace, man must be molded into this Charity, this lovingness, and this divine love in order that he may be associated and knit into the Godhead.

True love demands neither dignity nor special reverence. He who truly loves God comes boldly to Him and speaks with familiarity, and without fear or anxiety. If you really desire to know what

one loves, mark very well that upon which his mind perpetually dwells. Where love is, there also is the inner eye. The whole thinking of the human heart ever rests in that upon which it delights.

If you love God to any great degree, you will often think of Him. If you love Him but little, very rarely will you consider Him. If you will readily know where and in what is your pleasure, ponder that which you actually love. If you will not be ignorant of what you love, consider your whole thinking. You shall discover your treasure by your loving. Look into the depths of your mind, and you will easily find your love.

Life that does not love its God is totally lost. But he that truly loves has his eyes ever toward God, whom he loves, for whom he desires, in whom he delights, and on whom he feeds. Such a one is so disposed, so sings, so reads, and is so circumspect in all of his doings, as though God were present before his eyes, which indeed He actually is. When he prays, he is taken up before the majesty of God's throne, where thousands of thousands do God's service and ten hundred thousand are always standing before Him. Thus, the soul that loves God is awakened from its sleep. This indwelling love admonishes, softens, and wounds the heart. It lightens

the dark places, unlocks closed doors, warms cold places, makes the sturdy meek, drives away evil habits, bridles fleshly affections, changes manners, reforms and renews the spirit, and it restrains the ill-conceived actions and motions of human immaturity. When vitally present, love does all of these things. When it has departed, the soul loses poise and support in much the same way as a boiling cauldron becomes cool if the fire is taken away from under it.

XVIII

The Boldness of Love for God

For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.—HEBREWS 4:15-16.

LOVE is so great and divine a thing that it emboldens the soul to stand before God and to remain in Him. The soul that really loves God questions Him as a friend and seeks His Counsel in the many problems of daily life. Actually, it can hardly think or speak of anything else but this wonderful sanctifying friendship. Holding to God, it despises and loathes all other things apart from Him. Whatever it considers and to whomever it speaks, all is flavored with the divine love. In everything and toward all people, the loving soul breathes forth the love of God.

He, that will know God, must first love Him. Without that primary affection, reading, studying,

preaching, and praying are vain things. Love for God makes the soul capable of being loved. God loves us to the intent that He may be loved by us. From one viewpoint, love means little more than the ability to be loved. Love grows by its responding affection. The soul that loves God renounces all other attachments apart from Him and gives itself wholly to nothing else but the divine love in order that it may answer love with love. The complete spending of one's self is a very small thing in comparison to the everlasting stream of heavenly love!

Great are the odds between the beloved and the Lover, between the soul and its God, and between the creature and the Creator. Yet, if human love is undivided, there will be no lacking. Unlike the soul that loves with measure, he who completely loves is unafraid. Genuine love is carried away with desire, drawn with longing, cares not about deserving, shuts the eyes of dread majesty, opens the eyes of pleasure, places itself in safety, and deals boldly with God. Through such love, the soul withdraws and departs from the physical senses, so that it does not feel its own selfish urging but may reach out to God. This sweetness results when the mind has been allured to the unspeakable sweetness of God. The whole soul seems to steal away from

itself. Ravished and robbed of self, it comes to enjoy fully the God of its everlasting delight.

Nothing begins to be so pleasing as is the embrace of the divine love. For the unselfish soul, it procures the faithful friendship of God, while friendship makes for boldness, which boldness creates an ever-growing taste, and taste produces continual hunger. The soul, that discovers the love of God for itself, can neither think nor consider anything else, but it constantly and fervently sighs, "As the hart thirsts after the springs of water, so does my soul thirst after You, my God."

XIX

God's Great Works for Man

Verily, verily, I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel.—ST. JOHN 5:19-20.

AS A RESULT of His love toward mankind, God came to man, He became man, and He came into man. At the demand of His outpouring love, the invisible God becomes as one of His human servants. From the promptings of this same love, He was bruised for the sins of His brethren. But in these sacred wounds is found the safety and repose of those for whom He came into the world to redeem.

In His precious wounds, I dwell at ease. By His wounds, I find a way into the heart of His mercy. Whatever is lacking in myself, that I borrow out of the heart of my Lord. In my crucified God, there is no lack of channels through which the unending

stream of His lively mercy may flow. From the openings of His sacred wounds proceed the wondrous secrets of His heart, His all-embracing pledge of kindly love, and even that mercy of our God by which the dayspring has visited us from on high. These wounds of Jesus Christ are full of mercy, full of pity, full of sweetness, and full of love.

My sins have bored His hands and feet. They pierced His side with a spear. But through these wounds I may taste how sweet is the Lord, my God, how mild indeed, how merciful to all who seek after Him, and especially how tender to all who love Him. In the wounds of Jesus Christ, our Saviour, plenteous redemption is given to all mankind from Eden to the last judgment. At the Cross is given an unmeasurable abundance of sweetness, great plenty of grace, and for God's children the enlarging perfection of His virtues.

XX

The Wounds of Christ in Daily Living

And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

—REVELATION 5:9-10.

WHEN any unclean thought assaults me, I run to the wounds of Jesus Christ. When my flesh burdens and presses me to the earth, the remembrance of those sacred wounds gives me the fresh strength to rise up again. When the evil one conceals himself in wait for me, I flee to the mercy heart of my God. If the heat of passion provokes my members, the fire is quickly quenched by recalling the wounds of our Lord, the Son of God. In all the troubles of mortal living, I have never found any remedy so effectual and curative as the redeeming wounds of Christ. In these, I take my rest without care and I sleep without fear.

Christ died for us sinners. There is nothing pain-

ful in life which has not been already relieved by the redemptive death of our beloved Lord. Our whole hope reposes completely in His dying. Our own deserving wrought that awful death which has now become our refuge, our salvation, our life, and our resurrection.

The boundless mercy of my Lord has become my undeserved merit. I am never poor as long as I abide among His plenteous riches. As long as He is great in mercy toward me, so long do I deserve much. The mightier that He is to save, the more surely I dwell in Him without the shadow of care.

XXI

The Wounds of Christ and Adversities

For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.—ROMANS 8:38-39.

I HAVE sinned exceedingly and my conscience daily finds me guilty of many offences, but I dare not despair because I know that where sin has abounded, grace has overabounded. He, who despairs of his forgiveness, really denies God to be merciful. He commits a great wrong against God when he denies the divine mercy, since such a one doubts God to be completely loving, true in His words, and almighty in His works.

My hope consists in the love of God's adoption, in the truth of His promise, and in the power of His redeeming. Let my unwise imagination murmur as much as it wishes, "Who are you? How great is your glory? By what deserving do you expect to

attain it?" I will answer without a moment's hesitation, "I know in whom I have trusted, that He of His great love has adopted to be His own son, that He is absolutely true to His promises, that He is mighty in performance, and that He can do whatever He wishes for my good." All of my past sinning cannot make me fearful as long as I remember the death of my Lord. My evil doing cannot overmatch His eternal goodness. His nails and spear cry out to me that I have been completely reconciled if I strive to love Him with all my will. A Roman soldier, with a spear, opened the side of my Lord. Into that refuge I go and there in safety I rest forever.

Whoever is fearful for his sins, let him learn to love his crucified Lord because such sincere affection drives all fear out of doors. Meditation upon the passion and death of our Redeemer is also a powerful and effective check upon the fickleness of human love. From His Cross, Jesus stretches forth His arms and He holds out His bleeding hands in readiness to embrace His sinful brethren for whom He gives the fullness of His divine life.

In the loving arms of my beloved Saviour, I would live and die. There I shall dwell with an eternal security. I exalt and magnify You, my Lord,

because You do not permit my enemies to triumph over me. You have bowed down Your head in death to kiss Your beloved. As often as I look up to the sacrifice of Your unselfish love, I kiss my God.

XXII

Contemplation Upon the Love of God

Hear me speedily, O Lord: my spirit faileth: hide not thy face from me, lest I be like unto them that go down into the pit. Cause me to hear thy lovingkindness in the morning; for in thee do I trust: cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto thee.—PSALM 143:7-8.

O MY soul, which has been ennobled with the image of the eternal God, redeemed with the blood of Christ, betrothed to Him by Faith, indued with the Holy Ghost, garnished with the virtues, and placed among the angels, love Him who has so greatly loved you; serve Him who by His power holds you! He first loved you and He is the cause of your growing love for Him. He is the source, the merit, the reward, the fruit, the use, and the purpose of your love. Be careful for Him who wisely cares for you. Rest in Him who constantly remains in you. Be clean with Him who is inviolate purity. Be holy with Him who dwells upon a throne of absolute holiness. Consider how you appear before God and how He has appeared before you.

God is gentle, meek, and merciful. Hence, He requires gentleness, meekness, and mercy in His creatures. Of Himself, He has rescued His own from the fruitless dust and mire of the earth's misery. He is a friend above all other friends and He will remain steadfast when everyone else fails.

Behold, my soul, in the day of burial, when all your friends have departed, He will not forsake you but will defend you from the roaring lions that wait for their prey. He will lead you through an unknown country and bring you to the streets of the heavenly Sion. There, He will place you among His angels before the face of His own majesty, where you will hear the angels song, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of hosts." Here is the sounding of happiness, the voice of joy and salvation, and the utterance of thanksgiving and praise in which God is magnified forever. Here is the full measure of happiness, glory above description, complete joy that satisfies all human faculties, and the wealth of all good things. O my soul, sigh heartily and desire earnestly that you may come to the city above, of which glorious things are spoken and which is the habitation of all that rejoice. By your present living, prepare for your fuller experience.

Nothing is difficult and nothing is impossible to

him who loves. Indeed, the soul that learns to love often goes, during this present life, to the heavenly Jerusalem and runs familiarly from street to street, visiting the patriarchs and prophets, saluting the Apostles, wondering at the mighty host of martyrs and confessors, and admiring the glorious companies of virgins. Without ceasing, heaven and earth, with all things therein, call upon me to love and to praise my Lord God.

XXIII

The Knowledge of Truth

Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.
—COLOSSIANS 2:8-9.

WHAT is the knowledge of truth? As far as man is concerned, in the first place, it is the learning of self and the endeavoring to become that which one ought to be by the continual correction of those selfish qualities which should be amended in human character. Secondly, true knowledge is the learning and loving of the Creator in whom the abiding happiness of man consists.

How unspeakable is the gracious love of God toward us! He made us from nought and He gives us all that we own. As we, however, often love the gift more than the Giver and the thing made more than He who makes, so we trap ourselves in the snares of the evil one and we become his bond-slaves. Nevertheless, God is moved with compas-

sion and He sends His Son into the world of time to redeem us who are perishing in the midst of our own self-created slavery. Through the sacred purchase of our Lord, God sheds His Holy Spirit upon us, through whom we are again made His children. He gives His Son to be the price of our ransom, the Holy Ghost to be a permanent and invigorating assurance of His love, and the Father Himself becomes the very heritage of our adoption.

Thus, according to His exceeding goodness and mercy, God has not only bestowed His benefits but He even gives His very self to mankind. In this way, God recovers His children for Himself. That man might be born of Him, God was first born of man. Great is the selfish hatred which cannot be softened by the consideration of this wondrous love, a God who, to make a way to Himself for mankind, became man Himself. Who can be so hard of heart that, seeing the divine manhood, he is not forced to love God?

Without doubt, he who hates any man redeemed by Christ, also hates God. That all men might truly love each other, the God who made them became the redeemer of all. That they who were ransomed together might love each other with sincere affection, they were made sharers of the common divine

goodness. God appeared in the form of man, that in the view of the Godhead, the eye of the human mind could perceive that which is good, and with such knowledge, restore both the body and the soul to newness and fullness of life. By and through the divine-human nature, every human being may look upon God and discover the nourishment toward eternal living.

XXIV

The Role of the Holy Spirit

And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.—ST. JOHN 14:16-17.

TO DESTROY our mortality, by His love for us, our Saviour was born of a Virgin, crucified by those that He loved, and He gave His life upon the Cross of shame. The grape of His flesh was carried to the terrifying winepress of the Cross where, being pressed, it yielded forth the sweet wine of His Godhead. That the purpose of our Lord's mission might be fulfilled, the Holy Ghost was sent to make ready and sustain the vessels of men's hearts. In order that these hearts might enjoy the divine wine and not spill it, the Holy Ghost carries away all delight in selfishness and human vanity. The new wine could not enter in until the old had been emptied out. Delighting in wickedness defiles

the whole being, and taking joy in selfish vanity completely destroys the creature. The seeking and finding happiness in selfishness makes the human heart into a foul vessel and the gratification of vanity breaks it into many pieces. The enjoyment of selfishness is the destructive love of sin while the satisfaction of vanity is the empty love which will soon pass away.

Cast out, therefore, the wine which is bitter, that you may be prepared to receive the gift which is good. Pour out the rancidity of selfishness that you may be filled with all the sweetness of God. Hurl out the spirit of the world and of the evil one, that you may have room for the inhabitation of the Holy Spirit of God. The spirit of Satan creates delight in wickedness and the spirit of the world brings about the enjoyment of selfish vanity. These pleasures are destructive for the one springs from the fountain-source of all evil and the other creates the occasions by which man clings to things which are not eternally and completely good. When these evil spirits are torn out of your personality, the Spirit of God will come and enter into the tabernacles of your heart. Here, He creates good delighting and real love by which the shadow-pleasures of the world and of sin will be driven away.

The foolish love of the perishing world entices men in order to deceive them while the devastating love of selfishness and sin corrupts them as it leads them toward everlasting and final destruction. On the other hand, divine love enlightens the faculties, cleanses the conscience, gladdens the human heart, and shows God to man.

XXV

More Considerations on the Love of God

In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

—1 JOHN 4:9-10.

HE, IN WHOM the love of God dwells, constantly seeks those ways by which he can come more and more into the possession of the Godhead. Already, he has fled this passing world and has escaped the corruption of the mortal flesh. To nurture his true peace, his heart is always lifted up to the throne of God. When he relaxes, when he works or plays, when he sleeps, and whenever he does anything else, his heart stays ever in union with God. By his living, he encourages all of his fellows to pursue the wondrous love of God. In all of his works, he endeavors to bring this divine love to every man that he chances to meet. In heart, word, and deed, he shows how sweet is God's love

in contrast to the bitterness of that love for worldly things apart from God. He laughs at the momentary glory of this world and he little heeds its pressing cares. He teaches others how completely foolish it is to place one's trust in things which by their very nature must pass away. The blindness which he finds in his fellowmen makes him sad with the grief of God. Holding the security of permanent happiness, he cannot begin to understand why so many refuse to abandon their transitory and fleeting joys. He believes that all men should deem the riches most sweet in which he joyfully finds so rare a delicacy. He earnestly hopes and prays that all people will learn to love the flame which he loves so that they may gain an access to the secrets of eternal love which he begins to comprehend.

Often, the beloved looks upon his God and he is sweetly refreshed in his contemplation. The more frequently he watches, the more sustaining happiness does God bestow upon him. In human experience, we are aware that it is a pleasant thing for those who love us to keep us in mind. In much the same way, God wishes to be thought upon by His creatures, and He rewards those who think of Him with an energizing sweetness.

XXVI

The Heart's Resting Place

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

—ST. MATTHEW 11:28-29.

WHEN the human heart has established itself in the desire for divine love, it truly has discovered its final and everlasting resting place. When all created things which stand in the way are removed, the heart of man finds unalloyed delight in the goods of God. If this happiness is withdrawn by any vain thought or obscured by the distracting business of daily life, with all possible speed, the loving soul returns to its God. It is self-imposed exile and banishment for it to abide anywhere else. As there is no moment of human life in which man does not enjoy and use the divine bounty, so there ought to be no time in which God is not present in the soul's remembrance. It is not a light fault to forsake the continuing presence of God and to

behave as though He was neither seen nor heard. He surely blinds himself to God who follows his selfish and unruly thoughts that deal exclusively with the shadow-things of this world. By such action, the mind's contemplation is drawn away from the truths of eternity. By minding the things of this creation, innate worldliness increases and the soul loses sight of the God who made it, who redeemed it, who sustains it, and who will judge it.

XXVII

All Things Apart from God Must Be Rejected

For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?—ST. MARK 8:36-37.

THOSE among you, who dearly love this passing world, consider the direction of your whole life. The way in which you choose to walk is bitterly selfish and full of sorrow. Of your own choice, you are in the process of destroying yourself. Learn wisdom, O man, leave your other affairs for a while, and withdraw yourself from your own trouble-making thoughts. Cast away those trying cares which so heavily burden you; lay aside your nervous and painful turmoil; bestow a few minutes upon the thought of God; and rest yourself a while in Him. Go into the secret chamber of your mind. Alone with Him, shut out all things except God and whatever may help you in finding Him. With the doors fast shut, seek Him in the very depth of your soul.

Let your whole and undivided heart say to God, "I seek Your countenance, and it is Your face alone,

O Lord, that I require. Teach my craving heart, Lord God, where and how it may look for You as well as where and how it may discover You. If You are not truly here, where may I seek after You and into what place have You departed? But I know that You are everywhere, why then do I not see You? Like a blind man, I surely feel You but my eyes refuse to function. I am aware that You dwell in unapproachable light. How can I come to You and by what means may my eyesight be sharpened? Who shall lead and bring me to Your holy mountain? Under what signs or in which shape shall I seek You? Seeing You, yet I have never seen You. Your face is before me but I have never known it. O Lord most high, what shall I begin to do? What shall Your servant desire who seeks Your mighty love and who is far away from Your presence? Behold, my aching heart is anxious to see You and Your thrice holy countenance is far-lost from me. I long to come near but Your dwelling place is ever unapproachable. In discovering You, my happiness would have no bounds, but now I do not even know Your house. Make me grow into that for which You made me, I am most desirous to embrace You but I cannot recognize Your countenance."

XXVIII

Selfishness and the Dark Night

Mine eyes are ever toward the Lord; for he shall pluck my feet out of the net. Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me; for I am desolate and afflicted. The troubles of my heart are enlarged: O bring thou me out of my distresses.—PSALM 25:15-17.

LORD, You are my God and You govern me, but I have never looked upon You. When I see You, I do not comprehend. When I do not see, You are always before my eyes. You created me and again You made me new again. You bestowed the bounty of Your good things upon me but I have neither known nor really seen You. In short, I was made only to look upon You but I have not yet attained the awful purpose for which I was created.

O wretched state of man, in that he now must live apart from the purpose for which he was made! How great is the malice of selfishness? Alas, what does a man lose and what does he find? Through his selfish sin, he loses the fundamental happiness

for which he was made, and he finds the destructive misery for which he was not created. That is lost without which nothing is worth while, while that which remains is completely without value. Man was made to eat the bread of the angels for which he forever hungers, but he brings himself, by his selfishness, to consume the bread of sorrow.

Lord, will You forget us forever? How long will You turn Your face away from us? When will the terrible blackness of this night have its ending? When will You again enlighten our eyes and show us Your holy face? When will You restore Yourself within us? Look down, Lord, and hear our prayers. Enlighten us, show Yourself to us, and restore Yourself within our awareness that our sorrow may be changed into Your joy.

My heart is full of bitterness because You have left me to my own devices. Lord, I beseech You to sweeten my selfish emptiness again with Your comfortable love. With a hungry heart, I seek that which I have lost. Send me not away without Your life-giving repast. I come, craving the food of life, let me not go away fasting. I, who am poor, come to You, rich above measure. I, who am completely wretched, come before the outflowing throne of Your mercy. Let me not go away empty and

despised. I am bowed down with my hidden selfishness so that I cannot look up toward You. Lift me up that I may raise my face. My iniquities are gone over my head, they overwhelm me, and they overload me that I may be forced into the bottomless pit. Teach me still to seek You, and show Yourself at my seeking. Surely, I cannot seek unless You lead me, nor can I find You except You freely show Yourself to me. Let me seek You by my desiring, and let me desire You by my seeking. Let me discover You by my loving and let me love You in my finding.

XXIX

The Healing Power of Divine Goodness

Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.—PSALM 107:8-9.

I CONFESS and I thank You, O Lord, because You have made me after Your own image in order that I should always be mindful of You, think upon You, and love You. But the corruption of my selfishness has so defaced Your image within me that I cannot accomplish the purpose of my being except You continually renew and reform me. I beseech You, who bestows the living understanding of Faith, grant that I may readily comprehend the magnitude of Your boundless love. So great is that Charity that nothing greater nor better can be conceived. What is the meaning of this great love? Here is the unimaginable and supreme goodness which is self-existent and is the cause of all other things that have been made. You are, therefore, righteous, truthful, blessed, and whatever else that is better to be than not to be.

In that You are righteous above all comparison, how do You spare the wicked? The answer is hid in the unapproachable brightness in which You dwell forever. Truly, in the headspring, from whence the stream of Your mercies flows, is hid the deepest and most secret gulf of Your goodness. Although You are completely and exceedingly righteous, yet You are gentle toward sinners because You are completely and exceedingly good. You would be less good if You should bear with no evil in Your creatures. For better is he who is good toward both good and bad, than he who is good to the good alone. Better is he who is good to sinners both by sparing and by punishing them, than is he who is good to wrong-doers in only punishing them. Hence, the cause of the divine mercy is the complete and exceeding goodness of God.

XXX

The Fruition of Growth in God

The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God.—PSALM 93:12-13.

O UNMEASURABLE goodness which passes all understanding of heart, let Your abundant mercy come upon me. Let that love which continually flows out from You enter into me and engulf me. By Your mercifulness, spare me, and punish me not by Your ever-present justice.

Awake, my soul, and lift up your whole understanding. With all of your faculties, consider how great and of what immensity is that goodness which endures in God. Since all good things are pleasing, how delectable is this pleasantness that contains the goodness of all things. No such excellent goodness can be found in created things, but as He who makes differs from him who is made, so between them the quality of goodness diverges. If created life is good and enjoyable, how much

better is He who created it? If created prosperity is pleasant, how much greater is that prosperity which made all others? If the wisdom of conceiving and knowing created things is desirable, how much more to be sought is that eternal wisdom which made all things from nothing? Finally, if there is great pleasure in delectable things, how much more pleasing is the Maker of all?

What shall one have or not have who enjoys the good things of God? Most surely, he shall possess whatever he wishes and he shall not have anything that he would not have. He shall own all good things, both of body and of soul, as eye has never seen, nor ear heard, nor human mind ever imagined.

XXXI

The Supreme Good

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.—ROMANS 12:2.

WHY, O foolish man, do you travel about the face of the earth seeking for good things of soul and body? Love that goodness alone which contains the measure of all other good things. Here is sufficient and more than enough for you. Be desirous of the single good which possesses all goodness, and it suffices.

O my flesh, what is it that you love? What, O my soul, do you desire? Whatever is truly lovable can be found in God. All things that you desire are there. If you have a mind for beauty, there the righteous shine as the sun. If you like swiftness, or irresistible strength, or full liberty of body, there man shall be like the angels of God. The human body is sown a natural body but it rises a spiritual body, that is, spiritual in power but not in sub-

stance. If you desire an enduring and healthy life, there shall be healthful everlastingness and everlasting healthfulness. The righteous shall live forever since the prosperity of the righteous comes from the Lord of life. If you seek sufficiency, there shall be fullness of every human faculty when the glory of the Lord appears. If you follow after the intoxication of ecstasy, there the saints shall be made drunk with the abundance of God's house. If you have an ear for music, there the angels shall sing to God without ending.

Every pleasure shall be there. The Lord will give His saints to drink their fill from the life-giving stream of His delights. If you seek wisdom, the very wisdom of God will ever more and more display itself. If friendship, the friends of God shall love Him more than themselves, one another as themselves, and God shall love them more than they care for themselves. They love Him and one another by Him, but He loves Himself and them by Himself. If you seek concord and tranquility, the saints shall delight in only one thing for there shall be one will among them which is the unchangeable will of God. If power is your quest, the heavenly citizens shall be masters of their wills as God is of His own. As God by Himself can do

what He wills, so shall they be able to do what they wish through Him. As they will not wish any other thing than what He desires, so will He desire whatever they wish. All things that He proposes will come to pass. If riches and honor are your goal, God will make His good and faithful servants to be rulers of very much. As children of God, they shall be ever-becoming gods. In all things, they shall be heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ. If you desire security, the children born of God are absolutely certain of His unfailing good estate. Of themselves, they will never surrender their salvation, and God who loves them will never take it away from them against their willing. Above God, there is no power which may separate them from Himself.

What and how great is the completely satisfying joy of heaven with such endurance and so great goodness!

XXXII

The Saints' Mutual Love

Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.—PSALM 16:11.

O HEART of man, poor heart, heart well acquainted with misery and wretchedness, how glad would you be if you had that abundance of heavenly things which has been promised to you. Time and time again, ask yourself if you are properly preparing yourself to receive the unending joys of this great happiness. Surely, if any other man should gain that happy state, your joys should be double because the joys of your neighbor are also yours in God. If two, or three, or more should attain this glorious bliss, you ought to be equally as glad for every one as you are for yourself, that is, if you truly love your neighbor as you do yourself.

What tremendous and unimaginable joy shall there be in that community of perfect love among the innumerable company of the blessed angels and

saints, where none shall love any other less than he holds himself! Each one shall be as glad for others as he is for himself.

If the mind of man can hardly begin to conceive the joy that God has prepared for one solitary individual, how shall it be capable to comprehend the infinite multiplication and magnification of this great happiness? As every man loves his brethren, so much does he rejoice in the welfare of others. In the blessed felicity of everlasting life, as every man shall love God far more than self and above all other human beings added together, so he shall rejoice more of God's eternal and happy estate than of his own and of others' placed together.

Although the saints love God with the totality of their hearts, minds, and souls, yet their faculties will never suffice to love God as He is worthy. Without doubt, their rejoicing shall increase through the happy moment of eternity, but all of their faculties shall never suffice to rejoice to the full.

XXXIII

Into Eternal Life

For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.—2 CORINTHIANS 5:2-4.

MY GOD, my Lord, my hope, and joy of my soul, tell me whether this is the joy of which You spoke to us by Your beloved Son, "Ask, and you shall receive, that your joy may be full."

I have found sure happiness that completely suffices and more than satisfies all of my faculties. When the heart is full, the mind replete, the soul superabounding, and the whole man exuberant with unending satisfaction, there shall always remain more rapture beyond human capacity. All of this gladness cannot enter into those who begin to enjoy it, but the blessed shall enter completely into the joy of their Lord. Speak within my heart,

dear God, is this the excelling delight by which the saints enter into the joy of their beloved Lord? Actually, the bliss of Your elect has never been seen by the eye of man, nor heard by his ear, nor has it ever been conceived by his mind.

Therefore, I have not yet said nor imagined how much the Lord's chosen shall rejoice. Most surely, the measure of their unselfish love shall be the determining gauge of their happiness. Moreover, they shall love You as they know more and more of You. How much, then, shall they love You? In this mortal life, the human mind cannot conceive the quality and intensity of Your love in eternal life.

Although my faculties remain infantile during this present life, in the rhythm of eternity, let me grow from day to day. Let my knowledge of You increase here that eventually with and in You it may become full. Let Your love expand in me here that it may become perfect in You. As my joy is very great in my hope here, so indeed may it become full through Your wonderful reciprocation. Faithful Lord, give me the secret riches of Yourself that I may embrace the destiny which You have appointed for me.

In the meanwhile, let my mind ever think about You; let my tongue always speak of You; let my

heart continue to long for You; let the depths of my soul perpetually hunger after You; let my flesh constantly thirst for You; let my whole being incessantly desire You, until I enter into Your supernal embrace, my Lord, where I will continue forever, world without end. Amen.

*To God alone be all glory, honor,
praise, and thanksgiving.*

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