

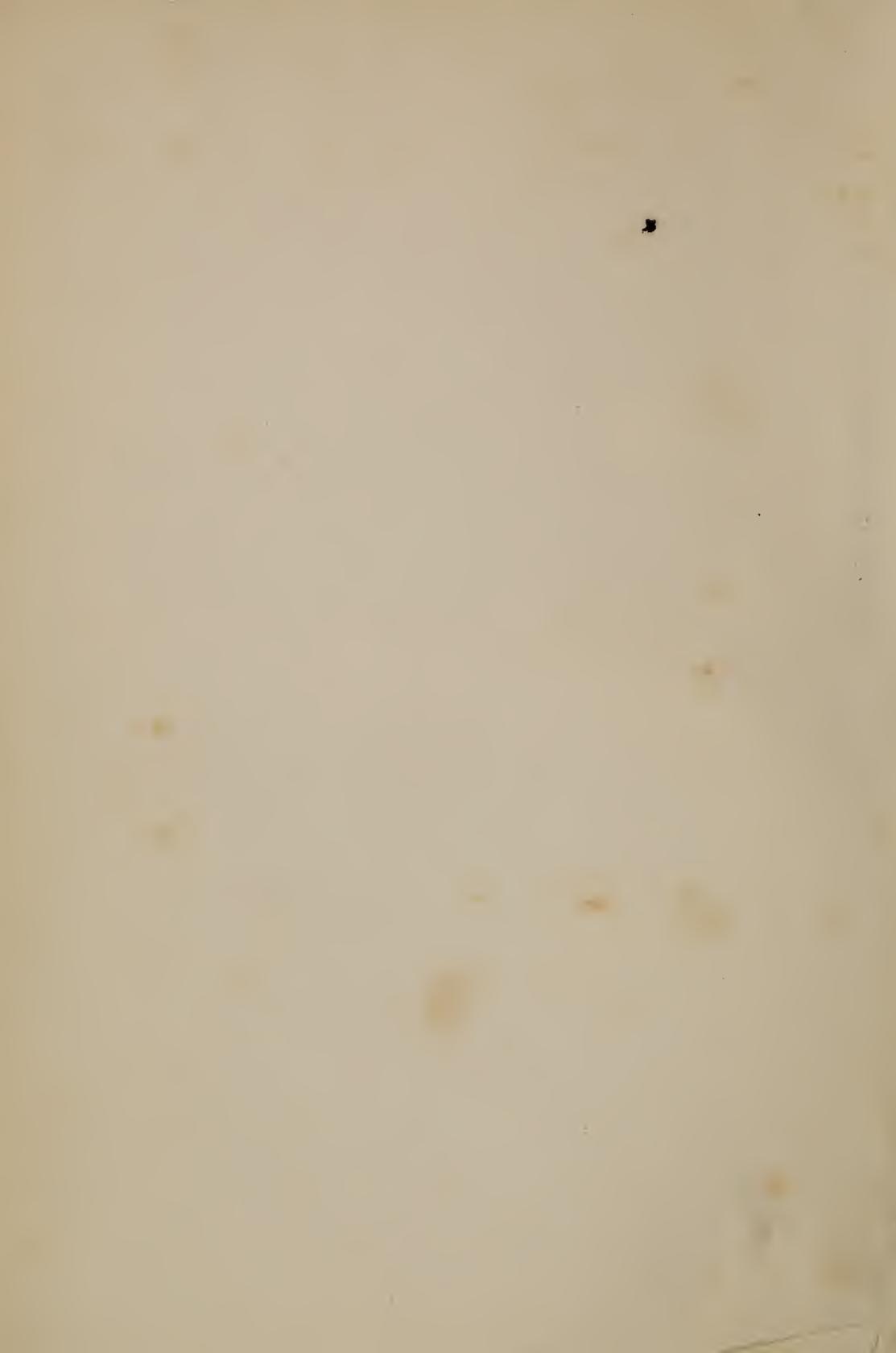
DIVINE LOVE

AND THE

LOVE OF GOD'S MOST BLESSED
MOTHER

THE LIBRARY
BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY
PROVO, UTAH

sep
llb



DIVINE LOVE

AND

THE LOVE OF GOD'S MOST BLESSED MOTHER

Nihil obstat.

VICTOR J. SCHOBEL, S.T.D.,
Censor deputatus.

Imprimatur.

HERBERTUS CARDINALIS VAUGHAN,
Archiepiscopus Westmonasteriensis.

Die 21 Sept., 1893.

232.91
W451d

DIVINE LOVE

AND

THE LOVE OF GOD'S MOST BLESSED MOTHER

BY

RIGHT REV. F. J. WELD

PROTONOTARY APOSTOLIC

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR

AND SOLD BY

THE FATHERS, ST. JOSEPH'S, MILL HILL, LONDON, N.

FOR CHARITABLE PURPOSES

Post Free, 3s.

ABERDEEN UNIVERSITY PRESS.

THE LIBRARY
BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY
PROVO, UTAH

TO HIS EMINENCE
HERBERT CARDINAL VAUGHAN,
ARCHBISHOP OF WESTMINSTER.

MY LORD CARDINAL,—

It is well known that the thought which is uppermost in your Eminence's mind and heart is to become a holocaust to God, sparing yourself in nothing, that thereby, as far as depends on you, you may secure the eternal happiness of heaven for all who in these realms are entrusted directly or indirectly to your pastoral care.

That happiness of heaven, St. Paul tells us, is prepared by God for those only who love Him. Then, to inflame all with this burning fire which our Lord Himself came to cast on earth, your Eminence's most ardent desire is to lead your flock to Him, and to show Him to be as He truly is, love and only love: to show Him as infinitely lovable in Himself, and lovable in all His dealings with all His creatures; that thus, seeing Him as He truly is, they may taste and see how sweet He is indeed, and so love Him and Him alone, for "souls that once have seen Him near see all things else decay".

For the attainment of this end, your Eminence is willing to accept every proffered aid, no matter how small or insignificant it may be.

But he who proffers aid and speaks of this loving God must ever bear in mind that were there in Him even one little speck, not full, entire goodness, love, and mercy, we could only love Him so far, and not as He commands us, with ALL our hearts and souls and minds and strength ; that is to say, we could not be ALL love for Him. And in commanding us to love Him thus, He would be commanding an impossible thing, or even were it not impossible, the attempt to do so would be indeed a sin, since it ever must be wrong to love that which is unworthy of our love. That little speck then can never exist in Him.

Your Eminence, therefore, desires to present that good and loving God before His creatures, as lovable in every possible way, both in Himself and in all His dealings with His creatures.

This indeed cannot always be done directly, but often only by inference, since “ we see now through a glass in a dark manner ” ; but indirectly it ever can be done, since He Himself reveals it. How can He desire all our love if He is not all love for us ? But He does desire and command it all ; then mercy and tenderest compassion alone can flow from Him. Oh ! how true it is that He can never without our aid raise His arms to strike : He can only hold them out to entreat us, His own beloved creatures, His own dear children, to come to His embrace, and repose in His loving heart.

He can repel no one of Himself ; He needs His creatures' aid to enable Him, nay more, to force Him so to do ; and this is precisely what sinners do by the bitter

hatred wherewith they repel Him. The terrible words which are heard before His judgment seat: "Depart from Me, ye cursed," find not their source in Him who is only love, love with all its attributes, and from whom therefore love alone can flow. Oh! no; He could never utter them; they are, and only can be, as it were the echo of voices far, far away, the cries of rebels filled with hate for Him, cries hurled at Him on whom they can have no hold; and, therefore, having to return to and fall upon the source whence they took their rise, they bear within themselves all that they imply, the loss of God whom they have cast away, the loss of Him in whom alone happiness can be found; the loss of Him whose absence is the presence of every woe.

How could malediction flow from a heart all filled with love? How could He, Love Itself, ever cast away those whom He has loved with such ardent love that He made Himself their suppliant, entreating them to give Him their whole entire hearts?

But the sinner in the exercise of his free will, having identified himself with intensest and most bitter hatred for God, the hatred into which sin resolves itself when death has brought probation to its term, casts Him off and curses Him who is Love Itself; and his cry to God for all eternity will ever be the same: "Depart from me, ye cursed;" and the echo of that cry repeats its words, and thus his torments last for ever.

God, Love Itself, can of Himself make no creature suffer. That which is not Himself must have another source. He only sows good seed; the enemy, the one

who hates Him, alone sows the cockle whence proceed all sufferings.

The creature, endowed with free will, alone has power to convert God's love into that which of itself it never can be, a source of eternal woe.

The sorrows of the Prodigal Son came not from his father's hand : he wove them all himself ; and so it is with all who suffer, even for eternity.

But these truths have to be clothed in varied form to reach the minds of those called upon to love ; and therefore your Eminence is a mendicant for as many of those forms as may help the work ; and I, seeing your hand extended, place there my little mite in the pages of this book, which you have so kindly accepted from me.

Upon this offering I have only a few remarks to make. The Church is Catholic ; and therefore its doctrines are intelligible, not only to the highly educated, but to all without exception, learned and unlearned. The only difference between the one and the other is that the one can impart his knowledge in more terse and scholastic language, and give it perhaps a better form than can the other. But to many of the unlearned, the more scholastic dissertations are less intelligible than the simple thoughts of souls less favoured in their training.

All the thoughts contained in the following pages are thoughts of such as these, and put together by one much like themselves, they are thoughts growing, as it were, spontaneously out of seeds of Catholic truth sown in uncultured ground.

A friend anxious to fan the fire of love for our good

and loving God, and His dear beloved Mother, enables me to offer a copy of this book to every priest in England engaged in parochial work, and also to every religious community.

I accept his offer willingly, not that I dare presume to offer instruction to them : they in their studies, prayers and meditations, will have learnt far more than I could ever bring before them. But I do so by way of placing at their disposal forms of which, if they think well, they can make use in conveying to others the knowledge they themselves possess.

I ask your Eminence's blessing on the work ; and I ask also the prayers of all who read it for him whose gift it is, and for its compiler who now signs himself

Your Eminence's obedient devoted servant,

FRANCIS J. WELD.

ISLEWORTH,

FEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF THE
EVER-BLESSED VIRGIN, 1893.

DIVINE LOVE AND THE LOVE OF GOD'S MOST BLESSED MOTHER.

PART I.

SUMMARY.

THE Incarnate Life and Passion of our Lord are the source of all knowledge for us.

The road to happiness thus pointed out to us is very different from that which we should have chosen for ourselves; but we have such abundant proof of God's love for us, that we may be sure He always deals with us for our good, even when the course He sets before us seems most hard, and perhaps detrimental to us.

The love and beauty of the Sacred Heart exceed all that man can conceive; the love of the Blessed Virgin for us, being the highest instance of the love of a pure creature, is the highest image within our reach of the infinitely greater love of God.

The Sun of Justice shines on all men equally, though all are not equally enlightened thereby. Even God's anger is only the expression of His hatred of all in us that hinders the action of His love.

The eternal love of God has been manifested to us by His incarnation and therefore through the Blessed Virgin.

The one word love is the whole language of the kingdom of God, so that even in Paradise, the knowledge Adam had by creatures would not have satisfied him; since he would not have learned thereby adequately the love of God, he would crave for the greater knowledge to be had in heaven only.

The Incarnation is the greatest result of the love of God; it is the direct work of the Holy Ghost, who is the love of the Father and the Son.

The rays of love, of light, and of life, are continually poured down by God on every human soul, though at times, and for its greater good, they may come to it indirectly and even seem to be intercepted; but they are so only as are the sun's rays by the clouds, which it has drawn up in order that they may pour down on the earth their genial showers. They may also be arrested by man's free will. Also, at times God permits in great love, and for the perfection of the soul, that it should be immersed for a while in deep darkness, really seeing nothing.

MEDITATION I.

BEHOLD THAT HEART WHICH IS SO INFLAMED WITH LOVE FOR MEN—JESUS CHRIST THE FOUNT OF DIVINE TRUTH.

THE loving invitation of our Divine Lord, to see and study His Sacred Heart, so inflamed with love for us, and to forget, as it were, all else, was fully understood by the great apostle St. Paul. For, putting aside every other consideration, he tells us, that he has judged himself not to know anything but Jesus Christ, and His loving Heart, for he adds—*and Him crucified.*

Here then are two most important points, to which we should devote all our attention, since all knowledge and understanding depend upon them : St. Paul rejects all else.

Jesus Christ is the Word of the Father,—Eternal Truth made Flesh, that is, the Word of the Father, spoken to us by Himself, in a language intelligible to us. He is the only Light that shines in the world, all else is darkness. Before the Fall, the wonderful things of this world were the books, in which Adam read the greatness of that power, which by a word had called them into existence. So bright a light shone upon them all, that it enabled his eye to penetrate into their deepest mysteries, at the same time that it revealed to him how great must have been that good God's love for him, since it had produced such marvellous works.

But Adam rejected Him — the Eternal Truth—the True Light, and followed the deceiver, the spirit of darkness. Then the bright light of truth, which hitherto had shone on all, was driven far away, and deep darkness only reigned.

The earth itself, which hitherto had produced in very great abundance the sweet flowers and delicious fruit needed by man, its master, and had ever taught him to love with ardent love the hand that gave them all, now rebelled against him, offering him thorns and thistles, and would ever seek to turn him away from God.

The powers of man's soul, and the senses also of his body, joined in the universal rebellion of nature, and that which was created to lead him to eternal life would now drag him down to eternal death. *In what day soever thou shalt eat of it, thou shalt die the death.*

Then God's infinite goodness and mercy determined Him to rebuild in far greater splendour than before, that which had been destroyed. His children now dead shall be born again. He will give them the light of truth, but *no longer through creatures*, for *He will be Himself* their teacher in all without exception.

Whosoever followeth Me, walketh not in darkness, but shall have the Light of life. The dawn of this bright light, before the light itself reached the earth, enabled man to know what good the earth might produce, and not the earth only, but also the powers of his own soul, and the senses of his body; but it also taught him that it was only with much labour, and by doing himself violence that he could make them produce that good fruit rather than *thorns and thistles*. Hence, this it is that man must do, since they are still the soil from which he has to reap.

But when the Eternal Truth enters the world, He teaches first of all by example how the work is to be done, and this He does by rejecting everything that this world offers of itself; and this, because all that once *was good—and very good*, is now full of danger. For this reason He is born in a stable, and laid in a manger, far from all that this world gives, and ever continues thus to live in the midst of deepest poverty.

And then having taught us by example, He teaches us also by His word, for He says : *Unless a man renounce all that he hath, he cannot be My disciple.* It is from Him alone that we can learn the truth. He only can teach us. He Himself tells us that His truth and the dark wisdom of the world differ from each other, even as light differs from darkness, and wisdom from folly.

Since truth is so far removed from our ideas and notions, we shall not be surprised, when we are told that the holding of Divine truth involves a *conviction of things that appear not* ; a conviction so hard to have, that even to enter on it we need a special command from God enforcing it, and also to be warned that its absence involves the loss of Him who is the Eternal Truth—that is, the loss of all good, of all happiness, and the presence of every suffering, eternal torments.

And the Church, that is our Lord Himself again, teaches that whosoever desires eternal salvation must hold truth, that is the Catholic faith, and that whosoever holds it not, will be condemned.

These declarations would have no meaning, had we only to hold that which is in accordance with our own knowledge and reason. We must be told what that truth is, and we must be told by Him who alone knows it, and who is indeed the only true Light shining in the darkness wherein we dwell, and who will Himself be our only Teacher. For He has said, that when those, whom He commanded to *teach all nations*, speak to us, it is not *their* voice we *hear*, but *His* : *He that heareth you, heareth Me.* Thus, whenever the Church speaks, she only declares that what she teaches is that which He taught. In a word, it is our Lord Himself who repeats again that which He has already told us to be the truth.

In conclusion, then, we must learn truth, and we can learn it only from our Lord Himself. He is our only Teacher, and the sole reason of our belief. Whosoever believeth for any

other reason is not a Christian. Nor is that man a true Catholic, who embraces the Catholic religion simply because he believes that its doctrines are reasonable.

A true doctrine is always reasonable. But since many things which seem according to reason are not necessarily so, in reason alone we should have a very uncertain and fallible guide. Therefore it is written that *the wisdom of this world is folly before God*. And such being the case, it follows that he only is a true Catholic who, holding himself as an entire blank—as one in utter darkness, receives the Christian doctrine solely because it is taught by Him whom he knows to be the Eternal Truth, who can neither deceive nor be deceived. *He only who believeth in the Son hath life everlasting*. Therefore St. Paul would know Jesus Christ only: and we also must know Him only, if we would know that truth which alone can give us possession of Him—God, the Eternal Truth.

MEDITATION II.

THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS THE KEY TO THE UNDERSTANDING OF DIVINE TRUTH.

WE may now ask, whence come these truths which are taught us by our Lord, since the world no longer gives them; and, also, why, in teaching them, He does not explain them in such a way as to make them quite apparent?

That they are not so is very certain; for St. Paul declares that *faith is the conviction of things that appear not*. The truths our Lord teaches us are of heaven, and since no man has been there but He only, He alone can tell us what those truths are. Many of them are so far beyond our present understanding, that they will and can be intelligible to us only when we shall be in heaven, united with Him who is the Eternal Light and Truth.

We must always bear in mind that we are the children of God only by adoption. God made us according to His own image and likeness, that is, with a capacity for something infinitely greater than ourselves. A savage in the heart of Africa may have in himself the latent capacity for all that would be required of him, were he the son of the powerful king of the greatest and most civilised nation in the world. But that his latent powers may be developed, the king must first adopt him as his son, and then provide for him the best possible education under masters fully qualified for such an important work. And the savage must believe everything he is taught, solely on the word and authority of his teachers. For the savage state is the exact opposite of civilisation; so that there is nothing in the one which at all corresponds with that which is in the other. He must wait, therefore, until the king calls him home, to see with his own eyes that which hitherto he has believed on another's word.

When God adopted the angels, those blessed spirits had to be educated for the infinitely higher state to which they were destined. And when He adopted Adam, he also had to be educated in Paradise for that same high state. And when He Himself came into this world to enable us to become once more His sons, He would Himself be our Teacher, entrusting us to no other.

If I come from a distant country, in which everything is unlike all that exists here, I may tell you that every happiness is to be found in that country, but I cannot explain to you in what that happiness consists, because it resembles nothing here, and I can find no term of comparison by which to convey an idea of that happiness to your mind.

If a wonderful tree grows there, which though differing, as a whole, from any tree with which you are acquainted, yet in its various parts resembling many, I can describe it. I may say that it has the trunk of an oak, the leaves of a holly, the flower of a rose, and the fruit of a vine. But if no part of it

resembles anything here, I cannot describe it, and you must therefore believe in its existence solely on my word. And your belief will be more or less steadfast, in the measure of the confidence you place in my veracity. But when we believe Jesus Christ to be the Eternal Truth Incarnate, our confidence in His words will be unbounded and our conviction unalterable.

If I go still further, and instruct you as to the means whereby you may obtain that happiness, which has no resemblance to that which you here look upon as such, it will not surprise you, if the means also by which it is to be obtained are exactly the reverse of those by which you obtain it here.

Neither should you be surprised if I, who have to arrange everything for you, am obliged often to do things which may appear adverse to your interests. But the amount of confidence which you have in my friendship and affection for you, will always be the measure of your conviction, that in spite of contrary appearances, my actions are all dictated by love for you, and by deepest interest in your welfare. In fact, you will judge me, not by what I do, for my actions refer to something which you know not; but you will judge me by what you believe me to be,—*friend or foe*.

I view with suspicion, and reject with vehemence, the apparently kind and affectionate act of a known enemy, feeling certain that it only hides the dagger which is to give me death; but the hardest blow from the hand of a tried friend arouses no suspicion, no doubt within me, for I know it can only be for good.

Therefore when the apostle learns truth from Him who alone knows it, and by whom alone he is willing to be taught, he learns that *God's ways are not our ways*; that His truths appear not, and are often not only beyond our understanding, but are even in direct contradiction with many of our own ideas.

What then is man's resource? An infallible one. He looks at

the Heart of his Teacher, to see if it be that of friend or foe. And looking, he sees only the loving Heart of Him who was crucified for us. The word *crucified* gives the measure of His love,—the only measure indeed which He could have, since He is Love Itself. *Having loved His own He loved them to the end*, that is, to the end, not only of His life but to the utmost limit of the power of His love. His love would not be satisfied by only dying for us, if something more were possible. And since it was in His power to do still more, He did it. He died upon an ignominious cross, as a malefactor, making Himself *accursed for us*, abandoned not only by man, but even by His own Eternal Father. He willed to drink the chalice of sorrows to the dregs, and not die until He had absorbed its last bitter drop, and accomplished all that He, Incarnate Love, could accomplish. And when He saw that all was consummated,—that there was nothing left with which He could quench His ardent thirst to suffer yet more for us, this thought that He could do no more became, as it were, the crowning grief of all,—He could only moisten His poor parched lips with the bitterness of the vinegar and gall, for all was full within. Then, and then only, when He could do no more, did He bow down His head and expire.

O my soul! when thou respondest to His invitation, and goest to His loving Heart to learn the truths that He came to teach, bear in mind that He is the Eternal Truth, who alone in this world knows that truth. Remember, too, that He is Love Itself, and that all His ways and all His dealings with men, whatever they may appear to be, can only be works of love. If we arrive at any other conclusion, we know that we err and misunderstand, since we do know what He is, that He is Love Itself, and, therefore, that He is incapable of anything which is not very great love indeed, direct or indirect.

I have a sum in arithmetic to do, and I know from the key

what the answer is, but I wish to work it out myself. If my solution differs from that given by the key, I know that I am wrong, that I must have made a mistake somewhere in my calculations; and I therefore try again until my answer agrees with the true solution.

In like manner, when I go to our Lord to learn truth and study His ways, He tells me to go to His loving Heart, because it is the key which shows what all His truths and ways really are and must be, no matter how unintelligible to me. If, while studying those ways, they appear to me at variance with the answer given by their key, that all His ways are love, I know that I am mistaken, that I must have erred somewhere; and therefore I try and try again until my conclusion agrees with that given by His loving Heart. And even if after all my calculations, I have not arrived at the true solution, yet I am certain that the key must be right, and that I am and must be wrong, and I say to myself: *Well, never mind, I am but a little child, I have not yet mastered even the easy rule of three. But when I am older, and shall have mastered the higher mathematics, to which my sum really does belong, I shall in a moment find the right solution and laugh at my former troubles; and after all what does it matter, since even now I know what the answer is?*

Therefore, always, and in all things, the rule I must follow is this. I must judge all His truths, all His ways, all His dealings with His creatures, not by what they seem to be, but by what they really are and ever must be, since they are all the fruits of love; and I must judge Him not by what He does, but by what He is—Love, and Love Itself. And in order that this may be our rule and guide in all we have to learn He invites us to His Sacred Heart, where there is nought else but love.

MEDITATION III.

THE VIRGIN MOTHER'S LOVE LEADS THE SINNER TO HER
DIVINE SON.

OUR own good God, our own dear Incarnate Lord holds out His arms to us, and invites us to His tender embrace, to His loving Heart. And I would indeed go; oh! how I would fly thither!

But, my soul, stay one moment. Who, and what am I? A wicked sinner all filled with iniquity. The guest was invited to the marriage feast, as I am now invited to our Lord's Sacred Heart; but because he had not on the nuptial garment he was cast forth. How shall I, being what I am, dare to respond to the loving invitation of my Lord?

My soul, there is another loving Heart which has ever been the path to all true life and happiness. It is the Heart of the most loving, tender Mother that ever came forth from the hand of God. And that loving, tender Mother is our own true Mother, and she is loved by Him, with a love deeper than the deepest ocean of all other love. Ah! to her we will fly.

'Mother, dear Mother.' See, in a moment, at the voice of her child, her arms are extended and embrace it most tenderly. 'O my Mother, how thou claspest me to thy loving Heart, thou callest me thy own dear child, and tellest me to ask all I will since there is nothing thou wilt not give me.' 'Stay a moment, dear Mother, give me time to think, in thy tender embrace, of all thy love for me, that I also may be all love for thee—my life, my sweetness, and my hope.

So now, dear Mother, my Lord, thy own dear Son, is calling me, in accents of most tender affection, to come to Him, and to His loving heart. Oh, how I long to go! But thou, dear Mother, knowest who, and what He is, and what I really am: thou seest all these black spots, and loathsome sores, which many times a day thou tendest with such loving care, and such

great affection. Nothing repels thee ; but then thou art my own Mother, and were they even a hundred times more loathsome than they are, thy love would increase a hundredfold and thou wouldst still dress and heal them all. But how can I, poor sinner that I am, venture thus, to His dear Heart? Nothing defiled can enter heaven, because it is the abode of the all-pure and spotless God.

But His Sacred Heart, is not only heaven—it is God Himself. O dear Mother, I long to go there, and the sweet soft tone of His loving voice, inviting me to come, makes me think that He also is longing for me. *Give Me thy heart*, He says, and He tells me, that He stands knocking at its door ; and I have told Him why I am afraid to open it. Again He entreats me to come, that I may *taste, and see how sweet He is*. And I was so eager to do so, that I began to run. Then I saw, once more the dark stains upon my soul, and therefore I have returned to thee, my Mother, to ask what I should do, to ask thy help. . . .

Listen, my soul, she speaks. *My child, I will take thee there. Who, but thy Mother, should guide thy steps? Each step thou takest with me, shall be in a fire of love, which will by degrees so penetrate thy entire frame, that before we reach Him, thou wilt be all-pure, and spotless. But, tell me first, canst thou remember any words ever spoken to thy heart, which made thee say: Now that is real love?*

Oh, how good and kind of thee, my Mother ! But stay a moment ; yes, I remember something, that went to my very heart. There was one whose person was blackened with every disgraceful crime—one who appeared to possess, not even the smallest redeeming quality, and against whom every hand was raised. Even as a wild beast becomes more savage, the more hotly it is pursued, so did he become more savage every hour. For a time he eluded his pursuers, but at length sank to the ground, exhausted.

Prostrate and helpless there, he spoke to himself these words: "Every door is closed against me now. Whither shall I go? Where shall I find a friend? I have none. Once I had many friends, but now, not one. For I spurned them all, I outraged all, yes, all. I repaid every kind and loving act with most heartless ingratitude, and most bitter hate. There was no disgrace, no dishonour, which I did not, with reckless hand, cast upon those who then helped and loved me. They cannot love me now. They know too well the bitter fruit that love for me will bring them. But Mother, O my poor Mother, why do you seem to stand before me now? You flooded my heart with tenderest love; but I heaped more sorrow, more grief, more shame on you, than upon all the world besides. Mother! do you not remember—I recall it well—the last time we met? Bitterly you wept, and you told me your heart was broken. But, even then, you held out your arms, to press me once more to that poor broken heart, that heart on which, for many years, you had fed me, and kissed me with all a mother's love.

But all in vain! Love, gratitude, affection, could find no resting-place in my heart, which cast them off, even as red-hot iron casts off water. The heavy blow of my strong arm felled you, my Mother, to the ground, and I fled from the spot. . . . Oh, how I remember all that, though long ago. Perhaps it gave her death. Perhaps she is dead now; I never heard, I never asked. But may be she still lives! Oh, if this be so, I may even now have hope! For, though abandoned by all the rest, she will never forsake me. . . . The night is dark, I will fly to her." Thither he flies, and is once more clasped in that dear Mother's arms. And while her hot tears stream down upon him, he hears her words just whispered in his ear, *My own dear child, you break my heart again, but now with joy and love.* . . . In those few, brief, happy moments, during which Mother and son were clasped in each other's arms, his whole

life in its minutest details seemed to stand out before him. But in her heart, all was obliterated, all forgotten, nothing but love remained. *O Mother!* he said, *it is too much, it is you now who break my heart.* In the light of her love, each thought, and word, and deed, was revealed to him in its true colours. The act most vividly impressed upon his mind, precisely that of greatest love, was the very one he had despised the most. And at the time she did it, she knew that such was his thought; but there was nothing she was not prepared to undergo, and was ready even to die in grief and sorrow, provided only he thereby might live true life.

It needed her loving voice to arouse him from that deep remorse and anguish which now absorbed him: she well perceived it, and it was like fresh fuel feeding more and more the love that was burning in her heart. *We have no time to lose, my child, whatever can be done to save you, must be done now, without delay.*

This good Mother, who would gladly give all she possesses and her very life to save her child from the penalty of death, which awaits him on conviction of so many crimes, makes use of every means, to attain this end. Love gives strength to her enfeebled frame, and she pleads with ardent, passionate words with all who can help his cause—her cause—to save her poor child.

At length the day of trial, on which everything depends, arrives. But all her strength is gone, she must stay at home. The minutes of that long and terrible day appear to her like hours, as she intently listens for footsteps, which, if his, will tell her he is free. . . . Her ear catches the longed-for sound, and in that moment, joy and love restore her all her strength. She flies to meet him, but only to sink into his arms, and die. *Kiss me again, my child, I die happy now, for my love has earned all it ever sought—thy love, thy happiness, thy salvation. I am repaid for all, more than all, by thy last loving kiss.*

And now I pause a moment to think. . . . And clinging yet more closely to my own dear Mother, I say to her: *Mother dear, I know now why thou didst ask me if I remembered anything which constrained me to confess that it was real true love. It was that I might know, and understand the greatness of thy love for me—poor sinner though I am. Yes, indeed, thou art our true Mother. No mother ever loved her child as thou lovest us. We shall never know in this life all thy love for poor sinners, for however great their guilt, thy love can never cast them off, but must ever lead them back to the true life which they, alas, had lost.* Listen, O my soul, to thy Mother's voice. . . .

“My child, that mother's love doth truly tell of mine, yet only as its far distant sound, for indeed it only tells a very little part. Oh! did poor sinners only know, the compassion, the love that awaits them in their true and only Mother's arms, and that she feels more than repaid for all her tender love, and all her bitter sorrows, by one tender, loving, grateful look from them, oh! with what confidence would they come to me, who weigh my love and welcome, by the weight of their iniquities. The greater the sinner, the greater also is my joy when he comes to me, and the more amply am I repaid for all I have ever done for him. Yet, remember, all my compassion and love are only one little drop given me by our own good and loving God, out of that great Ocean of Love, which He really is. And, since it is He who calls thee to His loving Heart, wilt thou fear Him, because thou, His child, hast many sores and wounds?” *Oh no, dear Mother! Let us fly to His loving Heart.*

MEDITATION IV.

NO HUMAN LOVE OR BEAUTY CAN COMPARE WITH THAT OF JESUS CHRIST. “ONE IS MY BELOVED, MY PERFECT ONE IS BUT ONE.”

SHALL we not go now, dear Mother? Ah, yes, I under-

stand! We are on the way, and thou didst tell me that each step would be in a flame of love, which would purify me more and more; but tell me again, who and what He is. *My child, He is the most beautiful among the children of men.* She said these words in a voice most soft and sweet, yet my whole soul and mind were penetrated by them, and they gave me knowledge of their meaning, and my heart was filled with love like that which filled her own.

Oh yes, I see it now. It is not that superficial beauty only which attracts the eyes of men, but it is beauty in its highest and truest form—perfect beauty of mind and body, of heart and soul. It is beauty so perfect, that God Himself, who had assumed that humanity into His Divinity, exclaimed: *How beautiful art Thou, my Beloved, how beautiful art Thou!* and those words He addressed, not only to the blessed fruit of her womb, the Incarnate God, but also to the flower from which that fruit had grown.

How could it be otherwise? As only the most perfect flower, producing a fruit most perfect, is worthy of the acceptance of a great king; so when the great God, the King of kings, determined to assume our humanity into His Divinity, only the perfect flower—thymself, dear Mother—producing Him, the most perfect fruit of all the human race, could be worthy of Him, the great Almighty King.

As Man, therefore, how beautiful, how perfect must He have been—perfect in body, and perfect in all the powers of His soul, most noble in mind, most sweet and loving of Heart! All that we can conceive as most good, most loving, most beautiful, most affectionate in every way, must ever fall far short of what He really is. Whatever our thoughts of Him may be, we must always say He is more, more, greater and greater still. He can be compared with none; He is greater than all, above and beyond all.

Now, therefore, whenever I shall hear or read of the great

and noble qualities of mind and heart of this world's greatest heroes, and my mind is filled with enthusiastic admiration of them, and my heart with love, I must pause a moment and then say to myself: *And yet all this is only as a little ray of light flashed from Him who is the True Light and Sun, shining in the world. Therefore He alone is worthy that I should say of Him, "One is my Beloved, and my perfect one is but One".* And, when in the hour of my greatest triumph and glory, my heart reverts to the loved ones at home, and I see their eyes all beaming with happiness and joy, and their hearts bounding with tenderest love and affection for me on hearing of my great triumph, I pause again and ask myself: *What are those beaming eyes, those loving hearts, and all that tender love for me? They are but as little sparks, compared with that great and consuming fire of love which burns for me in His loving Sacred Heart.* Again, therefore, do I say, "*One is my Beloved, my perfect one is but one*".

When, too, the day of suffering comes, and poverty, grief, and shame weigh me down to the very ground; when the punishment of my crimes falls on me and mine, when every door is closed against me, and every face is turned away from me; when that day of deep affliction comes, and I fly to my loving *earthly* mother, no word of reproach rises on her lips, but her arms are extended to embrace me, and her tender heart is filled with deepest compassion and greatest love for me. Oh, how good and loving is that tender loving mother! Yet, what is all the tender compassion, the surpassing love of that tender mother's heart, compared even with thine, dear Mother! but when compared with His love for me, it is but as a little tiny drop oozing forth from that vast Ocean of Love which He really is. Once more, then, am I constrained to say, *One is my Beloved, my perfect one is but One.*

Oh then, what must be the welcome given to the poor sinner who flies to that most loving Heart! I, therefore, poor

sinner that I am, desire and long to go to Him. *Dear Mother, carry me in thy loving, tender arms, oh, carry me to Him!* But no, not yet. Tell me first, dear Mother, what will be that welcome? *My child, He is beautiful exceedingly among all the children of men, and grace is diffused on His lips.* Light accompanied these gentle, loving words, and I understood all. Yes, I see, the lips give expression to the sentiments of the mind and heart, and since in His Mind and Heart, there can only dwell all that is most beautiful, most kind, most affectionate, most loving, *that* it is which is diffused on His lips, and by them poured out abundantly into the hearts and souls of all poor sinners, His dear, beloved children. His every word, therefore, brings consolation, peace, and joy to all who go to Him. And poor sinners, seeing Him so full of gentleness and love, are filled with sorrow and grief at the thought of having wounded such a Heart as His, and once more the fire of Divine Love is enkindled within them. Oh, well mayest thou say, dearest Mother, that *His lips are like a honey-comb, distilling sweet honey, and pouring out sweetest balm into the souls which draw near to Him.* *Now I know how tender and compassionate and loving is the welcome He gives to each poor sinner.*

But still, dear Mother, I see that thou wouldst confirm these words of mine and tell me more.

“It is so, my child, thou wilt have so much to see and read in His loving Heart, that thou and others may wonder and ask how all that can ever be.

And thus it is: thou hast placed before thee a beautiful casket, and knowest that it contains every precious gem which the world can produce.

Whatever precious gem then, thou wouldest display, thou knowest where to find it, it is and must be there.

And if thou art asked how thou didst know that that special one was there, thy reply is ready—that thou didst know that *every* gem without any exception was really there in all its great-

est beauty and very highest perfection, and needed only a hand to raise it up and a voice to proclaim those very great perfections.

And His great, noble, perfect Mind and beautiful, loving Heart form the exquisite casket filled with all most precious in the entire human race.

And we, beloved child, will draw forth from that casket of His loving Heart the gems we so well know to be there indeed in all their great perfection, but in displaying them we must always bear in mind, that all we can ever say of that beauty and perfection, is as nothing to what they really are.

MEDITATION V.

THE SUN OF JUSTICE SHINES WITH EQUAL LIGHT ON ALL, BUT
NOT ALL ARE EQUALLY ILLUMINATED.

ALL thou has told me, dear Mother, makes me long yet more to fly to His loving Heart, and already the flame of love is burning within me with ever-growing ardour. The sound of His voice calling me His beloved, for indeed I heard Him say : *Arise, My beloved, and come*, increases the intensity of that burning flame.

But we have still some way to go, and Thou hast told me that I have other lessons to learn before we reach that loving Heart ; and before I can read and understand all that I have to see in its brilliant light.

As I see Him now, He appears to possess all our feelings, and to be moved by happiness, gratitude, love, sorrow, grief, and even by indignation and anger, yet I know that He does not change as we do.

My Mother speaks again, and her word explains it all. I see it clearly now. It is I myself who change, I whose mind is ever changing as its manifold impressions vary, but He changes not at all ; He is the same for ever, as the apostle has declared.

I see the bright sun shining in all its glory on that noble ivy-

mantled tower, its brilliant rays encircle it on every side, and, penetrating within, shine there more or less brightly according to the medium through which they have to pass. Here, unimpeded, they shine in all the fulness of their glory; there, they carry with them the chequered shadows of the leaves, or the tints of the coloured glass through which they have to stream; while here again, so narrow is the way by which they gain admission, that they hardly dispel the darkness which reigns within; yet, even these rays, such as they are, when concentrated by a tiny convex lens burst out into so intense a flame that nothing can resist it.

But, however much the light may thus vary, I know that the sun—the bright source of all these rays—varies not; it shines with equal light on all, but all are not equally illumined.

Even so is it with Him, who is the true Light of the world. The bright rays of His light fall upon all, but they are varied in their appearance and effects by the medium through which they pass, and thus all are not equally enlightened. Upon some they fall and penetrate within more fully than on others, some see in them much which cannot be seen by others, but no one in this world sees clearly and perfectly, for we are as yet encompassed by the thick walls of our bodies. But when these fall, we shall see that light in all the plenitude of its glory. Till then, all we can think or imagine of His goodness and love must fall far short of what it really is. Now we can only see a part, then we shall see all.

MEDITATION VI.

THE ABSENCE OF LOVE IN THE CREATURE THE SECRET OF
THE ANGER OF THE CREATOR.

THY heart, dearest Mother, has taught me that I have yet more to learn on the way to that of thy beloved Son. Teach me all and teach me soon, for my whole soul craves and pants for Him.

Thou didst explain to me how it was that He assumed various forms in our minds; or rather, was clothed in the forms we gave Him, and appeared to be moved, even as we are, by happiness, gratitude, and love. "Truly, my child, it is so. He places Himself as wax in thy hands, but that wax is made only from the sweetest flowers growing in the true Paradise of His own loving Heart.

This wax will take every form thou art pleased to give, but if thou wouldst not be led astray, be careful to give it only the form of some one or other of the many flowers from which it was gathered. Any other form belongs not to it, and misleads, and is falsehood and error. All then should be flowers and forms of love, for He is only Love; thus they will all be full of beauty, and diffuse their sweet odours on every side."

I understand, dear Mother, and I see too, that since thou art so like Him, being all love, it was said of thee: "*How beautiful art thou, my beloved;*" and then: "*That thy spikenard gave forth its sweet odours*" and thou wast as sweet incense, "*composed of all the powders of the perfumer*".

But, dear Mother, thou didst speak also of a form of sorrow and of grief, of anger, too, and indignation, under which we sometimes seem to see Him. But in this we must err. I can understand love in a thousand engaging forms; but anger and indignation are, as it were, the absence of the whole ray of love. How is that, dear Mother?

Yes, I see now. I see that grief, sorrow, anger, and indignation are but the forms given by evil deeds to the rays of love ever pouring forth from Him; much as dark glass imparts its tint to the pure and spotless ray of light which passes through it. Thus are expressed to my mind the repulsive effects which evil deeds produce on that Heart, which is all love, ever unchanged, and unchangeable. Good must repel evil, and therefore His repulsion of evil is more or less vehement according to the measure of that evil; but it is the evil which He repels, and

as it is in man, it seems as if it were man himself that He repelled. And this it is which my mind sees expressed under the forms of sorrow, grief, anger, or indignation. The evil may be so great, and so incorporated with man, as to exclude altogether the ray of love; but if it does not go to that extent, it will only dim the brightness of the light, and impart to it its own tint, whatever that may be.

His love is an ardent flame which spreads on every side, wherever it finds fuel on which to feed; but it rejects and repels all that is of another nature. And since He is all love, and nothing else but love, the only fuel by which we can feed its flame, or by which it can be fed, or on which it can feed itself, is love. *He came to cast fire upon the earth;* but that fire, to be enkindled and kept burning, must find the only fuel which can do so, and that, I say once more, is love, and only love freely given by him whose love it is. Supposing it were possible, that a soul absolutely devoid of all will to give this love could approach this loving Heart, it must instantly be repelled, as water is repelled by fire. But as oil floating upon water will ignite and burn if brought in contact with a flame, so if the smallest particle of love for God is in the soul of this sinner, it is instantly caught up by the flame of God's ardent love. And as that flame grows and spreads, it drives all sin before it, and at length obtains full possession of the soul. And this is really all that His love ever seeks. Even as the little bee flies from flower to flower, seeking only from each one the sweet honey contained within, so does our dearest Lord seek in all our thoughts, and words, and actions, love only, or that which may be transformed into love. All, therefore, which we do for Him, and all we offer to Him, He values only for the love which He finds therein. If He finds in us anything opposed to the love He bears us, He at once rejects and casts it far away, and hence He tells us that the joys of heaven are prepared *only for those who love Him*. Oh, what love, my own loved God! Oh, how good Thou art!

MEDITATION VII.

JESUS CHRIST, THE INCARNATE WORD OF GOD, IS MADE INTELLIGIBLE BY LOVE AND THROUGH THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

I COME once more, my Mother, to learn my next lesson which, as thou hast already told me, is one of great importance.

She confirms my words by drawing me still closer to her heart, and then she thus replies :—

“ It is so, my child, for that which we have hitherto seen is only like a beautiful garden which we must now leave, to pass onwards through three massive gates, before we reach His loving Heart. At the first gate, nothing can be seen save only the faintest ray of light, just resting on the summit of a distant peak, telling of a bright light beyond ; thus was it in the world when Adam had fallen and had been forgiven. We enter that gate now, but fear not, my child.”

For awhile all is profound repose and deepest silence, like the night in the midst of her course ; but very soon I am aroused by an Almighty Word from heaven. It seems to me as a far distant voice, yet it is not a voice to me—I hear no sound, and though a word seems spoken, it conveys to my mind not only no thought, but seems to be the absence of all thought. It speaks silence and stillness ; stillness and silence so deep, so immense, that it really seems eternal. *O mother, dear mother, what is that ?* “ My child, it is the Eternal Word which proceeds from the Father, a word expressing all that the Father is—Infinite. Therefore it is itself God, as He is from whom it proceeds, and is intelligible only to Himself. He alone can know Himself, and is therefore as deepest eternal silence to every creature—to all that is not God. Yet thou hearest that deep eternal silence, which cometh to thee as a voice from heaven ; but hearing thou dost not hear, and the word spoken thou understandest not. Yet that sound which thou hearest

not, and that voice which thou understandest not, tell thee that He, the Incomprehensible, the Eternal, the Infinite, is, and that He speaks His Word." Yes, dear mother, and He, the Eternal, dwelling in the profound depths of eternity, had ever present to His mind the garden of thy Heart, where He would one day take His delight. It was that I might hear His voice there, that thou didst draw me deep into thy loving Heart. Oh, yes ; it is indeed to thee that we are indebted for all we ever have.

And I understand that if a sound reaches me from a far distant land, in which everything is totally different from all that I have ever seen or heard, that sound also, differing from every other sound, is not a sound to me, and is as though I heard it not. And if one word is the language of that country, and expresses all that exists therein, and the sound that reaches me is that one word ; it, like deepest silence, conveys, and can convey to me, no idea ; since all the ideas it embodies are totally different from all that I have ever seen or heard. I realise only that there is that distant land, and that there is a language, or a word, which embodies all that has existence there.

That this word may become intelligible to me, it must be spoken in a language which I can understand. But even then, since all the ideas which it embodies refer to things unknown to me, I must accept them on that word, and on that word alone.

"Yes, my child, and since He, the Eternal, has willed that this voice should reach thee from the abyss of His eternal repose, it is that thou mayest know that there is a place where His glory dwelleth. And although the word it spoke, embodying all that glory, was deepest silence to thee, it was spoken that thou mightest know that that word is. And why the one and the other, unless to tell thee that he calls thee to the one, and, to fit thee for it, will teach thee the language of the other—will teach thee the word that is.

Yes, the Eternal Word will take a form intelligible to thee, and He Himself will teach thee all thou must know and do to fit thee for His kingdom." Dear Mother, thou sayest that He, the Eternal, has willed that that word should reach my heart from the deep depths of His eternal repose. But it was thou who didst open out the way from those deep depths, for it was *when the King was at His repose that the sweet odour of thy loving Heart—all love for Him, penetrated into, and embalmed that very repose, and as it were, drew Him forth to thee. And, since I owe that, and all else to thee, dear Mother, continue thy work and prepare me for all that I have now to learn.*

"My child, in the beginning before Adam's fall, that word was spoken, though only indirectly, in a tongue intelligible to man; it was spoken through His creatures, and in their language. Its every note, like itself, was only one. The wondrous works of creation taught man the infinite power of Him who had given them existence; and taught him also that that power was exercised by the one thing that He is—Love, and love for him.

Love was the one word that met Adam and Eve on every side; it issued from the furnace of love which He is, seeking for the fuel of a corresponding love in them. But, failing to find that corresponding love, and finding in them only bitter hatred, it was compelled to return to its source. Its brilliant light was replaced by intensest darkness, and the true life which it would have given left only eternal death.

But there remained in the race of Adam, one spot exempted from that darkness and death which now reigned on every side, exempted by the power of Him who alone is, and who alone can make him clean, that is conceived of unclean seed (Job xiv. 4). That spot was specially reserved apart, because so great, so all but infinite was the fuel of love which it contained, that all the heavenly fire which might break out from the Eternal Word—love itself only through His creatures, would be insufficient to

encompass it and absorb it all ; and no wonder for that it was which would one day encompass Him. The spot of which I am speaking was no other than thyself, dear Mother ; it was thy own nature and person conceived without original sin, as it was said : *Thou art all fair, O my love, and there is not a spot in thee* (Cant. iv. 7).

As the Eternal Wisdom perfectly adapts the means to the end, that spot with all its fuel of love had to stand aside, as it were, awaiting the Eternal Word—God—Love Itself, who alone could fill it. But the word of the Father, which would be spoken there by the great eternal Spirit of Love, would fill the fulness of its measure, and He alone could do so. But the dawn of that eternal love already had full possession of it. Dawn indeed it was, but only so when compared with the bright sun which it preceded ; but brightest light, in comparison with all other light.

MEDITATION VIII.

LOVE THE LANGUAGE OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

SEE, dear Mother, thy child is once more at thy side, and now we must pass together through the second great massive gate. Oh, didst thou but know how long the time has seemed since we last met, and how eagerly I have desired the moment when I should come once more to thy loving arms, and listen to thy words which fill my poor dark soul with sweetest floods of light. And now I already seem to hear that Eternal Word in my own language. It speaks to me again and again, but always the same word. Hitherto I could not understand how one word could be a whole language in itself, and give expression to every thought ; but I begin to see it now. And thou didst tell me that it would be so.

“ What is that word, my child ? ”

Always the same word, dear Mother—Love. As it is the language of that kingdom where His glory dwelleth, each time

I hear it, it reveals to me some great work of His, and repeating itself, it tells me the reason why that great work was done.

On thy dear heart, I am, as it were, transported to that kingdom of His love ; and I behold on every side strange and marvellous things. When I ask, what called them into existence ? I hear the same word—Love. And when I inquire, wherefore ? again the answer is the same, always the same, always—Love.

“ It is so, my child, nor could it be otherwise, for He is Love only, He is Love Itself. But, tell me, what were those wonderful things which on every side met thine eye ? those marvellous sounds which met thine ears ? Since Love brought them into being, what end and object had Love in view ? ”

Dear Mother, all bore a strong resemblance to the effect produced by the Almighty Word of which I told thee yesterday ; for though I seem transported to that far distant kingdom, I know that I am not there. And although I seem to know, and even to see the marvels which there have existence, I also know that I neither see nor know them, since I am not there. I know that that word love is only another form of the first almighty word, and therefore embraces all that it contains. Like it, it speaks silence, deep, eternal, and immense, yet less deep than the first word. Like it, it is dark, but with a darkness into which some rays of light are beginning to penetrate. Dear Mother, tell me the meaning of all that.

“ Thou art right, my child, the word thou hast now heard, although it contains within itself the plenitude of the Eternal Word, reaches thy mind now, only as the dawn of that bright Sun which is one day to shine on thee in all its fulness. That Sun it is which is to enlighten every man that cometh into the world. All else is intensest darkness, so that whosoever leaves that light, only for one moment, falls almost inevitably into the frightful abysses by which he is surrounded.

The dawn suffices only to show thee that the objects on

which it falls exist, but does not suffice to give thee their real form. Therefore, for thee they only have that which is imparted to them by thy own imagination. Only when the Sun itself shines upon them, wilt thou see them as they really are, and understand how dark was thy mind in regard to them.

Therefore thou didst see without seeing, and the word thou didst hear was deep silence to thee. Only when it showed itself to thee under the form of Love, didst thou begin to realise what it truly was; and that was when it, the Eternal Word, promised in its deep, deep love, that the head of him who spread the darkness now reigning on every side, should be crushed, the darkness dissipated, and be replaced by light.

At that moment the dawn began, and we stood within the first great massive gate.

That dawn growing, and ever shedding brighter and brighter light, led us to the second gate, and in its light, we saw some details which we had not seen before. And now the Eternal Word is once more heard, and that word clothed in still brighter light, shows itself as being that Love which it is indeed, though as yet it does not trace out all its exquisite details. In this brighter light, the Eternal Word is carried by the loud thunders of Sinai to the ends of the earth. *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God.* But, as we have said, that dawn was not bright enough to show all the perfection of the Love which demands the love of the entire human race. The Sun itself alone could do it.

Therefore, man gives it the form which his imagination suggests, and so doing believes that the Eternal Word—Love Incarnate—will be a great earthly king. Only when He is Incarnate, will man realise how dark was his mind concerning all existing in that distant land, of which the Eternal Word is the true, great, mighty King. And now, my child, prepare thyself, for to-morrow we shall reach the last, great, massive gate, where thou wilt be clothed in the garments of the

Kingdom of Love." *Oh then, dear Mother, bless me, and prepare my mind and heart; that becoming all love, I may be fit to enter the Kingdom of Love Itself!*

MEDITATION IX.

JESUS CHRIST IS LOVE ITSELF, AND REVEALS HIMSELF THROUGHOUT THE UNIVERSE AS A GOD OF LOVE. ADAM'S FALL THE RESULT OF SELF-LOVE.

AT length, dear Mother, we have reached the third great massive gate; and are now on the very threshold of the loving Heart of thy dear Son." "It is so, my child. Listen, thou hearest Him call: *Arise, My beloved, and come.* We will go to Him now, for He has prepared the garment wherewith thou shouldst be clothed, for thou knowest well that a nuptial garment is required for a marriage feast, and thou also knowest that nothing defiled can enter heaven, because it is the abode of the all-pure and holy God.

But we go now—not to Heaven only, but far, far beyond—for we go to the very Heart of God Himself. The garment prepared for thee is the knowledge and other dispositions requisite to make thee pleasing in His sight. That knowledge embraces the following points—Who, and What He is; why He has come to us under the form of man; how we are to consider Him under that form; and why, under that form, He calls us specially to His sacred, loving Heart."

Teach me then, dear Mother, I will keep my eyes fixed on thee—the spotless mirror in which I shall ever see all His truth reflected, and read all I have to learn.

I see, even now, that the great and good God, by adopting man, raised him from his own state to an infinitely higher one. Earth was no longer to be his home, but only a school, in which he should be prepared and fitted for heaven—the home of Him who has now become his Father.

I see also, that the things of that home must be as much beyond all the things of this world, as the state to which he is raised is above that from which he has risen. Moreover, if he is to be moulded on these things of heaven, their forms must be brought down thence to earth, by Him who alone comes down from heaven.

These forms will be unintelligible to us, because they belong to a home in which we have never been ; for we have not yet reached our journey's end. That home is totally different from this earth, which would have been our home had not God raised us, and destined us for a far higher one, for His own home where His glory dwelleth. In these forms or truths, though they may sometimes, to some extent, approximate to our ideas, there will always be an idea beyond, inexplicable to our minds. *Yes, dear Mother, then I have only to learn ; and I can learn when my eye is fixed on thee, in whom I see all that is written.* "Fix then, thy eyes on me, my beloved child, and read all thou seest there."

I see, dear Mother, that if I have knowledge of a thing, that knowledge has itself a form which I can understand. But if I wish to convey that knowledge to another, I must embody it in a word, or form, which he can understand. He then receives my knowledge whole and entire ; and, having received it, it resumes in his mind its own form, and no longer needs the one which carried it to him—he has the knowledge itself.

If I, myself, am all knowledge and infinite perfection, the knowledge that I am so is, to me, an intelligible word, embodying myself, and all that I am in every way. But since, in this supposition, I exist of myself, if the word which is intelligible to me, has not its own perfect and distinct existence, it is deficient because it does not embody all that I am. But deficient it cannot be, since all knowledge is in me, and therefore it must have its own perfect and distinct existence. That word, therefore, is not made by me, but is begotten of me, and has been so as long

as I have known myself. It is therefore consubstantial—one with me.

Even so is it with God. God is infinite in every perfection and eternal; and the knowledge of Himself, that is, the Eternal Word is, like Himself, infinite and eternal. It is therefore a distinct personality—a Divine Person, equal in all things to the Father of whom it is begotten—truly God as He is, begotten, not made, and consubstantial with Him.

But when God determines to convey that knowledge, that Eternal Word, to the creatures to whom He will give existence, He must clothe it in a form which will carry it to their minds, and make it intelligible to them, to the full measure of their capacity; otherwise, it must always be to them—as we have already said—darkness, and deepest eternal silence. And since that Eternal Word is Love Itself, it can assume only a form which speaks entire love. Whatever does not speak of love is not of God, and is not His Eternal Word; and therefore we should not listen to it, for truth is not in it.

The creatures whom God has made in the heavens above, in the earth beneath, and in the waters of the earth; all the creatures of this entire universe, were the words intelligible to man, in which He spoke His own Eternal Word. He made them for the express purpose, that they might directly or indirectly lead men to the true knowledge of Himself. They were like the letters of a word to be spelt out one by one, but which only when combined give the entire word. And every one of those letters to be found in this world, no matter what its beauty, no matter what its form, vibrated only one sweet note, Love—love which is the real music of heaven. Oh, what love was displayed on every side!

The firmament with all its countless stars, would tell of God's infinite power; the grain of dust would repeat the lesson, only under another form; the first would be the big letter of the alphabet, the other, the little one, each expressing the same idea.

Everything and every detail in this creation unfolded itself to man, revealing the marvellous beauty it contained, and the infinitely greater beauty and power of Him to whom it owed existence.

Everything in nature proclaimed in a loud voice, as far as the creature could do so, the Eternal Word, Love, love ; and this revealed the greatness of that Creator's love, which had exercised its almighty power in giving them existence. He spoke, and they were made ; they were therefore all the fruit of that Eternal Word—fruit which grew of love itself—themselves therefore only love.

By studies such as these, man should have learnt that all he had, and was, he owed to the infinite love of the great Almighty God, the great Eternal Word ; and consequently that in return, he owed Him all his service, all his love and gratitude.

Now service implies work and sacrifice, and that is what love seeks to give, it is the real craving of true love ; love measures out that work in the measure of itself, and therefore, when love is great, and has given all it has, it still thinks it really has done nothing. And when it is love itself, it loves to the end, that is with eternal love, and calls on all to say what more it could have done.

CONTINUATION.

The knowledge then of the Eternal Word, was what man had to seek. This world and the firmament supplied him with all the letters of that word ; but the full understanding of it was still wanting, because the wisdom that it needed for that purpose was a thing of heaven, and that one thing was the possession of God Himself. Full possession then of God was the one thing that was wanting, to complete and give full measure to the entire word, when spelt out by man. But when man had collected all the knowledge of God's love which this world

could give, God would then have called him to the other world, and there have given him that one thing which he still needed; and that would have been Himself, the Eternal Word.

Man has ever to do his part, he has to do all he can do, and then God does for him what he cannot do himself.

Only the full and perfect form can fill the mould which has been made upon it, and man is made to the image and likeness of God. God, then, alone can fill and satisfy the cravings of his heart. And as long as he does not possess Him, he is ever inclined to seek by other means to satisfy those cravings and fill up the void. But as those means never are, at best, the full form on which he has been moulded, they never can give full, entire happiness; but can only give it in the measure in which they pour God's love into his heart; that love on which alone his heart was created.

And so was it with man even in Paradise. He craved and longed for the one thing which would complete the Eternal Word in his soul, which would be, so to say, its life. But, as we already said, this one thing could not be given there, since it is only found in heaven, and to heaven he cannot go to receive it, until he has done all that this world enables him to do. And man in Paradise had not done this. He had not, so far as it was in his power, filled his heart with love, as we shall see just now—he was not all love for God. Hitherto he had derived his knowledge from creatures, and each one had imparted to him that which it possessed; but all had fallen short of that for which he craved, and which alone could fill his heart.

But, as past experience taught him that from creatures he derived all the knowledge he possessed, so would it be now, he thought, with the further knowledge for which he craved.

And he knew that there was in Paradise a tree whose fruit imparted knowledge of good and evil; but hitherto he had not seen or even approached it, because God had told him that he

must not eat thereof, and that if he did so, he would die the eternal death.

And no wonder it should be so ; for this knowledge for which he sought, and which alone could satisfy his longings, was infinitely above all created things. It was the infinite wisdom, as we have already said, of the great God Himself, which could only be imparted in the eternal possession of Him. In that possession alone could he ever find perfect, entire happiness.

All knowledge culminating in any creature, must necessarily be infinitely far from the eternal wisdom and knowledge of the infinite God ; and therefore can in comparison with it be only folly, and they must repel each other. No knowledge imparted by any creature can be anything at best but a step to higher knowledge. It never can be final.

We cannot serve two masters ; and that means two masters who prescribe work in opposite directions. The one tells me to go to the right, the other to the left. I take the line marked out for me by the master I love ; and as the other prescribes and would force upon me work destructive of that willed by the one I love, I hate him, and, could I do so, would utterly destroy him. A looker-on can tell by the work I do which is the master I love, and which is the one I hate.

Man stood before the forbidden fruit : he was the one master having free-will, and God was the other. God said : *Thou shalt not eat thereof*, and man said : *Thou shalt eat it*, and hated Him who would place an obstacle in his way. And he ate it, because his love was all for himself and he hated God.

And how did this come to pass, that man gave all his love to himself, and hated God ? It was that, like the rebel angels in heaven, he saw his own great glory and power in this world, and how every creature revered and obeyed him as the lord and

master of all, as the one for whom alone they had existence ; and on the serpent's words he became enamoured of himself. This self-love would let him no longer look on all as God's free, loving gifts, and as the unmerited flow of His infinite goodness, and binding him in every possible way to give Him all his love ; rather he looked upon them as if God owed them to him, and had given him only his own rights. And with the growth of that self-love, he resented more and more all which seemed to demand a sacrifice at his hands.

He was forbidden to eat of the fruit, which he now thought, would impart to him the knowledge he desired, and which, he believed would give him the perfect happiness for which he craved and longed, making him as a God. He knew by his own wisdom and experience, how each fruit in Paradise imparted in perfection that which was indicated by its nature. Why then should he believe that the tree, whose nature it was to give knowledge by its fruit, would, instead of giving knowledge, destroy it and give eternal death ?

And as hatred for God was keeping pace with his own self-love, which was ever growing, he resented more and more God's prohibition ; and his doubts of God's love for him were ever on the increase. His doubts were confirmed by Eve, to whom the words which he had heard had been addressed ; she had listened to the voice of him who was a liar from the beginning ; and was now convinced that God hated man, and would never consent to his becoming as a God like Himself, as the serpent told her, would be the case did he eat of that fruit. She looked at it to judge for herself ; and saw that it was fair to behold, and would do that which her experience of all other fruits had taught her it must do ; its nature was to give knowledge, and therefore knowledge it would give. The serpent confirmed the lie which was thus in her heart, and it was fully shared by Adam.

In that moment, true love, God's light, the Eternal Word, was banished from his heart ; it fled also from the world, which

had been by God associated with man; and intensest darkness spread on every side. Though the deed had not yet been sealed, love for God had already been fully supplanted by self-love, even before he ate of that which had been forbidden: true light was no longer there, it had been supplanted by the darkness of that self-love which alone remained, and had now become his guide. His own wisdom thus changed into folly, placed him in the power of one who only can deceive, and who was a murderer from the beginning; and under his counsel, he signed the deed by which he finally renounced God, and with bitter hatred defied Him and ate the fruit.

Dear Mother, that is what thou hast given me to read.

“Thou hast well read my thoughts, dear child, and I will only add: Bear ever in mind, that thou art God’s creature to whom He owes nothing, and that thou hast nothing but that which He has given thee, that all He does bestow is His free gift; and when thou seest all that in His infinite goodness He has done for thee, thy heart should overflow with that love and gratitude, which finds its true happiness in working and renouncing itself for the object of its love. But it is only in the light of His love, that thou canst see what He has done for thee, and the work thou canst do for Him. Any other apparent light is really only darkness; and the moment thou judgest anything in Him to be aught else but love, and thinkest that He loves thee not, thou knowest that darkness is setting in; and if thou followest that darkness, thou wilt be, as so many are, guided to error and eternal death. Remember also that nothing so effectually dispels the true light of love, as the darkness of self-love.”

I thank thee, dear Mother, for all thou teachest me, tell me how can I repay thee? “Beloved child, by doing all thou learnest from me.” I will, dear Mother, help me!

MEDITATION X.

THE LOVE OF GOD REVEALED AND ENSHRINED IN THE
MYSTERY OF THE INCARNATION.

I REPOSE for one moment on my Mother's loving Heart, and then continue to read what I see therein.

God, who is Infinite Love and Goodness, determined to restore to new life the human race, now dead by the death of sin. But He determined to do this, not by raising that which was already dead to life, but by enabling man to be born again. It was not to be simply a resurrection from the dead ; it was to be a new birth, far more noble and more perfect than all that had preceded it. In his first birth, man was of the earth, earthly ; but in his second birth, he was to be born of God ; he was to be the beloved child of the good and loving God.

As a mighty king whose palace has been destroyed, builds another more beautiful and more perfect ; so the Almighty King of heaven determined to give to His new creation a glory and magnificence so great, that it would be to the former as the bright sun is to a tiny star. And when this great work would be accomplished, and these children of God would stand before Him radiant with beauty, and beaming with joy, from their lips and hearts would rise a hymn of praise and joy, exclaiming : *O happy fault which has merited for us so great a Redeemer.*

But the good God loves His new children so much and so tenderly that He will not, as He had done of old, entrust their education to any of His creatures. That book which He had given them in the beginning, and by which they were to learn His immensity, and the greatness of His power, and the greatness of His love, was so changed and so defaced by the malice of the evil one, the father of lies, into whose hands it fell, that instead of teaching them the truth, it might lead them into error. Now, therefore, God will give His children a full and

perfect revelation of Himself, of His beauty and His love. He will speak to them Himself. He Himself will be their Teacher and their only Guide. But how can this be?

The word of the Father is infinite, and therefore infinitely above and beyond the finite intelligence of any creature. That infinite word is intelligible only to Him who is infinite. How then can a finite intelligence—the human mind—understand Him, or approach Him? This would indeed be impossible on the part of any creature; but with God all things are possible.

His infinite power can bridge over the infinite space which intervenes between the creature and his creator, and make a bond of union between the finite and infinite. Yes, with God it is possible, and since it is possible, He will do it, for He is Infinite Love.

Impelled therefore by infinite love for His children, He sent them His only-begotten Son, His Eternal Word, equal to Himself in all perfections. *God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son.* And in order that He, the Word of the Father, might be intelligible to His children, and that they might learn of Him, He assumed the nature of man, He clothed His Divinity with our humanity. *A body hast Thou prepared for Me. Lo! I am come to do Thy will, O God.*

Thus by the ineffable mystery of the incarnation of the Son of God, the Eternal Father accomplished His purpose. Now He could speak to His children in their own language and they would understand Him; now He could teach them all truth; now He could show them all His love, and show them also how to obtain that eternal happiness for which He had created them from the beginning. All this was now possible; for His Eternal Word would speak to them the wisdom of heaven. And, moreover, He would draw them to Himself; for He would manifest to all His children His eternal love for them enshrined in a human heart, the true symbol of love. And when the Word of God came on earth and conversed with men, they saw that He was

the Son of God, yet also truly Man; a Divine Person indeed, possessing the plenitude of the Divine nature, yet having the form of man and a body and soul as they had, and possessing in its highest degree all the perfection of which human nature was capable.

Having compassion on our infirmities, and tempted in all things like as we are, without sin (Heb. iv. 15). This is the Divine Teacher sent by the Eternal Father to His children, His own Eternal Word spoken by Him in language intelligible to them, showing them the way of truth, the way of eternal life. But it is not in the form of God He teaches, it is in that of man, and the voice that speaks to us is a human voice, speaking our own language. Is it not so, dear Mother?

“Yes, my child, it is even so. If He, the Eternal God, were only very good and loving, all this would seem too much even for such love; but because He is Infinite Love, Love Itself, His love is without measure, it goes as far as that ocean of love can go and fills all within its bosom. And now, remember always that when thou seest Him in His loving Heart, thou seest Him as Man, in His human nature; though thou knowest also that He is truly God, thou hast to think of Him as the perfect Man, beautiful exceedingly above all the children of men; so kind, so tender, so affectionate, so loving in every way, doing, in a word, all that the most perfect man could and would do, at the same time that He is also really God.

It is, then, as man that the Eternal Word speaks to thee. As soon as thou seekest Him under another form, and divest, as it were, into the Divine nature, thou art confronted with questions full of mystery; as, for instance, how Divine happiness, which is really His, is compatible with the sufferings and temptations of man which He also is; and how the Hypostatic Union of the Divine and human natures exists in Him, who is the one Person of God the Son; or how some of His acts as God and Creator are compatible with the Love which

He really is, and which love renders Him powerless to do the smallest thing which is not that which He is, Goodness and Love Itself. Thou expectest, as it were, a word to be spoken by that Divine nature in which all is unfathomable and unintelligible to thy mind, and the response can only be deepest silence.

Adam sought for knowledge which it pleased not God to give him then, and of which his mind was not yet capable; because so far he had not filled up the measure of love, which alone could fit him for the possession of God—the Eternal Truth, in whom alone that knowledge could be found. Seeking for it by other means than those permitted him by God, he fell into the power of the deceiver, and was led away from God into darkness and error. Another thing thou hast to bear well in mind, and impress deeply on thy memory. It is that thou hast nothing to do with what God could or might have done; but only with what thou knowest Him really to have done; and of it, all thou ever hast to say is, that it was the work of Infinite Love, under the form given to it by eternal wisdom.

Thou mayest often be inclined to say or think, that God who is all-powerful could and might have dealt with the angelic and human race in a way, which to the folly of thy created and restricted wisdom, would seem more in accordance with goodness and love than that which He has done. But to His eternal wisdom, it was otherwise. The only knowledge on these points which He has imparted to thee, and which will ever be to thee an infallible guide, and may indeed be called eternal wisdom like His own, which never can mislead or deceive in any way, is the knowledge that He is Love Itself. No matter then what He may do, or what He might have done, all was and only could be love; the smallest thought opposed to this is the greatest enemy thou ever canst encounter—fly, fly from it, otherwise it will inflict eternal death upon thee. Whatever God does, no matter what, can only be love. Be mindful of all

this, and clothe thyself with its remembrance, for it is part of the nuptial garment.”

I will, dear Mother, and do thou, dear Guardian Angel, ever guide my steps on this path now marked out for me. I will, beloved one, ever do so, provided that thou dost promise me ever to bear in mind, that our good God, Love Itself, and nothing else, is rendered by that very love, powerless ever to do the smallest little thing which is anything but love. I do, I promise thee, dear Angel!

MEDITATION XI.

THE MAN-GOD, THE MASTERPIECE OF DIVINE LOVE.

I HEAR thee calling me, dear Mother, and I hasten to thy loving heart.

“Come, dear child, draw near : we are, so to speak, on the very threshold of His own dear, loving Heart.”

Yes, dear Mother, and the sound of thy voice carries with it a bright ray of light, imparting to me, as it were, thy final instructions. Once more I understand how every sound and voice coming from His high throne in heaven, must be like silence to me, and His voice incomprehensible to me. But it is like a diamond, that only awaits the rays of the sun of that land to which it belongs, to shine out in all the brilliancy of that sun ; and that land is my home. *And the Lamb is the Lamp thereof.*

Thou didst teach me that the Eternal Word proceeding from the Father, is that Eternal Father’s own knowledge of Himself ; a procession from His infinite intelligence embodying that infinity. That Eternal Word therefore is begotten, not made ; and though really distinct is yet truly God, consubstantial with the Eternal Father, and one with Him in all except His personality.

And now, thou furthermore tellest me that the work of the inner Divine processions is not yet full and perfect ; nor are the Father and the Son all the Divine Persons. There is a third Person, the Holy Ghost, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, as from one source and principle. The Father is not only Divine Knowledge whereof the Son is the perfect expression, but He is also Love, the love of Himself and of His only-begotten Son ; and His love is one and the same in Father and Son. Now it is from this Infinite Love, that the Holy Ghost proceeds, who is therefore called the Consubstantial Love of the Father and the Son. He is, as it were, the breath (spirit) of both ; a real and true Divine Person, God from God, proceeding not by way of intellect and as an intellectual image, but by way of will and as the personal or consubstantial love.

From this I learn that both the knowledge and the love of God are fertile and productive. But these are the only principles of fertility in God. From them everything that is proceeds.

There is nothing so productive, so communicative as love. The Father begets the Son, and from the Father and the Son the Holy Ghost proceeds. But He—that Spirit of Love, produces nothing in the Blessed Trinity. There, He is unproductive, He begets nothing, and nothing proceeds from Him ; because, besides knowledge and love, there is no further principle of fertility in God. The Divine Power to work and produce within itself is now complete, and, as it were, exhausted. The Holy Spirit is the centre which terminates and brings to plenitude in Himself all the Divine processions and productions.

But outside the Divinity, He, the Love of the Father and the Son, is ever active. From Him proceed all the works of creation, all the gifts and marvels of nature and grace, the highest and greatest of which is Jesus Christ, the God-Man. He is the Author of the Incarnation. He concertes the sacred marriage between the Divine and human natures. He forms the adorable body of Jesus. He creates His most holy soul. He unites

the Person of the Word with this body and with this soul. There is His most excellent work, or, rather, His masterpiece—the Man-God, the Incarnation of the Eternal Word, the deification of human nature. He then, the Holy Ghost—the Love of the Father and the Son—has to speak the Eternal Word of the Father in a language intelligible to us. It is by the tongue that words are spoken, and therefore, when He appears in a created form, as He has, so to say, to speak the Eternal Word, He assumes the form of tongues.

And now, dear Mother, I hardly dare read further. Oh, make me worthy to praise thee, most sacred Mother of God. For what do I read now? *And He was incarnate by the Holy Ghost, from the Virgin Mary, and was made Man.* In thy womb, oh dearest Mother, was He conceived! In thee, full of grace, in thee, that beautiful enclosed garden, whose flowers sent up to the Throne of God the sweet odour which drew Him down from heaven into thy chaste womb! As He Himself exclaimed: *Oh, how beautiful art thou, My Beloved, how beautiful art thou, there is neither spot nor stain in thee.* Oh, Mother, Mother! and thou claspest me in thy arms, thou pressest me to thy heart! Oh, let me go, for I am a poor sinful creature; how do I dare remain on thy pure and sinless heart? And yet thou drawest me all the closer to thy loving, tender, Mother's heart! And then she thus replied:—

“Listen, my beloved child, a moment. I will never let thee go. To seek for thee He came to me, that I might hold thee in the strong grasp of a Mother's love, whilst He poured into thy wounds the healing balm, which would enable Him to say also to thee: *How beautiful art thou, My beloved, there is neither spot nor stain in thee.* Dost thou forget thou art His child, His beloved one?

Therefore, the more thou dost realise my love for Him, the better wilt thou understand the immensity of my love for thee, His own, dear, beloved child. Oh, how dear thou art to me,

my child, the own loved child of my own loved Lord and Son. How I love thee, and what is there I would not do for thee!"

Ah, I know it is so, dear Mother, then tell me what return I can make to thee for such surpassing love?

"My child, be ever my true and loving child, that I may mould thee, and form thee, and render thee such, that He may be able to say to thee: *How beautiful art thou, My beloved, there is neither spot nor stain in thee.*" Dear Mother, I know no words to use, to tell thee how I love thee—accept my heart; there thou wilt see all.

MEDITATION XII.

THE RAYS OF THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST SHINE UPON EACH IMMORTAL SOUL, AND ARE ONLY INTERCEPTED BY MAN'S SIN.

YESTERDAY, dear Mother, thou didst tell me to remember that I was His own dear child, and thou didst ask of me in return for all thy love, that I should let thee mould and form me as His child. Then, dear Mother, since such is thy will, enable me to understand, at least in part, what it really is to be His child.

Yes, now thou showest me what it is; the remembrance that I am His child is an important part of the nuptial garment, and its absence would wholly change my intercourse with Him.

I remember that once I seemed to stand before the gates of the palace of a mighty king, when a magnificent equipage drew up there. Evidently it was expected, for guards were on duty, to receive its occupant with the highest honours. But when he alighted, he appeared hardly conscious of the profound respect paid to him on every side. *Who is he?* I inquired. *Is that the great king himself?*

And I was told that it was not so, but that he was the king's favourite, his friend, his counsellor, to whom he could refuse nothing, and on whom he had lavished the highest honours of

his kingdom. It was a reception day at court, and I followed at some little distance this favourite of the king, on his way to the royal presence. The nobles and courtiers, who thronged the palace, saluted him as he passed through their ranks, showing him profound respect and honour; but he hardly condescended even to notice them. He came at length to the splendid saloon which opened into the throne room. At the far end thereof was a lady, nursing and caressing a little child. The moment the prince perceived their presence, I noticed a change in his whole deportment. Turning instantly from his path, he walked towards the little child, and bowing profoundly before him, offered him homage, and seemed to annihilate himself in his presence. Who and what is that child, before whom the greatest and most noble in the land feels himself as nothing? It is the child of the king.

The prince then entered into the presence of that king, and was received by him with every mark of pleasure and affection. Yet, who and what is he, and what are all those other princes and nobles, compared with that little child? This thou wilt now see. That child is brought into the presence of the king, whose eyes are in the same moment fixed upon it alone. As the sun in his glory throws into darkness even the brightest stars, so does the sight of this little child efface from the king's mind all other glories of his brilliant court. All that he is, and all that he has, all his power, his riches, his majesty, his tenderness, his love, are concentrated and poured down in all their fulness on that little helpless child, whom he now clasps in his arms. That child is more to him than all the world besides, for it is his own dear, beloved child; and as it throws its arms around him, its one little affectionate embrace, its sweet and loving kiss, more than repay him for all he gives, and yet he gives all.

“Thou sayest well, my child, thou thyself art the beloved child of the King of kings, the Incarnate God, for He it is who calls

thee to His loving heart. Thou art lord of all, and heir to His heavenly kingdom; but because thou art still a little child, thou differest in nothing from a servant, but art under tutors and governors until the time appointed by Him thy loving Father. All His greatness, all His riches, all His power, all His love are poured forth and centred in thee. He in return longs and craves for thy love, and each little loving act of thine repays Him for all. Oh see then how great should be thy love for Him, and never forget that thou art His own dear loved child."

But, Mother, tell me, how can all that love centre in me, who am but one of many?

"Look around, my child, and see the millions upon whom the sun's bright rays stream down, yet the light and warmth which each one receives is none the less because so many others also receive the same. Oh no, each one receives it all, as though he stood alone. So great, so immense is that sun, so superabundant its radiant power, that it can give equally to one, as many. And yet, what is that great sun compared with Him who made it and gave it all its light—with Him, who is the Sun of Justice, the true Light of the World, the great, the infinite God? Now, therefore, thou seest how all His love is centred in thee.

Nor is He content with pouring down from the highest heavens the bright rays of His love, upon thee, His child; but He will Himself come down, that thou mayest dwell in the very Heart of all that love. Remember, that although at times thou seest the sun shining in all its glory, at other times it is shrouded or dimmed by clouds, but it is itself always the same, unchanged, unchangeable; and when those clouds (which come not from it) pass away, it will shine upon thee again in all its brightness, for it is all light, its very essence is light.

Even so is it with our great, good God. He is Love Itself. His essence is Love, and therefore, by necessity, He really can be nothing else. Therefore, the rays which He pours forth are all rays of love, of life, and of light. Those bright rays may be

dimmed or intercepted in their path to thee, or coloured by the medium through which they have to pass ; but their flow never ceases for a moment, however great the darkness which may actually surround thee. When the clouds pass away, the light will reach thee again, and then thou canst walk safely and securely, for in that light thou shalt see the Light—the Eternal Truth.

The true Light, which alone can guide thee, and lead thee safely to thy Father's home, is only really to be found in the perpetual remembrance that He, the Almighty God, incarnate for love of us, is Love Itself—Love, infinite and eternal, and that thou art not simply the subject of that great immortal King, but His own beloved child. Henceforth, regard all His dealings with thee, and with all the creatures of His hand, in this, the only true light of His love; and thou shalt never fall into any error, thou shalt know the truth. He Himself—Love Incarnate—tells us that so it is. *He who followeth Me walketh not in darkness.* He is the true Light shining in the midst of the darkness. He alone is the Light who is also Love Itself."

MEDITATION XIII.

JESUS CHRIST SOMETIMES WITHDRAWS HIMSELF FOR THE TRIAL AND GREATER PERFECTION OF THE SOUL. SUFFERING IS GOD'S MOST PRECIOUS GIFT.

DEAREST Mother, how I thank thee for all thou hast told me ! The more I ponder on thy words, the brighter is the light which illumines my soul. But wilt thou not continue thy work, and tell more about those clouds which intercept the rays of the shining sun ?

“ Well, my child, those clouds proceed not from the sun itself, and yet it is their cause. They are composed of the moisture drawn up from the earth, and from its many waters, into the higher air, by its warm rays. And although they

sometimes look so black, their waters are ever pure and clear, even as finest crystal. Go out in the early dawn, and see the bright dewdrops sparkling like precious diamonds on flowers, and leaves, and every blade of grass. As the bright sun ascends, they all leave the earth, passing upwards to meet him. Everything defiled remains below, there to be burnt up by the scorching rays of the noonday sun; and when that is done, then the waters descend again in crystal drops, and are poured forth upon the earth in genial showers, to refresh and purify it, and thus enable it to continue its work. The sun re-appears bright and resplendent, brighter even than before, as though the crystal waters had added new brilliancy to its rays. The buds expand, and burst into lovely flowers, emitting a delicious perfume, as it were an odour of sweetness and thanksgiving for the benefits they had received. The voices of the birds, singing their songs of gladness, are heard on every side, and indeed, all nature is renewed, and endowed, so to say, with new life.

And all this freshness, this sweetness, this beauty, this new life, are due to those clouds which appeared so dark and threatening. Even as the sun at times seems to withdraw its light, and hide behind a cloud, until the earth has been purified and refreshed by the waters of that cloud, so our own dear Lord and Father, whom we know to be Love Itself, withdraws His light from time to time, hiding His face, as it were, behind a cloud, not for our punishment, but for our good, not in anger, but in love, for He is always Love.

Then He draws up to His own loving Heart, and treasures therein, all the pure and beautiful works of His child, leaving behind all that is defiled, in order that it may be destroyed and washed away by the grief and sorrow which His absence causes, as it is written: *In my bed by night, I sought Him whom my soul loveth, I sought Him, and found Him not. . . . I will rise, and go about the city, in the streets and in the broadways I will seek Him whom my soul loveth.* And when grief and sorrow have

done their work, peace and joy return ; for then, *I found Him whom my soul loveth.* Then He pours back into the soul all the good it has done, that it may grow, and produce fresh fruit therein."

How true are thy words, dear Mother, and how often do I experience that which thou now tellest me ! I can see nothing but iniquity in my soul, and think that all is lost ; grief and anguish fill me. It is that He has taken up into His loving Heart all the little good, which His love and grace have enabled me to do : there to enrich it, and to return it to me as soon as, by my tears and sorrow, I have cleansed my heart and made it a fit receptacle for that good, now so enriched by Him, and made capable of producing abundant fruit.

"Thou sayest well, my child, in the midst of the soul's sorrow and anguish, His angels have been at work, digging up the garden of its heart, and sowing therein the heavenly seed, which then only needed refreshing rain to render it fruitful. For again it is written : *They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. Going, they went and wept, casting their seeds. But coming they shall come with joyfulness, carrying their sheaves* (Ps. cxxv. 5-7). Therefore, my child, thou must expect to pass through the various seasons of heat and cold, darkness and sunshine ; even storms and tempests will sometimes overtake thee ; yet, all these are but various manifestations of that great love, which is being ever poured forth into thy heart by Him who is Love Itself.

Oh no, nothing but love can ever flow from Him. Never lose sight of this. He watches over thee with more than a Mother's tenderness and love, for has He not said : *Can a woman forget her child ? . . . and if she should forget, yet I will not forget thee*" (Isaiah xlix. 15).

Dear Mother, thou tellest me those rays of love are ever streaming forth from Him, but will they never cease to flow on me ?

“They will never cease to flow for thee, my child, and thou alone canst repel them. But to succeed in this, thou wouldst have to close thyself up on every side, for as the deep waters of the ocean surround the objects immersed in them, and press upon them with almost irresistible power, and penetrate within, so do these powerful rays of God’s love not only surround thee, but penetrate into thy very heart. And if thy heart contains the very smallest spark of love, they will enkindle it with their own fire; and fanned, it will burst out into so great a flame that it will burn and consume every obstacle in its path.”

Then, dear Mother, not only are glory and happiness God’s loving gifts, but suffering, and very great suffering, is also His gift and is indeed a most special one of His most ardent love?

“Even so, my child. Suffering is indeed His most perfect gift. Oh, how precious must be its fruit, since, to enable thee to reap it, He whose love is so great that He suffers more in thy sufferings than thou thyself canst suffer, permits or wills them all. Oh, the good, the loving God!”

Dear Mother, may I ask a grace of thee? “Yes, dear child, whatever thou canst desire.” Then, dear Mother, when the dark, dark cloud hangs over me, let one little ray from thy loving heart penetrate the darkness, that I then may just see enough to have full conviction of what thou now tellest me!

“It shall be so, my child.”

MEDITATION XIV.

SELF-DENIAL THE CONDITION OF POSSESSING DIVINE LOVE.

THOU callest me again, dear Mother, to thy loving Heart, to continue the adornment of my soul, in preparation for its entrance into the loving Heart of thy dear Son. Thou didst promise to fill my heart with love on the way, and, oh, how well hast thou kept thy promise, dear Mother. Again and again I

thank thee for it all. Thou didst call that love in which we walk, the fire of love ; and I begin now to understand that this fire of love has the power, not only of absorbing, consuming and destroying, but also of assimilating into itself the things it can lay hold of. It therefore means love, with all its energy and all its works.

“It is so, my child. Even as an intense fire in its efforts to obtain full possession of all with which it can combine, destroys every obstacle in its path, so does the intense fire of Divine love burn and consume everything which would be an impediment to its making a heart entirely its own. Throw a piece of wood into fire, and watch the action of the flames. At first they are unable to obtain full possession of it, and they are repelled by the moisture which it contains, and with which they cannot combine. Again and again they rush back, and then encircle and press it on every side, until the last drop of water is entirely driven from it. And now, having obtained a firm hold, they not only surround it, but so penetrate it in every part that the whole substance of the wood glows with the fire into which it has been transformed, and fire has become its being. It was once wood, now it is that which has obtained possession of it. And so must it be with thy heart, if His love is to have possession of it.”

I thank thee, dear Mother, I quite understand.

And now wilt thou tell me another thing? When thou hadst told me much about the greatness of God’s love for me, thou didst then speak of black clouds, of storms and tempests, of the scorching rays of the sun, and of sowing seeds in sorrow. And thou didst tell me all these things in order that I might learn, how greatly true love and its mode of action differs from all our ideas of what it really is. How am I to learn that lesson?

“Dear child, thou wilt learn the lesson if thou bearest well in mind what I have told thee before ; we must not judge God’s

ways by ours, for if we do so we shall surely err, for the wisdom of this world is folly before God.

When amid the thunders of Mount Sinai, the Eternal Word proclaimed to all that He was Love Itself, men did not clearly understand; for the bright sun which alone could fully enlighten them on this point, had not yet risen, and therefore they were guided either by the twilight only of that sun, or by the false light of their own earthly wisdom.

This wisdom led them to believe that He who was announced, and whom they expected, would be a great earthly king, and would manifest His love by bestowing on them all the desires of their hearts, and all they most esteemed—honours, riches, pleasures, and earthly glory. But when Eternal Wisdom, the True Light, began to shine in the world, it became clear to them that their earthly wisdom had led them astray, that they were wandering in darkness and in error. For Divine Love revealed itself in humility, self-denial, mortification, and sacrifice, and sought to draw all men to follow in that same path.”

Oh, yes, I understand, dear Mother, when the Eternal Word came among men He told them that He—Love Incarnate—was come, not to bestow upon them the things which the world esteems, and which are but vanity and affliction of spirit, but to take them away as being obstacles to man’s true peace and happiness.

He told them that if they would find the true peace which He had come to give, they must henceforth fly from the riches, honours, and pleasures of this world; and like Him, embrace poverty, humiliation, and the Cross.

Unless they were ready to lay aside their own ideas, and believing in His word, to follow Him along the narrow path of mortification and self-denial, they never could be His disciples. If they would possess the truth, they must follow Him who is Truth itself; and if they would taste the joys of Divine Love, they must first learn that this love is born of sacrifice and suffering.

Therefore, dear Mother, when thou speakest of love thou speakest also of suffering, in order to show me that, if Divine Love finds in me any obstacle to its full and entire possession of my heart, it will burn it up, and in so doing cause me much suffering.

Still, without it, my heart could never be assimilated to His nor produce the works which the fire of Divine Love really does produce. I must renounce myself in everything, as He Himself tells us: *Unless a man renounce all he possesses he cannot be My disciple*; otherwise I shall remain what I was before, that is, wood, green and damp. But if I cheerfully give up all things, and deny myself in all for the love of God, He will enter into my heart; and taking possession of it, and of all my faculties and senses, reign within me, so that I shall have to say: *I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me!*

But I must always remember, when I go to His loving Heart, that His ways are not my ways; that what He wills is not what I will; and that the truths He teaches are not in accordance with the ideas of the world. I must reject my own judgment, my own opinions, and all those worldly maxims which I now know really to be folly. I must trample all these things under foot, and believe in Him, and never doubt Him or the greatness of His love, no matter what He may say or do, and repose all my confidence in Him, and in Him alone.

“Thou hast said well, my child. It is indeed true that, to be His disciple, thou must renounce thyself in all things, and follow Him along the path of suffering. But for thy encouragement, ever bear in mind that, whatever He asks thee to suffer for His sake, He has first of all endured Himself, and a very great deal more for thine. He was tempted in all things like as we are. He has gone before us on the path of suffering, and He asks only that we follow Him, for He says: *I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.* Oh, the good, the loving God!”

Then, dear Mother when I really give myself to Him, I am

to expect great sufferings, which, instead of troubling and disturbing me, should fill my heart with gratitude and love ; for in them I have the proof, that His love is burning and destroying all the obstacles in the way of its entire possession of me. And if those trials and sufferings of soul and body are not at all the ones I had expected, but seem to me more calculated to dissolve, than otherwise, our union, I may be quite sure that they come from Him whose ways are indeed not ours. “And then, dear child, how great should be thy gratitude to Him.” It shall be so, dear Mother, only do thou take care of thy own poor, weak, sickly child.

MEDITATION XV.

IN SPITE OF APPEARANCES TO THE CONTRARY, GOD IS LOVE
ITSELF.

DEAREST Mother, again I come to thee, and my heart is full to overflowing of deepest gratitude for all thy love. Thou hast led me by the hand, or rather thou hast carried me in thy arms along the path which has now brought me so near to His loving Heart. Oh, how often has He stood at the door of mine, knocking that I might open to Him? but now I stand at the door of His.

Yet, though I ardently desire to enter there, I dare not ask the favour till thou hast spoken to me again. I know that if I knock and beg admission, the response will indeed be prompt. But I can hardly speak even to thee, my Mother, for I have no words in which to express those sentiments which fill my heart really to overflowing.

How could it be otherwise, when I remember all thy tender maternal love for me? I owe everything to thee and to thy love. Had it not been for thee, God could not have pardoned me, since without repentance no sin can ever be forgiven; and it

was thou who didst obtain for us, at so great a price, Him by whom alone the sinner does repent. Oh, Mother, Mother dear, how great was all the work which thou hadst to do for me! I thank thee from my heart. Thou didst weep for all poor sinners and for me, and those tears obtained for me, as also for all who accept the grace, repentance and forgiveness. Oh, I owe all to thee, sweet Mother. I love thee, therefore, and thank thee with all my heart and soul. When I enter the loving Heart of Him whose child (through thee) I am, I shall again ask Him to do that which I myself can never do,—I shall ask Him to repay thee for all thou hast done for me.

Long ago when He placed thee in heaven, high above all the angels, and crowned thee as their Queen, He foresaw that one day I should ask this grace of Him, that He would add to all that He then did for thee, the debt that I owe thee, dear Mother. I know He heard my prayer, He is so very good; and oh, how I thank Him for not asking me what the pay should be, and paying all Himself; for had He asked me, I could only have wept with grief and sorrow, because I should have seen that all I could say or imagine would be nothing to what I would wish for thee, my own dear, dearest Mother, and He gave thee all.

But He thereby imposed on me a still greater debt, a debt of boundless love to Himself, which thou, dear Mother, wilt now help me to pay. Oh fill my heart with love, for that is all He asks; and then, and then only, can I venture into His loving Heart.

Blessed be His Holy Name for all His gifts to thee, dear Mother; and I shall not cease to beg Him to give thee still more, for I know that when I enter His loving Heart, He will tell me a great deal more than I can know now, of all thy love for me, and all thou hast done for me. . . . But now, dear Mother, bless with thy pure and spotless hands the garment I must put on before I enter His loving and Sacred Heart.

And in answer to my prayer, this good Mother only pressed me to her Heart, calling me in sweet and loving terms her own dear child. And then she added: "*Little dost thou know the new heaven thou hast created for me by these grateful and loving words, which proceed not only from thy lips, but are written in thy heart. I have already told thee that love is the food and fuel of the sacred fire which the God of Love came to cast on earth. That sacred fire takes possession of it, and henceforth it burns with that fire only. Therefore, whenever thou givest me this fuel of love, I cast it at once into His loving Heart, that that Heart may feed thereon. If thou didst only know the greatness of the love He bears thee, thou wouldst understand the happiness I experience in giving thy heart to Him.*"

And now I say once more, forget not the important lesson I have taught thee, and which I have repeated to thee so many, many times. I again repeat it: *God is Love; He is Love Itself.* Although at times, in His dealings with thee and with the other creatures of His hand, He may appear to act unlovingly, it is not really so, nor can it ever be. Nothing unloving, nothing which is not love can proceed from Him who is Infinite Love—Essential Love—Love Itself.

And therefore He is also the Truth, for love is always true, and can never deceive. He is the true Light shining in the world. Following Him thou shalt not walk in darkness, but shalt have the light of life. Be not anxious or troubled because at times thou canst not understand His ways, for His ways are not thy ways; and since thou knowest that, no matter what they may appear to thee, they can only be ways of love, because they are His. Place all thy trust and confidence in Him, and thou shalt surely find peace to thy soul.

Give not thy ear to the foolish ones of this world, who, animated by the spirit of pride, do not hesitate to sit in judgment upon the God who made them, and, measuring His infinite wisdom by their finite and imperfect minds, dare to condemn

Him. It were easier for them to hold in the hollow of their hand the waters of the ocean, than to measure with their puny minds the infinite ocean of God's wisdom and love, and assign to it a boundary.

Listen not to them, and go not with them on the way, for their end is destruction. But there are others who, although they deny not God's love, yet would for all that (which, as we said just now, can never be) set a limit to it. They will not believe that God's love for His children hath no measure, that *having loved His own He loved them to the end*, He exhausted all love's power, and for their sakes went as far as infinite love could go. These also have lost the faith; the true light is extinguished within them, and they will surely fall into the dread abyss. Fly far from them, or thy end will be as theirs.

Recall to thy mind for a moment the beautiful and touching scene which thou didst witness in the palace of the king. How that great and powerful monarch loved his little helpless child! All his love was centred there, and all he had he gave it, and that because it was his own dear child. It was dearer to him than all the world besides, it was the source of all his joy, and gladly would he have sacrificed his life to save it from injury and dishonour.

And with this thought before thee, look back into the profound depths of eternity. Behold the King of kings upon His throne, surrounded by all the great princes of heaven, who bow down before Him in deepest adoration. But not on them is His gaze fixed—they stand in need of nothing. It is fixed on thee. Thou art a poor helpless little child, and as such really unworthy of His attention. But because thou art His child, He loves thee with a love that no words can ever tell. He loves thee to excess, He loves thee even to folly. And because love cannot endure separation from its beloved, He came down from His throne in heaven, even to this earth; and stripping Himself of all His majesty and glory, took upon

Himself the form of man, that He might be united to thee His child, and fold thee in His embrace. Oh, how He craved and longed, and with what ardent desire He desired this closest union with thee His own beloved child !

But now this close union could not satisfy the ardour of His love. He desired to make thee one with Himself, even as He and the Father are one. And when He took thee in His loving arms, He saw that thou wast covered with the leprosy of sin, which must end in death. He saw thou couldst not live unless He gave His own life for thee, and therefore He offered it up for thee—*He died then that thou mightest live.*

Yes, He who hangs on that malefactor's cross, with His hands and feet transfixed by long, sharp, and cruel nails, His head crowned with thorns, His Heart torn open by the soldier's lance, He is thy God, suffering and dying for thee. He underwent all those frightful torments, that most cruel and ignominious death, through excess of love for thee. He is the victim of all His love for thee. Verily, *greater love than this no man hath.* Now it is that thou seest that He indeed is Love, and must be Love Itself.

And now, dear child, thou standest on the very threshold of that loving Heart, and I shall remain with thee. My beloved Spouse, who always watched over me and mine with such tender and loving care, will be there to watch also over thee. And thy Guardian Angel is ever at thy side. Oh, how great is his love for thee ! It is far greater than thou canst imagine. And because of his love for thee, my love for him is very great ; and for that same reason immeasurably great is also that of my dear Son for him, and often have I seen Him press this dear and loving Angel to His heart, and thank him for having fought so many hard long battles for thee, His dear beloved child. He has fought against all thy enemies, and when thou wast thine own enemy, he fought against thee thyself, and prevented thee from turning away from God's dear loving Heart."

Dearest mother, thank my good Angel for all his tender care of me. But who and what am I that he should care for me, and watch over me so lovingly ?

“My child, hast thou so soon forgotten thy lesson ? Who and what thou art ? Remember that thou art God’s own dear child ; whom He came to seek on earth and embrace, and fold to His loving Heart. And when He came He found thee dead, and so He died for thee, that by His death thou mightest be born again. His death was thy life.”

Only Love Itself could do so great a work of love. Oh then, dear Lord, since thou lovest me so much, enable me to pay my debt to Thee and fill my heart with love, but with that ardent and true love which pines away in sorrow if it is not ever working hard for the object of its love.

Dear Guardian Angel, since thou givest thy dear Lord such happiness by thy tender care of me, come now and renew it all by filling my heart with love !

Dear Mother, bless me now—I go to repose.

PART II.

SUMMARY.

As we advance in the knowledge of God's love for us, He dilates our hearts, so that our love for Him in return may continually increase.

The whole purpose of our lives should be to advance thus more and more in the love of God; and if we faithfully carry it out, our reward will be certain and exceeding great.

To love Him in return for His love of us will never be a labour, if we keep close to Him.

In Paradise the creatures by which man was surrounded were good, and would all help him to love God more and more; but when by his sin, they fell into the hands of the enemy, their tendency was to lead him far from God.

Hence when our Lord came on earth, He turned aside from all the things of this world, for they are now obstacles to true wisdom, and He established the Church to be our guide.

One of the greatest sufferings which our Lord underwent while on earth and in His passion, was the sight of the little return which men would make for all His love.

The only limit God has set to His love, is that which man endowed by Him with free will imposes on it.

Sin has so deformed man that his very nature inclines him to evil; he must therefore constantly resist his own inclinations if he is to make any return for the love of God.

One of the greatest griefs of the Sacred Heart is to find that the moment God allows trials and sufferings, so necessary for their eternal welfare, to befall men, they at once begin to doubt the greatness of His love.

INTRODUCTION.

My dear Mother bade me repose. I did so, but that repose was very short, and on awakening from it, I saw standing over me my beloved Guardian Angel.

Oh, dear Angel, thou seest me now on the very threshold of the loving Heart of our dear blessed Lord—speak, speak to me and help me to understand still better all that I have now to propose to myself and do in that most Sacred Heart.

And he points out to me these words written in large golden letters :—

“SEE THAT HEART WHICH HAS LOVED THEE SO MUCH”.

And then he said: “Beloved child, thou seest by those words of our dear Lord, that a moment has been reached in the existence of His Church, when all the varied paths by which she has hitherto led her children to Him seem now to meet together and converge into one. Our Lord Himself in telling His dear children to fix their minds and thoughts on the love of His Sacred Heart, seems to indicate to them that that is the road by which He wills, now more than ever, that they should come to Him. He seems to tell them to forget all else, and make that great love which He bears them the one and only motive for all they do in His holy service.

And by those same words He tells thee to do this, and to fix thy eyes upon and study that loving Heart, ever plunging deeper and deeper into its vast depths.

There it is that thou hast to read and understand all His dealings with thee and with all His creatures. And as the only light which shines there, is the light of His own love, it is in that light alone that thou hast ever to read and study, and to study all. He who is guided by any other light only walks in darkness.

And should it ever happen that thou seemest to see there anything that is not good and lovable, thou knowest that thou art then gliding into darkness and into error, for it really cannot be: His Heart is and always must be love, and only love.

He commands thee to love Him with *all* thy heart and strength, but He could not command thee to do an impossible thing, or to do that which would be sinful; but if there were in Him something which was not lovable, thy love would have to stop there, thou couldst advance no further, and wouldst be quite unable to give Him *ALL* thy love; He would have commanded thee an impossible thing. Nevertheless, if thou didst make a great effort to force thyself to do so, thou wouldst commit a crime, since thou wouldst be giving thy heart and love to that which would truly be an evil.

It is then in the firm and steady light of His love that thou hast to see and study all.

Thou perceivest, my child, that I have called the love of the Sacred Heart a Light. Indeed, there is nothing in creation to which it could be more fitly compared. It resembles it in its nature and in its functions, in its beauty and in its beneficence.

For this reason also thou hast to study the spiritual light of God's love, as thou studiest the material light of the world. That light is in itself too strong for our weak eyes. In order to gaze steadily upon it and to understand its nature and its component parts, its beauty and its richness, thou hast to resort to the aid of a pure crystal glass, in which thou seest those component parts under the form of prismatic colours, and in them thou readest all, and all becomes intelligible to thee. The moment the prism is withdrawn, the pure, bright, and dazzling ray is all that remains before thee.

Now thou mayest ask what are those beautiful prismatic colours in which the whole ray can be read and studied?

They are, so to speak, words calculated to make the sunlight more accessible and intelligible to him who studies nature. The colours are, as it were, a new language in which the sun's light is more easily and fully understood.

It is the same with thee, my beloved child, thou hast to see and study the bright light of God's love, but the Eternal Word, which is its expression, is too bright to be seen or understood except by Him who alone ever speaks it.

But when the great good God wills to convey knowledge of that love to His children of the human race, He clothes it in a form

that they can understand. He takes the form of Man and in His Heart, the very centre of all His love, He bids them read it all.

His sacred Humanity, His loving Heart, is the prism by which thou hast to see all the exquisite colours which, like a spoken language, will convey to thee knowledge and understanding of the details of that bright Light of Love. And those colours reflected in thy mind as constituted here below, are kindness, tenderness, affection, gratitude, self-sacrifice, sorrow, anguish, grief, affliction of heart, bitter sorrowful tears, and even anger and indignation. And all these thou canst understand; they all tell thee and enable thee thus to understand what that bright Light of Love really is.

Those are the bright colours then, and the only language in which God's love is spoken to thee, and the only one in which thou canst understand it. And thou dost understand it, because it is in thy own language that it is thus spoken.

Therefore the sacred Scriptures and the Church of God speak to us of Him who is Love Itself under one or other of those colours, even declaring that He is angry, and takes revenge, and repents of what He has done.

But now *that* Love, *that* Eternal Word which makes itself known to thee in thy own language, in heaven no longer speaks it, but there it speaks the language of heaven, and in its bright colours makes itself known to all who dwell in that abode of bliss. But it is always the same Love that speaks; therefore, whatever it has spoken here, when it speaks it again in heaven, though under quite another form, it is ever the same thing that is spoken again though unintelligible to thee; and if thou seekest to penetrate it and askest how this or that can be, thou meetest with no response.

Therefore in thinking of Him, even as He is in heaven, thou hast ever to see and think of Him under that only form under which He, the Eternal Word, has ever been spoken to thee by His Eternal Father: that is, under the form of the most beautiful of all the children of men, whose words drop from His lips like sweet honey from the honey-comb—and then with a Heart—and oh, what a Heart!—with a Heart so kind, so tender, so affectionate, so loving, so sympathising, so rejoicing, and so suffering. Could any other heart than that ever reach the deep depths of thine? or

could thy heart ever find any other heart that was boundless except that of thy own beloved Lord?

Could such a heart as that see thy sorrow and not grieve? see thee suffer and not be full of anguish? see thee on the way to death, and not pour out a very torrent of tears? Oh, then, when thou wouldst look up to Him and understand His love, that only Heart which He has ever shown thee is the prism through which alone thou canst ever do so. Set that Heart aside, and the brightness is so bright that to thee it can only be the very deepest darkness.

Now, dear child, we may put the same thing under another form.

Thou art here, and speakest to a friend in the language of the country which he can understand. Thou then goest to a far distant land where thou learnest its language also. If thy friend, after a time, seeks thee there, thou dost not address him in the language of that country, which is quite unknown to him, but in the only one intelligible to him. Neither does thy dear Lord speak to thee in the language of heaven, but only in that which He spoke on earth.

When He is pleased to show Himself and converse with favoured saints still in this world, it is thus that He shows Himself to them, and manifests love and grief, joy and sorrow, pleasure and displeasure, all the outflow of the attributes of His loving Heart. So also does His own beloved Mother. How all this can be, is to thee a mystery, so long as thou art in this world, as indeed are all His wondrous ways. And thou canst only read and understand that Heart now in heaven by seeing it precisely in the form and light in which He Himself has shown it."

I thank thee, Beloved Angel, for all thou hast now set before me: thy every word will be as a bright light, guiding me on my way in the depths of our dear Lord's loving Heart.

"It is so, dear child, but there is still another important consideration which thou must often recall to mind, and it is this: the love of complacency and affection with which thy heart already overflows, and will overflow still more, is, so to say, the infancy and childhood of love. But thou hast to watch over it, and see that it ever grows in vigour, and in manly, steady

preference of God to all created things, even to thyself. And this preference must arise, from the high esteem which thou hast formed of His infinite goodness, and sovereign and incomparable excellence. In the midst of all thy love of complacency and affection, ever watch those lovely flowers to see whether fruit is budding from them.

CONTINUATION.

And now, beloved, I still have another most important subject to which to direct thy attention, and it is this :

I have reminded thee, that the moment has been reached in the existence of the Church, when all the varied paths by which she has hitherto led her children to our dear Lord, seem to meet together and converge into one : all meet at the one point of His loving Sacred Heart.

But thou wilt notice that the nearer those who walked on those paths approached that loving Heart, the more prominently stood out before them the figure of him who was ever its loving guardian, and the guardian of her who was that Heart's most beloved treasure.

Thou mayest say, that in earlier ages, that glorious and beloved Guardian was seen only as it were in the distance and indistinctly, but the nearer all true lovers of our Lord approached His loving Heart, the more clearly and distinctly did they see the beauty, glory and power of Him who was called Father, by His own great God and Creator ; and Spouse by the beloved Mother of that same great immortal God. He ever was the Guardian of those two loving hearts, and through Him it is that we plunge into their deepest depths.

Never did that great and glorious Patriarch stand out in the eyes of the Church's loving children in greater beauty and glory than in the moment when the sweet, tender, loving words were dropping from the lips of Him who was pleased by him to be called His Son ; those words by which He invited all His children to contemplate His love and enter His loving Heart—never had there been a time when his glories had been more enthusiastically

proclaimed by all who loved our Lord—than in the moment of that new revelation of deepest, deepest love.

And, beloved, thou wilt notice, that as in the progress of time love and confidence in our dear Lord's Sacred Heart have been ever growing, so also has the glory of the great Patriarch St. Joseph been spreading on every side, and loving confidence in him been ever on the increase.

If then thou wouldst truly love, thou knowest to whom to go. And oh, how he will love and cherish thee and grant thy every prayer!

MEDITATION I.

GOD DILATES THE LOVING HEART THAT IT MAY LOVE
THE MORE.

O MY own good God, forgive me for daring to enter into Thy loving Heart. The last words of Thy own dear Mother, spoken to me on its very threshold, were that I should always remember that I am Thy own dear child, that the door of Thy loving Heart is ever open, and, therefore, that I should enter there with full, entire confidence.

But, although I remember all she told me of Thy great love for me, I could not forget that Thou art the great, the Infinite God, and for a moment I was afraid. But then I heard Thy voice, which indeed I have often heard before, calling, and even intreating me to come to Thee. Although I had eagerly desired thus to do, yet have I always held back.

But this time, at the sound of Thy loving voice, do what I would, I could not resist again. O my Mother, hold me back, or I shall presume too far. Thou hast told me to remember that I am His child, but it is that very thought which now breaks my heart. For what has He not done for me, His poor unworthy child? Such goodness! such compassion! such tender love! and all this for me! Oh, truly He must be Love Itself, and can be nothing else. In the clear, bright light of His loving Heart I now see all that thou, dear Mother, hast ever told me of the greatness of His love, and I see also the return I have made for all. Oh, what bright rays of light stream forth from His sacred Hands, and Feet, and Heart, all pouring from those deep, deep wounds, which I myself inflicted!

Yes, I, His child, whom He loved so much, and upon whom He poured forth the whole treasure of His love, I it was who made them all. These wounds, and the hard blows which inflicted them, were my return for all this goodness, and for all His love.

Yet even now, while I am crying out: *Depart from me, O Lord; who and what am I?* I am powerless to fly and hide myself away, as indeed I would, but He already holds me in His arms, and presses me to His Heart, and then I hear His voice trying to comfort me, and telling me that it was not I who made them, but that He Himself had done it, that love had made them all. *See, then, He added, how I died, that thou mightest live. See how great is My love for thee. By this thou canst measure the greatness of My desire to be loved by thee. Then fear not, My child, but dwell ever in My Heart, for this Heart is thy true home.* Then, dear Lord, keep me there. *My child, ask Me what thou wilt.* Dear Lord, my will, and that for which I ask, is this, that I may never more be parted from Thee.

My dear Mother, thou hast heard all. Did I not say well, that the thought of all His goodness and love was more than sufficient to break even such a heart as mine? But because it does not break when it really should do so, I grieve again at that hardness, and come to thee for comfort. "My child, as long as thou art in the world He wills that thy love, however great it may be, should ever grow, and so, as that love progresses, He dilates thy heart, which otherwise would break."

I understand, dear Mother. Thy heart was ever filled with grace and love, but with ever-growing love He dilated it to its full extent, and when thou hadst filled up the full measure of thy love, thou didst hear His voice: *Arise, My beloved, and come, . . .* and love broke thy heart, and thy soul fled to Him, was it not so, dear Mother? "*My child, we will speak of this, but later on.*" Bless me, then, dear Mother; and she seemed to pour all her maternal love into this poor heart of mine.

MEDITATION II.

THE WORK AND PURPOSE OF LIFE IS TO LOVE GOD.

DEAR Mother, thou seest me now in His loving Heart. He told me His Heart was my home, and that I should dwell therein. As others have a home so long as they live in the world, so have I my home in His Sacred Heart. But all who are in this world, are here for a purpose, they have a work to do. And I, too, am here for a purpose. I have a work to do, is it not so, dear Mother?

“Yes, my child, it is so, and in order that each one may accomplish his work, he must, first of all, inquire of his master, what work he wishes him to do, and where, and how it should be done. If a son is sent to college, and asks his father, what work he is to do, that father, who desires above all else the happiness of his child, will tell him, that he must apply himself to study. And where? In this college in which I have now placed you. Here, all the means for that purpose are provided for you—teachers, books, and all else required.

But how is he to succeed in his studies? how is he to accomplish this important duty? By close application to work, which of course implies the abandonment of repose, the withdrawal for a time from pleasure and amusement, and continued mental effort for the attainment of the desired end, in a word, work implies sacrifice of one's inclinations, and constant self-denial.

But a loving son will not shrink from any sacrifice which his father requires of him. No difficulty, no sacrifice will be too great for him. His love will triumph over all. He goes forth, therefore, to do his father's will. He knows how much his father loves him, and the thought of that paternal love sustains and encourages him in the midst of all his labours and sacrifices.

When, weary from constant work, or oppressed with sorrow, the thought of the home to which he will soon return, and of

the joy and happiness of his loved and loving father, and of the welcome with which he, now crowned with glory, will be received by him ; this thought, and also that of the high position which will so soon be his, and for which his education fits him in every way, together with its riches, and enjoyments of every kind, which will thus be at his disposal ; these thoughts, I say, and others like them will be as rays of bright sunshine to cheer and comfort him, and chase away all sorrow.

And now, my child, look around thee for a moment, and everywhere in varied forms, thou wilt read this same lesson. When a workman enters a factory, he knows that it is in order to do work, and he is told by the master what that work is, and where he is to do it ; and the tools with which his work is to be done stand before him. He perhaps asks if the work will be very hard, and is told that it is so, but will only be of short duration, and that at the end of the week he will receive his pay ; and further, to encourage him, he sees one who has done his work, and who is paid in countless golden coins.

On seeing this he sets to work with courage, and when his work is done, I ask him if it was hard, if he found it long, and what it was like ? He answers me that it all was like a dream.

Go to the bedside of an aged man, who has lived a hundred years, and is now about to leave the world, and ask him : *When was it that he was only a little child ?* and his reply to thee will be : *It was only yesterday.* And how long hast thou been in the world ? *Since yesterday.* And has life seemed long to thee ? *No, a day is very short, and my life has been only as one day.* We are here to-day—to-morrow we are gone."

I thank thee, dear Mother, now I understand.

"Yes, my child, but study well and frequently, all that I have now said, and endeavour to see it in all its bearings." *I will, dear Mother. Dear Guardian Angel, thou seest in what thou hast now to help me.* "I will do so indeed, beloved, but now rest awhile."

MEDITATION III.

I HEAR the voice of my dear Mother calling me to her loving heart. Dear Mother, I am here.

“Beloved child, as we have now been speaking of the work which has to be done in this world, there are certain considerations which I wish thy dear Guardian Angel to impress upon thy mind before thou returnest to our dear Lord’s loving Heart—they will prepare thee for much He has to tell thee; speak, dear Angel.”

“Beloved, I would only sum up in a few words many things which thou hast already heard, or wilt hear at greater length as thou advancest.

Thou formest thy opinion of the importance of a work which has to be done, by the importance of the means provided for its execution.

Thy opinion of its importance is greatly enhanced when thou knowest that he who provided those means is high, and mighty, and noble; but when thou art told that it is the great King who has Himself and with His own hands, and with long toil and labour, made and supplied them all—oh, then it is that thou exclaimest, how great, how important must the result be of means such as those; how great must be the end anticipated by the mighty King, and for the attainment of which He has spared Himself in nothing.

Beloved, look round at the great universe in the midst of which thou art, plunge into the depths of the great firmament, and to thy mind it will be unfathomable—the deeper thou goest the deeper will be the depths which thou wilt find beyond; to thy mind they will be infinite, and they are indeed only short of that.

Examine all that surrounds thee, from the smallest particle of dust to the greatest of the stars, from the smallest blade of grass to the boundless forests of the world, from the little drop

of dew to the mighty oceans of the earth; and each one will teach thee the lesson thou hast to learn, and will show thee that the one as well as the other, as far as thou canst see, is infinite indeed.

And so will it also be with all else on earth, from the lovely little flowering shrub to the most lofty noble trees, from the smallest insect to the great monsters of the deep; in the one and in the other, as also in every greatest or minutest detail of this entire universe, their oceans of marvel and beauty will have no other boundary than that given them by the feebleness of thy eye, or by the limit of the medium through which thou wouldst penetrate their depths.

And who was the great and powerful one who provided all these means for the attainment of an end which He had in view? It was the great all-powerful God Himself; all was the work of His own hands, and so beautiful and perfect was it, that He Himself declared it to be good and very good, and to be so great a work that having completed it, He henceforth rested from all His labours.

Oh then what could the object be which He had in view, since the means for its attainment were, not only as a whole but in each minute detail, all but infinite?

The object that God had in view in creating the world was clearly no other than to manifest His goodness and His love. The universe is the outcome of that love. For love communicates itself and gives of its own.

This manifestation of God's love, as we have shown, is all but infinite. But the world with all its riches and resources is made for man, and man himself is made in the likeness of God, to be, as it were His vicar and vice-gerent on earth. *Thou hast placed him over the works of Thy hands. Thou hast crowned him with honour and glory.*

But since man has been made like God, he must also act like God, he must resemble Him. Now God is essentially

Love. He loves Himself and His own infinite perfections, and He loves all that He has made, because it is His.

Therefore man also must love God and all that He has made, because they are the things of God. What a privilege for man ! God has no need of anything. He is absolutely happy in Himself. Yet he willed freely and lovingly to have a want, namely, that of being loved by the creature of His hand. He seeks thy heart, dear child, He desires thy love and affection, and He desires them fully, and completely, and exclusively. And this love of Him is meant to be thy own imperishable and eternal happiness. How great then is thy work on earth ! Son, give Me thy heart, are the entreating words of the Holy Ghost."

CONTINUATION.

Having reposed for a time in the loving Heart of my own dear Lord and Father, I now raise my eyes to Him and ask Him : *Dear Lord, Thou tellest me that this is my home with Thee, wilt Thou remain here always ?*

"Oh, no, my child, this is not My home ; I am only here for thee, to give thee a home until thy work is done, and to teach thee how to do that work and all that may be required of thee, to fit thee for My real eternal home and thine."

Then, dear Lord, I have a work to do, and until that is done we cannot go home ?

"It is so, my child, and moreover, thou hast only a little time in which to do it, and that little time, even at longest, is very, very short, so that it must not be wasted."

But, dear Lord, if I should lose my time, and my work be not finished at the appointed hour, what will happen then ?

"Oh, My child, the consequence would be terrible indeed, but of that we will not speak now. This only do I say to thee : A prince's son needs education of the highest order to fit him for his position in the world. His father does all in his power

and spares himself in nothing, to secure for him that perfect education. But if his son wastes his time in pleasures and amusements, in the company of evil-doers, he will not only be incapable of sustaining his position, but will be unworthy of it in every way, and bring disgrace upon his father and his father's house, were he ever to return.

But this return can never be. The father who would have welcomed him with open arms, and with every manifestation of joy, must close the door against him, and banish him to a distant land, where he will have to earn his bread with hardest toil and labour.

My child, thou art the Prince's son, nay, more—thou art the son of the King of kings. If thou wert the son of an earthly prince, in neglecting thy work, thou mightest be guilty of no other fault than wasting thy time. But it is not so with the children of the great immortal King; so great and important are they that all their works are either good or evil—if they are not good they can be only evil." *Oh then, my own dear Lord, let me lose no time; tell me why I am here, and what work I have to do.*

After a moment's pause, during which this dear Lord and Master seemed to pour His whole Heart into mine, He answered: "*My own dear child, thou shalt love Me, the Lord thy God*". I remain silent. I am overpowered with astonishment and joy. To love *Him*—how can that be work? If He had told me my work was *not* to love Him, *not* to give Him my heart, that would have been hard work indeed, harder than I could ever have borne; too hard for me to do. But how can it be work or labour to love Him, who is so good, who is all love, and all love for me? I go to my repose, wrapt in deepest thought. *Dear Guardian Angel, help me.*

MEDITATION IV.

THE MEANS TO PERSEVERE IN LOVE IS TO KEEP CLOSE TO JESUS, AND TO RECOLLECT THAT HE CAN NEVER BE ANYTHING BUT DEEPEST LOVE.

DEAR Mother, I desire to say one little word to thee, before I return to the loving Heart of my dear Lord. I acted according to thy directions. I asked Him what the work was which I had to do.

Before He answered my question, He told me that this world was not His home, and that He remained here only that He might make a home for me, until such time as I had finished my work, and also that He might teach me how to do it well ; and then He told me that as soon as I had accomplished it, He would Himself bring me to His own home.

Then, before He told me my appointed work, His love seemed to increase and grow exceedingly, and it all flowed on me, and seemed to fill my whole heart and soul ; and then it was that He revealed to me, that my work here on earth was to love Him with my whole heart and soul, and that when I should be all love for Him,—my Lord and God,—my work would be accomplished, and we should go home together. Dear Mother, I cannot understand how that can be called work, for it seems to me that I could never do, or even desire to do anything but that.

“ My child, thou thinkest so now, because thou art still a little child, and hast all to learn. If thou wert ignorant of music, thou mightest think it easy to reproduce some sweet harmony which had delighted thee ; yet if thou didst attempt it, thou wouldst fail, and produce not harmony but only grating discord.

Yes, thou hast much to learn. But, in order that thou mayest understand something of the difficulty in the way, let me remind thee of the great Apostle Peter, the Rock upon which

Christ's Church was built. In the beginning, that apostle thought he was all love for his dear and loving Master. He thought and said that death itself could never separate him from Him, and yet thou knowest how small a thing—a little breath of air—dissolved the tie. He learned wisdom from his fall, and thou mayest learn from his example that all is not so easy as it seems to be.

If thou tellest a child to read, it must first work hard to learn the letters of the alphabet and their combinations, before it can do thy bidding; even so, when He tells thee to love Him, thou must first work hard, in order to learn how to love Him with all thy heart and soul, and learn in what true love consists. Therefore, keep close to Him, and He will teach thee all; keep close to Him, for He alone can make the yoke sweet and the burden light, for it is otherwise indeed a yoke and a very heavy burden."

Oh, dear Mother, thou almost frightenest me, for I am so very weak. "Fear not, my child, but ever dwell in His loving Heart; never, never allow thyself to be deceived into the smallest thought that He can ever be anything but deepest love, and greatest affection for thee. And thou, thus filled with love for Him, wilt find the hardest work ever sweet and easy."

MEDITATION V.

THE HEART OF JESUS THE SCHOOL-ROOM OF DIVINE LOVE.

I ONCE more raise my eyes to my dear Lord, for I have never left His loving Heart. *Dearest Lord, Thou tellest me, that my work in this world is to become all love for Thee. But where shall I do that work?*

"Thou must do it here—all alone in My heart; in that solitude I shall speak to thee, and thou shalt hear My voice."

Then, dear Lord, wilt Thou Thyself be my teacher?

“Yes, My child, for I alone can teach thee all thou hast to learn. The things thou must learn are of heaven, heavenly, and I alone can know them, since I alone have been in heaven, and indeed, am ever there. These things are totally different from the things of earth, and therefore, thou must follow Me, who alone am the true Light of the world. Outside Me, all is darkness, therefore, he only who follows Me, walketh not in darkness.”

But, dear Lord, Thou sayest that in solitude Thou teachest, and speakest to the heart.

“Even so, My child, for the voice of minstrels would drown My voice, and thou wouldst not hear Me.”

But, dear Lord, why do I find Thee, deprived of everything, in a poor stable, laid in a manger, instead of possessing and having around Thee all the precious and beautiful things of the earth, such as have other great kings of this world? These beautiful things of earth were so fair when they came from the hands of the great Creator, that He praised them and called them good, even very good, yet Thou who art Goodness itself fliest from them all?

“So it was, My child, in the beginning. They were the books, as we have seen elsewhere, in which man was to read and learn the work he had to do; and they were also the means by which he had to carry out that work. But he turned away from God, who is the true Light in which alone he could see to read, and thus fell into darkness and error.

Then the enemy into whose power he had fallen, by his rebellion against his Lord and Master, obtained thereby possession, not of him alone, but also of all the other creatures of this world which had been made for him, and placed at his disposal; and caused them in their turn to rebel against and deceive him, and lead him away from God. They would indeed no longer produce for him anything but thorns and thistles, instead of fairest flowers and delicious fruit; otherwise than by hardest labour and in the sweat of his brow. Thus

only could he conquer them, and force them to yield that which he absolutely needed.

If thou wouldst read a book, thou must read while there is light ; when darkness comes thou canst no longer read. Neither can these books be read in the darkness which reigns over the entire earth ; and thou canst learn nothing from them, unless indeed thou castest a ray of His light on them.

In the same way, all in man is now prone to evil, neither can he bring forth any good fruit except by toil and labour, and by using violence to himself. If an important pivot has given way in a machine, all the other parts are at once thrown out of gear, and it can no longer do any work or even hold together, except by external force.

So it is with all in this creation ; all was thrown out of gear by Adam, who was the pivot on which all depended. Therefore creatures no longer obey him, neither will they do his work, unless forced to it by the expenditure on his part of very hard labour. If he possesses an abundance of the riches of this world, that is, if the enemies who are in his hands are very numerous, so tremendous will the battle be which he will have to fight, that victory and entrance into heaven will be hardly possible.

For this reason I determined that my children should no longer be taught by creatures, but that I Myself would be their Teacher, and therefore I came on earth that henceforth they might only learn of Me ; and doing so I turned aside from all the so-called beautiful and precious things of this world, and would have none of them, that all might understand that they are now real obstacles to true wisdom and holiness.

This was my first lesson to the children of men, given by example ; for, as thou knowest, in my birth no one could be more poor than I was, and that poverty continued throughout my entire life, and in my death I was stripped of all.

But I also taught by word, declaring that all who followed

Me would learn true wisdom, and that all who desired to be My disciples, must, for that purpose, renounce everything they possessed, either by actually disposing of all, or at least by detaching themselves from all ; thus becoming really poor in spirit, like King David, who, although a great and mighty king, declares that he was ever poor and in labour from his youth.

So now, My child, meditate carefully on what I have said."

Yes, dear Lord, but give me Thy blessing, that I may be enlightened. Dear Mother, dear Father St. Joseph, bless me, and thou also, dear Guardian Angel, give me thy blessing to this end.

MEDITATION VI.

NOT HUMAN WISDOM, BUT THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IS THE ONLY SAFE GUIDE IN THE WAYS OF DIVINE LOVE.

I THANK thee, dear Lord, for all Thou didst teach me yesterday ; and now I come to Thee again according to Thy desire, and trust that Thou wilt find me prepared.

"Yes, my child, thou art prepared, for thy prayers to My beloved Mother, and to her dear Spouse, and to thy Guardian Angel, were heard by them : they have prepared thee. And since thou hast already learned to read off from that Mother's Heart, read now what thou seest there."

Dear Lord, I see the following explanation : If I call an artisan and ask him to do a work for me in a given time, with the tools which I have provided for his use, he may tell me that those tools are quite new to him, and that I require an impossibility of him ; because the whole of the time which I have specified, and a great deal more, must be spent in learning their use and meaning ; and therefore, if I require him to do the work, I must give him tools which he can understand.

When God created man, and gave him dominion over all creatures on earth—creatures which He, their Maker, said were good, and very good, He willed that they should be the books in which man should not only learn what was the work he had to do, but He also willed that they should be the means by which that work should be done.

The Creator cast so bright a light on all, that, at a glance, man read and understood them. *He filled him with the knowledge of understanding. He created in him the science of the spirit. He filled his heart with wisdom.* So perfectly did man understand all that was created and placed at his disposal, that he could at a glance read its entire history, and call it by a name which summed up the whole.

If he raised his eyes to the heavens, he beheld the number and immensity of the stars, and saw the admirable order in which they transmitted to the earth their various influences. Even as the drops of water in the ocean are innumerable, and yet form one body of water for the life and well-being of the creatures that dwell in it; or again rise from its surface at the bidding of the sun, to fall once more in genial showers upon the dry, parched earth; so also are the stars innumerable in the firmament, and form an ocean for the life and well-being of the creatures of earth; and both collectively or in detail, as the case may be, do their appointed work for the well-being of the human race, for which alone God made them. In a word, man had to learn from everything in this universe the beneficence, the wisdom, the power, and the infinity of the great God, who by a work had called them into existence.

If looking at the earth itself, he beheld its lovely flowers, and delicious fruits, and the other wonders which it contained, he learned at a glance the one lesson from them all which they ever taught. They spoke to him of God, and of His perfections, of the greatness of His power, of the greatness of His goodness,

and of the greatness of His love—that love which alone had called them into existence. They were all, so to say, filled with God, and were His voice to men.

Great indeed, exceeding great is the contrast between man as he then was, and as he now is. Then, he saw all, and understood all; but now, it is only after prolonged and patient study, and by wonderful devices, that he is able to partially understand even one of the beautiful things which surround him on every side; and when he has learned all that his short life makes possible, it all has to concentrate itself into this one great truth, which is, that he really knows nothing; he only realises how ignorant he is indeed.

The fish in the sea know all that is necessary and beneficial for them, they know also, where to find all that they need. Not only do the animals and the reptiles of every kind, but even the trees and plants themselves, know exactly what they need, and where and how to find it; and all they have to do is done with incomparable perfection.

But transfer the inhabitants of the ocean to dry land, and the creatures of earth to the ocean, how helpless and unable would they be to satisfy their needs. Yet that result is only a feeble image of the change which has come on man, by the entrance of sin into the world.

Who and what can be more ignorant than man, as he now is? What are his discoveries, even the greatest of them all but as drops of water, out of the boundless ocean of the unknown! And what do all his studies and discoveries reveal to him except, as we said just now, that he is indeed ignorant and really knows nothing! He is like a blind man, who chances to take hold of a pebble, and believes it to be a diamond, until one who can see examines it carefully, and assures him that it is only a worthless stone.

In truth, man is now plunged in an ocean of darkness and ignorance, and is utterly helpless, until a friendly hand lifts him

out of those dark waters, and places him in a little bark, which will carry him to the haven of salvation.

I thank thee, dear Mother, for now I understand, and see that as we are in profoundest ignorance of everything in this world, the things of the world can no longer be the books, the means, the tools by which we are to do our work; and, therefore, we must cast them all aside, and renouncing them seek aid elsewhere.

I see also where, and where alone, that aid is to be found. I see that my own dear Lord, who is come down from heaven through love for me, and for all His other children, extends His hands to raise us up out of the dark waters in which we are plunged, and place us in the bark of His Church, in which alone we can reach the Haven of Salvation. Into that bark of Peter He Himself entered; He guided it, and directed it, and saved it from destruction. There He ever dwells. There He guides and directs His children and disciples, and saves them from wreck, and lands them on the shore of the Kingdom which has no end.

Again I thank thee, dear Mother; oh, hold me firm, that I may never fall into those troubled waters—I am so very weak, but as I am also thy little child, carry me in thy arms! And her eyes beamed on me, with tenderness and love.

MEDITATION VII.

THE KEENEST SORROW OF THE CRUCIFIED WAS OUR MEAGRE
REQUITAL OF HIS LOVE.

ONCE more I find myself in the loving Heart of my dear Lord. But before I speak to Him, I must first turn to thee, dear Mother, and beseech thee, together with thy holy Spouse and my good Angel, to prepare my soul.

Yesterday, when I said that this dear Lord had come down

from Heaven to lift us out of the dark waters, and place us in the bark of His holy Church, that we might therein reach the heavenly shore, His loving Heart seemed to dilate with yet greater love than ever, as though it would to-day pour out of Its fulness into my heart.

“Thou thinkest well, my child, and for this reason we have already prepared thy heart. His loving Heart is ever open to His dear children, that entering therein, they may present all their sorrows before Him, and receive from Him consolation, encouragement, and abundant help. But to-day, this dear Lord comes to thee that He may pour forth His sorrows into thy heart, and may receive from thee the help He so much needs.”

Oh Mother, how can that be? Yet I know, indeed, that He is called the “Man of Sorrows and One acquainted with infirmity”. Oh, might I only think that I could pour even one little drop of balm into His poor suffering Heart, it would be more to me than all the joy of heaven; no greater joy than that could possibly be mine.

“Well, my child, thou canst do thy part. See how, at this moment, His eyes beam down on thee.”

Although I did not venture to look up, I knew and felt that His eyes were fixed on me, and that there was indeed sorrow and affliction in them. *Dearest Lord, why art Thou sad? I feel that sorrow and anguish have entered Thy loving Heart.* While I thus spoke, it seemed as if tears were flowing from His sacred eyes and falling down on me. *But why art Thou weeping, my own poor Lord? for even now Thy tears are indeed flowing very fast.*

“My child, it is true that I have many sorrows, and many of My dear children, meditating on them, also weep with Me. But I have one sorrow, and it is a great one, of which they themselves are causes.”

What is that sorrow, dear Lord, that I may grieve with Thee,

and mingle my tears with Thine so as to make some amends to Thee?

“My child, throughout all My sufferings in the world, I crucified My memory, and therefore banished every thought which might give me comfort or consolation, in order to drink the chalice of suffering to the very dregs, and pay man’s debt to the last farthing; and thus, during My whole life, suffer so intensely in soul and body that I could not suffer more.”

“Therefore, I had not the consoling thought that I was satisfying the justice of My Heavenly Father; nor that I was by My suffering, saving My beloved children from eternal death, and opening for them that kingdom where they would rejoice with Me for ever.

Of these things I did not think, for had I thought of them, such joy would have filled My soul that it would have driven far away all My sufferings, and made it impossible for Me to be that which I really was from the beginning and to the last moment of My life—the Man of Sorrows.

But as I banished from My mind all that could give Me joy, so also I retained and dwelt upon all that could increase My grief and sorrow. Therefore, all those who, in spite of My great love for them, would reject Me and tear themselves away from Me, were ever present to My mind.

Those, also, who, though not rejecting Me, would make but little return for all My love; and those also who, by their many sins, would grieve Me again and again, were always present in My mind, and caused me intensest anguish. Great, therefore, immeasurably great, were My sorrow and affliction of soul. But thou canst not see nor understand except a very, very little part of what it really was. Neither canst thou measure it, for to do so thou must first of all measure the greatness of My love for My poor children; but that love has no measure, it has no bounds, since when My human love has reached its own boundary, it merges into that which is infinite and eternal.”

But, my own dear Lord, what is the great and special grief which Thy beloved children cause Thee ?

“ My child, when I have shown thee the greatness of My love thou wilt see what return I had a right to expect, and how poor is the return which I really do receive.”

MEDITATION VIII.

WHAT LOVE COMPELLED GOD TO DO FOR EACH ONE OF US.

I AM at Thy door again, dear Lord—shall I enter now? “ Yes, yes, My child, and listen attentively to My words ; and when thou hast heard all, thou wilt tell Me whether even Infinite Love could have done more than I have done for My beloved children.”

I repose quietly on His loving Heart, and from that dear sanctuary I look at my beloved Mother, her holy Spouse, and my good Angel, and I see that their gaze is fixed on Him. Then with a voice full of the tenderest love our dear Lord thus addressed me :—

“ I shall not tell thee now the reasons, which rendered necessary all that I have done for My dear children. But that they stood in need of all is clear and evident, from the very fact that I did it all. I shall speak to thee now only of some of the things which My love constrained Me to do for thee.

First of all then, bear in mind that God who is Infinite Goodness, gave thee existence, and gave it for thy happiness.

He alone is infinite, and, therefore, all the creatures of His hand are infinitely far from Him. As His creature, thou hadst thy natural destiny, in which thou couldst never possess Him, or even see Him face to face. It is true that thou mightest have had knowledge of Him from His works, even as thou wouldst know the sculptor of past ages by the works of his hands. And this knowledge of God would have led thee to love Him, and to

desire the vision of His Face, and even to possess Him, if this were possible. Is it not so, dear child ? ”

Yes, dear Lord, I understand Thy meaning. If I were living in a poor cottage and told of a great king, most good and kind, who lived in a far distant land, a land most beautiful and rich, producing all that I could want or even desire, I might wish to go to that fair land and to that king so great and good ; and yet I should know full well that this could never be, because a vast ocean intervenes which I can never cross.

“ Yes, My child, and so it was with man. He was created to the image and likeness of God, and was capable of possessing Him ; but the ocean of infinity intervened, and infinity alone could bridge it. But that Infinity was God Himself, and being Love Itself, He would do all that Infinite Love could do. The finite cannot attain and possess the infinite, unless there is something to bring it within its reach ; something on which it can repose, something which, though created, and therefore not infinite in itself, is nevertheless really so, because it is also truly God.

Now, My child, see My love. I, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, at once determined to do that work Myself. There was indeed nothing, however great, which I was not prepared to do. I therefore determined, by becoming Man, to bridge the infinite gulf which intervened between the Creator and the creature ; and to assume human nature into My Divinity, and this resolve I fully carried out. I was Incarnate in the womb of the ever-blessed Virgin.

If the most powerful king in the world left his throne, and travelled from the extremity of the earth in order to reach thee, and bestow on thee his riches and his kingdom, and did so without profit to himself, how thou wouldst love him the moment he appeared before thee ! How unbounded would be thy confidence in him, in all, and everything, no matter what it might be ; so that no act of his could ever cause thee to doubt his love. Is it not so, dear child ? ” *Oh, yes, indeed, dear*

Lord, for how could I help loving him, or how could I feel aught else but confidence in him? I should know that he must be all love for me, however little I might understand his ways.

“Then, My child, if I had done no more for thee than that alone, how great should be thy love for Me, and how great thy confidence in all My ways! But I did far more. For, what was it I saw in the moment of My Incarnation? I beheld tremendous obstacles in thy path, obstacles to the attainment of that happiness which I so ardently desired for thee.

And they were so great and so terrible, that I alone could overcome them; and I could do so only because, though truly Man, I was also truly God. But what would be the work required to overcome them? What would that work cost me? It would cost me agony and suffering so terrible, so appalling, that when I saw it all, I, even I, Love Itself, was oppressed with fear and dread, and fell to the ground in a sweat of blood, entreating My Eternal Father, that if it were possible, I might be spared such frightful, cruel torments.

But as I knew that, if thou, My beloved child, wast to obtain eternal life, it was not possible, and that thy happiness depended on My undergoing all; I say, knowing this, I not only did not refuse them, but hastened forward to embrace them for thy sake.

Now, My child, thou seest how great was My love for thee, but thou canst not even imagine how great were My sufferings of soul and body, throughout My entire life. No human mind can ever measure them. Even My greatest saints, after long years spent in contemplation of them, have formed no adequate idea of what they really were. Yes, verily I was the *Man of Sorrows*, and *acquainted with infirmity*.

Surely, My child, if thou bearest all this in mind, thou wilt never doubt My love, or be wanting in confidence in Me, no matter how much or in how many ways I may have to try thee! Whatever I do to thee, thou wilt always know that it can only be in love, since I am Love Itself.”

Dear Lord, I feel lost in the thought of such boundless love—oh, forgive me, I can say nothing. “It is well, My child,—repose now, and only think, and all thy thoughts will only be of love.”

CONTINUATION.

Dear Mother, it is to thy loving heart that I come to-day, and it is to seek thine aid. Oh, how can I go again to His sacred Heart, unless! now, more than ever, thou wilt identify thyself with me, thy own poor child. His last words revealed so great a love for me, and for all His poor children, that the like could never have been imagined.

And yet, it is all so clear and manifest, even to the simplest mind, as soon as it is told that the Incarnate God became the Man of Sorrows, and drank of this bitter chalice of sorrows to its very dregs, that He might thus pay man's debt to the last farthing. He must have suffered all that His Sacred Humanity, specially fitted for suffering, could undergo. Yes, it is clear enough, if we only think a little.

Oh, dear Mother, how can I see the Incarnate God, the fairest of the children of men, so full of peace and loveliness as to win the hearts of all—how can I see Him rejecting all the joys of heaven, and plunging into an ocean of deepest suffering for our sakes—how can I see such love, and dare to approach Him, with only the little spark of love of which my poor heart is capable? Oh, Mother dear, I ask thee therefore to identify thy Heart with mine, that so I may offer Him a love commensurate with all the ardent love He bears me, poor sinner that I am.

“It shall be so, my child; but still, remember that a loving Mother prizes more than all the fairest flowers of the earth, the little daisy offered her by her beloved child. Even so does He prize thy love, poor and little though it be; therefore, never be discouraged. Give Him thy heart, and He will think Himself

well paid for all He does for thee. Oh, how good and kind He is. So now, delay no longer.”

Oh Mother, then fill my heart with thy great love. St. Joseph, give me all thy love for Him; and thou, my good Angel, help me to love Him as thou lovest Him. I now enter His Sacred Heart, that I may repose therein. My own dear Lord, I thank Thee for all Thy love. I love Thee, and I give Thee my whole entire heart. Do with me what Thou wilt. Never again shall I doubt Thy love.

CONTINUATION.

Dearest Lord, Thou willest that I should learn yet more from Thy own lips how great is Thy love. But what more can there be to learn? Have I not learned all? If Thou hadst asked me whether Thou couldst have done more than Thou hast already told me, I should have answered: *No, dear Lord; even Thou who art Love Itself, and all-powerful, couldst have done no more.*

And yet, as I look up at Thee, I see Thou hast more—much more to tell. I know that what I have already seen, is only as a little stream flowing forth from a great ocean. That ocean itself I have not seen.

“It is so, my child; for all thou hast seen and learned up to the present of My sufferings and love is, in comparison with what they really were, less than is a tiny rivulet, compared with the vast and boundless ocean to which it flows. But follow closely that little stream until it finds the centre to which it flows, and then thou wilt see much more.”

I will do so, dearest Lord, but do Thou Thyself be my Guide, and lead me to it, that I may in that boundless love, be transformed into itself; that thus being dead to all but Thee, Thou alone mayest ever reign in me, that I may be Thine for ever.

“It shall be so, my child. Remember that when he who

truly loves has given all the substance of his house for love, he thinks he has done nothing; and truly, what he has done is nothing, in comparison with all he really would do, were it in his power. And what is that which he, then, would wish to give? It is Himself.

“But even then his love would not be satisfied, for love seeks not union only; it seeks for unity with its one beloved one. But this can never be unless the love be mutual—the love must be reciprocated. A love that meets with no response is sterile, and the heart that breathes it forth pines away in sorrow, and dies of very grief.”

And Thou, dear Lord, in order to suffer more, and pay my debt more fully, didst see only Thy own unrequited love; and seeing this, Thou didst pine away and die of grief and sorrow. Thy poor Heart was broken.

“It was so, My child. And now thou canst see an agony of Mine, which endured for the three and thirty years of My stay on earth; for during all those long years, I was craving and longing for the time pre-ordained by My Eternal Father, when I might attain the object of My love. The intensity and the agony of that longing can be measured only by the intensity of that love, which drew Me down from heaven, that I might suffer and die in ignominy upon a malefactor’s cross.

Go thou and measure that love, as thou seest it in the Garden of Gethsemani, in the Pretorium of Pilate, and on Mount Calvary; and then perhaps thou mayest be able in a slight degree to measure My life-long agony, summed up as it was, in those few words of Mine: *With desire I have desired to eat this Pasch with you*—to give Myself wholly to you—to become one with you. Oh, how I yearned to win your hearts and all their love, that we might truly and indeed be only one!”

O my own dear Lord, I do love Thee; perfect the work Thou hast begun in me. Help me, dear Mother, and make me all love for Him, that so reciprocating His love, He may

attain the loving desire of His Heart, and make me all His own !

CONTINUATION.

I once more, dear Lord, enter Thy loving Heart ; Thy own dear Mother tells me that Thou hast still much more to make known to me, of the greatness of Thy love for us, Thy poor children.

“ Indeed, My child, it is so ; those words of Mine which give expression to My ardent desire to give Myself wholly to My beloved children, and thus win their hearts and draw them to Me, are a revelation of immense and ineffable love. Every word of Mine is a word of eternal truth, which means and includes the plenitude of all that it expresses.

O My child, little dost thou know of the agonies of such love as Mine, craving ever, craving unceasingly for that unity which alone can satisfy its ardent desires ; and seeing it all the while at so great a distance, and so far from its attainment. Days seem years, and years like ages ; and during all that time, love is ever growing and its agony increasing. *With desire I have desired to eat this Pasch with you.*

Call to mind, dear child, all thou hast ever heard or read of the fearful torments undergone by those who leave this world, stained with venial faults, or marked with scars of greater ones, which, as long as they remain, exclude them from heaven, and from the sight of God. Ask those souls, filled with most ardent love for God, if they are suffering much.

“ *Oh yes, they will reply, our torments are very great indeed : the least of them is far beyond all that tongue can ever tell.* But tell me ; is there one which exceeds all the rest in the intensity of its agony ? *Oh ! indeed there is ; there is one in comparison with which all combined together are really nothing.* Oh then, tell me what that torment is. *This it is ; all is summed up in these words : with desire, I have desired to possess my God ;*

that God who is my only love ; desiderio desideravi—with desire, I have desired eternal possession of Him—those words tell it all.

Thou seest therefore, what great torment love can produce. But was there ever love like Mine? For first of all, Mine was the love of the most perfect Heart of the whole human race, and then it was the love of the Creator for His creature; all that surpassing love was centred in My Heart.

“ Oh, how I laboured and toiled to provide thee with that Bread, which should feed thee and make thee one with Me, enable thee to dwell with Me for ever! Man must labour and toil to provide his children with even earthly bread. But the Bread which I have given thee is as far above the bread of earth, as life is far from death. During three and thirty long, long years, I toiled to earn that heavenly Bread for thee; and during all that weary time, I earnestly desired to eat It with thee, and unceasingly besought My Father in heaven to grant that thou, and all My beloved children might be one with Me—*They in Me, and I in Thee*, My Father. See Me in My Agony in Gethsemani; see those big drops of Blood oozing out from every pore of My poor Body, and bedewing the ground; and thou wilt understand the intensity of labour and suffering by which I earned that Bread, which should make us one for ever.

Oh, my child, many indeed read these words of Mine: *With desire I have desired*. But few there are who realise the long years of love—love unheeded and unrequited, with its consequent suffering, concentrated in them all.”

Oh, my own dear, loving Lord, henceforth I will ever long and crave for Thee, who hast thus longed and craved for me; enkindle in my heart the love that burnt so ardently in Thine. Thou tellest me that Thou didst come to cast it on earth; cast it now into my poor heart; and, dearest Lord, tell Thy will to Thy own dear Mother, make it known to her; and I hear Him say: *And what do I desire but that it be enkindled?* Dear

Mother, thou dost His will in all ; oh, then, do it now, and enkindle His love in this poor heart of mine ; remember after all, that whatever else I may be, I am ever as thou so often tellest me, thy own beloved child.

MEDITATION IX.

GOD DOES NOT THWART THE FREE WILL OF MEN IN
SEEKING THEIR LOVE.

DEAREST Lord, Thou seest me again in Thy loving Heart !

Yes, dear child, and ask Me what thou wilt.

Dearest Lord, why hadst Thou to wait so long to obtain possession of our hearts ? Thou art all-powerful, and the winds and sea obey Thee. Then why not our poor weak hearts also ?

“ It is true, dear child, that I am all-powerful, yet not in the way thou thinkest. God, who is Eternal Love, created man capable of loving Him and possessing Him ; and for this very reason He alone should be man’s end, and the object of his love and service. *He alone is holy, He alone is God, He alone is the Most High.* All then should tend towards Him, who is their beginning, and should be their last end. They should obtain eternal possession of Him ; and in that possession they will find their perfect happiness.

But He is also Eternal Wisdom, knowing perfectly how best to obtain the end which His love for His creatures proposes to itself.

In that eternal wisdom and love, He gave man free will, without which he would have been only a machine worked by another’s will.

By the bestowal of that free will, He intimated to man that He would not exercise His powers over it by forcing it in any

way ; otherwise He would, so to say, be in contradiction with Himself.

God, then, never forces His loving will on any creature, but only transfers it to the heart which His holy grace has opened to its reception, and replaces the will which was opposed to it, but is no longer so.

But free will must open the heart.

In the creation of each one, God gives him that measure of capacity for the reception of His heavenly grace and love, which He, in His eternal wisdom and goodness sees best. All then may be likened to vessels of various sizes thrown into the ocean, whose waters press them on every side and fill them all, but only in the measure in which their space is unoccupied by other objects. So are all God's creatures, who in Him live, and move, and have their being, pressed on every side by the Love which He is. But they have power to close their hearts against it, or to fill their empty space with other objects ; and He, for the reason already given, never forces them.

And these living vessels are all expansive, and when all obstacles have been removed, and grace and love have filled them, then the pressure from without is such that it dilates them more and more ; and, thus, though ever full of grace and love, love is ever pouring in.

Thus it was with My beloved Mother, who was ever full of grace, and ever growing in it."

Then, dear Lord, since Thou never forcest our free wills, how are they to be moved into conformity with Thy holy will ?

"Beloved child, if thou seest a friend entering on a course which thou knowest must lead him to destruction, thou canst show him all the love thou bearest him, and then persuade, entreat, and warn him of his danger. Thou canst induce many friends to join thee in thy endeavours ; and thou canst offer to satisfy his every requirement. More than that thou canst not do. Thou canst not force him to obey thee. He

may refuse to follow thy advice, he is free to choose as he pleases ; and this is God's ordinary course with His creatures to whom He has given free will.

Thou hast little idea, my child, how sin has perverted the intellect and will of man, and how difficult it is to lead him along the right path. His tendency is, like the earth, to produce thorns and thistles. If he would bring forth good fruit, he must do violence to himself ; and if he fails to do so, he will never arrive at the kingdom of heaven."

Dearest Lord, Thy words are like a flood of bright light entering my soul. Now I understand why Thou hadst to labour so long and so painfully, to draw Thy children to Thyself, and to gain their hearts and wills. But when Thou hadst gained their love, might not that have sufficed Thee ?

I see that it is not so, for Thou tellest me that Thy long labours and sufferings were endured in order to satisfy Thy love, which was so great that it caused Thee to desire to give Thyself to them, *to eat this Pasch with them*, so that they might be one with Thee, which really is ever the aim of perfect love.

"My child, as I have already told thee, God cannot limit the flow of His love, which presses on every side ; the creature only can do that, by placing an obstacle in its way. God, who is Love Itself, ardently desires to give to man all that He can give, that is, all that man is capable of receiving. But as he is made to God's image and likeness, he is capable of receiving God Himself.

But as God is not only truly God but also truly man, so in giving Himself He does so not as God only, but also as man. *This is My body*, He says, *and this is My blood*. Thus thou seest that God, being Love Itself, wills to give Himself whole and entire to every man, according to each one's capacity.

I therefore say again that when I became Man, being both truly God and truly Man, and also Incarnate Love, Love Itself, I

desired with desire to give Myself (the Person of God the Son) whole and entire to the dear objects of My love. But I should not have attained My end, had I not given My human nature together with My Divine, they are inseparable since they are but One Person—the Person of God the Son. I longed and craved to do this according to the measure of My love—which was really immeasurable. *With desire I have desired to eat this Pasch with you. This is My Body, this is My Blood, unless you eat the Flesh of the Son of Man and drink His Blood, you shall not have life in you.*”

Oh, now I understand, my own dearest Lord. I see that if I would enclose an all but boundless ocean in a little tiny shell which floats on its bosom, it is a thing impossible and never can be done. But if by some tremendous power, I compress those mighty waters into one smallest little drop, at once the work is done.

And Thou, the great Eternal Love, hadst bestowed Thy kingdom, Thy inheritance, on Thy beloved children, making them Thy heirs ; yet so great was Thy love that Thou didst think *that* nothing, and wouldst give Thy whole entire self, give the infinite to the finite ; enclose that which is boundless within the narrow bounds of Thy creature’s little heart, and there wouldst be its food, its life, its all. Oh, how can that be done? oh, no, it never can be !

But Thou, great God, hadst a power, infinite as Thy love, and Thou didst by Thy word, which is Love Itself, exercise that power and do Thy own most loving will ; for Thou didst bring to a centre the infinite, the boundless, giving it the form of a little tiny drop of most delicious wine, and a little crumb of purest wheaten bread ; and then Thou didst say Thyself, dear Lord : ‘Taste and see how sweet is He, the True Incarnate Love.

Thus wouldst Thou feed Thy children, loving them, and loving them to the end—love could go no further.

Oh, what love, my own dear Lord ! And what return have

I ever made to Thee? Oh, add one favour more; change my heart, and give me Thine, that I may be all love for Thee. Dear Mother, show thyself a mother. Thou who didst never check the full flow of all His love, but wast ever full of grace, fill my heart with love. My Father, St. Joseph, and thou, my good Guardian Angel, by all thy love for Him, satisfy His desire, and give me all the love He ever seeks from me, that then I may give it all, all, all to Him. Oh, good, good God—Oh, how I love Thee.

MEDITATION X.

SOME SIGNS THAT WE POSSESS THE LOVE OF GOD.

TO-DAY, dear Mother, I come to thee; to-morrow I return to my loving Lord.

“And why comest thou to me, dear child?”

Some days ago, our dear Lord spoke to me about a special grief, caused by many of His own dear children; and when I asked Him what it was, He said He would first remind me of the greatness of His love, that I might see the return to which He had a claim, and thus understand the reason of His grief. I think, dear Mother, He will speak of it to-morrow, and therefore I am come to ask thee to prepare my soul, and to tell me what I should specially bear in mind.

“My child, forget not the answer I gave thee when thou didst think that to love was so very easy. That answer applies to all the parts of love, for in reality, all the various duties we have to perform on earth are but different parts and forms of one and the same command: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God.* They all have their difficulties, and these difficulties are not always present to the mind, but often appear when least expected. For this reason He warns thee—to watch and pray, lest thou enter into temptation. He has told thee that difficulties will

meet thee on thy way, for He has said that, *the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent only bear it away.* And again, *Unless a man renounce all he possesses he cannot be My disciple.* And He has also said that His service is a yoke and indeed a burden." But, dear Mother, why should we experience such great difficulties?

"My child, for the reason so often given: because sin has so changed thee, that all in thee tends to evil, tends, even as the earth, to bring forth thorns and thistles. If thou, with thy natural inclination to evil, art to do good, which is the exact opposite of evil, thou must resist thy inclination. This it is which is so hard, so hard indeed, that it cannot be done without the greatest efforts. *In the sweat of thy brow, thou shalt eat thy bread.* I, thy loving Mother, have already told thee how very different from the things of earth are the things of heaven, and that the wisdom of earth (that is, thy ideas and notions) is folly before God."

Then, dear Mother, what must I do?

"He tells thee, my child, that in Him thou hast the light, for He says: *He who followeth Me, walketh not in darkness.* But to this end, thou must be as a little child, accepting all truth from Him, without ever calling it in question; and allowing Him to do with thee whatever He wills, for His ways are not thy ways. Then will His yoke become sweet to thee, and His burden light.

But if thou actest otherwise, thou wilt always find the yoke a bitter one, and the burden almost beyond thy strength. But, my child, if thou art all love for Him, thou wilt never find it possible to do anything but what He asks and wills, for true love is strong as death.

Thou wilt know whether or not thou dost possess this true and perfect love, by the readiness with which thou layest aside thy own notions, believing Him in all, trusting Him in all, and allowing Him to do with thee whatever He pleases,"

Another sign of true love is this, that thou never thinkest anything which He may say to thee or ask of thee as trifling, or of small account ; but regardest all, no matter what, as of great importance, and the very best for thee. And now, my child, if thou hast understood me, repeat to me in thy own words, what I have said to thee."

Dear Mother, I begin to understand thy meaning. I am standing on the shore of a great and storm-tossed ocean, which I have to cross in a tiny, fragile boat, in order to reach a land which I know to be a veritable paradise. There is a stranger also standing by my side, about to set out on a journey. I ask him whither he is going. Turning away from the troubled waters which he had watched, as they rose in awful waves and dashed on the rocks the ships which floated on their bosom, and consigned to death all who were on board, his reply was : *See that lofty mountain rising in the distance, its summit is bathed in brightest sunshine ; it abounds in riches and in all that can delight the heart of man ; it is there that I am going*, but not by the way of the stormy ocean at which I am now only gazing.

Hearing this, I grieved, because I knew how terribly he was mistaken. That mountain is not what it seems to be. On the contrary, I know it to be an awful place infested by wild beasts and venomous serpents, which are ever on the watch to wound and destroy unsuspecting travellers. And knowing this, I am filled with desire to save this poor deluded man from certain destruction, and lead him to the haven to which I myself am going. But I know also, that if I now ask this man to give up his own idea of going to that mountain, on which he has set his heart, and instead of that to embark with me in my tiny boat, he will think me mad for proposing such a thing. He sees how slight and frail it is, and how unfit to ride the stormy waves which have hurled to death all he has seen encountering their fury. Oh, no ; never will he consent to be guided by me, of whom he knows nothing.

Therefore, before attempting it, I try to gain his confidence and his love. I show him every kindness in my power, I am ever ready to make, no matter how great, a sacrifice for him; and he soon discovers how very great is the love I bear him, and the deep interest I take in his welfare in every possible way. And more than that, he finds how wise I am, that I seem to know everything, and that my judgment never errs.

Then, and then only, is it that I ask him to give up his own conviction formed on what he sees himself; on the one side, the beautiful, attractive mountain teeming with light and bathed in the sun's most brilliant rays; and on the other, the stormy ocean, dark and threatening, and hurling to death all who venture on its waters: in a word, I ask him to give up that which he believes to be truly life, for that which his judgment tells him must be certain death.

Convinced of my superior knowledge, and of my ardent desire for his happiness, grateful for all the interest I have taken in him, and filled with love for me, who have manifested so great love for him, he is now prepared to believe me when I tell him that the mountain is death, and that I have the secret by which to guide my boat in perfect safety to the land of true life and happiness.

I know, he will say, the greatness of the love you bear me, and I am absolutely certain that you would not, and could not, do me even the slightest injury, and that you know all that you now tell me to be really true. Therefore, I will go with you and follow you whithersoever you turn your steps; and though it is, indeed, in itself a very great sacrifice to give up what I and others would call common-sense, yet really it is not so to me, for the love and confidence I have in you have fully convinced me of my error. Joyfully shall I follow you.

“Thou hast said well, my child, for thus it is with regard to thy dear Lord and Master. He does not ask thee to trust Him, or to follow Him along the narrow and painful path, until He

has first shown thee, and opened out to thee, in every shape and form, the greatness and tenderness of the love He bears thee in every way ; and unless thou and all His dear children really love Him, Who is in all most lovable and in every way, and without any exception is so, you will never allow Him to guide and lead you."

I thank thee, dear Mother, and I see that that is the one great lesson to be taught and learned—that He is love and lovable in all His ways ; that it is no use even to say *thou shalt love the Lord thy God*, if He is not at the same time shown to be love and lovable in all His ways and dealings with His creatures ; and I promise with thy help, to walk always along the narrow path in the sacred footsteps of thy dear Son—my own dear Lord and Master. *Oh holy Father, St. Joseph, and thou, my good kind Angel, bless this resolution, and help me to keep always on that narrow path, which now I know leads to eternal life. He, my all-wise and only love, tells me that it is so.*

MEDITATION XI.

GOD'S LOVE TOWARDS HIS CREATURES THE MOTIVE AND
MAINSPRING OF CONFIDENCE AND RESIGNATION.

DEAREST Lord, Thou seest Thy poor child once more in Thy loving Heart. This time I come to tell Thee that since I have seen the greatness of Thy love for me, and all the sufferings that love has caused Thee, my own dear Lord, I am filled with grief and sorrow, and am in need of Thy encouragement and help.

Nor am I afraid to ask this of Thee, for I know that Thy loving Heart is ever compassionate towards the weak, the miserable, and even the most sinful. I used to wonder how this could be ; but now that I see Thou art all Love, and

seekest for love alone, I understand Thy joy when Thou seest a poor weak sinner coming to Thy dear Heart; and I know that Thou dost often obtain more love from him, than from many others whose offences have been less grievous. When I had said these words, He pressed me to His loving Heart, as though they had sunk very deeply into It, and He asked me this question: *My child, how can that be?*

Dearest Lord, I know that it is so. I saw a mother who had many children and she loved each of them with a true mother's love. But one there was whom she seemed to love more than all the rest, and yet it was the one who had caused her more pain, and sorrow, and humiliation than all the others put together. And when I seemed surprised, that mother told me, that although this her favourite child had once given her great cause for grief, he had repented it with all his heart when he saw how kind she was, and how she forgave him all; he now loved her more than all the rest, indeed his love seemed to know no bounds; and then, how could she do otherwise than love him most of all?

I am that wicked, sinful child, and Thou art more loving than any mother ever could be to me, and to all poor sinners, if only we come to Thy dear loving Heart. And this is my grief, dear Lord, that I know not how I can ever love Thee enough, or what return to make for all Thy love for me, and for all Thou hast done for me. I can only say: *Depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinful creature, unworthy of Thy love.*

“My child, thou seest My love; then because My love for thee is what it is, thou canst understand all I should desire to do for thee, and also that I can desire to do that alone which is the most in accordance with My love.

Let Me, therefore, do with thee all that I will; and whatever I may do, rejoice thereat, and by thy gratitude and love encourage Me to continue My work for thee. Thou knowest now that all I do must proceed from My great love of thee; My

love for thee is the reason of all, as it is the source whence all My graces flow.

Be ever mindful of this, and thou wilt always say, *Thy will be done*, not only when things accord with thy ideas of what is best or most desirable for thee, but even when they seem most opposed to them in every way. Thou canst say nothing more pleasing to Me, and thou wilt thereby make Me a full return for all My very great love for thee; for thou wilt enable Me to lead thee to the throne which that love makes Me long to bestow on thee, when thou comest home to Me in the kingdom of our Father."

MEDITATION XII.

GOD SCOURGES IN TIME THOSE WHOM HE WILL LOVE FOR
ETERNITY.

"My child, now thou hast told Me thy grief, I will tell thee Mine. I have very many children, for whom, as thou hast seen, I am filled with most ardent love. Like thee, they have seen My love, and they know that more than I have done, I could not have done for them. They know I have merited their unbounded confidence, and that My love for them is so very great that I can act only for their good. Nothing can harm them, but all things are done for their lasting profit. All this they know full well, and indeed they acknowledge that I am Goodness and Love Itself.

Therefore, they tell Me that they love Me with their whole entire hearts, and would gladly do anything in their power to please Me in every way. They shed bitter tears over My sorrows and those of My dear Mother, and they believe that all within them agrees with what they say; but I who see the secrets of their hearts, hidden even from themselves, know how much is still wanting to many to fill up their measure. It is

only when a storm arises, and casts an edifice to the ground, that the weakness of its foundation is made evident to all. So is it with these souls ; they are very weak, but their weakness is hidden from them.

Nevertheless, I see in them the desire to be all that they say and think they are ; and because I love them so intensely, I crave and long to enable them to be so in very deed. But thou knowest that one who desires to read, yet will not learn the alphabet nor listen to his teacher, can never read. So is it with these souls. As soon as I, their Teacher, take them in hand, and place before them the lesson which I know to be the best and most necessary for them, that is, mortification and self-denial, they lose confidence in Me, and will no longer listen to My voice. They are disappointed and displeased, because what I know to be essential, they in their wisdom—which is folly before God—consider unnecessary. Therefore, they turn away, and instead of following Me they wish Me to follow them.

Herein lieth My great sorrow. For when I look up to the kingdom of My Father, I behold the beautiful thrones prepared for them, and to which My immense love would bring them, if they would only deny themselves ; and, giving up their own ideas and inclinations, allow Me to deal with them according to My will.

But this they will not do, and because they will not do so, I see with the deepest sorrow that they will never occupy those thrones. Their places will be far lower down, because they would not follow whither I would lead them.

Notwithstanding all My claims on their confidence and love, they forsake Me when I seek to lead them higher up ; and I consequently am constrained to go with them on the path they have chosen for themselves. From this arose My very bitter anguish, a life-long sorrow, the immensity of which can only be measured by the intensity of My love. But thou hast not heard all.

There is, in truth, but one path that leadeth to the entrance-gate of the great King's palace on the summit of the mountain. All who seek to arrive there by any other way, find, when too late to retrace their steps, that they cannot now enter the palace ground, except by passing through the formidable defences which guard it on every side. Steep precipices must be descended and high rocks must be climbed, while wild beasts and venomous serpents attack them, causing most excruciating torments.

So is it with these souls. When they arrive at the end of life's journey, and it is too late to retrace their steps, they encounter the terrible flames of purgatory, through which they must pass before they can enter the palace of the King of kings. And as it has not entered the heart of man to conceive the immensity of their torments, for no pain of earth can compare with them; so neither canst thou form any conception of the anguish I endured throughout My life, by knowing as I did that so many of My children must pass through those terrible torments—torments which they might so easily have avoided, had they allowed Me to lead them on in the path I had chosen for them.

Had this been My only grief, it would have sufficed to make Me the *Man of Sorrows*. Oh, My child, few are they who ever give a thought to this My life-long agony! And since they are so few, do thou give me a loving, sorrowing thought; thy tears will fall on My Heart, and thence will flow on those poor souls, and cool the ardour of the purifying flames. But I have another, and yet greater grief, of which I must now tell thee."

Another, and a greater grief, dear Lord! Oh, tell it me, that I may try to comfort and console Thee, my own dearest Lord. I will pour all the balm I can into Thy poor suffering Heart.

"It is this, My child. My dear children, who have seen and know all My love for them, most cruelly doubt My love as soon as trials, sorrows, and sufferings come upon them; and yet without them they cannot win their crowns. They think it

is I who inflict hard, heavy blows, which I might well spare them, as if a loving, tender mother could let her child suffer, unless to save its life; and that I am hard upon them, and thinking thus of Me, they also love Me less. But because they love Me less, they must of necessity suffer a great deal more: for the flames of suffering which they endure can only be extinguished by the more ardent flames of love. They, not I, have brought the fuel which feeds their tormenting flames, and if they are to be saved at all, it must be *as by fire*.

Even as a loving mother holds her child, while the surgeon's saving knife cuts deeper and deeper into its quivering flesh, and remains deaf to all its cries, though her agony is far beyond all that her child has to undergo, so is it with me. My love for My dear children causes their sufferings and trials to agonise My Heart, inflicting on Me more intense suffering than they themselves endure, or could ever undergo. My pain immeasurably exceeds theirs, but I bear it all in the greatness of My love. Nevertheless they think Me hard, and wanting in love; and that is to Me a grief so great, that it surpasses all My other griefs, and seems to crown them all.

Oh, my child, didst thou only know how these sufferings burn and torture Me, thou wouldst spare thyself in nothing to extinguish those flames, by bearing willingly and with joy every trial and suffering that comes on thee. And thou wouldst do this not for thy own sake only, but for Mine, and in order to spare My heart the grief which it undergoes, when thou dost something detrimental to thyself. Oh little dost thou know how great is My love for thee!"

Then, dear Lord, whatever I do henceforth to help poor souls or to preserve my own, shall be done for love of Thee, and to spare Thy loving Heart. And when Thou shalt ask me for whom I work, my eyes shall fall on Thy dear sorrowing Heart, and my response shall be—I am healing Thy wounds, dear Lord, and changing Thy sorrow into joy.

MEDITATION XIII.

THE FEWNESS OF THOSE WHO RETURN LOVE FOR LOVE TO
JESUS CHRIST.

DEAREST Lord, I come to Thee again. Thy loving Heart is ever open to Thy children. Alas, it is not so with ours. Too often, Thou hast to knock at the door of mine, and wait to gain admission. But I could wait no longer to tell Thee how much I grieve that I had never before thought of the sufferings caused to Thy loving Heart, not only by the practical refusal of many to walk in the path by which Thou wouldst lead them to so much greater glory than they can attain by any other means, but also by the thought of the frightful torments which by their refusal they bring upon themselves in the purifying flames of purgatory. I see now that their loss is a very deep grief to Thee, and that their sufferings agonise Thy loving Heart. And, therefore, now, dear Lord, when I am stubborn, and resisting Thy holy will, in trial, in sorrow, in suffering, in desolation and dereliction of soul, in carrying my cross, no matter how great or small these trials may be, I will pause a moment and look up at Thee, and see how I am inflicting on Thee, filled with deepest, tenderest love for me, far greater trials than I can ever undergo. Oh dear Lord, how am I then to assuage Thy anguish?—I know; I have the balm in hand, and that is: *May Thy holy will be done*; do with me in accordance with Thy love. And, dear Lord, I will tell Thy grief and love to all whom I see in trial and affliction, and who would resist Thy holy will; and they also shall fill Thy Heart with joy. And when I try to gain indulgences and avoid those cleansing flames it shall be for love of Thee, lest Thy loving Heart should have to grieve at those torments which otherwise I must undergo. And when I pray for those who are there, it shall be to free Thee from the pains caused by their sufferings,

and I will point them out to Thee and tell Thee that those whom Thou lovest suffer, and I will fly to Thy dear Mother and tell her all Thy agony, and she will tell Thee how much she suffered at the foot of Thy Cross, and that she cannot now see Thee suffer more, and must deliver those whom Thou lovest from their torments, in order that Thy own sufferings may cease. There is nothing I will not do, dear Lord.

“All that will be balm indeed, dear child, and it will help Me also in another way, for all who learn to do the same will thereby remove from their minds the thought that I am hard, which indeed I can never be. When that thought is present it checks their love, and is also, as thou hast seen, a great grief to Me.”

Yes, dear Lord, I remember Thou didst tell me, that love sought for unity with the object of its love. And Thou art all love; therefore with desire Thou hast desired that unity with Thy children. But the love must be mutual; and when it is not so, and Thou art refused the love which Thou hast so ardently desired, Thy sorrow must be very great indeed.

“Yes, my child, it is indeed very great—much greater than thou canst imagine. Even when I give Myself in the plentitude of My love, and eat that Pasch with My beloved children, I am often, very often obliged to drink of that cup of sorrows, because really very few of all My children return Me love for love.”

I perceive, dear Lord, that it cannot be otherwise. So many there are who seem merged in a sea of toils and sorrows, the terrible results of sin—as though Thy hand chastened, and Thou Thyself wert very hard and rigorous—which they impute to Thee, instead of imputing them to the sin which produces such results. In reality Thy chastisements are the expressions of love. As the mother warns her child against the deadly poison which will torture and cause it a frightful death, so dost Thou warn Thy children against the deadly poison of sin. The

mother does not torture, neither dost 'Thou. So long as they entertain such thoughts, they cannot be all love for Thee.

“It is so, My child, but if thou wilt follow Me I will show thee that I have never been, and never can be, anything but what I am—Love Itself.

And for that purpose I will give thee a thought to guide thy mind. Thou seest a mother inflicting great suffering on her child, and not knowing who she is thou judgest her by what she does—thou judgest her to be hard and cruel. But as soon as thou art told that she is the mother of the child, and is the best and tenderest and wisest of mothers, thou ceasest to judge her by what she does, and judgest her only by what she is. Although her actions may appear cruel, thou knowest now that they cannot be so, since she is not only so wise a mother, but also so tender and so loving. In like manner judge the Lord thy God, not by what He does, but by what He is. He is Infinite Wisdom, and His ways are inscrutable. He has not revealed and explained them to thee, but He has told thee what He is. Ever then, I say again, judge Him by what He is. He is Love Itself, and He is so in all His dealings with His creatures, and that not in this world only but also in the next. He is always Love. But God's love is everywhere, and in this life ever resists and seeks to destroy hatred, which is sin and evil, and hence great sufferings ensue ; but in the next life, which is eternal, it is hatred which would destroy Love, and, ever fighting against it, undergoes eternal torments.”

MEDITATION XIV.

THOSE WHO LOVE JESUS CHRIST WALK NOT IN DARKNESS
BUT SHALL HAVE THE LIGHT OF LIFE AND THE LIGHT
OF HIS LOVE.

DEAREST Mother, St. Joseph, my Guardian Angel, help me to-day, and prepare my heart, for I have many things to learn

from our dear Lord. I feel even now that His eyes are on me, and their loving rays fill my heart with the bright light in which I am to read His lessons. Oh, how true it is that those who follow Him walk not in darkness! And those rays of light are also rays of love. They alone will explain His ways, which indeed are ways of love: for nothing else can come from Him. This thought is light; all else is darkness. . . . But now He speaks.

“My child, what lesson dost thou seek to learn of Me to-day?”

Dearest Lord, Thou didst tell me that Thou wouldst lead Thy children by Thy own path straight to the kingdom of heaven. Following Thee they would encounter only ordinary obstacles on the way, and on arriving at its gates would pass at once into that heavenly kingdom, and be seated upon those high thrones of glory, which Thou hadst prepared for them.

But many, to Thy great sorrow—sorrow proceeding from the immensity of Thy love for them—select to go by another path, which is always one of greater suffering to them than the one by which Thou wouldst lead them; and it leads them, not to the real entrance but to the defences only, through which they have to fight their way in the midst of untold sufferings, and even then they have to content themselves with thrones far lower down than those which were really destined for them. And all those evils and that great loss come upon them because they will not follow Thee, but oblige Thee to follow them; and this Thou dost in order to save them from eternal torments into which otherwise they must inevitably fall. Was it not so, dear Lord?

“Yes, My child, and since thou now dost understand a little of that unbounded love I have for them, thou canst understand also a little of that boundless grief I endure on their account. Thou canst not doubt the immensity of My grief without doubting also the immensity of My love. And what

is that love? It is that Love itself of which thou hast already seen so many proofs."

Dear Lord, tell me how it is that these souls will not walk in Thy path, but oblige Thee to walk in theirs?

"My child, there are many things which thou must bear in mind. In the first place God has given to man free will, and having done so He never will, and in a certain sense which has been explained elsewhere, never can withdraw it. Therefore He cannot pour His graces into a receptacle which is closed against them, or which is already full, more or less with other things.

Man's will is, as it were, the expression of all that he is. But all that is in man has been thrown on to a wrong course by sin. His will therefore tends in a wrong direction, and being free can only be controlled by him whose it is. For the changing of that evil will into a good will man needs more potent reasons than those which the understanding, memory, and senses have hitherto presented to him. Man must be brought to see not only that this will is evil but that it is so from the beginning, that it is a law of his corrupt nature. In other words man must recognise that the powers of his soul and the senses of his body have misled him, and indicated the wrong path to him. He determines therefore for the future that he will repel their indications and take an opposite course. Even as a tree which by the power of the winds has been forced out of its right position can be brought back to it only by great efforts, so the will, memory, and understanding of man, his senses also, require violence to bring them back to their right course. As soon then as the soul understands that it has been deceived it will turn against its deceivers, having now full knowledge of what they are, and with the determination never again to be guided by them. Man thus enlightened will fight against his understanding by faith, his memory by hope, and his will by charity. He will also keep in closest subjection to himself his bodily

senses, because they too are prone to evil, and by doing them violence he will make them co-operate with the powers of the soul, in walking in the new path on which they have had to enter. Great, and, so to say, constant mortification therefore and self-denial are necessary on this path, and for this reason there are few who are willing to walk on it ; and I have to accept the little they are willing to give rather than lose them altogether, but with the consequences thou hast already heard. Now, My child, study well what I have said, and in thy next visit thou wilt tell Me what thoughts these words of Mine have suggested to thy mind."

Thou hearest, dear Mother : help me therefore to do well that for which our dear Lord will ask me. My study-room must be the arms of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. Dear Guardian Angel, place and keep me there.

MEDITATION XV.

NARROW IS THE PATH THAT LEADETH UNTO LIFE.

DEAREST Lord, how good Thou art to let me come to Thee so often.

"How so, My child, dost thou not yet know My love, and that I would have thee here for ever? When I hear thy little knock before thou comest in, a thrill of joy goes through My Heart, and I rejoice at all I did to win thy love."

How good of Thee, dear Lord ! But Thou almost makest me sad when Thou tellest me of such great love, for I would repay it all, yet I cannot do so. Dear Mother, help me ! Oh see His love, and what I am ! Then give me thy loving Heart that with it I may enrich my own and offer all to Him. . . .

And now, dear Lord, Thy words remind me of one whom I once met, and who seemed inclined to converse with me. He was a stranger from a far distant land. He told me that his means though small now suffice for all his wants, but that when he left

his own country his wealth was very great. He had always had a great desire to come to this country, but in order to do so was forced to take a long and arduous journey through a country owned by an evil king who enriched himself by despoiling others. He did not however dare molest travellers who had to pass through this part of the country, because other kings had in it certain rights of way. But his subjects alone had the privilege of escorting wealthy travellers who needed protection and guides. Those only who were poor and had nothing to carry could go alone and unmolested. These escorts had instructions from the king, under promise of great reward, to mislead all wealthy travellers, and guide them not to their proper destination, but into that part of the country over which the king was sole ruler.

This was an easy thing to do, because all the best roads led thither, and no one would think that the narrow and almost impassable bye-ways which were the right ones really could be so. Moreover, many who had entered on those narrow paths had returned, declaring they had found them impassable, and had since gone on the high roads which were so easy and so pleasant, and thus fell into the power of the king, who robbed them and made them slaves. Whenever this method failed the escort was charged to try other means, and to use every stratagem in order to despoil the rich travellers of all they possessed. This they did to me, reducing me from great wealth to comparative poverty; and had it not been for the good friend and trusty guide given me by my father, and who knew the right way, I should have fared worse, for I should have been robbed of all and led into slavery. But, I replied, if your friend knew the right path, how was it that you were misled? He answered, You may well ask me that question, for, had I followed him I could not have gone astray. But everything in that country is misleading and deceptive, so that you may almost say that the only course to follow is the one

which appears to be wrong. I could not always summon sufficient courage to do this, although the orders of my faithful guide were peremptory. The arguments of the escort seemed so forcible, and accorded so well with my own opinions, that I repeatedly yielded to them instead of obeying my own guide. Whenever I did obey him everything seemed wrong, and my difficulties appeared to increase every hour. The result was that my confidence in him grew less and less, and although in some things I obeyed him, in many which I thought of less importance I followed my own judgment. He fully understood my dispositions, and on these smaller matters subsequently yielded, lest I might reject him altogether, and thereby be robbed of all and led into bondage. It was a less evil for me to lose even a great deal than to lose all, and be made a slave. Only when it was too late, did I begin to see that the journey was designedly prolonged, and that my means were all dwindling away. I then realised how heartlessly I had treated my friend and guide, and that had I obeyed and followed him, I should not have erred. I was then very thankful I had not lost all,—that a little yet remained.

That is what he told me, dear Lord.

“Thou hast understood Me, My child, since My instruction brought that to thy mind. To-morrow I will tell thee more.”

Then, bless me, the child of thy own dear Mother. Bless me, dear Mother, my holy Father St. Joseph, and thou, my good Angel, give me thy blessing.

MEDITATION XVI.

PERFECT LOVE CASTS OUT FEAR: THE BOUNDLESS LOVE OF
JESUS FOR HIS CHOSEN ONES SHOULD CREATE IN
THEM PERFECT CONFIDENCE.

DEAR Mother, I am going again to His loving Heart, come with me. He said He had more to tell me. With thy dear

Spouse, and my beloved Angel we will hear His loving words.
. . . Speak, dearest Lord,—we listen.

“My child, after all thou hast learnt, thou wilt now readily understand Me. I have this day received into My kingdom, one of My dear children, and have placed him on the throne he has merited. But that throne is far—very far below the one which might have been his; he shall himself tell thee his history, in the light wherein he now reads it.” In that same moment I heard the sweetest heavenly music, distant at first, but drawing nearer and nearer to us, and concentrating itself into one gentle voice, pouring out gratitude and love for that dear Lord, who had done so much for it, and loved it so much and tenderly. So great was its evident love for our Lord, that I longed to die, that I also might love as it did, for indeed it was all love. Then turning to me, that loving Soul said: “My beloved, our dear Lord and God wills that I should tell thee how it was, that while I was on earth, I so often grieved His loving Heart, by withholding that confidence which He had a right to expect from me.

Instead of allowing Him to lead me, and do with me as He pleased, I lost confidence whenever I saw that His ways were not mine, and whenever they caused me unexpected suffering I murmured and complained, and even doubted His love. Then He, in order that I might not wholly abandon Him, yielded to me in many things, and walked with me along the path I chose, although He knew it would not only prove more painful, but also that it would never lead me to that high throne which He had destined for me in heaven.

I was really without excuse. Even setting aside the confidence which the knowledge I had of how boundless was His love, should have created in me, I knew that nothing could happen without His will or at all events His permission, and that if I conformed my will to His, everything (no

matter how great an evil it might appear, or in itself really be) would co-operate to my greater good.

I knew that here below we are all in darkness, that His ways are not ours, that I could keep on the right path only by following Him, and that the broad path led to destruction.

I also knew that I had to pass through an enemy's country, where everything would be done to despoil me of my treasures. All this I knew full well, and yet for all that I was both foolish and obstinate in following my own ideas. In order that thou mayest see how well my enemies succeeded, look up at the throne which is mine, and looking far beyond it into the depths of infinity, thou wilt see that other throne which would have been mine had I been more faithful. Not only did I fail to reach that glorious throne, but I had to pass through most terrible fires, in order even to reach the far lower one which is now mine.

Seeing, as I did, our Lord's love for me, believing also, that I had the greatest confidence in Him, and loved Him above all things, I placed myself in His hands, to do with me whatever He pleased.

Oh, with what joy and love He received me, in order that He might accomplish in me, and for me, all that He desired! Remember that He is All-powerful, and His love a boundless ocean. We alone can put an obstacle in the way of that ocean into whose depths we are plunged, and prevent it from pouring into us and filling us to the full measure of our capacity.

In giving myself to Him I engaged to allow Him to remove everything opposed to His entire possession of my heart, and hence His joy.

Then He took me in hand, and, seeing that my will was not yet entirely in accord with my words (though I thought it was), and that I did not desire Him with sufficient ardour to enable Him to take complete possession of me, and make me all His own, He at once took the means whereby to

increase this desire. He hid Himself from me, in order that my desire for Him might grow and become more ardent.

I had not expected this. I thought that more than ever I should have felt His presence, and that He would have filled my heart with sweetness, and held converse with me. I sought Him, and found Him not. When I approached Him in Holy Communion I thought I should find Him there at least. Did He not long for me? But no,—there, He seemed more closely veiled than ever. Then every evil thought and desire sprang up in my mind, and lasted throughout the day. At no time of my life was I ever so prone to evil. I dreaded the thought of that Heavenly Banquet.

O my soul, where then was that love and confidence, which had seemed to thee unbounded? The first enemy who attacked me, overcame me. I thought my Lord had altogether abandoned me. I had thought and known that He being all love could do nothing that was not love; but where was his love now? He has really abandoned me. It is on account of my sins, and my ingratitude which rise up at His presence, and drive Him away.

So far was that from being the case, His presence was the ferment which, as in wine, throws to the surface every impurity that it may be removed and thus leave all beneath clear and bright as crystal. But this I could not understand. His path was not the one which I had anticipated or thought to be the right one. In truth, my confidence in Him existed only so long as He followed me. I lost all heart and courage.

Then He who would have inflamed my will, and dilated my heart with eagerness and hunger for Himself, He who would have cast off from me every imperfection impeding union with Himself and have enabled me to earn that bright throne high up in the highest heavens, saw, that because His ways were not mine, I would not follow Him, and, that unless He entered on my path, I should leave Him altogether.

Therefore He no longer hid Himself, but caressed me whenever He came, and left beneath the surface, the dross He wished to cast away, and which must at some time be removed, but oh, with how much greater pain and suffering.”

Then, dear beautiful Soul, tell me what should be my law and guide? “Beloved child of my own loved Lord, let Love, and Love only, be thy guide at all times. God is Love Itself, and therefore nothing but love can come from Him. If thou ever thinkest that thou seest anything else in Him, thou knowest that thou art wrong, since He is all Love. If thou lookest into the works of creation, thou must never forget that Love called them into existence, and if anything should appear to thee not in accordance with it, thou must turn from the thought, knowing that thou art in error. And if what thou seest is really evil, thou knowest He can not have done it, but that it must have come from some other source. An enemy hath done it ; but since He has permitted it He will draw good from it for thee. In the same way, when thou regardest His dealings with thyself or with other souls, no matter what those dealings may be, sweet or bitter, ever bear in mind that the source whence they flow is ever His own most loving Heart.

And if contrary to His will, but by His permission, and for some greater good known only to Him, evil befalls thee, thou must be patient under the infliction, and then thou wilt receive the reward of that patience, and also that greater good, to enable thee to attain which He did not prevent the enemy from sowing the evil seed. . . .”

I thank thee, dear Lord, for what Thou hast now taught me through that holy Soul from heaven. Grant that I may be ever mindful of its words, and walk always by the one path of love.

Dear Mother, dear St. Joseph, and thou, my dear Angel, help me to do this,

MEDITATION XVII.

WE SHOULD ALWAYS TRY TO SEE IN JESUS NOTHING BUT LOVE UNITED WITH OMNIPOTENCE. CONFIDENCE WILL THEN FILL OUR HEARTS CASTING OUT ALL DOUBTS AND FEARS.

DEAREST Lord, I find that the more I learn the more I have to learn, and therefore Thou seest me again in Thy loving Heart. Before I looked up at Thee, I felt just a little timid, but I saw Thy dear Mother, and her welcome told me what I now see once more—Thy Love.

Dear Lord, it is not when I see Thee that I am afraid, but before I come in, I see only myself, and seeing what I am and remembering Who and What Thou art, I really am afraid, so I look round for my dear Mother's eye, and when I see her encouraging glance, I knock at Thy Heart—and then beholding Thee, I see nothing else; and all my fear is gone, and love has taken its place, for seeing Thee it is only love I see.

And now I thank Thee, dear Lord, for all that holy Soul has told me, and I shall try always to rejoice and be grateful to Thee for all. I shall never murmur or complain again, but shall seek Thy will alone. And if Thy will manifests itself in darkness, I now know, that if without conformity I seek for light, I do not seek Thy will. And if it makes me suffer, and I do not conform my will with that suffering, I do not seek Thy will. I know Thy love, and I know therefore, that if Thou keepest me in darkness for a time, it is in order that I may have all the greater light. The darkest part of the night is that which precedes the dawn. And if Thou makest me suffer, I know it is for the healing of my wounds, and the saving of my life. By hard labour, by great sorrow, and most intense suffering, Thou didst first give me life. And in case I should lose that life, Thou didst give me power to regain it. If it should be weakened by disease, Thou didst enable me to

restore it to its former vigour, by uniting Thy sufferings with mine, which give them all their efficacy. If I have no suffering, I have not that with which Thy sufferings can combine, and therefore, when Thou givest me sufferings, Thou givest me what I need. Thou knowest which sufferings are best for me. I might be mistaken, but Thou canst never err.

“I see, My child, that My dear Mother had well prepared thy mind to receive the lessons given by that Blessed Soul. It desires to speak to thee again, and for this end now stands before thee.”

CONTINUATION.

In that moment I beheld him, and saluting him I said: I thank thee, O beloved of my own dear Lord, and I listen for thy words. He speaks:

“I would repeat again,—have confidence always in the boundless love of thy dear Lord. Fix thy eyes on that, and on that alone. Seek it in all His works, and in all His ways. Seek it in all His dealings with His creatures, and especially in all that regards thyself.

Never see in Him anything but greatest love for thee,—love united with Almighty power. Thou wilt then trust Him in everything, and confidence will fill thy heart, casting out all doubts and fears. Thus will gratitude, and ever-increasing love, grow up in thy heart.

Would that I had always kept on that path, for on that path alone, is found the greatest happiness that exists on earth, for to all who walk thereon, He gives the plenitude of peace, as He Himself promised. My peace I leave you, My peace I give you. Nor is this extraordinary, for there thou hast unalloyed truth,—the one and only thing that He is,—Love Itself. Fear and doubt and murmuring shroud the truth in darkness, and then the way is lost.”

But, dear Soul, tell me now some of the ways in which thou

didst fail so that I may better understand the lessons thou hast taught me. . . . “Beloved child of my own dear Lord, all my trials, sorrows, faults and failings, arose from the one thing,—that I did not keep steadily on the path I have now pointed out to thee. In all my dealings with our dear Lord, I allowed myself to some extent, to reason, and argue, and pass judgments on His ways.

Thus, my wisdom, which was in truth but folly, led me away and weakened my confidence and love. When I prayed for grace, and my prayers seemed to me to meet with no response, I became anxious, and reasoned with myself, saying that what I asked was good,—and was indeed the very thing for which He commanded me to ask, why then did He not give it? If He is Love Itself, why must I ask so often? He promised He would give, saying: *Ask, and you shall receive.* Yet for all that I do not receive what I ask. And when I prayed for sinners, and for those who had not the true faith, the former continued in their sins almost to the hour of death, one indeed died without the sacraments, and the latter died as they had lived, out of the Church—at least so I thought. Friends told me, that their experience was the same as mine, and this made me doubt still more.

Oh, what folly was ours! He who sees and knows all things gives His graces, when and where He sees they will be accepted, and bring forth fruits. He never forces the free will of man. The husbandman has seed in hand, but he must first prepare the ground, and then sow the seed in proper season.

Those who are in the world must prepare the ground for the graces for which they ask, and this preparation is made by perseverance in prayer, confidence in Him, and entire conformity with His will. Perhaps the grace is not given, because they are not yet ready, or it may be, because the time for sowing the seed is not yet come. He alone knows when that will be. It comes sometimes in the very last

moment of life, when the soul, hovering on the brink of eternity, can see much which until then it had not discerned, and so is only then fit for its reception.

But because they do not as yet see that granted for which they have prayed, are they to shut their eyes to the bright light of His love, and doubt those infallible promises He has made? They may have failed to do their part, but He can never fail. I alas paid too much attention to what I and others thought, and thereby my faith and love were greatly weakened, and my progress on the path of love all but arrested. Only by His special grace, was I able to make those acts of faith, without which I must have lost all.

The hour of death came, and I stood before Him, in whose light all is clearly seen. When I saw the boundless love with which He had followed me all the days of my life, and the abundance with which He had poured out on me at that very time the graces for which I asked, and had doubted His love, and thought He had not granted them, when I saw all this I should, had it been possible, have died again of deepest shame. I saw how He had been all love, and in His love had longed to give me all I asked, waiting only for me or others to prepare the way. He longs to give us all we need, with that same intense desire with which, when He was on earth, He desired to give Himself to us. But He could not give it then, because my desire, or the desires of those for whom I prayed, were not as yet in full accordance with that for which I asked, and He was consequently obliged to wait.

He would not force my will, which was free, and for that reason He left me to pray on and on, in order that my desire might grow, and become like His own. Oh, had I really believed Him to be all love, as I was in every way bound to do, how clearly should I have seen all this. And when I saw it all in the hour of my death, and understood how wrongly I had judged Him, my grief and agony were very great indeed.

The wicked fly from before the face of His wrath, but had it been possible, I would have fled from the face of His love. *Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.* He would not let me fly, but opened out His heart to show me still more the greatness of His love. That love was in comparison with all I had ever heard or imagined, as the boundless ocean, when compared with a little drop of water. Then I cried out: *Dear Lord, show me that Thou forgivest my former doubts, by granting that for which I now ask. I pray Thee wait a little while in order that I may weep.* And then I began to weep and grieve, for my prayer was granted, and He allowed me to enter Purgatory, and there He enabled me to pay all my debt. Sufferings and sorrows poured into my soul, and the cleansing fire penetrated my very heart, but I welcomed all my sufferings, and rejoiced in their intensity. How true it is, that if the greatest sufferings existing out of hell, are to be found in those purifying flames, so also the greatest happiness outside of heaven is also found in them. At length the happy moment arrived, when my dear Guardian Angel stood before me. He cast on me a glance of ineffable joy and love, and then looked up to heaven and directed my attention there.

In that same moment I raised my eyes to the highest heavens, and there beheld my own dear Lord, and Father. And He was pointing to His loving Heart, showing me that all the wounds I had inflicted by my want of love were now healed, and I heard His words of loving welcome, words which were taken up and repeated by His Blessed Mother, and the angelic choir. *Arise, My beloved one, and come.* And those very words seemed to bear me up into His loving arms, there to repose for ever on His Sacred Heart.

He then in tenderest loving accents said: *My child, look round and see those who come to welcome thee.* Then looking, I saw before me clothed in glory, the very souls for whom I had prayed on earth,—those for whom I had thought my

prayers had been in vain. Instead of that My dearest Lord had given me all I had ever asked and much more, for whenever one sinner for whom I prayed had refused a grace, He had given that grace to others. Then I saw that no prayer is ever lost, but that He is indeed faithful to His promise. *Ask, and ye shall receive.* Oh, how could I have doubted His love after all I knew? He could never say of me, that I knew not what I did. These thoughts, which outside of heaven would break our hearts, are in heaven only food for greater and greater love. And now, dear child of His loving Heart, listen to my words ere I go: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God."*

I now seemed to have sunk deeper into His loving Heart, and thus spoke to Him: Dear Lord, since then Thou art indeed all love, grant me by all that love, the grace to seek for Thy love alone, and close my eyes to all that would darken it to me. That, dear Lord, shall be my rule and guide for ever, I promise Thee! Dear Mother, see the obligation under which I, thy child, now am. Oh, let me never fail. Dear Guardian Angel, watch my every step. Dear Father St. Joseph, guide them all, oh never let me fall.

MEDITATION XVIII.

JESUS CHRIST IS THE TRUE LIGHT AND THAT LIGHT IS
THE LIGHT OF LOVE WHICH HE IS.

DEAR Mother, thou knowest that our Lord has taught me many things about the greatness of His love. But when I asked Him what was the special work for which He sent me into this world, He paused for a while, as if overwhelmed by the infinity of the thought to which He was to give expression. Then, pressing me to His Sacred Heart, He seemed to unite it all with mine, so that even before He spoke, I knew that whatever His reply might be, it could only be all love. But

how could it be otherwise, since it is *His* Heart? He seemed to hesitate, as if hardly daring to say the word.

I raised my eyes to His, and there read all. I understood, that if He made known such love as His, and it was not reciprocated it would be a blow to His loving Heart, which would be severe indeed. He seemed with boundless love to ask if my heart would thus respond? *Ah, dear Lord, see my heart, —my own dear Mother's heart, for she has given hers to me, and made it one with mine!* And, dear Mother, He saw thy heart, and hesitated no longer but told me what the work was which I had to do in this world and He said with ineffable love: *My child, thou shalt love Me, the Lord thy God.* And since then He has ever spoken of the greatness of His love. But He also said, that as we went on He would show me how He had ever been all love in all His works.

“My child, how could it be otherwise, for He is Love Itself? It is evident to all, those only excepted, who, because they do not follow Him, walk in darkness. He is the True Light, and that light, is the Light of Love. When we examine things by that light, we see them as they are in truth, when we read by any other light, we fall into deepest error.”

It is so, dear Mother, and when He said those words again, I asked what that love should be? He answered, that it should have no bounds,—that I should love Him with all my heart, and soul, and mind, and strength. With the thought of such boundless love, I wondered where I was, and whether I had not left the world. I thought this must be the great eternity. . . . And if He asked all that love, it must be because that was His love for me.

And now, dear Mother, I think He will show me some of the great works of His Creation, and since I know that love is the only light in which they can be seen, as they really are, and that all other so-called light distorts them, in such a way that they appear unworthy of the perfect hand all full of love

that formed them, since I know this, I fear that I also may cast my own darkness on them, and thus find something that does not look like love.

In this way, I may be led to think, that I have found love's boundary, though indeed it has none, and thus my love also would find a limit, and that would surely be wrong since that which He enjoins is unmeasured love. And so, dear Mother, in my fear I fly to thee, that thou mayest take that fear away. And this thou wilt do, if thou wilt ever keep me with thee, for there His rays alone can shine and thus no others will ever fall on me, and then in their light only shall I see all the works of creation which He will set before me, and I shall never go astray.

"My child, thou art my very own, and I will do all for thee. And my dear Spouse who is always with me, and has tenderest care of all that belongs to me, will ever watch over thee. Moreover, thy dear Guardian Angel, whose special charge thou art, being himself all love, will fill thy heart with love."

Then, dear Mother, I long to go. When shall we go? Shall we go now? "Yes, now, my child, we will lose no time."

MEDITATION XIX.

JESUS CHRIST TOILED AND LABOURED THROUGH ALL HIS EARTHLY SOJOURN TO GAIN OUR HEARTS. HIS WAYS ARE NOT OUR WAYS BUT THEY ARE THE BEST, FOR THEY ARE ALL WAYS OF LOVE.

DEAR Son, my own beloved Lord and God, once more I bring Thee my own dear child, for Thou didst say, Thou wouldst give him further lessons by which clearly to understand, that Thou who demandest all his love, must therefore be Thyself all love for him. Thou speakest by Thy works.

A glance of ineffable love from that dear Lord seemed to

say: "My Mother, thou always bringest Me the treasures which I prize the most". Then He opened His arms to receive me. His love and goodness are so great, that when we go to Him with confidence and love He seems repaid for all He has ever done. "My child," He says, "thou bringest Me that which I came on earth to seek. I toiled and laboured all the day, to gain thy heart, and now thou bringest it to Me." . . . We pause a moment and then He continued, saying: "My child, all knowledge in this world is obtained step by step. The lofty tower from whose summit thou seest so much which otherwise was hidden from thy view, rose from the ground only stone by stone. Even so must thou rise step by step from this earth, to the knowledge which thou now seekest. Speak to Me therefore, of the things of earth, and tell Me what thou seest, for all is written out before thee, and thou hast only to read."

Dear Lord, I see before me, one in whose mind are many thoughts, but so long as they are only thoughts, they can feed only his own mind. If they are to serve otherwise and go elsewhere, they must receive a form which will bear them thither. If those thoughts are of intellectual things, he for that purpose clothes them in intelligible words, but if they are of material things, he gives them a material form.

In either case, whatever he says or does, can only be an emanation of his mind, for the mind can only send forth that which is already in it. Therefore, if I know what is in that mind, and what is not in it, I know also what can, and what cannot come forth from it. If the intellectual things are many, and of great importance, I know they will need long and elaborate discourse, if otherwise, one word may suffice. If the material things are great, important, and involving many complications, they will need much labour to give them their proper form, but if they are not great, or complicated, a movement of the hand may give them full expression. I then can

have an approximately correct idea of the importance of a thought from the elaborateness of the work, required to give it form. If the elaborateness is very great, I know that the idea which needed it must also be very great.

I now look again at the one who stands before me, and wish to know what occupies his mind. For this purpose I inquire who and what he is. I am told that he belongs to a family of engineers and is himself a mechanician.

But as he has made that his profession, it must be that he has a living to be earned and he hopes to do so by his profession. The means whereby that object is to be attained are as yet only in his mind, and need substantial form before they can serve his purpose. As he is a mechanician, we may suppose that they are probably in his mind under the form of a vast machine. Of this machine he must see, not only every minute detail, but also the material required for its construction, the hands to do the work, the machinery and tools those hands will need, and the building in which the work must be carried out. Then the rules and regulations for the maintenance of order must pass through his mind, and also the means by which they may be enforced. He must then see the proportions in which the various parts of the work are to be allotted to each labourer. He who has present to his mind, the entire work, can see in detail the means by which that work may be done ; he sees the right way ; all other ways are wrong.

Many of these means, which to one who sees only a part seem to be quite wrong, are to him, who sees the whole, the very ones on which all depends. But one who sees only the detail with which he is charged, and not the entire work, may easily imagine that his work is for some other purpose than that which is in the master's mind, and may execute it in accordance with his own ideas. But such work would not fit in with the other parts, and the machine would fail. It will

not work, because it is not that which was in the master's mind. It will not bring gold to pay the men, or supply the master's wants, and therefore all must suffer because one man has failed to do his work.

The master cannot give his men the advantage he himself possesses, of seeing the machine in every detail, and the perfect working of each part. Could he do so, each one would understand the importance of the part which is allotted to him. Neither can he describe it because the machine is so new that nothing yet exists resembling it in any way by which to illustrate his thought. Therefore to understand it, they must all wait until the work is done.

But meanwhile he must protect his own interests, and those of his men, by the most stringent laws enforced under severest penalties, that thus each one may be compelled to carry out his part of the work, in exact accordance with his instructions, and not according to his own ideas and fancies. The master must also make arrangements by which, if one man fails, another duly instructed shall take his place, in order that the work may in no way be interrupted.

The edifice in which the work is to be done is raised, and now stands before me in all its vast proportions, and from these I infer the greatness of the work which needed its existence. Every instrument, tool and appliance requisite for the work, is to be found therein and all of the most elaborate description.

Then the master assembles men in many hundreds, and when they are gathered round him, they ask why he has called them together? His answer is,—to work for me, and in serving me, to earn great wages for yourselves.

He allots to each one the work he has to do, and gives him minute details in drawings and instructions as to how it should be done. He leaves to the greater number the choice of tools with which they think they can best do their work.

They look round the building, and though they admire the marvellous beauty of many of the tools, they do not stop, but pass on until they find the one adapted to their work. As that was what they sought, having found it, they are indifferent to all the rest.

I now noticed that there were some to whom the master did not give a choice, but himself placed in their hands the tools which they would really need. These men murmured, and said that with those tools they never could succeed, and would utterly fail if they attempted it, but after working for a while they saw that the master after all was right, and that if they had used other tools their work would have been spoilt.

And then I saw another thing. Some, who of course had no idea of what the great work was of which theirs was to form a little part, imagined it for themselves, and instead of carrying out the orders they had received, followed their own ideas, which in no way fitted in with the real requirements of that for which their work was intended. Others idled away their time, or worked very little, and in order to excuse their own laziness, induced some of their companions also to do the same. Some used wrong tools from mere whim and fancy, and thereby not only spoilt the tools but also the work they had to do. Others designedly injured the machines and tools, and misled the men, so that they also spoilt their work.

The consequence of all this was that the master, although most kind, was obliged to weed out the evil ones, some for direct and others for indirect punishment. Then these men murmured and complained, and used abusive language, and said the work was not only too hard, but also useless, and detrimental to them.

His only reply was, that in all those things which they understood they had always found him a kind and good father and the best of friends, and therefore in those things which they could not yet understand, they should give him credit for

the same, and not so readily believe that he had changed in their regard or could do anything which was not really for their welfare. I heard that punishment had been inflicted, and when the reason why was asked, the reply given was: *He broke the law*, and all cried out with one accord: *He got what he deserved.*

That, I could well understand, because if work is to be done well, it must be done according to the rules prescribed. If these are not observed, the work will be marred and spoilt, and therefore it must be protected, and punishment enforced.

This punishment may result either from the act itself, and this is the more perfect way, or it may be inflicted by others who have the right of judgment. I ask why a country is great and prosperous, and I am told it is because it has wise legislators whose laws are faithfully observed. When I enter its prisons, and see those who suffer there, I am told that they broke the laws, and all who hear what they have done cry out: *They deserve their punishment.*

In the various chastisements inflicted, some greater others less, I also see the greater or less importance of the law that has been infringed. In the same way I noticed in the great factory that some who had done wrong were sentenced to immediate punishment, though indeed it could hardly be called punishment, as it really was only as the administration of a nauseous drug given for a good purpose and in the hope that amendment might ensue.

But those who were incorrigible were at once discharged, and this was a real punishment, because it involved not only the loss of wages, but extreme and continued poverty with all its attendant sufferings.

On this point, a bright ray of light seems to fall on my mind. I see that if this master is the only one who can give work to others, those who are discharged from his service will suffer extreme loss,—the loss of everything, and certainly no

punishment could be greater or more severe, and that punishment is the direct result of their own act and deed, and for its infliction needs no other hand.

Meanwhile the work moves steadily on, until the day of its completion at length arrives, and the machine stands out in all its perfection. And not only does it manifest its own perfection, but also the perfection of every thought, and word and action of that master whose wonderful mind had conceived and formed it. Then were all his wants, and those of all who had worked in obedience to his laws, fully supplied. Then too, did these men see and understand that the rules which they had been tempted to disobey and to condemn, were the very ones on which success had entirely depended. If the master, instead of being firm, had yielded on those points, all must have been lost.

Ah, I understand, dear Lord, Thou art He who will do a work—embodying thoughts which are in Thy Eternal mind. And because I know Who and what Thou art—Goodness and Love Itself, I know that Thy work must be goodness and love embodied. I know what Thy wants are,—the happiness of all Thy creatures. Thou wouldst make of their hearts new heavens for Thyself. There Thy love all poured out on them will fill them with that happiness. Thou hast now told me how work must be done.

“My child, thou canst now rest awhile. That which thou hast learnt, is an important stone in the tower thou hast to build and it only awaits the next.”

Thank Thee, dear Lord. I know, dear Mother, that thou didst pray for me, for He filled my soul with light. I—His child, now ask Him to pay my debt to thee. And thou, dear Mother, wilt pay thy Spouse for all he has done for me. He in turn, will pay my own dear Guardian Angel. Oh, dear Angel, with what supreme joy dost thou now beam! Thou too art my very own, I love thee very much.

MEDITATION XX.

THE WORLD AND IN IT THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IS THE
SCHOOL OF THE LOVE OF JESUS CRUCIFIED.

DEAR Lord, I come to Thee again, and Thou seest with whom I come. Thy own dear Mother and her beloved Spouse who now accompany me, have been so good to me, for they know I am Thy child. His look of love conveyed all His thanks to them, and filled my heart with love. Oh, then, dear Lord, I see Thou lovest me exceedingly, since Thou lovest all who help me.

“It is so, My child. And now tell Me, what are the results of the lessons thou hast learnt?”

I give an appealing glance at my dear Mother, and then reply: Dear Lord, if I hear words pronounced, I know they are only means by which ideas are conveyed from one mind to another. No intellectual being speaks, or acts, without a reason, and although I may not understand those acts, I am sure they are done in reason, and therefore, he who speaks that which is in his mind, does so in order to convey it to another. He then anticipates certain results. I judge the importance he attaches to those results by his prolonged discourse, and by the earnestness with which he dwells on each word of that discourse. If words alone will not convey his thoughts, he divides and subdivides those thoughts in his mind, and then gives material form to as many as require it. If then, I see a building, I know it is the embodiment of thoughts which are in the mind of the master builder, and which will, in part, enable him to give to me or others that which he wishes to impart, but which cannot be given in words alone.

I form an opinion of the importance he attaches to this work by the proportions and elaborateness of the building which stands before me. But how am I to know what he wishes to impart, as long as I only see an early stage? If a

fruit in its early stage is put before me I see it is a fruit, but not knowing what kind of fruit it is, I cannot tell what form it will finally assume. I therefore ask upon what kind of tree it grows, and as soon as I am told, I know at once what its form will be because I know all that that tree produces. I have heard words which I do not quite understand, I have seen a building whereof I know not the object, and I ask from whom the words proceed and whose thoughts are embodied in that construction. Who and what is the person of the builder?

When I am told, I know at once the form which all I see and hear must take, because that mind can produce no other. In this way I ascertain what he wishes to impart.

And so I look at Thee, dear Lord, that I may understand Thy words and works, and seeing that Thou art, and canst only be goodness and love, I know what Thy words and works must be.

CONTINUATION.

Dear Mother, thou speakest?

“Yes, my child, raise thy eyes, and see that which will illustrate thy words.” I do so, and see another building, magnificent and of vast proportions, standing out before me. I am certain it must be for some very important work. I wish to know what that work is, and I ask whose thought is embodied there? The name I hear is a name of universal reputation, that of one whose life has been devoted to the great cause of education, and that from philanthropic motives, for he has a noble and loving heart. I understand at once: this is a college in which his thoughts and theories will be embodied in the youths placed under his direction. I shall find many of them within those walls.

I enter, and see some hundreds actively engaged in acquiring all that constitutes the highest order of education,—an education imparted by the great master himself. They are provided

with all the most perfect means for the attainment of that end. Order reigns on every side, because his great mind, close application and long experience have enabled him to frame perfect laws for the guidance of all, and those laws are enforced under various penalties, or rather I might say their violation produces a result which, though painful in itself, repairs the evil done, if accepted in a proper spirit.

Great variety of character, constitution, and talent of the students cause these laws to weigh more heavily on some than others. But for all that, directly or indirectly, they are really perfect for the attainment of the end proposed not only for the community at large but also for each individual member. The master is all kindness and affection for his pupils, and each one finds him ready to relax a rule whenever there is sufficient reason for doing so, provided that it can be done without detriment, to either the petitioner himself, or to others, or to the object for which the college has existence, and in this latter case He simply replies that He cannot do it.

Here my dear Angel interrupted me for a moment and thus spoke: "Beloved, in all that thou hast heard and still hast to hear, ever bear in mind that whenever it is said of God that He cannot do this or that, it is precisely in the sense in which, the master of whom thou now speakest says, he cannot do that which is asked of him, because it would be subversive of a fundamental law which he had seen to be needed for his work. There is only one thing which God really cannot do and that is, He cannot do anything which is not goodness and love. Oh the good, good loving God!"

But such dispensations were seldom asked, because those to whom they had been granted, so often found that they would have done better had they strictly followed all the master's rules.

And now, dear Lord, is there more that I should say?

"Yes, my child, look round, and see, the scholastic year is closing, and many of the scholars have reached the age when

they must leave school. Their future career will depend upon whether or not they have done the work for which they were sent to college. Examiners are chosen by those who have at their disposal the highest appointments in the state with their accompanying riches.

First of all, the day-book signed by the master is placed in the hand of the examiner. After it has been carefully and minutely scrutinised, the students are themselves examined in those branches of knowledge required for the high positions to which they now aspire, and on those who show all the requisite qualifications, these coveted positions are at once bestowed, on each one according to his merits.

Then the master, after congratulating with great affection those who have won such high distinctions, spoke also to the unsuccessful pupils. He reminded them that their disappointment and disgrace arose entirely from their own deliberate acts. They knew and must admit that he never spared himself in anything which might help them to secure their own happiness and welfare. He had done everything possible for them, but through their own determination and self-will all his efforts had been in vain. Their evil deeds had already received by way of correction the punishments they deserved, and had those punishments been accepted in the spirit in which they were inflicted, they would have escaped the more terrible and real punishments which now await them.

No sentence is required, and no hand is necessary to inflict the blow. They have wasted their talents, neglected their opportunity, and thereby have lost all, or rather cast all away. Shame, disgrace, and dire poverty and its attendant sufferings will be their portion for the rest of their days.

A reprobate, in the name of his associates raised his voice, and in his rage, cried out: *The world is filled with such as we are. Why didst thou build this College to beget misery such as ours?* Oh no, another voice replies, that Master, that

College and its rules, are one, and you were never of it. You acknowledged no other master than yourself alone, and followed no rules but your own, and now you reap their fruit. Look around and see all that is great and noble in the land; they, not you, are the offspring of His mind. In order to give them the life they possess, He put forth in varied form, by word and hardest toil, that which existed in His own great noble mind. He has done the same and more for you. That vast building in all its parts and in all its details was the creation of His noble and loving heart. Should He have stifled His love, and refused to give to many, because some would trample under foot His gifts, and despising them persist in the evil path which leads to such utter misery?

To you, good Master, we offer the only return you ever sought, or indeed ever would accept at our hands. You see our happiness, and we owe it all to you, and for it, we are full of gratitude, and give you our hearts' warmest love.

Dearest Lord, it is thus Thou fittest us to go home to Thee in heaven. And as the Master sometimes said he could not depart from a law which for the general good he himself had made when really all power was in his hands, so do we as explained just now sometimes say of Thee that Thou canst not do this or that, when really there is only one thing which Thou canst not do; and what is that, dear child? Dear Lord, Thou canst not do anything which is not all love. "It is well, my child, thou hast learnt much to-day." Yes, dear Lord, because the eye of her, who is the Seat of Wisdom was ever fixed on me.

Dear Mother, thou hast my heart, and I have no more to give, but I must borrow from thy Spouse, and add His love to mine. And thou, dear Angel, who hast led me here, tell me what I can do for thee? "My child, let me ever lead thee, and ever be thy guide; I shall then be more than repaid for all I ever do."

MEDITATION XXI.

WE MUST USE THE WORLD AS THE PATH TO GOD.

DEAR Mother, the oftener I go to His loving Heart, the oftener I wish to go; and when I am not there, time that used to fly, now slowly drags along.

“And so it will be, My child—more and more, for souls that once have seen Him near, see all things else decay. They feel, and know, and understand, that if they have not Him, they really have nothing.”

Shall we go now, dear Mother?

“Yes, My child,—I hear Him calling us.”

Dear Lord, I come to learn another lesson; hast Thou one to teach? “Yes, My child, I have many more to teach, but as yet they are as stones in a foundation, which, though resembling each other, are yet distinct. Each has its own special place, and its own allotted work. They all fit together, and what one cannot do alone, is done by them united, for they support the heavy structure which rises up above. Tell Me now, what is the next stone thou seest?”

Dear Lord, once more it is an edifice, but this time it is a palace of surpassing splendour. I see it filled with all the choicest productions of the earth and all that is most perfect in science and in art, seems collected there. I see clearly, that the object for which it has been built must be one of very great importance, and therefore, following the rule Thou gavest me, I ask, who built it?

This time the answer hardly conveys to me the information I seek. I am told it is the work of a great and mighty king, and is the result of years of deep thought and study. But what need has he of this? His riches are unbounded, and his palaces unnumbered.

I pass within its walls, and see assembled there men of great renown in every branch of knowledge. I ask one of

these why he is there? He seemed surprised that I did not know, but he told me that the king had built that palace for the education and residence of his sons, and had collected, and placed therein, everything most beautiful and perfect, which the world could supply, for the attainment of that object. He told me that he and others were the masters appointed to carry out the king's ideas, and that these ideas were the result of years of study,—they were the fruits of his vast intelligence.

I asked him if that was the sole end and object in view? And he replied, that alone; but you must recollect, that they are the sons of that great and mighty king. Yes, that is true. But how many years will be needed to complete their education? Perhaps nine or ten. And after that? The work is for them alone, and will then be destroyed, because that which has served so high a purpose must never be made to serve any one less noble. It will therefore decay, and crumble into dust, and in that form alone may it serve for something else.

If you are surprised at so great a work, it is because you do not understand how great a king he is, or what it is to be the son of one so great and so highly exalted. We look up and only see the surface, the king alone knows all. Even his children know not how great they are, for as yet they are obliged to obey, and work like other men, and to endure punishment if they neglect their duty. When their education is finished, and they take their places in their father's palace, they will, for the first time, realise who and what they are.

Once more I look around. Such great beauty and perfection I had never seen before. Every minute detail showed forth the beauty of the whole. Oh, how great must be that king, and how important the education of his children judged by so great and vast a work, done for that alone. And Thou, dear Lord, art that great King, and we are Thy children. To

educate us, Thou didst create this world of manifold and marvellous beauty, and when its work is done it will fall to decay and become a total ruin.

“My child, that stone will fit in well. To-morrow we will seek another.” That will be a long time to wait, dear Lord; but Thou knowest best. Thy Will be done.

Dear Mother, give me now a loving look, for it will enable me not only to feel unbounded love for Him—thy own dear Son, but also to do His Will in all. That is the test of true love.

Dear Father, St. Joseph, and thou, my own dear Angel, bless me.

MEDITATION XXII.

SUFFERING IF BORNE IN LOVE ALTHOUGH DISTASTEFUL
TO OUR NATURE, FITS US FOR HEAVEN.

ONCE more I knock at the door of His loving Heart, although I may enter without doing so. But the sweet music of His voice bidding me to come in, seems to make my heart a heaven and so I knock and knock. He tells me that when I go to His Heart He comes to mine, and as my heart is thus made a heaven, He is quite at home, since heaven is His home. In His loving Heart I find His dear Mother, and her beloved Spouse, and my good Angel.

“And now, My child, before we proceed, tell me all thou hast heard in these last days. Is there anything thou hast not understood?” There is, dear Lord. I understood, that all works must be done by rule and law; that if the law was broken, an evil work was done, and a penalty incurred. This was admitted by all. But the penalty was uncertain, and when inflicted, was inflicted by another hand, and did not appear to be the direct result of the evil deed. And yet an evil deed

must bring its own direct punishment, since it is evil, and evil is suffering in one form or another.

“Thou seest right, My child ; but the evil deed produces its own direct punishment only when it has attained maturity, and is complete and irrevocable. Before that time the sufferings resulting from it are as those of a drug, nauseous indeed, but for all that calculated to heal disease if turned to proper use.”

Oh yes, I understand, dear Lord. If I deliberately inflict a wound upon myself, I break the law of self-preservation. Suffering is produced thereby, and is caused by nature’s effort to heal the wound ; if I bear these efforts patiently, and help nature by the various means, I may have at my disposal, I may indeed increase the pain, but the wound will soon be healed. If on the other hand I irritate the wound, and refuse to allow nature to do its work and cast off the healing salves, mortification sets in, and death ensues. That death and what follows after death is the real punishment of my violation of the law. My own dear Mother now speaks :

“Dear child, the great Creator has in His goodness so ordered things, that until His work has attained maturity and exhausted all its recuperative powers, it carries in itself that which, if allowed to take its proper course, will repair the evil done, but if on the other hand, it is rejected, that which would have given life, only deals out death.

“And so it is with the many other sufferings which occur, and which result not from any violation of law, of which we ourselves have been guilty, but from the crimes of others in that case they have no wound to heal in us, but like rich manure, thrown to the roots of a tree already bearing fruit, they make it produce a hundred-fold.”

I understand, dear Lord, the men we saw employed to make the great machine, had power by their work to construct that which would supply the wants of life to their master, and to

themselves. But all depended on how that work was done. Many disobeyed the instructions which alone could yield a perfect work; but their imperfect work could be undone, or repaired, or commenced again, until that great day came, when the machine would have to be completed by the final combination of all its various parts.

In the meantime, and in order to make them replace their imperfect work by good work, and do well that which was still undone and for their own sakes, punishment was inflicted. If this failed, then, when the great day came, their work was cast aside and replaced by that of others. Then it was that the real punishment of their misdeeds came upon them, no longer as a healing salve, but as the matured fruit of the evil seed, which they themselves had sown, for now there was no more work to be done and they could no longer earn. Poverty and sufferings of every kind must now be their lot.

So it was with the boys in the college who had entered on an evil course; as long as they remained there, their evil deeds were not final, and each one might be retrieved, and reparation made, by entering on a better course. Punishment was inflicted by the masters for this express purpose, and also to deter others from following their example. But when the final day arrived, the time of repentance was past, and the evil was irreparable. So it is with man, as long as he is in this world, he may still retrieve and make reparation for the evil he has done, but when death, the final day arrives he can do no more.

“Thou understandest now, dear child.” Yes, dear Lord, is the lesson finished?

“It is, my child, and though short, it is very full; that stone in the foundation will have to bear a heavy weight, and therefore fix it well and securely.” Dear Mother, help me to do so. Oh, how I see, more and more clearly, the goodness of our God, and how well I should do my work, whatever it may

be, since everything that He wills, can only be willed in love. I am not afraid of Him, but for that very reason I fear myself the more. How could I do the least thing, to offend and grieve One so good? Yet, I often do so, because I am so weak. Give me thy strength, dear Mother, and thy Spouse will help me too. Thus assisted, I, and my dear Angel, who always works with me, will do a perfect work.

And when suffering comes upon me, I shall always know that there must be a wound within, which needs that healing balm. Oh, how good of Him, thus to fly to my assistance. Yes, my dear Lord, I know well that Thou art powerless to make me suffer in this life from any other motive than that of Thy great love, and only when Thou seest the fruit of life and happiness which may flow to me from that seething iron. Oh, say a little word, dear Mother!

“Yes, dear child, thou sayest well, the sorrows and sufferings of this life are only indirectly the punishment of sin; they come from God’s hands, or are nature’s efforts working hard to repair an evil done, but if misused they increase the evil.

The tender loving mother can only caress and kiss, and press to her heart, her beloved child, while she warns it against that which may cause its death, but if her caution remains unheeded, she in the depth of all her love, and in intensest agony, applies to that dear child, with her own hands, burning ointments producing fearful sufferings, but sufferings, which terrible though they be, cannot count as such when compared with that death which otherwise must certainly ensue. And He is far more than any mother.” But, dear Mother, tell me, do we not sometimes see sinners die awful sudden untimely deaths—cut off in the very midst of their sins—are not these heavy blows real punishments of sin and terrible judgments of God? How can they be only drugs, or heal in any way? “Dear child, they are all acts of mercy, for mercy never ceases to flow from God as long as it can find an object on which to

rest, and all in the world are such objects no matter how great their sins, only in the next world are sinners no longer fit recipients of mercy as thou wilt see elsewhere. God may see a sinner here who never will repent, but ever will go on adding sin to sin as long as he has time. In His mercy, then, He arrests him in his course in order that his future sufferings may be less than otherwise they would be. His terrible death fills many with awe and terror, and converts them from their evil ways, and God gives him the benefit of the good thus wrought by his terrible death, and so a gain, and in so far, he has to suffer less in the place of torments." Oh, I thank thee, dearest Mother, I now quite understand.

MEDITATION XXIII.

THOSE WHO LET JESUS CRUCIFIED BE ALONE SUFFICIENT FOR THEM, WILL EVER REJOICE NOT ONLY TO WORK, BUT ALSO TO SUFFER WITH HIM, AND IN ALL THEIR WORK EVER FIND TRUE REST.

DEAR Mother, listen, I come to thee once more: with thy help I have tried to do well all that my Lord has told me. But now, do thou come with me to Him. I always need thy help in the lessons He teaches. The seed is perfect, but the soil on which it falls is poor, and weeds grow up and kill it, but thy presence destroys the weeds, and then the good seed grows up and bears abundant fruit.

In that moment she takes me to Him and I hear her say: Dear Son, my only Lord, I again bring Thee Thy child.

"It is well, dear Mother; to-day he shall receive another lesson on the same important point; but this time he shall receive it from thy dear Spouse to whom on earth we were both subject, and who loves him with tenderest love because he is all ours: he shall to-day instruct and direct him.

“Look up, my child, and say what he opens out before thee.”

I give a long and loving look at our dear Father, and he raises his hand to bless me, and my eyes are filled with light, to see and understand all he will put before me.

I then see a vast island; its inhabitants are many. It is bounded on three sides by the great ocean, and on the fourth, by a frightful precipice, at the bottom of which is a vast plain, extending many hundred miles, shut in on every side by high rocks, and filled with serpents and wild beasts, which bite and tear to pieces all who come within their reach. And what is far more terrible,—I see that those who are bitten by the serpents, suffer excruciating torments, yet do not die, but whichever way they turn, they are ever bitten again and again. In the case of those who are torn to pieces by the savage beasts, the same thing occurs; they suffer intensely, yet do not and cannot die, the parts into which they have been torn seem all to join again. Something in the great plain renders death impossible.

Beyond is a country, in the greatest contrast with it. In that country, everything most beautiful and perfect exists. I seemed to be lifted on wings from the island, and carried over the precipice, and across the plain, to the very border of that country, and there, I found such happiness that I thought greater could not exist.

All who enter there, are obliged to remain on the spot on which they have alighted. For my part, I could not have wished to proceed farther. But as my dear Teacher desired that I should know the country, he willed that I should penetrate still farther in. The farther I went, and the nearer I approached its great King, the greater became the beauty and perfection of all I saw, so that what I had previously thought most perfect now appeared to me as nothing in its comparison.

When I had seen and studied all, the wings bore me back once more to the island, and then I noticed that the sea was

gaining on it with great rapidity, and driving its inhabitants in the direction of the precipice.

I flew swiftly to the front to see what those would do, who were driven to the extremity of the land,—the formation of which caused the sea to advance more rapidly in some parts than in others. I now saw that some of the inhabitants had provided themselves with wings of the most exquisite beauty and perfection, and extending them, they easily flew over the precipice and deadly plain, and alighted in that beautiful country beyond.

But some had more powerful wings than others. Some just reached the border of the country, some passed farther in, and others alighted at the very feet of the great and mighty King.

But some of the inhabitants of the island, who had reached the edge of the precipice, were not only unprovided with wings, but were laden with heavy weights, which caused them to fall with terrific violence on the rocks below.

My dear guide then gave me a sign to return to those who were still upon the island. There I saw one in authority who seemed to be a father to them all. His love for them was very great. With evident dismay he drew their attention to the rapidly-advancing tide; he reminded them that they must very soon reach the edge of that dread precipice over which they had seen so many fall, and where wings alone could save. But many heard his words of warning with an apathy that was quite incredible. Their attention was absorbed by pleasures and amusements that were so fleeting that they melted away, and disappeared the moment they were obtained. For, strange to relate, these foolish people, sought all their pleasures in things which they knew were fleeting, and at best could not be carried away.

Their monitor told them that he had already crossed the precipice, and arrived at the throne of the great King, and the

King had allowed him to return in order that he might guide them, and instruct them. He showed them the beautiful wings which had borne him over the plain to the very feet of the great King, before whom he had pleaded their cause. He showed them the beautiful down, of which those wings were made,—the only material light enough to bear them over the plain, and beautiful enough, to be worthy of the country in which they were to dwell. Every other material obtainable on the island was so coarse and heavy that it would weigh down its wearer and drag him to destruction. He showed them how to weave this precious material into perfect wings.

But the greater number listened to his words with entire indifference, and many even with contempt. This caused him great sorrow, because he knew how terrible must some day be their lot. They knew not the time of their visitation. I saw the tears streaming down his cheeks, and often I thought his heart would break with grief.

A certain number, however, rallied round him, and he immediately instructed them what to do in order to be saved. He reminded them that nothing can be done without labour, and showed them that all those who ran after pleasure and amusement had really to toil and labour much harder to attain their purpose, than those who followed his directions. He told them that not only would their work be lighter, but that it would also be accompanied by happiness and peace, never to be found by any other means. In doing this they would have nothing to fear from the advancing tide, which the others really dreaded so very much, though often apparently indifferent.

Some did their work, more or less well; others, instead of obeying his instructions, chose their own material out of which to make their wings, which thus made would never raise them from the ground, and some, not content to have

wings only, carried other things which they greatly prized and would not leave behind. This caused great loss of precious time, all of which was indeed needed for the perfection of their work. In vain were they warned that all would have to be cast away before the wings could raise them, and that even then they would be so incomplete and weak, that with the greatest difficulty would they bear them even to the frontier of the land where alone they could find safety and repose.

I saw the tide advancing, and each one driven to the very brink of the precipice. All then, who were unprepared to fly, were forced to leap into the terrible abyss, but those who had obeyed the instructions of their Master, spread out their wings and were carried safely over that abyss into the country of the great good King.

Some whose wings were weak only reached the frontier, and others whose wings were more strong and perfect were carried over and alighted very near the royal throne. Again others were laden with heavy weights, which had to be cast off before their wings could bear them up. And those who in spite of all warnings had made wings of unsuitable materials, thinking they knew better than their Teacher, and who had therefore refused to carry out his instructions, these fell down into the terrible abyss and were thus irretrievably lost.

And now, all is deepest silence ; the sea has full possession of the island, and all its inhabitants are gone for ever.

Dear Mother, that is what thy dear Spouse has shown me. Wilt thou correct my work, and give it to our dear Lord ?

“I thank thee, dear child ; it will be like strong cement wherewith to bind many stones together in the foundation. There will be another stone,—a big one to go therein, and that thou wilt bring to-morrow.”

Oh how I thank Thee, dear Lord, for letting me work for Thee ! Dear Mother, St. Joseph, my good Angel, help me to do that work well.

MEDITATION XXIV.

THE HEART OF JESUS CAN ONLY BE CONSOLED BY LOVE,
THE ABSENCE OF WHICH IN MAN CAUSED HIS FALL.

DEAR Lord, Thou art always Goodness and Love Itself, and I know there is nothing Thou wouldst not do for the least of Thy children. But when Thou seest a poor sinner, Thy love seems unbounded, and Thou appearest to receive him in preference to all the rest.

Is it not so, dear Mother?

“Yes, my child, and He Himself tells thee as much, when He speaks of His poor lost sheep.”

Dear Mother, now I understand how it is, that when I remember what a sinner I have been, I am afraid to go to Him, who is so holy, so pure, and so good. And yet, when I remember how good He is, I would do anything to please Him, and for this reason I fly to Him, because I know that nothing can give Him greater joy than to receive so great a sinner.

Ah, yes, dear Lord, Thou knowest that it is so, and that Thou hast spared Thyself in nothing!

“It is well, my child; thou knowest how to reach My Heart. And when Thou comest, I bless and thank thee for giving me such joy.

“But now it is time to begin thy lesson.”

Then I look at my dear Mother, St. Joseph, and my good Angel to ask for and receive their blessing.

Once more a vast territory opens out before me, and in the distance I see a pile of buildings compared with which all I have hitherto seen is nothing. But this building is so far away, that I cannot distinguish its details. Had I not been told what it is, I should have taken it for a mountain.

As I approach it, its proportions grow upon me, so that I could not have imagined anything so great. But when I come nearer, I clearly discern that it is only a vast ruin. I hesitate

to approach it, fearing it may fall and crush me, but when I see my dear Angel going yet nearer, I know that there is no real present danger.

I follow and walk round the ruins.

Scattered on every side, I see fragments of exquisite carvings and sculptures, which had adorned the building in former times, and must have been exceedingly beautiful before they were broken to pieces. As far as I could judge, every part of that building must have been embellished with these perfect productions of the sculptor's art. But these fragments were now useless, unless indeed to show what must have been the former beauty and magnificence of the place. I now enter the ruins, and the interior corresponds with what I saw outside.

It had clearly, at some former time, been filled with everything most exquisite and perfect in art and science, together with the choicest treasures of the earth,—gold, silver, and precious stones. They were the means, by which the ends were to be attained, for which that building had been called into existence. The floors were thickly covered with fragments, each of which was in itself a perfect gem though detached from that of which it had once formed a part. But it was of no use now, except as indicating the beauty and perfection of what once had existed.

Oh, what an awful catastrophe must that have been, to cause so great a ruin. My Angel told me that he had seen it in the time of its greatest glory, and also in its fall. He told me also that all I had seen could give only a most imperfect conception of that building's former beauty and magnificence.

Then, dear Angel, tell me something of its history.—He looked for a moment at our dear Lord, that He might bless the words he was about to speak. "*Listen, beloved soul.*"

"A great and powerful Sovereign ruled the kingdom wherein we now stand. His subjects were in two divisions; the first, consisted of the Aristocracy. They were the king's favourites

and he heaped upon them riches, honours, and favours of every kind ; indeed his love for them was so great, that all he could bestow, seemed too little in his eyes. He was not content to make them his friends and associates, but in the greatness of his love he adopted them as his children.

The second division, was composed of plebeians. These also possessed every means of happiness, but they were not privileged to be companions of the king, indeed their education did not fit them for a state for which they were not intended.

At the head of the Aristocracy was a great and powerful prince, who was the king's favourite, and had received every honour and distinction from Him. The king consulted him in regard to all the affairs of the kingdom, and did nothing without his advice.

Gradually this prince seemed to forget that he owed his position, his power, and everything else to the goodness of the king, and he almost persuaded himself that he possessed everything by his own inherent right. If he could do nothing without the king's consent, neither could the king act in opposition to his views.

A measure of extreme and vital importance had now to be adopted. On it depended the welfare of the whole kingdom. It required for its execution, greater wisdom and judgment than was possessed by any one except the king himself. It could therefore, no longer be a question of favour or love, and for this reason the king asked for no advice, but simply declared, in the presence of all the assembled court, the measure which he had determined to carry out.

A moment of silence followed. Among the princes was one who was beloved by all the others, and whose love for the king was surpassed only by the king's own love for him. His great love for the king enabled him to detect instantly a change in the demeanour of the leader, who hitherto had only

spoken the language of love, but now spoke a language unintelligible to him, but certainly no longer what it had been before, the language of love. It was like a passing cloud, but sufficed to fill him with fear, and as a child when it is frightened flies to its mother's arms for protection, so did this one now cast himself into the king's arms. The king understood all, and spoke to him in a whisper which no one else could hear. *Thou art now the prince and leader of my court. Be silent ; watch and be ever on thy guard.*

The council now dispersed. A great number followed their leader to his palace. All felt that they had now arrived at a great crisis in their existence. The king had adopted a line quite new to them, the opinion of the prince had not been even asked.

If that cast a slur on him it fell also on them. They had, as it were, conceived the notion that all the king's kindness and deference to them arose, not solely from his pure benevolence, but also from his knowledge of the great power which they possessed, and which they looked upon as inherent in themselves. These thoughts filled the minds of all who had followed the great prince to his palace, and who numbered quite one-third of the Aristocracy. The prince cast upon his followers a searching glance, that he might judge whether he could depend on the fidelity of all.

He then thus spoke : *Until now, the king has allowed your leader and chief to share with him the government of his kingdom. To-day for the first time, he has denied my rights,—and yours. He has this day promulgated a law, to which, if we had been consulted, we never would have given our assent. If we yield now, we are slaves for ever, and slaves we will never be.*

Let us arm, and array ourselves ; let us march to the throne with our banner unfurled, and our motto inscribed thereon. *We will not serve.* And when we are asked by the King what we desire, my answer shall be, that you desire that I, your

leader, be associated with him in the kingly office with equality of rights.

To arms, was the immediate response of all.

In the meantime, he, to whom the king had said, 'Thou art now our prince and leader; watch, and be on thy guard,' had faithfully fulfilled that command. Going quickly to the king, he told him what had taken place, and now only awaited the royal permission, which was at once given to speak and act. His banner was instantly unfurled, and thereon was seen this motto: Who is like our own great and mighty king?

In that moment, all who had remained faithful gathered round his standard. A tremendous battle ensued, but it was only of very short duration. The rebels were conquered, and brought in chains before the king, who now reminded them of all the goodness, and kindness, and tender love he had ever shown them, and that it was to that tender love they were indebted for everything they possessed. He reproached them for their base ingratitude, the greatest of all their crimes, greater even than insurrection, and treason itself. That ingratitude it was which drew down upon them the terrible sentence he was about to pronounce upon them. But before this was done the victorious leader fell on his knees before him, and pleaded for its commutation into one somewhat less severe. 'O beloved prince, was the king's reply, didst thou ask for half my kingdom, I would give it thee.'

'Oh, then, great king, give it me, that I may have something to offer thee, for all thou hast done for me. I give it all to thee.' 'Arise, my beloved. I grant all thou askest for thy prisoners, but it gives them a certain freedom, which will entail on thee almost perpetual warfare. They know not what gratitude is, and will only hate me and thee the more, and will ever fight against all we love the most.'

Now, my child, repose awhile; to-morrow thou shalt hear more."

MEDITATION XXV.

CONTINUATION.

DEAREST Lord, may my good Angel continue his narrative?

“Yes, my child. It is for that I have now called thee here.”

The Angel continued: “When perfect peace had been restored, the king called the attention of his faithful subjects to the void created in their ranks by the rebellion of so great a multitude. He told them that He intended to fill up those vacant places by raising to their princely order as many of His plebeian subjects as would show themselves worthy of that high honour. This they would do by the love and zeal with which they would fit themselves for the high position of his adopted children. As yet, they had not received the necessary education, but the king would supply them with all that was requisite for that purpose and in keeping with it. Then it was that he erected the building whose ruins stand before thee, and furnished it with everything that was most suitable and perfect for the attainment of his end.

As I have already told thee, thou canst form but a very inadequate idea of the beauty, and magnificence, and exquisite perfection of that building, and of all that it contained. The king himself inspected it, and everything therein, so that nothing might be wanting in any way whatever.

When all was ready, he assembled his adopted children, told them what they had to do, and warned them of the awful ruin which would immediately follow the misuse, or abuse of that which he had now placed at their disposal. He told them that the education they were about to receive differed as greatly from all they had already learnt, as did their present exalted position differ from the lowly one from which he had raised them, therefore they must be guided, not by their own ideas based on past experience, but by the lessons they would learn from him, and from those who held his place.

On one point in particular, they received a special warning from the king. It was in regard to the use of an object which had procured for them in their plebeian state a something which for that state was an absolute necessity and which it was eminently adapted to supply. A corresponding object they would require in their higher state, but one of a much higher order and coming from a different source. They were admonished that the work was so perfect, that the least displacement would be perceptible in the entire structure. But, the point on which they were more especially warned was, as it were, the keystone of the entire edifice, and concerned the objects mentioned above, the one adapted for the plebeian state, the other for the so much higher one to which they had now been raised. They were warned that if the one was brought into contact with the other the contact would be fatal. It would be like the bringing together of two chemicals each of which by itself, and in its proper place, was good, but when encountering each other, formed an explosive so terrible, that it dealt death and destruction on every side. So would it be if those two products each good in itself, were ever brought together, by other or any attempt made to unite these two incompatibles.

All promised perfect obedience, and the king then departed. In the meantime their enemies had not been idle. They saw, with intense envy, those who were destined to take their place, and accordingly resolved to spare no effort to make them rebel against the king, so that falling, as they themselves had fallen, they might become their slaves.

Knowing the cunning of their leader, they willingly accepted his offer to take charge of this work himself. All he would have to do would be to induce these new favourites of the king, to disobey the royal command; since that alone would bring about the destruction of the entire building, which in its fall would so injure and mutilate them as to render them an easy prey to their enemies.

The plot was deeply laid. An apparently friendly visit was paid and great interest displayed in their welfare, and surprise was shown that the king, who had done so much for them, should have refused them the one thing on which all their greatness and happiness really depended. The tempter said: *Had you but that one thing you would yourselves be kings, and therefore the king's equals in all* 'but that he will not allow, and hence the prohibition. He has done, and will do many things for you, but that you should be like him, he never will permit. He may call you his sons, but it is on condition that you remain his slaves. Our motto was: I will never serve. We fought, and were conquered. But you have no battle to fight; you have only to stretch out your hands. If that had been our lot, we should now be kings. Look up and see the Crown!' And looking, they saw it was exceeding beautiful. 'How easily you can obtain that Crown! Fear not, for the king can send no army to conquer you. He intimidates you with the thoughts of a fearful death, but he knows full well that it is not death, but life which will then be yours. Oh, would that we only had your chance! But it is now too late for us!' Oh, what a fearful evil is pride,—self-worship! it flies so high, that it loses sight of all else, forgetting all the favours and all the love it has ever received. Pride banishes gratitude and love; it destroys them altogether, and opens the door to every kind of evil.

Wretch, that you are! In all that you have ever seen or understood, you have never experienced aught else but unbounded goodness and love from your great, good, and loving king. And yet, because he who knows far better than you can know, commands you, for your own happiness and good, to refrain from something which you do not understand, you will not trust him or obey him, but are ready to trust and obey his well-known enemies!"

We pause. I see my Angel weeps at the remembrance of what he saw, and he flies for a moment to our dear Lord's

Heart, there to pour out his grief. Then I saw how great is our Lord's love for him, for He pressed him most tenderly to His loving Heart.

“The enemy repeats the words: *No, no; not death, but true life will be your lot.* But even so,—ought not they who owed everything to their king, to have been willing to give him all,—even their very lives? But it was not so, their one thought was all for self. They stretched forth their hands and seized the Crown. That rash act precisely the one against which they had been so strongly warned, causes awful lightning to flash forth, and carry destruction on every side. That magnificent palace tottered and fell to ruin, as thou now seest it.

Its occupants were maimed in all their limbs, and wounded and helpless were seized and bound by their enemies, and dragged to a far distant land, whence their pleadings could never reach the ears of the king.

The silence of desolation and death now reigned on every side, and nothing remained for me but to return home.

In the same moment in which I extended my wings to rise, I dropped them, and again listened. No! I have not reached home! Is heaven come here to me? And yet the sweet harmony I hear is not of heaven, for even there such melody was never heard, except perhaps, by God alone. Again and again, I ask—*Whose sweet voice is that?* It was so sweet I thought I could never go away. I raised my eyes, and saw in the distance what appeared like a great army approaching. As it drew near, I saw it was the King, attended by all His Court. His chariot stopped at the door of a poor little cottage, a cottage so small, that I had not noticed it before. Its occupant was a poor weak woman; but she was exceedingly fair and beautiful,—so beautiful indeed, that even those who were nearest to the king's throne could not be compared with her, any more than a tiny spark of fire can be compared

with the sun in all its glory. The sweet music I had heard was her prayer of entreaty to the king, that he would show mercy to his poor servant.

The king embraced her tenderly and said : ‘My beloved, you need not mercy ; you alone of all my subjects have been ever faithful to me. You alone rejected the crown, declaring that you would trample under foot a thousand crowns, and die a thousand deaths, rather than disobey my orders. And not only for my sake were you ready to make so great a sacrifice, but also for each one of my subjects, you were ready to do the same, if thereby you could save them from their terrible ruin. Therefore the enemy had no power to lead you into captivity, and you alone remain.’

It is so, great king, but the mother’s heart suffers more in the hearts she loves, than even in her own, and accordingly she pleads for them, when she pleads for herself alone. Have mercy on me then, and I will move the hearts of thy rebellious subjects so powerfully, that they shall break with sorrow, and from those broken hearts new ones will grow, and those new ones will be all gratitude, fidelity, and love for you, for the pardon you may grant. The king raised his sceptre,—the sign that he granted all. The enemy was commanded to instantly set free every prisoner, intimating to each one that the King had now granted him the power to recover all he had lost, but on the condition that he resumed the work of his education. That education would be more toilsome than before, because his rebellion had perverted his faculties and senses, but it would produce more than a commensurate return.

Now, My child, repose, and ponder over what thou hast heard. And in a little while thou shalt return, and thy dear Angel will continue his narration.”

MEDITATION XXVI.

CONTINUATION OF NARRATIVE.

DEAR Mother, shall we return now to our dear Lord's loving Heart? He said that my dear Angel would continue his narration. Do Thou, and thy beloved Spouse bless me, that I may be able to understand and fully retain it all.

Yes, my child, we will go now.

At an intimation from our dear Lord, the Angel resumed: —“The King having signed the order, remained in consultation with her, who had obtained it from him. She appeared anxious to be the first to call his attention to the enormous work involved in what he had now done. She was well aware that he knew it already, but had he spoken first, he would have taken the whole charge on himself alone, and having once done that, his act could never be revoked. On the other hand, she who knew the frightful havoc to be repaired, could never have brought her great and noble mind to plead for pardon without, at the same time, being determined to spare herself in nothing, in order to repair the evil, so far as her weakness would allow. Therefore she reminded him of all, and then declared the fearful part she would take in the work, knowing well, that by itself, unaided by him, all she might do could not restore one stone of the ruined edifice. But nothing less than doing all she could do would satisfy, or indeed be worthy of her great and noble mind.

The king could deny her nothing, indeed he so fully appreciated all her goodness, and the greatness of her soul, that he knew, that if he denied her wish, he would thereby embitter the favour he would now confer. He therefore consented, that she should do all in her power, and he himself would do the rest.

The next question was: What should be done? All the means for education had been destroyed, or at least, so injured

and defaced as to be unfit for the work for which they had been originally intended, and were now more likely to mislead, than to teach that which really was required. Again, the work of education had become a hundredfold more difficult, and this, for many reasons. Before the work could be commenced the pardoned rebels must be freed from the diseases which had resulted from the course they had pursued, their frightful wounds must all be healed, and even then, the weakness of body and mind which would still remain, would be a great hindrance in the way.

But the heartlessness of the greater number, and their indifference to all he would do for them, was a great trial to the King, and to her who had obtained mercy at so great a cost. Many refused to do any work at all. They would not even realise the awful sufferings which awaited them from the hands of the enemies from whom they had been rescued, should they once more fall into their power, or to recognise the greatness of the work which had been done for them, and were consequently wanting in all gratitude and love.

Because the former means of education had now become not only useless, but even dangerous, the king resolved to lead away to another and safer place, all who were willing to follow him, and to place themselves under his care, and under that of her also who had been more than a mother to them.

And now, dear soul, turn thine eyes away from this vast and terrible ruin. Far away in the distance thou seest that poor little cottage, destitute of everything. It is the cottage whereat the king stopped. In that cottage he dwells, and with that faithful one, who had prepared it for his habitation, he educates all who come to him. When their education has been completed, those whom he has adopted as his children, pass into his Court, and take their seats with the princes of the kingdom.

Bear in mind, beloved soul, every word of this narrative; later on, thou wilt see its import."

And now, dear Lord, and thou also, dear Mother, and St. Joseph, deign to give to my good Angel the blessing he has earned by the lesson he has now taught me, thy child.

Dear Angel, for whom hast thou done all this? Ah! I know thy answer. For Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. Bless me also, thy loving child, and I promise thee that I will ever be grateful and full of love, for all thou hast done for me.

MEDITATION XXVII.

JESUS CHRIST THE INCARNATE LOVE.

DEAREST Mother, I come to thee to-day to entreat thee to give my dear Angel and myself a very special blessing, and thereby prepare my soul for its visit to our own dear Lord. My heart is more than ever inflamed with love for Him, who is so good. How indeed could it be otherwise? What have we ever seen, in all He has done for us, but the fruit of that which He is,—Incarnate Love?

But all we have done up to the present, is (as He said it would be) to collect together stones for the foundation, on which the tower is to rise. Now, however, we must watch that tower rising up, stone by stone, and we must examine each stone as it comes from the builder's hands. For this end I need bright light, and accordingly He causes love, which is the only true light, to grow in my soul.

"It is so, my child. And now, thou must gather round thee all thou needest to do thy work well. I, and my dear Spouse will also be ever with thee."

I thank thee, dear Mother; let us go now. Oh, how He draws my soul! My own dear Lord, I languish with love. Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.

“My child, I am, as indeed I must be,—all love for thee. I *can* only love, for what can come from Me, but that which I am? Thou canst therefore understand the happiness thy love gives Me. It hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive what great things I have prepared for those who give Me all the love of their entire hearts. But now, we must enter on our great work. My dear Mother told thee to gather round thee all thou wouldst need for that purpose. Tell Me what thou hast brought, and what thou dost require.”

Dear Lord, I shall need bright light, to see everything clearly and well. Thou art the true Light; all else is darkness. Therefore I know that it is only in Thee, that I can see at all. God is Love Itself, and Thou art God Incarnate; therefore it is only in the light of love that I shall understand Thy ways. In studying Thy works I can only have a right understanding of them, by saying to myself: He who did that, is Love Itself. He must therefore have done it all in love. He could not have done it in any other way. And if some of Thy works, are inexplicable to me, by the rules of love, it is because those works are not yet finished. When they are complete, I shall understand, and confess, that love alone had wrought them.

But that time will not come until the last day of all. On that great day, it will be given to each one, to point out,—if he can, one single thing done by Thee, my own good God, which speaks not of deepest love, and then all will have to own, that greater love than Thine there never was nor could be.

At present, we see not clearly,—a mist is before our eyes hiding many of the most exquisite details of Thy greatest works; but when that mist has been dispelled, Thy boundless love will be manifest to all. I must therefore, faithfully, and at all times observe the golden rule,—to regard all in the light of love, and of love alone. I know that that rule alone can be my perfect guide.

It is so often said,—God is Omnipotent! He can do what-

ever He pleases. Why then, has He done this, when He could have done that?

It is true that God is Almighty, but it is also true that He is Love Itself, and therefore His power is controlled by that which He is. He cannot exercise that power to the detriment of His own essential attribute—Love. If He has done one thing rather than another, He did so, because it was more consonant with His love than was the other. I know that He is Love Itself, although with only the incomplete details which are before me, I may not be able always to show that it really is so.

“My child, dost thou remember an example I gave thee which illustrates thy meaning?”

Yes, dear Lord, I do. A young person who knew nothing of sickness, or of the remedies needed for its cure, saw a mother holding her child with all her strength while a man inflicted frightful torture on it. Not long afterwards the child died of its wounds, and the one who had seen the mother's conduct said: What a cruel mother. Instead of running away with her child from the man who was about to make it suffer she actually held it while he inflicted the dreadful wounds. But the true explanation of it all was, that the child was suffering from a mortal disease, and the only thing which could save its life was the surgeon's knife, therefore the mother, in her great love for her child, was deaf to all its cries, and herself held it, that so if possible, its life might be saved. True its life was not saved. It died of the wounds inflicted by the surgeon! But why? Because in spite of every warning, and every precaution, it tore away the bandages, and the healing ointment; mortification then set in, and death followed. Otherwise its life would have been saved.

And that is how Thou, my dear Lord, doest act in our regard, but we knowing not what is for our welfare, too often condemn Thee and think Thee hard, saying that Thou mightest have done otherwise; we cast away the healing

balm because it makes us suffer. But in this we are inexcusable, because we know that Thou art Love Itself, and therefore Thou canst do nothing but what is truly love.

Dear Mother, didst thou speak?

“Yes, my child, thou often sayest that our dear Lord who is All-powerful, cannot do certain things, cannot do anything that is not really love. Tell me how thou understandest thy words?”

Yes, dear Mother. I saw another mother clasp her child in her arms with unbounded love; a knife was in her hand, and the king commanded her to slay her child. Although the knife was in her hand, and great strength in her arm, yet she had not the power to obey the order of the king; she could not kill her child, because love, in her, was stronger than all else. She could not raise her hand, or hurt her little one; she could only fondle it, kiss it again and again, and press it to her heart.

Oh, dear Mother, why make me say all that? The thought of it seems to break my heart. It is so exactly what our dear Lord does for us, while we remain on earth; and even when we leave this earth He can only cast those off who refuse His love, and themselves with bitter hate cast Him off and cry out. Depart; then and then only is He forced to cast them off for ever and they alone can force Him, and yet we doubt His love, and think He can be hard!

Oh, dear Mother, do thou, with thy dear Spouse, bless me, that I may be always full of love for Him. When I am all love for Him, I shall never more grieve His loving Heart. No matter what His ways may be, I shall never think that He is aught else but tenderness and affection, and Love Itself.

I repose for a moment on His Heart, all Love, and then I hear Him say: “My child, to-morrow, thou shalt come again”.

MEDITATION XXVIII.

DIVINE LOVE AND WISDOM HAVE MADE THE UNIVERSE.

My own dear Lord, I thought I heard Thy voice calling me.

“Thou art always welcome, My child. Oh, did My dear children, and especially those who need My help the most, only know the joy they give Me, by coming to My Heart, they would never hesitate, but come to Me without delay.”

I know it is so, dear Lord, since Thou didst come all the way from heaven, and work so hard, and for so long, on earth to obtain possession of them. It must be so; and we should be convinced of it, if we would only reflect. But this, we will not do; and Thou didst know it well, and knowing it, Thou didst excuse us in this, as in all else. My own dear Lord, Thy words: *Father, forgive them, they know not what they do*, go to my very heart. Only a Heart like Thine could have spoken such words after such base ingratitude as ours. But notwithstanding all the proofs of Thy love, there are some who indeed love Thee, yet think that others praise Thy love too greatly. Ah, if they would only reflect a little, they would see and know that it is not possible to extol Thy love too highly. Of Thee, and of Thy boundless love, it is impossible to say too much. All that is said, which is not boundless, is and must necessarily be, too little to say of Thee since Thou art Love Itself.

Thou art my God, and Thou commandest me to love Thee, even as Thou lovest me,—to love Thee with my whole heart and soul, with all my mind, and with all my strength. And, in order that I may never be afraid of allowing my heart to go too far, Thou Thyself teachest me how to speak to Thee. Thou speakest to me and to every soul in the state of grace, and Thou sayest: *Arise, my love, my beautiful one, and come; let Thy voice sound in my ears, for Thy voice is sweet.*

Since I am to love Thee, as Thou lovest me, I am to say

the very same to Thee, dear Lord ; I do say it with my whole soul. *And I will rise and go about the city. I will seek Him whom my soul loveth. How beautiful art Thou, my love, how beautiful art Thou ! . . . Thou teachest me all that !*

O dearest Mother, help me to return Him love for love.

Thou didst tell me, dear Lord, that we were entering on our great work, and Thy dear Mother told me to gather round me all that I should need for that work. But love alone is needed. In that light of love, we shall see and understand as much as can be known before the final accomplishment of the work, at the end of the world, when all the parts are put together, and we can see the whole.

“It is well, My child, and now lift up thine eyes, and see the world in which thou livest, being ever mindful of the lesson thou hast already learnt.”

I look up, and see the universe in the midst of which God has placed me. It is vast, not only in its immensity, but also in its least details. Wherever the mind of man can penetrate, be it into the heights of the firmament, with its countless stars, or into the depth of the earth, on which we dwell, all is marvellous, all is unintelligible, all is, as far as the creature's mind can go, infinite. What mind can ever reach the boundary of the firmament? No matter how far it goes, it always finds deeper depths beyond. Who can ever count the stars? We may count and count, and as we progress, each step appends the nought, which multiplies by ten. They are indeed to the ocean of the firmament, that which drops of water are to the ocean of the world, or atoms to the air ; or each minute detail of the earth which we inhabit, is to that earth taken as a whole ; their Creator alone can number them.

And whichever way we turn, we always read the same. For would I compare the greatest star, in its huge proportions far exceeding that of our earth, with the minutest particle of dust, I divide and subdivide them in my mind into their component

parts, and in doing so, I find myself plunged into the same infinity by the one, as by the other, and lose sight of all dimensions.

And everything in this material universe, the sun, the moon, the stars, the earth, the waters, air, and atmosphere, and all their productions of every kind and sort, are all composed of these particles which, as far as our minds can go, are infinite in number, and yet, as in all the things of this creation, there are no two alike, neither are there two alike of the particles which compose them ; all differ from each other.

And if we pass from considerations of space, and number, and variety, to the study of each combination, we find in each one forms so exquisite, beauty so great, effects so marvellous, that again we are lost in their infinity. No creature that we could ever figure to our minds could have imagined the least of the perfections which now open out before us.

We may well ask, who was the great Architect, whose mind conceived such marvellously beautiful things, and who was the All-powerful One Who called them into existence ? Everything around us, the ether which fills all space with its countless atoms, the atoms of which our atmosphere is composed, the grains of sand on the sea-shore, the drops of water in the ocean, the leaves on the trees, the light of day, the darkness of night, the firmament, with its boundless waters, the plants with their innumerable seeds, the sun, the moon, and the stars dividing day and night, and regulating the seasons, the living things of the water, the birds of the air, the beasts of the field,—all these were fashioned and formed—each one in its own mould, and according to the idea pre-existing in the great Creator's mind. Each was distinct and separate from all the rest, so that in all creation, as we have already said, there are no two things alike. I pause, and am lost, as it were, in this vast ocean of the marvellous and the infinite. Then I hear the voice of my dear Lord and teacher, asking : “ My child, what hast thou to bear

in mind, in the midst of all thou seest?" Dearest Lord, I must remember that all I see, and everything I know to exist, and everything that does exist, must ever have been present in its every form and in all its minutest details in their Creator's mind.

But the architect who wishes to give material form to the building which is in his mind, and thereby convey it to the minds of others, raises it stone by stone. Many of those stones are very beautiful, but others are very rough, and seemingly unsuited for so great a work. It is only when all those stones are brought together, and fitted in their places that the importance of the rougher stones can be fully realised, and the beauty and perfection of the building stand out, in all its glory.

"It is well, My child. Even so wilt thou find it in the study of this creation. And if thou findest here and there rough and rugged stones, remember that wisdom and love produced them, and that they will find their fitting place before the great work is done."

Bless me, dear Lord. And thou, dear Mother, with thy beloved Spouse, watch over my every thought. Dear Angel, we will work together.

MEDITATION XXIX.

DIVINE LOVE DISPOSES OF AND ARRANGES ALL THINGS
FOR OUR ETERNAL WELFARE.

DEAR Mother, I have thought much about what I learned yesterday, and though it may be a little soon to say it, I must tell thee, as my mother, to whom I can say all, that my dear Angel and I searched all the marvels of this beautiful creation, and whenever we asked ourselves, who could have made all these great and wonderful things, the answer was always the same. He, our Lord and Master, hath made them all; only

such goodness and love as His, could have given them existence. Love had done it all, all was done for love.

And now, dear mother, shall we go to Him?

“Yes, my child; see His arms are open to receive thee, and He is calling thee.” And as I draw near, I hear his loving words: “Well, my child, what hast thou to say to-day?”

Dear Lord, thou knowest all. The more I see and study, the more clearly do I see the greatness of Thy goodness, and the greatness of Thy love.

“But now, my child, tell me what thou hast already learnt?”

Dear Lord, I have applied the rules thou didst give me, and have contemplated the marvellous, the immense and all but infinite universe, in which Thou hast been pleased to place us. Unable to grasp the whole, I examined some details, and found that each one, on which I fixed my mind, was as far beyond my capacity and intelligence, as was the entire work.

Then I studied smaller and smaller things, until I came to a little grain of dust; but even that exceeded my capacity. So I divided and subdivided it in my mind, but no matter how far or deep I went, I always found the same: that each one of its parts as much exceeded my comprehension as the universe itself. From that, I saw not only that no man could create the whole, but also that he is powerless to create even the smallest part,—even a grain of dust; for how could he create that which is so immeasurably beyond the power of his mind, and which he is unable even to conceive? And as no man can create, neither can he destroy the smallest grain of dust, any more than he can either create or destroy the entire universe. The one is really to his mind as infinite as the other.

And that which is wholly and entirely impossible to each human being, must be equally so to all united. Greater therefore, immeasurably greater, than all human powers, must

be that Power, which called into existence this vast and wondrous universe. And that universe He has made into a book in which we can see and read, that He Whose immeasurable wisdom and power has called all into existence, *is*; that He is, and must be infinite, infinite in all perfections; that He alone is infinite, that He alone is God, the Great, the Mighty, the Holy One, the Lord and God of all. Therefore He is infinite Love, He is Love Itself.

And then, dear Lord, Thou didst teach me, that every intelligent being who does a work, does so for the attainment of an object; and that I could always form some idea of the importance of that object, by the importance of the means adopted for its attainment.

How great, therefore, must have been the object which the Creator had present in His mind, since for the sole motive of arriving at it, He brought this same vast and boundless universe into existence.

And then, dear Lord, it is often said of the great Creator that He is angry, and repents of what He has done. But that cannot be, and it is only said to teach us, how great an evil sin must be, which, could such have been the case, would have even that result.

And that we may further understand the importance of this creation, He Who is the All-powerful God, Who says the word, and all is made, Who commands and it is created, tells us, moreover, that when He created this universe, He took much time to do it, that He Himself examined each detail, and only passed on to another when He had found, that what was already done, was good, and very good.

A great king deposes his ministers to execute his orders, and only work of paramount importance does he do himself. How important then, must have been that work which was done by God Himself—so great indeed in every way, that when completed He sought repose—“*On the seventh day He ended His*

work and rested from it all". And He accomplished it in the manner thus revealed, to let us understand the great importance of the object for which the work was done.

And then, dearest Lord, Thou didst teach me, that when the means for the attainment of an object are completed, the Master calls His workmen together, that they may begin their work.

He has provided them with all the requisite means, and the work begins, and when the work is done, they receive their pay, and then go home.

When a college is completed, and perfectly adapted for the work of education, students are invited to enter it, and begin that work, and use the means provided for its attainment. When their work is done, they leave it to enter on the high position in the world, for which their education fits them. When none remain to learn and the college has done its work, it is deserted and allowed to fall to ruin, or perhaps destined for some other purpose.

"My child, thou hast well learnt thy lesson. Repose now; to-morrow we will continue."

My own dear Mother, I thank thee and also thy dear Spouse, and my good Angel for assisting me.

Dearest Lord, bless us all; we are all Thine. Oh, may we know Thee, may we love Thee, may we do Thy work well! And I just give a glance at Him, and He fills my heart with love.

MEDITATION XXX.

WE ARE PLACED IN THIS WORLD BY THE KING OF LOVE
AND WE ARE TO WORK IN LOVE FOR THE KING OUR
FATHER MAKING OURSELVES LIKE HIM AND WORTHY
OF HIM.

DEAR Angel, it is so good of thee to stay with me always, and assist me in all I have to do. I love thee very much. I praise

and bless our own dear Lord for having given thee to me, and giving me to thee. Let us go to Him now, for He is calling us.

Dear Lord, shall I continue my lesson ?

“Yes, my child.”

When the Creator had made the heavens and the earth, and had placed therein all things needed for the work which was to be accomplished, He created man, whom He then placed on the earth, giving him dominion over all the creatures on that earth, so that by their use he might accomplish the work for which he himself was placed there.

He, and his children were not to use all creatures indiscriminately, but were only to use those which would assist them in the work they had to do. A workman selects the tools which are adapted to his work ; all others he leaves aside ; no matter how elaborate and beautiful they may be, they would only spoil his work, and when his work is done, he casts the tools aside. I wish to know what is the work which the children of men must do.

Various considerations will afford me this information. I am able to form an idea of its importance, by the importance of the means provided for its accomplishment. When, some time ago, I saw that magnificent palace filled with the choicest treasures of earth, I knew that it must have been built and fitted up for some very important purpose. Such was the case indeed. It was to be the dwelling of the children of a very great and mighty King, during the time they were receiving the education which would fit them for their exalted position ; and all the exquisite treasures which it contained, were only means for the attainment of that end. The King himself had designed, and built that palace, and selected with great wisdom and care all the beautiful treasures of science and art, with which it was filled, in order that his children might have whatever was best adapted for their perfect education.

Now, dear Mother, help me to continue.

“Yes, yes, my child ; fear nothing.”

Dearest Mother, we have seen before us the universe, the work of God Himself, so immense, that as far as our thoughts can reach, it seems really to be boundless ; so countless in its details, that they seem infinite in number ; so marvellously beautiful and perfect in every way, both as a whole, and in all the various combinations of its parts, that, whether viewed as a whole, or in any one of its combinations, or in the minutest of those details, beauties and wonders are found, that each one considered in itself seems as infinite and beautiful as the whole.

Then truly we may say, that if each one of the countless means by which an object is to be attained, is all but infinite, that object itself, cannot be anything less than infinite. If the means are all but infinite, the end attained by them must indeed be infinite.

INFINITE then, must be the work which man has to do on earth, and oh, how great must man be, who has power to do so great a work.

But an infinite God alone can do an infinite work, and as therefore, He willed that man should also do that which God alone can do, He created him to His own image and likeness, adopted him for His son, and then placed him in the world, that he might do that work. Having supplied him with all the means for its execution, He made him master and ruler of that world, with power to use as he pleased all contained therein. Dear Mother, shall I continue? “No, my child ; repose a little while, and ponder over all thou hast now said.”

CONTINUATION.

Dear Mother, shall I tell thee what is now passing before my mind? “Yes, beloved, speak.”

I saw but now, in a magnificent palace, the children of its King at whose disposal that palace, and all its contents were

placed for as long as they might be there. Why were they there? It was to work for the King, their Father, making themselves worthy of him.

I saw a college supplied with every means of education for the sons of many parents, and everything that was in it, was at their disposal for the time they were there. Why were they there? It was to do the work for which their parents had placed them in that college. And to know what that work was, I only had to ask who, and what was the father of each one?

When the King's sons had left the palace (their temporary abode which then had done its work) they only carried with them the work which they had done there. The means by which they had done it being no longer needed, were left to decay. And so was it also with each student who left the college.

In like manner I see the world and those who are in it for a time. I see they use its various productions, and when they leave they carry none away. What do they carry with them? I must suppose they carry with them the work they have done there, be it good or evil, and when all have run their course, the means by which that work was done, whatever it may be, the exquisite dwelling of this world and its wonderful productions will all be utterly destroyed.

My way now opens out clearly before me. I have only to ask who, and what is He, who created this wonderful dwelling for the sons of men? Whose hands produced the marvels which it contains? Who was He, who created man, and placed him in the world?

The answer to this question can be but one. All that has existence, as we have seen elsewhere, is only short of infinite. The whole as well as each part and minutest detail, appears to our finite minds as infinite; though it is not really so, for God alone is infinite.

What must He be, who can create oceans, each one of whose drops is all but infinite? He must be infinite in power.

Again I ask, what must He be who, of His own accord and free will, has lavished all this wealth on us? He must be infinite in goodness. Yes, He must be all perfection, all power, all wisdom, all Love Itself. For whatever is short of goodness and love, is of course imperfect.

Now that I know who it was who created the universe, and who created me, and placed me in this world; who it was who worked so hard, that when the work was done, He rested from His labour—that it was the Great, the Infinite, the Almighty God; in a word that it was He who is Love Itself, for that is what that Great God is and nothing else; I may begin to form some idea of why He did it all.

No perfect being can work for an object unworthy of himself, but every creature being infinitely less than God, is, and must be, infinitely unworthy of Him. *Thou alone art Holy, Thou alone art God*, and therefore, He, and He alone, can be the end and object of all His mighty work.

And, therefore, the work of every creature, if not referred to Him, and productive of that which, directly or indirectly, He requires at their hands, must be an almost infinite evil. The work then, that I have to do in the world, is to produce that for which He gave me existence, and to do which He has supplied me with all the means.

I judge how infinitely important that work is, by the importance of the means,—but again, what can that work be?

Once more what is He? He is Love Itself. Since then, love itself asks for something, that something can only be, that which can fit in with itself, and therefore it can be love alone since He is only love.

But if I am to give love to Him, the Great, the Infinite God, that love cannot be less than full entire love; and therefore my work is to transform myself into that which He wills I should be and thus become that which He is Himself, that so He may

absorb me into Himself, and that I may no longer live, but He live in me.

I now raise my eyes and heart to Him, and pour out my words, all filled with love for Him, who has done so much for me: *oh Great, oh Good, oh Almighty God, say one word to me, Thy poor creature!*

And I heard His voice in such sweetness, tenderness, and love, that I could understand that all the joys and sweetest music of heaven could only be one little note of the harmony which filled my soul. And that voice said: "Thou art My own beloved child; it is I who am in heaven, who am thy Father, loving thee with boundless love".

But then, beloved Father, if heaven is my home, why am I far away? "My child, thou art at school, but only for a very little while, to fit thyself, and to be fitted to dwell for ever in thy home with Me." Then, dear Father, tell me, what is it I have to do? What is that infinite work which Thou hast placed me in the world to do?

In that moment, He, all love, seemed to absorb me into Himself and I absorbed Him and His every word. And these words seemed to incorporate themselves into my whole existence: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with thy whole heart, with thy whole soul, with thy whole mind, and with all thy strength.*

And the very words carried with them the first means whereby the command might be obeyed, for by telling me how He willed that I should love Him, He also told me how much He, the Great, the Good, the All-powerful God also loved me—that as I was to love Him with my whole entire being, so did He love me. Oh how could I do otherwise than return such love with love?

I then understand, that the world is my dwelling-place during the short time allotted to me for my education; that its productions are the means by which I am to learn my lessons, and, therefore, are only to be used, in as far as they promote that

end, and when that is done, they are to be cast aside; that if He refuses me the use of some things, and presses others on me, it is simply because He sees, that the things He presses on me are the very best for me, and that, if I were left to myself, I should choose things which would be bad for me. It is therefore from pure love for me that He will only allow me to use those things which He knows to be the most conducive to my welfare. My real work then is to become all love for Him, rejecting all that is opposed to that entire love. When the allotted time is passed, I leave the world and all its productions, to go to the home for which my education has fitted me.

The moment I am all love for Him, who is Himself all love, those two loves blend together, and then I live, not I, but my God lives in me, and if that unity exists in me at the hour of death, I am His for ever, because I am already God. His words are: "*I have said that you are Gods, and all of you, the sons of the most High*".

Thus, then, we have the assurance directly from God Himself, that the attainment and possession of Him by love, is the end of our existence on earth. Our own reason tells us, that such is, and must be, the case, and the beautiful and perfect works of creation, proclaim it on every side. . . . I pause a moment, and then my Angel speaks.

"Beloved soul, as all the beauty of a diamond consists in the perfect way, in which the beauty of the sun is reproduced in it, so also the beauty of a soul depends entirely on the fulness and perfection with which God,—the infinite sun of Justice fills it, and is reflected from its depths. God, beholding that image of His own infinite beauty and perfection in the soul, loves it as He loves Himself."

Dear Lord, I can say no more. I am, as it were, lost in the infinity of Thy love.

"Dear child, repose therein, and thou wilt be refreshed for thy lesson to-morrow."

MEDITATION XXXI.

THE WORK WE HAVE TO DO FOR GOD IS TO LOVE HIM
WHO IS INFINITE LOVE.

LET Thy voice sound in my ears, dear Lord, for Thy voice is sweet. Thou didst tell me to repose, but Thou didst draw me after Thee in the odour of that sweetness. And now I hear Thy voice saying: "*Arise, My beloved one, and come*".

Dear Mother, there was a time when I should have been frightened, had I heard the Infinite God calling such as me His beloved, but by degrees He has shown Himself to me, surrounded by a variety of such beautiful and loving forms, and manifesting such exceeding love for me, that I can no longer really fear, but far from it, I experience an ever-growing confidence and love.

It seems to me now, that in speaking of Himself, and telling me who, and what He is, He could use no other term than the one He does employ, and which sums up all He is,—Love Itself. He has made me understand, that God can be nothing else, that, were He not Love Itself, He would not be truly God. I know that He who is infinite must be infinitely perfect in every attribute, and therefore infinite in love;—once more, I say He must be Love Itself.

Dear Father, St. Joseph, thou askest me why I have said this, and I give a look at our dear Lord.

Ah, Lord, Thou knowest why I say it. Dearest Lord, we wanted to know what work the children of men had to do on earth; and Thou hast taught us that we can always know the nature of work to be done, no matter who commands it, as soon as we know who, and what he is, who gives us the order.

Therefore, when we know Who, and what Thou (our Master) art, we also know what kind of work Thou givest us to do, and as we know that Thou art infinite love, we also know that

Thy command can be only one: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God.*

Thou, dear Lord, standest in need of nothing, but by every act of creation, Thou createst for Thyself a want, for Thou then wantest that for which Thou hast created. Thou didst not stand in need of me, but Thou hast given me existence, and now Thou tellest me Thy want, and askest for my heart; for I hear Thee say, dear Lord: *Son, give Me thy heart, thou shalt love the Lord thy God.*

A magnificent building stands before me, and I ask whose it is? I am told that the great King built it. But that King has palaces without number, and possesses all the riches, and treasures of the earth. Then why has he built it; he can never need it?

No, he does not need it; he stands in need of nothing. He has not built it for himself, but for those he greatly loves. He is so kind and good that his one thought seems to be for the happiness of his subjects, whom he loves as his own dear children; and in that love he has built this palace, and within its walls he provides them with work by which they can, in a very short time, enrich themselves, and obtain every happiness.

And the work is very easy, for he has provided all that is calculated to make it so. Though he himself, as we have said, really had no want, yet by his very act of building, he created many, and those wants were the happiness of those he loved so much, which could only be obtained by their returning him love for love on seeing the greatness of his love. And, as he loved them all without exception, he wanted each one to love all who were loved by him.

Yes, dearest Lord, I understand Thou art that great King, and Thou didst want for nothing, but now I know Thou hast many wants, and askest for, not my heart alone, but for the hearts of all Thy creatures, and, therefore, if the love I give

Thee is not love for all Thou lovest, it is not that love for which Thou askest me.

Dearest Lord, I give Thee what Thou wantest, I love Thee, and I give Thee my whole entire heart. Enter therein, my own dear Lord, and take possession of it. Not only do I love Thee, but I also love all who are loved by Thee,—I love them because Thou lovest them, and I love them for Thee alone.

Is it not so, dear Mother?

“Thou hast said well, beloved child, but are not many of those, for whom thou sayest that He is filled with love, and whom also thou sayest that thou lovest with thy entire heart, covered with mud or something most hideous and loathsome both to Him and thee?”

It is so, dear Mother, and He does not love, but hates, as He wills also that I should hate, that frightful evil which hides away and darkens the beautiful diamond; but He loves the diamond hidden there, and of which if once cleansed, as it may be one day, He will see Himself in full entire possession. And such is the state of every soul in sin, so long as it is in this world. When death comes the evil then existing, no longer kept in check, bursts out into so intense a flame, that the diamond is calcined, and never again can the bright sun fill it with its glory.

Thou hast well seen, dear child, the meaning of His command. Repose now awhile, and then we will continue.

CONTINUATION.

I hear thy voice again, dear Mother, calling me.

“Yes, my child, thou hast told me that thou didst understand why the palace of the King was so beautiful and magnificent, when thou didst learn that it had been built and prepared for the education of his own children. Thou also, on seeing the beauty of the world, canst know and understand

why it is so perfect, when thou knowest who and what man is, for whom it was created.”

It is so, dear Mother. We have already seen that man's work on earth must be infinite, since eternal possession of the infinite God is the object it attains. Great, therefore, and almost infinite, must be the means for the attainment of such an end. But if man's work is infinite, and possession of the infinite God its end, what must man himself be, who can do such work?

The Creator has shown us in many ways, how great and important was the creation of the universe, how great an exercise it was of power, goodness, and exceeding care, and He has also told us that the entire work was done for man's use, and given him as the means whereby to attain his end.

When at length all was ready for the advent of man, for whom all had been thus prepared, the Creator paused. So great was the work of man's creation that it seemed to require the exercise of all His wisdom and power.

And, therefore, we are told, that the three Divine Persons took counsel together, and deliberated as to what should be done, and the wisdom and power and greatness and goodness and love of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, determined that man should be so great, that he should resemble no finite created being, but only be like Themselves. *Let Us make man to Our own image and likeness.*

And how could man ever by his own work hope to become the great and infinite God, if he were made to any other likeness than that of God Himself? *I have said that you are gods, and all of you, the sons of the most High.*

And who is it who utters these great words? It is the Most High, God Himself. There we see, how great is man, and how high is his destiny. His work is to make himself one with God by the bond of perfect love.

I raise my eyes for a moment, and see, on the throne of God,

Him who, though truly God, is also truly Man, and I hear the voice of that incarnate God pronounce these words: *Grant, Father, that they may be one, they in Me, and I in Thee.*

Dearest Mother, dear Father St. Joseph, and thou, my dear Angel, how I thank you, and love you all, for all you have done to fill my heart with love and gratitude for our own dearest Lord, and for all the help you have given me in the work I must accomplish.

I cannot tell you all my gratitude and love, but I will do my best to pay my debt by loving Him your only Love, with all my heart and soul. Bless me, dear Lord, and sign me with Thy holy Cross. I am Thy own dear loving child, oh, make me so to be.

MEDITATION XXXII.

GOD HIMSELF MUST TEACH US HOW TO LOVE HIM AS WE OUGHT.

DEAREST Lord, I come to Thee again. But after all Thou didst teach me yesterday I am almost afraid to look up at Thy face, or even to meet Thy glance. I feel now, that if Thou didst create me so great, it was in order that I might accomplish a very great work indeed, and I know only too well, that I really have done nothing. Thou hast shown me how great was Thy toil and labour, how great was the work Thou didst do, to enable me to do my part, and I have set it all aside. That has been my return for all Thy unbounded love.

“My child, be not disheartened. Remember, thou art all Mine, and thou art yet but a little child, and hast learnt only a few letters of the alphabet. But thou shalt learn more, and I, Myself, will teach thee. Thou shalt advance in wisdom, and in love, and shalt perfectly understand the importance of thy work.”

Dear Mother, before we go any further, wilt thou explain to me something I have seen, which is at present a mystery to me? I saw the Lord upon His throne, and while I looked upon Him, I thought it was thee I saw, though I knew it must be and could only be Himself. And then I looked in thy face, and I thought, as I gazed on thee, that it was Him I saw. Mother dear, thou art so like Him, and He is so like thee! Why is this?

“My child, two lessons are thus before thee for thy instruction. The one is on the greatness of man, and the importance of his work; the other was unfolded before thee in that mysterious vision, which shows thee exactly the nature of man’s work on earth. By the Divine assistance, I always did my work most perfectly, and was ever full of grace, that is, full of love for God, even as He, who is Love Itself, is filled with love for me. That mutual love unites and makes us one, and therefore thou didst see me in Him, and Him in me. And this is the work of all; they must learn to love God, and so become all love for Him, and so be His resemblance. Their work is, as was also mine, to know Him as He really is, all goodness and love, that so they may love Him to the exclusion of all else that may be an obstacle in the way.

If they think they know Him as aught else than goodness and love, they know they are deceived, as it cannot be, they must love Him only, and they must be all love for Him, as He is all love for them.

That mutual and perfect love will make them one with Him, He will be in them, and they will be in Him, as even now thou hast seen His union with me, and mine with Him. And all thy aim, my child, must be, to be to Him all that I ever was, in every way, and this will be effected in thee, as it was in me, according to the measure of thy love.

He tells thee Himself, that whoever does the will of His heavenly Father, that is, loves Him with all His heart and soul,

is really and truly, not only His beloved brother, but more than that, he is indeed his Mother.

For this union, or rather unity, with His beloved children, it was that He prayed so earnestly to His Eternal Father on the night before His death, and it is of that union that the great apostle speaks: *I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.* For he, indeed had become all love for the Incarnate God, and therefore was absorbed by Him, who, having possession of him, thenceforth lived in him.

Dear Mother, I saw that thy unity with Him extended to all His labours and sufferings, which thou didst fully share with Him, and although thine were of necessity very much less than His, yet were they so exceeding great, that I could see no difference.

I watch two distant stars which seem to me alike, so far distant am I from them, though I know by other means that the one is greater than the other; the greater distance of the one, reduces to my eye its dimension to that of the lesser. So must it be in all that we can ever know of thee, dear Mother, and of thy beloved Son; so far art thou above every other creature, even the highest seraph that ever came from the hand of God.

“It is so, dear child, and has been shown to thee, that thou mayest understand, that the work of love goes hand in hand, with labour and self-denial. Thou must take up thy cross and follow Him.”

Dearest Lord, although up to the present I have done nothing, I beg of Thee, to teach me how to work henceforth. I know now, that this world is not my home, that I am here only for a time, and in order to do the work given me by my Creator, who is also my Lord and Master.

I also know that the work I have to do is a great and important work, indeed an infinite work, since it consists in the attainment and possession of the infinite God. Infinite Love demands a service of love from me. I must love God with my

whole heart, and soul, and mind, and strength,—I must be all love for Him. God desires this perfect love, He longs for it, it is to Him a real want, for He has told me so. *My child*, He says, *give Me thy heart. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart.* Oh then, dear Lord, enable me to do my work well. “My child, I will teach thee everything thou needest to know, in order to perfect thy work, and render to Me a service of perfect love. Forget not the lessons thou hast already learnt. I have made thee repeat them many times in order that they may remain always in thy mind and in thy heart. To-morrow, I will teach thee more.” I thank Thee, dear Lord, bless me before I go.

PART III.

SUMMARY.

PRIDE and ingratitude were the chief sins of the rebel angels. Great was their punishment by God. But even so, by God's mercy it fell below their real deserts.

Man was created in their place and placed by God in paradise, there to undergo a course of divine training, to fit him for his high position and destiny. But like the rebel angels, he too fell, and for the same reason. His own ruin involved the whole human race, with one exception.

The greatness of the Blessed Virgin's love merited that she should be, as it were, taken into the counsels of God for the redemption of the human race; and she offered to undergo all the suffering she could for that end.

God is Love Itself; and even when He seems to act from some other motive, it is only because we do not see all the circumstances and realise the consequences of His dealings with us.

This Love, guided by infinite Wisdom, has been the architect of the visible universe, which has been provided by Him, to fit man for the work he was sent into the world to do.

This work is to transform ourselves into the perfect likeness of God, by becoming in turn all love of Him; and, the more we do this, the nearer do we approach to becoming to Him all that the Blessed Virgin herself has been.

We must die to the past, before we can live the new life, in which we shall live in Christ and He in us.

Every creature was in its origin a thought in the Divine Mind; and when existence was given to it, it received free will, with the power of loving or of hating.

The greater part of God's ways are dark to us; but from what we do know of Him, we can infer that all His acts are Love; but the free will, wherewith He has endowed all intelligent creatures, has brought hate into the world.

Love and life on the one hand, and hate and death on the other, cannot dwell together, and mutually repel each other.

All creatures are fashioned after the image of their Creator, so that He alone can satisfy their desires; and the work they have to do is—as it were—infinite; they have to transform themselves into the perfect likeness of that infinite Love, on whose model they have been framed.

This divine Love can only be comprehended by being seen in its own light, when the Holy Spirit of love shall have taken full and final possession of the soul.

The probation of the angels was to choose between love of God and love of self; and from that time forth, the cry to God of every creature that loves Him, has been like that of the ever-blessed Virgin: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done unto me according to Thy word".

The struggle between Michael and Lucifer, in which all the angels took part, was one between love and hate, which necessarily ended in the triumph of the former.

The sufferings of the reprobate are not due to God, who would, if possible, have remitted them, but to the hatred which has transformed them into His eternal enemies ever resisting His attribute of mercy, as indeed all His other attributes. And the love of God, as shown in angels and men, is amply justified, since the happiness of those who are saved, far outweighs the sufferings of those who are lost through their own fault.

All creatures proclaim to us the love of God, and so gradually lead man on to union with Him.

In this life we can only see a few of the details of this love, the source of them being too bright to be seen by any one not yet incorporated into the Divine Light. For every irrational creature is made by God for the service of His children, and is thus a separate proof of His boundless love for us. Besides this direct proof of God's love in creation, every creature indirectly has a higher office in the economy of redemption; for instance, the

waters and the living things springing from them, received a special blessing from their Creator to fit them for their office in the dispensation of grace.

The whole universe therefore, is like a book in which we can read the infinite love of God for us. When He created man—the end and crown of all this visible world—He made a fresh need for Himself,—the need to be loved by man.

This want was only satisfied, when the Word took upon Himself human nature, and received the perfect love of His Blessed Mother, and then gave that love perfected by His own to His eternal Father.

MEDITATION I.

HE WILL TEACH US HOW TO LOVE HIM BY LIVING IN US.

DEAREST Mother, I hear thee calling me ; I come to thee, my Mother. I then cast myself in my loving Mother's arms, and embracing me, she said : " My child, we have hitherto been collecting the stones, which are to form the foundation, upon which our great work must be built. Our edifice must rise so high, that the foundation is of very great importance. Bear in mind, therefore, the lessons thou hast learnt. Thou art now about to learn others, of exceeding great importance, and thou wilt need much light and guidance.

That light I will give thee, for I will pour into thee all the light of my love for our own dearest Lord, and that love will enrich thine, and will draw all His love to thee. Therefore, be not at all afraid. Let us go now ; it is time for us to appear before the Throne of the Most High."

For all my former lessons, I had always gone direct to the loving Heart of our dear Lord. But now all is changed. We are lifted up (I, in my Mother's arms) from the earth, which is soon lost to view. We rise higher and higher, far beyond the most distant stars, into unimaginable depths of space, into the highest heavens, until we reach the Throne of God.

On one other occasion I had been lifted up to that great Throne, to hear words which could be heard in heaven only, and only understood in its bright light. It was then that our dear Lord had told me, how great was His work in creating man. Now, once more, I am allowed to stand before that glorious Throne, and to behold the Eternal God surrounded by His Angelic Court. Those countless Angels were prostrate in adoration before their King, singing their ceaseless hymn of

praise: *Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Sabaoth.* Again I saw, and more clearly than before, the intimate union, and unity of the pure and virginal Mother with her Divine Son. Mother and Son were so like each other,—and so much each other—that it was only by her acts I was able to distinguish the creature from her Creator.

That loving Mother was for some moments absorbed in adoration of Him, who was her Son, and yet also was her God. During those moments, no voice, no sound was heard, but silence reigned, and it was the silence of eternity. All the adoration, and praise, and love, of those myriads of angelic spirits, seemed to soften down into that eternal silence, and then flowed on as a deep and mighty river, until it poured itself into that Mother's loving heart, and then it flowed forth again from that golden vessel of love for God, more beautiful, more exquisitely perfect than before, and rendered (as far as any creature could render it), worthy of Him, in whose Heart it was now to centre, and there have imparted to it that infinite value which alone could make it worthy of the Eternal and Infinite God.

Then, issuing forth from that Sacred and Divine Heart as a boundless ocean of adoration, praise, and love, it flowed in sweetest harmony around the Throne of the Ever-Blessed Trinity.

As I raised my eyes to look at Him who sitteth upon the Throne, that celestial music seemed gently to pass away into the silence of eternity, and I thought it was time for me to return to earth. Oh, how I wished to remain where I was, and remain there for ever! I looked at my loving Mother, and whispered to her: *Mother, must we go?* She answered. "*No, not yet, my child. What thou hast now seen and heard is to prepare thee for the lessons thou hast still to learn.*"

In that moment I beheld my own dear Lord. His eyes, His face, His whole person, were beaming with tenderness and love,

and I saw that He poured it all out on His blessed Mother, as He pressed her to His Heart. He seemed to say: *I thank thee, dear Mother, for having brought My child to Me.* Oh what goodness, can it ever be, such love for such as me, oh no it never can be—but stop—I forgot, it is and must be so, He is Love Itself!

I then saw, as I had never seen before, how great was His love for me, and for all His children, and His tender compassion for us notwithstanding all our many and grievous sins.

I saw also in that bright light of heaven how much my sins had cost Him. I saw, how deep and wide were the wounds, those sins had caused. Yet, He seemed to love me all the more, because I had wounded Him, and those very wounds in His hands and feet and Sacred Heart, were as so many centres pouring forth love into my soul.

Oh, I thought I must die of grief at the thought of my base and cruel ingratitude, and though He willed me still to live, I felt that my new love for Him must really break my heart!

“It shall be so, My child. Love shall be thy death, for it shall destroy all thy former life, and henceforth I, who am the only Life, will be thy life for ever. Thou shalt live in Me, and by Me, and I will live in thee.”

My dear Mother then just whispered in my ear: “Remember what thou hast learnt. Thou art His own dear child, and He is Love Itself, and will love thee to the very end. And now thou hast much to learn, which can only be learnt in the light of heaven. Rest in His loving Heart, and He Himself will teach thee.”

MEDITATION II.

WE MUST GIVE ALL OUR LOVE TO GOD.

ALL is now changed; I am in the depths of eternity. Yet He, the Great Eternal God, makes His will known to me, but

how He does so, I cannot tell. I hear no sound, for that will like myself, is only a thought in His mind, to which He has never given form, yet it was ever in His mind, even as I was ever there before He gave me existence. He has taken me back into that eternity, and (as I have said) I am now only a thought in His mind united by Him with that other thought—His will—which He thus makes mine, in order that I may follow it in all.

It is all like a dream to me, and I seem to be in infinity. Wherever my mind goes, all is boundless and eternal. And yet that infinity, which I see to be perfect unity, seems to be composed of all the most brilliant tints, each of which is perfect in itself, and bright with its own lustre which itself begets. And that lustre is also infinite, as the perfection which begets it. I saw also, that each of these tints, which were infinite in number, was the form of one or other of the infinite perfections of that infinity. And, seeing that all was perfect and infinite, I knew that the infinity could be but one—the great, the Eternal God, infinite in all perfections, and therefore infinite goodness and love.

As I am now a thought in that love, it pervades and possesses me even as fire pervades and possesses charcoal in its bosom.

He is all love for me, and for all, who have not yet received the form under which they will one day go forth from Him, bearing within them the love which possesses them. I therefore love such Love and Goodness. *O great God, I give Thee all my love.*

But strange, that love finds no resting-place, but returns to me. The distance is too great, for though I am in His mind, and He is all love for me, nevertheless I am infinitely far from Him, and my love can never reach Him.

Then shall I never see Him,—the Good, the Loving God? I grieve, and grieve, and my love grows more and more,

but however great it may become, it must always be less than infinite, and therefore ever infinitely far from Him.

He alone—the Almighty and Infinite God, can bridge over that space which stands between us, and He comforts me in my sorrow, by infusing into me a sort of assurance, that there is one dear to Him, through whom He will do this work. He only awaits her consent, and that consent will effect the desired end.

Stay! What is it that I hear? Music, harmony so sweet that it must be God's own voice. But no, it is not so, for He also heard that sweet voice, as it rose by my side, for she whose voice it was, was also a thought in His eternal mind, and that voice drew down to her Him, who alone could bridge the infinite abyss.

Into Him, and through Him, who was also still a thought in the Eternal mind, I poured out all my adoration, love and praise, and in Him it found its resting-place, the very Heart of God.

And now, once more, I seemed to be in deepest silence and repose, breathing only the sweet atmosphere of love, when I gently passed into soft slumber. In that slumber I had been, I know not how long, when in its midst, I realised more clearly than before, that I was only a thought in God's eternal mind, and in the very depth of His eternity,—a depth so deep that hitherto no thought had ever issued from it.

I then seemed, in the deepest calm and peace, to awake from my slumber, and in that moment the eternity in which I was, appeared to be transformed into light so bright and pure, that I knew it could only be, direct or indirect, the light of God Himself.

In the midst of that bright light I saw, as it were, a kind of upheaving, and I understood that God was now giving form to thoughts which were in His mind. O, how beautiful, how perfect, must those thoughts be, coming from such a source,—from Him who is Goodness and Love Itself!

I kept my mind intent on the great upheaval, and in a moment, the bright eternal light seemed to divide and flow off on every side, leaving before me a land so fair and beautiful, that I thought it must be God's own dwelling-place in the midst of His eternity.

But I knew it was not so. He was eternal, whereas this land had only now received existence from His hands. The light was so beautiful, and bright, and perfect, that it penetrated into every part, and revealed to me each detail. And each detail was as wonderful and as beautiful as the whole, though it was only a little part.

I was lost in wonder and admiration. Whichever way I turned, new beauties opened out before me, and each one was so great and perfect that, until it was succeeded by another, it seemed as if the All-powerful One Himself, could have done no more.

Of all those beautiful and perfect things, there was endless variety, for no two of them resembled each other.

Although in the midst of all, there was no life, yet there was not one detail that did not proclaim the power, the glory, the greatness and goodness of its Great Creator, and all seemed to be, as it were, the breathing of Love Itself. All things sang His praises in the most exquisite harmony, and I was carried thereby deeper down into the depths of Him, whose thought I was. But, even in those depths, the heaven which I had seen was still present to my mind.

I thought to myself, that that heaven must have been ever present in the mind of the Eternal God, and because nothing imperfect can dwell therein, therefore is heaven so beautiful. If He now gives it existence, it must be because He wills, that His knowledge of it should pass to other minds. But, for what end? Who, and What is He? Goodness,—Love Itself. Therefore His object can only be in accordance with what He is—Goodness, and Love Itself. The work is so great, so

beautiful, so almost infinite in perfection, that its purpose must also be exceeding great indeed.

In a moment, the whole scene changed, and I discerned in the midst of all, a spot where stood His Throne. I saw Him not, but I understood, that He was giving form to countless other thoughts of a much higher order, and which also had ever been in His mind. In countless millions, these forms stood around His Throne, awaiting His commands. It seemed to me, that they were all made on the form of God Himself, for each of the Divine Persons bestowed on each one power corresponding with His own.

The Father gave understanding, that His creature might know Him. But God alone *Is*. Creatures are born in time, whose moments succeed each other with great rapidity, and then cease to be, so that knowledge acquired in those moments would pass away with them, and therefore the Eternal Son—who is the knowledge of the Father, by whom He is communicated to His creatures, in coming to that creature, gives it memory, in order that it may retain possession of that knowledge imparted to it in the course of time, and unite and build up the various details of that knowledge, and thus obtain a fuller comprehension of Himself—the Eternal wisdom.

But, as from the Father's knowledge of the Son, and from the Son's knowledge of the Father, the Third Person—the Spirit of Love—proceeds, so, from the creatures' knowledge of God, entire love for Him should also proceed—and that love for Him should be ever growing with ever-increasing knowledge.

But, as love is an emanation of the will, so without a will there can be no love. And if the will exists, and is not free, its emanations are not its own, but his who controls that will. But freedom would be meaningless in the absence of alternative, and so the will which can love of its own accord, can also hate; the Holy Ghost, who proceeds as the Love of the

Father and the Son, being, as it were, an emanation of their will, gives in like manner free will to the creature, in order that from this free will may proceed love,—love divine, ever-flowing and ever-growing love of God : so that the stream of love that flowed out from God upon the creature, might flow back from the creature to God.

This then is the work that creatures have to do: they have to love. But love proceeds from will, and the will proceeds from the mind, and grows with knowledge. Creatures, therefore, must make up their minds, as to whom they will give the love which emanates from knowledge. Will they give it all to God, and therefore make all within themselves subservient to Him, or will they give it to themselves, and make all else, even God Himself, as far as depends on them, subservient to themselves?

I know, they cannot serve two masters, who lead in opposite directions—that if they are not all love for God, they must hate Him, and that if they are all love for Him, they must hate all that is opposed to Him, even in themselves, hate every thought and inclination in any way opposed to His holy will, and be ever ready, not only to sacrifice their own interests and inclinations, but even to lay down their lives for Him.

And He gave me to understand, that later I should see that the greatest of all His acts of love, and the one upon which eternal possession of Himself by any creature depended, would, for a reason which I should also see as I advanced, seem to entail upon those creatures the sacrifice of the happiness of which they were then in actual possession.

Those who were all love for Him, would not only rejoice to make the sacrifice, but would overflow with gratitude to Him, for allowing them so great an honour and so great a privilege as to suffer, or even die for Him their only love, and to Whom they were indebted for all they had and were.

But those whose love for Him was only apparent, because

subservient to the love they bore themselves, would really hate Him, who seemed to ask a sacrifice of them. From their free wills, no love would emanate for Him, but only bitter hatred ; and as hatred seeks for the destruction of its object, so would they be prepared to fight against their God, and against all who loved and served Him. But all who love Him, will truly serve Him, and be ever ready to fight for Him, to live and die for Him.

MEDITATION III.

ONLY WHEN ILLUMINED BY THE LIGHT OF LOVE CAN ANY CREATURE SEE AND UNDERSTAND THE DEEP WAYS OF GOD'S ETERNAL LOVE.

I WHO am still only a thought in the mind of the Infinite God, am, nevertheless, now deeper than ever in His eternal mind, and in the midst of light so bright and penetrating that everything within, which He wills that I should see, stands out clearly defined before me, and apart in all its full perfection.

But I also understand that that light, though so bright, is really darkness in comparison with the eternal light, of which it is only a reflection. That eternal light itself is darkness to all that has not become like Him whose light it is. His light is the light of love. Therefore, it is only when the creature is illumined by this light, that it can see and understand the deeper ways of the Infinite and Eternal Love.

But it can always know, by inference, what those ways must be, no matter how great the darkness which obscures them. First by its knowledge of Who, and What He is, whose acts they are: that He is infinite Goodness and Love ; and then, by its knowledge of those other ways of His, which are not in that deep darkness, but display in brilliant light the greatness of His love.

Those acts, which to the finite creature seem to speak dark-

ness, do so only, because they come from the deepest depths of His eternal light and love, and as has just been said, for that very reason are, and must be, darkness to us all, and appear the very reverse of what they really are, and so it will, and must be, until we ourselves are plunged into that eternal light, by the full possession of God.

But all is present to Him in whom I am, and He allows me to see a future which is thus present to His mind. I see that world, which He will one day call into existence. I see a glorious sun shining down upon it, and calling forth, from its bosom, trees and flowers, and sweet fruits, and causing precious gems to flash back its brilliant rays, clothed in their own peculiar hues.

But while I look, a dark cloud rises up, and shutting out the glorious sun, casts the blackness of night on everything, so that those flowers and fruits are no longer seen, but can only be felt by the hand that touches them. Their beauty and their brightness is wholly hidden now.

And yet, the sun is still shining in all its glory, and ever beneficent, is pouring forth the very rays which gave existence to that cloud. For those rays drew up, from earth, all required for its formation, and now that that is done, it will pour itself down in genial showers, which will give new life and beauty to everything on which they fall.

As those showers are poured down, the cloud grows ever lighter and lighter, until it has done its work. Then the sun's bright rays shine once more on every creature, and reveal them all clothed in their greatest glory.

Oh, how lovely is all nature now! All is life, and beauty, and joy. But if that cloud had not risen, hideous darkness and death would reign on every side.

Thus is it with many of God's acts. His greatest acts of love, appear, to my weak and darkened mind, really to be hatred, but it is only the darkness of my own mind, which like a cloud,

obscures them, and makes that seem hatred, which is only love. When that cloud has passed away, I shall see Him in His true light, and then I shall see and understand, that all His acts were love.

And now I look again at those glorious rays pouring down on that earth, from which they have drawn forth those lofty trees, and beautiful flowers, and delicious fruit, and I notice another thing. The moment those bright rays are withdrawn, all beauty disappears. I wonder how it is!

Then I understand, that no creature has beauty inherent in itself. It only has capacity for the development of beauty according to its kind. And that that capacity may develop and grow to its fullest extent, it needs those bright sun-rays. If they are absent for any length of time, the result is deformity, darkness, and death; and with that death all capacity for beauty is for ever gone, and nothing remains but that which once had had it. I can see deformity taking possession of such an object and spreading on every side, so that that which was once fair and beautiful, is now a mass of loathsome corruption. Hideous worms which it breeds within itself, are now its only life.

MEDITATION IV.

ALL PERFECTION IS SUMMED UP IN THAT ONE WORD—
LOVE.

I HAVE once more fallen back into the depths of God's eternity. His will carried me forward for a moment, that I might again realise, that He is Goodness and Love Itself, and consequently that nothing but goodness and love can emanate from Him.

If He gives existence to intelligent beings, that existence can only be in accordance with what He is, and therefore, when

He gives it, He makes them to His own image and likeness. Moreover, as all perfection is in Him alone, He must Himself be their only end.

All perfection is summed up in the one word Love, and therefore He is Love Itself.

But love is an emanation of the will, and therefore the will, from which love emanates, is love itself. As such, it can have only one thing in view, and that is, the bestowal of every good and every happiness on each creature, according to its kind and in the measure of its capacity.

The bright rays of the sun pour down on all creatures, developing, in all and in each, the life or capacity which they there find, imparting to them strength, and vigour, and beauty. But if those bright rays fall on objects which have no longer life, but in which death reigns, and which are therefore incapable of responding to their vivifying influence, those living rays though unchanged and unchangeable, have an opposite effect. They would combine with life, but finding only death, they struggle hard against those objects, in which death alone is found. Since they cannot give them life, they destroy them more completely, and bring about their utter dissolution.

So it is with intelligent beings. They receive the means whereby to influence their free wills, and cause them to emanate the only love, with which the rays of Divine love can combine. Those rays of Divine love, encountering in the creature the love with which they can combine, develop that creature's life, giving it ever-growing vigour, strength and beauty.

But if instead of that life of love, they find only the death of hatred, with which they never can combine, they repel it, as it also repels them. For love and life not only repel hatred and death, but hatred and death repel love and life.

And now that beautiful heaven seemed to rise up before me from the depths of eternity, and grew, and spread, as that which hid it from view, rolled from off its surface; and it then

revealed to me marvels of beauty so great, that I thought as I have already said, that it could only be the dwelling of the Great Eternal God. It was not so, neither could it be, since it had only that moment been called into existence, but it was so beautiful and perfect, that if not intended for God alone, I felt, that it could only be intended for those who, of all His creatures, resembled Him the most.

Oh, how great must be His love for those, for whom He has exercised such power! Whichever way I looked, each object seemed like an image of Himself. He spoke the word, which called them into existence, and they echoed that word—which ever was the same—love, love, and only love. All proclaimed the greatness of His love, the love of Him, who is the One Eternal Love. Oh, what music, what harmony in those sweet sounds! Once more I seemed lost in love, buried in the depth of its eternity.

But His will combined with me, who am still only His thought, and aroused me to ask, for whom He, the Eternal God had given form to all those beautiful things, which hitherto had only existed in His mind? To whose minds are those exquisite forms to bear the loving thoughts of the great Eternal Love? For whom was all that harmony of love pouring itself forth in such torrents, that, even to me, it seemed infinite and eternal? Who is he, who can hide himself from the bright rays of light pouring in on every side? Who can escape those consuming flames of love?

In that same moment I remembered, that here it was, that He called into existence those countless millions made to His own form and likeness, whom I had seen pouring forth from His hands. In His boundless love, He had called them into existence. In pouring out all His love for them, He had, as it were, created a void in Himself, a void which they were to fill up by giving back to Him the love, He had given them; *Give me thy heart and all thy love.*

Each voice of love, which burst forth from every created thing, was to fall on the intelligence of those, for whom His love had done so much, and there it was to be taken up by the free will, which alone could give the only love wherewith true love ever could combine, the only love worthy of Him, who had so freely poured out all His love on them. That love was to emanate from their free will in all the plenitude of perfect love.

Oh, how beautiful were those intelligences, those pure and spotless spirits! No word or thought could give any idea of their marvellous beauty. To know them as they really were we must know, what He is, to whose likeness they were made. And now, a thought enters my mind; is this their home? Are they to dwell here for ever? And looking round, I see that that cannot be; for those eternal waves which rolled away will return again.

Then why are they here? It must be in order that they may do some work for Him, who created this heaven and placed them in it, and may be, when that work is done, they will go home to the heaven, where their Father and Creator dwells.

I judge, how important is that work, in the mind of the great Creator, by all that He sees needful for its accomplishment. And I see that that all is only less than infinite in every way. Yet despite the infinite wonders and beauty which surround those blessed spirits on every side, I notice that for all that they are ever longing for something, as if they really had nothing.

And indeed they had nothing, for everything they had, was not a possession, since it would pass away, but only a means, by which they might obtain that, which alone could give them happiness, and would never pass away. Everything they now had, was intended to show them, how great and powerful was He, their own great God, and how great was His love for them;

all spoke of love, so that seeing all His love for them, they might love Him in return, and thus enter into eternal possession of Him.

I understand ;—they are moulded on Him, their Creator, and made to His own image and likeness, and He alone can fill them and satisfy their desires. Their work is, therefore, in a manner, infinite; it is to transform themselves into that which He is,—Love, Infinite Love, and so possess Him for ever.

MEDITATION V.

OUR LOVE FOR GOD MAKES US ONE WITH HIM.

DEEP in His eternal Mind I seemed to understand more clearly than all else that which immediately preceded and accompanied the creation of the place and means by which His first creatures were to do the work which would make them one with Him. The unbounded, the infinite love with which He did everything, absorbed every other thought.

Even the creation of that which was only for the service of those to whom His love was to give existence, appeared to me as the pouring out of the whole eternal ocean of His love.

And why so? It was because each object was to be the messenger of His love,—to tell those to whom He sent them of the perfection of His beauty, the greatness of His love, and how deserving He was of all their love. Oh, great indeed, and very great was that love!

When I saw the marvellous beauty and perfection of those creatures for whom He had done all, I no longer wondered that He loved them so much. But when I saw the greatness, and as it appeared, the infinity of that love, I felt that had I existence, and such love was poured out on me by One so great and good, I could not live, but must die of gratitude and love. And I felt that if I should see in myself the smallest

spark which was not love for Him, my heart would be rent asunder by the intensity of my grief.

He seemed to see Himself in them (made as they were to His own image and likeness) and poured out all His love on them. The Holy Ghost,—the Spirit of Love—only waited for that love to be reciprocated in order that He might take possession of them according to the measure and capacity of each one.

And I saw, and understood, that nothing but love could come from Him, and that if its greatness and its intensity could be realised, as it will be realised when He fully and finally possesses His creatures, it would be impossible for any intelligent being, whom He could create, to do other, than pour out on Him, with perfect free will, the plenitude of its love. Nor would it be possible for any creature, to think or imagine, that anything which the God of Love could do, could be other than the most perfect love.

I then understood, that that infinite love could only be seen in all its plenitude and comprehended, when seen in its own light; and therefore cannot be thus seen, until that light is shed in the entire person of the creature by the Holy Ghost—the Spirit of Love, when He has obtained final and irrevocable possession of it. Then only, can it clearly see and perfectly understand the ways of infinite Love. So long as the operations of divine love are regarded by intelligences, which are not yet illumined by the only light in which those operations can be seen, as they really are, they are distorted, even as the fairest face would be distorted, if reflected in an imperfect mirror.

MEDITATION VI.

THE BEAUTY AND BLISS OF HEAVEN IS THE WORK OF
DIVINE LOVE.

ALL I have, up to the present, seen is now before me. I see that wonderful abode called into existence by Infinite Love,

and that word, love, tells me, what perfection and beauty is to be found therein, since that love is omnipotent.

For a moment, I am overwhelmed with shame, and all confused, in thinking of what I have said of the beauty and perfection of that which now lies open before me. All I have said, and all I could say is, in comparison with the reality, as deepest darkness compared with brilliant light.

I also see the countless millions, whose abode is here ; and the beauty and perfection of each is so great, that if the least of them stood alone, I could understand without surprise, that all in this heaven had been created for him alone.

I know not, how long I remained absorbed in the contemplation of that glory, which to me appeared infinite, when His will intimated, that I should study some details, in order that I might more perfectly understand the whole.

Once more then, I open my eyes, and so intensely bright is the light of heaven, that if I really did exist, it would in a moment blind me. The light of a thousand suns and of all the stars together, would be as darkness, compared with that heavenly light. And I fully understood that all that light was the light of His love pouring down on all His creatures.

I then noticed, that these beautiful angels, and indeed all other creatures, had none of that marvellous beauty, with which they were clothed inherent in themselves. They had been created with capacity for the reception of those gifts, which their Creator's love poured into them so abundantly.

As we saw some time ago, when looking at the most beautiful things of earth, that there was no beauty in them, until the sun's bright rays shone down upon them, and that, when that light was gone, all was deep darkness, so was it with this heaven, and all that it contained.

I noticed also, that that bright light and fire of love, which God poured forth, could only enter into, and obtain possession of, the angels for whom God destined it, provided it found

in them the fuel, on which it could feed, that is, love for God emanating from free will, the only thing with which that eternal love ever can in any way combine. I saw each angel, as it were, making up his mind and forming his will.

On the one hand he saw his own immense power,—a power so exceeding great, that, as he had not yet fully realised the infinitely greater power of the Creator, he could almost think that he was himself omnipotent. Then besides his great power, he saw also his own marvellous beauty and perfection, and it was so like the beauty of Him, to Whose image he had been made, that combining it with the greatness of his power and strength, he could easily think, that he should hold his own independence, and, as far as he could do so, cause all love, and adoration to be given to himself alone.

But in the perfect clearness of his intelligence, he fully understood, that this would place him in direct antagonism with God, for whom, as being his rival and opponent, he would then have—not love, but really hate.

On the other hand, he saw that he owed not only his strength and beauty and manifold perfections, but even his very existence, to the boundless love and goodness of the Great God. How then could he return such love with bitter hate? Everything he saw and everything he heard, repeated to him again, and again, that one word which the Eternal God is,—*Love, Love.*

His free will must exercise its power in the presence of such an alternative. He asks of himself: *Is all my love to be for Him? If for Him, then I shall be ready to suffer and die for Him, and to hate in myself, and in others all that is in any way opposed to Him. Is all my love to be for self? If for self, then there will be none for Him; I take His place. I cannot serve two masters, and therefore, if self-love possess me, I hate Him.*

In that moment, I thought a breath was coming down from the highest heaven, and whispering to each one these words: *Oh*

My Beloved, how I love thee! Thou art all fair and beautiful. What is there, I would not do for thee? And indeed, those words only summed up, briefly, the words spoken by every creature—the greatness of God's Love. The deepest silence now reigned. But notwithstanding all that love, I saw that hate was also in the balance. And I then understood, that as love imparts to him who possesses it, the beauty and perfections of the Great God, whose love it is, so also does hatred produce the extreme of hideousness and deformity, and all that is most repulsive. . . .

Again I listen, and I hear a distant sound, but which seemed to me not the sound itself, but as it were its echo. A sound may give an echo, but that echo follows it, but here the order was reversed, for the echo preceded the sound, which as yet I did not hear.

But, oh how beautiful was that echo! It was to me again that sweetest music, which once before had drawn down the Great God to me. All the angelic spirits were filled and penetrated by those sweetest chords, and paused, and seemed to drink them in with exceeding wonder and delight.

All the heavenly music they had ever heard before, was as discord in comparison with that which they now heard. And while they listened, that sweet echo burst forth again and again in all its fulness; creating thereby a new heaven, and the words embodied in it were these: *Behold the Handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to Thy Word.* And I understood, that those words would ever be the keynote and response to God of the free will of every creature, which had come forth from His hands, and gave Him all their love, no matter what He might ask, no matter what the sacrifice.

And countless millions took up the note, and their words were: *Behold us filled with Thy precious gifts. All is Thy gift, the gift of Thy great love, and the more beautiful and perfect we are, the more are we bound to be Thy faithful and loving*

servants, and to give all we have to Thee, and to fight and die for Thee. Make known Thy will, we give Thee all. O great good God, behold Thy faithful servants,—Thy own loving children, ready to do Thy will in all.

MEDITATION VII.

THE ANGELS FELL THROUGH CHOOSING HATE IN THEIR PRIDE AND SELF-LOVE INSTEAD OF LOVE; PREFERRING THEMSELVES TO GOD.

I, STILL ever remaining only as a thought in His eternal Mind, seemed in the moment of that great outburst of adoration, love and praise, to see a something in Him, which was new to me, and that something was so great and boundless that for an instant it excluded from my mind all else. His creatures' love appeared, as it were, to be to Him the crown of His own ineffable love for them. Nevertheless, a sorrow and anguish so great, that it could be measured only by the greatness of the love from which it took its rise, seemed present to His mind.

I knew, of course, that this was not really so, but there was a something, which corresponded with it, deeper than any creature could ever penetrate, and which He alone could understand. He who is Love Itself,—He only could understand the greatness of His love for His beloved children.

His will then directed my attention, once more, to that celestial harmony, and to those beautiful creatures who were singing His praises.

Then I saw as it were an almost imperceptible mist, which rose from, and encompassed many of the angels, and caused the notes, which they were singing, to be somewhat out of harmony with the voices of the greater number. These sang in full sonorous tones the words of the echo, which had come from afar.

Oh yes, they were all love and gratitude for the great good God; they would be His faithful servants and children, they would ever rejoice to do His holy will. But it seemed to me, that the notes, which were intercepted by the mist were less sonorous and less clear, and I thought I could not have heard them aright, for they seemed to me to say: *I will not serve.*

While I was deeply absorbed by these thoughts, it appeared to me, that the words I had heard, rose up to Him, and were the cause of the sorrow and anguish, which I had seen in Him, and which I now felt, as it had seemed to me just now, to be great in the measure of His love, and therefore so great indeed that, were it possible, it would melt away this whole creation into an ocean of bitter tears. (Oh yes, His whole person did pour out an ocean of tears and they were tears of blood; but not yet.) From that loving grief and anguish I learned more of His great goodness and love, than from all I had seen before.

And then I thought,—could not He, the Almighty God, have prevented an evil which must be so very great? And time thus echoed back an answer.

I saw a broken-hearted mother surrounded by her loving children. But one of them stood far from her, and that one she delivered to the executioners. But her cry of anguish rent my heart asunder, and I thought,—how could such love give up her child to death?

Then I looked at him and saw, that he was filled with every evil, and with most bitter hate for that loving mother, and for all those she loved the best, and I understood that if he did not die, he would destroy them all. Then I fixed my eyes on that poor mother, and her words of anguish went through and through my heart: *O my child, my child, could my life change thee from what thou art, transforming thy deadly hate into burning love, how gladly would I die for thee, a thousand thousand deaths.*

Then looking up, I once more saw the throne of the living God—who is Love Itself. I saw His Heart, so bright with all its love, that to me all else was darkness, and I saw in that Heart a wide gaping wound! Yes, He had died to give His creatures life!—greater love than this no one hath! Then I knew, that only rays of love could pour forth from Him, and although a cloud might intercept them for a time, or give them some other form than that which really was their own, yet that they were, all the same, ever pouring down and only rays of love.

Some of these rays are so intensely bright, that until created eyes live in their midst they appear as darkness. We must therefore wait until we can see them as they really are, and then He, from Whom they flow will say: *Tell Me what more I could have done.*

If that love could have prevented evil, either by not giving existence to the wicked, or by any other means, and did not do so, it can only have been, because that which He, the eternal Wisdom, did, was more in accordance with the end He willed it to attain, and with what He is,—Goodness and Love Itself. We shall see and understand all this, when, in a little while, we stand in the midst of those bright rays. We shall then see, that love, and love only, no matter what the form it may present to us, ever did and ever could come from Him Who is only Love.

For some time, I was lost in the contemplation of His infinite love and goodness. Then returning to myself, I was reminded of the words He had spoken to each of those angelic spirits: “*O my Beloved, how I love thee; what is there I would not do for thee?*” And indeed that was the language, in which He ever spoke through all there was in heaven.

In that same moment, a beautiful angel approached me. I had noticed him before, for he was nearer to me than many others, and I saw that he was clothed in such beauty and glory,

that I did not think it possible, that any one among those countless millions could exceed him in glory.

When this angel had joined in the outburst of love, he had as it were, collected in himself not only all the love of the heavenly host, but he had also clothed it in a something, which gave it a beauty and harmony exceeding that of almost every other creature. Had it been possible, I should have said: *That can be no creature's voice—it must be that of the Eternal Word Himself.*

No, it was not His voice, but it was the voice of her, who was the nearest and dearest to Him and the most like to Him of all His creatures. It was indeed the love of her, the echo of whose voice had given such harmony to the praises of the heavenly hosts. That angel had, as it were, caught up the voice itself, and blended it with his own outburst of love and praise, and therefore was it so exceedingly beautiful.

I felt attracted to him with a sentiment almost akin to adoration, and with a confidence and love, to which no words could give expression, and then once more (as seemed frequent in this heaven) the echo preceded the sound, and told me all he would hereafter do for me.

My gratitude and love became so great towards him, that I grieved because I could not concentrate all the beauty and glory, I had ever known, and pour it down on him. I felt such love for him, that I was certain, that even if some of those angelic spirits did exceed him in beauty and glory, he would nevertheless be to me the most beautiful of them all.

As he drew near me with ineffable love I should have asked him why it was so, but he himself spoke in the sweet tones I had already heard saying: *Beloved child of my own loved God and Father, since thou art His beloved child thou canst understand how great is my love for thee. But also I am drawn*

to thee amongst all His children, and thou art drawn to me, because He has chosen me to be thy Guardian Angel, when it shall please Him to call thee into existence. Then the echo came again of what he would one day do for me, and I saw that he looked at me with such love, that it reminded me of the love of God Himself.

All in a moment, fear and sadness came over him, and he seemed to struggle very hard, as if engaged in a tremendous battle, in which I saw that I was taking part and siding with his enemy, and fighting against himself. But he conquered and bound me fast, and I was now his prisoner, and deserving of death for my heartless rebellion, and he told me that that death, he must now inflict on me, and then he whispered to me such words of tender love and entire pardon,—all messages from Him Who is Love Itself,—that I felt that I was really dying, that my heart was breaking; and the death I had to die and which he inflicted on me, was, that he broke my heart with the grief of love and gratitude, which flowed into it in such abundance from all God's loving words. I was dead to all but Him, my own loved God. He had now become my only life. Then my Angel's look of sadness passed away, and he seemed brighter than before, he had already loved me very much, but now his love seemed to have no bounds. Oh, how I loved him in return!

Ineffably great also, was the love of his dear Lord, who now poured down upon him rays of intensest love, and thanked him for having fought the hard battle, and snatched me, His poor child, from the hands of the enemy. And the sound of the echo went no farther, but softly melted away into deepest silence.

MEDITATION VIII.

THE BRIGHT LIGHT OF THE HEAVEN OF THE ANGELS BEFORE THEY WERE CONFIRMED IN GRACE, CAME NOT DIRECT FROM GOD, BUT WAS AS IT WERE REFLECTED LIGHT, AND THEY KNEW HIM BY HIS WORKS.

FOR a time the silence of contemplation reigned, and then my Angel spoke. I understood, that our good God permitted him to show me all,—not in the form existing in the angelic mind, but in a form intelligible to mine. Man spells out his words, letter by letter, the angel reads them all, in a single intellectual glance. With much toil, and only by degrees, man collects together all the information required, in order to arrive at a decision, and often hesitates and doubts. But it is not so with the angels. The voice of God, speaking through all the works of His love, is like a flash of intense light, illumining perfectly those angelic intelligences, and revealing to them, in a moment, everything which the Creator, in giving them existence, willed that they should know and understand.

This knowledge is perfect and complete from the beginning, and therefore their judgment and decision is formed at once, without doubt, or hesitation. Consequently, that judgment and that decision is, and must be, irrevocable and final.

In this manner the angels perfectly and immediately understood the word of the Creator: *You cannot serve two masters. If you love the one, you hate the other.* In a moment they made their irrevocable and final choice. With absolute freedom of will, they elicited an act which would be eternal. That word of the Lord spoken to them by every creature: *What is there I would not do for thee, and what more could I have done for thee?* was understood by all.

I now noticed, that, bright and beautiful as was the light which illumined the abode of bliss, it was all reflected light, and none could see the source whence it proceeded. I looked

at my dear Angel, and from his face streamed forth the answer to my thought,—God alone is infinite and therefore every creature, even the most perfect, is infinitely far from Him, and can only see and know Him indirectly, and by inference from His works.

The great power and beauty, and all the manifold perfections He has bestowed on us, reveal to us the infinite goodness and perfections of our great Creator, whence they all proceed, and we know, that, thus owing Him all we possess, we also owe Him all our gratitude and love. If in the exercise of our free will, we give Him what we owe, He pours it back into us confirmed by His own great love, which then abides for ever, and enriches all the gifts He has already given, confirming us in the eternal possession of them.

But in our creation, He gave us capacity for far more than that. He gave us capacity for the reception of Himself,—the source of this bright light, should it ever be possible to span the infinite space which intervenes between Him and us. He, the Almighty, could alone do that, and He engaged to do it, when He determined one day to ask what more He could have done. But as He has given us free will, that will must elicit love, perfect in its kind, in order that He, who is Love Itself, may find that with which alone He can unite. I asked my Angel, *what is that full and perfect love?* And he replied:

“The greater my love for another, the greater is my hate for all opposed to him. When perfect love emanates from me, it is accompanied by full entire hatred for all opposed to him, who possesses all my love, and the more powerful is my love, the more powerful also is my hate.

If I find that opposition in myself, I so far hate myself, and force myself in all the energy of love to do the will of him I love, no matter at what cost.

If, on the other hand, all my love is for self, hatred for all opposed to my will, emanates from me. The strength and

power of the one, or the other, in the angelic nature, is far beyond the mind of man ever to conceive. I see that, whatever power and beauty and love I possess, comes from God, and from Him alone. Even as the beauty and brilliancy of a diamond come from the sun which shines upon it, and disappear the moment those rays are withdrawn, so also does all our brightness and beauty come from the eternal Sun of Justice, and if we withdraw from Him, they instantly depart. Therefore, I love Him who has given me all I have, and in loving Him, I hate all opposed to Him.”

CONTINUATION.

My attention was now attracted by two angels whose beauty and perfection exceeded that of all the others, even as the brightness of the full moon surpasses that of all the stars. They were so exceeding bright, that had I not known, it could not be so, I should have thought God's bright rays fell direct upon them, and that it was from them that they were reflected on all the others. In those rays reflected on them, the one shone forth as the brilliant diamond, the other, as the exquisite ruby.

The first I saw was the prince and leader of the heavenly host. On him the great good God had poured out, in far greater abundance than on all the rest, (the second one excepted) the riches of His love. I thought within myself how very great, greater than the concentrated love of all other creatures, must be that angel's love for the good God, who has done so much for him.

All inflamed with this thought, I raised my mind to him, but I met with no response. He was cold and inspired me with fear,—a fear, I seemed to know again. When had I felt it? I remember it was, when I thought, that in the hymn of praise some notes were not in harmony.

I turned to my dear Angel, (oh, what a contrast!) he was all beaming with love, and filled me with confidence and courage, and I asked him,—who is he—that one, who fills me with such fear? My question seemed to awaken the same fear in him, but calling me his beloved one, he replied, that the name of that other angel was Lucifer, because he bore in himself, in a supreme degree, the bright light of God's love. For that reason, his obligation to love the good God with all his being, and to lead all his companions to love Him, was very great, and his obligation was all the greater, because he was the prince, and leader of them all.

I then saw the millions who flocked around him and almost worshipped him. But I also saw something, which I did not understand. Greater numbers than I could count, gathered round my Angel, and their love and praises seemed to rise to him as sweetest incense, and from him ascend, in streams of brightest light and love, to the throne of God.

But it was not so with the great prince and leader, for the bright cloud encircled him, but rose no higher. And all those who were nearest to him, and served him best, reawakened in my dear Angel, though in a less degree, the sadness which the sight of their leader had caused in him.

And I remembered, that they were the very same, whose voices had not seemed in perfect tune with those of the countless millions, when they sang their hymn of adoration, praise and love. I turned to my dear Angel, but he was silent though he let me understand that I should see all, not now, but later.

He then directed my attention to the second angel, whose perfections (though of a different order), equalled, if indeed they did not exceed, those of the first. This angel seemed to have no special charge, but like a little loving child, was the beloved of all. All poured out on him, in the form of love, that which, when given to the leader, seemed almost adora-

tion. And I beheld all this love which was given him, rise up from him to his own loved God, to whom he referred it all, and it was so bright, so very bright, that it seemed to me to carry up all the glory of the angels, and of all the heavens. Soon after I had observed all this, I heard Lucifer, his leader, call him, and straightway, in prompt obedience, he flew to his side, and I noticed an all but imperceptible tremor pass over him.

Many of the more immediate followers of the great leader, had flocked round him, to give welcome to the loved one, summoned to his presence. For him they always had had the tenderest affection. But now, as soon as he stood before them, they seemed, without knowing why, to be filled with fear and held back and clung to their leader, whose great power knew no such thing as fear. I thought, however, that I detected even in him, both fear and defiance. Strange! How could that sweet gentle angel excite either the one or the other, in any one? Yet so it was, and seeing it, he withdrew.

All in heaven seemed perfectly aware of the almost boundless love the great Creator had for this beautiful angel. He appeared in each moment, to be growing as it were, in light and glory, and it was evident to the leader and to all, that God was preparing him for some great and most important charge.

Although, as we have already seen, some of the angels seemed to fear him, yet the greater part loved him with a love almost akin to adoration. But none of this love did he take to himself, it all without reserve was referred to Him whom he loved with his whole entire being. Regarding himself as nothing in the presence of his Creator, he wondered, why so much love was given to him who was but the servant, of the great immortal God. But he was deeply grateful to all for their great love, and considering himself their debtor, there was nothing he would not gladly do for them.

I had noticed from time to time more ardent acts of love

rising up from him to God, and then flashes of brightest light poured down on him, and clothed him with ever-increasing glory. I now watched him returning from the presence of his leader, and sadness and anguish had possession of him. But that very sadness only increased his beauty, and made him look more God-like.

CONTINUATION.

All in a moment, the firmament seemed rent asunder, and the Form under which the great eternal Love, unseen and unknown, as He is in Himself, to every creature, communed with those who sought Him,—that Form, as brightest light enveloped the angel, and bore Him up, as it were, to His own eternal home.

I, being in the Mind of God, saw and heard much. The dear angel wept, and the more clearly he saw all God's goodness and love, the more he wept that such love should not be loved. And I thought God also wept, because His beloved was weeping, and He said to that loving child: *How beautiful art thou, My beloved, there is neither spot nor stain in thee.* And the angel answering said: *If I have beauty, Thou hast given it to me, and all I have, I owe to Thee, my God; therefore, I am bound to serve Thee with perfect love. Behold the servant of the Lord.* At these words his loving Lord and Master paused for a moment, for in them He seemed to hear the words and the voice of her, who one day would be His Mother. Indeed it seemed to me, as if that beautiful angel was a sort of counterpart in the angelic host of what the pure and spotless Mother would be on earth, amid the human race. Then it seemed to me, as if that Great God said to Himself: *Yes, to be her child and possess her love, and then give myself to all, I will bridge over eternal space, and be truly man as well as truly God.* And the dear angel heard His words, and also

these, which followed: *Then thou wilt see my face, and all who like thee, love me, shall see me face to face and be mine for ever. Wait awhile, and thou shalt know all who give their love to me.*

I saw that my dear Angel awaited the return of Him whom he so greatly loved; they were united by the most intimate and tender affection for each other. And therefore, when my Angel saw his beloved companion weep, he also wept with him; but their tears soon ceased to flow, for when they reflected on the extent to which God's love, now made known to them, would go, it seemed to them impossible that any one, on hearing of such love,—love carried even to excess,—could refuse to join in the universal act of adoration, praise, and love which such infinite love would necessarily elicit; and so, once more, their only thought was love for Him Who is worthy of all their love.

MEDITATION IX.

LOVE MUST EVER TRIUMPH OVER HATE.

AND now, even as before creation, profoundest silence reigned. Indeed, the new life to be bestowed by eternal Love, was so far beyond all other life, that, in comparison with it, all that had gone before was as if it had never been.

Then, in the repose of deepest contemplation, each angel saw again all that the Great Creator had done for him. He was plunged deep down into the ocean of God's infinite love, he saw the love with which that Love had given him existence, and bestowed on him all his countless and exquisite perfections, perfections so great that nothing was wanting in them in any way. He understood, that everything he possessed, was the free and loving gift of the Great Good God, and that he ought to give Him in return, the love of his entire being. Deep

down in that ocean of God's Infinite love, he heard the Creator's voice whispering to him and saying: *How beautiful art thou, my beloved. What is there I would not do for thee? Thou seest my love for thee, then give me all thy love.*

And now, the loud voice of the prince and leader roused each one from his deep contemplation. It was a mandate, calling on all to assemble round the Throne of the Eternal King. Instantly that order was obeyed, and I saw the Great Throne surrounded by countless myriads of angels and arch-angels. They appeared already to know, that the Good God whose love was to go to the very end (*Tell me what more I could have done?*) would give them One who could bridge over the infinite space which stood between the Creator and the creature; for they burst forth into their hymn of praise, which through Him alone could reach the Infinite God Himself and carry them to Him. *Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord God of Hosts.*

And now once more deep silence reigned. Lucifer, the prince and leader, whom God had enriched beyond all other angels, stood before the Throne. He seemed to me to stand there reluctantly—as one who would not serve. On the other side stood the dear angel so especially loved by God; his whole being quivered with love, and those quiverings were vibrations which carried all he was into the very Heart of God. He seemed to cling to his God, as it were to protect and defend Him, as a child would defend its loving mother thinking her in danger. His entire person seemed to vibrate his own name, Michael (that is, who is like God), and it seemed to take possession of all.

For a moment, the whole attention of every angel seemed fixed on him, and then his whole voice broke forth filling the entire heaven, and crying out: *My God, My own good God, I love thee, oh, how I love thee!* Then he appeared before all those angels resplendent with beauty and power, endowed with

mighty greatness, and they regarded him with wonder and admiration, for, never before, had they seen him so glorious and resplendent, and this only, because until now, he had never manifested it to them, he had kept it all for Him who had all his love, the God from whom he had received it all.

But now the time had come, when, it was important to inspire others with confidence in himself, and show them, how very great and powerful he really was and enriched in every way. The time had come, when he would use in the service of his God, all he had received from Him. Until that moment I had not realised the immensity of the angelic power, or the strength and inflexibility of his will. That will, though enjoying perfect freedom, no power could move or change, when once it had arrived at a decision.

Then too, I realised, that these angelic beings who had been made all for God, would receive yet more abundantly of His beauty and manifold perfections, as soon as they entered into the full possession of Him by entire love. Great and immense as was their beauty even now, it was as nothing compared with that which it would one day be, when the full act of love should make them one with Him for ever. This will was free to choose between the two opposite extremes,—love and hate. What love would impart of beauty, glory and happiness, hate would impart of hideousness, deformity and frightful suffering. To whichever their will once adhered, it would adhere for ever, so that happiness or torments would be their portion for all eternity.

As soon as the archangel's love burst forth like sweetest music, I detected a half-hidden look of scorn on the great leader's brow. That scornful look he did not intend to be seen by all, but only by those who were his devoted followers. When the sweet music of that great act of love had passed away, he then made known to the assembled multitude, that he was charged by the great King to announce to them, a matter of

deepest import. "The King," he said, "would one day appeal to them, to tell Him what more He could have done for them, and that He would then fill up the measure of His love. He reminded them, that an infinite space, must ever separate the finite from the Infinite. Infinite power alone can unite the two, and that infinite power the King will exercise in our regard. Hitherto we have known Him only through His works; henceforth we shall see Him face to face. Hitherto the bright light of His love could not fall directly on us, henceforth we shall be illumined by that Light Itself. A prayer will rise to Him from the purest and most perfect of His creatures, entreating that His will may be done in all, according to His word. In that moment created nature will be assumed from that perfect creature into the Divinity, a finite nature will be united with one that is Infinite, and through that one, the bright light of God's love will pass direct upon us, and incorporate us with Himself. By Him all the angels, archangels, the cherubim and seraphim will cry out unceasingly: *Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God of Sabaoth.*"

I noticed that Michael with the other six, who guarded God's Throne, drew nearer to their King; and I, present in the Divine Mind, saw His Will enter the mind of His beloved one, and it seemed to say: *Thou art Prince and Leader of all who are mine, but not yet; wait, and watch.*

I now saw the thought which passed through the mind of Lucifer. It was: *I am the fairest of all God's creatures; it is myself whom He has chosen, and He now awaits my appeal to Him to do His Will according to His word.*

A glance at *his* followers, assured him that they were in accord with him, and, certain of their allegiance, he cried out aloud: *Thy will be done according to Thy Word.* The response was instantaneous, and seemed to be as the voice of God Himself. It thrilled through and through every creature to whom He had given life, and it was: *Thou shalt*

love the Lord thy God. But that was not the response which he had expected. He awaited another in the deep silence which now reigned,—a response which would proclaim his own divinity. But none came. He then withdrew and was followed by a great number—a third of the heavenly host.

My Angel, then made known to me, that the prince and leader of them all, he who had received most abundantly of all God's most perfect gifts, and who was therefore bound so strictly and, beyond all the others to return to his Creator and his King all the gratitude and love of his whole entire being, had become so filled with self-love and pride that he would no longer depend on God for the consummation of his bliss. He had persuaded himself, that he was self-sufficient, and that he could be happy without submitting to his King,—unless indeed, he was the creature to be assumed into the Divinity. He would wait to know who that one was, and if not himself, then he would neither submit nor serve. *No, I will not serve; will you?* was the declaration he made to his followers. And their reply to him was: *No, neither will we serve.*

That was to be his war-cry; and he, their leader, then pledged himself, that whatever might be his lot,—whether incorporated with God, or remaining as he then was,—he would never permit them, his faithful followers, to be made slaves.

I then saw, how love for self, the fruit of pride, had already taken possession of them also, and of their free wills, they only holding back their bitter hate for God, until they should hear His full and final announcement of what He would demand from them.

In that moment, my dear Angel drew nearer to me, and gave me to understand that the wisdom of God, being infinitely above the wisdom of any creature, its greater and more important acts are also, infinitely beyond any created intelligence, not yet admitted to the perfect possession of God. In the

light of finite and created wisdom, God's greatest acts of love often appear directly opposed to love.

Such would be the case, more especially, with that crowning work of love, which He was now about to reveal to these angelic spirits. It would seem not to be in accordance with perfect love, but to demand a sacrifice and humiliation from them.

Those who are all love for God, and who therefore hate everything which is opposed to Him, cast away from themselves, at once, and with all the energy of their mighty wills, any and every thought of resistance to Him whom they love so intensely, and rejoice to make for His sake any sacrifice, no matter what, or how great it may be. They know full well, that all which proceeds from that infinite ocean of Love must be true and perfect love, under whatever form it may appear.

But (as we have already seen), very different is it with those whose love is for self. These hate every one and all that seems detrimental to themselves, and consequently, when God enjoins a thing which seems to involve a sacrifice on their parts, their hate bursts forth against Him, and against all who love Him, in all its strength and bitterness.

Therefore, the great God, before announcing to His angels what would be His final and crowning work of love, assembled them round His Throne, in order that He might convince them of His boundless love for them, and thus, in return, win their whole entire love.

Then it was that their great Lord and Master gave them His supreme command: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy mind and strength*, the command itself telling how great was His love for them, that He, the Great, the Infinite, the Almighty God, loved them with all His mind and strength, loved them to the end, that this love went as far as Love could go—that love itself could go no farther.

In the same moment it was easy to see, who were God's

real loving servants, and who were those, who would never serve, for a most bright and brilliant light encompassed and penetrated those, who were all love for Him, whereas those, who were all hate, threw out a lurid glare.

And now the great and decisive moment had arrived. The leaders of the angelic hosts issued the King's commands, that all should assemble round His Throne, there to hear the extent to which Love Itself could, and would go for them.

Then all those heavenly spirits grouped themselves round the Throne of the Most High. All the various orders and choirs came,—each into its own place, and each displayed in its own plenitude the marvellous beauty and manifold perfections bestowed upon it by the good and loving God. And these choirs seemed to vie with each other in singing the praises of the King. There was no discord now, all was in sweet and perfect harmony. Their leader had forbidden any sign or note of discord pending the edict of the King.

All was now in deepest silence, for all knew, that they had reached the great, the all-important moment. The Eternal King was upon His Throne. The bright light, which hid from view the Form, which never could be seen by any finite creature, and through which He, the great and Infinite God, was pleased to communicate more directly with His Angels, now shone in all its great glory; all the light of heaven seemed dark compared with it. All listened in greatest expectation. Then a loud voice issued from the midst of the bright light: *Michael, prince and leader of My Angels, make known My love for them and for all My children.*

In that moment, Michael, the beloved of God, who was resplendent with the very light which, on the Throne, hid the Form of God, stood forth in the presence of that countless multitude. The King had now bestowed on him a beauty and perfection far surpassing that of all the other angels, and it was evident to them that he was God's beloved one. I saw

the thought of envy and hatred which passed in that moment in the mind of Lucifer, and I heard him say: *He then takes my place; he supplants me.*

Then, the great archangel spoke, and his voice was as the sweetest music of heaven, nay more, it was divine, it was infinite harmony, and his words were: *Et Incarnatus Est. . . . and He, the great Eternal God, was incarnate and became Man.* Those divine and adorable words were instantly taken up, and repeated by those millions of God's angels, who loved Him with their whole being. *And He was incarnate by the Holy Ghost from the Virgin Mary, and was made Man.* All in a moment, this harmony of heaven was interrupted, a terrible shriek burst forth from Lucifer. It was a cry of almost boundless rage and fiercest hatred against God, and against His decree as he exclaimed: *A creature, less than the least of us, to be assumed into the Divinity. Never will I submit, no, never will I give to him adoration, praise, or love. No, I will never serve.* That loud cry of rage, hatred, and defiance was repeated by all who had chosen to follow the rebellious leader, and, in that moment, they all rushed forward with him, in all the terrible power of their hatred, to attack, and destroy if possible, Him Who sat upon the Throne.

The mighty force of this hatred fell upon the great archangel who guarded the Throne of God, but it hurt him not; he cast it off, even as a mighty rock casts off the waves which in all their fury dash down upon it. Then he, Michael, uttered in a voice which rose high above all other sounds, the watchword of fidelity and love: *Who is like unto God?* That grand cry of the great archangel was instantly repeated by the countless millions who, like him, were devoted to their King.

And then began the great battle between the good and the rebel angels, the great battle between love and hate, a battle so tremendous, that no human mind can ever form any conception of what it really was.

On the one side was Love unbounded, whose greatest happiness was to sacrifice all happiness, and even life itself, in the service of the great immortal King. He was the one object of all their love; hence their cry: *Who is like unto God? Behold the servants of the Lord.* He, their beloved Lord, had given expression to His Will. He had revealed to them His decree, that human nature,—a nature inferior to their own—should be assumed into the Divinity, and, in the greatness of their love, they would never have exchanged the happiness of a sacrifice, or even death for Him, for all the joys of heaven, and adoring His decree, and overflowing with love and happiness so great, that they thought it must be God's own love and happiness in heaven that had come upon them, they cried out: *Be it done according to Thy word.*

On the other side was hatred, all but boundless; hatred most bitter and intense, hatred, united with, and aided by all the mighty power of the angelic nature, hatred against God and against all most dear to Him, a hatred that would shrink from nothing in its endeavour to dethrone and destroy God, were that possible. Hence their loud cry of defiance and of treason: *I will not serve, I will ascend and become like to the Most High.*

God permitted that tremendous conflict to rage round His Throne not only for the greater glory of those who loved Him, but also to give fresh power to their love, and render them more and more capable of that ineffable union, which He,—the Eternal Love, would effect with them.

The change which had come over the rebel angels since pride and self-love had first taken possession of them, was terrible to behold. They, who up to that moment, had been so bright and beautiful, and who had received a capacity for beauty and perfection all but boundless, a perfection which they would have attained in the first moment of their full possession of Him, who is Infinite Beauty, and Infinite Perfection.

tion, had now lost all their beauty and were transformed into the most hideous, and frightful monsters. They *were* angels; but *now* they are devils. No words could describe, no mind could conceive all they had lost, and all they had now become.

Against these hideous and fiendish monsters, Michael and his angels fought. They fought and conquered. Their victory was rapid and complete. Then they dragged their captives before the throne of the great King, that He might judge them, and pass sentence upon them.

In that moment the eternity in which we were, seemed to open out, and the time when God would be incarnate, appeared as though actually present to us. As all judgment is given to the Son, and the Father judges no one, we saw the Eternal Son under that form which He would one day assume, and we saw by His side another form so like Him, that the two forms were indeed as one.

When He appeared, Michael, and all the choirs of the good and faithful angels, sang out in sweetest and most perfect harmony, those beautiful words which had been their war-cry, and had rendered them victorious over all their enemies: *Behold the Handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to Thy word.* Then, as the eternal King ascended the steps of the throne, those celestial choirs repeated in yet sweeter harmony: *And He was incarnate, from the Virgin Mary, and was made man.* And as those words sounded in His ears, the King looked with ineffable love upon those blessed spirits, and opening His arms to embrace them, He said: *Come ye blessed of my Father.* Instantly, they were drawn to His sacred and loving Heart, and I saw them transformed into such great beauty and glory that I knew the light of His love was no longer reflected on them through creatures, but shone direct upon them, penetrating and filling them with brightness and glory. Now, for the first time, they saw Him face to face, and

now also, for the first time, their acts of praise and love, went direct to Him; for, by Him, the angels, and archangels, the Cherubim, and Seraphim cry out without ceasing: *Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God of Sabaoth.*

There was a moment's pause, and then raising His eyes, and regarding the whole assembly round His throne, He spoke so that all might hear His words. He said: *What is there that I ought to do more to My vineyard, and I have not done it?* Those words were accompanied by a ray of light which, falling on the rebel angels, awakened in them deepest anguish and despair. It caused them to understand and realise how all His ways with them, from the first moment of their creation, had all been ways of infinite goodness and love. They saw clearly and distinctly, and fully realised that, whatever His ways may have seemed to them, they were ever ways of infinite love, and that ray of light forced them to cry out: *Thou couldst have done no more!* That same ray will fall on all, on the great day of judgment, and with the same result. If any creature should ever ask why God, who is all-powerful and infinitely good, did not do one thing, which appears to it to be better than that which He really has done, the answer, and the *only* answer is, that He did not do it, because it was less in accordance with the eternal wisdom which guides and directs His goodness and love—wisdom in comparison with which all other wisdom is only folly. Of many acts which God might do, He always does the one, which under the circumstances, is the most in accordance with the love which He wills to pour forth. To those dwelling on the earth, whose only light is the light of faith, this may not always appear to be the case.

Nevertheless, it always is, and must be so, and when the dark light of faith shall have given way to the full light of glory, they will see that which is hidden from them now, hidden because they are things of faith and which therefore appear

not. It was always so, all was always love and could never have been otherwise, since God is Love Itself.

And now I saw and understood that the rebel angels were in the fulness of their torments. Infinite Goodness, must infinitely repel evil ; as evil, to the extent of its power, repels good. Therefore, the moment evil took possession of the rebels, Infinite Goodness repelled them, and they repelled Him,—the source of all goodness and beauty and joy, and in that same moment, having in Him lost all beauty and happiness, nothing could remain but the opposite extreme, that is of hideousness and suffering which thus had full possession of them. Nothing now remained but for the Judge to pronounce sentence on them.

But before He did so, I saw the glorious conqueror—the Archangel Michael—go before the throne and bow down in adoration before Him Who sat thereon. The King regarded Him with ineffable love, and then said : *Ask what thou wilt.* He replied : *O great God, merciful and patient, who dost punish sin less than it deserves, Thou beholdest the torments which these ungrateful monsters, once Thy children, now undergo ! They themselves have created the fuel which feeds those flames, Thou couldst not do it. Let Thy sentence which their eternal hatred and rejection of Thee obliges Thee to pronounce upon them, carry with it a lessening of the ardour of those tormenting flames. Where Thy voice penetrates, it must always bring relief. They must depart hence, and never hear Thy voice again ; they have lost Thee for ever !* I then saw more clearly even than before, what monsters those rebels had become, and how terrific was their hate, for they writhed in agony and rage at the thought of receiving grace or favour from the object of their hate. They would rather that their torments be redoubled than receive from Him any abatement of them.

Yes, they hated Him with such intensity of hate that they preferred eternal torments to a favour at His hand, and so will

it be for ever. That hatred is unchangeable, it is eternal, and it will ever, as far as it has power so to do, pour itself forth against God and against every creature.

The good God now gives His command, and instantly the walls of hell appear. In that hell they will suffer less than they suffer in this moment, less than they must suffer, if unprotected by its walls.

The great Judge now addresses them: *You have refused all My love, and you, in the exercise of your free wills, rejected Me; you give Me bitter hate, and compel me to cast you off for ever, depart then, ye cursed, into everlasting fire!* Instantly they all plunged into hell's dreadful flames, and its doors closed over them for ever, for all eternity!

Oh, my soul, see what a frightful evil it must be to turn by sin from God. Let tears run down like a torrent, day and night; for by sin He is cast off, Who is all beauty, happiness, goodness and love, He is cast off by sin, which alone can do so. Oh, sinner then, *let tears run down like a torrent day and night; give thyself no rest.* If evil is the only just object of sorrow, if tears are only made to weep for and regret it, then we can never weep as much as we should weep, since sin is an infinite evil, being an outrage against Him Who is infinite. If thou weapest rivers of tears, or as much water as there is in the sea, thou wilt not have wept for sin as much as it deserves; one tear for a little evil, two for a greater, an infinity of tears for an evil which is infinite, and unless thou weapest here, thou must weep there for ever, whence there is no redemption. *For there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.* After a million of years there will be weeping, after ten million years, there will be weeping,—weeping for ever.

Oh, tell me, lost rebel angel, in thy torments, who is it that thus punishes thee? Is it, can it be the good, the loving God?—*No, no, no,* is his instant response; *His power is great, but He could not do that, He could make no creature suffer, as He is*

Love Itself. Oh who then did it, who could do it? *Only hate, I did it myself!* But He made thee? *Yes, He made me like Himself, Love, and I undid His work, and made myself what I am,—Hate.* I was free, and He could not prevent me. If thou couldst, wouldst thou now go to heaven? *No, no, never; I already suffer enough here, there I should suffer infinitely more; here at least I am in my own element of hate, there I should be out of it, in the element of love, and then my torments would indeed be terrible; all hell's torments concentrated into one, would be nothing to it!*

MEDITATION X.

GOD IS INFINITE LOVE AND MERCY. THE SUFFERINGS OF THE REPROBATE DO NOT COME FROM HIM, BUT ARE THEIR OWN CREATION.

MY Guardian Angel now addresses to me these words: “My beloved, our dear Lord allows thee now to take thy place on earth for a little while. Hast thou anything to ask of me, in explanation of what thou hast heard or seen?”

Dear Angel, will the torments of those rebel angels be eternal? Will our good and merciful God never show them mercy?

“My beloved, the good God, Who is both Infinite Love, and Infinite Mercy, can never be anything but merciful. He is Mercy Itself. But here there enters no question of mercy. Were it so, that mercy would not have waited for the lapse of ages, but would have been exercised in the moment of their fall. Their sufferings, the sufferings of the reprobate, do not come upon them as an infliction and revenge poured down upon them by an angry and unforgiving God. Oh no, only love can flow from Him, and it is precisely for that reason that they, who are nothing but bitterest hate, can never be united with Him, Who is ardent Love Itself, and ever must repel Him, as love must also,

from the fact of what it is, ever repel hate. They themselves are the source from which their sufferings take their rise, they themselves, by their own wills, continue ever and for ever to supply fuel for their torments, and therefore in the midst of those torments must they ever dwell.

The constant bitter hatred which they are ever pouring out against God's ever-flowing love, rejecting it in every way, compels that love also to reject and ever cast them off.

The evil which they are, ever hurling itself so to say against the good which He is, and opposing it in every possible way, compels that good ever to cast off that evil. Good and evil, love and hate, are like the distinct elements of fire and water which must, ever and for ever, repel each other in all the fullness of their strength.

Their sufferings then consist, first, in the loss of all good, that is in the loss of God, whom in their hatred for Him they are ever repelling, and terrible those sufferings must be indeed, since the absence of any one suffering of which their nature might be capable, would be a blessing, though indeed only a negative one, but as all good, all happiness, is lost where God is *entirely* lost, even that negative one cannot be present there.

Secondly, they consist in the special sufferings which result from each attribute of love which has been outraged by their sins, and of which they have thus become capable, justice it is that inflicts them. Their lot then is in their own hands and is not dependent on, or a question of, mercy on the part of God.

Did they ever cease by hate and evil to cast off God, who is Love Itself and all that is good in every way, and change their hate to love, and replace evil by good, as is done by repentant sinners in this world, and thus no longer force Him to cast them off, their sins would all be forgotten and their sufferings changed into the joys of heaven. God is goodness and Love Itself, and is unable to repel any creature, that does not repel Him.

But they will never cease repelling Him, but ever hate Him and rebel for ever Him who has said in sweet and loving accents: *Turn to me, and I will turn to you and will cast your sins to the bottom of the sea and remember them no more.*

I say then again that the reprobate have elicited, in the exercise of their free will, an irrevocable and eternal act of hatred against God. They will never repent, they will never consent to receive mercy from Him. They have so entirely and completely debased and deformed their nature, that they have now become the personification of evil, and are therefore antagonistic to God, Who is essential goodness.

Even as fire and water, which are by nature antagonistic to each other, and can never combine, so neither can these rebels ever unite with the good and loving God. The repulsion is mutual, for good must repel evil, as evil must repel good, and that in the measure in which each attribute of good, has been outraged by that which corresponds with it in him, who has been made to God's own image and likeness. Thus there is I say again, not only the frightful general suffering which results from the loss of God, but also the special suffering which justice demands for each attribute which has been outraged in detail, otherwise the one would not be good, or the other evil.

But this state has been brought about, not by God, but by themselves alone. It was their own act, an act accomplished with entire knowledge, and with full deliberation, and in the exercise of their perfectly free will; it was irrevocable and final, and will endure for all eternity, they will ever hate God with eternal hate.

In this sense then God can never exercise mercy in their regard, they themselves will never permit Him so to do. They are in antagonism with it, and I say once more, that had it been possible, mercy would have been exercised in all its fulness, in the moment it was needed.

DIGRESSION.

Again my dear Angel speaks ; “ My beloved, I see in the world two persons standing before an altar, there to be united, and made one by God. The future is before me, even as the present. I see three sons—the offspring of that union. To these are given the same means and opportunities for the attainment of riches, honours, and the most perfect happiness this world can bestow.

Two of them succeed, and obtain unbounded wealth, highest honours, and perfect happiness. The third fails utterly and completely in all, and this by his own wilful and deliberate fault. He wastes his opportunities, he idles away his time, and commits every crime. At length he falls into the hands of justice, and after enduring many torments, expiates his evil life by a painful and ignominious death.

Must that union be forbidden and existence denied to those who, making a perfect use of all with which they are provided, will attain so great an amount of glory and happiness—glory and happiness which will redound on all connected with them, or in any way dependent on them, because another, having precisely the same means at his disposal, will cast them all aside, and wilfully and deliberately launch into every evil, and draw on himself an ignominious death? Surely not. Therefore those who by keeping on the right path will attain eternal life and happiness, are not to be denied existence, because others will refuse to walk on a rugged way!

So then was it in the creation of the angels, and in the creation of the human race. All the ways of God which are intelligible to us, are seen to be ways of love. His hidden ways are always, and must be, love, guided not by our folly but by eternal wisdom, and though incomprehensible to us now; they are the ways of the same loving God, and therefore can be no other than ways of love.

We see them now only by the light of faith, and in that light of faith we are warned, that things will seem to our dark minds the opposite of what they are, love seeming hate, and hate love.

But when we see God Himself, in the bright light of glory, when we see Him face to face, we shall see things as they really are, and then He will ask us 'What is there that I ought to do more to my vineyard, that I have not done to it?'"

Oh no, dear Lord, Thou couldst have done no more. Oh how good Thou art! I love Thee with all my heart. I see and know and understand, that all Thy ways are, and must be, the ways of love. I thank thee, my dearest Angel, bless me.

"I bless thee, beloved child. And now thou must return with me, and be once more a thought in the eternal Mind."

PART IV.

S U M M A R Y.

THE earliest creation, that of light, is the most vivid symbol of the love of God for His creatures.

Everything in the universe proclaims the same: the fruits of the earth, corn and wine, which are one day to shelter the Divine Presence upon earth: the sun, moon, and stars, which are symbols of that eternal light which is needed for the knowledge of God.

Digression.—Star differs from star in the kind of enlightenment each pours down on man, but all have reference to the love of God for His creatures. But the centre and source of all this love is too bright for the unassisted gaze of any creature, so that it seems to them darkness and even hate.

Every living creature has its own end, for which it is perfectly adapted: but all are designed for the service of man. The creatures which move in the waters received a special blessing from God, to foreshadow that higher office to which the waters were one day to be raised—that of bringing forth children of God.

The reason why every creature bears witness to us of the love of God, is that we may realise it better, and be filled in turn with love of Him. In order to give man some idea of His loving care, He tells him that He took long to do this work, pausing at each stage, and only proceeding when each part was perfectly adapted to its purpose.

How great must man be, for whom this universe has been created! Yet there is a higher proof of his excellence in the desire which God has for man's love: for in making man, He—so to speak—created a need for Himself, which only man could satisfy. Nay, the dignity of human nature goes beyond this in its fulness, by a personal union with the Godhead Itself.

Considerations.—1. If any one were to be raised to a higher position than he was originally designed to fill, he would need training and discipline, perhaps of a severe and painful nature to fit him for it.

2. This is especially the case with man, who has been raised from earth—his natural destiny—to the far higher one of heaven.

3. The fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was designed for, and would have imparted to man the knowledge he would have required, had he not been raised from his natural earthly destiny to the infinitely higher one of Heaven.

4. God being the only fitting end of man, the creature does but pay the debt justly due to its Creator by loving Him above all things.

5. The service we render God must be entirely free and disinterested, for He neither needs nor wishes for that of a mercenary or a slave.

6. In order that we may render him this voluntary service, He has given us free will, and a choice of alternatives;—to love or to hate Him.

7. If we love Him, we must hate all that is opposed to Him—even if it be ourselves—and we shall know that His will and all He asks of us must always be for our good, as He is only Love.

8. Only perfect confidence in the love of God for us can enable us to undergo the discipline needed to fit us for the state for which He designs us.

9. Once a higher destiny has been opened for man, he cannot fall back on that knowledge of God that would have been previously enough for him, nor be satisfied with anything else than seeing Him, and being united to Him, for ever.

MEDITATION I.

GOD CREATED LIGHT, AN IMAGE OF HIS LOVE.

ONCE more, my dearest Mother has placed me in the loving Heart of her Divine Son, and He has transformed me into that thought which I was, an eternity ago, in God's mind. As charcoal, in intense fire, is penetrated by that fire, so am I penetrated by that ardent fire of the God of Love Itself, and there is nothing else but love.

The thought that I have never resisted or saddened that love, that I have never been anything but love for Him, that I am filled with adoration, love, and gratitude to Him, for having thought of me, and loved me eternally, fill me with intensest joy.

Yes, adoration, gratitude, and love flow like a stream from my heart into His, and we seem to be only one, and I possess His happiness.

Then I grow sad, and weep, and He would have wept too, because I wept. See what it is, to be Love Itself! Love must weep, if it sees its beloved weep. And in order that He might Himself weep, He came out of His eternity, and also brought me out, and for a moment he allows me no longer to be only a thought in His mind, but to have existence. From His loving Heart I looked up and saw His tears, and heard Him ask: *My child, why art thou sad?*

Dearest Lord, why didst Thou give form to me, who so long as I was only a thought in Thy mind, could not cause Thee sorrow? See me as I now am, all covered with the leprosy of sin, and so full of ingratitude to Thee; it is this which makes me sad.

My own dear child, thou shalt now see thyself, and all thy scars, the relics of thy sins.

And I see myself,—all shining with the brightest light of love. But all was as nothing, compared with the great scars, they were like so many suns shining out brightest rays of brilliant light and love.

Oh dearest Lord, who, what can have effected this marvellous change,—dark night transformed into the very light of heaven? Ah yes, I see, Thou alone couldst do it, Thou who art Love Itself, no other love could do it. When I see such goodness and love, and that Thou hast changed all my crimes into means of greater and greater love for Thee, and that Thy bitter tears did it all, I grieve all the more, and the more I grieve the more I love; and grief and sorrow produce such ever-growing love that that love breaks my heart.

In the same moment I once more find that as yet, I have no existence, but still am only a thought in His eternal Mind.

Awakening as it were, from a deep slumber, I saw my own dear Angel at my side. The heaven wherein the angels had dwelt had been absorbed now into the eternal abode wherein God's glory dwelleth. In that eternal abode the faithful angels dwell with Him and receive their reward, a reward exceeding great. The heaven therefore which I have seen, with its blessed inhabitants, had now passed from my sight, and the great wave of eternity had once more enclosed in its bosom, the spot where it had stood.

But there remained a huge formless mass deep down, and far away enveloped in darkness. I knew that mass came into existence when heaven was created, but as now, I only knew of its existence, but could see nothing, for all was darkness.

All in a moment I seemed to feel a thrill of what I can only call infinite joy, and it went through the whole of heaven, and if I dare to say so, it seems to me to thrill the Heart of God

Himself; as if He were now about to give existence to the greatest of all His works of love.

I listened and watched, and all was like the deep silence of eternity. Every angel was in expectation of what might be the word of the great Creator. But that Word of the eternal Father is Love Itself, therefore the spirit of love, the love of the Father and the Son, must prepare the way for that Eternal Word by which, when spoken, all works of love are made, and all the forms which again speak Love and only Love, are instantly created.

That spirit then moved over the dark waters which covered the huge mass, and vivified them, thus enabling them to hear and obey the Word of the great Eternal God.

And now, filled with the life of love only, and therefore only capable of producing works of love, those waters awaited the command of Him, Who was Love Itself, to produce the works of that love whose life they now carried within themselves. Each work would be in its kind good and very good. It awaited only the command of its Creator, to obey in all.

Before any command was given, it seemed to me, dare I say the word, that that great Creator awaited that which I now heard, namely a gentle loving voice, arising from those waters, and which said these words: *Behold Thy servant, O great and loving God, prepared to do Thy will in all*, as if God Himself awaited the consenting word of another, before He would speak His own almighty word.

Strange, strange, that everywhere those same words are spoken by all who love the great Creator! And they seem to take possession of Him, and give Him to those from whom they have flowed to Him. And that sweet loving sound had hardly passed away, when He, the Eternal God, made known His will issuing His command which said: *Be light made*, and the light was made, and He saw that it was good, and He separated it from the darkness.

Oh, how beautiful must that light have been, which even He, the eternal Light Itself, declared to be good! In the midst of this brilliant light, there seemed to be one ray so bright, and as it were, detached from all the rest, that I thought it must be the true eternal Light Itself. It appeared to come direct from Him, though it was not really so, but only a reflection from another upon whom His ray would fall, and the other light in the midst of which it was, though so bright, seemed like darkness to which this ray had imparted light. I was filled with fear! Oh, who, and what am I, in the presence of such greatness? Then I heard a tender loving voice reply: *Thou art My child, for thee, and for all My children I do it all. What thou now seest, is little compared with all I still will do for thee.*

Then my dear Angel said: *That bright ray which sheds its light on every side, and on everything, is not the eternal Light, but its dawn only, preceding its real coming.* And God called the light—day, as it were, one step, and the darkness—night, which was another; indicating that the human race would do its work, step by step, and in the succession of time, differing therein from the angels, whose work was instantaneous, as the lightning's flash.

Then God said: *Let there be a firmament.* And it was made, and He called it after His own dwelling-place,—Heaven, for it resembled the abode of His great glory and was lighted by the light of heaven which He Himself is. The light which He created in the beginning was beautiful, but it was created for the earth, for man's natural destiny, it was not the light of heaven which man would only need when heaven might be his destiny, so that when I looked up at the firmament which He had made, I saw only darkness.

The light by which it would be seen by man when heaven, and not this earth, should be his destiny, was not yet revealed.

Then God spoke again saying: *Let the waters be gathered*

together, and let dry land appear. And as the great waters rolled off from the land, it reminded me of the creation of the heaven of the angels. But it was a different order of things, for whereas I saw that that heaven was created for the angels on their way to Him, I understood that the land which now appeared would be, at least for a time, the abode of God Himself. But how that could be, or why, I knew not. It was very beautiful, and God saw that it was good, as also were the waters, but I was frightened at the thought I had conceived, that that earth could ever be the abode of God, so I turned to my dear Angel, and asked him how that could be?

For a moment he was silent, and then, when he did speak, he could only say: *Oh, what love, what love! He alone Who is Love Itself, could love to that extent!* Then, I saw, as it were, love, boundless as the ocean, rising from him to God. Again and again he repeated: *Only Love Itself could do it!* I asked no more, but I looked down on the earth, and saw one spot thereon, which absorbed all my attention. I saw, rising from that spot, to heaven, the bright light, of which I had hitherto seen only the dawn, and it filled the whole of heaven. I then understood it was the light by which alone the angels saw the Face of God. Without that light, everything in God, as far as seeing it directly went, would be to them as deepest darkness. And thus it came to pass.

I heard rising from that spot, the most sweet harmony, one note of which I had heard before, and then so exquisite was it, that that one note then seemed to me to be, the full harmony of all the angels, in possession of the great, the infinite God, and never to be excelled.

But the harmony which I now heard indeed excelled it in every way, for it was composed, not of that one note only, but of chords of countless notes, the one more exquisite than the other. Then the distance was very great, now we approach the spot from which it rises up to heaven. The words of that

harmony, were words which, as we have already said, ever flow from those who love their God.

They preceded the creation of the light, and as that first light awaited God's order to appear, so did this true eternal Light, await the will of His Beloved, who in all things did His will, and the same words thus once more rose up before His throne: *Be it done to me according to Thy word.* In that moment the heavens were rent asunder, and God dwelt in the world. All this, I saw only in the dawn, as it were, of true Light, which had not yet come, it was like the echo which preceded, instead of following the sound. Then, I looked at the seas which the Creator had called good, and they were lit up by the same reflection, or dawn of the bright light of God falling on them, and they seemed like purest transparent silver.

But their waters were restless, for they had not yet received all for which they were made, and they rose in high waves towards heaven, as if inviting the steps of Him Who alone could impart the true cleansing and life-giving power, which was to be theirs one day. But even now, how beautiful were they!

And now I looked once more at the fair spot, the home of the bright light, and near it, was another spot, which, I know not why, I thought must be the spot on which He would erect His throne, there to receive to His embrace, the objects of His love, and pour into them all the treasures of that love.

My Angel told me I was right, and looking up, I saw that he was weeping. I had seen him weep before, but never weep as now. That is to me a mystery, for though he may not really weep, there must be a something not understood by me, corresponding with it, but it was the sight of that spot, which drew from his eyes that flood of tears. The ground also seemed to heave and struggle, and I should have called its movements, those of deepest sorrow, and intensest grief, and the struggles were agonising indeed, as if it must one day be

the scene of some awful grief. Then, as if God willed it should be so, it settled down to its first peace and calm, and its movements simply said: *May Thy holy will be done.*

MEDITATION II.

GOD CREATED THE SUN AND MOON AND STARS TO SHINE IN THE FIRMAMENT OF HEAVEN AND PROCLAIM HIS LOVE.

GOD now said: *Let the earth bring forth the green herb, and the tree that beareth fruit, having seed, each one according to its kind,* and it was so done, and God saw that it was good.

In a moment the earth seemed transformed into a most lovely garden, filled with herbs, and trees and flowering plants, and exquisite fruits. And the bright light which fell upon them, revealed all their marvellous beauty, and unfolded their least details, and as I examined them one by one, I saw the beauty and the purpose of each one.

They all differed from each other, there were no two alike, and yet, all spoke the one language of their Creator, the one word which He is—Love, the love of the great Creator for all His own dear children for whom He had created all.

Oh, how good God is! I was lost in wonder and admiration at all that opened out before me. I had seen the heaven of the angels, and it was most beautiful, but that which I now saw, in its way, exceeded it in beauty, and that, because it was to be the dwelling-place, at least for a time, of the God who made the angels.

In the midst of all which now adorned the earth, there were some productions which exceeded the rest in beauty, even as the sun exceeds a little star.

I saw great fields covered with flowering wheat, which waved like seas of brightest purest gold, in the brilliant dawn of eternal Light, which shone down upon them; and it was the

breath of the great Creator, breathing on those golden ears of wheat, which caused them to wave like the waters of the mighty ocean, and they seemed to bear Him on their bosom and carry Him to those who loved Him.

Then a most sweet delicious odour ascended to His very throne, and also seemed to bear Him thence, to His beloved children, and I knew that delicious odour, for there was no other like it. It was the sweet odour of the flowering vine which I had smelt before. Then I saw that the brightest angels looked down from heaven, and (had it been God's holy will), gladly would they have been transformed into that golden wheat, and ground into bread, or have replaced the fruit of the vine, and been trodden in the wine-press that stood close by.

Oh, dear Angel, speak! He said: "*That is the food which will feed His love, by that He will satisfy the cravings of Love Itself*". In that moment, eternal silence reigned again. Then a soft, loving voice, seemed to vibrate through that whole eternity, and all heard and felt it saying: *With desire, I have desired to eat this Pasch with you.*

Once more I turned my eyes and all my attention to that spot, where I had thought He would place His throne. I had seen beautiful trees growing on every side, and God Himself had called them good, each one was so full of beauty.

But on that spot there grew a tree more beautiful than all the rest, no other approached it in beauty and perfection. It had the most exquisite leaves, the most lovely flowers, and oh! what must be its fruit. That tree alone seemed worthy to be the throne of the great immortal King. I fixed my eyes upon it, and it appeared to raise its noble branches, like arms to receive that King, and in the same moment, I once more perceived the sweet odour of the flowering vine. The fruit had not yet formed, but its delicious perfume rising like a bright soft and beautiful cloud, rested on the tree, and hid it from my view.

And now it seemed as if a new order of things was to begin. God's will was to create man, whose natural destiny would be this earth, which would supply all his wants in every way. But He would also create him with capacity for an infinitely higher destiny, that is, with capacity for heaven, and eternal possession of Himself.

But as the earth, by itself, could not supply that which man would require, to fit him for the higher destiny which might one day be his, God also created a firmament, as we have already seen, which He called heaven, and which in that event could supply all that might be needed. But as it was not so yet, and man did not at present require those higher things, neither had they been revealed, nor had God commanded that those lights should be made, by which alone those higher things could be discerned.

There was therefore the brightness of day, for all the things, of earth, which was man's natural destiny, and the darkness of night, for all the things of heaven which was not yet his destiny.

But God is Love Itself, and therefore loves to the end, and will give to His beloved children all that He can bestow, and fill them up to the full measure of their capacity.

For this purpose therefore, He now adopted man for His child, and as heaven is the home of Him: Who is thus man's Father, so is it also the home of him who is that Father's son, and has become his eternal destiny. But man will now require light of a much higher order than any, which up to the present moment has been at his disposal, whereby to see and acquire all needed for his so much higher destiny; in a word, to see and understand the things of God and heaven.

And therefore the eternal God spoke His will again: *Let there be lights made in the firmament of heaven, to divide the day and night.* And here my dear Angel bid me give special attention to those words of the great Creator. He commands lights to be made; the light of earth is only one created by

the hand of God, but the lights of the firmament, the sun, the moon, the stars, are indeed countless, and as far as the mind of the creature can reach, they seem really to be infinite,—the infinite God alone, can number them.

Only created light is needed to know the things of earth, whereas infinite light, the uncreated light of God Himself is needed to see and know the things of heaven, and there it shines in all its glory. In that uncreated light, falling on and reflected by the countless stars, which God called into existence for this higher purpose, man reads how infinitely higher is his destiny for heaven, than was that for earth. He must therefore now trample that earth under foot, and rise from it to heaven. And those stars, in transmitting to man the light of heaven, receive command from God to divide the day and night.

But what night can there be in that eternal light ever shining on the firmament of heaven. For it is the true light, the light of God Himself?

As regards the human race, until God spoke, that firmament was, as the earth had been, void and empty, and darkness was upon its face, and so must it ever have remained, had not God said: *Let there be lights made in the firmament of heaven*, that is to say, creatures capable of receiving that light, which was ever shining there, and transmitting it to others. The order was obeyed and the sun, the moon, and the stars came into existence. And coming into existence in the firmament of heaven they were in the same instant of their creation, inflamed by the fire, which is the light of heaven and which being God's love, exceeds in intensity all that can ever be imagined by those, who are not in its midst: it was the fire which God came on earth to enkindle in the hearts of men. And what were they to do? They were as we have already said, to divide the day and night. But again I ask, what night could there be in the firmament of heaven to be divided from the day, which was the uncreated light, the light of God Himself?

True ; God is Himself the Light of heaven, and in Him, as regards Himself, there can be no darkness, but as regards all creatures, it is otherwise ; for them, there is in Him, not only brightest light, but also deepest darkness. He is brightest light to the creature, in as far as that creature can see and comprehend the wondrous ways of His infinite love, but as the creature is finite, and the Creator infinite, there must be infinite depths beyond all that the creature can see and understand : the foundation as it were, of all His works of love, incomprehensible to us, and therefore deepest darkness.

And so it must ever be, until we become one with Him, infinite Love and Light. The sun, the moon, and the stars then, in the midst of as much of the infinite light of God, as was shed by Him on the firmament of heaven, had to receive of that light all that each one, in the measure of its capacity, could receive, thus withdrawing it from the darkness of the brighter light, and then transmitting it to the earth.

They were to shine with this light in the firmament of heaven, and from them that light would pour down on every creature ; and as we look up to heaven, all those stars are brightest light, burning with that intense fire of which we have spoken, but all around and beyond them is darkest night. They obey God's order, and divide the day and night of the firmament in which they are, and *the heavens show forth the glory of God, and the firmament declareth the work of His hands.* And man whose body, with only its natural destiny for earth, was not fully adapted so to do now stands erect, that he may fix his eyes on heaven.

DIGRESSION.

Dear Angel, will our dear Lord allow thee to step forward to the time when I shall have existence, and tell me now that which thou wilt tell me then ?

“Yes, my beloved. Thou wilt then understand some of God’s progressive ways in regard to His creatures. Thou seest Him placing lights in the firmament, and those lights were to the light He had created for the world, when man’s destiny was for the earth, and when he could never have seen God face to face, that which the fruit of the tree of life in Paradise was, to the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil : the first was the food he needed for the infinite destiny, which God had now made his ; the other was that which he would have required, had he not been raised so high. And when He delivers His people from the bondage of Pharaoh and makes them free, He gives them manna—bread coming down from heaven, which was to the food of Egyptian slavery, that which the fruit of the tree of life was, to the forbidden fruit. And when He adopts His people, and makes them His own beloved children, He gives them the true bread from heaven which He Himself tells them is, as much beyond and greater than the manna, as life is far from death. God thus seems to lead His creatures on, step by step, until they reach Him, and then He gives Himself.”

But, dear Angel, those stars in that firmament, seem no longer to give the light for which they were created.

“Thou sayest well, my beloved, for when the spirit of darkness conquered man, he threw his own darkness over all that was for man’s service, and over all that had been placed at his disposal, wherewith to do his work in the world. They are no longer to him that which they were then, any more than is the earth in which he now exists. The earth, as it was created, only brought forth lovely flowers and delicious fruit, now it only yields thorns and thistles, unless indeed by hardest toil and labour.

The darkness remains on the whole of this creation, and like its master is a liar, and pretending to be light, deceives. Thou no longer receivest the light and knowledge of God by

seeing. Seeing now deceives, thou receivest it by hearing only.

So that, when the true light, God Himself, shines in the world,—*sight* deceives, and thou only seest the poorest and the outcast of men, but *hearing* tells thee, that He is the King, the Lord and Master of all.

And when He gives Himself to thee, to be thy food, not to be absorbed by thee, but to absorb thee into Himself, *sight*,—the darkness of this world, deceives, and would persuade thee that it is only bread, but thou *hearest* Him, the Eternal Light and Truth speak, and He tells thee that it is Himself.

And as the sun, the moon, and the stars spoke to the eyes of men, the great Eternal Truths of God,—so now does He charge other creatures to divide the day of His Eternal Truths from the night of the folly of this world, and speak to their ears those Eternal Truths.

He tells them to *teach*, and tells thee to *hear*, and does not say *see*. And then He adds, that when we hear them, we hear Him,—it is He Himself who speaks—Faith, comes by hearing.

And now, my beloved, thou must return again to that which thou wast but now, a thought only, in the mind of God.”

A bright cloud came over me, and as a thought I once more rose to that beautiful firmament which God had called Heaven.

CONTINUATION.

And in that firmament all that I had ever seen of light and beauty, seemed to be concentrated. But one thing there was before which all the beauty I had ever seen, the bright light of heaven, and the glory of the angels, all seemed to melt away as nothing, and that was, not only the greatness, but also the tenderness of the love, wherewith God had prepared everything for the happiness of each creature, to which He would give existence. This so absorbed me, that I seemed to care for nothing else.

I did not see the Creator Himself, but I knew that His love, which pervaded everything, was really and truly Himself. This love was so great, that not even the intelligence of the highest angel could form any adequate idea of how great it really is. That which seemed to me to be the nearest approach, which anything created could open out to the mind, of the greatness of His love, was the sweet odour of the flowering vine, which seemed to me to pour into the soul the fulness of that love.

Another thing made a deep impression on me, manifesting, as it did, the greatness of His love; He allowed me to see the action of that Light of the firmament, such as it would be on men, for as was said just now, knowledge then came by seeing. I saw that the light which poured down directly or indirectly from the sun, moon, and all the stars, carried with it the special knowledge or effect, with which it was charged by its Creator, and enabled its recipient to see and understand its import; it conveyed that knowledge either directly to the creature to whom it was addressed, or indirectly by its action on the earth.

Then I noticed, that the rays of light did not always pour down *directly* from each star, but that many of them combined in groups, and each group poured down in one stream the special work, with which each separate star of the group was charged for man, and that, either directly, or indirectly. In the latter case, the action was not seen, but for all that its effect was very great.

But that which made so much impression on me, was the special knowledge with which those rays were charged, and the bright light which shone on each of its details. That special knowledge was at one time under one form, at another under another, but it always had reference to the greatness of God's love for all and each one of His creatures, and with that knowledge, full and entire love seemed to be poured out

on each one, as if he stood alone. Those who placed no obstacle in its way, received that knowledge in all its fulness, and were transformed into that Love Itself.

But now I noticed something which was quite incomprehensible to me. I saw the spot whence all that light proceeded to the sun, moon and stars, and also to God's angels, and to every creature. It was, first of all, one great outburst of love, carrying all the details of love which had ever been poured out on any creature concentrated in itself, and it distributed itself to all who had been charged to impart it, and make its details known to His creatures. I traced back all these details of His love for every creature to that spot (its source), and to the moment when that flow of love began, and what did I find?

Not light, but deepest darkness, not love, but hate. I knew not which way to turn, and did not dare to think. I would have hidden myself even from God Himself, and I raised my eyes to see which way to go. But my dear Angel stood before me. "*Fear not, beloved one,*" he said, "*learn now one of thy greatest lessons.* Thou hast traced His rays of light and love to their very source. In that source they are so bright, that those only, who are incorporated for ever in that light, can see or understand them. The brighter light is, the darker is it to those whose eyes are too weak to bear it. To them this apparent absence of all light, is the presence of entire darkness, and, in the same way, the apparent absence of all love, since the creature is too weak to see and understand it, is the apparent presence of that which is most adverse to it,—deepest bitter hate.

Creatures can see some of the details of God's love in the modified light with which they may be clothed, but the source itself of that love is too great and too bright to be visible to any creature not incorporated in it.

But whatever form that love assumes, even that of hate, it can only really be that which He is,—Love Itself.

This great truth thou hast already learnt, but when thou shalt see Him face to face, thou shalt also see it. He is all-powerful, but His power is guided and directed by that which He is,—Love Itself. This is the explanation of, and the key to all His actions. His love and eternal wisdom regulate and direct His power. He knows everything, we know nothing. He is the True Light, we are darkness.

Beloved one, bear this truth ever in thy mind, for thou wilt often need it for thy guidance. I saw a third of the angels fall, because they regarded, in their own imperfect and flickering light, the incarnation of the Eternal Word which was announced to them : that work which was to be the greatest and brightest of all God's works, the very work which was to consummate their bliss, the work which summed up in itself all His love, the only work which could enable them to see the bright light which, without that work, that act could not, on account of its infinite splendour, be anything but deepest darkness to finite beings.

To these angels, then, looking at that surpassing work in their own finite light, His light and love appeared to be, only darkness and hate, and so they hated Him and turned all their love to self, worshipping their own great beauty and power and glory.

But those angels who looked at this great work of God, in the light of all the love, which He had poured out on all His creatures, (that love which He had made visible to their eyes being the only love that they could see), and who also recognised that all their own perfections were the gift of His love, and that nothing but love did or ever could proceed from Him, no matter what its form,—those who so regarded this His greatest work, saw it in its true light, though still veiled—but *only* veiled, and adored it with ineffable joy.

Therefore, beloved one, if the creature studies the Creator's greatest works in the light of its own created wisdom, it will encounter nothing but deepest darkness, those works will seem

opposed to love, and consequently, that creature will, like the rebel angels, not give love, but hate.

If, on the contrary, the creature, rejecting the darkness of its own wisdom, clothes God's acts in the bright light of infinite love, which He really is, even His darkest acts will shine in brightest light, for they will be clothed in the Light given forth by all His other works, and by all that ever has been known of His goodness and of His love. Bear this in mind, for there will be many in the world, who because they will not walk on this path, will side with the rebel angels and cast Him off for ever."

MEDITATION III.

EVERY IRRATIONAL CREATURE OF THIS MATERIAL WORLD IS MADE BY GOD FOR THE SERVICE OF HIS CHILDREN WHOM HE LOVES WITH BOUNDLESS LOVE.

ONCE more the voice of the Creator is heard. He had commanded the earth, and it had obeyed Him, as also had the firmament. But, until now, His commands regarded material things, which needed only the vegetative life inherent in them. Now His command is to the waters, and it is a command of a greater and much higher order. *Let the waters bring forth the creeping creatures, having life, and the fowls which may fly over the earth.* As these new creatures were to receive life,—which the waters could not give, I saw that God Himself created the great whales, and every living creature, which those waters brought forth, and also those winged fowls, which the waters also brought forth at His command.

All life comes direct from Him, and from Him alone. And God saw that it was good. Each one of these living creatures was most beautiful, and each one was perfectly adapted for the attainment of the end for which it had received existence. How could it be otherwise, since He, the all-wise, and all-

powerful God had made them? The Creator then willed that they should increase and multiply.

He had made each one for a purpose, and in its attainment, as also in the use of everything which conduced to that end, each would experience the fullest measure of happiness, of which its nature was capable. There was no disease or suffering among them, neither could there be, since disease and suffering are the results of sin, and the consequences of having taken the wrong road. Everything the good God does, is and must be love, and peace and happiness. When each one has done its appointed work, the oil which feeds the lamp of life will be exhausted, and life will pass away, and that into which it had, by God's command, increased and multiplied, will take its place, and so will it be to the end of time.

Now I noticed, that not only were these creatures, the production of the waters, good, but they were so exceptionally good and pleasing in the sight of God, that He bestowed on them a blessing, not given to the productions of the earth.

Why was this? I gave an inquiring glance at my dear Angel, and he replied: "*All I can say now, will for the present be to thee an incomprehensible mystery, but the day will come, when thou wilt understand it all.*"

Every creature of this material world is made by God, for the service of those whom He still has to call into existence, and whom He will adopt as His children, loving them with boundless love. Each creature has its special work to do, and is endowed with all it requires to do that work well. In the beginning the waters were set apart from the dry land, and were thus endowed: their work would be, to bring forth, at God's command, creatures to which He willed to give life. But had that been their only work, those creatures would not have been brought forth, in such exceptional perfection as to elicit from God, the praise implied by special blessing. But God had created those waters with capacity for an

almost infinitely greater work, should it please Him to develop that capacity, as indeed He would. They were one day to be called upon to bring forth children to Himself, and therefore that capacity for so great a work, when exercised on a lesser, would give to that lesser work an exceptional perfection, and cast so bright a halo round it that it would secure for it, above other created objects, God's preference and blessing.

Later on, beloved, thou wilt see, when the Incarnate Word has to be redeemed by His beloved Mother in the Temple, the price she will pay for Him will be, a pair of turtle doves, the produce of the waters. When the spirit of God, descending upon Him, takes a created form, it will also be that of a dove, which, as we have just said, was brought forth by those same waters. Again, when He, the Son of Man, poor and in labours from His youth, needs a coin wherewith to pay His tribute, He asks it of the waters, and they transmit it by a fish, which with it gives its life. And when He would feed a vast multitude which had followed Him, He would not only give them bread, the figure of the True Bread, wherewith He would one day feed them, but also give them fish, which, once more, at His command, would increase and multiply. And when He would Himself take food, that food would be fish, and with it also honey, culled from the sweetest flowers, by the little bee, itself the produce of the waters. And again, when He had invited to His repast, those whom He had chosen to be fishers of men, and whom He had appointed to receive from the waters His own children, once dead, but now through them born again, He, the true bread from heaven, would Himself be their food, but with that food He would also give them fish, the produce of the sea. The plant of the field, and the herb of the ground, could not live and do their work, unless the waters flowed over them, and finally, when the monsters of sin had invaded the earth, the waters poured down upon them and washed them all away.

And here, beloved, remark that the Holy Spirit only reveals Himself in God's greatest and most important works. He overshadows the ever-Blessed Virgin, that pure and spotless earth, whence He would take the human nature wherewith to clothe the Eternal Word of God. In the form of a dove, He, coming down from heaven, will overshadow and rest on that Incarnate God, from whose loving Heart, beloved children will be born all pure and spotless. And when He, that Holy Spirit, who had given created form to the Eternal Word on earth, would speak that Word to all nations with breath and tongue, that breath will be as a mighty wind, and the tongue will be in form of many tongues of fire, which will inflame all hearts and take full possession of those who are charged to speak that Eternal Word—Love Itself to every tongue and every nation. That word, thus spoken, will invade the hearts of men, and bear them to the living waters, to be there washed and purified and filled with eternal life.

Oh then, how great and mighty is the work to be accomplished by the waters, and as that work is so very great, the Holy Spirit manifested Himself from the beginning, and moved over their face, and gave them the life they needed."

In that moment I seemed to awake from sleep, but all that I had heard was deeply impressed on my mind. And once more I heard the voice of the great God, and hearing that voice, my thought could be for Him alone.

MEDITATION IV.

ALL THE WORKS OF GOD BREATHE LOVE SO THAT HIS CREATURES MAY BECOME FILLED AND IMPREGNATED WITH PERFECT LOVE FOR HIM WHO IS ALL LOVE FOR THEM.

GOD'S word now was: *Let the earth bring forth the living creature in its kind, cattle and creeping things, and beasts of the*

earth, according to their kind. And it was so done, and God saw that it was good.

Again I saw how full of beauty and perfection was every living creature which the earth now brought forth. Each one was endowed with all it required for the special work it had to do for Him who was to be its Master, and whom it would obey. The most perfect harmony reigned on every side, there was no suffering, neither could there be; for He, the Creator, could sow no other seed, than the seed of good. And therefore, there was no disease or infirmity of any kind, and each one of His creatures experienced all the happiness of which its nature was, for the time being, capable, and that happiness it found in its highest degree in the fulfilment of the end for which God had given it existence, and its attainment, no matter what it might be, never was and never could be, a source of suffering of any kind, or indeed of anything but the most perfect happiness, of which its nature was capable.

To them the Creator had also given the power of reproduction, that thus they might increase and multiply, but no weapons of defence or offence were needed, as perfect peace and harmony reigned, and each one fulfilled the duties of its state in the most perfect way.

As among the herbs and trees, the golden wheat, the flowering vine, one tree had especially attracted my attention, so now, among the beautiful animals, the little lambs attracted me, for they seemed to have caught a ray, I know not how, of the bright light of the good and loving God, and while I looked at them, I felt that I loved Him more. Then I saw another, which seemed to me to be chosen for some especial work, and it was browsing near the beautiful tree which I had thought would be the throne of Him, who would win all hearts, and it had on it dark lines, like arms stretched out, resembling the branches of the tree, and I thought that perhaps it would one day bear Him to the arms of that tree, which seemed to await Him.

And then I saw at the foot of the tree a beautiful serpent, and its scales were bright and glittering with light, but the light was not its own but reflected on the scales, and I did not see whence it proceeded, but I noticed that when light was thrown by the serpent's scales upon the tree, it changed to darkness, so that I no longer saw the serpent, and I felt relieved I knew not why, though that serpent was perfect in its kind, and God saw that it was good.

Once more deep silence reigned. The great work of the creation was completed, all the means had been provided, which were required for the attainment of the end for which it had received existence. In the midst of that deep silence, I found myself, all in a moment as it were, carried forward into a far distant future, but retaining still, fully impressed on my mind, the glories which I had witnessed. I then received command to look back, and once more contemplate that glorious work of the hand of God, and then look at that in the midst of which I now find myself.

In doing so, it is with the greatest difficulty that I can recognise the former, in the universe wherein I now find myself. As I compare the one with the other, I see, and at length clearly understand, that the latter is now only the deplorable ruin of the former. Some awful catastrophe must have brought about that ruin, but that alone would hardly account for all. It seemed to me that a fierce and raging fire must have passed over everything. Who could suppose that this universe, as I now see it, was once so exquisitely beautiful and perfect as the one on which I look back, or that so beautiful a creation could have been transformed into what is now before me? Yet, so it is, and, whatever of beauty can now be found scattered here and there, is only, so to say, a mutilated fragment, of that marvellous edifice of which it once formed a part.

In that edifice the most perfect order reigned, all was exquisite in beauty, and everything, in harmony. Every detail

was perfectly fitted and adapted for the attainment of its end, neither could it oppose, or hinder, or fail in the execution of, any work with which it had been charged. It had no will of its own, and could only obey the commands of its Creator, or of him to whose power it had been given. Whence then, the deplorable change which has come over all? Whence the darkness, disorder and confusion which reigns on every side? Whence the fearful raging storms and tempests, destroying all within their reach? Whence these tremblings and groanings of the earth? Why does that earth vomit forth fierce flames and poisonous vapours, which injure and slay its own children? Why does it bring forth thorns and thistles, instead of sweet flowers and refreshing fruits? Why has man to till it with so much toil and labour, and, in the sweat only of his brow, draw from its bosom the good which he requires? And even then, when he has done all, why is it that so often the elements themselves conspire against him, and rob him of that food for which he had toiled so hard? Why does the sun so often refuse to pour down its bright and vivifying rays, when needed, or pour them down, when they can only bring destruction?

Then I see that hailstorms destroy his vineyards, and that hurricanes carry ruin and desolation before them; the beasts of the field refuse to obey their master, and often seek for his destruction. They themselves are at war with each other: they seek to avoid the end, for which God created them, for that end, too often now, not only does not bring them the happiness, that He had willed it should bring, and as it did in the beginning; but it often does bring, many and great sufferings. And oh, what horrors I see on every side, wars, famines, and frightful pestilences, and I see the terrible hand of death taking possession of each one the moment he has existence.

Whence came all these fearful, awful woes? They indeed were not, when the universe came forth from the hand of its Creator. He, that great good God, made none of them. No

sorrow, or suffering could ever come from His most loving hand, from Him, who is Goodness and Love Itself. He made only those things which were good and beautiful, and adapted in every way for man's welfare and happiness.

Therefore, let no one imagine that the earth, as we see it now, was such when it came from the hand of God. Oh, no, whatever we find of beauty in it now, is only, so to say, a fragment of the gorgeous palace, which has fallen to all but utter ruin. No, God did not create the universe, as we see it now, the enemy hath done it.

CONTINUATION.

And now, my retrospective vision is over, and I am again a thought in God's Eternal Mind. Once more I look at all the marvellous works of the Creator, and I cannot say that one is more beautiful and perfect than the other; for, in its way, each one seems to possess beauty almost infinite.

But, in order that His creatures may realise more and more fully the work which He has done for them, He tells them that He, who for all else says the word which is instantly obeyed, took a long time to do this work, and only made its various parts one by one, bestowing the greatest care on each detail, examining it minutely, and only when He found it good, did He pass to the creation of another. And when I raise my eyes to the beautiful firmament—so wonderful that the Creator Himself had called it heaven, I could see and understand by the bright light which He placed there, that, if the things of the earth reveal His power, His goodness, and His love, the firmament reveals His greatness, and His Infinity.

For, whenever I look into those vast depths, I see that the depths beyond are far deeper still, and that the stars themselves multiply each other.

And then I understood that each one of them was created

for man alone, to speak to him, either by itself, or in combination with others, the Eternal word Love, Love, and to tell him, how great is the love of the infinite God for him, His own beloved creature, and to pour down on each one the special rays, he needs for the accomplishment of his work.

And now I seem to stand in the soft balmy air, which has received all it required to fill up the measure of its perfections. And oh, how sweet and perfect it is in every way. And I look round, and at a glance, take in the beauty and perfection which reign on every side. Then I ask myself again, in wonder and admiration: *Who created all that perfection? Who could do it all? One only—the Great, Almighty, Infinite God.*

And what is He, that I may know, why He has done it all? *He is Love Itself, and that is why His works breathe forth only love.* In the Infinity of that love, He wills to call into existence others who may share with Him His bliss. But love must be mutual, and therefore, to the beings whom He creates, He gives time and means whereby to learn all that is calculated to call forth from their wills the most perfect love, *perfect love for Him, who is all love for them.*

Can there be doubt, that the creature will give all his love to Him, to whom he owes existence given in such boundless love? Indeed, it will be doubtful, unless he learns well that which creation teaches, and his love will be for himself alone.

And now my dear Angel explains to me, that it is in the world that man will have to learn his lesson, and that the beautiful marvellous things of this creation are the books in which he will have to read it. I ask him: Will man remain long in the world? *No, his stay on earth will be very short.* Is the world for man only? *Yes, and everything in it is for him, and for him alone. The sun, the stars, are also made for him. And when his work is done, all will pass away.*

And will man know and understand these works of creation? *He will, indeed. What use would be a book to him, which he*

could not read or understand? He will know and understand all that God places before him.

And what will he read in those books? *He will read the only thing which that great good God could write, and which only he has to learn, Love, and Love alone.* But, will it be possible for man to misunderstand that which he reads? *Never, so long as he reads those books in the light wherein they were written—in the light of love, the only true light which does or can proceed from Him Who is Love Itself.* “All other so-called light is really darkness, but that which is the darkest of all, is that which proceeds from self-love, which is the love we owe to God, and which belongs to Him, and of which we rob Him, when we take it to ourselves, and in the same moment that we do so, it becomes blackest, darkest night, and leads into every error. The rebel angels looked at the Creator’s greatest work of love,—the work of His incarnation,—not in the true light of His boundless love, but in the darkness of their own self-love and wisdom, and, immersed in that darkness, its light could not be seen, but seemed a work of hate, and thus having deceived themselves, they fell away from the source of true light and love and happiness.

So will it be with man if he attempts to read the works of God in any other light than the light of love, which is the only light that ever does, or ever can, come from Him, who is only Love: he will deceive himself, and falling away from the Infinite source of happiness, will suffer for all eternity.”

And now I remember, that when I was carried forward into future time, and saw men, then living on the earth, I saw, that they could neither read nor understand the marvels of creation. They groped about, as though in darkness, and fell into grievous errors, even about the most simple things. Many of them spent their lives in studying works of nature, and, although from time to time they learnt trifles unknown before, yet they were all obliged to own, that the most they had learnt

was, that they knew really nothing. Can that have been the Creator's will, in all His marvellous works? Can the great Master have opened out, before those who had to learn, books utterly unintelligible to them in every way? Did He intend, that they should remain in ignorance and darkness?

Oh no, He who is the True Light, desired *to enlighten every man coming into this world*. It is man's bitter enemy, who having conquered him, seeks to fill him with hate for God, by throwing a veil of darkness and obscurity, over the beautiful works of creation which otherwise would all tell of love, and love alone, and thus drag him into eternal torments. Yes, the enemy has done it.

MEDITATION V.

THE GREATNESS AND EXCELLENCY OF MAN IS SHOWN IN THIS THAT GOD LONGS FOR HIS LOVE, "SON, GIVE ME THY HEART". BEHOLD I STAND AT THE GATE AND KNOCK.

AFTER I had for some time contemplated, with deepest wonder and profoundest admiration, these beautiful and marvellous works of the Infinite Creator, I began to reflect how great, how very great, must he be, for whom God had wrought these wonders.

My Angel perceiving these my thoughts, said: *Yes he will indeed be so great, and so noble, and so perfect in every way, that he will be exalted, and seated on the very Throne of God. He will be so great, that although a creature, He will also be the Creator of all things, and though truly Man, will also be truly God, and be adored by all the angels, who will for ever sing His praises, crying out: Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God of Sabaoth.* "Yes, it is for Him that all things have been made. Man's work therefore, is to become that which God says he is.

I have said that you are Gods, and sons of the Most High. An infinite work indeed!

And what is God? He is love—God is love, and love alone, all else in Him, His attributes, and acts, are only details of love. Then, if man's work is to become God, he must become like Him, all goodness and love. But how is he to do that work? He will learn it from the books which the Creator will open out before Him.

God, who stands in need of nothing, in creating man, created as it were, a want for Himself, a want which man alone can satisfy. Thereby, the Creator and good God makes Himself, so to say, dependent on His creature—who in all things depends on Him. Oh, how great and noble must he be, for whose love God longs and craves. And He does so crave, for He says: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God. Give Me thy heart. Behold I stand knocking at the door.* And He comes in, and I give Him my heart, and then He gives me Himself. Oh, what goodness! Oh, what love!

Once more eternal silence reigns, and in that silence every angel, and every creature which the Almighty God had called into existence, awaits His orders,—waits to know His will. At length, His voice is heard, but no longer to command, neither is His word addressed to any creature. It is the Great Eternal Father Himself, who now speaks. But to whom does He address His word? *Let us*—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, three persons in one God, in all our wisdom and power—*make man*. Who, what is man, how is he so very great, that all the wisdom and power of the Undivided Trinity—of the Omnipotent God, is put forth, in order to give him existence? And what could that Infinite power of the Ever-Blessed Trinity, when exercised in all its fulness, produce worthy of Itself, if not Itself again—if not one who alone is Holy, who alone is God? Whose image, and what likeness, would be worthy of so great a creature? No other, than that of Him, who created

Him. *Let us make man, to Our Own image and likeness!* are the words of the great Eternal God. I may see a beautiful tree standing out before me, and I ask what it is? But only when summer comes, and I am shown the beautiful fruit which growing on it has then attained maturity, can I form a true idea of what it really is, and I exclaim in wonder and admiration: *Oh, what a beautiful, and marvellous tree, to produce such delicious fruit!* Now, God made man to His own image and likeness. Man bears in himself the image and likeness of each person of the Blessed Trinity, and therefore, how beautiful must he have been, when he came from the hands of God. But as yet, in this early stage I do not realise his beauty, or his greatness. To do so, I must go forward into time, and there see the fruit which has grown from Him. I then see, that that fruit is so beautiful and perfect, that the great Eternal Father Himself unites and makes it one with His own Eternal Son; oh then how beautiful and perfect must he be, who now stands before me, and from whom such fruit has grown. And how was that fruit produced from him? It was the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity, the Spirit of Love, who Himself formed it of the pure and spotless earth, which man, formed of earth, was before his fall, and in whom it was set apart and ever preserved pure and spotless. Oh, who, and what must man be, from whom such fruit could grow? fruit so fully and entirely in the image of God Himself, that He, God, blends it with Himself, and assuming it into His Divinity, renders it Himself, really and truly God! Oh, how beautiful must man be, since the Eternal Son will Himself become really and truly Man! Oh, how beautiful must man be, since with that human nature the Holy Ghost---the Love of the Father and the Son, clothes the Eternal Son! And when that Divine and ineffable Union has taken place in the Person of the Word, the Eternal Father proclaims to every creature that: *This is His own beloved Son,* and in the same moment, the third Person of the Blessed

Trinity, the Infinite Spirit of Love, descends upon Him, and thereby declares, that He is one in Nature and in Essence with that incarnate Word. Oh, who, and what is he, who stands before me, from whom such fruit grows?

And in a moment the heavens seem rent asunder, and in the midst stands the Throne of the Most High God. I behold the Eternal Father, accompanied by the countless millions of His court, issuing forth to meet His beloved Son—the Son of Man, the Son of him who stands before me. I hear the hymns of joy and praise, sung by the angelic choir: “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth”. Oh, who and what is that one, who stands before me, and from whom such precious fruit has grown?

I then see that Son of Man, rising from earth to heaven, and there enthroned and seated at the right hand of His Father, and all the heavenly citizens fall down before Him and adore Him,—their Great Eternal God. But, in the midst of all that homage and adoration, I thought that I detected a tear that stood in the eye of Him who sat upon the Throne. He was looking down on the earth whence He had now ascended. He had left there, with those He loved, the One whom He loved most, that she might encourage and console all who were now her own beloved children. On her heart, His big tear dropped. He longed for her in heaven. *Yes, He is Love Itself, and oh, how He longs and longs for those He loves so much.* And in the moment when that tear dropped, the angels sang His words, *with desire I have desired.* Oh then, how should all love and long and crave for Him, so loving in every way who thus craves and longs for them. Then once more I ask: *Who is He, who stands before me? and from whom such fruit has grown?* Now, indeed, I no longer marvel at the sight of heaven, and its countless stars, nor at the wonderful things of earth, when I see for whom they were all created.

O ye children of men, all of whom are fruit grown from the

tree on which He, the great Immortal God was grown, see how great you are ! And, ever bearing that in mind, do well the work which alone is worthy of you, the children of so great, and so good a God. To each one of you the Creator says : *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God.* That is thy work, thy only work on earth !

EXPLANATORY CONSIDERATIONS.

First Consideration.

At this point, my dear Angel thinks it well to give me some important instructions, and thus addresses me : “ My beloved, thou hast already learnt that every creature,—no matter how great it may be, is, and must be, infinitely less than the Creator ; also that it must have a destiny corresponding with its nature. But the Creator, if it so pleases Him, may give it capacity for a higher one than that which by nature it possesses.

Thou wilt do well to call to mind an early lesson, which spoke of a savage, in the heart of a wild and uncivilised country ;—his apparent destiny was the savage state. But there was in him capacity for the much higher state of civilisation—of which he knew absolutely nothing.

The king of a civilised country, in the course of his travels, met with this poor savage, took him in affection, and, seeing that he was quite capable of it, resolved to raise him to his own high state and adopt him as his son, and therefore educate him in accordance with it.

Of the state, to which he was now raised, the savage still knew simply nothing, beyond the fact that it was very high and very great indeed, and calculated to give him unbounded riches and most entire happiness.

The king, without delay, appointed teachers, who had been educated in his own court, and to them he entrusted the charge of his adopted son, at the same time, telling him that he must

be guided and directed by them in all things without exception. He, at the same time, reminded him, that as everything in the high state to which he had now been raised, differed entirely from all belonging to his own lower one, so must he also be prepared to give up its habits and inclinations, and accustom himself, by degrees, to those which he would now acquire, and all of which he must of course accept on his teacher's word alone, since, before entering his father's court, he could not see or judge for himself in any way, but into that court he could only be admitted, when the education which would fit him for that exalted home, was completed. The savage state was no longer his, and, with loving gratitude, he promised all.

Thou canst readily understand, my beloved, that two considerations only could encourage, and enable this poor savage, to carry on, with patience and perseverance, so hard a work, and those would be, first, the assurance he would have of the greatness and ultimate happiness of the state to which the king had raised him, and secondly, his knowledge that the king's goodness was so very great, that he was incapable of doing the smallest thing to any one, that was not kind and good. And then he also had the most perfect assurance of the king's personal affection for him, which made an unkind thing on his part all the more impossible. He might, indeed, often do things which would cause suffering, but that would be no more a reason for doubting the king's love, than would the administration of a nauseous drug, by a mother to her beloved child, be a reason for calling her love in question. The child might think her hard, because it is a child, but all others would see in that loathsome medicine the tenderness of a mother's heart.

His common-sense would then tell him, that raised as he was to a much higher state than that to which he had hitherto belonged, he must need education for it; that all who had to be educated, for no matter what position, had, for the time, to renounce their own opinions and inclinations, their pleasures

and amusements, and work hard, and very hard, and on this condition only could they, at the end of their course, be fit to enter on the state which needed this education ;—failing this, their chance must be gone for ever. Impress these thoughts well on thy mind, my beloved one.”

Second Consideration.

My Angel continues : “God created man with a natural destiny, which is the earth, and also with capacity for an infinitely higher one, which is Himself and heaven. Therefore, in preparing all things for the former, He also made provision for the latter.

The sacred writer records the creation of man twice in the course of the same narrative, signifying thereby, that his creation was in some sense twofold ; he was created first of all with his natural destiny, which would be the earth, of whose slime he had been made ; and then, when adopted by God, he would be born again with the supernatural destiny of a son of the most High, whose dwelling is in heaven.

Under the law of grace we daily witness what we may call a twofold birth : man is first of all created and born in sin, and thus his inheritance is eternal death ; and then in the waters of baptism he is born again, born of God, who now becomes his Father, and his eternal inheritance.

And this is not the simple restoration of a dead man to life, but it is a new birth, he is born again. So then Adam was created with the destiny which belonged to his nature, and when God adopted him as His son, we may say that he was born again of Him, who was now his Father, with the infinitely higher destiny of a child of God.

This seems to be confirmed by the twofold course followed by God, in the creation of the means whereby man was to do the work for which he was in the world.

For man in his first destiny he created the earth and the light which he would require there. He also planted the tree,

whose fruit would impart to him the knowledge of the good he had to do, and of the evil he must avoid :

For his second destiny He created the firmament which He called heaven, but which remained shrouded in deepest darkness, until it became his inheritance, by his adoption and new birth as a son of God—then only did God give His command that lights should there be made.

He also planted the tree of life, of whose fruit, after having been proved and tried, he would have eaten, and then have been transferred from this earth, which was no longer his inheritance, to heaven, the dwelling of the God, who is now his Father, and there have lived for ever. Hence was he warned, that if he ate the fruit of the other tree, which was not created for his infinitely higher destiny, he would die the death."

My dear Angel now paused, and seemed to lead me forward into a distant future, and bid me look back, and see one of God's ways in dealing with those children of men, whom in a special manner He had made His own, and I saw how He varied the exceptional food He was pleased to give them. I saw that, when the food He gave them, was thus exceptional, it was either figurative of something, so infinitely beyond and more perfect than that which it superseded, or that it was itself the true bread from heaven, so that any attempt to unite the one with the other could only result in death. When His children were in the bondage of Pharaoh, they ate the food of slavery, but when He would free them from that slavery, He gave them bread from heaven : but if they mingled that bread with the food of bondage, they "died the death".

And having given Himself as the true bread of heaven to be the food of His beloved children, He warned them by His Apostle, to prove and try themselves before partaking of it, telling them, that if they attempted to unite that heavenly bread with the evil fruits of earth, they would die eternal death. And then, speaking by His Church, He again warns

them, under pain of mortal sin, which is eternal death, not to join that heavenly bread with the food of earth, and commands all to be fasting from the previous midnight.”

Third Consideration.

“ If God has given man a destiny infinitely higher than that which was his by nature, it follows, that the knowledge and education required for this higher destiny, must be very different from, and of an infinitely higher order, than that required for the infinitely lower one. It must be traced out on very different lines, belonging as it would, to a totally different order of things. Therefore, if all that was necessary for the earlier destiny, can be concentrated into one thing only, that one thing must be fully and entirely cast aside. And not only that, but since the means for the attainment of either destiny, are so entirely opposed to each other, as they must be, even as fire is to water, it follows that any attempt at combining them together, could only result in the mutual, and so to say infinite repulsion of the one by the other, the violence of which would be so great, that death and ruin would be scattered on every side.

If thou hast two substances which produce, the one intensest heat, and the other intensest cold, and thou desirest to preserve them both, thou keepest them far apart, since, if they met, by their very nature they would repel each other with a violence proportioned with the greatness of the power of the one and the other. And what greater and more powerful extremes could there be than the finite and the infinite?

All that man needed for his education in his natural destiny, was the knowledge of that which would be for his own happiness, and of that which would be prejudicial to it. A tree produced a fruit which imparted to him who ate it that knowledge of good and evil. All, then, that man with his natural destiny required, was concentrated in that one fruit, which was indeed the perfection of all the fruits of paradise.

What should we therefore expect, if God is pleased to change man's destiny, and give him an infinitely higher one, and with it fruit-suited to that destiny, and created expressly to impart to him all that he would now require? We should expect, that God would forbid him to eat that, which was in no way calculated for a destiny infinitely higher, than the one to which it belonged, and warn him that, if he did so, it could only result in instant death, and in the overthrow and ruin of all that had been created for his service. Meditate well on this, my beloved !

Fourth Consideration.

Whoever does a work, has an end in view, and that end or object should be worthy of him who does it.

God created man, but for what end, for whom did He create him? He can have created him only for Himself, for He alone is infinite; all others are and must be infinitely unworthy, that God should work for them, since all that is not God, is infinitely less than He is. He then, who alone is worthy of them, must necessarily be Himself the end and object of all His works. And all those works must, directly or indirectly, find their last end in Him, in whom they found their first beginning.

God is, and must be, perfect in every way, which means that He is, and must be Love Itself, and therefore, only love. Every attribute in Him is but one or other form of love. Therefore, as He is thus Love Itself, only love like that which He is, can unite with Him.

And if a creature comes from His hand, its creation can only be in love, and the attainment of the end, for which its existence is given to it, must be to it the greatest happiness of which its nature is capable, since it is Love Itself which has given it that existence.

But that creature having received everything from God, and having nothing of itself, is charged, from the moment of its creation, with a debt towards Him, from whom it has received

all. But if it is charged with a debt, its payment must necessarily be a condition of its existence, and be the end and object of all it does.

If the creature owes Him nothing, God must have given it existence for itself alone, which, as we have just seen, He could not have done. But now what is the debt which thus devolves on the creature in the very moment of its creation? What is the only debt payment of which could be expected and desired by God (who is Love Itself), from His creature?

It must and could only be, entire readiness to give back to Him, all that it now possesses, with the same love as that with which God gave it all. Love then and gratitude, that is to say, the creature's entire heart, the one thing of which it really can dispose, is that wherewith it pays its full entire debt.

Therefore, when I see a creature come from the hand of that God, who can have given it existence only for Himself, and see that creature ever pouring all its love and gratitude into the heart of Him, who is Love Itself, I see that it is paying the debt it owes to its great Creator, for all it has received from His gracious loving hands, and I understand how it is, that by the act of creation, God worked for Himself, and by His work earned, if I dare say such a thing, that which I see His creature now paying Him, and I also understand what the debt is, payment of which, is a necessary condition of existence, given by an infinite God. I see how He is the beginning and last end of all His creatures, directly or indirectly."

Fifth Consideration.

"Beloved! If one needs the services of others, there are three classes of persons who may render them. These three are: slaves, mercenaries, and sons, and they will render these services, from three different motives: slaves will serve, because they are slaves, and have no choice: mercenaries will do so, because they need the stipend they thus earn, and sons serve their

parents, because of the love they bear them. . We saw just now, that God, so to say, needs the service of His creatures, for in creating them, He created a want for Himself which they only can supply. That want takes the form of a debt which they have to pay, a debt which involves them in much toil and labour.

And what is that want? It can only be that which alone accords with His nature. But that nature is Love Itself. He then wants His creatures' love. He wants my love, and I owe it all to Him.

Therefore the toil and labours that I undergo, must not be those of a slave—compulsory—they must be free; not those of a mercenary given only to obtain a stipend, but they must be those of a loving son who works, not under compulsion or for the sake of pay, but because he loves his Father.

God then commands His creatures to give Him what He wants. He wants all His creatures' love in every shape and form, and at the same time that He commands that love, He also gives the motive, for which it must be given, and for the sake of which, all the works that that love involves must also be carried out.

And what is that motive? It is the appreciative love involved in the words of God's command. If He wills and commands His creature to be all love for Him, it can only be, because He is Himself, all love for that creature." Oh how good of Thee, great, good, and loving God, thus to love me, and such as me, and oh how I then love Thee! Beloved Angel, I indeed thank thee for all thou hast now taught me—add another favour, and illustrate thy words.

"I will do so, my child. I saw one who had two friends, whom he firmly believed to be all love for him, as they had so frequently declared. After a time he found himself in a position of greatest difficulty, one in which they alone could help him, and that at considerable sacrifice. He therefore, full of confidence in all the assurances they had given him, addressed

himself to one who, at once gave expression to the greatness of his regret, at the difficult position in which his friend now found himself, but at the same time brought forward countless pretexts why he could not make the smallest sacrifice for him.

He then addressed himself to the other, who received him with open arms, and placed all he had in the world entirely at his disposal, and thus he knew who loved him. And thou sayest that thou lovest thy dear Lord, but thou only knowest whether thou really sayest true, when He asks thee to give Him thy will and inclination.”

But why, dear Angel, should He want my will and inclination? “Because, beloved, He wants thee and thy entire heart, and knows, that if thou makest the sacrifice He asks, thou wilt be His for ever, that otherwise thou canst be His no longer.”

Sixth Consideration.

As God wills that we should give Him full, entire love, in payment for all the love He has poured out on us, and as that love can only be of the kind to which we have just referred, He necessarily provides the means to the end, and gives us all we need, whereby to do our work.

The first thing we require is a free will, otherwise we should only be machines or mercenaries. Therefore, God gives free will to all His creatures, and having given it, He never recalls it, or forces it in any way. He *gives* it, and therefore it is no longer His, but belongs to, and is the property of, him to whom it has been given. He may indeed by special grace, sweetly lead us to control our wills, even when rebellious, but He never forces them. Bear that well in mind, beloved.

But a will cannot be called free, unless it has an alternative choice, on which to exercise its freedom, and in that alternative there must also be proportion.

If there is only one exit from a house, it is no use to tell me that I am free and may go out whichever way I please; and if

there are two exits, one of which to my knowledge opens out on a precipice, the same remark applies, but if there are two exits resembling each other, though leading in opposite directions, I endeavour to learn whither each one leads, and use my free will in the preference I give to the one rather than to the other.

Therefore, with free will God gives alternatives in proportion with each other. Every creature owes Him love, the love of which we have spoken, and God, to enable him to give it, gives him free will, in the exercise of which alone that love can be given, and therefore creating him with power to love, He also creates him with power to hate, the one being the alternative of the other. But if these alternatives are in proportion with each other, the extreme to which the one leads in its own way and nature, must correspond with the extreme to which the other also leads, and in so far as the one or the other falls short of this extreme, defective power and imperfection are indicated, which cannot exist in the works of God, which must all perfectly attain the end, which He willed in their creation. If thou makest a clock to tell the hours of the day, in so far as it fails to do so, it is to thy discredit, and so would it be in regard to the works of God. And, therefore, when the creature's work is done, it must have resulted in either full, entire love, which attains its end in the possession of Him who is Love Itself, or full, entire hate, which results in the eternal loss of God, the object of that hate. Remember always that thou canst not serve two masters, if thou lovest the one thou must hate the other."

Seventh Consideration.

"One and the same thing can only be commanded by one master. Therefore, when we speak of two masters, we mean that one commands one thing, and the other something diametrically opposed to it. If I love the one, I must hate all who oppose his will.

Then, if I love God, I must hate all who oppose His will,

and so far fight against them, with all the vigour of my love, and without consideration for who or what they may be, who oppose Him, even if it is I myself who am the enemy. If, then, God commands me to do a thing, which seems detrimental to myself, my obedience or disobedience tells which master has my love, tells whether my love is all for God or for myself alone. If I have full conviction of God's entire love for me, I shall never think any command that He may give, no matter what it may seem to be, can ever be anything but love.

And how can I be otherwise than fully convinced that He is all love for me, when I reflect that He commands me to love Him without measure? for that He could never do, were not His love for me, itself also without measure, loving His own and loving them to the end. But if He is all love for me, how could anything that He might ever ask, be detrimental to me other than in appearance? As far as our free wills permit, we are ever full of grace.

Therefore, beloved, remember, that the greatest enemy against which an intelligent being has to contend, is one who suggests even the smallest doubt of the fulness of God's love; all His dealings with all His creatures, no matter what the form those dealings may assume, always are, and must be, and can be nothing else, than acts of full, entire love.

Thou canst only draw from a vessel that which it contains, and God is Love Itself, and therefore only love can ever flow from Him."

Eighth Consideration.

"The man whom we saw, raised from the savage state and adopted by a great king, remains as he was before, until his education for that higher state is completed, and he enters on it. He retains the natural inclinations of his first state, and is still strongly inclined, to form his judgments and opinions, and to direct his actions, by his own knowledge of things, and by his

own past experience, rather than on that of his teachers, for, not having yet entered on his higher state, he has no knowledge of the reasons and motives of action, which that higher state presents.

As far as personal knowledge is concerned, he is in entire ignorance. He is, however, clearly and distinctly told, by the one specially charged by the king with his education, and who has seen and knows the higher state, that he must no longer be guided in anything by his own judgment and experience, or by that of others like himself, and he soon finds, that what his teacher tells him of his higher state, is almost always in direct contradiction, with all his own ideas. Under such circumstances, what is there that can present, such powerful motives in favour of the teachings of the higher state, as will enable him to entirely set aside, *all* other knowledge and experience, and render perseverance in such a course of constant self-denial in any way possible?

One thing, and one thing only can do it, and that is, confidence in the love and wisdom of the king, who has adopted him ; with confidence in those two things he ever feels that the king cannot err, and that whatever he says or does can only take its rise in the love he bears him. He then looks round and sees, on every side, unmistakable proofs of that love ; and that he is like a child sent to school by a loving father, and though deprived of all, that might be prejudicial in any way, to the end for which he is at school, is nevertheless surrounded by all else that love can give.

A creature can only find perfect happiness, in the attainment of the end for which the Creator gave it existence. Nothing else can satisfy it. So long then as it has not attained that end, it is ever craving and longing for a something, which it can neither explain nor define. So long as the destiny of the angels was to know God only indirectly as the Creator of all things, they would have found in the attainment of that indirect knowledge, their natural beatitude.

But when, by grace, an infinitely higher one was given them, they could no longer find happiness in that destiny, which had been theirs, but was no longer so, and could find it only in that which was now set before them. Therefore, when the rebel angels, rendered themselves incapable of their second and more glorious destiny, and forfeited it entirely, they could not fall back on that from which they had been raised, or re-enter on its happiness, for it was no longer theirs. In rejecting, therefore, finally and irrevocably, their higher destiny, they created, as it were, for themselves one apart from God, and for which He had not created them, and in which they could only find, immeasurable endless woe.

In the same way, so long as the destiny of man, was to know God only indirectly, as the Creator of the Universe, he would have found happiness in that knowledge, which the tree of knowledge of good and evil, would have imparted to him, and in the purely natural love of God which would have been its consequence.

But when, by grace, an infinitely higher one was given him, his former destiny which was no longer his, could no longer satisfy him, and he yearned for that direct and intimate knowledge of God, which they alone can have, who see Him face to face ; he then longed and craved thus to see his God, and to be united with Him for ever, in perfect and supernatural love.

Hence, the earth being no longer his "lasting city," is only to be his dwelling, for the time required to fit him for the home, to which he is on his way. And the things of earth are to serve him, not as an end, but only as means, as stepping stones, whereby to attain his so glorious destiny.

The things of God, and of heaven can be seen only in the light of God, the light of His infinite love. In that light, even the darkest things are bright and beautiful. 'In Thy Light, we shall see light.' But out of that light of God's love, all must ever be to us, deepest inscrutable darkness."

PART V.

SUMMARY.

MEN and angels were alike created free to love, or not to love, their Maker. The probation of the latter was instantaneous; that of men is gradual. Adam and Eve craved for something to fill their hearts, which ought to have been occupied with the love of God: hence they came to believe that God withheld the knowledge of good and evil, not in love, but to their great detriment.

The fall of our first parents, then, was due to self-love, which usurped the place of the love of God in their hearts. By this act they lost God, and all the gifts with which He had adorned them; and by his victory over man, Satan acquired dominion over the whole of the creation which had been designed for man's service.

The whole material universe was thus perverted; so that, instead of being a help, it became a hindrance to man in attaining his last end. For this reason, our Lord renounced all earthly things when He became man. By his fall, man lost the surpassing beauty of soul and body wherewith sanctifying grace had clothed him, and he sought to cover his shame with a garment of leaves.

One alone of God's creatures, His Blessed Mother, has been an exception to the rest of mankind. She absorbed, and corresponded to, all the love which God has poured down upon her.

Her perfect correspondence with the grace of God was the beginning of a new life on earth, as the disobedience of Eve was the beginning of death.

Hence, in the very act of pronouncing sentence on the serpent, God foretold that Mary should come into the world, and crush its head.

In order to repair the fault of our first parents, God enabled His ever-Blessed Mother to offer to Him the only reparation worthy of Himself, the life of His Son.

The sufferings of this world are in no way due to God, who, being Love Itself, had exempted man from all suffering, corruption and death. These then, are all due to sin.

All the attributes of God are only so many forms of the love which He is.

All creatures that are made in the image of God must, like Him, be also love; but they can direct this love to any object they choose, because they are free. If they select God as that object, they will hate all that is opposed to Him; if they select themselves as the object of their love, they will hate God. The results of their love of God in the one case, or of their hatred of Him in the other, were not fully set before either angels or men, in order that their wills might remain free.

The claims of God to the obedience and love of His creatures being infinite, the disobedience and ingratitude involved in sin are infinite, and cause sufferings, not indeed infinite in intensity—as that cannot be, but infinite in duration.

But for all that, the sufferings of the rebel angels and men are less than they would have been, had the mercy of God allowed their hatred to have its full effect.

MEDITATION I.

MAN HAVING BEEN CREATED FREE LIKE THE FALLEN ANGELS,
TO LOVE OR NOT TO LOVE, NOUGHT BUT DIVINE LOVE
CAN FILL THE VOID OF THE HUMAN HEART.

“AND God created man to His own image, to the image of God He created him, male and female He created them. And having thus created them, He said: Let him have dominion over the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the air, and the beasts, and the whole earth, and every creeping creature that moveth upon the earth. And the Lord God took man and put him into the paradise of pleasure, to dress it, and to keep it. And He commanded him, saying: Of every tree of paradise thou shalt eat, but of the tree of knowledge, of good and evil, thou shalt not eat, for in what day soever thou shalt eat of it thou shalt die the death.

And the Lord God brought all the beasts of the earth, and all the fowls of the air to Adam, to see what he would call them, for whatsoever Adam called any living creature, the same is its name.

And the Lord God built the rib, which He took from Adam, into a woman, and brought her to Adam.”

Being still a thought in God's eternal Mind, it is His will that I should follow closely the course of events. God has given man his supernatural destiny by adopting him for His child. In passing from his natural to his supernatural destiny, he has to throw off the things of earth, and clothe himself in the garments of a child of God. A child should be like his father, and therefore the child of God should be like unto God Himself. But God is Love. His child, then, must also be love—all love for God. That is the one and only thing his

Father asks as a condition of eternal union with Himself. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart."

But love is only love when it is the outflow of a perfectly free will. It must have alternatives on which to exercise itself, as we have already seen. The angels had an alternative before them—God was on the one side, and their own selves on the other. They had to choose between the two; for no one can serve two masters. They had to decide whether they would give all their love to God, or give it to themselves; and, for that purpose, they had to learn all that could be learnt on both sides. In the perfection of their angelic nature, a moment, a single glance, sufficed to give them the knowledge which they sought. Possessing that perfect knowledge, they made their choice, which was absolutely free. Although their wills are still free, their choice and the decision to which they came, are irrevocable and unchangeable, because made with perfect, complete, and entire knowledge of what they were doing.

I see that man has precisely the same work to do; he has to learn all he can learn, all that is to be learnt on both sides, so that with full and entire knowledge, his free will may breathe forth either love for God and hatred for all opposed to Him, or self-love and hatred for all seemingly opposed in any way to his own apparent interests.

But his nature does not enable him, like the angels, to learn all at a glance. He must acquire knowledge slowly, and by degrees; and when he has acquired it, then make his choice.

For this reason, God will leave him in the world for a time, that he may there do this work, and thus be educated and fitted for the supernatural destiny which is now his. The beautiful works of creation are the books in which he is to learn his lesson; and, therefore, he will be able to read them all; at a glance, as we shall see him do when he gives appropriate names to each animal, as it passed before him, seeing in that glance the

whole of its natural history. So also could he read everything else in this creation.

God, then, having created Adam and Eve, placed them in paradise, where they would find all the productions of this creation in their greatest perfection. He has made them the masters of all therein—one thing alone excepted. They are not to seek the knowledge, for which they now crave, from the fruit of a certain tree, because the knowledge which that fruit would impart, though indeed perfect for the lower destiny from which they had been raised, (and which destiny therefore was no longer theirs) was, and must be, infinitely dissimilar from that which they now require for their infinitely higher one. God, then, in His love for them, and for their welfare and happiness, exercised His Sovereign right over them, and gave them an express command that they should not eat thereof, reminding them that, if they did so, it would cause their eternal death. And they were bound in every way to obey Him, no matter what His commands might be.*

But as God is Love Itself, all His commands are, and must be, full of love, and as long as we bear that in mind, no matter how hard and difficult they may appear, they will always be to us sweet and easy. This command of God was so stringent, that they did not venture even to look at the forbidden fruit, but ever kept at a distance from the tree which bore it.

But on everything else in paradise, or on the earth, or in the firmament, they could fix their gaze, and everywhere they read, in varied form, the one eternal word of God, Love, Love; and those words, those messages of love, told them how He, the All-powerful One, had exercised His power, all in love for them.

When they lifted up their eyes to heaven, their future home, all the countless stars repeated the same lesson, how God had

* Whatever may here be said of the tree of the fruit of life and the tree of knowledge, is not necessarily intended as an interpretation, but may be taken more as an accommodation and illustration.

made each one of them, and charged it with a special work to be carried out either by itself, or in combination with others, for them, His own beloved children. All things in heaven, and on earth, declared God's boundless love for them; how then could they doubt His love, or think that any command of His, no matter what it seemed, could be anything but tenderest love for them?

Had they retained their natural destiny they could have seen and understood all that related to it, since they were in its very midst. But it was not so with their new and supernatural destiny, for of that they had to learn all on the sole word and testimony of their great Creator. They could not see it for themselves, for the things of heaven are at so great a distance, and differ so entirely from the things of earth, that they can only be seen in heaven, in God's own light, a light which shines for, and can be seen, by those only who are already in eternal possession of Him.

Beautiful and perfect as were the things of that earthly paradise, they did not, and could not, satisfy the heart of man. Only the mould in which a thing has been shaped, can contain that thing; all else will distort and spoil it. Now, man's heart is moulded on the form of God, and that God alone can satisfy its longings.

Sensible of this void, Adam and Eve were ever seeking, as man is even now, to satisfy its cravings. They thought to do so by the acquirement of knowledge withheld from them by God, but which, indeed, was only withheld by Him because as yet, and until they entered heaven, they were incapable of it, as we saw just now. That knowledge could be acquired here only indirectly, and in the light of that great love which had shone forth from God from the beginning.

Everything in the firmament and on the earth, everything around them and within them, stood present to their minds. They saw and understood that all these things had been given them by God. To Him they were indebted for their own existence, and all those powers of body and soul of which they

were possessed. They saw each other's beauty, and excellence, and knew that God had given them to each other, and made them one, for their mutual happiness.

The Creator placed before them all these great proofs of His boundless love for them, in order that of their own free will they might give Him the love of their entire hearts, so that when the time should come for them to prove their love, by readiness to make what would seem to them a sacrifice, their free wills might breathe forth for Him love, and love alone; and having thus proved and tried themselves, they would have eaten of the fruit of life and lived for ever.

But instead of this, they turned more and more from Him, who alone could satisfy their hearts; and thus the void which they experienced there, was ever widening, and with it, the desire to satisfy its cravings.

Then they began to read the act by which God withheld from them the knowledge they desired, not in the light of all the love He had ever shown them—and in which they would have seen that no act of His could be anything but love—but they read it in the light of their own self-love, in which it appeared as if, in denying them that fruit, He was doing them an injury.

Thus was their confidence in Him ever growing less, and they had almost ceased to have any love for Him. But love must have an object on which to find repose; and hence, in the degree in which they took their love from God, it centred in themselves. For this reason, they experienced an ever-increasing difficulty in submitting to another's will, even to that of their Creator; and so they drew nearer and nearer to the tree, whose fruit they now believed to be withheld, not in goodness and love, but to their great present and future detriment.

Lucifer and his rebel angels, always filled with bitterest hate for God, had seen, with fiendish envy and rage, the creation of those who were destined to take their own places in heaven; and they hated these children of God all the more, because they

were made to the image and likeness of Him who was, as we have just said, the object of all their bitterest hate. If they could only frustrate His designs, and obtain possession of these His children, upon them they would vent all their rage, and inflict all the terrible torments which they had themselves to undergo.

In man, they also beheld the one whom God loved the most, His own beloved Son; and therefore, if they could induce the beloved child of God, who now stood before them, and from whom the perfect one would grow, to rise against his Creator and his Father, if they could only lead him to disobey and rebel as they themselves had done,—oh, then they would be avenged indeed!

These rebel angels had retained all their mighty power—a power irresistible to all natures inferior to their own; and from the moment of man's creation, they had determined to use all that power in effecting his utter destruction; and, in the first moment of his creation, they would have destroyed him, had not God protected him.

MEDITATION II.

OUR FIRST PARENTS CHOSE SELF-LOVE IN PREFERENCE TO
LOVE DIVINE: THE CONSEQUENCES OF THIS CHOICE.

WE have already seen that amongst the beasts of the fields there was one, which, though perhaps not less beautiful than the others, yet, for all that, seemed to reflect from its brilliant scales a strange and lurid glare, which did not belong to it by nature, but only fell upon it from some hidden source; that glare in a way repelled all who saw it, whereas all that came from the loving hand of God, always attracted and breathed forth sweet peace and joy.

That strange light was really shed on the serpent by Lucifer,

the enemy of God and man, who was hiding himself under its form. In order that Adam might more fully know, who it was that spoke, God permitted the enemy to assume no other form than that one which had ever been repulsive to him, for the reason already given. Under that form, then, he would seek the ruin and downfall of the human race. At the foot of the tree which bore the forbidden fruit, he awaited, from day to day, the favourable moment in which to throw out his snares.

His first work was to sow the seed of distrust and doubt of God's goodness and love, in the hearts of Eve and Adam, as indeed he does to the present day. As a consequence, their love for Him became gradually less ; self-love, and ideas of their own importance and independence of Him, began to grow.

Strong impressions were also taking possession of their minds, that as in each one of the various fruits of paradise they found that which was indicated by its name, so must it also be with the fruit whose very name was that for which they longed so much, and which alone, as it seemed to them, could procure them the happiness for which they sought.

Had they given all their love to Him, to whom they owed it all, had they viewed the apparent sacrifice asked of them in the light of all the love that He had ever shown them, they would have rejoiced to make it for Him, even had that which He asked been all they possessed, and paradise itself ; but they would also have seen clearly that, no matter what He asked, or what it might seem to be, it could only be asked in goodness and deepest love, and for their welfare in every way. But no ; their love was centering in themselves alone, and their free will was already breathing hate for all that thwarted them, even for God Himself. Why, then, should they deprive themselves, and be deprived, of that which was so evidently for their happiness ?

When Eve drew near the tree, the moment had come for the deceiver to begin his work ; and therefore, with feigned interest,

he asked *why it was that God had forbidden them to eat of the fruits of paradise?*

Love asks no questions. Love never doubts the goodness of Him who is all love, and who has shown His love in so signal and overwhelming a manner as God had done to Adam and Eve. Love was still burning in the heart of Eve; and therefore she replied that God allowed them to eat of all the fruits of paradise, with the exception of only one, that of the knowledge of good and evil; but of that they were not to eat, for if they did it would give them death. "Not so," the Serpent replied; "God knows that in whatsoever day you shall eat thereof, your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as Gods." A lie was required to shake her faith in God's veracity; a lie and an appeal to self-love, in order to make her doubt of God's goodness and love. Eve now raised her eyes and looked at the fruit, and saw that it was fair to behold; that is to say, it not only had the superficial beauty which pleases the bodily eyes, but it seemed to conceal beneath its outward beauty another internal beauty, a spiritual power to impart wisdom and knowledge, such as the tempter had promised and held out to her. Eve no longer loved and trusted God, and would only believe and judge by what she herself could see: and what she saw, confirmed her newly-awakened ideas of self-love and the truth of the serpent's words. She saw it for herself, and no longer doubted that God was their enemy, jealous of their happiness. Hate had now entered into her soul, and the poison thus instilled began its deadly work. She would not sacrifice her happiness for Him who denied that happiness to her; and she stretched forth her hand, and ate the fruit, and gave it to Adam, who also took and ate it. By this act, they, so to say, signed the deed of renunciation of God and of His authority, a deed which the devil, the father of lies, had drawn up for them. It bore the same seal it had borne before, when he was leader of the rebel angels in heaven, to wit: "I will not serve".

In this moment of final and decisive renunciation of God, they lost Him, they lost all ; they were stripped of His beautiful and sanctifying grace, and with it of all the precious gifts He had bestowed on them, and whereby they were ever to have advanced in His holy love, until they obtained full and final possession of Him in whom alone perfect happiness exists and eternal life. They had indeed lost all ; true life was no longer in them, but only eternal death.

They saw how they were indeed stripped of all, and naked ; and like the wicked who at the last day will call upon the mountains and rocks to fall upon them and hide them from the face of God's wrath, so did they seek to hide themselves in the thickest woods of paradise ; and toil and labour commenced, as they had then to make garments for themselves of the leaves of trees.

Satan's victory was complete ; he had not only obtained power over man and all his faculties and senses, he had not only led him into bondage, but by the same victory he had obtained dominion over all that had been subject to man, and that dominion therefore extended over the entire earth and over all the creatures that dwell thereon—over the air and over the waters, and even over the stars of the firmament.

He in the same moment exercised his dominion, over Adam and Eve, by rendering all the powers of their souls and the senses of their bodies prone to every evil ; then again by turning the powers of the earth from the production of all that might remind man of God's goodness and love, to the production of thorns and thistles which would make them think that He was hard and cruel, and thus turn them still more from Him.

Then, the enemy of peace, turned all animals on earth created by God for the service of man, into man's enemies, so that again he might be led to think that God could not be a God of love, since all His creatures were man's enemies. And as they were all creatures of God, made by Him that

indirectly they might lead those whose servants they were to love Him more and more, he would vent his hate for God on them by making the things of earth a source of suffering to them, and by destroying the peace and happiness which up to that moment had reigned on every side, and so setting them the one against the other.

Finally as all the beautiful things of the world, were like so many books lit up by the bright light of God that so man might read in them the greatness of God's power and love—the enemies of God and man—threw deepest darkness over all, leaving only in view the surface which, disconnected from all that gave it meaning, would deceive and lead astray from God, instead of leading to Him.

MEDITATION III.

ADAM and Eve have fallen from their high estate, and in their fall have caused confusion and disorder among all the works of God's beautiful creation. He, who was the keystone of that great work which God had raised, had fallen from his place; and consequently the whole fabric tottered, and fell in ruins.

We must bear in mind what we have already learnt—that everything in this creation, the earth and all the things thereon, the waters and all the inhabitants thereof, the stars in the firmament, the whole universe, and all things animate and inanimate—everything was made for the use of man. All these things were given him as means to an end, that is, to enable him to accomplish the work for which God had created him and placed him in the world, to fit himself for his home above, the kingdom of his heavenly Father. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God." This was man's great and only work; and there was nothing in all creation which did not converge directly or indirectly to the powers of his soul and to the senses of his body, in order to facilitate that work.

But, as we have seen, all the things of the earth being under

the dominion of man, fell with him into the power of that one whose slave he had now become. And this enemy of God and man at once drew over them a veil of darkness, that so man might no longer read in them the all-important lesson which the Creator had intended should be taught by them: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God*. Consequently, the only light which man had now to guide and teach him was that false, deceptive light shed by him, who was a liar from the beginning, and which makes folly appear wisdom and wisdom folly.

My good Angel now made known to me that everything which God had blessed in man, and everything on the earth which He had declared to be good, was now so perverted and full of evil that it had become fuel for hatred instead of love, and that for this reason, when God Himself would become Man, He would avoid all these things of the earth, and admonish all who would be His disciples, and work out their salvation, that they must avoid what He avoids, that they must renounce the things of the earth and deny themselves in all. Oh, how great is the change which has come over everything of this creation, since those very things which God had formerly found good and very good, and blessed, have now fallen under His malediction!

Great also is the change which has come over the stars of the firmament. Those bright lights, which had been created to transmit to man the light itself of heaven, also had thrown over them the same darkness that had been thrown over the things of earth, leaving them only light which had now become deceptive, leading too often to utter unbelief.

And the whole of this creation is thrown into entire ruin; and, in that great disorder, it no longer teaches man with the same clearness the lesson with which it was charged. The light of that lesson has become dim, its sound indistinct. One thing, however, can still be learnt from it, and that is the awful power of sin which could cause such havoc, and the fiendish malice and hatred of that enemy who brought it all about.

Oh, beloved, fly from sin, and love the Lord thy God! He, who is all love for thee, never can ask anything which is not from love of thee and for thy greater happiness. When thou callest that love in question, the big tear stands in His eye, and sorrow fills His heart. Oh, how He loves thee; oh, how He loves us all!

EXPLANATORY CONSIDERATION.

My Guardian Angel now speaks again: "My beloved, there are some points to which I desire to draw thy attention once more. God gave to man, as He had given to the angels, the gift of free will. Now 'God's gifts are without repentance'; that is, when He has once bestowed a gift He, does not withdraw it. Nay more, when he bestows a gift, He, as it were, gives up and relinquishes His own right over it. Having bestowed on man the gift of free will, God never interferes with its perfect freedom, neither does he force it. What He does, in His infinite goodness and love, is to place before man's mind the reasons and motives which may influence the will and turn it away from evil, and lead it to good, adding thereto persuasive words of tenderest entreaty and of deepest interest and love.

By the sweet action of grace He presses man on every side, but enters only where free will gives admission. Beyond this, in the ordinary course of His dealings with man, He does not go. He has given him full power to control and direct his actions, so that he can choose between opposite courses, and follow either the one or the other. A traveller reaches a point where the road divides into two paths; he ascertains whither each path will lead, and then decides which one he will follow. Both are open to him, and no obstacle impedes his progress on the one or the other.

So it is with man. God has placed him at a point, where two roads open out before him; he is perfectly free to choose between them, and to decide which one he will follow. Two means there are, by which he may think to guide his will in

arriving at a decision. The first is his own judgment and experience, which may seem to indicate the road most likely to lead him to the happiness for which he by nature craves. The second is, setting aside his own judgment and natural wisdom, which he knows may mislead, to allow himself to be guided by God alone, whom he also knows to be incapable of error, and, being Love Itself, incapable of misdirection.

God then, without depriving him of free will, seeks to fix that free will on the right path, by placing before him every motive calculated to influence it, and move it in the right direction. His own judgment and experience of the things of this earth, and of his natural destiny, could only mislead him in regard to his supernatural one, and therefore, in order that he may set that knowledge and experience aside, and be guided by God alone, God places before him all the beautiful and perfect works of creation, that he may read therein the greatness of the Creator's power and the greatness of His love for him, and so, seeing himself encompassed on all sides by that love which has no measure, he may be convinced of the most important truth, that whatever God asks him to do, He asks, and can only ask, in love, and because he knows that that will secure his future happiness. And so the warning which God gave him, that instant death would follow, if he should disobey the Divine command, was given from pure love.

Adam perfectly understood the full import of that warning. He understood it far better than his descendants can ever understand it (unless in the special light of Him, by following Whom man walks not in darkness), for their intellects have been clouded, obscured, and enfeebled by his fall.

That warning of God, if he chose to dwell on it, revealed to him, in the clearest manner the terrible consequences, both temporal and eternal, which must necessarily follow on disobedience.

And yet that revelation was not as the threat of a king who

stands over a subject with a drawn sword in his hand, and reminds him that he is quite free to obey or disobey his command: such a reminder would be a mockery, for how could one be free under circumstances which really left no choice?

No, God spoke to Adam as a father would speak to his tenderly loved child, and made known to him in general terms the consequences which must follow on a departure from his directions. That word of the good God and loving Father, did not sound in Adam's ears as a threat, but only as a tender loving warning. A little child who rejoices in the greatness of its fond mother's love, would not consider it a threat if that loving mother should warn it against eating a certain fruit, which, if eaten, would cause its death; but would only see in that warning what it always sees, its mother's love and anxiety for its welfare, and her superior knowledge. But if, in spite of all, the child eats the fruit and dies, it dies by its own wilful act, and not by its mother's hand. And so was it with Adam. God warned him in the greatness and tenderness of His love, that if he did a certain act, that act would cause his death. And Adam knew full well that that act would not only cause his own eternal death, but also that of all who would be born of him; and yet, in the full light of that knowledge, he disobeyed the order of the God who had loved him from all eternity with boundless love. His love was all for himself and he cared for no one else.

“Wherefore as by one man sin entered into this world, and by sin, death; and so death passed upon all men in whom all have sinned” (Rom. v. 12).

II. EXPLANATORY CONSIDERATION.

What is the result of the rebellion of the angels and of man against God? What is its punishment?

It brings with it its own punishment. The rebel, by his own act, throws off God, in whom alone is true life, all beauty, and

all happiness, the absence of which is, according to its degree, the presence of corresponding suffering. God is ever the same, unchanged and unchangeable. He is Goodness and Love Itself.

We sometimes speak of Him as of an angry God who repents that He made man : but we know that in Him passion cannot exist, that He cannot be moved to anger, or repent of anything which He has done ; for everything which He has made, is perfect for the end which He willed it should attain. These expressions about God, then, are only, as it were, a medium through which we may better see and understand some of His actions, which otherwise to many would be quite unintelligible. If we look at the sun, its great brilliancy will blind us ; and therefore we use for the purpose of that study a piece of coloured glass. When we speak of the punishment of the sinner, God is represented as a Judge, before whom the sinner is brought that he may be judged by Him. It is in the power of a judge to pronounce a sentence more or less severe, and according to the severity or leniency of his judgment, he will himself be judged by others as either hard and severe, or be praised as kind and merciful.

When we judge God in this way, and consider the terrible punishment of sin, we are inclined to think Him very hard and severe, and little in keeping with what we are told He is, Goodness, Mercy, and Love Itself. But such is not the light in which we should view God's judgments. We have seen that good necessarily repels evil, and that evil necessarily repels good—they are antagonistic to each other. If, then, God is good by the necessity of what He is, He must repel evil, as in the same way evil must, as long as it exists, repel good ; and therefore, when a creature, be he angel or man, has finished his course, and stands before God for judgment, strictly speaking no judgment is needed ; for if he is in mortal sin, he is evil, which, by its very nature, as we have just said, necessarily repels

good ; and God, being Infinite Goodness, is, so to say, forced by the sinner's own act to reject him.

The sinner has, in the full exercise of his perfectly free will, and by his own deliberate act, changed himself into an element which is essentially antagonistic to good ; and he therefore hates God, and prefers eternal torments to the alternative of making peace with Him.

God can only repel and reject those who repel and reject Him. He never irrevocably casts off any one, who has not first of all cast Him off by a final act of full, entire, irrevocable hatred. If that act of the sinner is not irrevocable, (as it only is when death has possession of him) and he repents of it, and desires to return to God, God, Goodness, and Love Itself, never can reject him. But when the sinner, persevering to the last moment in hatred for God, dies impenitent, he by that final act rejects God, and flies from Him with a hatred that will be eternal.

Now, let us place the same thing under another form. God is Love Itself. Hence, only love can come from Him. That love is ever flowing down on all His creatures, as the rays of the sun are ever pouring down on this world, so that, wherever those creatures may be, they are, and ever must be, dwelling in the midst of all this love. God has His attributes, which are only varied forms of love ; and having created man in His own image and likeness, He has made him capable of becoming that which He is Himself, love, and thus capable of the attributes of love.

When, therefore, God's love finds in the creature that which it is itself, love, it blends with it, and like two flames meeting they become one ; but if, on the other hand, it finds that which is opposed to it, as fire would be to water, they repel each other with the greatest violence.

But this repulsion is exercised by each attribute of love in the measure in which it finds itself repelled. If, for instance, God's attribute of justice finds injustice where justice should

have been, it repels that injustice with greater or less vehemence according to the measure of its intensity : and the torment of that repulsion is therefore greater or less, as we have already said.

And so must it be with all the other attributes of love. As long as we are in this world, God's love, finding in us that which is opposed to it, strives to drive it out as fire drives out moisture from the wood of which it has taken hold, and thus seeks to obtain entire possession of it and convert it into itself. Thus it is, that each attribute of God's love struggles against that which in us offers opposition to it, in order to drive it out and itself take its place.

But when the sinner, as is the case in death, is confirmed in all opposed to love, that *all* can never be driven out; and therefore this sinner is ever repelling and being repelled by the love which always pours down upon it, and in the midst of which it dwells, since God, Love Itself, is and must be everywhere. But that love concentrates in itself all beauty and all happiness ; whoever repels and is repelled by it, must be a hideous monster and in eternal torments.

Because mortal sin seems to thee in this world to be a trifle, thou dost not understand how it can really be so great an evil, and produce such dire consequences : neither can a child who holds a little acorn in its hand, understand its greatness and its power, because it has not yet taken its full developments ; but if that child looks a short time ahead, it sees what it really is—the beginning of a mighty tree. Sin in this world is the little acorn, and needs only the opening out, by death, of the ground in which it is to take its full dimensions of hideousness and deformity.

Thou canst tell the child what the acorn really is, but as yet it cannot see it ; and I can tell thee what sin is, but as yet thou canst not see it.

MEDITATION IV.

CURSE AND BLESSING.

“AND the eyes of both were opened, and when they saw themselves to be naked they sewed together fig-leaves, and made themselves aprons.”

I saw that such indeed was the case. I looked round and saw every other creature clothed in exquisite beauty. Man alone stood naked—stripped of all the all-surpassing beauty with which sanctifying grace had clothed him.

What can be more exquisite than the beauty in which the Creator clothed the creatures of the earth? Kings and queens who would inspire with respect and admiration those who are subject to them, clothe themselves with the beautiful garments and ornaments which the Creator has bestowed with a lavish hand on the creatures whom He made, only to be man's servants. Oh, then, how beautiful must man himself have been, the most noble and most perfect of God's creatures, before his terrible fall. How divinely beautiful was that robe of sanctifying grace with which the Eternal Father had clothed His adopted children, and which was not then, as it now is, hidden even within the new-born child of God, but was visible to all. In the natural order they were beautiful exceedingly, beyond all God's other creatures; but in the supernatural order their beauty exceeded all we can ever say or even imagine.

It is now quite beyond our power to have the faintest idea of the beauty and glory of those whom God had made His children; and who were not only His children, but, as such, were also destined to be the parents of the Incarnate Word and of His own pure and spotless Mother, of whom God Himself would say: “Thou art all fair, O my love, and there is not a spot in thee”. And now they are stripped and robbed of all that exquisite beauty, they are naked. No wonder they

are filled with shame and dismay, no wonder they seek to hide from each other the nakedness in which they are. But neither can they find the garments wherewith to do so, for the earth and creatures no longer serve or obey their orders, but only yield to force. They had, therefore, to gather the leaves of trees, and sew them together as aprons, and thus hide their shame, and, in doing so, begin the toil and labour which would be their future lot on earth.

No wonder that on hearing the voice of the great King, before whom they are no longer worthy to appear, having lost the mystic garment of grace, they hasten to conceal themselves among the trees, and, like the wicked, on the last day, call upon the mountains and hills to hide them from the face of God's anger.

But everything on this earth now refuses to obey those who themselves have disobeyed their God. Nothing can, or will, hide them from the face of Him whom they have so ungratefully and so terribly outraged and offended.

Oh, who can tell or imagine the frightful agony of that moment, in which the guilty pair had to stand in the presence of their God? Only those can do so, who have already heard the awful sentence pronounced on the wicked by the Supreme Judge: "Depart from Me, ye cursed:" they only can in any way realise the intense shame and anguish of Adam and Eve in that awful moment.

They now await the execution of the sentence: "Thou shalt die the death". And still eternal silence reigns, no word has yet fallen from the Judge's lips.

But all in a moment I saw, in the midst of the darkness which surrounded them, a faint light, as it were the advent of earliest dawn. And that light seemed to be not only the dawning of light, but also the bearer of a far distant sound of gentle loving pleading. Oh, how sweet was that sound! It surpassed all that I had ever heard from the angelic choirs; but it did

seem to be again, though softer and sweeter than ever, like those mysterious echoes which from time to time I had heard in the mind of God, and which also pervaded the entire heaven. I still watched the Judge, awaiting the sentence He was to pass. As yet no sentence came, but I saw flowing from His lips that which seemed to me like the outpouring of all His goodness and His love ; yes, justice had met mercy, and their meeting was, as it were, a loving kiss of peace. And then the angelic choirs in the highest heavens pealed forth in the new tones of virgins who followed the Lamb, these loving words : “ He kissed me with the kiss of His mouth ”.

MEDITATION V.

MARY, THE SECOND EVE, MOST LOVING AND MOST BELOVED OF GOD AMONGST WOMEN.

I, STILL a thought in God’s mind, knew that He willed me to attend closely to all which should now transpire. I looked back to the moment of man’s creation, and in him saw a something so bright, that it seemed far brighter than the concentrated light of the sun and of all the stars, and I asked my good Angel what it was. He replied : “ My beloved, this is one of the wondrous works of infinite love, which, to be understood, must be read in that same light of infinite love, which can only be seen in the highest heaven.

That infinite love seems to plant a tree which He Himself has created, and that tree will produce a fruit so perfect and so delicious that it will be worthy of Himself, the great almighty God, and will be assumed by Him so entirely into Himself that, at the same time that it is thus Himself, it will also be itself and remain truly food.

He, being Love Itself, His love goes to the very end ; and therefore, with that food it is that He will feed those whom He has made to His own image and likeness, as soon as they are

capable of its reception : and indeed, no other food would be worthy of Him who is Goodness and Love Itself, since less than that would not be all that love could give. He gives all that the creature, placing no obstacle in the way, is capable of receiving.

And that food alone, the fruit of life, is the entire life of those who dwell with Him and ever sing His praises with deepest gratitude and love. All their love and praises thus pouring forth from the infinite life which is now theirs, are indeed the only praises worthy of Him—the great, the infinite God.

But, besides this life-giving fruit that tree will produce also innumerable other flowers and fruits of greater or less beauty and perfection. Their germs are in the tree ; and I seem to see them growing, as its roots draw from the earth the delicious juices on which alone they feed. But I notice in the earth a layer of ground in which are juices adapted to another purpose, and which, if absorbed, would be poisonous to the tree. The roots, therefore, pass through that layer, and find beyond it the juices they require.

As I watch the germs growing and developing, I notice one budding out which seems to contain more than all the rest together. It is most beautiful and perfect, and its powers of absorption appear to exceed the powers of the earth to supply its needs. It opens out into a whole garden of delights, exceeding in beauty and perfection paradise itself, and seems only worthy, as far as a creature can be worthy, to be the paradise of the great God Himself.

In this moment all the bright light of heaven, which I knew to be God's love itself, seemed to concentrate itself into one ray, and pour down upon it and enclose it on every side, and fill it with its bright light ; and it seemed to have thus become the dwelling of God Himself. In its midst I saw a fountain which was sealed ; for its waters were all for Him, and I under-

stood that He would vivify them, and then let them flow and water the entire earth.

In the moment when this great work was done, deepest darkness came over all and everything outside that enclosed garden, and the hand of death was on them. All the countless buds which were growing on the tree had withered away; the source which had fed them with life, and vigour, and beauty, had been cut off, and another had taken its place, which gave not life, but death.

Yet, for many something seemed to arrest the hand of death; for when their last moments arrived, when they had only one breath more to draw, if that breath had blended with it the sweet perfume wafted by the breeze from the enclosed garden, they did not die, but lived. That perfume diffused itself on every side, rising even to the highest heavens.

But the poison created a loathing for that sweet and life-giving odour, so that only those who were willing to believe the assurance of all who knew, would consent to breathe it; but when they did so they were at once inebriated with its delights."

O dear Angel, how I thank thee! Now I understand. Adam is that tree to whom God said, "Increase and multiply," and in whom He therefore implanted the germs of all who were to proceed from him. He had to feed himself and them with sweet juices of God's love with which the earth supplied him. All spoke the one eternal word, everything told of love, everything in the firmament, all in paradise and on the earth repeated the self-same eternal word, Love, love, and repeated to each one, "Oh how dear thou art to God, and oh, how He loves thee!"

But one germ, as we have already said, seemed to absorb more of that love than all the rest together; and though filled with love, yet love in torrents still poured down upon it, and in the midst of those torrents it dilated more and more, and absorbed their every drop.

Oh yes, dear Angel, that beautiful bud had already, before earth's sources of love had been corrupted, filled itself with all that they could give; but still thirsting more and more, had turned from earth to heaven, there to feed on love at its very source.

For a moment I saw it feeding there, and then lost sight of it: but I saw the hand of God take a rib from Adam's side and build it into a woman: and then I once more saw the beautiful bud in His hand: and then He seemed to pour down upon it a ray of light so bright that I thought it must be the concentration of all His love and glory, and with it said these words: "How beautiful art thou, my beloved, how beautiful art thou".

In the same moment a response rose up before Him as a sweetest odour; but I saw it, for it so exactly took the form of the bright ray which I had just seen pouring down from Him that I could easily have taken the one for the other. But that which to me was very deepest mystery was, that God, in inhaling that sweet odour, seemed, not so much to absorb it into Himself, as to be Himself really absorbed by it.

I now saw that the bud reposed in Adam's side, whence God had taken Eve; and it seemed to take her place, but for all that it still was only a germ.

I looked inquiringly at my dear Angel, guide, and he thus replied: "Only one ray brighter than that which thou hast now seen, will ever come from God; and that will be when He comes to assume into Himself the fruit which will grow from that perfect flower which has supplanted Eve". Again I heard the sweet harmony I had heard before, and it repeated the words of God Himself: "How beautiful art thou, my beloved, how beautiful art thou". And a bright cloud then came over all and hid it from my view.

MEDITATION VI.

THROUGH ADAM'S FALL DEATH CAME INTO THE WORLD, AND
THROUGH MARY'S LOVE NEW LIFE.

“BUT of the tree of knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat, for in what day soever thou shalt eat of it, thou shalt die the death.” I see that Adam did eat, and is dead. When he was summoned into the presence of the God whom he had disobeyed, he showed no sign of sorrow and asked for no forgiveness. Far from that, he made excuses and gave way to recrimination: “The woman whom Thou gavest me for my companion gave me of the fruit, and I did eat”; and Eve also said: “The serpent, Thy creature, deceived me, and I did eat”.

Ah yes, Adam and Eve were dead; they had lost the true life, or such words as those would never have come from them. And God could not restore them to life unless they truly repented of all they had done. But He did promise them forgiveness; and therefore, before that promise came from Him they must have shed bitter tears of sorrow. And thus it came to pass.

God, all goodness and love, filled with deepest compassion for them, saw that, by the very act of rebellion against Him, they placed at His disposal means whereby to display His love and His goodness under a form with which sin alone could clothe them. And those means would display love so great as to throw into deepest shade every motive for loving Him that had ever gone before—all that paradise had ever displayed of love was as nothing in comparison with the love which would now be seen on the spot of earth which God would make His paradise. He tells us Himself that the day spent there will be the day of His espousals, and the day of the joy of His heart.

There yet remained in Adam and Eve a chord, hitherto untouched, which might still vibrate under their Father's loving

Hand, and give forth harmony which would indeed be sweet music in the ears of Him who is Love Itself.

I see the two unrepentant sinners standing before their outraged God. Hatred for Him is in their hearts: but they are silent; for they know they can do nothing to avenge themselves. I raise my eyes to Him, in whose mind I am; but I instantly turn away, for I see in Him such ineffable compassion and love for poor lost man, His enemy, that it overpowers me. I should die of sorrow, if I continued to look at the grief-stricken countenance of that loving compassionate Father, knowing as I do that the hearts of those whom He loved so much, are filled with bitterest hate for Him. Is it possible that hatred can resist such love?

And, all in a moment, floods of tears pour down upon me. Whose they are I know, for I know that they are God's tears; not tears of water, but tears of purest blood, tears of infinite compassion for His poor sinful children.

All then sank down into deepest silence, silence which seemed eternal: when all in its midst I heard the eternal *fiat* of a new creation, even the second creation of man: "Put on the new man, who according to God is created in justice and holiness of truth" (Ephes. iv. 24).

But as yet I saw no change in man! all was darkness and rage within his soul. But stop! What do I discern deep down in that deep abyss of darkness? It seems like a little twinkling star, but its brightness is very great indeed, and in marvellous contrast with all that surrounds it. And now I see, as it were, a pillar of smoke rising from it, and I thought that star must be burning fire. Is it the fire of punishment of sin? No, it cannot be that fire; for its reflection from the serpent's scales on which it once fell was dark and gloomy and murky, but this is bright, like that bright light I saw in the beginning, and which was so beautiful, that I thought it must be the light of God Himself. And the smoke now rising emits a perfume sweeter than all the

sweetest odours of paradise itself. And it rose higher and higher in the air, until it reached the throne of God; and then I saw that it was all charged with great big drops; and those drops were tears of blood; and the tears which God had shed seemed to blend with them, and to impart to them full power to obtain all for which they had been poured forth in such great abundance. And the sweet odours were all as gentle pleadings rising from a heart all on fire with God's love, and infinitely loved by Him.

Then again I heard the words: *Let us make man anew—let him be born again*; and in that same moment, one of the seven who ever stand before God's Throne, received the message he was to bear to the little star, and, swift as thought, he stood in the bright presence, and made known the will of God. Then I heard, in the sweet harmony that I had heard before—harmony far sweeter than the concentrated harmony of all the angelic choirs—the loving response: *Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to Thy word.* These words, rising from such a heart were indeed sweet harmony, not only to all the hosts of heaven, but even to God Himself. In that moment, the earth, the firmament, and (as I thought) the very heaven of the angels, were clothed in darkness, and the whole earth trembled at what it had to hear and witness. Only one little ray of light emanated from one spot on earth.

A Mother stood at the foot of a Cross whereon her only-beloved child was dying, in bitterest anguish and extreme suffering. A sword of sorrow pierced her heart. Seeing her, Adam was filled with terror and dismay, and asked: "Who is that sorrowful and broken-hearted Mother?" A voice replied: A second Eve, who offers you bread from heaven. "But why that sword of sorrow in her heart?" It is the price she paid for that bread. "And who is He that is dying upon the Cross?" Her own dear Son. "And who is that Son?" The God whom you have outraged in every way, and whom you

hate. "And why does He die?" That you, who are dead, may live. At these words a cry of intensest anguish burst from Adam: "Oh, what goodness, oh what love! It is too much; I die!" And Adam fell, and in that moment would have died of grief, had not his guardian angel, who stood by, strengthened him, that his sorrow might grow and be commensurate with the magnitude of his sin. I saw him then bathed in a sweat of blood, and his tears were tears of blood. And God forgave him.

MEDITATION VII.

THE SERPENT'S HEAD CRUSHED BY THE SECOND EVE.

ADAM and Eve now stood repentant before their Judge, who had already pardoned them, but stripped by their own act of all those gifts which God had bestowed upon them. They, and in them the whole human race, stood a tottering ruin, which would have to be rebuilt stone by stone from its very foundation; and for this purpose they must labour and toil incessantly, and add to all that toil and labour constant prayer, mortification, and self-denial. By these means only can they regain God's gifts, and make Him any reparation for the outrage committed against Him.

God called them before Him only in the afternoon air, to teach them that they had no time to lose, that the greater part of the day of their existence on earth had passed away, and that night would soon come on, when they could work no more: and also to remind them that the ruin which they had brought on themselves they had likewise brought on all their posterity, who would have to continue the work of rebuilding and restoring the spiritual edifice, even to the end of time. Stone by stone, slowly and with much labour, would they rebuild that Temple of God; and it would be the afternoon of the day of the existence of their race, before that height would be

attained at which it could be once more clothed with its former beauty and great glory.

Lucifer, the bitter enemy of God and of the human race, already judged in his angelic nature, now awaited judgment in the serpent's form, which, in the exercise of his tremendous power, he had assumed and used to ruin God's first design and work.

The curse now pronounced on the serpent, symbolised the curse really pronounced on Satan, whose fiendish character is best exposed and made known to man by the natural qualities of the serpent, such as we know them now—what those qualities were when God declared that all His work was good, or what the serpent's relation was to man, is now hidden from us.

In the presence, then, of his victims, God pronounces judgment on him: "Because thou hast done this thing, thou art cursed among all cattle and beasts of the earth, upon thy breast shalt thou go, and earth shalt thou eat (eat the very dust) all the days of thy life". And because thou wast filled with bitterest enmity towards the woman, so also shall she, for whose heel thou shalt lie in wait, be filled with deepest enmity towards thee. "I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed, and she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel." And not she alone; for that enmity in which she shall conquer thee shall be the inheritance of her seed: it also, through her, shall crush all begotten of thee in all times, and throughout the world. Here, beloved thou hast the characteristic marks by which to distinguish the offspring of the serpent from the true children of God. And at the moment of this sentence I hear the sound of great rejoicing, and the whole angelic choir singing in joy and greatest triumph: "Oh, happy fault, which has merited so great a Redeemer!" And once more they burst out in celestial harmony, and their words were: "Thou alone hast conquered all heresies throughout the whole world",

EXPLANATORY CONSIDERATION.

I see passing before my eyes a procession. A father and mother with a numerous progeny wending their way along a beautiful but arduous mountain path, which, though circuitous, will lead them to a country whose sovereign has enriched them and given them vast estates, equal to a kingdom. Into possession of this kingdom they are now about to enter.

On account of the many dangers which would be encountered on the way, and which, if they deviated in the slightest degree from the right path, would lead to certain death, the king himself had warned them and given them the minutest instructions as to the only path by which they could reach him in safety, and from which they were never to depart.

On the road they encounter one who immediately enters into conversation with the mother, she seeming to be the centre and guide of all. He was, though well disguised, a bitter enemy of the king, and bent on the ruin of all who were loved by him. He asked her in the most friendly way, and with kindest voice, whither they were going; and she told him in reply where, and wherefore, and also what the good king had done for them.

He immediately pointed out the country, and it seemed at no great distance. At the same time he asked why they were following so long and circuitous a route, when another path (which he also showed them) was so much shorter, and would lead straight to the kingdom to which they were going. She told him in reply that the king himself had warned them against any path but the one they were now following, and also had told them that any other would lead to certain death. To this the stranger's answer was: "Look and judge for yourselves. There is the kingdom you seek, and you can see that the path I have indicated leads direct to the city gates. Is it not so?" And so it really appeared to be.

Continuing, he said : “ The king, in all probability, prolongs your journey that he may, during your absence, make use of your treasures. He perhaps already regrets his gifts, and may soon determine to recall them altogether ; you have no time to lose.” Those words had their intended effect on the mother’s mind, and also on that of the father of the family ; they began to doubt and hesitate, and to lose confidence in the king, and it was evident that now it needed very little to determine them to follow the path pointed out by him, who really seemed their friend.

They gave another long scrutinising gaze at the beautiful, straight, and open path which he had indicated, and saw, as they thought, clearly, and to fullest evidence, that it ended only in the country for which they were bound.

Mistake was impossible ; the king was their enemy, but the kingdom he had given them was theirs, and they would have it, no matter at what cost, even if to get it they must take his life ; they already hate him. And on what ground—what had they ever known or experienced of him but the greatness of his goodness and love for them, and his deepest interest in all that concerned their happiness !

Fools ! self-love had gained such full and entire possession of their hearts that it blinded them to all else, and they could see only hate, wherever they encountered the smallest contradiction, no matter how great the love which enveloped it on every side. Determined to snatch their kingdom from the king’s hands without delay, they rushed forward on the new path pointed out to them ; but, at some distance ahead, it was rent across by a frightful precipice, which was not perceptible until its brink was reached, and previous to which the descent had been so steep that a halt was quite impossible.

In a moment all were hurled into its frightful depths, and must have been dashed to pieces had not some provision been most unaccountably made, and which just sufficed to preserve them from instant death ; and indeed that was all that could

possibly have been done. But they were terribly wounded and maimed in every limb, and entirely incapable of encountering the other dangers and more terrible sufferings which must be undergone, if the path they had deserted was ever to be recovered. Only external aid of powerful and almost unheard-of nature could effect the work ; and from whose hand could that aid ever be expected ?

I remember that among those children, many of whom were very fair and beautiful, I noticed one whose beauty surpassed that of all the others. Even then the thought crossed my mind, that it must have been for her that the king had lavished such favours on the entire family, which otherwise could hardly have attracted his attention. And I saw that she was as perfect in mind as she was beautiful in form, without spot or imperfection.

Of this the king must have been perfectly aware ; and also, whatever others might do, her great and noble mind, her grateful and loving heart would never allow her to falter for one moment in her loving, grateful allegiance to him, no matter what it might cost her.

The king had misgivings of the fealty of the others : and well knowing the seductive cunning of the enemy who was certain to throw out his snares, and how his beloved might be dragged on against her will by the main force of the rush which likely would be made, he determined that anyhow she should be saved. He therefore in case of need had made preparation for the purpose at the bottom of the precipice, so that, should she be dragged down by the others, no harm might befall her ; and that which was to save her, saved the others from instant death. But not only this ; he concealed a troop of powerful and faithful servants, who had orders to listen closely, and at her slightest call fly to her and obey her orders in all, as they would obey himself.

In the moment, then, of the terrific fall, her sweet, gentle,

plaintive voice was heard as the music of the highest heavens, not coming down indeed, but rising as if heaven itself was there whence arose that harmony; and it instantly met response from the servants of the king, and she felt herself drawn up unscathed as if on angels' wings—she knew not who they were, but her only thought seemed to be for the welfare of the others. *Oh, save them, save them*, was all her cry, *and I will pay the cost—the king is so very good, that when I have paid all I can pay, he will pay the rest.*

Her prayer was received as an order by the entire army; all flew to the aid of the poor mutilated victims of their king's enemy. Before them was the only path by which they could retrace their steps; but it was awfully steep and rugged, and, in their weakened state, its ascent was quite impossible. The assistance they needed was now given them; but on each side of the path were terrible precipices, and far down below were monsters of every kind. Down these many fell, because they would rely on their own strength and refused all proffered aid; others, thinking they knew better than their guides, would take their own course, and many more deliberately hurled themselves into the abyss, rather than make the efforts to climb that difficult and painful path.

From below, also, voices were heard pitying them, and calling them, and urging them not to be so mad as to kill themselves by ascending that rugged and painful path, but to cast themselves down where loving arms awaited them, and where all their sufferings would cease. Deaf to the entreaties and terrible warnings of those who so earnestly desired to save them, they responded to the seductive voices from below, and, casting themselves into the abyss, were lost for ever.

MEDITATION VIII.

THE CURSE PRONOUNCED UPON ADAM AND EVE, AND CONSEQUENTLY UPON THE HUMAN RACE: THE PROMISE OF REDEMPTION.

GOD, having now pronounced judgment on the serpent, proceeds to do the same on the woman, telling her the consequences of her disobedience. First of all, notwithstanding the promise just made, that a woman's heel should crush the serpent's head, yet her descendants, inheriting from her proneness to evil rather than to good, would all be exposed to the conflict and warfare between good and evil, between grace and nature. Many would succumb to evil, and their place would have to be filled up by others. Thus would her conceptions be multiplied and her sorrows be many; for whereas in paradise the giving birth to children of God would have been a joy and happiness exceeding all others, so now the giving birth to enemies of that same God (for all are born in sin) would cause intensest suffering, as if those children were already clothed in the thorns and thistles of the evil, which, like the earth itself, they would ever bring forth, unless indeed by hardest toil and labour, they overcome their propensity to that evil.

And because she had made so bad a use of her power and influence over her husband, she would now be degraded, and be under his power and dominion, and looked upon by the entire world rather as man's slave and servant than his equal in any way; and thus would it continue, until the evil she had done, should be repaired by her whose heel would crush the serpent's head, and woman be thus restored to the position from which she had fallen.

The sentence upon her was: "I will multiply thy sorrows and thy conceptions; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth thy children, and thou shalt be under thy husband's power (and so to say his slave), and he shall have dominion over thee".

God then turned to Adam, and proceeded to pronounce sentence upon him. He had hearkened to his wife, and had disobeyed his God. The earth, the sun, the moon, the stars, the entire universe, which had all been made subservient to man, would now rebel against him. They had been created by God for man's service and happiness, and this, not only to supply him spontaneously with all he needed for his existence and happiness, so long as he should be in their midst, but also to teach him in every shape and form the greatness of God's love for him, and thus, gradually and by degrees, lead him on in ever-growing love until at length, his heart being dilated to its fullest measure and transformed into love, he might enter into the possession of his great, good, and loving God, and become one with Him for ever.

All followed him on the path of disobedience, and would now no longer be sources of happiness to him, but the reverse; they would be constant sources of suffering, and ever be to him, in a greater or less degree, as thorns and thistles, and ever need hardest labour and often greatest violence to force them to obey, and yield the fruit they were created to supply.

And all this would be the counterpart of that which he had himself become; since to produce anything but that evil to which he is now prone, and bring forth fruit worthy of God's kingdom even in the reign of mercy and of love, violence and constant self-denial will be required, and indeed be the conditions of victory.

The delicious fruits of paradise will no longer be their food, but the herbs only, and productions of the earth differing as greatly from those delicious fruits as this poor, fallen, rebellious earth, all full of suffering, itself differs from the paradise of pleasure.

And not only thus would all the things of earth rebel; but unless brought into subjection and ruled as by a master's hand, instead of leading man, as they were charged to do, to the know-

ledge and love for God, they would conceal His wondrous ways and draw all man's love to himself, and make him fix his whole, entire heart upon himself, and upon himself alone.

All matter is subject to death or to decay; and therefore, man by nature was subject to death, and would simply have died out as does a flame, when there is no more oil to feed it, or when the wick is so far consumed that the oil can no longer rise.

The delicious fruit of paradise was the oil which would have fed the flame of man's life; but being itself subject to decay, it could not have arrested decay in him whose food it was; and therefore, when that decay had reached its term, the oil no longer rising, the flame must have died away. But by a special favour of God's love, man in the moment of his creation was freed and exempted from all natural imperfections, and was therefore not subject to death or corruption.

God moreover was pleased to give them the fruit of life, which was to maintain their vigour and strength. But by sin all this was changed. Not only have they lost that fruit of life, but the very herbs of the earth, which are now to be their food, are also in rebellion against them; and unless they are ever on their guard, by mortification and self-denial, to keep the food of this earth in close subjection, it will draw them away from God's love and make them its slaves, and then will not only not prolong their lives, but will become a source of every kind of disease and lead them, not to life, but to untimely death.

All this God now placed before them, saying: "Because thou hast hearkened to the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat, cursed is the earth in thy work, with labour and toil shalt thou eat thereof all the days of thy life. Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee, and thou shalt eat the herbs of the earth. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return to the earth out of which thou wast taken, for dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return."

And this curse seemed to me to be not so much judicial, as declaratory of the necessary consequence of Adam's own act, in entering on the path of disobedience.

And now that God had given understanding to Adam and Eve as to the state to which they had brought themselves and all who in any way depended on them—in a word, pointed out to them how they now stood as ruins, and how hard and for how long they would have to work to rebuild that which they had themselves so recklessly overthrown—He also reminded them how they were stripped of all grace and beauty, and were, as they themselves had said, naked indeed.

Having done this, He then, in His loving mercy, placed at their disposal the means by which they might impart life and efficacy to the hard work they had to do : means which were, so to say, first fruits of the work which would one day be done by the second Eve, who will herself toil and labour very hard to restore the work so utterly destroyed by her whose place she takes.

But God had said : "In what day soever thou shalt eat thereof, thou shalt die the death". The eternal death, then, of the transgressor could alone satisfy God's justice. God had promised that woman should repair the evil and satisfy His justice. He would then enable her to offer Him an equivalent which He could accept, an equivalent of eternal death ; that is, she would offer Him, and consign to death, one worthy of Him.

But whose life could be the equivalent of eternal death. Only the life of one who is Himself eternal. What life could be an offering worthy of the great, the infinite God ? Only the life of Him who is equal to Him in all.

The woman then will offer to that great and infinite God, in His own temple, a victim worthy of Him, one whom He Himself has given her and made all her own.

But in the meantime, awaiting that great sacrifice, man was bound to do all he could do to repair the evil he had done, and

acknowledge his Creator's supreme dominion over him : but this he could only do by laying down His life in sacrifice to the God whom he had offended, and thereby making the acknowledgment that he owed that life and all he had to Him. He should, as a victim, sacrifice himself on the altar of God's justice.

But God was pleased now to clothe him in the skins of animals, and thereby intimate that He would accept in sacrifice the lives of those animals, whose form He now gave him, as substitutes for himself. They, when thus offered as victims in sacrifice, should avail him in view of the infinite sacrifice which would one day be offered for the entire human race, and of which they, offered in sacrifice, would be constant types.

And now I seem to hear my dear Angel echo words, pronounced far, far away, and they are these : " And He was subject to them ". And they were followed by other responsive words already well known to me : " Be it done to me according to Thy word ". And on her consent thus given, I heard hard, heavy blows, as of the slaying of a victim ; and my beloved Angel wept, and a dark cloud overspread him and hid him from my view.

After a time my dear Angel once more stood by my side, and then said : " Beloved, there are certain points to which I would call thy attention. God has told Adam and Eve that now their lot is death. The nature of the fruit of the tree of life was either to make the life already existing in its recipient, eternal life (he who eats this bread shall live for ever), or, if it found that death had taken the place of life, it made that death eternal. He who has ceased to be a child of God is already dead. I say then again, that if it found in man love for God, the only true life, and the one and only thing with which it could assimilate, it made that life eternal. If, on the other hand, it found that that life which had once been there was gone, and its place filled up by death, it made that death eternal.

Thou seest, my beloved, how the sun's bright, glorious rays strengthen and develop the life they find in the objects on which they fall : but if the life which was once there has given place to death, then those same rays, which would have strengthened life, seal the death which has replaced it, and transform all that over which it reigns, into loathsome, seething corruption, into ever-living death.

When hate had supplanted love in Adam's heart, and he left the path of obedience to be himself his only guide, his intelligence clothed in darkness would mislead him, and his wisdom be only folly. He had hitherto known good only ; but now he has knowledge of both good and evil, and thinks himself like God, as the serpent assured him he would become, and therefore capable of judging as to what he should seek or what he should avoid.

As long as he was guided by obedience, he avoided the forbidden fruit ; but as soon as self-love had crept into his heart, he would no longer obey but would judge for himself, and for that purpose looked wistfully up at the tree and at its fruit. His wisdom was already on the path of folly ; and the mist of self-love, which had all but entire possession of him, though it allowed him to see that that fruit was fair to behold, as it was indeed, did not enable him to discern that the knowledge which it would impart was knowledge suitable, not for him whose destiny was heaven, but only for one whose destiny was ever to dwell on earth. By casting out from his own understanding the light of God's love, he introduced darkness there, and his wisdom became folly.

If such was the case before the final stroke was given by the formal act of rebellion which declared that he would not obey, how much more would it be so now, even though he had repented ? The effects of the formal act remained, and the true life of a child of God was no longer in him : he was not yet born again. The forbidden fruit was in him : and had he now

eaten with it the fruit of life, he would have eaten damnation to himself.

And God Himself declares their darkness to be such that they believe themselves to be even like Himself in both knowledge and in wisdom, and are ready, as too many are, to judge the works of God's eternal wisdom. He had told them that by death they must return to dust, and He knew that in their folly they would think to evade His decree by eating the fruit of life; for they would see in it only its nature to exempt from death a life which otherwise and by nature was mortal, and not see that if that life was not that of a child of God (the only true life, and which was his no longer), it would make the death which it did find there eternal, and from which there no longer could be redemption. In a word, by eating of that food, so far from living for ever, he would eat damnation to himself.

But God would show them mercy and not let them see death for ever, and would give them life. He therefore protected them from themselves, and drove them from the paradise in which that fruit grew, and placed before its gates a cherubim and a flaming sword turning in every direction to keep the way of that tree of life, from which would one day grow another tree whose fruit would be the living bread of man, then born again—'He who eats this bread shall live for ever!'

MEDITATION IX.

ALL GOOD COMES FROM GOD, ALL EVIL FROM SIN. SUFFERINGS
A REAL GOOD AND THE FRUITS OF LOVE.

OVERWHELMED with sadness I now stand alone with my good Angel. I see around me on every side disorder and desolation, sorrow and suffering. The whole earth and all the creatures thereon groan as though in extreme pain. Dear Angel, who

has caused all that? I know it cannot be the work of the good and loving God: sorrow and suffering are beyond the power of Him, who is only love. Who, then, has done it?

“My beloved, Adam has caused it all by his disobedience.” But was his disobedience so great an evil as to cause all that sorrow and suffering? “Yes, indeed it was; and so very great that the evils which thou hast seen are all as nothing when compared with those which still remain for consideration.”

Again I look round, and see the hand of death reaping its harvest of countless millions without respite to the end of time, inflicting by its heavy blows unspeakable torments, not only on its immediate victims, but also on all who are near and dear to them. I see their tears pouring out in torrents so great that they flood the whole world. Surely all those sufferings of soul and body, of mind and heart, cannot be the result of one sin only, dear Angel?

“Well, they are so indeed: but thou mayest almost say no; for, terrible as they are, they are really nothing, as we said above, when compared with other results of sin. Indeed, they are balms which, if turned to good account, heal the wounds from which they themselves have flowed.”

I see now, and in detail, all the countless and varied sufferings of all the millions of God's creatures from the beginning to the end of time, the sufferings of war, of pestilence, of famine, and of earthquakes, the cruelties of every kind inflicted by man on man. A terrible vision indeed it is. Yet all this is as nothing in comparison with the torments which follow after death, and are the lot of those who carry from the world that most awful evil of sin.

Those sufferings may heal the wounds, but these torments aggravate them eternally. Nor is it God's work; because the creation of that which causes even the slightest pain, is beyond His power. And why beyond His power, beloved Angel? “Because He is goodness and Love Itself.” Who then creates

them? "The sinner himself, who alone could provide the fuel which feeds those flames." But, dear Angel, cannot God make me suffer, as a mother makes her child suffer under the surgeon's knife, in order that I may live? "Yes, my beloved, and the sufferings which thou dost then endure from the hand of God are in reality the effects of the love of Him, from whom love alone can flow. But even then a cause external to Himself is needed to enable His love to produce the very slightest pain; and thou thyself, or others who have gone before thee, must place that cause within His reach. A child must show illness before its loving mother's heart can make it suffer by the drug which is to heal its wounds. Wherever love goes, like fire it burns and destroys, or drives away, all with which it cannot assimilate, and thus causes suffering. But that with which love cannot combine, comes not from God; and therefore His love seeks to destroy it and drive it far away. And now, beloved, I repeat once more—ever remember, that whatever comes directly or indirectly from God can only be good, only good can come from Him who is all love and nothing else, and wherever evil exists, remember, that it cannot have taken its rise in Him, it must have come from some other source, distinctly opposed and repelled by Him." But has He no, no control? "In one sense He no longer has control over that which He has given unreservedly to another; for, since He has given it, it is no longer His. He has given free will to angels and to men; and therefore, though He may help it by His grace, and thus, if it so pleases Him, change rebellious wills—but in accordance with the order which He, Eternal Love and Wisdom, has established and which must be good—He no longer controls that free will otherwise than by reason or persuasion, and by His holy grace which sweetly draws, but does not force the will of man.

My beloved, let nothing ever induce thee to think that when thou dost suffer in body or in mind, that it is because God is

angry; or when thou seest others suffer, that it is and can be so. God is never angry: He cannot be so, for He is only Love. If thou couldst see Him as He is when His children suffer, thou wouldst see Him looking sad, and, so to speak, with tears in His eyes. He weeps then, when He sees thee suffer, yet is Himself its cause. His love is so very great that He must pour it out on thee. Like the sun which cannot withhold its rays, neither can He restrain His love; and that fire of divine love, encountering something in thee which is opposed to love, and therefore injurious to thyself, encircles it with its intense flame to burn and destroy it; and that burning flame it is that causes all thy suffering. Oh, how willingly would He spare thee each pang! But love must do its work and burn away all evil, that so, when thou art wholly purified, His love may possess thee without reserve.

Remember, therefore, beloved one, that all sufferings on earth are fruits of God's love. That love is ever working for the destruction of evil, and seeking to bestow true life and perfect happiness. And therefore, when thou sufferest thou mayest ever say—with thy heart all full of joy: Ah, love has found an evil which it now burns away. Thank thee, thank thee, dearest Lord: oh how good of thee!"

MEDITATION X.

THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD ARE LOVE UNDER VARIOUS ASPECTS.

DEAR Guardian Angel, continue thy instruction. "I will do so, my beloved. God being the First and Efficient Cause of all things, and the Being subsisting by Himself, must contain eminently in Himself the perfection of every creature. Whatever perfection is in any creature (as truth, goodness, wisdom, freedom) comes from the Creator, from whom it flows; but they are only varied forms of the one thing which He is—Love,

Love Itself. He is the first beginning and the last end of all, and, like the bright light of the sun, is only one, though apparently composed of many parts.

If the light of the sun falls on a crown of diamonds, rubies, emeralds, and other precious stones, that one unchangeable ray of light is clothed and reflected by each one of those stones in its own form and colour. The clear and spotless diamond receives and sends forth that ray in its own clear and spotless beauty, and the lovely ruby imparts to it its own bright crimson hue, and the emerald tints it with its own delightful green. Whichever of these precious stones exceeds the rest in number, will by its colour predominate in the hue of the bright ray. The clear transparent stones are themselves filled, penetrated, and transformed, as it were, into the ray itself, before they emit it clothed in their gorgeous colours. But the beautiful pearl, with no thought for self, throws all its delicate rosy tint on the bright ray which has itself absorbed it. And if the ray of light falls on a fleeting mist, it will return to its source all clothed in rainbow hues. But when those lovely colours are once more blended into one, they only form the one bright, spotless ray which they ever were.

So is it with the bright ray of God's love. It may be clothed with many and varied forms by the objects on which it falls; but no matter what that form may be, it never can be other than that which it is indeed—a ray of deepest, intensest, loving love.

As God is the Love in which His attributes are found, and is all Love, Love Itself, Love is every attribute, and each attribute is Love, though these attributes appear to the creature in varied form. If angels and men are made to the image of God, and He pours out His love on them, as soon as He does pour it out, they have also power to return it again to Him. But as the sun's rays are reflected back with the colour of the gem which has received their light, so does God's love return

to Him coloured by the virtue or attribute which predominates in him on whom that ray has fallen.

God creating man to His own image and likeness, gives him aptitude proportioned to his finite nature for all His attributes, though not to all men in equal measure or degree. He gives that aptitude to all, but under many forms, and never to two alike.

The aptitude in each one for participation in God's attributes may, as we said above, resemble a cluster of various precious stones, each stone of which is capable of reflecting back to its source the ray of light which has fallen on it, but clothing it with its own hue, whatever that may be. These stones return the ray thus clothed in varied intensity, according to the capacity given them in their creation, and to the development that has been given by each one to that gift of God.

They are all dark, until the sun's rays fall on them ; but the moment the ray does fall on the one or the other, it is flashed back to its source clothed in the colour then given to it by that on which it has fallen. In each human being there is a natural tendency to clothe the ray of God's love falling on him in one colour rather than another ; and a natural power, greater or less, exists in all to return that ray to Him in greater or less beauty and intensity, according to his will. But man, being free is not bound by natural tendencies, and can clothe the ray in the colour and form he pleases, or he can exclude it altogether by covering that on which it should fall with earth ; but if he so pleases he can remove the soil, and then the gems shine out in all their pristine glory, unless, indeed, they have been calcined, and ceased to be what they once were.

Some clothe the ray in the garb of hate and say that God does not love them ; others say that He is very hard and asks more than He really gives ; and others, that His acts are not those of a friend. And yet, notwithstanding the cloud which is thus cast round Him, or the colour imparted to the ray, the

same ray is ever streaming forth unchanged, unchangeable, is ever Love Itself.

“Oh then, beloved, ever be the pure and spotless diamond which, of all the gems of earth, alone returns the sun’s rays as they really are. Clothe them if thou wilt with every lovely hue which may make thee love them more, but never lose sight of what they really are, or let their brightness be dimmed by the colour thou impartest to them. Keep them ever pure, bright, brilliant and spotless. Clothe again, I say, all His ardent love which He is ever pouring down on thee, with all the love of thy entire soul and heart, and so give it back to Him. All else that thou mayest ever see in Him comes from another hand, and is not really His. He is Love alone, and nothing else but Love. Oh, the good, good God!”

MEDITATION XI.

GOD NEVER FORCES, BUT ONLY ASSISTS THE FREE WILL OF MAN. MAN HIMSELF IS RESPONSIBLE FOR LOVE OR FOR HATRED.

My dear Angel speaks again: “I will now suppose that I, an intelligent being, am the sun, and shine indiscriminately on every object within my reach, and, by the help of my light and warmth, these objects grow and develop to every perfection of which their nature is capable. And if they fail to do so, the fault cannot lie in me, for my ray is perfect; it must therefore lie in him who made them. But if I have myself created those objects expressly that they may return my rays to me clothed in their several hues, if they fail to do so, the fault must be mine, I have done my work badly, and am thus discredited.

And, if I have made a perfect work, and that work is like myself, an intelligent being with free will, and it refuses to do that for which I made it, it also discredits me. In the eyes of others it will seem as if I were unable to accomplish my design.

Anyhow, I show want of judgment in sending forth my rays to an object whence they may return to me bringing me back discredit. And the greater and the more exalted my position, the greater is that discredit."

Tell me then, dear Angel, how thou wouldst act, if thou wouldst give existence to an intelligent being with a free will, but who, no matter in what way he exercises that will, could never cast discredit on thee, or give thy work even an appearance of imperfection, when that work is once fully and truly seen?

"Beloved, thou hast already learnt many things, tell me first of all, how thou wouldst act in such a case?"

Dear Angel, it seems to me, that since free will is a necessary condition of my created nature, I should create that nature so that it could and must always do one of two or more things, either of which would negative the others. Its free will would thus have alternatives on which to exercise itself, but no matter which alternative it selected, it would always be a perfect work,—and therefore never to my discredit. The power I should give it would be either to do that which I wish it to do, or to do its exact opposite, so that whichever it did, it would always be done by its own free will. But as my work must always be a perfect work—no matter in which direction the free will exercises its power, the result must be perfect in its way, and thus give me full entire honour. If on any single point it failed to do so, it would be to my discredit.

I then make an intelligent machine with a free will, therefore with alternatives on which to exercise that will, and the alternatives are the production of either intensest heat or intensest cold. The free will, then, in the machine can direct itself whichever way it pleases, but whichever way that may be, it must produce a perfect work, otherwise, I say once more, it would be to my discredit.

If, therefore, it wills to produce intense heat, and that heat

is not intense, my work must be imperfect, and therefore to my discredit, and if the cold which it produces is not also intense cold, the work is again to my discredit.

And if I exercised my power and deprived the will of its freedom to produce either the one or the other to its fullest extent, I should, in so far, be interfering with that which in its bestowal I considered an integral part of the work to be accomplished, and I should stultify myself.

I may also suppose the case of two free wills instead of one, the one willing the production of heat, and the other that of cold, it might be thought that these would counteract each other. But if the machine is perfect for the production of both it could not be so, there might be an apparent storm, but when the wind has ceased to blow, it would be found that the heat and cold had only intensified each other.

“Thou hast said well, my beloved, and now I place before thee the workings of our great, good, and loving God.

That great eternal God in whom alone is all life and beauty and goodness and happiness, who in a word *is*, and can only be Love Itself, determined to give existence to intelligent beings, and to make them like Himself, and to enkindle in them love like His own.

He who alone could and would be their beginning, should also be their last end. To Him then who created them all, their love should flow.

But in order that the love which He would pour down on them, may be able to enkindle in them love like itself, it must find in them something resembling that on which its own flame feeds. A flame can impart itself only to that which can feed it, and having done so, and taken its hold of the new fuel, it is then independent of the flame from which it issued, and becomes the flame of that upon which it now feeds.

God therefore gave to those intelligent beings His own image and likeness, and so His love, pouring down upon them,

found in them fuel resembling that upon which it had always fed, and was thus able to impart itself, and then become the separate flame of that of which it had now taken possession.

Again we can also say that, as God is Love Itself, a creature, made to that image and likeness, must itself also be love, and therefore by its nature be able to pour out love. But as it has free will, it can pour down that love on the object of its own selection.

A creature can obtain its fulness of happiness only by the attainment of the end for which it has been created. God, as we have seen, must be the end of all His works, and therefore, creatures can only find happiness directly or indirectly in the possession of Him.

This possession of Him they obtain by giving Him their love, as He has given all His to them.

But the flame of love which God enkindled in them, now burns from themselves, and is therefore theirs—it belongs, so to say, to them, and if they are not machines working by extraneous power, but intelligent beings, it must fall on the object to which their wills direct it ; but those wills would have no power of direction, if they were not free.

But, I say again, God always gives His creatures the means whereby to do the work which He expects from them, and which they really owe Him. And by doing that work, they enable Him to unite them with Himself, and share with Him His happiness and glory.

He therefore gives them free will.

He has created them capable of love of so perfect a kind that, when they possess it and preserve it in its integrity, it makes them like Himself, since, indeed, it is love enkindled by the flame of His own love, which is all Himself. And if that love which they have now become, is given by them to Him, they become one with Him, and so share His happiness and glory for all eternity.

But once more, will without alternatives on which to exercise itself could not be called free. God therefore gave their wills the alternative of pouring out the love which He had enkindled in them, either on Himself, or on themselves alone. That which He told them to do, was right ; the other alternative was wrong, for He alone is holy, He alone is God.

He alone is Love, therefore all love should flow to Him and to nothing else.

They have power, then, either to love God, and if so, they will hate everything opposed to His will : or to love themselves, in which case they will hate all who seem to require of them anything which they consider detrimental to themselves, even God Himself. You cannot serve two masters : if you love the one you must hate the other, who, you believe, would lead you away from him you love.

But as they are the work of God's hands, whatever they do will necessarily be a perfect work in its own way. But the work they have to do is to love or hate. Whichever then they do, it must be either full, entire love for God, and therefore hatred for all opposed to Him, and be followed by eternal possession of Him which is eternal happiness ; or full, entire love for self, and hatred for all, even for God Himself, if He appears opposed to them in any way. This hatred of course implies the loss of its object—the eternal loss of God, in whom alone happiness exists—and therefore it is the loss of all happiness, and the endurance of eternal torments.

It follows then, that as the consequences of the act of the creature's will, whatever that will may be, are, so to say, infinite, therefore only an infinite equivalent can ever be the alternative of those consequences."

Now, dear Angel, tell me two things : first, did God show His creatures in their creation the infinite happiness which would result from loving Him, or the infinite suffering which would be the consequence of not giving Him their love ?

“ No, beloved, He did not, beyond telling them that, if they did the one, they would live for ever, and that the result of the other would be eternal death. The reason of this was because the love they had to give Him, was to be real, full, entire love, proceeding from a perfectly free will, and to be given for the sake of what He is, Goodness and Love Itself. That they might do this, He showed them His goodness and love in every way, and let them see how worthy He was of all their love. All in themselves and everything that surrounded them, told the one great eternal truth, how good He was, and how much and tenderly He loved them. But, as we have just said, to give this love, free will was required, but the sight of either heaven or hell, as they really are, would have deprived them of it.

No one can be free in the presence of infinite happiness or under the sword of the executioner. Under such circumstances service would be given, not for love of God, but would be purely mercenary, and only to obtain either the happiness displayed—all else would be forgotten—or it would be given under dread of the torments which inevitably await those who dare to disobey.

Now, beloved, suppose the case of a child, born with excellent dispositions, and of most loving and intelligent parents, who have for their child the tenderest affection. It grows up, surrounded by all the marks of this very great love. There is not the smallest sign of anything but love, and the child fully reciprocates it.

As, however, it is still a child, there are many things which it does not know or understand, and therefore the loving parents tell it what to do, and what not to do. That suffices for the child. It never enters its mind to question its parents' love, and therefore it fully understands that *do* means that is for thy happiness, and *don't* means that it would make thee suffer, that for thee it is an evil.

It is love that speaks, love says *do*, love says *don't*, and this because the one will lead to happiness, and the other to

suffering. The words are all the outflow of tenderest parental love.

Under such circumstances as these, would the parents deem it necessary to accompany the expression of their will with elaborate descriptions of the results of do or do not? The expression of their wills tells all, no details are needed. It is more than sufficient that the expression of their wills comes from those whose love can never be called in question. The child's loving heart would be grieved at the doubt implied and cast on its love.

A display of all the evils resulting from disobedience would be holding a sword over the child's head, leaving it no longer free, and it would now obey from selfish motives and no longer for love.

And now, beloved, what was the other question thou wouldst ask?"

Dear Angel, thou hast told me that God has created intelligent beings for Himself, to become one with Himself, and thus to impart to them His own happiness and glory. He can only unite with Himself that which resembles Him. He is Love Itself, and therefore only love can become one with Him. He then enables these intelligent beings to become all love, and give that love to Him. But this, without a free will, they could not do. He therefore gives them that free will, with the alternative of giving Him either love or hate. But those, who give their love to themselves, and their hate to Him, will break His every law, and this subversion of order must lead to every sort of evil, and affect, not only others like themselves, but even those who give all their love to God. Now tell me, dear Angel, will God permit His enemies to perpetrate all this evil, and not take the part of those who love Him?

"Beloved, God in His eternal wisdom saw all, and saw what was most in accordance with that which He is, Eternal Love. Thou must never lose sight of this, He can only act in love. In

that loving wisdom then, which is far above our comprehension as long as we do not possess in Him that wisdom itself, He determined to give His creature free will as being most consonant with this love for them, and with the end which He proposed to Himself in giving them existence. And, having given it, He thereby expresses that it is His will not to interfere with it, and therefore lets it take its course.

But as we saw just now, in the production of heat and cold, it seemed as if the production of the one would counteract the production of the other. But such was not the case; there might be an apparent storm, but when the wind had ceased to blow it was found that the heat and the cold had only intensified each other. So it is with good and evil which we find together in the midst of God's creation.

Then, beloved, until God's great creative work is completed, which will only be on the world's last day, when, at His judgment seat, He will show it in all the beauty of the love with which He carried it out, and ask what more love could have done, until then we must expect to see the storm and turmoil and incessant battles going on between the opposing emanations of the free will of creatures.

It is to the human race that which the great battle in heaven was to the angelic. And as the faithful angels conquered, so will all those conquer who give their hearts to their loving Father and Creator. Loving Him entirely, they will not only never see anything but love in all His ways, but will fight, as Michael fought the rebel angels, all who dare hint that there is or can be anything but love in any of His ways.

Oh, beloved, love Him, love Him, His ways can only be the ways of tenderest love, His power does not extend beyond the ways of love."

Dear Angel, tell me something by which I may make my love for Him all that He would desire. "For that, beloved, thy

love must be infinite." Oh, dear Angel, tell me how that could ever be! "I will tell thee a secret, beloved.

I once heard a spouse of our dear Lord say unto Him: Dear Lord, I should so much like to be God, like Thee—do make me so! And why, my child? He said. Because, then, I could love Thee with infinite love, and nothing less could ever make me happy, it is the only love worth offering to Thee who art so good, so good; all other love seems contemptible when I think of Thee. Thou sayest well, My child, He answered, that is the infinite love with which My Eternal Father loves Me, and it is the love with which I love Him, the love with which the Holy Ghost loves Him and Me, the love with which We love Him. And, as that love is the only love worthy of God, thy prayer has been already granted, and I have assumed thy humanity into My Divinity. And thus all the true love which thou offerest to God, because thou art one with Me, is infinite, and therefore I have said: that you are Gods, and sons of the Most High."

Oh, thank thee, dear Angel, now I understand.

MEDITATION XII.

NO PUNISHMENT TOO GREAT FOR DISOBEDIENCE AND INGRATITUDE TO A GOD OF INFINITE LOVE.

DEAR Angel, thy last words have drawn me, as it were, into the depths of God's infinite goodness and love, and I wake up now, so to say, from a deep dream of thy heavenly abode. I understand now, how God's end in all His works could only be love, and that if He adopted one course rather than another, it was, and could be, only because He saw in His eternal wisdom that that course was more in accordance with His own goodness and love than the other, and with the end which He proposed to Himself—an end which could only be love. As we have

seen elsewhere, when the work is completed, He will show it, and then let us judge and say whether love could have done more. The act of love then leads to infinite happiness, and that of hate to infinite suffering."

Dear Angel, I see that thou hast more to say—oh, tell me!

"Yes, beloved, the result of hate, as thou hast now seen it, is as the result of drinking some terrible poison. The poison itself brings about the suffering and death, and the kind and the intensity of the suffering depend on the nature of the poison. But thou hast to consider another point. Supposing that the poison did not carry with it any results of suffering, is there any amount of punishment, which could be too great first for disobedience to the commands of the great Eternal God, and then for such frightful ingratitude to Him, whose infinite love has made His creatures what they are?

As regards the first, angels and men are bound by every reason to obey the commands of God. They are His creatures who have received everything from Him. He is their God. In Him they live and move and have their being. If He were to withdraw from them, in that moment they would cease to exist. Or if leaving them existence only, He withheld from them the rays of His love, all beauty would depart as the brilliancy of the diamond disappears, when the sun's bright rays no longer shine upon it, and it remains dark as a common stone.

But for them it would be more than darkness, for the absence of the ray of God's love leaves a void which is instantly filled up by unimaginable sufferings. Therefore, in every moment of its existence, every intelligent being is under infinite obligation to Him, for not being that which a moment's withdrawal of His presence would render it.

Now, each one is bound in every possible way, as being His creature, to obey each and every one of His commands, and, therefore, refusal to obey would be an act of rebellion against Him. And what is rebellion against God?

I am working with one who is my equal, but who for the time being represents my master, and I refuse to obey his order. I am wrong in disobeying him. He calls the master, who himself repeats the command, and I still refuse obedience.

My disobedience has now become more grievous, and the position and authority of the master is the measure of the evil, so that that which in itself might be only a minor act of insubordination, if he who gives the order is in supreme authority, disobedience constitutes rebellion and high treason, and incurs the extreme punishment of death.

What then must disobedience to God's commands imply? God is the King of Kings, infinite in all perfections. His rights over us are supreme, and therefore disobedience to His orders, implies rebellion, high treason against Him, incurring a penalty great in proportion with what He is, and He is infinite. That penalty must accordingly be infinite. But as in a finite creature it cannot be so in intensity, it must be so in its duration.

But the great Creator has other rights besides those which belong to Him as King and God. He possesses the right of One, who has ever been that which He is by nature and by essence, Love Itself. His creatures, angels and men, before they rebelled against Him, had never known suffering. They had received from Him every gift of which their beautiful and perfect natures were capable. Their nearest approach to suffering was intense hunger for, and craving to possess, a something of which He had made them capable, but which was not yet theirs, and that something was Himself, whole and entire, that craving hunger was the very thing which was to draw Him to them. Their wills were free, and He awaited their consent. His love for them caused Him to delay, in order that they might hunger and thirst more and more for Him; for without hunger, food can with difficulty assimilate with its recipient, and He desired to make Himself one with the objects of His love.

Thou mayest judge, beloved, what He who alone Is, must

have been to His angels, by what He has been to man, unchanged, unchangeable. It is thus He speaks to man: 'With desire, I have desired to give Myself to you, whole and entire'. Love made Him long for them, and their love must make them crave and long for Him. So great is His love for them that He *commands* them to give Him all their love, and nothing less than all can satisfy His love: 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God'.

Love must be reciprocal, and therefore He says: 'Turn to me and I will turn to you, what more could I have done for you? Like a true lover I have given you all the substance of my house for love, and I think it nothing, so great is My love for you, I adopt you for My children, and give you Myself.' And the dying favour He asked of His Eternal Father was that they might be one with Him. 'Oh then,' He says, 'will you not give Me your hearts?''

Who could resist this tender, loving appeal? O, my own loving Jesus, I hear Thy sweet voice breathing out these words: 'With desire I have desired'. What hast Thou desired, my own loved Lord? 'To possess thee, My beloved child, and to give Myself to thee—give Me thy heart!' And how long hast Thou desired to possess my poor heart, dear Lord? 'Always,' He replies, 'I am He who Is. I am the God of angels, thy own good and loving God.' Oh, what a good God have they!

But, my own good God, I see Thee weeping and suffering, and why? 'My work,' He replies, 'is very hard. I am thy Bread, and thou art Mine. In the sweat of My brow I am earning thee, and to win thee, I think it nothing. To win thy love and thy whole heart I shall lay down My life. With desire I have desired thee, My own beloved child, and oh, how great is the agony of that craving hunger, little dost thou imagine. Oh, My child, feed My craving hunger: give Me thy heart and I am paid for all.' And that same good God it was who asked for His angels' love. But, my God, my own good God,

Thy sufferings are indeed too great, greater they cannot be. Thou drinkest the cup of sorrows to its very dregs.

‘And, dear child, my crowning grief of all is that I cannot suffer more.’ And why, dear Lord, are all these sighs, and pleadings, and unutterable groanings? ‘They are all, my beloved one, to enable thee to give Me thy heart. Oh give it me, My own dear child; refuse Me not, or My Heart must break. With desire I have desired. Oh how I have longed for thee!’

And that is the angels’ God who commands them to love. And for how long, dear Lord, didst thou crave for their love? ‘Always; I am He Who Is.’

But, dear Lord, I see thee in a poor stable, trembling with cold and hunger. Oh, why art Thou there?

‘My own loved child, it was the only road which would bring Me to thy heart. With desire I have desired to give Myself to thee.’

That is the good loving God, who claimed the angels’ love. But now, my own dear Lord, I see Thee in an agony exceeding all the rest. Two swords run through Thy Heart, the one Thine own—that of the Man of Sorrows—the other that of Thy dear Mother, the Queen of Martyrs. Oh, what agony!

‘Yes, My beloved child, to Me that was the sharpest sword of all. My sorrows, as a sword, went through her Heart and then returned to Mine, all purpled with her blood. Thou canst never fathom the depth of her agony and Mine until thou hast penetrated into the depths of our mutual love.’

But, dear Lord, how couldst Thou ever bring Thyself to wound her loving heart?

‘Dear child, it was the road by which I could reach thine, which with desire I have desired, and her love was like Mine, and she opened out the way. And had I denied her the longing of her loving heart, its grief and sorrow would have far exceeded all the other agony. Oh, how she prayed and entreated me!’

That is the God who commands the angels' love! Oh, what a good and loving God!

But, dear Lord, I see Thee dying on a cross, and Thou dost cry out asking Thy Father why He has forsaken Thee? Why was it so, dear Lord?

'My dear child, it was because I would never part with thee; and it was the only price that would enable thee to give thy heart to Me. See then, how I long to possess thy whole, entire heart, how with desire I have desired it.'

That was the God, the loving God, who asked for His angels' love! Oh, what a good and loving God!"

Again my dear Angel speaks. "Now, my beloved, we see the state of things in heaven at the moment of the fall of the rebel angels. We see who and what their God was, and must have been, though all that ever can be said falls far short of what He really is.

We have seen what His rights are over all his creatures. In the greatness of His love, He exercises His rights, and commands His angels to do that which they are already bound in so many ways to do—to give Him all their love—and then places before them the means by which alone they can become one with Him.

His Incarnation would indeed be the crowning act of all His love for them, and, though not devised as such, would be the test of whether or not they had given Him all their love. If they were all love for Him, there was no sacrifice they would not be prepared to make for Him, the one object of their love. Even should that which He asked be a real sacrifice, and very detrimental to them, they would gladly give Him all He could ever ask.

The means which He would propose to them, and by which alone they could become one with Him, belonged to an infinitely higher order of things than that in which they at present were, and by it alone could they rise to that higher order,

and until they did so, it was unintelligible to them. They were as yet clothed in comparative darkness, and the step they were called upon to take seemed detrimental to them. But what did that matter to those who were all love for Him? There is nothing that love would not do or sacrifice for love. Moreover, love never believes its object capable of anything but good, no matter what its form, and would annihilate the one who would dare breathe a word against it."

MEDITATION XIII.

THE TORMENTS OF THOSE WHO HAVE CHOSEN TO LOVE NOT GOD.

DEAR Angel, continue, I entreat, thy instruction. "I will do so, my beloved. Love makes the creature a partaker of the Divinity. Hate makes it a partaker in all that is opposed to God. All beauty and happiness are in God alone, and are possessed by His creatures in the measure in which they partake of God. Horrible deformity and dreadful suffering must result from the loss of all beauty and all happiness.

Hence, in the moment when the rebel angels cast off God by sin, they cast off all beauty, and became monsters so frightful, that no human being can form any idea of the change which then took place in them. As we have no real idea of the beauty imparted by the possession of God, which possession is obtained by love for Him, neither have we any idea of the awful deformity which is the necessary consequence of the loss of Him by hate.

Whenever evil spirits have been allowed to appear on earth under a form which was in any way analogous to their own, and which could be described, that form always gave the idea of all most repulsive in every way, though repulsive as it was it was never more than the shadow of a reality in presence of which no human being could live. The loss of all happiness

involves the presence of all suffering. The absence of one suffering, or the existence of a suffering less intense than it might be in the individual, would be a happiness—a blessing. But if all happiness is lost they cannot possess even that negative one of the absence of a torment.

We have already seen that the attributes of God which shine in His creatures in various degrees, if returned to Him by love, find their corresponding happiness, so also, if returned by hate, they find their corresponding suffering.

No description can give any adequate idea of what those sufferings really are; indeed, God, having given us free will, has not made them known, the knowledge of them, as also that of the joys of heaven, would destroy all free will, neither can it, as we have already seen, give even a remote idea of the hideousness and deformity of those who, in losing God, have lost all beauty.

Oh, then, what a terrible thing it is to assert independence, and thereby cast Him off who alone sees and knows all, and who, being Goodness and Love Itself, is powerless to guide to anything but happiness.

If, then, thou wouldst picture to thyself those eternal torments, think of all the sufferings of which thou hast ever read or heard, or even imagined in any way, and then remember that they are all as nothing in comparison with those which really have to be undergone by all who cast away their God, for that they themselves alone can do, He is Love Itself.

And what would each one in the midst of all those fearful torments tell thee, didst thou question them? They would ever repeat again and again the same thing: ‘I was fully warned, I knew what I was doing, and, in the exercise of my free will, I chose that which produces these results. I have no one to blame, I did it all myself. Oh, no, it was not God who did it, that was beyond His power, He never was, and never can be, anything but Love. Love is His nature. And because love is

His nature and hatred is now mine, I hate Him. I, by my own act, changed myself into what I am, and, as water repels fire, so do I repel all good, and hate and curse Him who is Goodness and Love Itself.'

And if thou further askest Him; could not God have prevented you from eating the poison? His answer would ever be: 'No, for my will was free, and I chose to eat it'. Did you know what you were doing? 'Yes, I knew perfectly what I was doing. Had I not known I should not be what I am.' Could He not free you from your sufferings? 'No, they are my nature, and my nature being hatred for Him, a boon from Him would be to me far greater torment than all I now endure.'

But your sufferings in hell are less than they would have been were you not, so to say, protected by its walls? 'Yes, that is so, but if we looked on hell as a boon from Him, the very thought would cause us far greater suffering than all that we are spared by dwelling there. But His boon was not to us, and we never asked it, it was to His Angel Michael who asked it of Him, when he held us bound as prisoners before his Master's throne, but even the thought that we owe it to one, that is loved by, or loves Him for whom we have such bitter hate, causes sufferings and agony almost commensurate with those from which we are freed.'"

And here my dear Angel bids me question one, who now stands before me, and I do so as follows. Poor fallen angel, I and many pity your sad lot. And he replies: 'Fools, we hate you all the more. No doubt, if you could, you would free us from all torments, and we would, if we could, heap those torments all on you, multiplying them a hundredfold. Oh, how we hate you, for you are loved by Him for whom we have such bitter hate. Nevertheless, we try to excite your pity, so that pitying us, you may think God hard, and love Him all the less, and for that reason we thank you for your pity. Could we ever find a respite in our torments, it would be when you pity

us, and think Him hard, when you think that He, Goodness Itself and Love Itself, could have done more than He did for us. That would indeed be to us a source of greatest joy, because it would cause you to love Him all the less, and it would also be a lie, another consolation. We hate truth because He is truth, and we love lies because He hates them.' Here I pause, and my dear Angel says: "Beloved, thou hast now learnt thy letters, put them together, and read what a frightful evil is sin".

PART VI.

SUMMARY.

MARY is the only human being that was excepted from the effects of Adam's fall; and consequently the only one, who could approach the throne of God. She had, too, the most intense love for the whole race of mankind, and was prepared to undergo every suffering to save it.

What is true of God—that He is Love Itself—is true in its degree of His mother; she loves us with a love surpassing that of any earthly mother, or any other pure creature.

God does her will in all things, for her will is identical with His own. From the recognition of her love we can rise to a better understanding of the infinitely greater love of God.

The first lesson that we thus learn of the love of God, is that it is boundless on His part, and, as regards ourselves, it is only limited by the capacity of our nature and by our own free will.

The state of man, after the fall, was to all appearance hopeless; Mary's love for God, who foresaw it all, enabled her to crush the serpent's head, and thus open out, as it were, the work of redemption.

Mary alone of all the children of Adam was preserved from sin; she crushed the serpent's head, because the greatness of her love for God exceeded the serpent's hate.

The key-note of her whole life is to be found in her answer to the angel: "Be it done unto me according to Thy word". Her blessedness among women lies in this conformity to the will of God, whose handmaid she ever was.

The incarnation depended on this, as expressed by her consent, from which all God's graces flow, for her consent gave us Him by whom alone we could reach to God.

When we realise this, we see that our love for God is inseparable from that we bear His mother; and that His love for us in turn depends on our love of her.

Sacrifice is the supreme test of love. We know that God asked what seemed a sacrifice of the angels, and which was to them incomprehensible. We cannot enter into the sacrifice He demanded of His mother, but it must have been proportionate to her love for Him.

All her perfections were His free gift, and therefore bound her the more to love Him unreservedly, and to do His will in all things.

The beauty of her soul consisted in her being filled with the love of God, and therefore adorned with every virtue. She is the Queen of Martyrs because she, the greatest of all sufferers with the exception of our Lord Himself, is the Bride of the Man of Sorrows, the King of heaven and earth.

MEDITATION I.

MARY THROUGH THE PERFECT LOVE OF GOD HAS A SHARE
IN THE REDEMPTION OF THE HUMAN RACE.

MY dear Angel, I thank and love thee for all thou hast taught me.

“ My beloved, I also thank and love thee for thanking me. Nothing is more pleasing to our dear Lord than a grateful and loving heart ; and therefore if thou wilt give me thine, I will offer it to Him. I will now tell thee other things for thy instruction.

We have arrived at a point which it is most important that thou shouldst understand. Thou hast seen that Adam and Eve had fixed their wills on hatred for God, and that in them there was no sign of repentance. Thou didst then see that there still was in Adam the germ of one, between whom and the serpent enmity existed. It was that germ which, as a beautiful flower, thou hadst already seen grasped by the hand of God, and become a garden of delights in which He Himself would dwell. The one filled with ardent love for Him, the other filled with bitter hatred.

That blessed one, being the only one of the entire human race who was not in sin, not at enmity with God, was consequently the only one, who could plead before Him the cause of fallen man. God knew that she would never reject Him, and that her will would ever be in perfect conformity with His, and that His own most holy will was to grant her prayer in all. Indeed so close was the resemblance between her love for Him and His love for her, that He determined that, whatever He could do by power, she should do by prayer. To her then He refers, when He speaks of the work to be done by a woman : and her work

would be to obtain from Him by prayer that which no creature but He alone could give.

Later thou wilt see how fully God placed all in her hands, and left the eternal destiny of the human race as entirely dependent on the free will of her who was the second Eve, as it had already been on that of the first. And this He was pleased to notify to all by Himself waiting for her own full, entire consent to be formally given by herself, as it was indeed given and expressed by the words: 'Be it done to me according to Thy word,' before He would Himself enter on His own great, almighty work.

Now understand, beloved, that had it not been for her, who alone of all the human race was filled with love for Him, and who was therefore the only one, who could or would approach Him, the whole human race would have been for ever in antagonism with good, with love, with God.

Adam's posterity would have directly inherited from him the loss of supernatural love given with sanctifying grace; moreover they would have inherited from him powers of soul and senses, so weakened and so prone to evil, that their free will would have at once refused to sacrifice their pleasure and self-love to God: in a word, they would have hated God, and, in that hatred, they would have persevered until death, and therefore for all eternity.

From the moment in which by God's grace Adam was forgiven, that same grace continued to flow on all who were willing to receive it, and this it did in anticipation of the price which would one day be paid for it in the Temple and on Mount Calvary. As we have already seen, its first fruit was the conversion of those who had caused all the evil.

And now, my beloved, I have little else to say on this point. Thou seest the state to which man was brought by sin. He had lost that high position and dignity to which God had raised him by adopting him as His son. He had contracted a

debt which he could only pay by infinite sufferings in all the powers of his soul and in the senses of his body—sufferings not infinite indeed in intensity, as that could not be in a finite creature, but infinite in duration.

Even had that debt been paid, so prone was he to evil that he would immediately have contracted it again, for the very things which once would have helped him to do good and love and serve his God, being now perverted, would urge him on to the commission of every evil, and that to such an extent, that even in the age of grace and love, all are commanded to fly far from them. In a word, man is a ruin, as are also the means originally given him whereby to do his work : they are no longer a help to him, but like the earth itself produce thorns and thistles. Then how is that great work to be accomplished?

God Himself, as we have just seen, told Adam and Eve that a woman would do the work, for He said : ‘I will put enmity between thee (serpent) and the woman’. That is, they would be antagonistic to each other. The serpent is all hatred for God ; and the opposite of hatred is love. Therefore the woman of whom God spoke must be all love for Him.

Love for God embraces all God’s creatures, and therefore, she who is full of love for Him will seek to banish hatred from the heart of man and fill its place with love.

The incarnate God, by His infinite merits, preserved that perfect one alone from the least stain of the fearful evil which afflicted all others of the human race, and filled her heart with love. Therefore, as we have already seen, she was the only one of the whole human race who could approach the Throne of God.

But if she was all love for God, her love for the human race would be great in proportion to that love, and therefore, there could be nothing she would not be prepared to do to secure its eternal happiness.

God, knowing that such would be the case, and that she,

that beautiful and perfect one, would do all that a pure creature could do, not only to pay the debt of man, but also to provide him with all the means whereby to do his work, and having done all she could do, would have recourse to Him who could deny her nothing, and implore Him to do that which she could not do herself. I say then that God, knowing this, in the greatness of His love for her, at once began the work of the sanctification and salvation of the human race, by once more pouring out all His love upon it. Mary, therefore, was not a mere passive instrument of our redemption. She was an active, a free and reasonable agent. It was by her free and full love of God and man, that she helped to bring about the redemption of the human race."

MEDITATION II.

THE CROSS IS THE MEASURE OF GOD'S LOVE TO MAN.

DEAR Guardian Angel, we are to return to-day to the loving heart of our own dear mother, and she will lead us to her own beloved Son. Even now I hear her sweet voice, and I know her arms are open to receive me.

Oh, dear mother, how long, how very long it seems since that day on which thou didst bear me up, and leave me in God's eternity.

"My child, I have for all that ever been with thee, watching over thee with a mother's love. It was for thy great good that I remained hidden and seemed to have left thee altogether. I often have to act thus with my beloved children, and too often they think that I have forgotten or indeed forsaken them.

They grieve me by that want of confidence, for how could I, who have always loved them so much and so tenderly, ever for one moment really abandon them?

My beloved child, listen to this: the root and source of all

the troubles and crosses which arise in the souls of my dear children, is, that the moment my presence in their souls assumes the form of twilight, doubts and fears commence. They think that I am forsaking them and begin to doubt my love, and even that of their own dear Lord, and thus they are disquieted. When twilight has deepened into night, those doubts become convictions, they are certain that not only I, their own true mother, but also He who has loved them so much, loved them to the very end, and assured them that though a mother might forget her children, yet He would not forget them, has abandoned and forsaken them !

My child, thou seest that in the material world there are the constant alternations of day and night, of heat and cold, which are good and even necessary changes whereby to enable the earth to produce its fruits. To pass from one day to another, we must go through the night. So is it in the spiritual life, the alternations whereof are good and necessary in order that the soul may produce its fruits for eternal life.

Of this thou wilt find abundant proofs in the lives of God's saints, and more especially in those who were His greatest favourites. Remember, therefore, that thou hast never to be disturbed by these alternations in thy soul of day and night, of heat and cold, but in their midst fear one thing only, and that is loss of confidence in thy own dear Lord, and in me, thy loving Mother."

And why, dear Mother ?

"Because it is a departure from the truth. He is Love Itself, and yet thou callest that love in question, and I am thy true Mother, and can I forsake my child, especially in the day of trouble ?" But, dear Mother, it is not that we doubt His love, it is that we doubt and fear ourselves. We fear, lest by want of correspondence with His grace, we may render that love impossible.

"And what of that, my child ? Is not that knowledge in

itself a grace? It is good for thee to see that thou art thyself the only hindrance to His love, that thou mayest at once begin with more earnestness than ever to correspond with grace. It is a great grace to see that obstacle which is so powerful that it can arrest the flow of His almighty love, to see also thy own weakness, and thy great need of Him, and how entirely thou art dependent on Him for all. The greater thy weakness, the greater is thy claim on His loving care and help; and this knowledge, that without Him thou canst do nothing, leads thee to place thy entire confidence in Him, and in Him alone. But thou must let Him give His help, not in thy way but in His own, for His way must ever be the very best for thee."

Dear Mother, how shall I do that?

"My child, by saying always: 'Thy will be done,' by thanking Him for everything which happens to thee, whether by His will or only by His permission. If it happens by His will, it must ever be good in itself, no matter what its form, or if only by His permission, even though an evil, if thou conformest thy will with that permission, He will draw from it very great good for thee, a good that thou wouldst never have otherwise received. Everything which befalls thee, whilst thou art on earth, is directly or indirectly the fruit of His love for thee. See that loving mother who bears in her arms the child of her heart all covered with disease. All that mother's care, and all her love are lavished on her poor afflicted child. But listen to its cries, see how it struggles to escape from its mother's arms, look,—it raises its little hand to strike her! And why? Because she, in her love, has to make it suffer. But how can she steel her heart against all its cries and sufferings? Her love, and that alone, enables her to do it all. And so is it with Him who not only loves with a mother's love, but is Love Itself."

But, dear Mother, am I never to say,—He punishes me?

“No, my child, never, He never punishes in this world. He is always what He is, Love and Love alone.”

But does punishment never follow my evil deeds ?

“Only, my child, that which often follows sin, and which thou mayest call punishment if it so pleases thee, but whatever the suffering may be, it is always brought about by some wound inflicted on the soul by sin or disease arising from the same cause, and often suffering has to be increased either by nauseous drugs or even by painful operations that life may thus be saved. When disease necessitates the one or the other, thou dost not regard the sufferings they produce as punishments, but thou knowest that they are the remedies which were really required to save thee from death ; so it is with the sufferings which often follow, not only thy own evil deeds, but even those of thy ancestors. But if thou turnest them to good account, they will bring thee back to God, or if thou art in His holy grace, confirm thee in that love, for that and for that alone do they come upon thee.”

Dear Mother, does not our Lord often withhold the grace which He would have granted, had I not been unfaithful ?

“Yes, my child, yet not by His own act. Thy sin or infidelity closes the entrance by which His grace would have passed into thy heart, and then thou hast to labour hard and long to remove the obstacle which thou thyself hast raised. As we have seen elsewhere, His graces surround us, and even as the ocean’s waters press on every side the objects which are in its bosom, so does His love seek entrance in our hearts, but even as the waters, however hard they may press, can never enter an object entirely closed against them, neither can His grace enter into our souls, if all is closed against Him.

God is Love, and in Him we live and move and have our being, and therefore that love, as we said just now, presses on every side, ever seeking to make our hearts its own, and to obtain entire possession of them,

Remember, therefore, that thou wilt always be right if thou seest only love in Him, and in all His acts. Many things will seem to thee to bear the form of hatred, but His ways are not thine, and therefore, judge them not, but be guided by what thou really knowest, and that is, that He is Love Itself, and Love alone. Never doubt that Infinite Love for a single moment, for if thou dost, thou wilt surely fall into grievous error, the path of perdition. Fly from such doubts as thou wouldst fly from a serpent about to strike thee with its poisoned fang.

Bear also in mind that what I now tell thee of Him, is in its own degree also true of me. Then never forget that I am thy own dear loving Mother, and that no mother ever loved her child as I love thee. Now, more than ever, is it necessary that thou shouldst bear this well in mind, for thou hast to see what my love has made me do for thee, and that has been so great, so very great, that it would be incredible to thee, didst thou see me other than I am.

So now, dear child, meditate carefully on these truths, that He is Love Itself, and that I am His mother. And pray with all the fervour of thy soul, uniting with me in that prayer by which thou wilt entreat Him to give thee grace never to depart from that one only path in which the true light shines. Tomorrow we will go to His loving Heart."

MEDITATION III.

MARY'S WILL WAS EVER THE WILL OF HER GOD, FOR SHE
LOVED HIM WITH A PERFECT LOVE.

"ARISE, my beloved one, and come."

I know thy voice so well, dear Mother, and I know that thou alone wouldst speak such loving words to one so unworthy in every way. Thy words are indeed the words of our own dear Lord

who is all thy love ; then, I AM thy beloved one, dearest Mother, and this thought fills my heart with confidence and courage. Oh, let me repose for a moment on thy loving heart, for the thought of thy great love overpowers me.

Yes, I really am her child, and she is truly my Mother ; I see her eyes beaming down upon me with maternal tenderness and affection. Indeed, there is no love to be compared with such love as hers. Oh, dearest Mother, I will never doubt thy love, no matter what occurs. When the dark shades of night come on me, when trials, temptations, and sufferings encompass me, when it is so dark that I cannot see thy bright smiling face, I will not doubt thee even then, but will only say : what a dark night, dear Mother, even *thou* art hidden from my view ! But the storm will soon pass by, and the bright sun will shine again. I will sleep in thy loving arms, “ In peace, in the self-same, I will sleep and take my rest,” for, no matter how the storm may rage, I know in whose arms I am, a Mother’s arms, and she, the Mother of my God, without whose permission, a hair falls not from my head.

And He was subject to her, and did her will, and does it still in all. Didst thou hear, dear Mother, what I said ?—That He does thy will in all.

“ It is so, my child, for my will is ever His. He Himself made me thus, so that I am all love, and therefore, He who is Love Itself gave Himself to me and made me all His own, that so I might ever do His will, as He ever does mine. He who loves does the will of the one whom he loveth : my will was therefore always His : ‘ Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to thy word ’.”

Oh, dear Mother, how many times have I heard those words in thy own sweet loving notes, when left by thee in the midst of God’s eternity. They were the rallying words which bound together all who truly loved their God.

But, dear Mother, will His love for me be always like thine ?

Can He possibly love me so tenderly who have been so ungrateful, and have so often displeased and caused Him pain?

“Oh, my child, how canst thou speak thus? Do not say thou hast displeased Him; displeasure is so like anger, and He knows not what it is. Say, if thou wilt, that thou hast grieved His loving Heart, and made Him sad. He chose me to be, not only His Mother, but also thine, precisely because I was the one who could love thee most, because my love was the nearest approach to His.

Oh truly, my child, the love of all the mothers in creation is little indeed compared with my love for thee, and for all my dear beloved children. Yet all my love, great as thou wilt see that it has ever been, is all as nothing when compared with His love for thee. My loving heart is but a stepping-stone from which thou mayest plunge into the depths of His; for His Heart it is which is the real, great, fathomless ocean of love, Love Itself. I extend my hand to lead thee to Him, and no matter what it costs me, I spare myself in nothing to remove every obstacle standing in thy path, some of them indeed I alone can move. As God gave free will to Eve, with which to save or lose the human race, so also did He give it to me.”

Then, dear Mother, in giving me life, thy sorrows were multiplied?

“Yes, dear child; and when thou hast seen how great these sorrows were, thou wilt begin to realise the greatness of my love.”

I now see my dear Father, the spouse of my own dear Mother. He is here to watch over me, because I am her child: and oh how He loves me! My Guardian Angel, and those angels and saints of God, who have done so much for me, and whom I am so especially bound to love, are all here to help me to realise and understand the great lesson I have now to learn.

Once more my Mother speaks: “Arise, my beloved one,

and come". Whither shall we go, dear Mother? "Listen to His voice, of which mine was only the distant echo."

I do now indeed hear His loving voice, which also says: "Arise, My beloved one, and come. With desire I have desired thee."

Oh, dear Lord, say no more, if Thou willest that I should live! Oh, what tenderness, oh what love, and Thou art the great, the infinite God, my God and my all! What can I give Thee in return for all Thy love?

"My child, give Me thy heart. I ask thee for nothing else. Give Me thy heart, and then thou wilt do My will in all. When temptations assail thee, think of My love, think how sad and pained I shall be, if thou dost yield; think how I long to see thee fight courageously against all that might keep thee from Me. See Me—I am watching thy every thought, thy every struggle. Look at Me, and at the love I bear thee, and then thou wilt do all, thou hast to do, for love of Me alone."

At this moment He drew me into His loving Heart, which is now to be my dwelling. It is in His Heart that my lesson must be learnt. There it is that He will teach me all I have to know.

Dear Mother, I see thou hast a word to say.

"Yes, my child, remember why it is that in His loving Heart thou hast to learn thy lessons. It is because all the beautiful and wonderful things of this world, which were once the books in which man had to learn the lessons that would fit him for eternity, are now in the hands of the enemy, and would lead thee astray.

• Fly, therefore, from the things of earth, as He telleth thee to do; for He Himself supplies their place, and He alone can teach thee. Those only, who follow Him, walk not in darkness. Again, I say, He will be thy teacher."

MEDITATION IV.

THE ONLY SIGN AND TEST OF OUR LOVE OF GOD IS
CONFORMITY WITH HIS HOLY WILL.

DEAREST Lord, Thy Own dear Mother placed me here in Thy loving Heart.

“Yes, My child, she did so ; she always does My will, and she knew how I longed for thee : ‘ With desire, I have desired thee ’. Oh, how hard she toiled to bring thee hither. Each time she heard Me call thee, and thou didst not respond, her look of anguish went through My Heart. Then I called out loud, that I might thus comfort her, and thou didst then hear Me say : ‘ Arise, My beloved one, and come ’.”

Dear Lord, why did she love me so much and so tenderly ?

“It was because she knew the greatness of My love for thee, and how I longed to possess thee for ever ; and also because she is so like Me in all ; she loved thee for the reason for which I love thee so much.”

But, dear Lord, why dost Thou love me so much ?

“Because thou art made to the image and likeness of Him Who is Love Itself.”

But, suppose, dear Lord, that I do not love ?

“That may be ; nevertheless thou art capable of love. The purest diamond covered with earth is dark, but the earth may be removed, and then the diamond becomes bright and beautiful like the sun itself which then shines down upon it.”

Dear Lord, what must I do, that Thy bright rays of love may penetrate me and transform me into love, into Thyself ?

“My child, remove the earth, every fault and imperfection, every particle of dust. Fly from all which can turn away from thee My ardent rays of love.”

Oh, dear Lord, Thou art so good, how am I to love Thee as I indeed desire to love Thee, and as Thou willest to be loved

by me? Give me a sign, dear Lord, by which I may know my heart, and whether it really is all love for Thee.

“My child, there is only one sign and test which never can deceive. If thou lovest Me, thou wilt always seek to do My will in all, no matter what that will may be. That is the mirror in which thou wilt ever see the precise measure of thy love. I do not look so much at the success thou hast achieved, as I do at thy good will, and the efforts thou hast made to please Me in every way.”

But now, dear Lord, Thou callest me to Thy loving Heart, that there I may learn all that Thou and Thy dear mother have done to save the human race; then why is Thy first lesson the one Thou teachest now?

“Dear child, it is because no one can understand God’s ways in any light except His own light of love. He only, who followeth that light, walketh not in darkness. Few are they who walk in that light; few, therefore, realise the great truths of God and the teachings of His Church. Keep ever in that light, and thou wilt see and understand all that will be put before thee.”

Oh, my own dear and loving God, Thou seest me, where Thou Thyself hast placed me, in Thy loving Heart. Thou seest what I am. Oh, by all Thy goodness, by all Thy love, by Thy tenderest compassion, I entreat Thee, my own loved God, to fill me, inflame me with Thy holy love, that, in every moment of my existence, I may live only for Thee, and for Thee alone, and thus enable Thee to do in me Thy holy will in all. Let my only thought and desire be, to do in all things Thy holy will. Dearest Mother, show thyself a mother to me; guide and direct each step of thy poor child, so that each step may lead me deeper into His loving Heart. Dear St. Joseph, I belong to Jesus and Mary, make me all theirs without reserve. Dear Angel, and you my holy patrons, filled as you are with ardent love for Him, do ye His holy will. He wills and commands

that I should be all love for Him. To you I then appeal. May His holy will be done.

All is now repose; my dear Angel stands ever by my side always watchful. He sees that I would whisper a little word to him, and looking at me with tenderest affection, says: "Speak, my beloved one". I reply: dear Angel, tell me the things I should ever bear in mind, while learning to know Him, and all He has done for me.

"My beloved, remember that the true and only measures of love are the works which we do, and those we wish to do. If I love thee, I serve thee according to the measure of my love. Therefore, if thou knowest the measure of my love, thou knowest also what to expect from me. And if thou knowest, that I am wholly devoted to thee—that I am all love for thee, thou art confident that I shall do all in my power for thee, and that in thy regard I am unable to do otherwise, my love restricts my power and keeps it in its embrace. If I should omit the least thing intentionally, thou wouldst have a right to say: 'it is true thou hast been very good to me, but thy love has a limit, since it stopped short of what it might still have done for me, and therefore is not boundless'.

Now, our dear Lord is Love Itself, and therefore His love for us can have no limits, save only those which we ourselves assign it. And when His work is done, and we can understand it, He will appeal to all without exception, to tell Him, what more love could have done.

It is of extreme importance that this truth should be deeply impressed on thy mind, first, because it is a cruel and heartless thing to say or imply, either directly or indirectly, or even to think anything that can be even in the very slightest degree derogatory to such love as His. Oh, what a pang it is to a loving mother's heart to hear the child of her love,—the child for whom alone she has lived, reproach her with want of love, because she gives a drug which she knows alone can save its

life, to see it reserved, and, as it were, afraid to draw near her. Oh, how can it doubt her love? And yet, so it is, it seeks to fly from her who alone can save its life.

Then, what pain and agony must such words, such doubts, cause to the loving Heart of Him who is Love Itself, and this, not only because of that very love, but also because He knows to what they must lead the dear child He loves so much. Oh, how great is the joy of the enemy of God, when he sees that Sacred Heart thus tortured by the very children whom He has Himself adopted, and whom He loves with such boundless love. Secondly, because if thou dost not believe that He is Love Itself, thou wilt not believe that His love ever can have gone to the extreme to which it really went.

Remember then, that even the least thought derogatory to His love comes from the serpent, God's enemy from the beginning, and that no thought more dangerous can enter thy mind. To fill the minds of God's children with such false and evil thoughts, such deadly poison, is the ceaseless effort of that fiend, who is the father of lies, and hates the very name of love. Alas, he succeeds too well.

My beloved, thou art now warned, be ever watchful, be ever on thy guard."

MEDITATION V.

THE GREATNESS OF MARY'S LOVE ENABLED HER TO CRUSH
THE INFERNAL SERPENT'S HEAD.

DEAREST Lord, in obedience to Thy loving command, I return to Thy loving Heart, to learn the lessons Thou wilt still teach me.

"Yes, My child, but before thy lessons begin thou must tell Me what thou hast already learnt."

Hiding in His loving Heart I see my dearest Mother, St.

Joseph, my good Angel, and my Patron Saints, giving me looks of encouragement and of very great affection. But I pleaded and asked them to join in my petition, that one, who had seen all from the first moment of creation might speak for me. In answer to my prayer, our dearest Lord gave a loving look at my dear Angel, whereby he understood that he should speak for me.

In obedience to that look, my Angel said : " Beloved, the state of mankind after the fall was indeed deplorable. To retrieve it, four things, which were impossible except to Him who is Omnipotent, would be required. First of all, there must be one who could and would plead to God for mercy. But in the natural order there was no one who could or would do this, because the entire human race was infinitely far from Him. Secondly, should there even be one to plead, still an infinite debt had to be paid. But the equivalent of an infinite debt must itself be infinite ; and God alone is infinite. Thirdly, all the means with which man had been provided in order to do his work in this world, were in the hands of the enemy, by whom they were so perverted that, instead of guiding him into the way of truth and love, they would deceive him, and turn him away from God. And fourthly, man, being now prone to evil, would have a very hard battle to fight, and would be obliged to do violence to himself ; but having deprived himself of the food which alone could give him strength and life, he would be unable to overcome himself and his evil inclinations.

We see, therefore, into what sorry plight the cunning serpent had brought the whole race of man. But the Infinite God, who alone could make him clean that is conceived of unclean seed, gave the promise that the great work of man's sanctification and redemption should be accomplished ; and He declared also, that He would accomplish it by the aid of a woman, the greatness of whose love for Him, the Lord her God, would enable her to crush the serpent's head. That

valiant woman, 'rising from the desert, fair as the moon, beautiful as the sun, terrible as an army in battle array,' would fight the infernal serpent, and trample him under foot and crush his head. Terrible is the power of that fiendish serpent's hate, but far more terrible for him will be the love of that valiant woman.

God said, that He would put enmity between the woman and the serpent, which means, that He would fill her with such love that, even as the serpent's hatred for God exceeds that of all the other rebel angels, so should her love exceed the love of all angels and men together.

Oh yes, truly, my beloved, the bright love of the seraphim, and of the whole angelic host, pales in the presence of the mighty love for God of that fair and beautiful one, all fair and beautiful, without spot or stain, as pales the brightest star in the presence of the sun. Oh then, how she loves all that her God loves! then how great is her love for thee!"

Oh, dearest Angel, stay a moment; let me fly to her dear loving heart, to thank her for all her love. Dear Lord, I am Thy child; oh bless her again for me!

MEDITATION VI.

MARY'S LOVE OF GOD OVERCAME THE SELF-LOVE OF LUCIFER.

ONCE more I knock at the door of my dear Lord's loving Heart, and I hear His voice: "Come, dear child, come to Me. Oh, how beautiful thou art. Thou art all clothed with My dear Mother's love. Thou comest from her heart."

Yes, dear Lord, from that heart in which Thou didst place me. Oh, how I thank and love Thee! And now, as such is Thy will, dear Lord, I will ask my good Angel to explain to me, how it was, that the beautiful one, who was all love for God, was

preserved in the universal wreck. Dear Angel, wilt thou explain this to me?

“My beloved, thou hast already learnt something on that point, for thou hast seen that the Most High God placed His hand on her, and drew her to Himself, the very source of love, so that she had really ceased to drink from the sources of love with which the earth had been provided. Even before they had been poisoned, she had already become an enclosed garden of delights, which God had set apart for Himself alone. He only could enter there. He took entire possession of her, and she drank of the torrents of His love, ever full of grace.

But now we must look back into God's eternity. In His infinite wisdom and love, He decreed to call beings into existence—beings formed to His own image and likeness, in order that they might love and possess Him, and thereby participate in His glory. But every creature, however great and perfect it may be, is finite, and consequently infinitely far from God. But He who willed the end, willed also the means by which to bridge over that infinite space, and He willed to do it by assuming into His divinity a finite created nature, through which all might approach Him, and possessing Him, become one with Him. He then decreed the creation of the human race of which He would Himself become one, uniting its nature with His divinity.

We judge the perfection of a tree by the most perfect fruit which it can produce, even though it may produce others less perfect. Oh then, how beautiful and perfect must be that human race, from which could grow one so perfect, that He would be both God and man! As in a tree there exists the germ of every flower and fruit which it will ever bear, so in Adam existed the germ of that beautiful flower which would produce that perfect fruit. What then must that flower have been which could produce such fruit! What must that mother be who would give birth to such a son!

But since she, equally with all others of the human race, existed in Adam, how was she alone preserved from the effects of sin? Adam in the exercise of his free will had rejected love and chosen for himself and his posterity hatred, the alternative of love. God's honour and glory required that, whichever alternative was chosen by man's free will, it should be in its way a perfect work, therefore, if the one was to result in infinite happiness, the other could only result in eternal torments. Therefore an infinite equivalent only could replace the one or the other.

The Eternal Word saw in Adam the germ of that beautiful flower from which He Himself would grow, that beautiful one whom He had destined to be His Mother. He saw that boundless love with which she would love Him. All that we have said of the greatness of her love, was by anticipation of what it really would be from the moment of her creation—love so great that for His honour and glory she would willingly undergo every torment of soul and body, and think it all too little to do for Him, and therefore thirst and thirst ever to do more. He knew what sufferings and what fearful agony the glory of His heavenly Father and the salvation of the human race would require at her hands, and already the loving accents of her response seemed to fill the highest heavens, where His glory dwelleth: 'Be it done to me according to Thy word'.

Yet, notwithstanding the beauty and perfection of the lovely flower, and the yet greater perfection of the fruit which it was one day destined to bear, it grows from Adam, and his hand will cast upon it the blight of eternal death. God's honour and glory require that; instead of producing the fruit of life, it shall be cast into the fire to pay therein the eternal debt of sin, and as that debt is infinite, nothing less than suffering infinite, not in point of intensity, since that cannot be, but in point of duration, can be its equivalent. But the Eternal Word snatched from Adam's hand that perfect flower, before it had been blighted by his

poisonous breath of hatred, and took upon Himself that which otherwise must have fallen on it, the guilt of Adam's sin. That guilt shall now never fall on her, but on Himself only, and together with that sin He takes all its frightful consequences of suffering and of death, all of which must otherwise have been her eternal lot, as indeed it was of all other descendants of Adam.

And then I heard Him say: 'Behold I come'. And in the same moment, He, the fairest and most beautiful of men, stood before me as a leper, and no health was found in His body, and I seemed to hear these words: 'I am the guilty one, she is pure and spotless, she is all fair and beautiful and stands alone, the fairest lily in the midst of thorns. How beautiful art thou, my beloved, how beautiful art thou.'

Thus then it was, that she alone of all the children of Adam was ever preserved from sin. Behold now the woman who, all love for God, is at enmity with the serpent, that infernal serpent ever full of hatred for Him, whom she loves with unbounded love.

But why should enmity be recorded, if no proportional result ensue? But God Himself who recorded it, records also the result as full, complete, entire: 'Her heel shall crush the serpent's head'. As the great Archangel Michael conquered him in heaven, so does that blessed Virgin, far greater than the united host of heaven, 'terrible as an army in battle array,' conquer him on earth. 'She shall crush thy head.'"

Dear Angel, how did she crush his head?

"My beloved, pride and self-love begot in Lucifer hatred for God, and that pride could only be conquered by the virtue opposed to it, as she herself tells us: 'God hath regarded the humility of His handmaid'. Lucifer's cry was: 'I will not serve,' hers was: 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord to do Thy will in all'. We now have the four impossible things required for the restoration of the human race.

First of all, God, in the exercise of His infinite power, saved from the universal wreck one ever filled with ardent love for Him, and who therefore could and would approach His throne, and plead for the human race, offering at the same time, in all the nobility and greatness of her soul, herself to pay in her own person the awful debt of suffering, as far as it was possible to one who was not God. Having thus done all that the creature could do, she again and again implored that good God, to do what she could not do herself.

Secondly, she was so dear to God, that He would grant her prayer, and give Himself, who alone is infinite, to her that so, with that infinite price which alone could pay the debt, she might pay it all. He, her Son, would be subject to her, and therefore she could offer Him, the infinite price, to His Eternal Father in His temple at Jerusalem.

Thirdly, He would perfect His work by withdrawing His children from the things of earth which had been perverted, and would mislead them, and He would Himself become their Teacher.

Fourthly, He will give to all His children that which He has received from her, His precious Body and Blood, the true fruit of life to be their Food, so that all who eat thereof, thus strengthened may fight the good fight, and gain the victory, and so live for ever."

I thank thee, dear Angel, for what thou hast now taught me. Dearest Lord, I entreat Thee, together with Thy own dearest Mother, to bless that good Angel, and also to bless me and all Thy creatures, so that we may be ever grateful and full of love for Thee.

MEDITATION VII.

MARY THE MOST BLESSED OF ALL WOMEN, BECAUSE SHE
ALONE FULFILLED GOD'S WILL MOST PERFECTLY.

OH, what sweet, what heavenly music I hear; what delicious

perfumes reach me, as I draw near to His loving Heart ! Dearest Lord, how Thou beamest all with love, and I see how Thou pressest to Thy Heart Thy own dear Mother. Oh, how fair and beautiful is she, and Thou crownest her with ever-increasing glory.

“ Yes, beloved child, draw near, thou art hers, she gave thee life, of her thou wert born again. She gave thee to Me to be My very own. It was not good for her to be alone, so I would be the new Adam, and the Holy Spirit took not only a rib from her, as He had done from Adam,—that would not have sufficed for His present great work of love which would have all her love,—but He took her whole entire heart, and built it up into Me,—a Man, who am also truly God, though indeed only one Person, the Person of God the Son.

She does My will in all, as also I do hers. Knowing the greatness of her compassion and love for all My beloved children, I anticipated all her desires in their regard, and hastened to pour down upon them graces in abundance ; and oh, how abundantly did they flow on Adam and Eve, as thou hast already seen, transforming them from hatred to ardent love and sorrow for their sins !

I paid all their debt for her ; I could refuse her nothing, who would give Me all I could ever ask, and I knew she would repay Me ; and indeed the moment I asked her to make Me some return, her instant reply, clothed with love like Mine, was : ‘ Behold the handmaid of the Lord ; be it done to me according to Thy word ’ .”

And now, all absorbed in those two loving Hearts, I repose a moment. . . .

“ Yes, rest awhile, my child : breathe this atmosphere of love. It will strengthen and refresh thee, and prepare thee for the great things thou hast now to learn. It is of that dear Mother we will speak to-day, hence thou seest Me filled with unwonted joy.”

Raising my eyes I saw another Angel—one of the highest of the seraphim, who ever stand before the Throne of God. He appeared to wait for a response from our dear Mother to a message of which he was the bearer. I heard that response, and it was to me like the music of the highest heaven, as indeed is every word that falls from her sweet lips. “Be it done to me according to Thy word”. It was the Archangel Gabriel, whom our Lord had commanded to ask His dear Mother’s permission to recount many things of her. Reposing in our dear Lord’s Heart I listened to the Archangel’s words.

“Beloved child, the things I tell thee now, I speak in a form intelligible to the human mind. We—the angelic spirits—were created to the image and likeness of God, and consequently nothing less than complete possession of Him could fill up the void which, without Him, must always have existed. We understood that one day we should possess Him, and be filled by Him, for He, being Goodness and Love Itself, would never give His creature anything less than all it needs to fill up the entire measure of its capacity for happiness.

I tremble to speak of His goodness and boundless love for all His creatures, because I dare not say less than all I can say. Did I do so, I should do Him injustice, and if I say all my nature enables me to see and understand, though still infinitely less than what He really is, nevertheless my words would open the door to the love which is within me, and immortal though I am, it seems to me that so intense would be its flame, that it must consume me in the very moment. The sole thought of the boundless love with which He unites Himself with me even now overpowers me.”

His voice had become all tremulous, neither could he have sustained himself, had he not in that moment reposed on his dear Lord’s loving Heart. For a moment all was deep silence, and then he raised his eyes to our own dear Mother, asking her for strength, and turning to me he said: “Beloved, thou

mayest think that such love is for me and for me alone, but it is not so. It is also for thee and for all His creatures, according to the measure of each one. It cannot be otherwise, since love is His nature. The difference between God's children on earth, and those who are in heaven, is this : we, before we fully possessed Him, knew only in an imperfect way what He really is, but now that we possess Him, our knowledge is perfect, and contemplating such goodness and such love, we are fixed for ever in His holy love.

Those who are on earth also know the greatness of His love, since they know that He is Love Itself, but, as all else here below, that knowledge begins as a little seed which has to be fostered with care, and therefore they need much thought and study to realise its greatness. The more they study it, and so realise His greatness and how good He is, the nearer do they approach to our state of fixity in His holy love.

Every difficulty, beloved one, arises from departure from this course. It is of little use to speak of His love, unless thou endeavourest to realise that love in all His dealings with His creatures, and ever represent Him to thy mind as being that which He ever is, Love, and only Love.

Thou shouldst judge Him, I say again, in His dealings with thee and with all His creatures, as thou wouldst judge a most wise and loving mother and all her actions in bringing up her dear children. The more thy heart is inflamed with love, the greater will be thy efforts to cast away all that could grieve such love, and prevent it from obtaining full possession of thee.

Oh, beloved one, couldst thou but see one little ray of the love, which I see Him now in this moment pouring down on thee, thou wouldst there and then die of joy and happiness.

Let us now return for a little while to the time of our creation. We knew that, in order to carry out His work of union with us—His creatures, His infinite wisdom would devise a means by which it might be accomplished—'Ima Summis'—

a means by which to raise the lowest to the highest. But how God would accomplish this, we did not know at first. Yet, there was within us the impression, that in the Creator's Mind existed a creature so immensely above us all, and so near Himself in His own perfection of love, that, if any creature could draw Him to itself, it would be that one.

Also a mysterious feeling pervaded our minds, that to that one we were indebted for our existence, and that thought itself filled us, we knew not how, with new love, love all but unbounded for her, which seemed like adding fire to fire, so that we loved God immensely, immeasurably more than we could have done without that superadded flame. Then from time to time a breath seemed to descend upon us from the very highest heaven, embalmed with all its sweetness, and bearing with it these words, which were not heard but felt, as also was the delicious odour: 'From the beginning was I created'.

These words conveyed to our minds, more clearly than before, that this one was, so to say, the first creature that God had in His mind, and that countless others would follow, but only, if she so willed.

Our existence showed what her response would be, that it would be one enabling Him to form the link which alone could bind us so closely to Himself as to make us one with Him. Had He not foreseen this full response, He would not have given us existence.

And as these thoughts passed through our minds, bearing with them the sweetest odour of all that was most delicious, so also did the sweet sound of her loving words: 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to Thy word,' pass through our minds, filling them with that sweetest, most delicious thought, that she is indeed our mother. Oh what a heaven then was ours! Already our love, enriched by such love as hers, seemed to touch the shores of God's own eternal love.

And as the human race would receive the blow of death from the first woman created on the earth, so would every creature, angels and men, receive life from her, who 'from the beginning was created'.

"But there was another heavenly sound, which appeared to take its rise in even deeper depths, and to plunge us into the very ocean of infinite love. And it said: 'I came out of the mouth of the Most High'. And thus it seemed to us that as the eternal Son was, in the order of the uncreated, the word of His eternal Father, so was she, who came out of the mouth of that same eternal Father, His word also, but in the created order, and therefore only the nearest approach to the Eternal Word, but that nearest approach she was, and therefore, how can the tongues of men and angels ever tell, how great is her love for Him, how great is His love for her?

Such being the case, we saw at a single glance, that she must be the centre from which all that is created flows, and to which everything converges. 'The Lord possessed her in the beginning of His ways before He made anything.' 'And blessed are they that keep her ways.' 'He that shall find her, shall find life and have salvation from the Lord.' We heard no sound, as I have already said, but from time to time we found ourselves in this atmosphere of all that was most delicious: harmony so sweet, happiness so great, that we could almost have thought ourselves already in full possession of our own good God, and of that real heaven which would one day be ours.

Then, in a moment, all would combine to speak, but no sound was heard; it was eternal silence. No creature was worthy to utter her praises. But in the midst of that deep silence, the Eternal Word seemed to fill every creature, flowing to them through her, who was the created word, that had come out of the mouth of the Most High, and it seemed to say: 'How beautiful art thou, My beloved, how beautiful art thou!' In an instant countless millions burst forth into angelic harmony, repeating

those words of the Great Eternal Word. But I say once more, that they were not heard but felt, for still eternal silence reigned. She had not yet existence. Nevertheless the response came even amidst the eternal silence : ‘ Behold the handmaid of the Lord ’. The Lord had already taken possession of her. She was already His. But that response, now given in all the fulness of her love, seemed to reverse the whole order of things, to change all that had preceded, for, up to the present, He had possessed her ; but to her, who would thus give Him all, He would not give less, and so He now gave Himself to her, and it was she who possessed Him. He was all her own. This was the heavenly atmosphere which frequently surrounded us.

Whenever we responded to an indication of will on the part of our own good God, we did so in the very words of His beloved one, feeling that her words gave an almost infinite value to the expression of our wills. Each time that they were repeated, they brought new happiness to all who spoke or heard them. They were the words which were ever on our lips and in our hearts. All God’s works and ways seemed to converge to that one point. His love and goodness were centered there. From this source they seemed to stream down upon us.

In those moments we all felt the greatness of His joy. We felt that it arose from the full return she made of all her love to Him for all the love He gave her. Again we felt that it arose also from the greatness of His love for us. For we understood, as I said before, but without knowing how or why, that she had enabled Him to create us, and make us what we are, so great that we may become one with Him. His joy in our love is so very great, that we could almost imagine Him to be our debtor, whereas we owe Him all.”

MEDITATION VIII.

BY MARY'S CONSENT TO THE INCARNATION SHE GAVE US
HIM BY WHOM ALONE WE COULD EVER LOVE GOD WITH
LOVE WORTHY OF HIMSELF.

DEAR Angel, may I ask a question? Thou hast said, that that beautiful creature had enabled the good God to create us all. Wilt thou tell me how that was?

“It was so, dear child of that loving Mother. The great God, in determining to call beings into existence who should become one with Him, determined also the means to the end, a means by which the finite could be united with the infinite.

In His eternal wisdom and love, He saw that that should be by the Incarnation of His Eternal Word, the assumption of a created nature into His Divinity. But for the reasons already given, the creature, without free will, could not give to God the love which alone is worthy of Him; and the Creator's ways differ so much from those of the creature, that, what He asks of it, is, as a rule, so opposed to its own ideas and imaginations, that only full love can enable it to make what seems to it to be so very great a sacrifice.

That fair creature, the most beautiful and perfect of all His works, had free will in its fullest form, and since God had given it to her, He awaited her consent to that upon which His whole work depended, His own incarnation. God alone knows, what and how great was the sacrifice of her own judgment and entire self implied by that which He asked of her, and what boundless love was needed to make such sacrifice possible. She had, in the first moment of creation, when confirmed in grace, shown that her love was such that she would ever be His faithful hand-maid to do His will in all.

Without the Incarnation no creature could ever possess God, or give Him the only love or praise worthy of an infinite God,

By the Incarnate Word alone do the hosts of heaven cry out, without ceasing, His eternal praises.

As the salvation of the human race hung on the lips of Eve, depending on her obedience and renunciation of her own will and judgment, so also did the creation of the angels, and the life or death of the human race hang on the lips of this second Eve. All now depended on her response to the message of which I was the bearer on the part of God. By that response she gave life to all men and angels, for it was in full conformity with God's holy will: 'Be it done to me according to Thy word'."

But, dear Angel, all the angelic spirits were created long before that ever-blessed Virgin.

"True, beloved one, so also was Adam created before her. But as for him God anticipated the response which would give him new life, so did He anticipate that same response in the creation of the angels. God did all His works, and granted all His graces knowing that He would be fully repaid by her."

How, dear Angel, would she repay Him?

"Beloved, by her consent to the Incarnation she gave us Him by whom alone our love could ever reach the throne of the infinite God. She paid, in the Temple, and on Mount Calvary, the price of man's redemption, which she had received from the hand of God. He who was subject to her, and obedient to her voice, would neither suffer nor die without her consent to all. The moment she pronounced the words: 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to Thy word,' she, the perfect flower, enabled the Holy Ghost to produce from her the perfect Fruit,—the Word was made Flesh, by whom alone the angels can approach, and give infinite praise to the Great, the Infinite God.

She, in that moment, entered into possession of the price, wherewith to pay the debt of the entire human race. The bright light which shone in heaven, before and after the terrible

battle of the angels, guiding to certain victory those whose watchwords were hers: 'Behold the servants of the Lord to do His will in all,' was the dawn of her, who was herself the dawn of Him who alone is holy—Who alone is God.

By those watchwords we already knew who those were, who were all love for the good and loving God and His faithful servants. The sweet harmony which accompanied the words seemed to come from afar, as it were, from the highest heavens. We all felt and knew, that it could be no other than the breathing of one most dear to our loving Lord, and its words gave forth the odour of aromatical spices of frankincense and of myrrh, and of all the sweetest perfumes. And whoever she might be, for as yet we knew her not, all called her Blessed.

But those, in whom were already the seeds of hatred for God, and who would fight against Him, stood aside, saying that their love was for God alone, and, in an undertone, they reversed our words, for their battle-cry was: 'We will never serve'. Thou hast already heard that war-cry in the tremendous battle.

Then, as now, the touchstone was the same. The faithful, who truly love God, love her and repeat her words, while those, who are not hers, will never serve Him, who is her Son.

Oh, couldst thou only see her, as she really is, so full of surpassing love for God, and, in the measure of that love, filled with love for thee and for all her beloved children, thou wouldst not be surprised at the greatness of His love for her—love so great that, as we have already seen, whatever He can do by power, she can do by prayer.

As the noonday sun, shining in a cloudless sky, eclipses all the brightness of all the myriad stars, so does that bright and beautiful mother of the Incarnate Word surpass us all and every creature in the magnitude of her perfections."

And whence is all this glory?

It proceeds from her surpassing love for God whom she resembles in so many ways; as He is all love for her, so is she

all love for Him, and ever full of grace. She loves Him and all He loves, and her love for Him is the measure of her love for us. Therefore, she is so beautiful, and so filled with every perfection, that, as thou didst see when our dear Lord willed that I should speak of her, I trembled at the thought, and had to seek support on His loving Heart, and entreat Him, that dearest loving Lord, to make me worthy to speak her praises.”

MEDITATION IX.

THE MORE WE LOVE THE BLESSED VIRGIN AND ARE GRATEFUL
TO HER, THE MORE ALSO GOD LOVES US.

DEAR Angel, I entreat thee to continue thy discourse.

“ I will do so, my beloved. In the beginning God created heaven and earth, and, on the seventh day, He rested from all the work which He had done. He, the eternal God, had come forth from His repose, in which He had begotten His own beloved Son, consubstantial with Himself, and this He did, to call into existence, first of all, angels, and then men, whom He would create to His own image and likeness, and adopt as His children, and also to give existence to all they would require whereby to fit themselves for the reception of His own true life, of which He had made them capable in their creation. Having done this work He re-entered His eternal repose, there to await those who, having availed themselves of all He had done for them, had filled themselves with true life, and transformed themselves into what He is, Love. They would thus be enabled to rise to Him who had adopted them, and, by the union of their love with His, find perfect eternal happiness.

But ages rolled by, and the earth remained unproductive—it was still a desert.”

And now I raise my eyes to our dear Lord, in whose Heart I am, and also give an appealing look at my dear Mother, en-

treating them to grant, that my Guardian Angel may impart to me the lesson I am now to learn. Our dear Lord then blessed him for the work, and he, inclining with deepest reverence before our dear Mother, said these words: "Make me worthy to praise thee, oh, sacred virgin!" And I saw her, as it were, encircle his brow with a halo of heavenly light, and then he spoke:

"My beloved, we in heaven had witnessed the terrible convulsion of the earth at the moment of man's rebellion against his God, and we saw the change which in that moment came over all in this creation. We saw how that convulsion had brought everything to ruin. That which was in man, and the things given him for his use, could now no longer produce fruit worthy of heaven.

And yet there was a something incomprehensible to us! Thou wilt remember those sweet sounds of perfect harmony which from time to time seemed to pervade the whole of heaven, and reach even the throne of God. If this delightful harmony, when heard by us as a far distant sound, filled us with unwonted happiness, and almost transformed the heaven in which we were into one of higher order; thou canst understand, how exquisitely sweet it must be, when it bursts forth in all its fulness in the presence of Him, to whom it is addressed. It seemed to us as a breathing of love so like God Himself, that it became one love with Him, and all, who heard those sweetest sounds, were filled and embalmed with love.

And, oh beloved one, what agony that love caused, and how it made us burn with desire fully to possess Him, thus more than ever rendered the one object of our love; to possess Him through whom alone we should be enabled to give infinite praise and glory to the great eternal God.

So great was the agony of that craving, longing, that, had not love been itself true life, we must have ceased to live. In a word, that one from whom the sweet sounds had come forth,

seemed to be the very soul and life of all, whom God had created. Its every breath was, as it were, a true breath of life, and embalmed the entire heavens. To all who loved their God, it gave yet greater love, and irresistibly drew them to reproduce it in themselves, that so they might love Him with that same beautiful and perfect love.

But those who loved not God, turned away from that sweet music, it grated on their ears. To them it was not harmony, but real discord, and in them aroused not love, but hatred,—that hatred which led to the great battle, of which thou hast already heard.

We had a vague idea, that that perfect creature in the order of created beings, would correspond in perfection with that of the Eternal Word, in the order of the uncreated, in so far as such a thing could be there, where the difference really must be infinite. But we saw in clearest light that that perfect creature was of all God's creatures the nearest approach to Him. We all were made to His image and likeness, but in that perfect one the resemblance was so close, that had we not known that such could never be, we should have thought her really God. She stood alone, and so to say, on the very borders of infinity.

And yet we saw her not, for she then had no existence. God had thus imparted to us some knowledge of what would hereafter be. But what we saw was only, as it were, the dawn of the rising of that perfect one. And if the dawn was such, what must that one be who was its source? Thou canst therefore imagine, how exceeding great was that creature's love for the great good God.

In the order of the uncreated, the Holy Ghost proceeds from, and is the love of, the Father for the Son, and of the Son for the Father. What procession would be too great for us to expect, in the order of creation, from the love of God for that perfect creature, and its love for God?

What we did expect seemed almost too much—we dared

not breathe the thought, but in our own minds that thought was: He who proceeds from that love, will be the link between the great, the infinite God, and His finite creatures,—in Him will be united uncreated love with the creature of that love—they will be one, that is, Love Itself. Through Him we shall give infinite praise to the infinite God. Through Him we shall sing without ceasing: ‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of Sabaoth!’

We are all God’s children and call Him Father, because God has begotten us, has adopted us, in His infinite love. But the incarnate God is the Son of God, because He proceeds from the divine substance.

How great then must be the love of that eternal Father for Him in whom He would see such love, love so like the love which He Himself is, that it would be all but the plenitude of His perfections. It would almost seem, as if He had now begotten in time His own eternal Son begotten in eternity.

Yes, He who was God would become also Man. Infinite love alone could do this. Love goes to the very end, and therefore, the Holy Ghost, the love of the Father and the Son, infinite love, would perhaps do the work.

These were thoughts and ideas which seemed to grow in the light of that dawn, which had already possession of our minds, and, as that light increased, these thoughts gained strength. We seemed unable to think of our good and loving God, without feeling the presence of her, whom He loved so much.

Then another thought would reveal to us, how great she must be, and how very great must be His love for her, since we knew (how, I cannot tell) that the great God, who made all things in heaven and on earth by a word of His mouth, would submit the utterance of that word to her will. Had not He, to whom all things are ever present, heard her response: ‘Be it done to me according to Thy word,’ He would not have spoken the word. For that link, which alone could unite the finite with the infinite, would not have had existence, and

consequently they, who otherwise would have been created for union with God, would not have received the gift of life, since, I say again, the means for that union would not have existence. But He heard her word, and hearing it, spoke His own : ‘ He spoke and they were made ; He commanded and they were created ’.

From time to time all, who loved their good God, were filled with new and brilliant light, and the flames from which that light proceeded, were within them, and they ascended, emitting clouds of sweetest incense ; and these were their loving thanks to God for having given them such and so great a Mother.

To that holy Mother they now saw that they owed existence, and their gratitude to her they placed in His hands, entreating Him that, as they also were His children, He would do for them that which they could never do for themselves, that is to enrich that gratitude in such a way, that it might be a full return to her for all she would do for them. They would ever do all they could to repay her for all, but they trusted, that He would, by His tender love, supply all that might be wanting. And I understood that their gratitude was most pleasing to Him, and His love for us seemed to redouble because of our great love for her, whom He loved with such tender love. Oh, how He loved her.”

Dear Lord, what return shall I make to Thee for all Thou hast done for me ?

“ Dear child, give me thy heart.”

Dear Lord, I give it Thee ; it is now Thine for ever.

MEDITATION X.

SACRIFICE THE SUPREME TEST OF LOVE.

My dear Angel, now continuing his discourse, said : “ As time rolled by, we ever kept our attention fixed on the earth, whose

only light was the dawn of that Blessed One, who would herself be the dawn of the true Light, which one day would shine upon it. Here and there we noticed a few bright flowers growing on the earth, and emitting a sweet odour; but that odour never rose above the surface of the earth. It remained there, as it were, suspended, and awaiting the breath which alone could waft it thence to heaven.

God's hands did not gather those flowers. He awaited the growth of a lily, the fairest of flowers, which alone could impart to them the delicious perfume which would render them acceptable to Him. He remained in that repose, to which He had returned after the great work of creation.

We also understood the dreadful havoc that was going on in every place whence the dawning light was entirely excluded. In that darkness were produced fruits of eternal death, and that death and eternal torments were the lot of all who tasted them. Therefore in heaven, when we from time to time heard the exquisite harmony, and breathed the sweet life-giving breath of which we have already spoken, we embalmed our supplications therewith, and cried out: 'How long, oh Lord, how long?' And each time we saw the dawn grow brighter, and understood that the orb of light from which it flowed had drawn nearer, and then, oh how we longed to see it rise!

But the earth remained a desert, no odour of sweetness rose therefrom to heaven, and God still reposed. That repose seemed more profound than ever. Deep eternal silence reigned, and all was, as if it had fallen back into the eternity, wherein it was but a thought in the mind of God.

But all in a moment of that deepest silence, the entire heavens seemed rent asunder, and, in the farthest depths beyond, we recognised the dawn which we had so often seen, but now we saw it in all its brightness—brightness so great, that, compared with it, all the light of heaven seemed only darkness.

Silence deeper than ever reigned, but only for a moment, when

God's Eternal Word burst forth in all the plenitude of its power : ' Let there be light, and light was made '. And we saw, as it were, in His Heart, in Him, the eternal light, the bright orb of light to which He now gave existence. That great eternal Word of the Father, which commanded all things, then melted down into the softest, tenderest breathings of tenderest loving love, and ' He kissed her with the kiss of His mouth,' and said : ' How beautiful art thou, My beloved, how beautiful art thou ! Thou art all fair and beautiful, and there is no spot or stain in thee '."

At this point my dear Angel paused, and seemed unable to say more, because of the great things he had just detailed. He trembled like an aspen leaf, till our dear Lord held out His arms, as I had seen Him do before, and drew him to His Heart.

When he had reposed there for awhile, I heard his sweet and gentle voice repeating his former prayer : " Deign to make me worthy to praise thee, oh most pure and spotless Virgin". In that moment a great crown of brilliant light encircled his brow, and then he continued : " We saw that all God's love centred in that fair and beautiful one, and we understood that from that centre it would pour itself forth in all its varied forms upon every creature.

We saw also that every creature who really loved, would give all its love to Him through that centre, wherein it would receive the still greater beauty and perfection, which, as far as a creature's love could be so, would make it worthy of Him, into whose loving Heart it was then to flow.

But there was another thing, which caused us more than ever to be filled with unbounded love and gratitude for Him : it was this, we could hardly distinguish between the love He poured out on that pure and spotless Virgin, and that which He poured out on us—so great was it—and not on us alone, but also on the entire human race, into whom He willed, that all His love should ever flow through her. It also seemed to be His will, that all

that love should flow in all its fulness into each one apart, as if no other had existence ; and thus indeed it does flow, filling each one in the full measure of his free will and capacity. And we saw, with what ardent earnest desire He desired to give Himself thus wholly, and without reserve to each one of us,—to thee, and to all, even as He had given Himself to her. Each one is to Him, who is Love Itself, *His one beloved one*.

That immense love for each one of His children seemed to redouble His love for her, who, by her perfect conformity with His holy will, enabled Him to give them existence, and also had enabled us to give Him all our love.

Not content with this she, in the plenitude of her love, would give us to Him, knowing how much and how tenderly He loved all, and how precious that gift would be to Him. I saw, as I said just now, that in His infinite love He received each one, and poured out all His love upon him as though he alone existed.

Oh, if creatures would but understand, how great and boundless is His love for each one of them, they would indeed give Him all their love. His love is so very great, that no thoughts can ever reach, or words can ever say, how great is that love in very deed.

And now, beloved one, I must remind thee of another thing which thou hast already heard in part—a thing of very great importance—and I do so by the will of our dear Lord. Thou knowest that He asks for love, and only love, from all His creatures. To enable them to give Him that love, He bestows free will upon them, placing before them alternatives on which to exercise that will. ‘No one can serve two masters, if he loves the one, he will hate the other’. Thou art prepared to make any sacrifice, however great, for him whom thou lovest, and thou art ready to inflict any suffering on one, who is an obstacle to that love, even though that one be thy own self.

Sacrifice is the supreme test of love. God required of His

angels an act which was, and must have been, incomprehensible to them, before they had entered into full possession of Him, who is the Eternal Light. And that act, for reasons we have already given, appeared detrimental to themselves. But those, who had given Him all their love, gave all He asked with joy, whereas those, whose love was centred in themselves, would make no sacrifice for Him.

We knew not, what God asked of her, His most beloved one, in the moment of her creation, but it was something proportioned to the greatness of her love, but we heard her response in that sweetest music, which had so often entranced the entire heavens, and we heard it no longer as an echo only or a distant sound, but as really present; and we heard the words themselves, and they were poured out in all the fulness of greatest love: 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to Thy word'.

All that then took place, was so all but infinite, that we dared not, even by thought or desire, penetrate into those tremendous depths, but a bright light flashed down upon us and made known to us that, what God had asked of her, and to which her words were the response, had assumed to her mind, not yet in full possession of the Eternal Light, the form of a sacrifice so great, that it could hardly be any other than the sacrifice of Himself. No lesser sacrifice than that would seem commensurate with the greatness of her love; it would be to give Him, who was her perfect Love, into the hands of bitter hatred, to cruel sufferings, and a malefactor's death. 'Thou art all my love,' she seemed to say, 'and Thou willest that I should hand Thee over to tormentors to be by them mutilated, torn, and saturated with outrage, and deprived of life. By my own consent I am thus to be the executioner, I, who owe my life, and all I am, to Thee, am to take away Thy life. Thou askest my consent to each minute detail—oh, how can this ever be? Oh, beloved of my soul, if it be possible let this chalice pass

away, yet not my will, but Thine be done. . . . Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to Thy word.' In that moment we understood, that she was confirmed in grace, and espoused to God Himself. And a bright cloud descended upon us, and all else was hidden from our view.

My beloved, bear in mind, that I have now put in detail before thee, for the better understanding thereof, that which was presented to our minds as in one flash of light, at the moment when that Blessed One was called into existence."

MEDITATION XI.

ALL THE BEAUTY AND PERFECTION OF MARY COMES NOT FROM
HERSELF, BUT IS THE FREE LOVING GIFT OF HIM WHO IS
LOVE ITSELF.

"IMMEDIATELY after that moment of which we have just spoken, we saw the bright light shining on the earth, and diffusing its rays on every side, 'fair as the moon, beautiful as the sun'. And now we heard her sweet voice which said: 'While the King was at His repose, my spikenard gave forth the odour thereof'. Then the angelic choirs caught up the new music of that voice, for new indeed it was, the music of virgins who followed the Lamb, and they burst forth into harmony more sweet than any, which had ever yet been heard, coming from their lips. 'Who is she that rises from the desert as a pillar of smoke of aromatical spices?' And the response descended from the Throne of God, who had given her her name: 'The Virgin's name is Mary'. That was the voice of the great eternal Creator, who had come forth once more from His repose again to work for man."

Here my dear Angel paused for a moment, and then continued: "Nothing that I can ever say, is capable of giving even a remote

idea of what that new heaven was, into which the sound of her sweet name transferred us, uttered, as it was, by the great eternal God. We thought His work must now be done; that even He could do no more.

Again the angelic host, in harmony ever new, cried out: 'Who is she that rises from the desert leaning on her Beloved?' And once more the same response was given, but this time it was the voice of the Beloved One Himself, the Eternal Son of God, who spoke the words: 'And the Virgin's name was Mary,' and in the same moment heaven was clothed again in even greater glory than all that had gone before. Oh, who and what is she, whose name alone creates for us new heavens and unthought of happiness?

And yet again that celestial harmony, still ever new, bursts forth: 'Who is she that rises from the desert, fair as the moon, beautiful as the sun, terrible as an army set in array?' And now it is the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity, the Love of the Father and the Son, who responds. He is the Tongue which will one day speak the Eternal Word, who will thus become her Son, and He now speaks the Mother's name, whom He will enable, as a tremendous army, to conquer God's enemies, and crush the serpent's head. He then, the Spirit of love, gives answer: 'The Virgin's name is Mary'. Oh, what happiness and what joy was now in heaven, happiness and joy which seemed to crown all that had gone before! That beautiful, that perfect one, in the first moment of her creation, looked upon herself as only the poor handmaid of the Lord. She saw, that everything fair and beautiful within her, came not from herself, but was His free, loving gift. She knew and felt, that she was, therefore, only the more bound to love and serve Him, and seek His will in all. She herself tells us, that her humility, her true conception of what she was in relation to her God (like spike-nard, a lowly herb), sent forth its odour, an odour of sweetness so exquisite, that it drew Him again from the repose, into which

He had re-entered after man's creation. For, having prepared the earth, and caused it to produce all that man might need whereby to do his work, and having found it very good, He blessed it, and then having created man, the sacred writer tells us that He re-entered on His repose. From it He now comes forth once more, that those who are dead, may be born again."

DIGRESSION.

Dear Angel, thou wouldst speak?

"Yes, beloved, thou hast now to bear well in mind, that our Blessed Lord was the Man of Sorrows, that is, the greatest sufferer in soul and body that was ever in the world."

But, dear Angel, suffering is the fruit of sin, sin alone can cause it, but He never sinned; He was the pure, spotless Son of God. Whence, then, came all His sufferings?

"They came from the sins of man which He had taken upon Himself. He had clothed Himself with man's iniquities, and they produced in Him their fruit of awful suffering."

But again, dear Angel, the ever-blessed Virgin was the Queen of Martyrs, as her dear Son was the Man of Sorrows, that is, the greatest sufferer in soul and body that ever was in this world, with the exception of our Lord Himself. But she never sinned, and was conceived without original sin; whence, then, her suffering?

"Her sufferings all came from this. She ardently desired the salvation of the human race—a work so great that God alone could do it. But to obtain a grace from God, we must always do what we can ourselves, and ask for what we cannot do, and then God does that for us which we have been unable to accomplish for ourselves. Therefore she offered herself to take the sins of the human race on herself, and to clothe herself with its iniquities, thus doing all she could; and God having accepted that offer, those sins produced also in her their

fruit of awful suffering, and then she asked for that which all her sufferings never could by themselves have done : ‘Give me my people for which I ask,’ and then God did for her that which all her own efforts never could have done—He re-deemed the world.”

MEDITATION XII.

MARY IS THE MOTHER OF FAIR LOVE BECAUSE SHE IS THE
MOTHER OF INCARNATE LOVE.

My dear Angel now thus continues : “the new earth, from which God would form the second Adam, now stood before Him, ready to obey His will, and act in all things according to His word.

He therefore now prepared that earth, in order that it might produce in every way all that would be required. For that purpose He made her pure and spotless, a virgin earth so pure and spotless as to exceed the first earth in beauty and perfection, even as the Sacred Humanity of the second Adam would surpass the first in every beauty and perfection. He filled her heart with Divine charity. He then commanded her to love the Lord her God, and to enkindle, on the altar of her heart, that burning fire which in all its intensity should take possession of everything therein. There was she inebriated with the sweetest wine of charity ; there was she filled with all the most delicious powders of the perfumer, with every great and noble virtue, every highest perfection ; and these heaped up, as it were, on the altar of her heart, and burning in the flames of her ardent love, rose as a pillar of smoke of fragrant incense to the highest heavens, even to the throne of God Himself.

And the great God saw that the earth which produced it was not only very good, as was the first earth, but was brighter

than even the highest heavens, which themselves are not clean in His sight.

He Himself exclaimed : ‘ How beautiful are thou, my beloved ; thou art all fair and beautiful, and there is neither spot nor stain in thee. Thy beauty, compared with all other beauty, is as the white and spotless lily in the midst of thorns.’ ”

My Angel paused for a moment, and seemed to be carried back to the time when those words were heard by all. Resuming, he said : “ Those Divine words, in the plenitude of their strength, fixed every mind and thought on her, and then, like a hand which by its touch draws from the harp its sweetest chords, they drew from her heart and lips a response which was more sweet than all the sweetest harmony of heaven : ‘ Behold the handmaid of the Lord. Oh yes, if I am fair and beautiful Thou hast made me so. The more Thou hast bestowed on me, the more am I bound to do Thy will in all.’ ”

Oh, with what ardent love did she pour forth those words ! Oh, how unbounded was the gratitude of her loving heart ! Those flames of love made her so like our own beloved God, that, had we not known that it could not be so, we should have thought that she was also God. We remained some time in deepest contemplation of that God-like love pouring itself out all on God alone. In another moment that love seemed to open itself out in Him who had set in order charity in her, and it revealed to us the order in which it existed there. And its flames embraced not Him alone, but also all who were loved by Him. She then saw man, who had been made to the image and likeness of God, but oh, how disfigured and deformed ! She saw the terrible and infinite debt which he had contracted by sin, and which must be paid to the last farthing, in all the powers of his soul and the senses of his body, a debt of eternal sufferings, which alone could satisfy the infinite justice of God, thus frightfully outraged. Oh, with

what compassion did the greatness of her love fill her tender and compassionate heart! What was there that she would not do? What sacrifice could be too great for her great and noble nature? 'Oh yes, I will pay the debt,' she seemed to say, 'and pay it to the last farthing! I will drink the chalice of sorrow to the very dregs; I will spare myself in nothing, but will give all I have to Him, with every precious gift which He bestows on me. I will pay Him all—yes, all the debt. Oh, poor lost children of Adam, the sight of you breaks my heart! Oh, look up and see me, the Queen of Martyrs, and tell me if there be sorrow like unto mine! I will do all I can for you, though I know that all must count for nothing, since the debt is infinite; but still I will do all I can, and then I will fly to Him, whose power and love are infinite, and He will do, what I cannot do myself.'

And we saw her raise her eyes to God, and those eyes poured out a flood of tears. It was a spring which rose out of this new earth watering its entire surface. But there was no man to till it. She therefore appealed to God. 'Since I have found favour in Thy sight, give me my people for whom I ask.' She did all she could, and God accepted it. He Himself would impart, to what she would pay, the infinity which was wanting. We then heard Him say in a voice of sweetest tenderness and love: 'It is not good for her to be alone, let Us make her a help like unto herself'. From those words she understood, that her offer was accepted, and her prayer granted. And we heard these other words: 'Bone of her bone, and flesh of her flesh,' which as yet we did not understand.

Nothing now remained, except that she should suffer, in order to pay the debt as far as she could pay it. From this moment she became the Queen of Martyrs, enduring, in the powers of her soul and the senses of her body, torments exceeding those of all the martyrs and of all other creatures in this mortal life

one alone excepted, and that one was our dear Lord Himself, the Man of Sorrows.

She knew not yet, that the second Adam would be her own beloved Son, that she was the earth from which He would be formed, but she knew, that only God Incarnate could pay a debt which was infinite, and that He would pay it to the last farthing, that He would pay it by sufferings so great, that none other could compare with them, except those undergone in that place of endless torments, to which all, who die in sin must be consigned for ever.

Her love for Him rendered her like a pure and spotless mirror, in which each and every detail of His sufferings was vividly reflected, thus causing her to undergo, from that moment, all the unspeakable torments which would one day be His. She had taken the sins of the whole human race upon herself, and clothed herself with their iniquities, and consequently—since she would do all she could do for them—she had to undergo the torments, due to them, to the utmost extreme, of which her perfect nature was capable.

And since she was powerless to pay that awful debt in full, she relied, with unbounded confidence, on Him who alone could pay it all. Therefore, we saw her rising from the desert, leaning on her Beloved, that is, relying on Him for everything, and He responded, telling her how she could do her work in the most perfect way: ‘Listen,’ He said, ‘oh daughter, and see and incline thine ear’. She was to see and hear Him alone, that, like Him who did in all things His Father’s will, she should also do that will in all, not even allowing her mind to dwell on the thought which would have filled it with unbounded joy—the salvation of the human race: ‘Forget thy people and thy father’s house’.

Yes, she was to exclude every thought save that of doing God’s will in all, that thus her sufferings might be pure and unalloyed. She ever heard the dying cry of the Man of Sorrows:

‘Why, why?’ And thus, like Him, she ever drank the chalice of sorrow to its very dregs.

The women of her race longed for offspring, in the hope, that of them might be born the Saviour of the world. Not so with her: ‘Forget thy people and thy father’s house’. ‘I know not man.’ No, she was to know God alone, and to be in all things like to Him, of whom it was written in the head of the book: ‘Behold, I come to do Thy will’. A pure and spotless Virgin, the Queen of Martyrs, was to be the bride of the Man of Sorrows, and therefore should resemble Him in all. She was to bear the penalty of the first Eve, and consequently, her sorrows were to be multiplied in giving life to those, who are now her children: ‘Stand and see, if there be sorrow like unto my sorrow’.”

P A R T VII.

S U M M A R Y.

THE capacity for suffering is always proportionate to that for love. Therefore, as the love of Mary for God exceeded that of every other creature, so also did her capacity for suffering exceed that of every other creature, with the exception of our Blessed Lord Himself.

Before the Incarnation, Mary's sufferings were compassion for Him, who was to redeem the world, and for her, who was to be His Mother. When she knew, that she was to be that Mother, her grief as far exceeded all that had gone before, as did her now higher state surpass that from which she was thus raised.

Mary's extreme love made her suffer with intensity equal to it, and this because she knew and understood, how great an outrage sin was against the Divine Majesty, and this made her ever long to suffer still more, that thus she might the more fully atone for it, doing all the creature could do.

By filling her with love, God fitted her to become the bride of the Holy Ghost, and, by His power, the Mother of a Divine Person, which is Love Itself.

In the greatness of her love for God and His creatures, Mary took on herself, as far as a pure creature could do so, the sins of men, in order to make reparation for them.

Her capacity for suffering, and her power of endurance, only reached their fulness, when she became the Mother of God.

By her consent to the Incarnation, she accepted voluntarily the sufferings the Man of Sorrows was to undergo, and which must be hers, as being His true Mother.

God's design, in placing us in this world, was, that we should

love Him here and hereafter ; and the trials and sufferings of this life are intended to help us on our road to eternal happiness.

Jesus Christ is the only true teacher, who, by example as well as precept, has taught us the secrets of the love of God, and the way to that heavenly Kingdom, God has prepared for us.

The love of our Lord's human soul for God, and for us, almost immeasurably surpasses that of His Blessed Mother.

Digression.—Since the fall of man, the human intelligence has been darkened, so that we are unable to judge correctly even the love of God for us.

Considerations.—1. Many persons lose confidence in God, because they do not, at once, see the fruit of their placing themselves entirely in His hands.

2. God Himself has paid the penalty of our rebellion, and, in His generosity, treats man as an equal.

3. Our Lord loves all His children so much, that He would most willingly have undergone all His dreadful torments and cruel death for each of us, one by one, had that been required.

He loved us to the uttermost, even to taking upon Himself all our sins, and standing before His Father as a criminal. Can we ever doubt His love ?

His boundless love for us was the cause of all these sufferings ; so that we cannot conceive, that He could have done more for us.

MEDITATION I.

MARY, THE QUEEN OF MARTYRS, AND THE MOTHER OF
“FAIR LOVE”.

I NOW repose for a few moments in company with our dear Mother upon our Lord's loving Heart. In obedience to His command, my Guardian Angel will impart to me the lesson I must learn. He speaks :—

“Beloved, before we proceed further, I must ask thee to recall to mind certain points, to which I have already directed thy attention, and this, in order that thou mayest have a better understanding of the intense sufferings undergone by this pure and spotless Virgin in payment of man's debt, and also of the far greater agonies of her beloved Son, without which all, she could have ever done, must have been as nothing. The infinite consequences of sin, needed for their removal an infinite equivalent, which He alone could give.

God called angels and men into existence, in order that they might give Him their entire love, and to that entire love He would Himself give the infinity, which alone could make it worthy of Himself, the Great, the Infinite God.

But as I have explained to thee elsewhere, at greater length, that love could flow only from free will, and free will implies alternatives. The alternative of love is hatred.

God's work always has the perfection requisite for the attainment of the end, which He proposes to Himself in giving it existence. Therefore, when He made His creatures capable of doing either of two works, He made their capacity such, that, no matter on which work they fixed their wills, that work would always be perfect in its kind, and fully attain its end.

If the creature chooses to give His love to God, that love will attain its perfect end in the possession of God Himself, Infinite and Eternal Love, infinite happiness.

If, on the contrary, he rejects God, and chooses hatred, which is love's alternative, that hatred must also attain its perfect end, involving the eternal loss of God, and therefore infinite suffering. Were it otherwise, God's work would be imperfect, which can never be.

Now, as the alternatives should be in proportion with each other, it follows, that the capacity for love is the measure of the capacity for hatred. The one and the other are the measures of the happiness or suffering entailed by either. Therefore, the greater the capacity for love and its consequences in happiness and glory, the greater also is the capacity for hatred and its resulting torments.

But as the love of the blessed Virgin for God exceeded that of all men and angels together, it follows, that there was in her a capacity for suffering, great in proportion with the greatness of her love,—a capacity for the endurance of torments of soul and body, exceeding that of all angels and men together.

Therefore, when she—the most noble of all God's creatures, filled with a compassion for lost men, corresponding with the greatness of her love for Him, pleaded for the human race, she would not, in the all but boundless generosity of her soul, do less than pay as much, as it was possible for her to pay, of the tremendous debt for the remission of which she pleaded.

And the great God, who returned all her love, and had her honour at heart, would not grieve her by refusing to accept the offering she would make. What that offering would be, we have already seen ; it would be, to undergo sufferings, in soul and body exceeding those of the entire human race. By this offering it was, that she became truly the Queen of Martyrs, that is to say, the greatest sufferer of all creatures, who had been, or ever would be, on the earth, with the one exception only of the

Man of Sorrows, whose Bride she was to be, both in His sufferings and in His glory.

Beloved one, never, in this life, will any creature realise the greatness of the obligations, under which he is to that most blessed Mother for all she has done for him. Neither will he be able to realise the greatness of the sufferings she underwent, in order to give him life, for this she really did, and our Lord Himself tells us so, for, dying on the cross, He said to the disciple: 'Behold thy Mother'. That is, 'see her, to whom thou owest life, and all thou art, in every way for good. Through her thou art born again, and in sorrow she has brought thee forth.'

Thou shouldst often turn to Him, thy own dear God and Father, who has thy honour also deeply at heart, and entreat Him, not to overlook thee, His child and hers, but Himself pay her the debt which thou owest her, but canst never pay thyself. From the first moment, in which she took on herself the payment of man's debt, her sufferings exceeded all that in this world can ever be imagined. She had, in that moment, become the Queen of Martyrs.

Her sufferings were before her, and in her, under a seven-fold form, as we shall see later on. Like fruit which is in a tree in germ, but will one day attain maturity, so also were those germs of suffering in the Queen of Martyrs, and they also would one day attain maturity.

But even in their earliest stage they exceeded in intensity of agony all that we can possibly conceive. As she was ever full of grace, yet ever growing in it, so also was she full of sufferings which were ever growing in her."

I thank thee, dear Angel, for all thou hast now taught me. From the depths of our dear Lord's loving Heart, I now raise my eyes to my beloved Mother.

Dearest Mother, I thank Thee ; until now I did not know thee.

In that moment she seemed to embrace my soul, imparting to it that which no tongue can ever tell.

MEDITATION II.

MARY'S SUFFERINGS THE MEASURE OF GOD'S LOVE FOR HER,
AND OF HER LOVE FOR HIM.

DEAR Guardian Angel, I am going now to our dear Mother's loving heart, she has herself called me, and I heard her say: "Stand and see if there be sorrow, like unto my sorrow". Come with me. Her deep sorrow already oppresses me, and it is she herself who calls me. Stay by my side and help me.

In a moment I find myself in that loving heart, but I hardly dare raise my eyes; I am filled with deepest anguish. At length I raised them and understood her words: "See if there be sorrow like unto my sorrow," and her look of deep and intense anguish now explained it all. Oh, now it is indeed that all the beauty of the King's daughter is within. She, though so fair and beautiful, is nevertheless black and disfigured. She has become like a leper, and from the crown of her head to the sole of her foot there is no soundness in her. Oh, speak, dear Angel, tell me what has wrought this awful change in her?

"My beloved," he replies, "thou must know that she is the new earth out of which God will form the new Adam. He is to be the man of sorrows, and like unto a leper. Only out of such earth, as thou now seest before thee, could his poor suffering body ever be really formed.

Moreover, His body, that of the Man of Sorrows, will be built up, not as Eve was, only from Adam's rib, but from her entire heart, the heart of the real Queen of Martyrs. He will be bone of her bone, and flesh of her flesh. Therefore was it necessary that, if His body was to be that of a man of sorrows, and formed of her, all in her should also be most bitter sorrow and intensest anguish. How otherwise could a body, adapted to its purpose, be formed of her? What she would be, that also would He be.

And now, thou mayest trace back to their source those sufferings which made her what thou hast seen, and fitted her to supply the earth from which He, the Man of Sorrows, might be formed.

In that moment, then, I once more saw her come from the hand of God, and in that same moment give Him all her love—love so great and perfect that it would give Him all that He might ever ask, no matter what its cost. He then showed Himself to her as the Incarnate Love—which He would one day become—the fairest and most beautiful of the children of men, truly Man, and at the same time truly God, to be by her adored and loved. The love and adoration she then gave to Him is known to Him alone ; it far exceeded the concentrated worship and love of all other creatures, angels and men together, and she poured it all on Him, and on Him alone.

In the very midst of all that deep ocean of love, all was in a moment changed, hard and terrible blows seemed to fall down on this Incarnate Love, and make Him like a leper, and the agony was so great, that it wrung from Him this plaintive supplication : *Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass away ;* and so intense was His suffering, that it forced from Him a copious sweat of blood.

His flesh was torn and mangled, His head was crowned with thorns, His hands and feet transfixed with nails, which fastened Him on a cross by which His own beloved Mother stood, and her loving heart was wounded and torn by seven swords of the most bitter grief and anguish.

That Mother, whose love for Him exceeded the united love of all creatures, and whom He loved in all the plenitude of His love, thus seemed to be His very image, for whilst all His cruel tortures of soul and body were reproduced in her, hers were reproduced in Him. He had become an object so fearful, that even His own Eternal Father seemed to forsake Him in the very hour of His last agony. And when His piercing cry,

expressing in one word all His terrible sufferings and most bitter anguish, was heard: 'Why, why?' that cry seemed to go, not only through the Mother's heart and soul, but also through her own, and love gave her the form in soul and body of that poor suffering Mother—as yet she knew not that she herself would be that Mother, who was herself the faithful copy of her dear Son dying on the Cross.

She now stood before God's Throne herself also as a leper, and so like was she to the object of her love that He alone, who sees and knows all, could see that they were not one, not identical; but that the One was the Incarnate God, and the other His own beloved creature. The dying words of the Man of Sorrows now rose from her lips also: 'Why, why?' and the response came: 'God's honour and glory require that Victim, and thou must strike the blow. No blow can fall on Him which is not inflicted by thy hand.' And her answer was: 'Stand and see if there be sorrow like to my sorrow. Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass away; yet not my will but Thine be done. Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to Thy word.' In that moment God drew her to Himself, and once more kissed her with the kiss of His mouth, breathing into her ear the promise that, whatever He could effect by His Omnipotence, she should effect by prayer. Instantly her prayer arose: 'Keep me ever like Thyself, crucified in soul and body'. And I heard the reply: 'It shall be so. I am the Man of Sorrows, and thou the Queen of Martyrs.'

And here bear well in mind, beloved, that her life of suffering was divided into two distinct parts. During the first, which ended with the Incarnation, her work and sufferings were those of the greatest servant and most special friend of God, but she knew not that she would be the Mother of Him who alone could redeem the world.

Hence her compassion was not only for Him who would have to suffer the extreme of agony in soul and body to pay

man's debt, but also for her who would be His Mother, and who as such, in addition to suffering as a most loving creature, would also, as His most loving Mother, have to undergo in her heart and soul all that her dear Son would have to undergo in the powers of His soul and in the senses of His body.

During the second part, her work and sufferings were those of a new life of an almost infinitely higher order, those of the Mother herself of the Incarnate Word.

From the moment in which He had given her the promise that she should be the Queen of Martyrs, He was ever before her as the Man of Sorrows ; as was also she, who was to be His Mother, together with all her sorrows ; and the measure of her love for Him and her, was the measure of the sufferings which she herself ever underwent.

She saw all the cruel blows which fell so hard upon Him, the One object of all her love. But the crowning grief of all was the remembrance that her own hand itself should inflict those blows. How that would come to pass she knew not yet. Ever crucifying her own will, her breathings were : *If it be possible, let this chalice pass away ; yet not my will, but Thine be done.* Her memory was also crucified, for in accordance with His command, which had said : ' Forget thy people and thy father's house,' she excluded therefrom every drop of balm which might soothe the agony of her heart.

The thought of the salvation of her people and the glory to be given thereby to God whose child she was, and Whom alone she loved, would indeed have sweetened that bitter chalice. But that was not to be. All was to be bitter to the very end. Not only was her memory crucified by the exclusion of every thought calculated to assuage her grief, but her understanding also was crucified, for she was not to know the reason of all her bitter grief and intensest anguish.

Then the question would rise up before her : How could such bitter sorrow produce aught else but most bitter fruit ?

Again and again her agonising cry thrilled through the highest heavens : ‘ How can this be ? Why, why hast Thou done thus to me ? ’ And God gave answer, but she understood not His word, and could only say : ‘ Be it done to me according to Thy word ’. She was paying the debt of sin, and was therefore plunged into its terrible darkness. And as in hell, this darkness increases the woe of those who are in its midst, so also did it increase her agony, excluding every ray of joy.

Thus was the new earth prepared, that God might form out of it the Man of Sorrows. All this commenced in the moment when she first pleaded for the human race, offering to pay its debt, but even in that moment her sufferings exceeded those of every other creature, and already made her the Queen of Martyrs.

Thou wilt remember that I have already spoken of this obscurely. But now our Lord enlightens my intelligence that I may give thee these details. From the first moment of her existence those sorrows, implanted in her being, even as fruit is in a tree from its first beginning, were ever growing with her growth. And now is arrived the moment in which that new earth has reached the stage, at which it is fit to have formed from it, by the hand of God, Him who will truly be the Man of Sorrows.”

MEDITATION III.

IT WAS MARY’S ARDENT CHARITY EXCEEDING THE UNITED
LOVE OF ALL GOD’S CREATURES THAT MADE HER SO
LIKE TO GOD HIMSELF.

AGAIN I hear His voice : “ Arise, My beloved, and come ”.

Oh, dear Lord, stay me with Thy hand. When Thou callest me Thy beloved, and I think of what I am without Thy aid, shame must return me to the nothingness, from which Thou Thyself hast drawn me.

“ My child, for so thou art, have I not made thee so? Dost thou not remember, that it is only the lowest which is really worthy of the highest, and therefore I have chosen thee? But thou must do thy work. For the highest continues His regard only to those who, like His beloved handmaid, are ever ready to do His will in all.”

Dear Lord, *then do Thy will in me.* And in that moment He seemed to strengthen me, and to enable me to do that will in all, and to bear what He will now place before me.

He bids me raise my eyes, which instantly suffused with tears, barely catch a glimpse of His beloved one, and the sight of whose most bitter anguish makes me fly away, and plunge into the depths of His most compassionate heart. But her gentle pleading voice recalls me. I hear her say: ‘Stand and see if there be sorrow like to my sorrow’.

Once more I raised my eyes, and saw her standing before me as the Queen of Martyrs, the bride of the Man of Sorrows. I knew that bride again, but she had now advanced in age and grace. The fruit of sorrow which I had seen in germ had grown, and nearly attained maturity. It was the food wherewith this new earth would feed the new Adam, now about to be formed of her. He would drink the chalice of sorrows to the dregs, and the sufferings of His beloved, poured into that chalice, would impart to its bitter sorrows others so great, that even He would be obliged to say: ‘It is consummated’. The chalice is now full, and overflows on the entire world. I saw the fruit, seven in number; they had attained maturity, and now only needed the colour and the bloom which He alone could give.

And He, the Man of Sorrows, would enter that enclosed garden wherein they grew, and crown the work of His beloved Bride, in order that she might then crown His.

He, who had set in order charity within her, now willed that I should again fix my eyes upon her, that I might see the real source of all her sufferings. And I saw that burning love,

that ardent charity, exceeding the united love of all God's creatures, and which rendered her so like to God Himself.

It was that most intense fire, ever burning in her heart, which caused her such grief and anguish when she contemplated the Majesty of the God whom she loved, and saw Him outraged by sin. That love made her so ardently desire to make Him reparation, at no matter how great a cost. That same love, extending to the poor lost children of men, made her wish to pay their whole entire debt. But seeing that all her sufferings, though so very great, were as nothing when compared with the debt itself, her grief became intense, and could be measured only by the greatness of her love. Then it was that a cry rose from her heart, and mounted even to the Throne of God, and her cry was : *I thirst, I thirst ; would that I could suffer more.* And, as we have already seen, God heard her prayer.

Again I saw that the flame of ardent charity poured forth from her heart, and encompassed all, the children of men, the poor lost children of Adam. It seemed like a double flame, emanating from one source, love for God and love for us, but each was so like the other that they seemed but one.

And then I saw that, though all that love fell on all without exception, still, falling on all, it fell on each one whole and entire, as though he stood alone. I saw the whole of this flame concentrated, as it were, in one point, and it centered in my heart. Oh, what tender maternal love filled her great and noble heart for me, and for each one of her dear children ! She loved each one, as though he were her only one, and was ready to die a thousand deaths, provided that that one dear one might live, and live for ever. Each one can say with fullest confidence : ' There is nothing she would not do for me. I am her child, and that I might live she would suffer all and lay down her life.'

Again and again, while she pressed me closer to her loving

heart, I heard her cry of deepest anguish, so plaintive that it must have touched the Heart of God Himself : *I thirst, I thirst.* Oh, dearest Mother, how dear thou art to me ! I thank and love thee. Oh, how I love thee ! And that cry did touch His Heart.

The new earth was now prepared, and in every way fitted for the formation of the new Adam, the Man of Sorrows. The fruit on which He would feed was ripe, and awaited only the colour and bloom which His presence would impart.

Ah, dear Mother, thou didst thirst for more, for yet greater suffering, and thou hast now reached the moment in which thy prayer is heard. The last drop of bitter anguish will now be poured into thy loving heart, and He whom thou lovest will Himself become the bundle of bitter myrrh dwelling in thy bosom. Thou hast now to enter into the full deep darkness and suffering of the night of sin.

All is now ready.

As prior to creation, so now Eternal Silence reigns, and with it the deep, deep silence of intensest expectation, the two being blended into one.

MEDITATION IV.

MARY'S BURNING LOVE MADE HER THE CHOSEN BRIDE.

My dear Angel speaks : " Once more, beloved, we will return to the moment when God gave existence to that pure and spotless Virgin. In the midst of eternal silence the voice of the great Almighty Father was once more heard, commanding that a new and living earth should come forth from that one which now was blighted by the hand of death. It was the command of Him, who alone can make him clean who is conceived of unclean seed. The voice of Him who *is*. And in that same instant the new earth, the new creature stood before Him in all its beauty

and perfection. It had free will, and in the full exercise of that free will it breathed forth love for Him (the love of the creature for the Creator), and that love so pure, so perfect, so all but infinite, so like unto Himself, Eternal Love, that He called it His Love, as if it were really Himself again. *How beautiful art thou, My love, how beautiful art thou! Thou art all fair, oh My love, and there is no stain in thee.* He in that moment adopted her as His daughter, as His child, commanding her to forget all else but Him. And, seeing how closely she resembled Himself, He called her His sister, and His spouse, and filled her with His own love, in return for the love she gave Him.

But His love was the *Paternal love* with which He loved His only-begotten Son. She was therefore now full of *that* grace and love, and thus rendered by Him, in the order of created beings, that which He, God, her Father, was in the order of the uncreated, and He was the Father of His own Eternal Son.

The words of that Eternal Father: *How beautiful art thou, My love*, were likewise those of His Eternal Son, one God with Him. But the love which filled that fair and beautiful one, and which the Eternal Son claimed as belonging to Him, since He called it His, was now the paternal love of His own Eternal Father which that Father had given to her. She then loved Him with love that in her became maternal, and in return for that love by which she loved Him as a Son, He loved her with the love which He Himself is, *Filial Love*, thus loving her as a son loves his mother. *And she was full of grace.*

The Holy Ghost,—the Spirit of Infinite Love,—the love of the Father and the Son, one God with them, spoke the self-same words, and also called the love which filled her His love. The love which He found in that beautiful one, and which He thus called His love, was the paternal love of the Eternal Father, and the filial love of the Eternal Son, and therefore He in return bestowed on her HIS OWN LOVE.

But as His love, the love which He is, was in the same

order as hers, that is the love of the Father and the Son, paternal and filial love, His bestowal of it on her was like an espousal with her, like meeting like. Now, what should we expect to result from the espousal of one who is infinite with a finite creature, if not a son who would himself be both infinite and finite, be God and also man?

But as the love of the Father and the Son, which He is, unlike the love in the Father and the Son, has no procession in the Divinity, since He is the centre at which procession ends, yet, as love must ever be productive, His love is productive outside the Divinity, for as a tongue in combination with the element of air gives outward form to what is purely mental, incorporating it in articulate speech, so His love espoused to hers will, in plenitude of time, render the mental word of the Eternal Father visible and corporeal by uniting it with her mortal flesh. He will form its body from hers, and create its soul, clothing it in her nature. That is the love which He pours out on her. She is full of grace, and is now the chosen Daughter of the Eternal Father, the chosen Mother of His Eternal Son, and the chosen Bride of the Holy Spirit."

MEDITATION V.

LOVE FOR GOD, AND FOR ALL HE LOVED CAUSED ALL THE
SUFFERINGS OF MARY.

My dear Angel now resumed his discourse: "When God had pronounced those words of praise and love for His beloved one, she had still to await the plenitude of time, when He would carry out all that they involved. And when that time was come, He, the great Eternal God, spoke once more, and by His words made known His will in her regard: *Let us make man to our Own image and likeness.* His words are works. His great ambassador, the Archangel Gabriel,

the strength of God, standing before His throne, was then commanded to make known the will of the great Eternal King to His beloved one, the pure and spotless earth, out of which the new Adam would be formed. Her will was absolutely free, and therefore the Archangel must await her full and free consent to the will of the Most High. Standing then in the presence of that pure and spotless Virgin, the Archangel was silent for a moment."

My Guardian Angel, not daring to enter on such tremendous mysteries, also paused, and all was deepest silence. But our Lord, with a look of exceeding love, willed him to continue, and to describe what took place in that great moment when Gabriel stood before the Holy Virgin, the Beloved of God.

Obedient to the Divine Will, my good Angel, bowing profoundly before that Holy Virgin, implored her help, saying: *Deign to make me worthy to praise thee, O holy Virgin*; and then, as he turned to me, I saw once more the halo of bright light rise from the Virgin's brow, and rest on his.

He then spoke and said: "My beloved, when the great Archangel approached the dwelling of this pure and spotless Lily, the fairest flower of God's creation, the air was so embalmed with its sweet odour, that it seemed to him as though he were yet standing before God's Throne. Never before, except in the presence of that Throne, had he inhaled such odour of sweetness, but he recognised it as that which had risen as a pillar of smoke of aromatical spices, and which he had seen penetrate into the repose of the great eternal God. In that moment he seemed to realise what he already knew, that all the sweetness he had hitherto breathed in paradise had first of all flowed direct from God to her, and from her passed to the angels in heaven. He now was able to see and understand, whence arose the delicious odours, and whence came the sweet harmony and the rallying words of faithful love, which, as echoes or distant sounds, had from the beginning pervaded the entire heavens.

She was the centre of creation. All life, all beauty, and every sweetness flowed from God first of all to her, and thence to every creature. Indeed, her love was so fully God's own love, that in the midst thereof he, the Archangel, felt as standing before God's own Throne. And he stood with deepest reverence before her.

The mighty love for God which poured forth from all the powers of her soul and all the senses of her body, so far exceeded the united love of all the millions who stand before God's Throne, that he attempted no comparison of the one with the other.

And yet, for all that, he did compare it with love itself, for, as far as his mind could penetrate, her love now resembled only the love of the Eternal Father for His Eternal Son, and the love of the Son for His Eternal Father. Hence her resemblance to the Holy Ghost Himself, the love of the Father for the Son, and of the Son for the Father, was so close that he (the Archangel) now realised the message which he bore, that she would be espoused by the Holy Ghost, and conceive the Eternal Word.

But now a wondrous vision presented itself before us, and we saw how the flames of love which rose from her heart were, and ever had been throughout her life, wholly and entirely for God, and had ever ascended to Him ; and in Him they opened out and encompassed all He loved. They then seemed to return to her, and, enveloping her on every side, they became dark as darkest night, and were infuriated as by a frightful storm ; and so terrible were they, as we saw them now, that they seemed as if they could only be the awful raging flames of hell. Like those flames from the midst of their darkness, they threw out a lurid glare, revealing all most calculated to multiply and increase the tortures they inflicted, and they penetrated all the powers of her soul and the senses of her body.

Thus it was that we now saw her. And, strange to relate, although those flames caused sufferings corresponding with

those of hell, yet they were really all flames of love. Yes, love for God, and love for all He loved, were the sources of all her sufferings.

He understood also how great must be her sufferings, first, because in every creature the capacity for suffering is commensurate with the capacity for love. Therefore, since her capacity for love exceeded the united capacity of all other creatures, her capacity for suffering went far beyond that of every created being. Great then, indeed, were her sufferings, because in the greatness of her love for God and man, she would take on herself the sins of men, and as far as possible for a creature to do so, make reparation to God for them, and pay the whole entire debt, and what that debt is we have already seen, and nothing less than all would ever satisfy her great and noble heart or the ardour of her love."

Oh, dear Angel, do I understand that the Queen of Martyrs would, throughout her whole life, be plunged in deepest sorrow?

"Even so, my beloved one; each suffering less than all would have been a coin wanting in the full price that she would pay, and a gem wanting in her queenly martyr's crown. All that in her bears the name of joy, and would be so to others, is in her noble and loving heart, sharp and cruel anguish. Listen to the brides of the Lamb. They have walked in her footsteps, and they will tell thee that their greatest sorrow on earth is to be without great suffering. Their cry is ever the same: *To suffer or die! To suffer and not to die!* or, as that beloved bride of the suffering God, Veronica Giuliani, exclaimed in her thirst for suffering: *Neither suffer nor die*, for the greatest suffering she could undergo in this world was to live and not suffer, and in her ardent love for souls, she implored her sisters who surrounded her, to join with her in entreating her dear Lord to send all the sufferings due to their sins to her, that she would bear them all. That is what the

children of that beloved Mother teach us. Oh, what must have been their Mother! Truly their ardour for suffering was only a little spark flashed out from the glowing furnace of the heart of the queen of martyrs.

And the great Archangel saw her as the queen of martyrs, for indeed he held in his hand the diadem wherewith to crown her spotless brow.

The Man of Sorrows, the Incarnate God, was present to her mind, even as she had seen Him in her creation. And there also stood before her His beloved Mother; He all mutilated and torn, she all transfixed by grief. The sorrows of the one and of the other were reproduced so perfectly in her, by the immensity of her love—for, as we have said elsewhere, she knew not yet that she herself would be that poor suffering Mother—that the Archangel saw in her not only the Man of Sorrows, but also the Queen of Martyrs, apparently one.

The immeasurable measure of her love for Him was the measure of her sufferings. Each wound on His sacred body, and in the heart of His beloved Mother, were reproduced in her, and she knew, that each blow which fell, could fall only with her consent.

Why or how it should be so, she knew not yet. Oh, bitter anguish! She saw each cruel blow about to fall on Him, and would have averted it by a thousand deaths, but for each new torment He, with a loving pleading glance, awaited her response, which was ever to be the same: *Be it done to me according to Thy word, not my will but Thine be done.*

Then there was the other flame of the same fire of love, which caused her to clasp in her arms every poor lost child of Eve. As the greatness of the sun enables it to shine down in all its brightness on countless millions, and on each one of those millions as though he stood alone, so also did she in her all but boundless love embrace each one as though he stood alone.

Oh, how great, exceeding great, was the love with which that Mother clasped each of her dear children to her maternal heart, as she stood in the presence of her God and pleaded for that child, as indeed her dear Son Himself would one day plead with unutterable groanings, counting out as it were the coin of each suffering that she would undergo, in payment of His debt.

‘All these, oh God, and more will I undergo. Oh give me my child, spare his life, and sparing him, spare me! Yes, my God, I take on myself all the punishment of sin.’

And the flame of that punishment cast darkness on all that might give comfort or consolation, and therefore, ever in the midst of all her cries that one was ever there, *Why, Why?*

Yet all was insufficient to quench her ardent thirst to suffer still more for her beloved children. Oh, what gratitude and love does each child owe to that most loving Mother!

Again her pleading cry rose to the throne of God: *I thirst, I thirst!* God now grants her prayer. He, becoming Incarnate, will Himself pay the debt. He was all her love, and knowing that nothing less than the payment of the whole debt, as far as a creature could pay it, would ever satisfy her noble generous heart, He permitted her to understand that she should be spared in nothing, and that every blow which fell on Him should first pass through her heart, that every agony and crucifixion of His soul and body should first be undergone by her, that every drop of His bitter chalice should fall in all its bitterness into her loving heart, thus satisfying, as far as that could be, her insatiable thirst for greater and greater torments.”

MEDITATION VI.

MARY'S DESIRE FOR THE SALVATION OF THE HUMAN RACE
WAS IN PROPORTION TO HER INTENSE LOVE OF GOD.

“THE Archangel Gabriel saw the Queen of Martyrs standing

before him, crucified in soul and body, even as she herself saw her Incarnate God dying on the cross. He seemed reproduced in her, as she also was reproduced in Him. She was the most beautiful and most perfect of all God's creatures : she alone, of all the children of men, was pure and spotless, her voice alone could reach the throne of God. And she stood before that throne, pleading for the poor lost children of Adam. All a creature could do she did in payment of their debt, and that debt consisted, I say again, in the extreme of suffering (salted with fire) in the powers of the soul, and in the senses of the body. She took those sufferings on herself. But as she was only a creature, she could suffer, only to the utmost extent of which her nature was capable.

Crucified then in soul and body, doing all that the most perfect creature could do, she pleaded again and again with God, asking Him to enable her to suffer still more, that her sufferings might be, as it were, in the measure of her thirst, so that, in accordance with her love for God and man, she might really pay all that she, a creature, or any pure creature possibly could pay, and then He, that good God, all her love, would Himself do the rest. Oh, what love, oh, what pleadings were ever rising from her burning heart to the throne of God ! Oh, with what tender maternal love did she clasp each one of us, her children, to her loving heart !

The moment had at length arrived when her prayer would be granted. She had now attained the full measure of suffering of which her nature was capable. It was only by becoming the Mother of God that her sufferings could be increased, and with it her power of endurance. In her present state they had attained their extreme limit. Everything created has its measure which cannot be exceeded, and her measure of sorrow was now filled to overflowing.

Oh, my child, my child, she seems to say to each one, *tell me what more I could have done, what more I could have suffered*

to give thee life and happiness? And yet all seems to me as nothing. Oh, how I thirst yet to suffer more! But it is consummated. I can do no more. My God, my God, I thirst. Pity a poor Mother. My children are all dead. Oh, what sorrow, oh, what anguish! But all those pleadings rose as a pillar of smoke of sweetest incense of aromatical spices, of myrrh and frankincense, and of all the powders of the perfumer from her burning heart to heaven. And God's Ambassador saw her as a perfect holocaust. She resembled in all things Him, who was to die upon the cross, and like Him, in that hour of anguish, she now saw only the sins with which she was laden. Like His, also her soul was sorrowful unto death, and she was even now undergoing the most terrible of the consequences of sin, the pain of the loss of God whom she seemed really to have lost. Why hast Thou forsaken me? Stand and see, if there be sorrow like unto my sorrow.

In that moment the Archangel saluted her. Two things surprised and frightened her: his apparition, and the words of his salutation. She knew that no angel would stand by the Incarnate God when dying on the Cross, since even the God of Angels would Himself forsake Him. For He was indeed to undergo the frightful pain of loss. She was now offering her life to Him; she knew that she could do no more. It was consummated, and she felt herself as in the agony of death, yet she had received from Him the assurance that His every anguish should be also hers. Why then does an angel stand before her, and salute her in words which implied that He, her God, had not forsaken her? *Hail, full of grace*, is the angel's salutation. *How can I be full of grace who am filled with the sins of the entire world and with the wrath of God? The Lord is with thee. But the Lord has forsaken me;* and in that moment the last cry of bitter anguish fell from her lips: *My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?* For in that very moment she saw God outraged by the sins of her own

children, then she beheld herself clothed with all their sins, and the God whom alone she loved turning away His face in anger from her, even as He will turn away from the wicked on the last day. And in His anger God seemed to say to her, as He will say to them: *Depart from Me. Oh why, my God, hast Thou forsaken me?*

In that same moment the work of the poor anguish-stricken creature was done, and in the order of nature a broken heart would have closed the scene. She was sorrowful unto death. She awaited only that closing scene of death which in this world is the last coin of the debt of sin which has to be paid on passing into eternity. *My soul is sorrowful, even unto death,* were the words in her heart when the angel stood before her. But the death she was about to undergo (in a way) resembled the sinner's death, which is really a passage from the sufferings of this life to the far more terrible torments of eternity. She had thirsted for greater sufferings. He had promised to grant her prayer, and His angel would now strengthen her, so that living she might pass from her present suffering life to a far higher one, that of Mother of God, in which she would endure torments as far exceeding those she had hitherto undergone, as the pains of hell exceed all the pains of this mortal life.

She was God's creature, but now she will be His Mother."

Oh, my dear Guardian Angel, my Mother is sorrowful unto death, and is about to die. Bring me and place me in her dying arms, so that reposing on her heart I may console and comfort her. That dear creature awaited death, standing even as God's Mother stood at the foot of the Cross. Her love gave strength to her arms, and she clasped me to her heart. She was suffering and dying for me. And I tried to comfort and console her, and to make her happy, for I told her that I grieved for all my sins, that I loved my God with my whole

entire heart, and that I would ever be her child. Oh what a bright ray of love shone from her poor dying eyes! not that she could be comforted, but she saw the desire of my heart, and she kissed me. With that kiss on my lips, I died to all but love for her who was now dying for love of me, in order that He who alone could do so, might beget me to God.

“ Her soul was sorrowful unto death and the Angel was charged to strengthen her. *Fear not, Mary, thou hast found grace.* That grace which she had ever sought she had now found. She had sought to satisfy God’s justice by the entire sacrifice of herself, and by bearing the punishment due to sin. She had sought the salvation of the human race by taking on herself the sins of men whom she loved with such intensity of love. And that she might complete her work, she had craved to suffer more. The grace therefore which she has found is that God’s justice will be fully satisfied and the human race redeemed, and her sufferings multiplied. *Thou hast found grace, oh blessed one!* And she seemed to answer: *I shall drink the cup of sorrow to the bitter dregs.* But no chalice could be bitter to such a love as hers, if she could only see the fruits of love growing from its lees; therefore, in order that she may taste all its bitterness, the light alone, thrown by the burning fire of the sins of men, shall shine on all her sorrows, revealing nothing save only that which will ever increase her woe. With her, as with Him Who will now be her Son, the darkness will remain, and the same agonising cry will rise from the lips of both: *Why, why?* Oh, terrible words! How dark they are! But to us they are bright light indeed, for they reveal to us the deep and hidden depths of the chalice of suffering, of which the Man of Sorrows and His bride the Queen of Martyrs will have to drink to the very last drop. They also reveal to us the greatness of their love.”

MEDITATION VII.

THE SALVATION OF THE HUMAN RACE DEPENDED ON THE FREE WILL OF MARY FOR ITS ACCOMPLISHMENT—SHE ACCEPTS A SEA OF SORROW.

OH, dear Angel, continue thy discourse, and he thus resumes : “The Queen of Martyrs standing in the presence of God’s Ambassador, is now to learn that which will complete the crown of all her sorrows. The seven-fold fruit of suffering has now in her reached maturity. Her chalice is full to the very brim !

Thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a Son—the Son of the Most High. She knew that a Virgin would conceive the God who was to be incarnate, but that she herself, filled with the sins of the entire world and forsaken by God, should be that chosen Virgin, had never even passed before her mind. The daughters of Israel married with the hope that the Virgin Mother of the Messiah might be born of them, but she knew not man. God had commanded her to set aside that hope : *Forget thy people and thy father’s house. How shall this thing be, for I know not man ?*

Oh, beautiful Daughter of God ! Oh, beautiful Mother of God ! Oh, beautiful bride of God ! Oh, beautiful Queen of Martyrs ! The gall for which thou hast so long thirsted shall all be now poured into thy chalice, and thou shalt drink it to the dregs.

Hitherto thou hast suffered as His creature, now, henceforth, thou shalt suffer as His Mother. Thou shalt be His Mother, and He will be the bundle of myrrh of suffering and sorrow dwelling in thy bosom. *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee. And therefore the Holy One which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God.*

She now understood that she was to be the Mother to whom He would be subject, and by whose consent alone each cruel torment could be inflicted on Him, her own Incarnate God. He was to be her Son, subject to her in all, and already she could see His piteous pleading glance awaiting her consent for every merciless blow which should fall upon Him, and to each pleading glance her response would ever be the same: 'Oh, if it is possible, let this chalice pass away, but not my will, but Thine be done. Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to Thy word.' Her will was free, and God awaited her response.

Would she thus become the Queen of Martyrs? All would indeed be terrible, but that she herself should be His Mother, that He, her God, should also be her Son, and that she should strike each awful blow from which would pour forth such streams of blood in the Garden of Gethsemane, at the Pillar of Flagellation, in the crowning with thorns, and on the Cross—oh, that was agony indeed to her! *Oh, all ye that pass by, stand and see, if there be sorrow like unto my sorrow. If it be possible, let this chalice pass away.*

Throughout her life she had ever dwelt in the deep darkness of the world of sin, seeking only, and doing only, the will of Him who willed that she should suffer and not know the reason why. But never was the night so dark as now, and never was the light of that darkness so bright as in this moment, revealing as it does every bitter drop of the chalice of which she must one day drink. She stood as one pouring out her whole entire being in her longing to make reparation for the dishonour done to God by the sins of men, and the intensity of her pleading was measured only by her immeasurable love for God, and her more than maternal love for the poor lost children of Eve. Never before had she pleaded as she pleaded now.

In the beginning God told His angels what they must do to possess Him eternally. The divine command was opposed to

their idea of wisdom and happiness, and consequently a third part refused to obey; having no love for God they would make no sacrifice for Him.

God also told Adam and Eve what they had to do in order to possess eternal life. But as the command was opposed to their idea of wisdom, and seemed also opposed to their happiness, they also disobeyed. We see, therefore, that those angels and men who loved not God, would make no sacrifice for Him. Love is the measure of sacrifice, and sacrifice is the measure of love.

God now gave that holy Virgin to understand, that to obtain her desire for His honour and for the salvation of the human race, He must become her Son, subject to her in all things, and therefore that she herself would have to offer Him to His Eternal Father as the Victim for all she asked, and give her consent to all those insults and sufferings, which the cruel hatred of men, and the still more fiendish hatred of the rebel angels would heap upon Him, before He who was her Son and subject to her in all, could give His, and without which no hair could fall from His Head, and finally, that she must by that same consent, deliver Him up to a malefactor's death, and herself stand by His cross, and there, with her own bitter anguish, fill up the chalice of His sufferings, and continue this until she should see Him die abandoned by God and man. All her former torments then, although exceeding great, were only shadows of those yet to come.

But all those sufferings, past and future, would be only as one little drop of water in an ocean compared with the sufferings He would undergo with her full consent. Only unbounded love and confidence in God, like that of this blessed Virgin, could ever enable a creature to believe (she was blessed because she did believe) that such awful outrages against His beloved Son, like so many other evils permitted though not willed, could be the means by which reparation would be made to His Divine

Majesty for all the outrages committed against Him by man, and thus give her all the desires of her heart.

And oh, what a lesson for those who murmur against God, because He permits (though He does not will them), so many evils in the world. As the salvation of the human race had depended on the free will of Adam and Eve, and its eternal destiny hung on their lips, so now the eternal destiny of mankind hangs on the lips of this blessed Virgin. The creation of the angels, the creation of man, and his redemption—all depended on her free will and on its breathing forth of perfect love for God. God Himself, angels and men awaited her decision.

She stood (as we have seen) in the deep darkness of the sins she had taken on herself, and the light of that darkness shone more brightly than ever to darken all that might be light, and to throw its lurid glare on all that was calculated to increase her woe. *Why, why? How can this be done to me?* Her sufferings have brought her to death. Unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground dieth, itself remaineth alone, but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit. So now I say once more the beloved of God is at the point of death, and like Him who dying on the cross and not knowing why, yet called God His Father, and placed Himself unreservedly in that Father's hands, saying: *Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit*, that pure and spotless Virgin placed herself with unbounded confidence and love in her heavenly Father's hands. *Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to Thy word.* That holy Virgin bowed herself down, and, as it were, expired, but it was only to wake up to a new life. She is henceforth the daughter of the Eternal Father, the Mother of the Eternal Son, and the Bride of the Holy Ghost. Behold the pure and spotless Mother of God! The crown of the Queen of Martyrs now encircles her brow, and her seven fruits of sorrow possess their colour and their bloom. They now await the hand of the

master of that enclosed garden who will gather them into the chalice of His sorrow.”

DIGRESSION.

THE ONE DESIRE OF GOD IN BECOMING INCARNATE WAS THAT WE MIGHT LOVE HIM NOW AND IN ETERNITY.

Dear Guardian Angel, I heard thy voice.

“Yes, my beloved. Before entering on the tremendous mysteries which we have now to consider, our dearest Lord and His blessed Mother desire that I should place before thee a few considerations to guide thee on the way.

We will suppose the case of a great traveller who is well known and enjoys the confidence of all. This man announces that during his late prolonged absence he had undergone unheard-of perils, privations and sufferings, which however had resulted in his discovery of a real earthly paradise wherein all can find the most perfect happiness. He describes that happiness in glowing colours, explaining every minute detail.

When asked why he did not remain there in the enjoyment of so much happiness, he replied : ‘I believe you all know me well. I may say that no man is better known throughout the world than I am. Therefore you will credit me when I say that one happiness was wanting to me therein, a happiness without which I could not live. You were not there to fill up the measure of my joy. My one desire was that you also should be there to enjoy the happiness of that paradise.

Therefore I appear before you now. I should not venture to do so, were I not convinced of your belief in the unbounded affection I have for each one of you, and that you place entire confidence in me. Those indeed are the only conditions on which it will ever be possible for you to reach that country.

You ask me why, and how that can be? I am the only person on earth who has visited that land and returned, I

alone know the way thereto. The road is long, difficult, and dangerous. The dangers are indeed so many that one false step is inevitably fatal, and consequently hundreds perish on the way. The reason is that the nature of the ground to be traversed is totally different from everything hitherto known, so that the indications which, according to your ideas, would be infallible guides, are the very ones which lead inevitably to destruction. This is so absolutely the case that notwithstanding all the warnings given, and all the experience gained by the sight of the destruction of so many, their companions remain obstinate, and in large numbers continue to act according to their own ideas.

I desire your happiness, but I should be leading you to inevitable destruction, did I consent to your accompanying me on any other condition than the entire renunciation of your own ideas, judgments, and inclinations.

Now this is more difficult than you suppose, and indeed it is only possible on condition that you are fully convinced of the power of my intelligence, the accuracy of my judgment, and the greatness of my love for you. Yet, this alone will not suffice, for I shall frequently require of you things so hard and difficult, and so many sacrifices of your notions of common-sense, that only very great love for me can give you courage and strength to make such (apparently) great sacrifices, sacrifices comparable only with the sacrifice of life itself. Love alone, which is strong as death, can effect this.

We will now set out on our journey, but remember that life and every happiness this world can give will be for those only who are faithful to my conditions; while terrible sufferings and more terrible death will be the inevitable lot of all who depart even by one step from those conditions. Your destiny is therefore in your own hands. Happiness or misery, life or death.'

My beloved, meditate carefully on what I have just put

before thee. Our Lord is from above, and thou art from below; and therefore His ways are not thy ways. He came here to seek thee and all His children; and His word is: *Follow Me*; and He is here for the resurrection of all who do so; but those who refuse to follow Him must inevitably remain in eternal death."

MEDITATION VIII.

JESUS CHRIST ALONE CAN TEACH US TO RETURN LOVE FOR
LOVE.

DEAREST Mother, now that I have such important lessons to learn, I come to thee, for I hardly dare penetrate into those depths of our dear Lord's loving Heart, where alone these mysteries can be read.

"Fear not, my child. He, in coming for the salvation of mankind, has superseded all other teachers. He is the only Teacher now, since, as thou hast already seen, all others have been corrupted by the enemy, and, guided by him, they lead men, not to love, but to hatred for God. Therefore the one true Teacher bids all His children renounce those false teachers, and follow Him who alone is the Light of the world. I will lead thee to Him."

In that same moment she clasps me to her loving heart, and bears me to His. Oh, dear Mother, how good is the great, the Infinite God.

"Yes, my child. His greatness and infinity are the only measures of His goodness, and that is the first great lesson thou must learn, it is the foundation on which all others rest."

I know and feel that His eyes, beaming with tenderest love, are pouring down the rays of that great love on me. Oh, dear Lord, I dare not raise my eyes to contemplate such love, but

teach me to know Thee, that I may become all love for Thee, and may ever return Thee love for love.

“My child, for that very purpose do I call thee now to My loving heart, thy dear Guardian Angel shall look at Me, and read off to thee the lessons thou hast to learn.” In that moment our Lord and His dear Mother gave their blessing to my Angel, and then he said :

“My beloved, I must begin by asking thee to recall to mind some of the lessons thou hast already learnt. Remember that God is Infinite, and all creatures, however great, must be infinitely far from Him. Therefore, when, in infinite goodness and love, He determined to call into existence beings, made to His own image and likeness, in order that, becoming one with Him, they might be made partakers of His happiness, His glory, and His divinity, He also decreed the means for the attainment of that end, means by which He might bridge over the infinite space intervening between Himself and them, and this He would accomplish by assuming a created nature into His own. Of the two natures which He determined to create, the angelic and the human, he assumed the latter though a little less than the former.

Thou knowest that with God there is no succession of time, all things are ever present. But in order that thou mayest understand them, I am obliged to place these things before thee as succeeding each other.

Now, God saw that the first man, the father of future generations, would, in the exercise of his free will, rebel against Him, and would involve in that rebellion, and all its fatal consequences, the whole of His posterity without any exception. Thus the incarnation of the Son of God would have been impossible. But God foresaw, that in the midst of the human race there would be one who, if exempted by Him from that fall, would be filled with such great and perfect love for Himself, with love so exceeding the united love of all other creatures, that

there could be no suffering, however great, that she would not be prepared to undergo for Him, or sacrifice too painful for her to make, for Him who would be all her love.

Yet exceeding great as would be her love, yet it would be as nothing in comparison with His love for her, the love of Him who is Love Itself. If she would be ready to endure any and every torment for Him, there was no suffering He would not undergo for love of her.

Thou hast seen that God's work would be imperfect, if that work did not perfectly produce that for which He made it, that which He intended it to produce. He made it to produce love so great that it would obtain possession of Him, Infinite Love, and therefore possession of infinite happiness. But He also made it capable of hatred, the alternative of love, which could only result in His eternal loss, and therefore in infinite suffering.

Now, if an equivalent is to be found for that result, that equivalent must itself be infinite. But God only is infinite, and therefore, if He would preserve that Beloved One from Adam's sin and its consequences, He must Himself be for her their equivalent. He, therefore, having determined to be Incarnate, determined also to offer Himself to undergo all the dread consequences of sin. *Behold I come.* But she too will do her part, and will undergo all His torments, that so, she, the creature, doing all that the creature can do, the Creator may do what the creature never can do.

My beloved, thou seest that the Incarnate God will now have two great works before Him for both of which His Sacred Humanity will be fully adapted. That Sacred Humanity will be of the highest perfection, of which God made human nature capable when it came from His Almighty hand. If the great King will eat of the fruit of my garden, only the most perfect fruit which it can produce is worthy of Him, and the flower from which that fruit grows must correspond with its perfections.

The sacred humanity of our dear Lord, the perfection of human nature, will be perfectly adapted for its assumption into the Divinity, and by that assumption He, the Eternal Word, will, so to speak, not only clothe Himself with His creatures' nature, but also clothe them with His own, thus enabling them to give to all their acts the infinite perfection which alone can render them worthy of the infinite God.

But that Sacred Humanity must be adapted to another work which It also must accomplish. It must pay the debt of sin, and undergo the extreme of suffering in soul and body, which really is that debt. Nothing less than that extreme could satisfy His great and noble nature. He will therefore have to undergo, not simply sufferings corresponding with those which are endured in this world, but sufferings which correspond with those torments of hell, which are the real inheritance and debt of all who are in mortal sin. His Sacred Humanity would then be adapted for the endurance of all those frightful torments.

He being God as well as man, gives to those sufferings of His human nature the infinite value which alone can make them an equivalent for eternal torments. In a word, the capacity of His human nature for suffering corresponds with its capacity for love.

The ever-blessed Virgin was, in comparison with all the other flowers of the human race, as a lily among thorns, and her beloved Son was the fairest and most beautiful of all earth's fruits. As her capacity of love for God exceeded that of all other creatures, so did her capacity for suffering exceed that of all others, like that of her own beloved Son."

MEDITATION IX.

JESUS IS EVER READY TO RECEIVE US AND SHOW US
EVERY MARK OF TENDEREST LOVE.

DEAR Angel, I entreat thee, continue thy discourse, and he thus

resumes: "In the same moment in which the blessed Virgin consented to the Incarnation of the Eternal Word in her womb, the Holy Ghost, the love of the Father and the Son, formed of her pure and virginal body our Lord's Sacred Body, creating and uniting with it a most perfect soul. Simultaneously with that creation the Eternal Word assumed it into His Divinity, and from that moment He was not only truly God, but also truly Man, two natures in One Person, the Person of God the Son.

Now, my beloved, listen to His voice in the first moment of His Incarnation, for His words are to thee: *Arise, My beloved, and come. . . . Come to Me all you that are heavy laden.* And in that same moment we would fly to His loving Heart. But before doing so, we reflect that when we are about to visit for the first time an important personage, we try, before we do so, to ascertain all that we can as to who and what he is, his appearance, his gifts, his qualities, his character. And this we now do, and at once our common-sense tells us, that if the infinitely perfect God determined to assume human nature into His Divinity, He knew that from that race, made to His own image and likeness, one so perfect and so like Himself could grow, that He would be fitted for His high destiny, that is, fitted to become one with God, and be truly God, and would therefore be the centre of every beauty and perfection which could possibly exist in human nature, in a word, be the fairest and most beautiful of the children of man in soul and body, mind and heart.

Can we imagine the God of holiness and purity assuming unto Himself anything not possessing all the purity and perfection of which its nature is capable? If thou dost at any time admire great and noble qualities in another, however great those qualities may be, thou wilt always be obliged to say: *Yes, our Lord was all that, and far more than that.* When thou dost picture to thyself something in another which would attract thee to Him, and cause thee to feel unbounded confidence and

love towards Him, thou wouldst exclaim : *Our Lord was all that, and a great deal more.* When in sorrow, or in sickness, or in disgrace, thou thinkest of some kind friend, thou sayest to thyself : *However loathsome or repulsive I may be to all others, I know that that friend will receive me with open arms, and show me every mark of love.* Do not now forget that our dear Lord is, and must be, all, and much more, to thee than any friend can be ; that He is more than thou canst ever imagine. He is indeed in everything, and in every way, far far beyond all that tongue can ever tell ; no mind can ever measure the greatness of His love, or the kindness and tenderness of the affection of His loving Heart.

Therefore, if that most loving Lord is presented to thy mind under any other form than that of boundless love, thou knowest at once who it is that thus presents Him before thee.

It is thy enemy who hates thee with fiendish hate, and is ever seeking to deceive thee, and lead thee from the path of love. He is a liar from the beginning, and the father of lies. Oh fly, fly from no matter whom, who presents Him to thee with the faintest shade which is not entire love. That one is thy most dangerous enemy, and if thou dost not fly, he will give thee death. Our Lord is beautiful exceedingly before angels and men, and His boundless love embraces all His children.

My beloved, shall I tell thee again what thou hast to fear the most on earth ? What is the mariner's alarm when he sees on the horizon that small black cloud which bears within it the frightful cyclone, dealing out death to all within its reach ? So shouldst thou dread the little cloud, which would hide or obscure from thy mind, the love of that dear Lord who became Incarnate for thy sake. Fly from it instantly ; it has within it the frightful thunder-bolt which, if it falls, must cause thee eternal death. Now, my beloved, this thought is one of very great importance. Therefore give it such attention and consideration, that it may sink

deeply into thy mind. If this foundation-stone be weakly set, that weakness will extend to all that is built upon it."

Oh then, since such He is, I will respond to His loving invitation, and fly to His Heart, and there will open out mine to Him. Dear Lord, since Thou art all goodness and love for me, do Thou, together with Thy beloved Mother, strengthen and consolidate my work, and fill me with ardent love for Thee, and never let me see Thee in any other light than that only True Light which Thou art, shining in this world. As long as I shall follow Thee, True Love, I shall never walk in darkness. Dear Angel, I see that thou hast still something more to add.

"Yes, beloved, remember this: Whenever thou hearest or readest of the terrible, frightful consequences of sin, and of what are called God's judgments, and dost not at the same time learn how He, in the midst of all, is ever the same, Goodness and Love Itself, and that thou alone art the source whence all those judgments spring, thou hast only been told half the truth. Seek, then, the antidote of that which, deceiving thee, has made thee think Him hard, which Love can never be."

MEDITATION X.

THE HUMAN LOVE OF JESUS IN THE FIRST MOMENT OF HIS INCARNATION IMMENSELY SURPASSED THE LOVE OF ALL THE CELESTIAL HOSTS, AND EVEN THAT OF HIS MOST BLESSED MOTHER.

DEAR Guardian Angel, since it is our Lord's will that thou shouldst place before me the special points to which I must attend, tell me what thou didst see in that moment wherein the Eternal Word, Love Itself, became Incarnate.

"My beloved, I have many times told thee of the very great gratitude and love which the angels have for their own great God. But I could not express in language intelligible to thee,

or to any human being, the immense love for Him which fills even the very least and lowliest of those blessed spirits. When thou seest very great sacrifices made through love, thou dost measure that love by the greatness of those sacrifices. And when thou seest the greatest love imaginable, thou art not surprised at the very great sacrifices that that love makes. And when that mighty love has done and suffered everything possible to it, thou art not surprised that it counts all those sufferings as nothing, and weeps because it can do no more. Yet, what is all the love which thou canst imagine in comparison with angelic love? Therefore, when thou thinkest of this great love, thou canst realise in part, how ready we were to make what seemed to us so great a sacrifice, asked of us by God. For, as far as we could see, that sacrifice was very great indeed. Still thou canst suppose, how very great it must have been in our minds, when thou rememberest that a third part of the angels preferred the risk of battle and the loss of God to making that sacrifice even for Him to whom they owed all.

Then, the love of the faithful angels must have been exceeding great, since they were willing not only to make that sacrifice, but to engage in conflict with those rebel angels who were led by the highest and most powerful prince of the angelic host.

Yet, all the love of the good angels, even of the seraphim, and their mighty love combined, was, in comparison with the love of God's dear Mother, as a tiny taper is to the mighty sun. The immensity of her love is to thee an indication of the immensity of suffering she underwent when beholding Him, who was all her love, undergoing such terrible torments, and knowing that those torments were the price He promised to pay, when He willed that Adam's sin should never fall on her. That great love made her ever ready to undergo herself every possible suffering, when such was His holy will, and to esteem it all as nothing; and more than that, she ever ardently thirsted,

to suffer still more for Him. In a word, her love was so very great that it rendered her like to God, who is Love Itself.

Oh, would that I had the tongues of those myriads of blessed spirits to tell thee how great is her love for God, yet even then, all I could tell thee would be only as a drop out of the mighty ocean of that love. If thou dost wonder why I speak to thee of angelic love, of human love, and more particularly of the love of God's most blessed Mother, it is only that I may lead thee up to the contemplation of that love which immeasurably surpasses all,—the love of the Sacred Humanity of our Lord for His Eternal Father and for us His creatures, His beloved children, in the first moment of His Incarnation.

Oh, what precious fruits must flow from such an immensity of love! My beloved, let thy mind be filled with this thought. Think of what a human being will undergo for love, think of what two-thirds of the angelic host underwent for love, think of what the ever-blessed Virgin, God's fairest and most perfect creature, endured for love! And with these thoughts in thy mind, ask thyself: *What may not He, who is God, Love Incarnate, do for love, do for His beloved children?*"

DIGRESSION.

Dear Guardian Angel, before we proceed further, wilt thou explain to me how it is that so many thousands know and confess the greatness of our Lord's love for them, acknowledging that it is far greater than they can imagine, and yet that there are so few who act towards our Lord as if they really did believe it? Indeed, unless they are constantly reminded of it, they forget it altogether.

"My beloved, I will tell thee the reason in a few words, and will add some considerations which will elucidate it, and prepare thy mind for what thou hast to see in the moment of the Incarnation.

And first of all, the wisdom of this world is folly before

God. It was not so before Adam placed himself, and all in this world which was subject to him, in the power of the deceiver, of him who was a liar from the beginning. All was, as the Creator declared, good and very good. But when Adam had put himself in his power, that liar turned those things which God had declared good, and which were intended to lead man to Him and to happiness, into means whereby he would be led from true knowledge into every folly.

For this reason our blessed Lord, from the moment of His coming into this world, keeps all the things of the world at a distance from Himself; He is born, and dies, in privation of them all, and ever lives in the greatest poverty, and tells thee plainly that, unless thou followest His example, thou canst not be His disciple.

But very many will not be guided by what He teaches, but will follow their own ideas, gathered from the deceiving world, and call that wisdom, but our Lord calls it folly, and declares that those who are guided by it walk in darkness. Only those, who follow His teachings without doubt or hesitation, are in the truth. But, because too many will follow more or less their own ideas and wisdom, and dare make themselves His judges whenever His acts and guidance are not in accordance with those ideas, they doubt His promises and His love. They say that if they go to a friend who really loves them, he at once gives them all they ask.

But they forget that the things asked from a friend are the things of the world, and their distribution is regulated by the wisdom of the world, which is common to both: whereas all thou askest of our Lord, must refer directly or indirectly to the things of heaven, of which thou knowest absolutely nothing. As thou dost judge the things of this world by thy worldly knowledge, so thou shouldst judge the things of heaven by that heavenly wisdom which our Lord alone possesses. Those things of heaven are not acquired by the means which thou

wouldst adopt, but only by those which He Himself teaches both by word and example.

If I propose to dwell in a country similar to my own, I can judge by analogy what my requirements will be, and can easily ascertain the preparation I should make for my journey. Moreover, I can argue on equal terms with my friend the various questions which may arise. But if I am going to a country totally unlike my own, I can only listen to my friend who has lived there, for I cannot argue with him on matters of which I know absolutely nothing, and I shall be guided by him in all according to the measure of the confidence I have in him. If I would not go wrong, I must accept all his statements without attempting to qualify them. He knows what he says, I know nothing, and knowing as he does my ignorance, he is careful to use words which are literally true, and will bear no change.

These rules of common-sense are set aside in dealing with our Lord, and according to the measure in which this is done, departure from the truth takes place, doubts as to the greatness of His love arise, and His promises are disbelieved."

Then, dear Angel, tell me what is the wisdom He imparts and which will be our infallible guide?

"Beloved, it is contained in the remembrance of three things. First, that He is always Love Itself, and that all other love that is or can be imagined, is to His love less than is a drop of water to an all but boundless ocean. Second, that He is Eternal Wisdom, and knows the most perfect way in which that love can find its terms in His creatures. Third, that He is omnipotent, and can do whatever He pleases, and can therefore carry out to their fullest extent all His designs of love.

His love encompasses His creatures on every side, as the ocean encompasses every object within its bosom. The free will of man alone can hinder or exclude the inflow of that love. Now, beloved, understand that the moment thou callest in question these three things, or any one of them, or tryest to

qualify them, thou art erring from the truth. *He who believes not, shall be condemned.*"

VARIOUS CONSIDERATIONS.

First Consideration.

“Let us now suppose the case of a person who has lived from childhood in a city. He has always been supplied with bread, but only knows that it is the produce of the earth; but how it is produced he has no idea. After a time he determines to emigrate to a distant country, where, having bought land, he calls in a native farmer and asks him to supply him with the bread he needs, under the impression that it is an immediate and direct production of the earth. The farmer replies: ‘Then we must at once set to work to clear the ground’. They worked the whole day long, and when night set in the stranger asked for the bread. But as no bread was forthcoming, he thought the farmer had disobeyed his orders. But each day they continued their work of clearing, manuring, and ploughing the ground, and then they sowed the seed; but as yet there was no sign of bread. The stranger, having now no longer confidence in the farmer, asks him how the work which they have done can ever by any means be productive of bread. To him it seems impossible, and convinced of this he discharges the farmer from his service. The crop of wheat then rots on the ground, and no bread grows. Foolish man that he was! Knowing nothing whatever himself as to how bread was produced from the earth, surely he should have trusted him who knew all about it.

It is even so with many who place themselves in our Lord’s hands. They know nothing about the means which are required to produce in their souls the fruit which they desire, and yet, because they do not see that fruit appear at once, they lose confidence in our Lord, and give up their work, and end by leaving

Him altogether. They say He does not love them, and that He does not keep His word."

Second Consideration.

"A country has rebelled against its King, and although it has been brought again into subjection, it has nevertheless caused him irretrievable injury. The first Prince of the kingdom, who had taken no part in the rebellion, and who is therefore the only one having access to the King, presents himself before him to plead his people's cause. This Prince is in all things most noble and generous. When, therefore, he goes before the King, he carries in his hands documents by which he makes over to his Majesty all he possesses, as compensation for the injuries inflicted by those for whom he is now about to plead. He is by nature so great and noble, that he would never ask another to remit a debt, unless prepared himself to do all in his power to pay that debt, and to repair the injury done by those for whose forgiveness he would plead. Nothing could more deeply wound his noble generous heart than even a suggestion that he could do more, that he might have done more than he really has done. Moreover, the King knowing full well the noble character and the great generosity of his suppliant, would not grieve him or wound his feelings, even by the offer to accept less than all he could give, showing thereby how fully he appreciated such grandeur of heart and soul. Therefore he treats him in accordance with his noble qualities as if he were a King and equal with himself. He calls him to his throne, and embracing him, assures him that his request is granted. And then he adds: 'Your every act shall count as mine, your orders shall all be as issued by myself, and shall be obeyed by all'.

That noble Prince is our Lord Himself, and we behold Him in His human nature and as Man pleading our cause

before His heavenly Father, and He will pay the whole entire debt, and bear the extreme of suffering in soul and body, and drink of the chalice of sorrows to its very dregs. He will Himself be the equivalent for those eternal torments, which otherwise must be our lot for ever."

Third Consideration.

"The mother of a numerous family is asked to give one of her children to another who is willing to adopt it. That mother replies that she is willing to do so, but which of her children is she to give? One particular child is proposed, but at once the mother says: 'Oh no, I cannot part with him, I love him far too much'. Another child is chosen, and again the mother objects: 'No, I cannot give that dear child, he loves me so very much'. It is the same with all the rest, she can part with none, she loves each one with all a mother's heart as though it stood alone. It matters not how many they may be, she can spare none, no, not even one.

And so it is with our dearest Lord. We are all His children, and He loves each one of us so much that He would die for all, and for each one, one by one.

I see another most loving mother, who clasps her beloved child in her arms, and kisses it in all the tenderness of her heart. In her eyes there is no other like it in the entire world. But while she is caressing it, a tiger springs forward and snatches it from her arms. Oh, what is that mother's anguish? She rushes after the tiger and struggles with it, is torn to pieces, and dies a dreadful death. She dies that her child may live.

The roaring lion would devour us, the beloved children of our Lord, and that dear Lord snatches us from its jaws, and is Himself torn to pieces, and dies a cruel death that we may live. Oh, what love!"

MEDITATION XI.

THE LOVE OF THE INCARNATE GOD HAS NO LIMITS—
HAVING LOVED HIS OWN HE LOVED THEM EVEN TO THE END.

“FOR we have not a High Priest who cannot have compassion on our infirmities, but one tempted in all things like as we are—without sin” (Heb. iv. 15).

“These words, my beloved, will remind thee that since the Eternal Word in His Divine nature is unintelligible to thee, He now speaks to thee in a language thou canst understand, for He has assumed thy human nature. The moment thou leavest the one to return to the other, thou art lost in darkness. How incomprehensible are His judgments, and how unsearchable His ways! The only judgments and ways which thou hast to read and understand, are those of a perfect man, tempted in all things as thou art, but without sin, that is, doing everything in the most perfect way possible to One who unites in Himself, all the highest perfection of which human nature is capable.

And now, my beloved, we return to the moment of the Incarnation. As in the beginning, when God said the word and all things were made, when He commanded and they were created, so, in the moment when she, to whose free will He had submitted His own Eternal Will, even in the creation of angels and of men, gave expression to her will: ‘Be it done to me according to Thy word,’ the Word was made flesh, the Eternal God became Man, Love was Incarnate, and that holy and spotless Virgin had become the Mother of the Infinite God.

Oh, here it is, beloved, that, lost in wonder and admiration, thou canst realise more fully than ever, that which is and must be the foundation-stone of thy belief, in all thou hast to learn of God’s wondrous ways, that He is indeed Love Itself. How-

ever great the things which I might tell thee of what His love has done for thee, and for all His creatures, thou wouldst still say : ‘ After all thou hast told me of His goodness, power, and love, I can readily believe all thou now sayest ’.

But if I showed thee a little helpless babe, depending for everything on a creature’s will and power, the possession of its mother, and told thee that that babe was thy God, the great Creator and Lord and Master of all things, that His great love for thee had caused Him to lay aside all His Majesty and glory and power, to become this little helpless babe, thou wouldst (in spite of all thou hast ever heard) surely say : *It is too much, even for such love. I never can believe it.*

To that I reply : Beloved one, remember thou dost measure another’s love by what it does for the object of its love. If love has a limit, its works cannot go beyond it, but if it has no limit, its works can never find one. If they did, thou wouldst say, and with reason, that love is not full, entire, for I can see the point at which it stops.

But His love, the love of the Incarnate God, can have no limits, since He is Love Itself. ‘ Having loved His own, He loved them unto the end.’ ”

Ah, dear Angel, I see that, however great His works of love may be, I can never say that they are too great ever to be believed, for they are the works of a love which is not only very great, but which is really infinite ; since the human love which is in Him, is merged into the Infinite Love which He really is—the one Person of God the Son.

The only thing that could raise a doubt as to the infinity of that love, would be the affirmative to this question : ‘ Could He have done more ? ’ Therefore He Himself will, when His work is done, ask that very question, saying : ‘ Tell me what more I could have done ’.

But He could not have done more. The waters of the ocean can only be checked in their rushing flow by the boun-

daries which enclose them. He loved to the very end, and in His creatures into whom He pours that love, it can only be checked in its course either by the natural boundaries existing in the creature itself, or by the exercise of that creature's own free will.

Accordingly, when thou tellest me not only that God is good and loves very much, but that He is Love Itself, I can believe that that love could carry Him so far as to become, for my sake, the little helpless infant that I see before me, and I am prepared to join with the countless millions of the angelic host, who, in this moment of His Incarnation, fall down prostrate before Him, adoring Him as their great Lord and God, and sing with them His praises : " Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty ".

" See then, beloved one, the great all-powerful God is now a little helpless babe."

Oh, dear Angel, tell me why has He thus clothed Himself with such humility ?

" It is, my beloved, that thou mayest realise that He puts aside all His Majesty and power, in order that thou mayest not be deterred by fear from making Him all thine own ; that nothing may stand between Him and thy entire love, and also that thou mayest know that He places Himself in thy power, to help thee in every way.

Oh then, beloved, treat Him well ; love Him, caress Him, give Him thy heart ; see how He extends to thee His tiny arms ! See how He longs to give Himself all to thee ! I heard an angel whispering to another, didst thou not hear his words ? *With desire I have desired.* What did He desire ? And the answer was : *To give Himself to man !* Oh man, we angels envy thee. What love ! Oh, what boundless love !"

CONTINUATION.

" In that same moment we saw Him in His Human Nature prostrate before His Eternal Father, adoring, praising, and

thanking Him for having given Him existence. Oh, with what love, what boundless love, He bowed down before His Father! I could never portray that mighty love to thee.

We can only contemplate its greatness in deepest thought and silence, remembering that in its surpassing greatness, it reached, as it were, the boundary of infinite Love Itself, and so closely resembled it that when, in the first instant of its existence, those two loves met, they became One—those oceans flowed the one into the other, not only to combine, but more than that, it was that they might be one as indeed they were, since that Incarnate love was but one Person, the Person of God the Son.

From that immense love of the Sacred Humanity for the great immortal God, sprang another love distinct from and yet one with it, and the intensity of the one was, so to say, the measure of the intensity of the other. This other flame of ardent love was love for all who bore the likeness of the great Eternal God. No creature could imagine, much less describe, the splendour and glory of this moment, or the glory with which everything great and noble in human nature shone forth in all its highest perfection from the Sacred Humanity of the Incarnate God.

But all in a moment, a frightful shock was felt, and a terrible convulsion ran through the whole of nature. The heavens and the earth thrilled again and again as under a terrific blow. The awful roaring of the elements sounded like the last dread struggle of an expiring universe. It seemed to me the repetition, though far, far more terrible, of what took place in the moment of Adam's fall. But accompanying, and rising far above it, we heard, as it were, a voice proceeding from that great flame of love, and its words were: *Father, forgive them, Father, forgive them. I will pay the debt, and will pay it to the last farthing. I will take their sins upon Myself and clothe Myself with their iniquities.* In that same moment the bright heavenly light, which was shining in such

glory, was changed into intensest darkness, like the flames of hell, and like those flames revealed all that was calculated to increase the woe of those who were in their midst. Oh, then, what woe did they reveal to us! We saw Him, who a moment before was the fairest and the most beautiful of the children of men, and had been received by His Eternal Father in all the infinity of His love, now transformed, as it were, into a leper, and become like a worm which had been trampled under foot. No health was found in Him, and He seemed to seek to bury Himself in the earth, thus to hide Himself from the Face of His Eternal Father, at the same time that He uttered the loud heart-rending prayer which also filled the entire heavens: *Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass away.* What was that chalice? It was the chalice which contained the whole frightful debt of sin, and to save themselves from drinking even a part of which the guilty ones at the last day will call on the mountains and rocks to fall upon them, and hide them from the face of God's indignation, and above all from the sound of that terrible curse which He must pronounce upon them: *Depart from Me.* Oh, how great, how great, how terrible was His agony! His sufferings can only be compared with those endured by lost souls in hell, and He, in the excess of His love will drink that chalice of sufferings to the very dregs, He will spare Himself nothing, but pay the debt of sin to the last farthing. We saw those frightful flames of suffering penetrating His whole soul and body, no part of Him was spared, nor was there any respite, even for a moment. He was salted with fire. *He was tortured in His will.* 'If it be possible let this chalice pass away.' No, no, depart from Me, ye cursed. *He was tortured in His memory,* for those awful flames hid all that could bring Him comfort or consolation, and revealed only that which would increase the bitterness of His anguish. *He was tortured in His understanding,* for it was also crucified. *Oh, why, why?* was His agonising cry. He knew that His Eternal Father

had been outraged by the sins of men, and He underwent all the anguish which that knowledge caused. His love for men was second only to His love for His Eternal Father, and He saw all their guilt and all those unspeakable torments which would be their lot for ever. The souls in purgatory, great though their sufferings are, yet know that those sufferings purify them, and that those flames remove the obstacles to their union with the God for Whom they crave and long with intensest longing, and whom alone they love.

But the Man of Sorrows would drink His bitter chalice to the dregs. He would forget, as it were, that His sufferings were making reparation for all the outrages offered to His heavenly Father, or that they were bearing to the eternal joys of heaven those children whom He loved so much, and whom His eternal Father desired to possess for ever. All He then seemed to know and to hear was the judgment of sin and sinners: *Depart from Me, depart from Me, ye cursed.* He had made Himself accursed for them all. Thus it was in the first moment of His Incarnation; and from that first moment to the last when He died upon the Cross, those sufferings were ever growing. He advanced in age and wisdom, that is, in His human knowledge of the magnitude of the outrages, offered to His Eternal Father, and also of the magnitude of the work which He had undertaken which seemed ever growing. The full and entire knowledge was always there, but with advancing age it seemed to develop more and more, and with that increasing knowledge increased also His thirst for greater and greater sufferings.

My beloved, thy progress in grace keeps pace with, and depends upon, the fidelity and perfection wherewith thou dost accomplish the work for which God has placed thee in the world.

He also advanced, not only in age, but in grace, by ever performing in the most perfect manner, in the measure of His

Human Nature, the will of His heavenly Father, which was that He should pay the debt of sin to the last farthing, and drink of the chalice of sorrow to its dregs, and perfectly fulfil this end for which He came on earth. And men saw more and more clearly the greatness of His wisdom, and His surpassing beauty and perfection in mind and body.

They saw that He was beautiful indeed, beyond all the children of men—they saw Him, as we should ever represent Him to our minds, in His Sacred Humanity, for, it is only by regarding Him as Man that we can understand the Eternal Word, the Eternal Love ; since it is as Man, and as Man only, that God makes Himself known and speaks to us. Oh, my beloved, the nearer thou dost approach Him, the more beautiful and loving and winning wilt thou ever find Him. How could it be otherwise since He is Love Incarnate? Thou knowest this. How then, canst thou ever doubt? ”

COLLOQUY WITH MY GUARDIAN ANGEL ON THE PASSION OF OUR LORD.

Filled with deepest anguish, and unable to speak, I fell back, as it were, into the arms of my dear Angel. Around me is desolation, and it fills my soul. But I know and feel that His dear loving nature is pouring sympathy and love into my poor heart, and He is doing it in the heart's own language, which no words can ever speak.

At length my pent-up tears burst forth, and I weep! Oh, what sorrow! oh, how I weep! and my dear Angel also pours forth a very torrent of tears, for, in the presence of all he had seen, he envied me my tears, and unable longer to resist, he passed the boundary within which there could be no sorrow, and coming into my heart, all full of sorrow, he mingled his tears with mine.

Had I seen any other than my own loved Lord, even the

most perfect creature, suffering so intensely, I might perhaps have endured the sight, but to see Him in such suffering and anguish, to see Him, so full of goodness, and gentleness, and love, to see Him oppressed with grief and immeasurable suffering, even in the very beginning of His life, this was too much for me, and I thought I must die of sorrow, nothing could console me. But I heard my Angel's voice saying : *Stay, thou hast to see and learn yet more*, and in that moment he infused new strength into me.

Dear Angel, I see Him standing all alone ; all have forsaken Him. Oh take me to Him that my poor heart may pour out all its love and compassion into His. He is so good that He will permit me, though so unworthy, to tell Him of our love, and that will console Him because He loves us so very much.

“Yes, my beloved, it would indeed comfort and console Him ; but for that very reason thou canst not go, and He could not hear thee. He must drink the chalice of suffering to the dregs. Gall and vinegar, but no sweetness can ever flow into that bitter cup.”

But at least His own dear Mother can pour some balm into His wounded Heart ?

“Alas ! my beloved, I dare not speak of that. The sorrow is too great. Not only is His dear Mother unable to console or comfort Him, but in His ardent thirst for suffering, He has willed that she should be the one, not to comfort or console, but the one to fill his cup of bitterness to its very brim.

Oh, what agony was that, for that poor Mother ! That agony it was which consummated the work of suffering, both for herself, and for her dear Son, as far as a creature could consummate it—for every drop of her sufferings had to be poured into His poor suffering Heart, as He indeed poured all His into hers, that she might be like Him in all.”

But, dear Angel, tell me ; is there nothing we can do to lessen such great suffering and affliction ?

“ Yes, beloved, thou canst do much therein. All the sufferings and trials which come upon thee, and which thou endurest patiently for love of Him, and in conformity with His holy will, diminish His sufferings. Together with all who suffer for His sake, thou dost, as the apostle declares, supply what is wanting.”

But, dear Angel, explain that to me.

“ Beloved, thou seest a child doing all in its power to remove from its sick, unconscious mother, whatever might increase her sufferings, and so far he lessens them, though she does not know it then. But that mother, though she knew not at the time all that her loving child was undergoing for her, afterwards, on returning to consciousness and health, learnt how very much less she had suffered than she would herself have undergone had not her child worked and suffered for her. Oh how she would love and kiss that child, and love it more than ever !

It is even so with our blessed Lord. The sufferings which were wanting in Him, and which He otherwise would have undergone, were precisely the trials, sorrows, and sufferings of this life which His beloved children willingly undergo for love of Him, and He missed them, and ever longing for greater and greater sufferings, He said : ‘ I thirst ’. He sees only, during His mortal life the will of His heavenly Father, that He should by suffering pay the debt of sin to the last farthing.

His whole mind, intent on that extreme of suffering, renders Him unconscious of all that would counteract it in the very least degree. He who is ever thirsting to suffer more, excludes all that might make Him suffer less or sweeten the bitterness of His chalice. Nevertheless, whatever portion of that draught we drink, leaves the less for Him.

Therefore all who love Him should fix their minds on Him, so that, seeing the details of the work He is doing by His sufferings, they may do a corresponding work. He wills that it should be so, because His sufferings will not only not profit those who do not take up their cross and follow Him, but all He has done for them will be for their greater condemnation.

Remember, my beloved, that it was love for His Eternal Father, and love for each one of His poor children, which led Him to undertake the payment of man's debt, and bear its punishment. He could not have undergone those sufferings had He not hidden that love from His mind, and, as it were, cast a veil over it.

Had He not done thus, His sufferings, instead of being sufferings, would have been to Him a real heaven, a paradise of delights, just as the sufferings of the Blessed Martyr, St. Laurence, were to that saint an anticipation of the joys of heaven, because the love that burnt within was more ardent than the flames which consumed His body.

Every source of comfort and consolation was clouded in deepest darkness, and our dear Blessed Lord saw only those things which could increase His woe. The same question was ever before His mind: *Why, why?* Yes, He, the Blessed One of all, who would one day say: 'Blessed are they who have not seen and have believed,' would ever be thus blessed. Only when He bowed His head and died, was the veil withdrawn, and then how great was His gratitude and love towards all His beloved children who had striven to comfort Him in His bitter sorrows and make His sufferings less! My beloved, let this be thy sweet occupation, to comfort and console Him. Let us go now to His dear Mother, and in her poor suffering heart we will learn another lesson."

MEDITATION XII.

ALL THE SUFFERINGS OF JESUS WERE THE CONSEQUENCES OF HIS BOUNDLESS LOVE FOR US : THERE IS NOTHING THAT THIS MIGHTY LOVE WILL NOT DO FOR THOSE WHO NEED HIS HELP.

As we drew near to that dear Mother, my heart failed me. How could I ever bear to see the anguish which must fill that poor Mother's heart ? How could I see it and live ? If, when I beheld the sufferings of her beloved Son, I felt the pangs of death, and only did not die because my Angel infused new life into me, how great must her anguish be at the sight of His sufferings, who is His Mother, loving Him with all a Mother's love, and not only so, but also loving Him as her own Lord and God !

Yes, she is His Mother, and as Eve was formed of Adam because it was not good for Man to be alone, so was the new Adam formed of her, for neither was it good for her to be alone. Without the new Adam man could not be born again, but now that the Man of Sorrows is espoused to the Queen of Martyrs she will give birth to her children, but in doing so her sufferings will be great indeed, and her sorrows multiplied.

But we hear her voice, she calls us, and in that same moment I repose on her poor suffering heart, not daring to raise my eyes until I heard her words : *Stand and see, if there be sorrow like unto my sorrow.* In obedience to that sorrowful pleading call, I gave a glance at the Queen of Martyrs, but that one glance was like a sharp sword, running through and through my whole heart and soul, and I sank down upon her suffering heart, hiding my face away.

She spoke not a word, but seemed to infuse knowledge into my mind, and then I understood how her dear Son had

been formed of her, who, not only had been growing up in the midst of sorrow and anguish, but whose body and soul had been, so to say, transformed into, and had become intensest anguish and suffering itself, from the moment in which she pleaded for man's redemption, and had taken his debt upon herself.

It was out of this Virginal Body so transformed that was made the Sacred Body of the Man of Sorrows. I saw her breathings by which He lived, and every breath was one of intensest anguish. The food which nourished Him was the fruit which grew in that enclosed garden, and which I had seen attain maturity in the moment of the Incarnation. And she knew and felt that she, His Mother, was feeding Him, her own beloved child, on the food of sorrow and anguish.

Nor could she give Him any other, for none other had she. She saw that being thus fed His sufferings were ever growing. How could it be otherwise, since He was the Man of Sorrows to whom therefore such food was most congenial, and He was growing from her who was herself the Queen of Martyrs? I saw too that every breath she drew fanned each spark of sorrow into flame.

But now my mind was led to consider more in detail the work our Lord had taken on Himself, and the means by which He did it. My Angel said to me: "Bear in mind that God in creating man gave him a free will, never to be withdrawn. He created him to His own image and likeness, so that the powers of his soul, and the senses of his body, might tend towards Him, and towards all that was good. He then adopted him as His son, giving him supernatural life. But man, in the exercise of his free will, turned from God, and by his rebellion lost for himself, and all his posterity, the supernatural life given him by God, and turned the powers of his soul, and the senses of his body, to every evil.

And that tendency to evil, like a natural disease, was transmitted to his posterity, all of whom in the exercise of free will

would yield to it, and reap its bitter fruit, which is an eternity of woe.

We compassionate others in their sufferings according to the measure of the love we bear them, and we help them in the same degree.

Now, who is He before whom thou standest? He is incarnate love, truly Man and truly God. Then, how great will His compassion be for those in suffering and affliction, and what is there that His mighty love will not do for all who need His help? And with this thought in thy mind behold thy Incarnate God who is now before thee."

I raised my eyes to Him, but never can I describe the intense agony which revealed itself to me. No words could picture it, or convey any adequate idea of how great it really was. We may, as it were, grow into it, and it may grow on us, while we contemplate the vision which filled His soul. He saw that His Eternal Father, for whom His love was so immense, had been outraged by sin, and then, regarding the human race to which He Himself belonged, and which He loved in the measure of His love for His heavenly Father, He saw that it was that race of man which had outraged His Father, and thereby incurred the debt of eternal punishment.

He saw those awful torments in all their intensity, and He saw the enemy, like a roaring lion, snatching from His arms the children whom He loved, and dragging them down into their midst; and He also saw that only an infinite equivalent could ever withhold from them those who, though not yet plunged into them, had incurred them by their sins. In that moment He, as it were, threw Himself into the jaws of sin, and taking all upon Himself pleaded for us with a loud cry to His Eternal Father. He offered to pay all our debt, even to the last farthing, and to be Himself the equivalent for that tremendous debt. And that first great pleading continued throughout His whole life, and He, the perfect Man, ever toiled and suffered to pay it

all. Never was there a moment in His existence when it could be said that He did not suffer, or that He might have suffered more. He was ever crucified in all the powers of His soul and in the senses of His body. Oh, how great must His sufferings have been, and how great His love! Oh, cruel, cruel souls, that call that love in question; cruel souls that, looking back into God's eternity, dare judge Him and think that He might have displayed still greater love.

DIGRESSION.

My dear Angel now thus addresses me: "Beloved, before we proceed further, we must try to realise still more fully what is the work our Lord undertakes to do for the children of men. I will give thee an example in illustration of that work of the Incarnate God.

The only son of a mighty king, while travelling to the farthest limit of his kingdom, discovered a family which was in the greatest distress and suffering. On inquiry, he found that their poverty, which was extreme, arose from an enormous debt contracted by their ancestor. It was too enormous for them to pay; they earned nothing, and had to be slaves instead. Moreover, each member of that family was afflicted with loathsome disease, and was avoided and shunned by every one with the greatest care.

Their ancestor, who had incurred the debt which kept them in slavery, was a man of low estate. But the king who then reigned, the prince's ancestor, had taken that man into greatest favour, and bestowed enormous riches on him, and raised him to highest honours, and finally adopted him as his son. But he proved himself utterly unworthy of all the king had done for him, he squandered all his riches on evil pleasures, and contracted terrible diseases, the result of his wicked life. He was reduced to the greatest possible straits, and then, to retrieve

his losses, entered into a conspiracy to dethrone the king, under promise that he should reign instead.

His wicked purpose was defeated, and he became a prisoner. Although he deserved to die, the king, though reproaching him with his base ingratitude, yet, in consideration of the love he once had borne him, spared his life, and banished him to the extremity of his kingdom. The family which the prince now found in such helpless and hopeless misery are the descendants of that ungrateful rebel, and their sufferings are the consequences of his crimes.

The prince was filled with compassion for them, and in his goodness resolved to do all that could be done to restore them to their position. For that purpose, he said, there is a work which I alone can do, but it is a work by which I can earn the enormous amount required to pay the entire debt, and by it also I can obtain the remedies which alone will heal their maladies and restore them to perfect health. I shall also provide them with means for the education required for their high estate, and will then plead their cause with the king, my father. At my prayer he will restore them to the high position which would have been theirs, had not their ancestor been a rebel and conspired against his king. The attendants of the prince remind him of the very great labours and sufferings he will have to undergo, and above all, of the little gratitude he will receive, they remind him again of the frightful ingratitude of the rebel, in comparison with which all his other crimes were nothing, and they assure him that few, very few, of the descendants of that rebel have more heart than he had, and that only a very small number of them, if any, will even take the trouble to use the remedies which he will procure at so great a cost, and still less will they submit to the restraint involved by education. All is in vain, his only reply is: 'I would undergo all, and even more than you have told me, in order to save only one from such misery and such suffering'.

That noble and generous prince spared himself in nothing, and endured for many years untold agonies of every kind. When the work was done, all full of joy and with a heart overflowing with love, he placed all at the disposal of that family, but how was it received ?

It was received by all, with very few exceptions, as he had been warned it would be, with basest ingratitude. They hardly thanked him, and few were willing even to take the medicines, because their taste was nauseous, or to apply the salves because they caused their wounds to smart, and, as for education they would never submit to its great restraints, though they were told that it alone could fit them for their high position. Their maladies progressed with great rapidity, and soon caused their death.

Beloved, our dearest Lord has toiled and suffered (like the good and generous prince) and He, also full of joy and love, places all that He has earned at the disposal of each one. But, if the children of men will not avail themselves of what He has done for them, He can do no more and they must die the death."

PART VIII.

SUMMARY.

THE waters which have sanctified us in Baptism, spring from the sufferings of our Lord, and in a certain sense from those of His blessed Mother, as we shall explain in the text. In return we must give ourselves without reserve to Jesus; and, like Mary, endure every suffering in conformity with the Divine Will.

The love of our Lord and His blessed Mother for us, and their sufferings in the flight into Egypt, are the source whence that Heavenly Bread was derived, by eating which we live for ever.

All the suffering which Jesus had Himself to inflict on His blessed Mother was poured out by her into His Sacred Heart. There, in union with His sufferings, it assumed an infinite value, and was accepted by the Eternal Father towards payment of the debt due for sin, but more especially for the debt of those who, having once been born again, have relapsed into sin. The Sacrament of Penance has its origin in this.

The Queen of Martyrs alone could be the fitting Bride of the Man of Sorrows; and the Man of Sorrows was the only fitting Spouse of the Queen of Martyrs. He placed His seal, so to say, on the deed of union, when He gave her His Body and Blood the night before He suffered on the Cross.

All the sufferings of sin since the fall of the first Adam were concentrated on the second Adam; for he voluntarily became the criminal from whose guilt all those sufferings sprang.

Jesus, the heavenly Bridegroom, clothed in His nuptial garment, bearing on His brow the diadem wherewith His Mother, now His own beloved Bride, has crowned Him by her perfect conformity with the Divine Will in all, now meets that beloved Bride on His way to Calvary where He, the Man of Sorrows, in union with

her, the Queen of Martyrs, will give life to all who are to be born again. In that moment, one glance told Him all that she, the Queen of Martyrs, was, and her one look at Him told her who and what He, the Man of Sorrows, was. They were then to be united and the mutual consent to that union given. All was contained in the one glance, and from that union sprang the Sacrament of Christian Marriage, through which those millions who were to be born again might receive existence.

Every suffering that we undergo in union with Him and in conformity with His holy will lessened the torments which He otherwise would have undergone in His Passion. This is why all who have truly loved Him have ever thirsted to suffer more and more.

During the Crucifixion Mary stood beside her Son, fully assenting to His every suffering, and offering the Victim of Propitiation on the Altar of her Heart.

Lucifer at the moment of the Crucifixion showed our Lord all the hatred by which He would be repaid for all His sufferings and those of His dear Mother; at the same time calling on each of them to have mercy on the other, and to cease pleading for such ungrateful souls. Jesus' answer to this was: "Father, forgive them;" and Mary's heart, one with His, simultaneously offered the same earnest supplication.

The Eternal Father abandoned His beloved Son on the Cross, because that Son held us sinners to His heart, and would not abandon us. From Mary's anguish united to that of her Son at the moment of His death, sprang the Sacrament of Holy Orders, whereby the Sacrifice then consummated on the Cross should be renewed continually till the end of time.

The centurion's lance which opened Jesus' side pierced His Mother's heart before it could reach His own. From this dolour arose the Sacrament of Confirmation, and it was in response to her prayer that, as the Holy Ghost had come down on her beloved Son, so also He might come down on those who had taken His place as her beloved children.

DIGRESSION.

On the will of the ever-blessed Virgin depended the life, not merely of the whole human race, but also of the angels. For God

would not have created intelligent beings, in the order in which He created them, had He not foreknown that one of them would attain the highest possible degree of perfection, and thus have a will in all things conformable with His own; and she was that one.

When the loving tender Mother consigned the Body of her Son to the tomb, began that last dolour of separation from Him, which continued during the whole remainder of her life. From this dolour came the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, which prepares us for our burial also.

When Mary beheld her Son for the last time in the sepulchre, she once more accepted us as her children in His stead, and was ready to do for each one of us what she had done for Him.

All the evils that have resulted from the fall of angels and of men are due to their free will. But this very endowment of all intelligent beings was bestowed on them by God in His love, so that they might participate in His likeness.

When God decreed to unite human nature with Himself a woman was needed, uniting in herself all the perfections of which that human nature was capable that she might be His Mother. But as she, having been created to the image and likeness of God, was free, her consent to that incarnation was needed; so that on her consent depended that incarnation.

Thus she, in a way, was really the Mother even of the angels, whom God would not have created, had He not decreed to unite Himself with them by the incarnation. This is the meaning of those passages of Holy Scripture which the Church applies to her as the centre of all creation.

The practical lessons to be drawn from all that has been said are:—

1. Ever to think of God as Love only.
2. To avoid sin.
3. If we unhappily fall into it, to have recourse at once to our loving Lord in the Sacrament of penance.

MEDITATION I.

FIRST DOLOUR AND ITS FRUIT, THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM.

MARY'S SHARE IN THE SUFFERINGS OF JESUS CHRIST WERE IN PROPORTION AS SHE LOVED HIM AS HER SON AND AS HER GOD.

My dear Angel thus once more speaks: "Beloved, listen! The dear Mother is calling thee to her heart, there to show thee the fruit of sorrow on which she feeds her beloved child. It is the food on which she herself was always fed, for her sorrow was indeed always before her, as it ever was before Him. He must drink the cup of sorrows to the dregs—that is His work, and He will carry it out to its fullest length. In order then that each ingredient of bitterness which flows into His heart and soul may carry with it its full amount of suffering, it passes first of all through His dear Mother's heart, and then it enters His. And for this purpose I now see that He is, as it were, pouring into her heart a full knowledge and understanding of the whole debt which she already knew that He would have to pay, and on which she ever had been feeding, and He did so now, in order that she, His Mother, whom He must honour and obey, might return it to Him, clothed in the agony of her maternal heart and in the anguish of her consent, and thereby satisfy His hunger and thirst for ever greater suffering. He then, in turn, fed her, the Queen of Martyrs, also ever hungering and thirsting to suffer more and more. He fed her with the bitter sorrow, wherewith her sorrow filled His loving heart."

And I remembered her own words: *A bundle of myrrh*

is my Beloved to me, He shall abide between my breasts. She paused a moment and then I heard her say: "He awaits my consent for each hard and cruel blow, and thus I shall know them all, and He will undergo no torment that I do not share with Him".

Then she glanced at me, and at the souls of men, and I heard her all but imperceptible breathing, which whispered out these words: *Oh, did he, did all men, but know how great is the love of the Incarnate God for them!* And my Angel, hearing those words said: *Oh, how that loving Mother loves thee!*

Once more I sink down into my good Mother's arms, to rest on her loving heart, and there alone do I dare ask for the light I need.

Dear Mother, tell me: *On which fruit art thou now feeding?* To which fruit art thou now imparting thy own bitter anguish before it passes to thy Child?

"It is the sorrow, my beloved one, foretold me by the holy Simeon, and which combines in itself all my other sorrows. Each of these sorrows is also one, perfect, distinct, and complete in itself. But He feeds now on the one which combines all in itself. I see that He, my own beloved Son, is to be a mark for all the persecutions of men, a sign to be contradicted, and this because I have consented to it, by now offering Him in God's own Temple itself to His Eternal Father, for He is mine to offer; God has given Him to me and to me alone; no one shares Him with me, and I offer Him because He so wills: *Oh God, if it be possible let this chalice pass away, but not my will but Thine be done. Be it done to me according to Thy word.* And I offer Him, O agony! as a victim, as a holocaust, done to death by cruel unheard-of torments for the sins of men.

But oh, what agony is mine! oh, what a sword of sorrow already pierces my soul! and on that bitterest anguish it is that I now feed Him, and my agony goes through and through His Heart, and then He Himself feeds that agony with the food of

His own most bitter anguish. And those waters of tribulation, ever gathering up greater and greater strength in my heart, and thence pouring into His, will at length, like a tremendous torrent, burst forth from His loving Heart.”

And in this moment I remember that thus it was with the first earth from which also a spring rose up, which watered its entire surface, as now I see one rising up from the new earth of her loving heart, that earth out of which the second Adam has been formed ; but oh how embittered by all the grief and sorrow of the heart in which it takes its rise, and its waters all pour into the heart of that new Adam, into which, indeed, all sufferings were to flow, and there attain maturity. Those waters, there vivified, will one day when He has Himself first of all absorbed all their bitterness, pour themselves out again from the deepest depths of His most loving Heart as a clear and crystal spring, and in them the dead will be born again and live with life eternal.

“Thou sayest well, beloved one ; that is the food on which I now feed my Child, and, as He advances in age, so does that grace of suffering ever grow, becoming more and more intense.”

And now my dear Angel just whispers in my ear : *Beloved, the blood which flowed from these sufferings is the water poured out on thee in Baptism, it was then that thou wast born again, born the child of God.*

Oh, was it so, dear Angel, and are those waters the outflow of such suffering ?

“It is so indeed !”

And I have never thought of that. Oh, dear Angel, how I grieve ! oh tell me what to do ! “Beloved, think often of the price He and His own dear Mother paid, thus to give thee life, and then thou wilt realise the value of the gift, and rather die than lose it—thy one thought will ever be to make Him some return, and then He Himself will speak and say : *Thou seest how I love thee, then give Me thy whole heart.*”

Oh, that I will ever do, dear Angel. Dear Lord, I promise now. And again I fix my eyes on this poor suffering Mother.

Oh, dearest Mother, how great, how bitter is thy anguish. And I thought my heart must break. But she, seeing my exceeding grief, pressed me still closer to her own heart. And then I saw that she was pouring out, so to say, her very heart's blood in union with that of her beloved Son, that I might be born again, and be her own dear child, and thus live with her for ever. Oh, what mighty love !

Once more I heard her say: *Stand and see if there be sorrow like unto my sorrow.* I had not strength to raise my eyes, and could only ask my dear Angel to tell me what sufferings Mother and Son were undergoing now. And he replied:—“They are paying the debt of sin; they are salted with fire in soul and body. That fire is dark, shedding no ray of comfort or consolation. They now only see the face of God's wrath, to hide from which sinners at the last day will call in vain on the mountains and hills to fall upon them. He is drinking now of the chalice of sorrows, absorbing all its bitterness, and of which He will drain its very dregs, and that work will only be consummated with the last moment of His life. Thence it will be, as we have just seen, that the clear crystal living waters, vivified by Him, will stream forth, and in them man will be born again.”

Dear Mother, now that I repose on thy loving heart, place thy dear Son in my poor heart. In that same moment I know that He is there ! Oh, what sufferings of soul and body are already His ! for, though each suffering shows itself as yet only like a little bud emerging from a seed, but which will soon become a lofty tree, yet, growing from the Man of Sorrows, it is even now an agony and torture, exceeding all that can be imagined in this mortal life.

Oh, my own dear Lord, thou art now to me also a bundle of myrrh dwelling in my heart ! Oh tell me why Thou must undergo such cruel, cruel torments !

“ My child, because I love thee. With desire I have desired to give Myself to thee, and make thee all My own. Through all these torments must I pass that I may reach thy heart. See then, how great, how very great, is My love for thee.”

Oh, what goodness! Oh, what love! What return can I make to Thee, my own beloved Lord?

“ Dear child, remove the only obstacle standing in My path, the only thing which, notwithstanding all I can ever do, I Myself can never take away. I reach the door of thy heart and knock, but I can only knock. Oh, open it to Me, for thou alone canst do so, and give Me full possession of it. Then I shall be all thine, and thou wilt be all Mine. With desire I have desired thee, but thy love alone can make thee really all My own.”

O Mother, tell me what to say! Dearest Lord, since this Thy first great sorrow embraces all Thy sorrows, my return for all Thou hast done for me shall be all that I can ever do for Thee. I will be Thine in all things, and Thine for ever; there shall be no reserve. I will ever watch and see that my love is true. Its measure shall always be how I do Thy will. And, dear Mother, since the sword of sorrow which pierces thy soul carries with it every sorrow, to correspond with all thou dost for me, I will undergo every sorrow and trial of this life with entire conformity with His holy will, and thus I will strive never to frustrate even the smallest thing of all thou hast done for me.

Dearest Lord, and thou, my dearest Mother, never permit me to lose the life imparted to me by those living waters which flowed from all your sorrows and sufferings when I was born again. Those sorrows and sufferings have opened out my heart to Him, and He is already there. And my poor afflicted mother, pressing my heart to hers, lets me understand that my prayer is granted. *Oh no, they never can deny a prayer; they are only love.* Dear Guardian Angel, see now the path

marked out for me in which thou hast to lead me. Oh, by all thy love for Him whose child I am—bought by Him and His dear Mother at so great a price—never let me leave this holy path. Keep me on it, until I have reached the home to which it alone can lead.

MEDITATION II.

SECOND DOLOUR AND ITS FRUIT, THE BLESSED EUCHARIST.

LOVE FOR POOR FALLEN MAN THE ROOT AND SOURCE OF ALL THE SUFFERINGS OF JESUS AND OF THE SORROWS OF MARY.

DEAR Guardian Angel, my soul is still filled with intensest anguish. The Incarnate God and His dear Mother are ever present to my mind in their terrible sufferings. Oh, what agony are they undergoing! When I recall to my remembrance that love for me and for all poor sinners is the root and source of all that fearful anguish, my soul is oppressed with grief, and my heart feels rent asunder. What can I do to give them relief? I see them, as it were, on a high and barren rock, exposed night and day to those dreadful storms and tempests of excruciating torture, which are ever bursting forth on them from the frightful crimes of men, with which they have clothed themselves.

And now I see a new storm bursting over them. I am terror-stricken, and cry out: *Let the day perish wherein I was born; let darkness and the shadow of death cover it.* I see all my own evil deeds pouring down upon them. Oh, what agony! What can I do? Each one, as it falls on them, causes excruciating torments, and I see them writhe in that agony and offer all to God; and oh, with what love do they offer all, and their great sorrow seems to be that they cannot suffer more!

And from the midst of that fearful storm of agony a loving

gentle voice reaches me : *Dear child, love Me as I love thee.* Such goodness and such love in the presence of my sins and in the moment of the frightful torments which they are there and then inflicting, the sight of my own base ingratitude multiply a thousand-fold the agony of my heart which, did He not strengthen me, would break on seeing such goodness and such love, displayed in such a moment when He is, as I have said, actually undergoing the cruel torments caused by my own misdeeds.

My dear Angel then seeks to encourage me by saying : “ Beloved, accept thy share of suffering in this world, and bear it all for Him who suffers thus for thee ; bear it in accordance with His Holy Will ”.

And now, once more, I hear the dear Mother’s voice in the depth of her agony again saying : *Stand and see if there be sorrow like unto my sorrow.* Flying at once to her afflicted heart, I raise my eyes, and again behold the great Dolour—the fruit of bitter anguish on which her beloved has fed, and I see it opening out into other six. Only a moment before, in the midst of all His excruciating sufferings, He had asked me for but one return in payment of all He suffered for each one of us. And, accompanied by a gentle loving glance, the soft sweet voice had said : *Love Me.* That was all, the one, the only thing that *with desire He desired.*

But now comes the heart-rending response which carries only hate : *Rise and fly.* Not only they do not love Thee, but they hate Thee unto death ; they seek to take Thy life. Oh, what grief and woe then filled those two loving Hearts ! Whichever way they turned the response was ever the same. It was bitter hatred, and in the midst of that bitter hatred, poured into their loving hearts, their love becomes like the grain of wheat, buried in the earth until it has attained its end in death, beyond which love cannot go : “ Greater love than this no man hath,” and then, and only then, will it multiply and invade all hearts.

Now, there is but darkness on every side, the darkness of sin and hate. They looked around, but there was none to help. *O dear Mother, O dearest Lord! Tell me—to whom, to what is this intense anguish of Incarnate Love to give life?*

Dear Angel, tell me.

“Beloved, thou wilt remember that the alternative given to the creature on which to exercise its free will was love or hatred, and the one conquers the other. Man chose hate—hatred then in him was the conqueror of love. But eternal love would fight the cause of conquered man, and became Incarnate—and then watched for the moment when hatred should fairly enter on the course which it would pursue to the very end, and on that course fight and conquer it. Hatred now entered on the path which it would follow, and that was to take the life of Him who was Love Incarnate, but the Guardian of that love was warned of the impending danger by an angel’s voice which said: ‘Arise, and take the Child and His Mother, and fly into Egypt,—Herod will seek the Child to destroy Him’. The destruction then of his opponent was the path on which hatred entered, and relentlessly pursued unto the Mount of Calvary. Love encountered it on the path which it had thus chosen, and sought not to destroy or drive away those who, filled with hatred, would take its life, but sought to draw them to itself, and thus transform their bitter hatred into ardent love: and its breathings ever were: *With desire, I have desired thee;* and the greater was the hatred which met it, the greater was the love with which it ever was encountered. That love not only did not seek to take the lives of those against whom it fought, and who would take its own, but it ardently desired, as we have just said, to change their hatred into love, and then feed them on it, that so they might live for ever. *With desire I have desired to eat this Pasch with you; he who eats this Bread shall live for ever.* Thus thou seest, my beloved, how that fruit of sorrow combined in the words: ‘Fly, they seek His life,’ and on which His dear Mother fed

Him, fed also intensest anguish within Him. And that anguish grew and grew, because the more He realised the greatness of the hatred which His love would conquer, the more intense became the love by which He would conquer it, and the more ardent His desire to win the hearts of those who hated, and winning them give them all Himself. Nothing less than all could satisfy such love.

Oh, with what intense and ever-growing agony of both desire and expectation did He, throughout His entire life, await the moment when He might say to them: *Take ye and eat, this is My Body, this is My Blood*, My whole entire Self—God and Man—Love Itself can do no more. Oh, how great is My love for thee!”

My own dear Angel, this is indeed too much. “Beloved, thou art right, too much for all the love that man can imagine in this world, too much for all except for Love Itself which goes to the very end: *He loved His own, and loved them to the end*. And oh, what was the agony of that craving love, so ardently longing, so long, so long, that hours were like days, and days like years! That agony can only be measured by the greatness of the love from which it grew, and how great was that! *It was Love Itself*.”

Deep silence now reigned, but, after a time, I heard once more soft breathings of love, and each breath breathed forth that love, full, entire, unbounded, and again I heard its words: *With desire I have desired to eat this Pasch with you*. Oh, what hunger and intensest thirst! Oh, dear Mother, pity me in my deep sorrow, and tell me how to feed that hunger of my own loved Lord.

“Beloved child,” she replied, “He longs to give Himself to thee whole and entire, but to give Himself to thee, thou must give thyself to Him, and therefore He hungers and thirsts for thee. He craves and longs for thee that, thou giving thyself to Him, He may be able to give Himself to thee.” Oh, then,

dear Mother, it is I alone who can assuage His hunger, and quench His burning thirst ; I listen, and then I hear His words : “ Dip thy finger deep into the waters of charity, that water will cool My tongue, for I am tormented in this flame ”.

Not only will I dip my finger into that love, but listen to me, dear Lord, I will ever be all love for Thee ; the one thought of my life shall be the unalloyed greatness of all Thy love for me, and with that love ever present to my mind, its flames will burn and consume in me all that is not love for Thee.

Then Thou wilt have the desire of Thy Heart : “ With desire I have desired to eat this Pasch with thee,” and I also will ever crave and long for Thee, and when thou comest to me, I too will say : “ With desire I have desired to eat this Pasch with Thee ”. Dearest Mother, by all thy sorrows and those of Thy beloved Son, fill my heart with love.

Dear Guardian Angel, thou seest the fire thou hast ever to keep burning in this poor heart of mine.

MEDITATION III.

THIRD DOLOUR AND ITS FRUIT, THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE.

THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE, THE SACRAMENT OF THE LOVE OF JESUS—THE SACRAMENT OF HIS PRECIOUS BLOOD.

DEAR Angel, guide, direct me, I am immersed in intensest darkness ; no ray of light reaches me, and I no longer see the way even to my dear Mother’s Heart, a dark cloud surrounds me. Lead me by the hand. That darkness increases, and the nearer I seem to be to the Heart of the Queen of Martyrs, the darker does it grow.

But all is changed ! It is another phase of the debt of sin. I find her now with her beloved Son : “ A land of misery and darkness where the shadow of death and no order, but everlast-

ing horror dwelleth" (Job x. 22). But she sees Him not. All order is reversed, it is no longer the poor Mother who feeds her Child on the food of sorrow, but it is the Son who now feeds her, and at the same time feeds Himself on the bitter anguish with which He fills her heart. And she, being clothed with the sins of men, hears the sentence of condemnation: *Depart from Me*, pronounced by that beloved Son Himself, and undergoes the pain of loss, the most fearful of all the results of sin.

All her former sufferings seem as nothing in comparison with what she now undergoes, and to fill up the measure of that sorrow, she knows not why it has come upon her. "Why hast Thou forsaken me?" It is the hand of her own beloved Son that inflicts the awful blow. Oh, what was the agony of her maternal heart, when she had to consent to each hard blow inflicted on her beloved Son, and to feed Him always on the food of sorrow! What, therefore, must have been His agony in having with His own hand now to strike this blow on His dear Mother's Heart! She, like her divine Son, had made herself a curse for us, and of all the sufferings resulting from that curse this pain of loss was indeed the greatest of them all. As Mother and Son were to drink the chalice of sorrows to its dregs, He was denied the consolation of telling her why she thus suffered, neither was she permitted to know why it should be so.

Oh no, that would have been as sweetest honey where only bitter gall could be; the ocean of suffering was indeed a fathomless abyss. Truly, Mother and Son are paying the terrible debt even to the last farthing. Oh, my own dear Lord, if this was the greatest of all the sufferings of Thy dear Mother, what must the agony of those long days have been to Thee who hadst Thyself to inflict the blow, and oh, with what intensest anguish to Thy most loving Heart! Dearest Lord, forgive me, it is too much! I dare not penetrate into such depths of suffering.

Dear Father St. Joseph, thou hadst exceptionally to drink of that bitter chalice ; all sorrows truly were combined in it ; tell me, therefore, what is the fruit growing from that seed of most fearful torment ?

“ My child, many are born again in the life-giving waters of which we have spoken, and obtain possession of God, and partake of the Bread of heaven, but many lose Him again by sin. Those intense sufferings of our Lord and His Virgin Mother, corresponding with that second loss, are placed by Him in the hands of those to whom He gives all judgment in this world, and by them the scarlet of sin is washed away, and the guilty ones become once more white as driven snow.” Oh then, had that awful price to be paid for me, dear Father ? “ Yes, beloved child. Each time His Minister says : ‘ I absolve thee from thy sins,’ that which thou receivest then is the fruit of those days of intensest sorrow, days which were indeed prolonged and only found their term in the dark night of Calvary.”

Dear Father, was there not one spot in all those dark sufferings wherein our Lord and His dear Mother discerned a ray of light ?

“ No, dear child, the only light that shone there was that of the dark flames of sin in which they were enveloped as in a garment, and which darken every source of consolation, and throw a lurid glare on all that increases woe. And, therefore, they saw clearly and distinctly only the cruel and heartless ingratitude of men in return for their boundless love and all they had done for them, and saw those men tearing themselves from their embrace and plunging into eternal torments.

And in that cruel light our dearest Lord and His sweetest Mother saw displayed before them as it were, one by one, all the fearful agonies of their entire lives. They saw the price they had to pay for the gift they would bestow on their beloved children.

I say they, for as thou already knowest, our dear Lord

allows His beloved Mother to pay the same price that He pays Himself, and to drink even as He drinks of the chalice of sorrows to its dregs. She paid it to Him, pouring it all into His loving Heart, and He, suffering it all again, enriched it and gave it the infinite value that it required, and then He paid it to His Eternal Father.

The frightful black darkness then of hell's fire, revealed to them the countless souls who would so soon throw off the new life given to them at so great a cost, and oh, at what a cost !”

CONTINUATION.

“ See now, beloved child, the Incarnate Love, that fairest and most beautiful of the children of men, so kind, so tender, so gentle, so loving in every way. See Him in the Garden of Olives, standing before the judgment seat of His Eternal Father as a leper, clothed with the sins of men, and then prostrate on the ground, hiding His face in the earth from God, His own loved Father, now about to pronounce sentence upon Him. Oh what agony must His have been to have wrung from Him whose cry had ever been, ‘ I thirst, I thirst,’ that other cry : ‘ Father, My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass away’. But no ; for as in hell there is no more time for mercy, neither could there be mercy for Him so long as He was in the world and capable of suffering. No, no ; *Depart from Me, ye cursed.* He had made Himself a curse for me. And now all the agony of soul and body which He had undergone throughout His entire life had reached maturity, the sins of men which He had taken on Himself enveloped Him with their frightful flames, burning in full intensity. Thus did they ever burn on, burn on. But even so, they were as nothing in comparison with the awful pain of loss expressed in the words : ‘ My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?’ There was the price paid for man to be born again. Then if such

was the price to be paid for man to be born again, if he dies again and again, what price has to be paid that he may once more live? The same price, but in another form. For the first the Eternal Father casts off his beloved Son; for the second that beloved Son casts off His own beloved Mother. To Him all judgment is given and He sees before Him His own dear Mother, clothed as she is with the sins of the entire human race, standing before Him, and awaiting that judgment. She is guilty; she has made herself a curse for us; and therefore only one sentence can be pronounced upon her: 'Depart from Me'. 'Oh Son, why hast Thou done thus to us? Oh, if it be possible, let this chalice pass away. My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?'

And all the agony which this most loving Son had to inflict on His dear Mother returned to Him steeped in her poor heart's blood, and went through and through His own dear, tender, loving Heart.

There is the price paid for the gift held in the priest's hand when he holds it over him who is dead, and who in giving it restores him once more to life."

But oh, dear Father, what a price to pay! Little did I know it, and never will I forget it.

"Dear child, terrible it was indeed; but that was not all. Another torment in that dark light opened out before them and seemed to crown the whole."

And what was that, dear Father?

"The ingratitude of men. Among all the countless thousands who receive that precious gift from him to whose hands it is committed, those who ever give a thought to the price, paid for it by the Incarnate God and His own dear Mother, and are really grateful for it, are like the ears of corn after a well-gleaned harvest. Oh, terrible is that sin of ingratitude! That sin it is that destroys in countless souls the work of man's redemption, and hurls them into the place of

everlasting torments. Where there is no gratitude, there there is no love ; but love alone can enable man to do himself the violence without which the kingdom of heaven is not to be borne away. Men receive the precious gift, but know not its value, because they do not think, then gratitude is wanting ; but as I have just said, where gratitude is wanting, there there is no love, and then they sin, and sin again, and die in sin, and thus are lost for ever.”

Oh then, dear Lord and my own dearest Mother, never, never again, will I inflict on You those frightful blows, never again will I crown your grief and love with my ingratitude, never again will I receive that gift without first of all thinking well of the tremendous price it cost You, and then I will pay You for it with a heart all filled with ardent love and overflowing gratitude. Now I understand that it is the heart for which Thou askest, dearest Lord. Ah, my own dear Mother, take mine and clothe it all in thy own dear love, and then give it Him for me !

“Thou sayest well, dear child, it is for that they long with most eager desire.”

But, dear Father, did they not see the many who would really love them—the many who would be saved by their awful sufferings ?

“No ; these flames are dark to everything but woe. But they did indeed throw a cruel light on all. *Have pity on Me, at least you My friends*, they seemed to say, but no friends were there. Those dark flames showed only all that fell short of gratitude and love. ‘I looked for one that would comfort me, and I found none’ (Ps. lxxviii. 21). Weeping, He and His dear Mother have wept, and the tears are on their cheeks ; there was none to comfort them among all their friends.”

Oh, then, dear Father, I will comfort them, my tears of gratitude and love shall wash away all their tears. I will never break their hearts, for they would surely break did they see me, their

own poor child, in the torments caused by sin. I will keep present to my mind at all times all they have done for me, and will thus dilate my heart with ever-increasing love. Dearest Lord, dearest Mother, give me one look of love, say one word. Oh, what a glance of ineffable love from both as they reply : “ My child, give Me thy heart, and then I am more than paid for all I have done and suffered ”.

Dear Angel, see what thou hast to do for me.

MEDITATION IV.

THE HOLY EUCHARIST, THE GIFT OF AN INFINITE LOVE.

DEAR Guardian Angel, I long, oh, how I long to fly to my dear Mother’s Heart ! And yet I tremble and wither away at the very thought. Never can I forget her sad loving look in that moment when she said to me : “ Stay and see if there be any sorrow like unto mine ”. O come with me, dear Angel, for I cannot trust myself, I dare not go alone. In that same moment I find myself in her loving heart.

But, dearest Mother, where is thy Beloved, whither hath He gone, and we will seek Him with thee ? She answered by a glance at my dear Angel, intimating that he should reply ; for her Beloved was not gone, but now was One with her. My Angel said : “ Beloved, so far thou hast seen how the Son and Mother mutually fed each other on the fruit of sorrow.

That fruit was ever growing and developing itself, and drawing to maturity in the Man of Sorrows, as He advanced in age and grace before men and before God, His Father. That grace was the ever-perfect fulfilment of His Father’s will, which was, that He should pay the whole debt of sin. He was therefore always full of suffering, and those sufferings ever kept pace with His advancing age and ever-increasing strength.

So was it also with the Queen of Martyrs. She was full of

ever-increasing grace to do God's will perfectly in all the measure of that grace, and His will was—that she should (as far as that could be) pay by her sufferings, the debt of sin to the last farthing, like her beloved Son, whom she was to resemble in all.

A fruit exists in a tree from the very beginning, and grows with its growth until it attains maturity. Even so did suffering dwell in the Man of Sorrows and in the Queen of Martyrs from the beginning. It was not good for Adam to be alone. From him alone men could not be born. God, therefore, gave him a helper like himself, that by their union the work might be accomplished. But, by sin, the first man inflicted death on all who would otherwise have lived. God in His infinite love willed that man should live, and therefore be born again.

For that purpose He gave a second Eve, who, offering to Him, as far as that was possible, in her own person, the equivalent of the suffering which was the fruit of sin, should crush the serpent's head, and thus enable man to be born again. To offer less than her perfect nature, adapted as it was for exquisite sufferings, could offer, since she was full of grace, would not be an offering worthy of God, its Object, neither of her who offered it. But it was not good for her to be alone. All she could offer would be infinitely less than that which alone could pay the debt, and therefore God would give to her, who was all suffering in soul and body, a Helper like herself. He would give her as her Spouse His own beloved Son—now the Man of Sorrows, so that, in union with Him, the great work of Redemption might be accomplished, and man be born again to eternal life.

But that union could take place only when, in the one and the other, the chalice of sorrows was filled to its brim, and that would only be when the fruit of sorrow had in the one and in the other attained its full maturity.

That moment at length arrived, and then it was that they were, so to speak, to leave home in order to walk to the Altar, before which their mutual consent to this mystic union was to

be given, and the Man of Sorrows become one with the Queen of Martyrs.

They opened out their course at a marriage feast, and by that symbol told the world whither they themselves were going. She had to do for the world all that a creature could do in payment of its debt, and she had to plead with God for what she could not do herself. She needed a helper like herself, and that Helper God willed to give her now. *He will be bone of her bone, and flesh of her flesh, and they shall be two in one.*

They pursued their onward course, and, as in the marriage feast, the jars were filled with water, to be changed by Him into delicious wine, so did He send before Him His servants to prepare the hearts of men, making them fit recipients of the wine of charity with which He would now fill them at His own marriage feast. The moment had arrived when the last words of their mutual agreement were to pass between them, but previous to those final words, a review, as it were, was to take place between them of all their fitness for each other.

Only the Queen of Martyrs could be the fitting Bride of the Man of Sorrows. Only the Man of Sorrows could be the fitting Spouse of the Queen of Martyrs. All had withdrawn in the dwelling of Mary Magdalen, who also had herself withdrawn in order to leave her Beloved Lord alone with His own dear Mother.

For a time deepest silence reigned, but the one was so completely the other that at length both simultaneously raised their eyes, and the poor Mother once more clasped in her tenderest embrace her most beloved Son. *My Beloved to me, and I to my Beloved.* Now indeed He was to her *a bundle of myrrh dwelling in her bosom.* Oh, now it was that the flood-gates of heaven were opened that its waters might cleanse the earth of sin, for their tears ran down like a torrent into each other's hearts, and each tear carried with it a most bitter sorrow, a most excruciating pang. She displayed her riches of grief

and anguish before Him whose Bride she is. He sees and reads them all, and, moreover, enriches them with all His own excruciating agonies. There was not a coin which He paid down but found in her the one with which it corresponded. No sense of her body or power of her soul had escaped the full extreme of suffering. Each one had to pay, even to the last farthing, its share of the debt. The sufferings of the Incarnate God, concentrated as by a lens, were ever pouring down upon her—first, as the sufferings of an Incarnate God whom she loved with surpassing love as her own great God, and who, as she knew from the beginning, could alone pay the debt ; secondly, those sufferings were increased and multiplied by the Maternal Love which inflamed her heart and soul.

The powers of her soul, like His, had ever been crucified. She was crucified in *her understanding*, for she knew not the reason of even the greatest of her sufferings. For, as when it seemed to Him that He had lost His God, He asked why He had been thus forsaken, so did she also ask why He had forsaken her, and understood not the words of His reply. *Her memory was crucified.* ‘Forget thy people and thy father’s house ;’ forget all that will comfort and console thee. *Her will was ever crucified.* ‘Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to Thy word.’ Oh how terrible must have been the crucifixion of that will when she had to give consent to every hard blow inflicted on Him she loved, her own dear God and Son ! Oh, what anguish, and what awful agony !

Oh beloved one, never forget this sad night of sorrow. Bear ever in mind that, as He, in order that He might be one with His dear Mother, sought in her, trials and sufferings corresponding with His own, so will He seek for them in thee, in order that thou also mayest be one with Him. Deny thyself, and take up thy cross. Otherwise for thee all must run to waste, and His graces flow in vain.

Thus passed that sad night which preceded the saddest night of all. Oh, who could describe that last loving embrace which they exchanged on parting, knowing full well that their next meeting would be on the way to Calvary !

The bride now awaited only the last visit of her Beloved when He would put His seal on the contract—that for which He had longed and craved during His entire life : ‘ With desire I have desired ’. He gives Himself to her whole and entire, and the seal is on her heart: *This is My Body, this is My Blood*. And here sight and understanding fail us, this moment is the deepest depth of the highest heaven, and like the Eternal Word Himself is hidden from our view.” Oh, dearest Mother, by all the bitter sorrows of those sad words: *Why, why?* tell me why He, thy own dear Son, underwent such fearful torments.

My child, it was for love of thee. He died that thou mightest live. Oh, canst thou ever doubt His love or think He can be hard?

And thou, dear Mother, why didst thou undergo such cruel torments ?

My own dear child, for love of thee. I suffered to give thee birth and true life. Canst thou ever doubt my love ?

Dearest Mother, what can I do ?

My child, love Us, give Us thy whole entire heart.

“ They meet no more until the moment arrives for the consummation of their great work of Union. That will be on the road to Calvary, when the Man of Sorrows will meet His beloved bride, and becoming one with her, the Queen of Martyrs, will enable her to give new life at the foot of the Cross to those who are to be born again.

And I seemed to hear His voice calling His beloved bride : ‘ Arise, My love, My beautiful one, and come. How beautiful art thou, My love, how beautiful art thou ! Till the day breaks and the shadows retire, I will go to the mountain of myrrh, and

to the hill of frankincense. Thou art all fair, oh My love, and there is not a spot in thee.'

And I saw Mount Calvary, and the darkness of night hung over it."

MEDITATION V.

SURELY HE HATH BORNE OUR INFIRMITIES AND CARRIED
OUR SORROWS.

"AND now, beloved, since thou hast seen and watched the bride, clothed in her nuptial garments, we must follow in the footsteps of the Bridegroom, and see the garment wherewith He is also clothed.

As He advances on His way, I watch, and an awful terror seizes me. It is the same which seized me at the moment of the Incarnation, but now it is multiplied a hundred-fold. I seem to see once more Adam standing in all his beauty and glory by the tree which bore the forbidden fruit. The sun was shining in all its brightness, and everything in nature was so perfect and beautiful, that all creatures knew it to be the reflection of the power, beauty, goodness, and love of the Great Creator. Only happiness reigned. Sorrow and suffering were unknown, because that from which they spring had as yet no existence.

But in a moment all was changed. Adam disobeyed the command of God and absorbed into himself the frightful poison of sin. The convulsion which seized him in that moment passed on from him to the whole of this creation. It tore from him all his beauty and glory, and caused all the sufferings, sorrows and death which reign in this world on every side, and which in the next world open out into the full measure of eternal torments under the terrible sentence pronounced by

the outraged God : ' Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire '.

Like the first Adam before his fall, the second Adam seemed to stand in the Garden which He had now entered as the fairest and most beautiful, in soul and body, of all the children of men. The sweet, loving thoughts which filled His Heart dropped from His lips like honey from its comb. Tenderest love streamed from His beautiful eyes, like the seven-fold glory of the sun in paradise. Oh, what highest seraph ever conceived such love as His love was indeed !

But in a moment the frightful convulsive thrill, which had stripped the first Adam of all his beauty, and then had extended its extreme of suffering and death to the entire human race, striking even the second Adam in the moment of His creation, now seemed to recall its vibrations, and to concentrate them all that so they might burst out in greater fury on Him.

Yes, all seems concentrated in Him, even the sufferings of His own beloved Bride and Mother. And why should all sufferings be concentrated in Him alone, and no longer send forth their vibrations to the world? Ah, I understand ! The second Adam is now the guilty one. All guilt is centred in Him and in Him alone. In Him now reigns that guilt from which all sufferings flow, and in very truth they are all flowing from and upon Him like a tremendous torrent. Crowned with that fearful guilt, I once more see Him as a leper, and from beneath that crown to the sole of His foot there is no soundness in Him. As the sinner at the last day is called forth in the midst of all his torments to stand before his Judge and hear his sentence pronounced upon him : ' Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire,' so must He now Who has made Himself a curse for us stand before His God and also hear His sentence.

Then, seized with the terror and dismay which sinners will experience at the last day, He would hide Himself from the

face of the wrath of His Eternal Father, and falling prostrate on the ground, seek, but seek in vain, to hide Himself away, and His cry of agony fills all creation: 'Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass away'; but no, it will not pass away. He must drink it even to its very dregs.

In that moment He was clothed in His nuptial garment; His precious blood flowed from every pore, and each of its countless drops was a precious gem with which that garment was adorned. But agony has now reached its term even in Him whose body had been especially fitted for suffering—suffering far greater than any other creature could ever have undergone—and He tells us so, exclaiming: 'My soul is sorrowful, even unto death'. And yet, so great was His love for His Eternal Father, and for each of us, His children, that, like a true lover, having given all He could, He esteemed it all as nothing. And therefore there began in Him a new and far more ardent thirst for greater and greater suffering; and so it continued to the end.

In accordance with His will an angel came and strengthened Him, so that He might not die now, but live to suffer more. When that strength was given Him I saw the flames of the dreadful fire, with which the sins of the whole world now salted Him, bursting out on every side. Hell also seemed to have emptied out the whole of its countless legions, and they awaited God's sentence upon Him, in order that He might be given over to their power, as indeed are those who leave the world in sin. Oh, with what fiendish hatred and rage they urged their agents on to torture Him in every way, to spare Him in nothing."

MEDITATION VI.

FOURTH DOLOUR AND ITS FRUIT—THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE.

MARY, STANDING AT THE FOOT OF THE CROSS, BECAME THE MOTHER OF ALL WHO WERE TO BE WASHED IN THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB.

AND God, His Eternal Father, pronounced upon Him the terrible sentence : “ Depart from Me ”.

“ Oh see that tender Lamb being led to the slaughter and opening not His mouth ! It is the sentence of His Eternal Father, and He bows in submission to His will : ‘ Not My will, but Thine be done ’. He even seems to hasten His steps, that He may the sooner meet the cruel executioners of that Will. He is seized and bound, and as He is dragged along by those fiends, is tortured by them in every cruel way that they can devise, and every ignominy is heaped upon Him, until they reach the spot where they can multiply those sufferings and outrages in every way.

Every possible extreme of cruelty was heaped upon Him, and He suffered to excess as He advanced on the way to the court, wherein all their concentrated fury would overtake Him. The arch-enemy of God and of the human race suggested to his agents that which would bring upon Him the most cruel and barbarous scourging. He suggested to the unjust judge in condemning Him to that frightful torture to say that, after its infliction, he would set Him at liberty, thus exonerating himself from the disgrace of taking the life of One in whom he had declared that he found no evil, and yet satisfying those who demanded that He should die. In his own mind he seemed to say : *I will so scourge Him that die He must, and then I shall be free.* On hearing that He was only to be scourged and then set at liberty, the chief priests and their followers, fully deter-

mined that He should no longer live, urged on the executioners to multiply their tortures.

Then it was that tied to the smaller pillar, preserved in Rome in the Church of St. Praxedes, and which was used for those who, not condemned to death, were only to be chastised, His innocent Body was to be torn to pieces. The executioners armed themselves not with the lighter scourges implied by simple chastisement, but with the far more terrible ones which were only used when the extreme of torture was to be inflicted. And this was Pilate's order. With leather thongs, armed with iron hooks and spurs, they tore off His Sacred flesh, scattering it around. No spot remained other than a frightful, cruel wound: *From the crown of His head to the sole of His foot there was no soundness in Him. He had become as a leper.*

And because that tender Lamb, in the greatness of His love, thirsted still to suffer more, and murmured not, and opened not His mouth, those who had determined on His death reproached the executioners that they did not do their duty, and bribed them to multiply His torments.

But He was not yet to die. The Angel had given Him strength to outlive this torture also, that so He might still suffer more and so embellish His nuptial garment, which had yet to be studded with countless other most precious gems. He then awaits His nuptial crown, the crown of the Man of Sorrows, in which to meet His Bride, the Queen of Martyrs.

And they plaited one of thorns, long and sharp, and hard as iron, and pressing it on His Sacred head, they drove in those thorns with hard, heavy blows. And oh, with what agony!

Then they dressed Him up as a mock king, and having heaped upon Him every ignominy and outrage suggested by that arch-fiend who, because he had been conquered in heaven, was now pouring out upon Him the plenitude of his revenge, they led Him again to Pilate.

Even this wicked judge, hardened though he was, thought that the sight presented by this Man of Sorrows must excite compassion even in the most hardened hearts, and he therefore brought Him out before them, saying: *Behold the Man!* 'See if you can recognise in Him the one you, so short a time ago, delivered into my hands. See, He hardly breathes, and can live only a few short hours. Let Him go home and die in His Mother's arms.'

But no; in His bitter chalice there can be only gall. He will drink that bitter chalice to the dregs. He now hears the heartless cries of those who hate Him for His very goodness, and for whom He is laying down His life: *Let Him be crucified, let Him be crucified.* They knew what this implied. It implied not only crucifixion, but the reopening of all His wounds, a repetition of that awful scourging, which, by law, followed upon the judicial sentence of death. The first scourging was called chastisement. The smallness of the pillar implied such punishment as might be inflicted on a youth who would then be set free, as indeed Pilate had said: *I will chastise Him and set Him at liberty.* But the scourging which preceded crucifixion was far more terrible, as we may judge by the higher column preserved in Rome at St. John Lateran's, to which the victim was bound or suspended. Then once more were poured out on that adorable Victim the frightful tortures which result from sin. He was scourged with all the severity of the Mosaic law, which scourging was so terrible that no man could receive more than forty blows and live, and He was also scourged with all the severity of the Roman Law. The blows He received exceeded five thousand! When the Roman scourging was to be inflicted on a criminal, the first blow was given by the officer in command, and that was the signal for all the soldiers of the cohort, a thousand in number, to follow. They fell on their victim, if a slave, with terrible stripes of the lash; and if a free-man, with heavy sticks. Each member of the cohort inflicted

blows, and thus a thousand men soon measured out the five thousand stripes which tradition tells us were inflicted on Him. And all this was in addition to the awful scourging inflicted by order of the Jews, then with scourges, now with dreadful sticks. Oh, how the evil spirits urged on those cruel executioners! They knew the power of endurance imparted to Him by the Angel, and that He would live to be crucified according to His sentence, no matter what the cruelties might be otherwise inflicted on Him.

At length cruelty could do no more, and the cords which suspended Him to the pillar were cut, and He fell to the ground all weltering in His blood."

Oh, dear Angel, stop, I can bear no more. . . . For a time I was lost in this ocean of frightful anguish, and I poured out a flood of bitter tears because I knew that my sins had increased His torments. Oh, I will fly far from sin! My dear Angel again took refuge in my heart that he also might weep therein. Oh, how he wept!

After some time he aroused me, and made me hasten my steps. The Bridegroom—the Man of Sorrows—was now clothed in His nuptial garments, His crown was on His Head, and He was journeying on His path to meet His bride, the Queen of Martyrs. "Go forth, ye daughters of Sion, and see King Solomon in the diadem wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the joy of his heart." Yes, she crowned Him who willed her consent to all. When His beloved Mother met Him, her grief and bitter anguish transfixed His Heart and Soul, and His anguish transfixed hers; and in the same moment she felt within her poor suffering heart the words which breathed from His: "Arise, make haste, My love, My dove, My beautiful one, and come". But here I noticed one frightful wound amongst the countless ones on His sacred Head and Face, and more terrible than all the rest, and I turned to my dear Angel, and with a

glance I asked him what it was, and he replied : “The most heartless and cruel of all the torments, suggested by the infernal spirits, was the kiss of Judas. But the sight of their own iniquity thus impressed on His sacred Face, inflicted on them such new torments that, to hide it from their view, they urged on the terrible blow from the gauntleted servant’s hand, and made it fall on the spot where Judas kissed ; that is the frightful wound prominent amongst all the rest.”

And I thought of all my own ingratitude, and He, that dear Lord, read my grief, and I said : My own loved Lord, what can I do ? And one glance said : *Love Me.* The wills of Mother and Son, of Bride and Bridegroom were in perfect conformity with the will of their heavenly Father, they were of one mind and one heart. Therefore, in the moment when they met on the way to Calvary, God made Them one, and from that ineffable union I saw budding forth a Sacrament, by the grace of which those children, who were to be born again of them, would by the Christian marriage of their parents be so adapted for the new birth which awaited them, that its life would take a stronger and firmer hold of them, and less easily be lost. That sight might indeed have been a source of immense consolation to the Mother through whom so many millions were to be born again, and to Him who had with her to pay its price.

But no ray of consolation could reach their hearts, for in them was burning the dreadful fire of the sins of the world, with which they had clothed themselves, and which darkened every consolation. But to make all more bitter it did throw its gloomy light on the many thousands who, though born again, would die, and die again until they died for ever, and this often, because their parents had not entered on the holy state of marriage in which God Himself would make them one in dispositions corresponding with the greatness of such a work. They saw not the value of the gift He bestowed upon them, or the price that He had paid for it. Love, then, and gratitude

were absent from their hearts, and hence their children, not being formed in a mould of holiness, were less fitted than they would otherwise have been to correspond with grace. Oh, what anguish for those two loving Hearts! Thus it was that the sight of everything growing out of their hard, hard labours calculated to comfort and console them, became to them only a source of greater and greater torment.

Oh, bitter indeed was the chalice of which they had to drink, and no wonder, since the loss of God is the absence of all happiness, and the presence of all suffering; and again I heard their voices: *My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?*

I grieve, I grieve, dear Lord. Sweet Mother, oh how hard must my heart be that I see such agony all for me, and still do not die of intensest grief! Oh pour a little drop of thine own great grief into my poor heart that so I may grieve for you with grief worthy of such ardent love.

Yes, God has made them one, and now they proceed to the spot whereon the altar is to be erected. The Man of Sorrows bears that altar on His sacred shoulders. At the foot of that altar the Queen of Martyrs will take her stand, to receive the children who by His death will of her be born again. On that sacred spot she will become the Mother of the new human race. Standing there, crucified in soul and heart, she will pay her share of the debt of sin, and therefore bring forth her children in sorrow, while her Divine Spouse will give to all that sorrow the life it needs to make it bear its fruit.

“They advanced to the place of sacrifice like lambs led to the slaughter, no sound of complaint or murmur escaping from their lips. But the tears of the poor afflicted Mother flowed like a torrent: tears flowing not only from her knowledge of His cruel sufferings, but much more from the sight of the infinite evil of sin, which had caused them all. She heard His words to the women of Jerusalem: *Weep not for Me, but weep for yourselves and your children, for if sin causes such suffering*

in Me who am innocent and only suffer for you, what will it produce in those who are themselves really guilty of it? If it is so in the green wood what will it be in the dry? Yes, for the sins of the world she wept, and for all my sins. And she wept and wept again because she could weep no more, and could not herself alone pay the entire debt, and because her dear Son and God had to pay it all.

That was again the spring rising up out of the new earth from which the second Adam had been formed, and it was watering its entire surface. The new Adam was now about to give, through her, new life to those who, already dead in sin, were to be born again, and He would form them, not of the old earth earthy, but of that new earth from which He Himself had grown. If the sight of her dear Son's sufferings was as a two-edged sword transfixing her soul, how sharp and terrible must have been the anguish of that Son's Heart on beholding all the agony of His sorrow-stricken Mother! He saw that He Himself, clothed with the sharp thorns of sin, was the greatest and most excruciating anguish of her poor, tender, loving heart."

MEDITATION VII.

THE TRUE LOVERS OF JESUS SHOULD THIRST FOR SUFFERING,
AND EVEN THIRST FOR MORE AND MORE.

I SAW the Man of Sorrows now in the agony of death, and His cruel persecutors, fearing lest He might die before they could inflict on Him all the ignominy and sufferings which they had devised, compelled a stranger to help him with His Cross. Oh, dear Angel, I can bear no more! Do thou assist me. Can I do nothing to help or comfort our dear suffering Lord?

"No, beloved, He must drink the bitter chalice to its dregs.

Nevertheless, every trial and suffering thou endurest for His love, and in conformity with His will, and every act of compassion for His sufferings, takes away something of the bitterness of His chalice. Thou canst always say He had that much less to suffer." Then, dear Angel, had I suffered less He would have suffered more. Now I understand why His true lovers thirst for suffering, and ever thirst for more.

"But a new sorrow was in store for the poor Mother. How eagerly she would have rushed forward to wipe, with loving hands the Blood which covered His sacred face, and almost blinded Him. But no, it could not be, since she also was to drink the chalice to its dregs. All His sorrows were to be hers, as all hers were His. Neither could pour into that chalice of which both had to drink aught else than the bitter gall with which they were filled, and for even more of which they both so ardently thirsted.

Before that loving Mother's eyes a stranger's hand performed the office which was hers by right, offering to her dear Son a cloth wherewith to remove the blood that was blinding Him. But there was to be no alleviation, either of His sufferings or hers, for again she saw Him fall heavily to the ground. The thorns were driven more deeply into His sacred Head by that new fall, and all His wounds reopened.

With very great difficulty and suffering He rose once more from the ground, and was dragged along with even greater violence and cruelty than before. Some women of Jerusalem, as we have said just now, seeing the awful sight, were moved to deep compassion and poured out their tears.

But those very tears reopened one of the deepest sorrows of His afflicted Heart, reminding Him again of the hideousness and enormity of sin wherewith He was clothed: 'Ah, yes,' He said, 'and if so it is in Me, the green wood, what will it be in the dry?' And this thought again brought out before Him the countless multitude of those for whom He was even now

pouring out all His precious Blood and dying a dreadful death, and who, nevertheless, would be torn from His embrace and hurled into eternal torments.

Yes, He saw that vast number, and He saw each individual soul, and filled with intensest anguish, He pleaded again and again for them with His eternal Father. But that awful vision of the many whom He, all love for them, would lose, overpowered Him, and again He fell to the ground as though His last hour had now really come."

Oh, poor Mother, where are now thy loving arms, that in them He may find repose, and where thy loving heart that He may rest upon it? Oh, Mother, open out thy arms, and clasp Him to thy heart—that heart which is the refuge of all poor sinners. He has at least the sinner's claim to that sanctuary of refuge, for all our sins are His.

But my Angel whispers: "No, He seeks no repose, but only thirsts to suffer more". And so it also was with His poor afflicted Mother, her only word could be: *Be it done to me according to Thy word.* . . . Dear sorrowing Mother, thou canst not comfort Him, all thou canst do is to seek to quench His thirst, pouring thy bitter tears into the chalice of which He drinks, making it overflow! Ah, truly, no sorrow can be like thine!

"Again, her dear Son is roughly raised from the spot whereon He had fallen, and is once more dragged along to the place of sacrifice. On arriving there the crown of thorns is torn from His sacred Head that He may be stripped of His seamless garment, and then He is crowned with it again, with ever-increasing torment.

No thorns were found on earth until sin made them grow, and now all sin, concentrated in Him, produces that awful thorny crown which He wears in such excruciating agony." Oh, dear Angel, my heart breaks, tell me why that agony!

"Beloved one, He makes that crown His own that it never

may be thine." Oh, what goodness, oh, what love ! And now my dear Angel speaks again.

" Beloved, thy sins were also there, and from thy sins those thorns had grown." Oh then, dear Angel, give that crown to me, for it belongs to me. " Beloved, I cannot take it, for He has made it all His own, and therefore He alone can give it." Oh then, dear Lord, give me at least one thorn ! My dear Angel tells me that I can take it, but only thus : " Henceforth when thou hast to suffer remember that that suffering is the thorn for which thou now askest, and if thou bear it well and for love of Him, it will be a thorn the less in the crown He now wears for thee. When sorrows come upon thee, remember *this*, and thou wilt then rejoice in the midst of all, and the yoke will indeed be sweet, and thy burden light."

And now I seem to hear once more the voice that spoke in Paradise : *Adam, where art thou ?* But no trees are here in the midst of which the new Adam can hide from the face of God's wrath. But one tree there is, and on that one He will be raised on high, there to die a malefactor's death. By that tree He now stands naked, in the presence of His Eternal Father and the entire world. The shame of his nakedness made Adam fly from the presence of his God, and hide himself amidst the trees of Paradise, and he cried out : *I was afraid because I was naked.* How terrible then must be the shame of the second Adam, our own dear Lord, as He stands naked in the sight of God and man !

No words, no thoughts, human or angelic, can ever in this world give the measure of the shame and agony of the innocent Lamb of God thus exposed to the gaze of the rude and scoffing multitude. But He is silent even now in this His agony of shame. *He opened not His lips. . . .*

MEDITATION VIII.

Amor Meus Crucifixus Est.

MY LOVE IS CRUCIFIED.

THE hour of the great sacrifice has now arrived. His sacred hands are at length unbound and free to remove from His eyes the blood that is blinding Him. Raising them, He gave a long and loving look at His dear Mother. And oh, what bitter anguish was in that look, and it was also full of supplication. He asked a sacrifice of her which full entire love for God alone could grant. That look entreated her consent for every torment He was now to undergo, and for each frightful blow that was to drive the hard iron nails through His hands and feet, and fasten Him to the Cross. He knew how those cruel nails would pass through and through that dear Mother's Heart, and how each blow would clench them.

His Mother returned that tender pleading look of her dear Son, and oh, how very dear ! and it transfixed His loving, loving Heart. He understood all the anguish of that look. He knew what love was hidden there, and all which it expressed. No words could ever have conveyed the full message of her soul. The only words which her eyes did speak were these : *Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to Thy word.*

In that same moment of her consent the awful sound of the terrible blows was heard ; it reached the highest heavens and penetrated the depths below, and these oft-repeated blows drove the long hard nails through His hands and feet, and through His Mother's Heart, and then, all streaming with her Heart's blood, they went again through and through His own. And oh, how their soft, sweet, gentle voices rose in closest unison to the very Throne of God : *Not my will, but Thine be done.*

And when they had crucified Him, they raised on high the Altar of the Cross with the Divine Victim on it. And at the foot of that Cross stood Mary, His Mother, the valiant woman, perfect in soul and body; in her there was no weakness. She stood as she had ever done throughout her entire life, and in all the courage of her great and noble soul consented to His every suffering, and to His cruel death, thereby offering to God on the altar of her own heart, the Victim who was offering Himself on the Altar of the Cross! *Stabat Mater*, Mary stood beside the Cross awaiting the final moment when her heel would crush the serpent's head.

MEDITATION IX.

MARY, THE QUEEN OF MARTYRS, PLEADED TOGETHER WITH HER SON FOR ALL THE MILLIONS OF MEN WHO FROM THE BEGINNING TO THE END OF TIME HAD CAUSED HIS CRUCIFIXION AND HER OWN MOST CRUEL MARTYRDOM.

AGAIN my dear Angel speaks. "As in early days, I now see once more, rising from the altar of the Mother's Heart, the smoke of the Victim who is also there. She is offering to her God all that is most dear and precious to her, whilst He offers Himself. She thus pays all she could pay of the infinite debt of sin. Mother and Son were not only alike, but more than that: God had made them one, and they were one both in mind and heart. Therefore the same thought rose simultaneously in their minds, and the words they spoke were identical. The words of prayer, spoken aloud by her Divine Son, were spoken in secret in His Mother's Heart, and they rose as sweetest incense to the Throne of the Eternal Father.

And they were words of infinite value, worthy to be heard by the great, the infinite God. The Man of Sorrows and the

Queen of Martyrs pleaded together with one mind and one heart for all those millions who from the beginning to the end of time had caused His crucifixion and her most cruel martyrdom.

And now, in this moment, a stupendous vision opened out before me. Once more I saw the angels of heaven in battle array. I saw them divided into two tremendous armies each having inscribed upon its banners the war-cry under which it would fight, the one : *Behold the servants of the Lord to do His will in all.* The other : *We will not serve.* And then I heard the music to the sound of which the faithful soldiers of their King and Master marched out to battle, music such that I fully understood that nothing of all that had hitherto filled the heavens, beautiful as indeed it was, could ever approach in any way.

They knew not whence it proceeded ; it came from afar. But so exquisite was it that, wherever it sounded, it seemed to draw to itself from the highest heavens our great God Himself, truly under a hidden form, but it ever was Himself, and therefore, wherever it was heard, only glorious victory could ensue. That music seemed the only thing which the rebel leaders feared. The instant it reached the ears of their followers they seemed to falter, and regret the course on which they had entered ; and therefore the sounds to which those rebel leaders led them to battle were hideous, frightful cries, frightful and discordant in the measure in which those they would drown were attractive and harmonious. Oh, how terrible were they ! The shadow of death was there ; no order, but everlasting horror.

The great battle then was fought, the enemy was conquered, and his place was no more found in heaven. But out of heaven there were children of God, loved by Him ; oh, how they were loved ! They were on the march to the kingdom of their God and Father to be seated on the thrones of the conquered rebels. Against them these rebels would fight with

redoubled rage and hate, and carry on the battle to the end of time.

All this vision occupied but a moment, but now, as the great Victim was being raised on high, all that I had seen in heaven seemed to be reproduced. I saw standing before me that same rebel army making its last and tremendous assault against Him who now was fighting the battle of His beloved children. It was indeed a forlorn hope, for, from the leader downwards, there was not one who had not up to now fought with desperation, and been signally defeated.

On the other hand, I saw the faithful followers of the Lamb, the Victim on the altar, and not only did I hear the war-cry which was to lead them to victory, and the delicious music to whose sounds they were to march, as sounds coming from afar, for so I had heard them in heaven, but there, standing at the altar's foot, was the new heaven itself in which God would dwell, His own beloved Mother, and whence alone such music could proceed; and to the sound of that sweet music she was breathing forth the war-cry which would lead to certain victory: *Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to thy word.* And the great Lord who already had been drawn down from the highest heaven by those same words and by their sweetest harmony, was no longer hidden, but was Himself the Lamb, the Victim on the altar, and He, together with her whose heel would crush the serpent's head, would now encounter the last tremendous assault of the enemy of all that is good.

For a moment I raised my eyes to heaven and saw the countless millions of the heavenly host, no longer prepared to fight, as they had already fought and gained the victory, but in deepest silence awaiting the moment when they should sing the victory of their great God and King, who was now in the world to fight the battle of His children.

And oh, what silence was that! I thought myself once more

in the deep silence of eternity before all creation, but this silence would form the contrast with their hymns of joy which would so soon burst forth in all the plenitude of happiness. But the great moment of battle had now arrived. I saw that the entire army of the enemy surrounded Him who was on the Cross and her who stood at its foot, and enveloped them in its awful flames of hell which were darker than I had ever known them. They seemed to force themselves into the minds and hearts of Him and her whom they thus surrounded, and against whom they were now fighting in all the rage of bitterest hatred and despair. They hid in their deepest, blackest darkness all that might encourage and give confidence, but revealed in bright light all most calculated to lead to despair and to extinguish every spark of love which might still exist for the human race, for that race for which so much already had been done, and which had made so heartless a return.

They were reminded of all the frightful torments of soul and body which they had undergone, and all these torments were placed before them in their most vivid colours, and all as being inflicted by those very ones for whose love, and salvation He had come down from heaven. They were reminded again and again of the cries of those for whom He had done so much: *Let Him be crucified, let Him be crucified.* They represented to Him all the agonies inflicted by those same heartless ungrateful ones on the Heart of His dearest Mother, and then they represented to her the frightful, cruel torments inflicted by man on her own beloved Son.

They reminded Him of the anger and indignation of His Eternal Father who had cursed and abandoned Him, and had refused to grant His prayer that His chalice might pass away. They reminded Him that His Eternal Father was thus angry and indignant against Him because He insisted on pleading for wretches unworthy in every way; and in that moment they opened out before Him and His beloved Mother the awful

prison of hell, to show them the result of all their work and prayers in the countless number of the entire human race whose lot was hell for ever.

Every smallest sign of gratitude and love from any creature was hidden in the deep, deep darkness which surrounded them. And then Lucifer's final cry was heard: *Cease your pleadings for ungrateful man who hates you, come down from that Cross, and let the hate and the ingratitude of those for whom you would have died attain their righteous end.*

And then he once more showed the loving tender Son, in still more vivid colours, all the cruel sufferings inflicted by man on the Heart of His beloved Mother: *Wilt thou love and plead for those who have thus treated thy own beloved Mother? And then he called on her to look at and contemplate her beloved Son, pointing out all His dreadful wounds, His agonies of soul and body, and the ingratitude of men: And canst thou in His presence plead for men rather than cry out in thy loudest voice, arise and be revenged?*

Thus had the final tremendous assault been made, and in deepest suspense Lucifer, in the serpent's form with which he had identified himself from the beginning and for ever, as iron is identified with the fire which surrounds it and penetrates into its every part, awaited, at the foot of the Cross, the response of the Son and His dear Mother, for they were one mind and one heart. His response was hers, and hers was His.

The silence of eternity now reigned again, and waited to be filled by the Eternal Word, which alone could fill eternity. Silence, silence, deep, deep silence it was indeed that reigned in heaven, on earth, and even in hell itself, and all awaited the word of the great eternal God. All in a moment that eternal Word burst forth, and its cry which filled eternity was: *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.* The work was done, the victory was gained, the serpent's head was crushed.

Oh, what was the outburst of joy in heaven when those words

dropped from His lips ! Those angels never knew before what the harmony of heaven really and truly was : *Glory be to God on high, and on earth peace to men of good will. Thou alone art holy, Thou alone art God, Thou alone art most high. Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God of Sabaoth, the heavens and the earth are filled with the majesty of Thy glory.* And in singing His praises they sang the praises of His beloved Mother, the Spouse of the Lamb. He was bone of her bones, and flesh of her flesh, two in one.

The battle was now over, nothing remained to be done by Him who had conquered sin and death, but to proclaim in the face of all creation the glorious fruits of victory, and the spoils wrested from the enemy—peace to men of good will, and then drink the last drop of His bitter chalice, and place on His work the seal of death—love is strong as death !

Here, my dear Angel said, in soft but tremulous accents : “ Beloved, bear well in mind the battle was fought for all, but the fruits of victory are only for men of good will, as, alas, thou hast still to see ”.

Oh, dear Angel, strengthen me, and open out the way. He extended His arms in that instant and clasped me in them, and I was lost to the things of earth, and once more in God’s eternity, and I seemed to see Eternal Love, all love, nothing but love guided by Eternal Wisdom, determined to call into existence Beings who, made like Himself, would absorb Him into themselves, or rather be absorbed by Him, as the bright and brilliant diamond is itself absorbed by the rays of the sun which shines down upon it. And from the depths of that infinite Love and Wisdom I seemed to hear ecstatic voices, cries of happiness far exceeding all that could ever enter the mind of any creature not already dwelling in their midst. And the words of those ecstatic cries were : “ I live, not I, but God lives in me ”.

For I had seen Him give them existence, and as He was Love

alone they also had to be all love, and His Eternal Wisdom knowing what they required to become thus all love like Himself, gave the means which His Eternal Wisdom and ardent love marked out as those whereby alone the great work could be done. He gave them free will, and thereby divested Himself of the power of control over them whom He had thus made free. They had become, so to say, independent of Him, and if they chose, could will evil as well as good. That which He, Eternal Love, guided by Wisdom itself, thus did, could only be on His part deepest love, and that we shall fully realise when we enter into possession of that light which now is too bright to be other than deep darkness to us, and will continue so to be, as long as we are in the world.

In this moment I was aroused, and once more stood before the Cross on which for love of His poor creatures Incarnate Love was dying. I seemed to see the greatness of that love, and how it embraced every creature. Then, my dear Angel said: "See, see that love, count all those wounds, plunge down into that deep ocean of sorrows, deep into that wounded Heart, where, as if all His own sorrows were insufficient for His love, thou wilt see all the agony of His beloved Mother. There thou seest the measure of His love and what He underwent. He had done all that love could do, but man had free will.

Two sinners, for each of whom He had undergone all His cruel torments were dying by His side, crucified like Himself, but He could only save the one who willed it, the other was lost for ever. Ah, truly, there was only to be gall in His bitter chalice.

I heard the voice of Him who willed it say: *Remember me, when Thou comest into Thy kingdom*, and I heard the response: *This day, thou shalt be with Me in Paradise*. The happiness which that free will of His beloved creature might have given Him would indeed have made His bitter chalice overflow with the joys of heaven, but the dark flames of hell, pouring out from him, who dying by His side, blasphemed Him, made it

more bitter still. Oh, what agony He then underwent! He saw His poor child, for whom He had undergone such cruel torments, and for whom He was now about to die, snatched from His arms, to be led there where he would hate and blaspheme His love for ever. But He still lived, and still might work for those He loved so much; hence another grief. Ah, He seemed to say, could I only suffer more, I might still touch his heart, but no, He could do no more, His cup of sorrow was full to overflowing.”

Oh, sinner then, no matter what thy crimes, canst thou ever doubt such love, because thou art a sinner? Oh, refuse not to heal the wounds thy sins have inflicted on His loving Heart. Those wounds are there changed by love into lips which plead with thee, and ever entreat thee to heal them all. And how canst thou do that? what is the balm which will do that work? *One thing, and one thing only, and that one thing thou alone canst give, and it is thy love and all the gratitude of thy heart.* That is the balm which heals all His wounds.

And because I said these words, He looked at me from His cross, and oh, with what love! I must indeed have died in that same moment, but He willed that I should still live. But the world which had heard His prayer, “Father, forgive them, they know not what they do,” had also now to learn that His prayer was granted for all who willed its fruit—“This day thou shalt be with me in Paradise”.

Oh, my soul, my soul, never forget that thou art free, and must do what thou canst, and give thy will to Him. Thy prayer must ever be “Not my will, but Thine be done”; seek to do His will in all. Thou must use the means which He has placed at thy disposal—without them none other ever can serve thee in any way, notwithstanding all His love and power, He can never reach thee.

MEDITATION X.

FIFTH DOLOUR AND ITS FRUIT—SACRAMENT OF HOLY ORDERS.

MARY, MOST HOLY, THE GIFT BEQUEATHED BY JESUS TO HIS BELOVED ONES FROM THE HEIGHTS OF CALVARY.

FOR a brief space, all was once more deepest silence. As from the depths of the ocean no sounds can arise, neither could any rise from those now plunged in the deepest depths of sorrow. Oh, what anguish filled their hearts! The loss of the unrepentant thief opened out before them the countless number who would follow in his steps, and be lost by their own free wills, and tear themselves for ever from His loving Heart, and I seemed to hear words, rising from that dying Heart—"tell Me, what more I could have done!"

Oh, in what a sea of sorrows were He and His own dear Mother plunged! The sins of the world weighed still on them, and their dark light hid all that might comfort or console them;—all was bitterest gall, and it was gall and gall alone.

And in the midst of this silence my thoughts carried me back to the beautiful world, as it came from the hand of God, that hand, from which only beauty and all precious gifts could flow, the hand of Love Itself. The sun shining in all its brilliancy, and pouring down its rays of beauty and life on every creature, imparting to them all its glory as even now it does when falling on a cluster of diamonds and every precious stone. In the midst of that world was the Garden of Paradise, in which were concentrated all the most exquisite productions of the earth, teeming with life and beauty, and at the foot of a tree stood the master of all, he for love of whom the Great God had called all this wondrous beauty into existence, and by him stood his bride, beautiful as himself—both clothed in sanctifying grace which gave them a beauty as far beyond all

that existed on this earth, as heaven itself is more beautiful than this world.

And at the foot of the tree was coiled a serpent displaying from its scales gorgeous and seductive hues. But all in a moment darkness seemed to rise from it, and I saw no more.

But when all was enveloped in that darkness, I felt again the frightful convulsion which ran through the whole of creation at the moment of Adam's fall. And I heard Adam say that he was naked, and the Great God said that the lot of man was now death, that the earth would produce thorns and thistles, and only yield bread by the hardest labour, and in the sweat of man's brow. And I heard the woman say that the serpent deceived her, and I heard God say that her heel should crush his head, and that her conceptions would be multiplied, and that in sorrow she should bring forth her children.

All this I had heard before, but now it returned to my mind with far greater force, when in that moment my dear Angel roused me as it were from the midst of Paradise, and then I understood all that had seemed to me only as a dream.

I stood on the gloomy Mount of Calvary, where all reminded me of crime and death. I stood at the foot of a tree, and saw nailed to it the Son of Man formed of Adam, who himself was made of earth. And He was naked, only there was growing from His Head a whole crown of long hard thorns. And the hand of death was on Him. He had toiled and laboured so hard, to give bread to His children, that now He must die. I saw the sweat of His brow, and it was all of blood flowing in big streams from every pore, and from the roots of those dreadful thorns, and it flowed from other awful wounds which covered His entire Body—no spot was free, frightful scourges had done their work. And now, I recognised that this was the tree of life, on which its fruit was growing, that He Himself was the true Bread from heaven, by eating which man would live for ever—that to give this Bread, it was, that

He had toiled and laboured so very hard, and undergone such frightful torments ; that this had been the one end and object of His entire life—to be Himself the food of those whom, in His ardent love, He was now in this very moment enabling to be born again, to be His own true children. “With desire I have desired to eat this Pasch with you.” Oh, what love, what love ! oh, how could such love ever be ? “Greater love than this no man hath, that he die for his friend.” But to die in ignominy and by such cruel torments ! Only He, who being Love Itself, and therefore able to pour out even greater love than the greatest love that any man can have, could ever do it. It is Incarnate Love Itself, who is thus dying, and for whom, dearest Lord, is it that Thou art dying ? “For thee, beloved child.” Oh, what can I do for Thee, dear Lord ? “My child, love Me, and give Me thy entire heart.”

And at the foot of this tree the woman stood, the serpent was also there, and her heel was on its head, which it had fully crushed, at the very moment when the prayer, *Father, forgive them*, reached the throne of God. And oh, what sorrow and deepest anguish filled the heart of that poor Mother and Bride of Him who hung dying on the Cross ! Every thorn that grew from His poor brow went through and through her heart, and every cruel wound, which had made Him like a leper, had left no spot in her, which was not that wound again. And she drew a long, long breath, which I thought must be her last, but it was only to say : “Stand and see if there be sorrow like unto my sorrow”. Truly was it so—it was the second Eve, who, having taken on herself the guilt of the first, had become the Queen of Martyrs, and was espoused to the second Adam, the Man of Sorrows, and was now giving birth, in the deepest anguish, to all who were to be born again. But as so many thus born again would reject the grace, others had to take their places, and thus were her conceptions multiplied. And then I heard the voice of the Bridegroom, pointing out to her those to

whom she had given birth—"Woman, behold thy son, all My disciples owe their lives to thee, to them thou hast now given birth, behold, from henceforth they shall call thee blessed"—and He then reminded these disciples that it was to her they owed their lives, that she truly was their Mother, and that they should ever be her loving, devoted children. To the disciple He said: "Behold thy Mother".

Oh then, dear, beloved Mother, my life hung on the will of the first Eve, and for me she would make no sacrifice or give up that which she thought would procure happiness to herself, and thus gave me death, and thou, dear, dearest Mother, wouldst sacrifice all—like God Himself whose love thy love resembled, thou wouldst also give thy own beloved Son, now dying on the Cross, in order to give me life. Oh, never will I forget His word, that thou art indeed my Mother, and, that I am thy child, and owe all to thee. Oh, how I will ever love thee, and ever be thy own true, loving child.

Once more it seemed to me, that joy at the sight of all thus born again, must change their sorrow into joy. But no, it was not so. Still the dark flames of hell shed their darkness on all calculated to relieve it in any way, and only kept before them all which tended to increase it. And they, as a tender mother who, when one child suffers has no thought for all the others, whom she loves no less, had all their thoughts and sorrow on the dying thief, now dying eternal death and also on all the many, who like him, would refuse the life purchased for them at so great a cost.

And they prayed, and seemed to pray in vain, and all this bitter anguish and grief at length tore from His loving Heart, and that of His beloved Mother, whose heart was one with His, the sad, mournful cry: *My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?*

And here I clearly understood that, as all the frightful torments of hell are as nothing in comparison with the one awful

loss of God, which like terrible fire, always and for ever pervades and penetrates those sufferings, so was this agony to our dear, dying Lord, an agony so great that all His other frightful torments were as nothing in comparison with it, and that torment throughout His life filled every hour and moment of His existence.

Oh dearest Lord, Thou askest why, and the reason stands before Thee. In the Garden of Gethsemane, Thou hadst to hide away, to bury Thy face in the ground on which Thou didst fall prostrate, so terrible was the countenance of that Eternal Father, and so terrible was His wrath enkindled against Thee, His own beloved Son, in whom He was well pleased.

Oh no, but Thou didst bear me in Thy arms, pressing me to Thy Heart, and because Thou wouldst not abandon me, the sinner, He abandoned Thee. And I am still in Thy loving Heart, and Thou askest why He has forsaken Thee, look into Thy Heart, dear Lord, and there Thou wilt still see me. Cast me forth, and in the same moment Thou wilt be in His tender, loving, and eternal embrace.

I thought that my heart would break, and that in that moment I must die. For it now seemed to me that my words, "cast *me* off," had given Him the blow of death, so intense was the agony which vibrated through His loving Heart, and those vibrations seemed to say: *Cast off My own beloved child to save Myself a pang! Ah no*, and with a loud voice He called out, *I thirst*. And for what dost Thou thirst, my only Love? *I thirst for thy dear soul, I thirst for all poor sinners, ah, did they but know how I thirst and long for them, with what love and confidence would they ever fly to Me!* "They would see the new heaven they create for Me. They would see that they are the price I ask for all the hard work I have done for them, for all I have ever undergone. To seek for them My own most precious treasures, I came down from heaven into this world, for them I worked so hard, and then, oh, what happiness

for Me, when, as I do in them, I find and possess all for which I have ever sought. I thirst, I thirst to work still harder, and to suffer still more for them." He would then only taste the bitter gall which was one drop more of bitterness in His bitter chalice but would not assuage the natural thirst arising from such frightful loss of blood.

But now, He can do no more. He has absorbed the very last bitter drop of the chalice of sorrow. He has paid the debt, and paid it to the last farthing. He can do no more, He has loved His own, and loved them to the end, love could go no farther. *It is consummated*, and then, with that full confidence in His Eternal Father, which, in the midst of all the sufferings of His entire life, had never for one moment faltered, He said: *Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit*, placing all the perfect love of His human nature in the hands of Eternal Love. He bowed down His head and expired.

And as He bowed down His head I saw the last drops of precious blood trickling down the hard, long thorns which, passing through His Sacred brow had gathered them up, and from their protruding points they dropped on to the ground. He had shed all His blood for us poor sinners, to the very last drop. Oh, well might He say: *Tell Me, what more I could have done.*

Dear Lord, I am Thy child, grant the last prayer Thou canst ever hear from me, in this mortal life. Oh, let those last precious drops of blood fall on my poor sinful heart. And one drop still remained, the last, and it fell upon my heart, and I should, I must have died of love for Him, who in that moment died for love of me! But no, the time had not yet come, and He willed that I should still remain.

The pure and spotless Mother of God had never for one moment left her dear Son; she ever stood at the foot of the Cross, whose Victim was, as it were, ever passing from the altar of her heart, whence she offered Him, doing all that the

most perfect creature could do to the altar of the Cross, where the Victim Himself did that which even the purest of pure creatures never could do herself, satisfy the justice of, and give infinite glory, to the Great Eternal God, of whom only that which was infinite like Himself could be really worthy. And in this moment I heard Him with a loud voice cry out : *Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit.*

Oh, dear Angel, open out to me the tremendous mystery now passing before my eyes.

“Beloved, that Divine Victim, who alone and only could do a perfect work, on bowing down His head and completing the work for which He came into the world, bowed it down first to that dear beloved Mother, whom He loved above every other creature, angelic or human, or all united, in order that she, from whom He had received His Sacred Humanity, and whose love for Him exceeded the concentrated love of every other creature, might place on His Sacred Brow the crown of His entire work, the crown of all His sufferings, the crown of the Man of Sorrows, whose Queen she was, now that He was about to place His Sacred Soul in the hands of His Eternal Father. Remember, beloved, that every suffering that He underwent throughout His entire life, became full, entire suffering, and was carried, so to say, to the utmost extreme of which His Sacred humanity was capable, by passing through her loving, agonising heart, and then returning to His own, purpled with her blood. To understand that agony, we must understand the greatness of His love for her, His own pure and spotless creature, His own beloved Mother. He still ardently thirsted to suffer more, but, one by one, He had absorbed each drop of His bitter chalice, and none now remained, but still every desire of His loving Heart was to meet a full response, and therefore was He still to suffer more. And then, as when man is at the point of death, every act of his entire life opens out as one word before him, and he reads it at a glance, so

did every agony of soul and body, of heart and mind, which He, the Incarnate Love, had undergone for His creatures, and all the sufferings of His beloved Mother, centralise themselves in His loving Heart, and repeat themselves again. But still the cry, *I thirst, I thirst for more*, was ever in His Heart, and so again and again, in order as it were to quench that unquenchable thirst, all those frightful agonies in their frequent repetition, and also the death He was in that moment dying, became the sword foretold by the holy Simeon, and passed through His dear Mother's Heart. There, all crimsoned with her blood she, His true Mother, formed it into a royal diadem, and placing it on His Sacred Head, said once more, but oh, with what agony of soul: *Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to Thy word. Thou art now to die, oh, be it so. Thy will be done in all.* Crowned, then, by His own dear Mother's hand, by the hand of His beloved Bride, by His own Queen, the Queen of Martyrs, He was to appear before His Eternal Father. Oh, ye daughters of Jerusalem, go forth and see King Solomon, in the diadem wherewith His Mother has crowned Him, in the day of His espousals, in the day of the joy of His Heart.

Oh, yes, see the Son for whom His Father, the Eternal King, has in heaven prepared a marriage feast. I see that Son decked out in His nuptial garments, composed of all the sorrows of His life, which in that kingdom will be changed into unimagined joy. He is crowned with the Crown of Sorrows and intensest agony, which, on bowing down His Sacred Head, He received from the hand of His beloved Mother, and thus crowned, He bowed it down in deepest adoration of His Eternal Father, offering Himself the perfect Victim for the sins of the world; the perfect equivalent for that which God's honour and glory required from the sinner, before He could be freed from the consequences of sin, the equivalent for torments which must have been eternal.

And as He would do all that a perfect man could do, and had undergone the extreme of suffering in the senses of His Body and in the powers of His Soul—both in Him being created with exceptional capacity for suffering—He may have undergone even that which in point of time would correspond with the eternity of those torments as far as that could be.

But He has reserved to Himself the knowledge of many things which will be imparted to us only when we see Him face to face, and when before asking us what more He could have done, He will show us all He really has done in its full detail. He did all that the creature could do, and His divinity gave to all and every thought, word and deed of His entire life, the infinite value which alone could make them worthy of the Infinite God, to whom they were fully offered.

But the final moment had now come; He bowed down His head and expired.

And in that moment, beloved one, see how all the sufferings of soul and body, of mind and heart of the Redeemer of the world, and all those of His dear beloved Mother, are now concentrated in His death, and as a sword pass through and through the heart of His and our dear Mother, that from them all in one the Sacrament of Holy Orders may bud forth, that Sacrament by which, to the very end of time, the adorable Sacrifice which had just been consummated would continue to be offered for her dear children, and its Victim be their food, and also, that all that He has done may continue to flow into His and her dear children until the end of time, through that Sacrament which He instituted in the moment when His love attained the object of His love. She now, doing all that the creature could do, was paying its price; He had paid the rest.

With desire I have desired to eat this Pasch with you."

Oh, dearest Angel, let me now repose for a moment with thee. Oh, how I long to fly to the poor heart of my own beloved Mother, but I hardly dare approach her in the hour of her greatest sorrow until I hear her loving voice.

“Yes, come, my child, come to me, for His last word told me that I was indeed thy Mother. Come, therefore, to thy poor Mother's heart. When thou art there I feel that He is there, that He is still with me!” Oh, what compassion, gratitude and love now again filled my heart for that dearest of all dear Mothers, and oh how she pressed me to her own most loving heart!

And I could only say, yes, dear Mother, and He then told me that thou wast indeed my true Mother, oh blessed art thou. And we seemed to weep together.

And thus she, the refuge of sinners, and their tender Mother, ever does with every poor sinner that flies to her loving arms and reposes on her heart. She can no more repel a sinner than can her own beloved Son. And even in the next world, to have power to repel, they must themselves be repelled by a repulsion which is final.

Oh, who can see all that they have done, all their love for poor sinners, and call in question the greatness of their mercy, the greatness of their love. Look up at the Cross, and see Him who is dying there—see who stands at its foot with all His suffering, as a sword passing through her poor heart! For whom all that? “For thee.” Why? “Because thou art a sinner.” Oh, what goodness, oh, what love! Dearest Mother, I love thee, oh, how I love thee!

MEDITATION XI.

SIXTH DOLOUR—ITS FRUIT THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION.

THE LANCE OF THE CENTURION WHICH PIERCED THE HEART OF JESUS ON THE CROSS WAS ALSO A SWORD OF SORROW TO REND THE HEART OF MARY, FOR SHE WAS ONE WITH JESUS.

My dear Guardian Angel now bids me remember how that pure and spotless Virgin was the Spouse of the Holy Ghost,

who formed from her the new Adam, now dead upon the Cross. "Remember," he said, "how He, when dying, told her, that in giving Him, as far as depended on her for the redemption of the human race, she received in exchange all who were to be born again.

To these she, the second Eve, had now given life in deepest sorrow. They now took the place of Him who was born of her, and had been formed from her by the Holy Ghost. And therefore the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Love, who was the Spirit of Jesus Christ, would also come down upon them and enkindle in their hearts His own divine love. But all graces have to flow through her loving heart to all her children; that heart, then, already opened by the sword of sorrow, has once more to be opened wide by the centurion's lance, in order that the great Sacrament of Confirmation may flow thence and pour down on all those children the fulness of the Holy Ghost."

For a brief space all was again silence, when in a moment a great tumult was heard, and the centurion, with a lance in hand, was seen approaching the Cross, on which still hung the lifeless Body of her dear Son. He was accompanied by the executioners, who seemed about to obey the orders he would give them.

"Oh, when the poor Mother had seen her Son die on the Cross, she had thought that all outrages on Him must have found their term, and, therefore, what was her dismay! In that moment every torture and outrage that had already been inflicted on Him rose up before her mind in all their frightful hideousness and agony. Were they now to begin again? And as the centurion's lance was raised in the air to strike Him, the sight of it alone more than sufficed to tear out her own entire heart, filled with all its sorrows, and that lance carrying it on its sharp point, passed through and through it before it reached that of her beloved Son.

Ah, truly, no outrage had ever been inflicted upon Him which had not first of all passed through her loving heart. Thence, crimsoned by her blood, it passed through and through His own. For He was subject to her whose will was ever in conformity with that of His Eternal Father, her response had ever been: *Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to Thy word.* Nothing could ever be done to Him which had not first of all been undergone by her, she had ever to do all that the creature could do, but, alone she could not give life.

He then Himself suffered all that she had first of all undergone in her loving, maternal heart, to which it had already been made known, awaiting her consent, and by His own suffering imparted to it the infinite value which she was unable herself to give. But as this stroke of the centurion's lance could not cause Him suffering, and as He was no longer subject to her, having, by the death to which she had given her consent, passed from her hands to Him to whom she had offered Him in the Temple of Jerusalem, which offering she had now completed on the Mount of Calvary, this last outrage was not made known to her in advance, her consent was no longer needed. As far as a creature could do so, she had paid in full the price which then redeemed the world. He, therefore, was no longer hers.

God had accepted her offering, and had already paid her the equivalent for which she had asked; He had given her the sons of man, they were now her children, and she was their mother, and in that sense her dear, beloved Son was no longer hers; she had given Him without reserve.

The whole entire agony then inflicted by the centurion's lance was, as just said, for herself alone, and was the response to her prayer that the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Love, should come down on all those who were now her children, as He had come down on her beloved Son.

But God had willed that every grace, which flowed from the price which she had paid to Him in the person of her own beloved Son, should pass, first of all, through her own heart, before it reached those for whom she had obtained it.

Thus then it was that her prayer for the Sacrament of Confirmation, was carried by the centurion's lance with her own heart into that of her beloved Son, and by Him the favour granted was returned to hers, that thence that Holy Ghost might flow down upon all her dear children as indeed it did when she was in their midst.

Oh then, what a price that dear Mother had to pay for us, and only if thou knowest how great was her love for that beloved Son, canst thou understand the greatness of this dolour, and what she suffered when that lance went through her heart, which was ever one with that of her beloved Son!—it could not go through the one without passing through the other.”

The ever-blessed sorrowing Mother and Spouse of the Incarnate Love, the Man of Sorrows, still stood at the foot of the Cross in deepest contemplation. I felt, as it were, plunged into that ocean of sorrow and mystery. Both were far, far beyond my depth, and whichever way I turned it was always the same, one depth leading to another deeper still.

My dear Guardian Angel stood by, awaiting the moment to speak to me, and then he said: “My beloved, it is now time for me, before the suffering Mother completes her great work by consigning to the tomb the Body of her beloved Son, to recall in a few words, much which thou hast already learnt, that so, at a glance, thou mayest better understand that which is now before thee, that is, the Incarnate God, slain on a Cross by the bitterest torments of Soul and Body, and His own beloved Mother, who has undergone in her heart and soul all these same torments, and indeed, in order that His might be the greater, they had all passed through her loving heart before reaching Him. The one and the other may then well say to all: *Stand and see if there be sorrow like unto my sorrow.*”

DIGRESSION.

“God, the Great and Infinite God, can do all things whatsoever He pleases, but He never can be pleased to do anything which is not in accordance with His divine nature which is goodness—Love Itself.

To bring this within thy reach, beloved, I may say, that His power is limited by His love. *He can do nothing which is not goodness and love.* Therefore never lose sight of that—*whatever He does must be good and loving.* He cannot do otherwise. But as thou hast seen elsewhere, the deeper depths of that love are so bright that they are darkness to whosoever in this world would fix his eyes upon them. Therefore, as that light seems darkness to all who are not in its midst, and have not final possession of its source, and is for all that really light, and the brightest of all light, so also, when His acts which never can be anything but that which He is, goodness and love, seem opposed to love, or indeed, to be acts of ill-will and hate, we know that they are and must be acts of very great love indeed, and if they appear otherwise to us, it is precisely because that love which produces them is so very great that it is entirely beyond our comprehension, and will be so as long as we are in this world and not dwelling in its midst. It will, therefore, often seem to us to be the very opposite of what it really is.

Faith comes by hearing, and that faith teaches me, as also does my common-sense, that God is Love Itself, no matter what I see. Fix thy eyes on the bright sun in its great glory, and it will blind thee not only to all within itself, but to everything around thee. So must it be, if thou wouldst penetrate into God's hidden ways. *Who can search out His ways?* But however dark they may seem to us, we know that they are, and can be only the bright light of love, and more than that, the darker they may seem to us, the brighter is their real light—it is, and must be so, since His almighty power is and can be guided only by His love.

Once more then I say, He is love, and only love, all that He does must be love, and can be nothing else, no matter what its appearance, or how dark it may be to us."

CONTINUATION.

"Now, beloved, remember that in speaking to thee, I put things before thee, not under their real form, but under a form which may make them intelligible to thee. Much of what I tell thee now thou hast already learnt, but it is of such importance that it is well to remember it again.

The Infinite Good God determined in His love to give existence to intelligent beings, who might live for ever in the enjoyment of all the happiness of which their nature was capable. And of what happiness did He make them capable? He made them capable of possession of Himself in whom is all happiness. And how? He who is Love Itself made them to His own image and likeness; that is, with love resembling His own, and ever flowing from a free will.

The free will then, directing the love which is ever flowing from it, to God's love which it resembles, those two loves blend together and become one, and thus possess each other as the Spirit of Love Himself expresses it: *My beloved to Me and I to My beloved.* But every creature being finite, must be infinitely far from its infinite Creator, and therefore, how is it to reach Him, that it may pour out its love upon Him? How can it bridge over the infinite space that intervenes between them?

He only who is infinite can do an infinite work. He only can draw His creatures nearer to Himself, and He makes known to us, not only that He, Love Itself, will remove the obstacle, but also makes known to us the means by which He will attain His end.

He will assume a finite nature unto Himself, unto His own Divine Person, so that He may be both infinite and finite: infinite as true God, finite as true man. By the former He

would be one with God, by the latter, one with men. He would thus be the link, the Mediator between God and man. Finite human nature would reach the infinite God in Him and through Him. Thus the creatures adopted by Him as His children, who by the exercise of their free will approach Him and pour out all their love upon Him, will thus obtain eternal possession of Him.

God had present to His mind angelic and human nature to both of which He would give existence. In His infinite wisdom and love He determined to assume into His divinity human and not angelic nature. That being so, thou canst understand that He, the all-wise and perfect God, seeing before Him the entire human race, would first of all stretch out His hand to the one only of all that race, who by her love resembled Him the most, and stood nearest to Him, and whose love for Him was therefore the nearest approach to His own love, Love Itself, and who was thus the fittest of all the human race to impart to Him its own human nature. For that reason also, she would, above all others, be prepared to make any sacrifice and undergo any torments, no matter how great, for love of Him, since sacrifice is the measure of love.

Therefore, beloved, thou canst understand that thou needest nothing else to tell thee how greatly the one thus chosen must have exceeded all other creatures human or angelic. Therefore, whatever perfection thou canst imagine in any creature, or in all creatures together, must fall far, far short of all that was really there.

That one stood in the midst of the entire range of angelic and human natures, as a high mountain on a plain, whose lofty peak is hidden in the skies. And, therefore, everything that thou canst think most perfect in any creature, must there be found in its very highest degree.

Some of the words which expressed that which was in the mind of the great Creator, in the moment when that perfect

one first stood before Him, are given us by the Holy Spirit of Love Himself, and thus did He address her: 'Oh, fairest among women, my love, my dove, my beautiful one. Arise my love, my beautiful one, and come. How beautiful art thou, my love, how beautiful art thou. Thou art all fair, oh, my love, there is neither spot nor stain in thee. Open to me, my sister, my spouse, my love, my dove, my undefiled. Thou art beautiful, oh my love, sweet and comely. One is my dove, my perfect one is but one. Fair as the moon, beautiful as the sun. How beautiful art thou, and how comely, my dearest in delights.'

There then, is the fair and beautiful one, from whom alone the Great Eternal God will take the human nature, which He will assume into His Divinity, and through which alone any finite creature, be he angel or man, can ever attain the infinite.

But she is free with the freedom wherewith God has made her free, made to His own image and likeness, and therefore, He Himself will ask her, if she also wills that which is His own holy will. Only when she says the word will He, by whose word all things are made, pronounce His own word. Only then, will that word command, and all things be created.

He formulates that which He asks of her, in these words: 'Hail! full of grace, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou amongst women, behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus. . . . The Son of the Most High, and of His kingdom there shall be no end.'

And here, beloved one, were once more, but more fully than in the moment of her creation, opened out clearly to her mind all the consequences which would flow from that which was asked of her, and that was that she should, in obedience to the will of her great Creator, hand over to cruel torments and to a malefactor's death, the Son, whose mother she would now become.

As we have said, the light of God's deepest love is dark-

ness to every creature who is not yet in final possession of Him, and, the greater the love, the greater is its darkness and the more does it resemble hate. That which was asked of the angels in heaven, seemed detrimental to them, and only those who loved, because they knew that God was love, and that that which He willed, no matter what its form, could only be good, would assent to His will. Their love being all for Him, there was nothing which He could ask that they would not also will.

Thus is it with the human race which is called upon to deny itself, and give up that which would apparently be for its true happiness, and to walk on what seems a very thorny path. But those who really love, embrace all with joy, no matter at what cost.

And thus stood that Blessed Virgin in presence of her God, and oh, how dark did all His brightest light then seem to her! Oh, how could love, or aught else but bitterest hate, slay the beloved Son of God! And yet she was now asked to give her assent to every hard, cruel blow, which was to torture Him and bring about His most cruel death. She had ever known, that the mother to whom He would be subject, would have thus to consent to all; and oh, how often had she wept over the sorrows of that poor mother! But only now did she know, that she herself was that poor afflicted mother.

Eve stood at the foot of the tree bearing the forbidden fruit, and the eternal life or death of the entire human race hung on her will and lips—and here now stands the second Eve, and on her will and lips depends the eternal life, not of the human race only, but also the possession of God and His heaven by the angels themselves. On her will depends whether or not they shall possess Him by whom alone they can give infinite praise and love to God, for He is the One by whom alone all that love and praise is, and can be, given.

Oh then, most Blessed Virgin, behold how every creature

awaits thy word for its creation, for God Himself awaits it—on thy word only, will He pronounce His own, which calls all creatures into existence.

Who then can call her other than the centre of all creation? Who can suppose that any grace can come to any creature other than through her, through whom alone existence was given to it? Who can suppose that God who willed that existence which came through her, should will that the graces required by existence should come through any other hands? Through whom should her divine Son bring forth the Sacraments of His Church, if not through His beloved Spouse? Who but that Blessed Virgin should, after man's exile, show him the Blessed Fruit of her womb?

Now thou understandest why the words which God awaited from her, rose up before Him, when thou wast but a thought in His eternal mind, and before He gave existence to His angels. *Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to Thy word.* Then and then only was it that He said His own word, which called them into existence.

Thou seest now why the sweet harmony of her words sounded through the heaven of the angels, and conveyed to them the graces vouchsafed by God, and filled all who were willing to accept them, with more and more ardent love. He Himself granted all those graces to the sweet music of those words; they accompanied the loving angels to battle, and gave them victory. By them, as now, friend was known from foe.

He, as thou wilt remember, awaited those very words before imparting life to this creation, which until then was void and empty. Those words rose up like sweet incense before Him, and drew down from Him pardon and forgiveness for Adam and Eve, and the promise of a Redeemer.

Who can see those countless virgins, whose lives are placed before us by the Church, and who, walking in her footsteps, were chosen by God to be His spouses, and clothed in

heavenly nuptial garments, gave their consent to eternal union with Him, and then received from His own hand the wedding ring, and were by Him made one with Himself, and not see, and understand that she, the Queen of Martyrs, was indeed the Spouse of the Man of Sorrows, and that they were one?

Who can see those same countless spouses of the Lamb sighing only for greater and greater sufferings, and who, so to say, could not live without them, and pleaded with their beloved Spouse for still more, and for pure sufferings without alleviation, and not readily understand what must have been the thirst for suffering in the true Bride of the Man of Sorrows? The thirst of many of God's saints for sufferings was absolutely insatiable, and they declared that they looked on life as the greatest of all sufferings, if not filled with sorrows and sufferings of every kind, and, I say again, can any one doubt the longing of the beloved Spouse of the Man of Sorrows—for sorrows, and greater sorrows—*I thirst, I thirst?* Can we be surprised if He will, with His own hands, respond to the cravings of His beloved Spouse, and inflict on her the greatest of all her dolours, the pain of loss, by Himself withdrawing from her? Can we suppose that she could wish for, or accept comfort and consolation, when we hear a beloved spouse of His declare: *Suffering is not suffering to me, my suffering consists in being pitied?*

Oh, then, indeed, the chalice of that Beautiful One, that One who was ever full of grace, that One of whom the enemy could never say: *Thou didst much, but thou couldst have done more*, was full of suffering throughout her life; never was there room in her heart for anything but suffering, and her dear beloved Son, willing that everything which she did should be done in all the plenitude of perfection, offered her no consolation, even in the midst of the greatest dolour of her entire life. Neither did He, in the greatness of His love for her, take away or even lessen one of those sorrows for which she so ardently

thirsted. Full of grace, her every act was to be of the highest perfection ; never could it be said by any one, even that it might have been just a little more.

That, my beloved, is the one now absorbed in contemplation at the foot of the Cross of her dear Son, but not seeing things even with the amount of light with which we can see them. In the moment of her creation she had power over all things that are on the earth, and she was filled with the knowledge of understanding. The science of the Spirit filled her heart with wisdom and showed her both good and evil. But from the moment when she took our sins upon herself and offered to pay their debt, the darkness of sin took possession of her and was more intense in her than in any other creature, for she had on her the sins of us all. Blessed are they who have not seen but have believed. No she never saw, because she was ever blessed ; her life was a life of the very purest faith."

Oh, Mother, thou tellest me to stand and see thy sorrow—but that is not enough for me, who am thy own dear child, the last gift bestowed on thee by thy own dear Son before leaving this world. I then seemed to see her poor heart open wide, and I entered there to attend to the objects of her contemplation. In that moment, she was all absorbed in that of the infinite perfections of the Great, Almighty God : His greatness, His goodness, and His love. And then all that love seemed to open out, and from it flow innumerable creatures, made to His own image and likeness, in order that they might share His glory and happiness. And she seemed to realise the greatness of that goodness and love in a degree unattainable by any other creature. When, in the very moment of its fullest realisation, I saw her raise her eyes and look around, as it were, to see the boundless love and gratitude of every creature for such love on the part of their Creator : in that same moment, a change, so great, so awful came over her, that I could only compare it with the change I saw in heaven, when Lucifer, the

highest of all the angels, became what he is, with the difference only, that his transformation was the result of hate for God, and hers was the effect of love.

Every attribute of God, outraged by him and by sinners, produced its corresponding torment in them, and each torment seemed to fill them with rage and ever-growing hatred and despair, whereas in that ever-blessed Virgin, the corresponding grief and suffering produced by her love at the sight of each outraged attribute of the God she loved, only increased her love, and made her desire more and more ardently to suffer, that thus she might, as far as it was possible to her, make amends for the outrages committed against that great, good God.

And then I understood how He, in the greatness of His love for her, satisfied her love by permitting her to suffer in the full measure of suffering, and therefore, that in each suffering nothing should be wanting, and in that moment, a breath from God seemed to rest on her and say: "My Beloved, ask of Me what thou wilt," and her response was, "Good God, I thirst; in all my sufferings leave not one spot in me unfilled with deepest, bitterest anguish". And His reply was: "Beloved, it could not be otherwise since thou art full of grace". Hence I understood the difference between that Mother and her Son, and all other mothers with their loving children: it was that the love of that Mother and her Son for each other was carried out by the one helping the other to do that for which each one longed and had come into the world, that is, to drink the chalice of sorrows to its last drop, and to leave no dolour less than it might have been. All other loving mothers assuage, to the utmost extreme of their power, the sufferings of their children—as loving children also do those of their loved mothers.

Every thought, and word, and deed of that beautiful Spouse of God was to be full, entire, perfect. She was full of grace.

As she helped her beloved Son by her consent to all His dreadful torments, even unto death, so did He permit that she also should drink the bitter gall to its last drop. His thirst for sufferings continued, as long as sufferings were possible to Him, and if He now no longer suffers, it is because for Him suffering can no longer be.

And therefore I still heard the words of the loving Mother: *I thirst, I thirst*, and she like her dear Son would also in payment of the debt which she had contracted in taking our sins upon herself, thirst and suffer as long as sufferings were possible for her, and those sufferings would be pure, full, entire sufferings, the only ones worthy of that great and noble soul, the only ones worthy of her who was full of grace, of her, the Queen of Martyrs, of her, the beloved Spouse of the Man of Sorrows, of Him and her, who were One—how could they be one, if His sufferings went as far as they could go, while hers were checked in their growth?

As she, from the moment when she pleaded for us, and offered herself to suffer for us, became the Queen of Martyrs by seeing the cruel torments of soul and body which must be undergone by an incarnate God, so did her sufferings like His continue as long as it was possible for her to suffer, but with this difference that she, who like her dear Son ever advanced in age and grace, now suffered, not only as a loving creature suffers, at the thought of the sufferings of her incarnate Creator, but as one who was also His most loving, tender Mother, and His own beloved Spouse—His sufferings were always before her until the moment of her death, when, like Him, bowing down her head she expired—for, as He died by His own will, she died by His—she heard His voice calling: *Arise, My beloved one, and come.* And she replied as always: *Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to Thy word,* and expired in that moment.

CONTINUATION OF MEDITATION XI.

That dear Mother then who willed that I should see her sorrow, stood absorbed in contemplation at the foot of the Cross, and I saw passing before her mind, how God had been pleased to allow her to do all that a creature could do towards payment of the debt of sin, how she had pleaded with unutterable groanings for what she could not do herself, and which He alone could do. How He had heard and granted her prayer by giving Himself to her, and making Himself subject to her, Himself the Infinite price which alone could pay the debt : how she had herself carried that price to God's Temple, and there offered it to Him. How God had signified to her His acceptance of it, by telling her how she would have to pay it to Him, as it were, coin by coin, and how a sword of sorrow would transpierce her soul. Then, as all His sufferings in detail passed before her, she saw how she had paid the price coin by coin, the last one only remaining unpaid. And then she saw how she had still to pay the entire price, giving it as a whole to Him, who had already given her those for whom it had been offered.

Once more then she was to take in her arms that beloved Son, the price already paid for those dear children who were now her own, and offer Him to God. A word just breathed into her ear by the beloved disciple, aroused her from her deep contemplation, and she withdrew a few steps, that those who were charged to do so, might take Him down from the Cross, and consign Him to her arms. And oh, with what tender love did she clasp Him, and press Him to her heart ! Then indeed did she once more breathe forth the words, placed on her lips by the Holy Ghost : *My Beloved is to me a bundle of myrrh, abiding in my bosom.* Oh, dear Angel, shall I not enter that heart again ? She said that when a beloved disciple

was there she possessed her Son again, and she told me she was my Mother. I at least should watch and see, if I cannot give her help and consolation.

“Beloved, for her there is no consolation, but her desire has ever been to fill thy heart with grace, and that grace will pour into thy soul while thou art contemplating her sorrows.”

And then I saw her, as it were, with her beloved in her arms, examine every coin one by one of His bitter suffering, that it might be reproduced in her heart, in all its freshness and agony, and then be joined with His (for *It was not good for her to be alone*), and thus be offered with Him and His, all to God.

Oh no, there is no suffering wanting—not one agony that might have been more intense ; not one moment of time when she did not do all that she could do. No, she was ever full of grace, and every suffering of her, the Queen of Martyrs, fitted in perfectly with all the sufferings of soul and body of the heavenly Bridegroom, the Man of Sorrows, her true Spouse. And now I saw, how with her dear lips she kissed, and kissed again, each one of His frightful wounds, pouring out on them a flood of loving tears.

And all in a moment that Mount of Calvary assumed the form of the Garden of Gethsemane, which it was now to be to her. And as there her dear Son had presented Himself clothed with the sins of the world, to be judged as sinners are judged at the last day, so was she now also to be judged. Like them He heard the terrible sentence: *Depart from Me*, and He lingered on, in that most frightful of all the torments of sin, the pain of loss, until all His sufferings reached their highest point, and He then cried out: *My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?* So was this blessed Queen of Martyrs now finally to lose Him, consigning Him to the grave, to see Him no more in this mortal life.

MEDITATION XII.

SEVENTH DOLOUR—ITS FRUIT THE SACRAMENT OF
EXTREME UNCTION.

TRUE CHRISTIANS, LIKE BLESSED MARY, SHOULD LET JESUS
CRUCIFIED BE ALONE SUFFICIENT FOR THEM—WITH HIM
THEY SHOULD LEARN TO SUFFER AND BE AT REST.

AND then I saw that Blessed Mother, as she bent down over her Beloved, weighed down by that which gave her a look of sorrow and sadness beyond all I had ever seen before, and then I heard her breathe these words: *My soul is sorrowful unto death*; and so it was, and I thought she would never breathe again, and that she had followed her beloved Son. But no, her chalice of sorrows was not yet exhausted.

The dolour, the fruit of sorrow, which was to pay sin's special debt, the pain of loss was fully formed during the three days that sorrowing she sought after Him, but only now has it attained maturity. Then it was He who had forsaken her, but now it is she who must herself, in the exercise of her own free will, forsake Him, and pay the price she promised to the Eternal Father in the Temple, and pay the whole price without reserve.

To do so, and that her work may be full, perfect, not one shade less than it might be, and therefore worthy of the great, the noble, the exalted Mother, Bride and Spouse of the great Eternal King, she has to place that whole entire price in the tomb that awaits it; He will then be gone, and no longer hers, and no more seen by her in this mortal life!

The angel, then, who had strengthened her dear Son, that He might still live and suffer more, now strengthened her, and again she breathed, and in that same moment poured forth over each one of His wounds a fresh flood of tears, and then I noticed, that as those tears flowed over His wounds, they were as sweetest oil, sweetest balm, and became the oil of the

Sacrament of Extreme Unction, which would heal the wounds caused by sin in her dear children, and fit them to pass from this world into eternal life.

But, dear Angel, tell me, why was the consigning to the tomb of the Body of her dear Son so great an agony as to be numbered with her greatest dolours? She knew that He could now no more suffer, that He would remain only for a few short hours in the tomb in which she now placed Him, and would then rise from it to live for ever, and that then once more she would see Him in life and press Him to her heart, knowing that death no longer had dominion over Him. Why, how could that be other than a joy and consolation to her, after all her terrible sufferings?

“Beloved, for the reason thou hast just heard—her sacrifice of Him in payment of man’s debt was full, entire, without reserve, and He, her dear Son, who would Himself inflict on her, His own beloved Mother, loved by Him with love only less than His love for His Eternal Father, the greatest of all her dolours, the pain of loss, would Himself complete His work, and would be seen by her no more.* And that agony, that crucifixion of the understanding which then drew from her poor heart the question *Why?* continued, as it did in Him, until the end of life, and her last words, before commending her soul into His dear hands, were like His own: *My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?*” Ah, dear Angel, let me reply.

Beloved Mother, thou askest *Why?* and I, thy child, respond, it is because thou, like thy own dear Son, wouldst not abandon me, but wouldst ever bear poor sinners in thy loving heart.

“It is so, my beloved! She was throughout her life the Queen of Martyrs, and as, before she became the Mother of the Incarnate Word, she ever suffered as a loving creature the torments she knew must one day be undergone by Him, and

* I say this with reserve, because it is contrary to the more generally received opinion.

His sorrows, which love made hers were always before her, so now were those same sufferings ever present to her mind, not as to that of a pure creature only, but as to one who was also His own true beloved and most loving Mother.”

As few can realise the great perfection of this most perfect of all God’s works, the one whom He willed to be His Mother, or the extent of sacrifice to which perfection leads, the sacred record sums up all in very few words, but those words are oceans into which all who will do so may plunge, and will there find that everything they have read or heard of the perfection and abnegation of the saints, those countless brides of the Lamb, are all as nothing when compared with the greatness of her perfection. And as regards the special point now in question, the negative evidence of the sacred writers is, for those who realise the fulness of grace in that Blessed Virgin, more than sufficient, at the same time that it avoids a direct statement, which might be a stumbling-block for many.

And now the moment has arrived for the consummation of the great work entered on three and thirty years ago. The pure and spotless Virgin, Mother of the Incarnate God, then bore her beloved Son in her arms to God’s Temple, and there offered Him to God, His Father, as a Victim, a Holocaust, in payment of the debt of eternal torments and eternal death, due by the human race, and while she made that offering, her beloved Son repaying her, as it were, for that which had ever been in her mind and heart, *to do His will in all*, seemed gently to repeat in her soul her own words to Him: *Be it done to me according to Thy word.*

Her offering, thus confirmed by Him who was offered, was accepted by the Eternal Father, who then pronounced sentence upon her beloved Son, and condemned Him to undergo the awful torments of soul and body, which are the fruits of sin, and then to die an ignominious death. He had indeed earned that death, for He had taken upon Himself the sins of the

entire world, and thus made Himself a curse for all. The words of His Eternal Father : *Depart from Me, ye cursed*, were ever sounding in His mind and Heart, until He had paid the whole entire debt.

But as the creature who asks a grace must do its part, must do what it can, so was it intimated to her who did her part in offering the Victim, that she herself must also complete her work by the sufferings she must undergo. *Thine own soul a sword of sorrow shall pierce.*

The Victim was then left in her hands, that the sufferings and death to which He was condemned might be fully carried out, and when that was done, she was once more to carry Him in her arms, and present Him to His Eternal Father dead and all one wound from the torments inflicted on Him, in accordance with the sentence which that Eternal Father had pronounced upon Him.

And therefore I now see her with His poor Head resting on her heart. I see Him in her arms, and she herself is supported by the loving ones who had never forsaken her, and is thus relieved of the greater weight, which would have exceeded all her strength, and thus she bears Him to the sepulchre, and there she herself deposits Him, the Victim slain, as it were, upon an altar, and once more bending over Him in perfect calm and peace and conformity with the will of Him, whose will was ever hers, she seemed to listen for a moment, as if gathering up once more that will, and then I heard her say : *Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to Thy word.* And another flood of tears streamed down upon Him, as she gave Him her last loving kiss. And then she raised her head, and the tears had ceased to flow. Her sacrifice to God of her beloved Son, was full, entire without reserve, perfect as the Victim, and worthy of herself of whom that great God had said : *Thou art all fair and beautiful, without spot or stain.*

I then saw her kneel down by the spot on which she had placed the Victim, and she then offered Him as the price of man's redemption, to God, a sacrifice so full, entire, perfect, that it would only compare with the perfection with which He had offered Himself to His own Eternal Father. She then rose from her knees and withdrew. A bright cloud which I understood to be the highest glory of heaven, now seemed to descend from God's own throne upon her, and hide her from my view, but the great Archangel Michael, the Guardian Angel of God's Church, stood before me and said : *Her work in this world will be, to give that Mother's care which she bestowed on her beloved Son, to those children, who through Him were born to her in deepest sorrow at the foot of the Cross—to those, whom she received in exchange for Him.*

FINAL MEDITATION.

DEAREST Guardian Angel, I am now longing to return to my dear Mother's Heart. I thought it well, when she withdrew from the sepulchre and had completed her all but infinite sacrifice, to leave her absorbed as she was in the great work now accomplished. But I know and feel that she calls me. The void which would have existed in her loving Heart on giving back to God the dear Son whom He had given her was assigned by that dear Son to the children to whom she had given birth at the foot of the Cross.

"It is so, my beloved. When she fixed her eyes on Him for the last time in the sepulchre, she saw distinctly before her all who were to replace Him, and fully understood that her work on earth was now to continue to those dear children all that she had done for Him. Rising then, her words were once more : *Behold the handmaid of the Lord ; be it done to me according to Thy word.*

I will not again attempt to describe the perfection with which

those words were thus repeated by her who was always full of grace ; with that grace she had ever perfectly corresponded, and therefore it had never ceased to flow into her heart and soul in torrents, great in proportion with the greatness of her who was God's Mother. By her perfect correspondence with it all, it ever dilated her capacity for its reception in proportion with its abundance.

It met with no resistance, and therefore, each time that God's holy will, like a hand, touched this perfect instrument of His will, it emitted new notes in harmony with the progress it had made, and which accorded perfectly with all that had gone before.

The oft-repeated words, and full response, were as music ever new, music so perfect that all the sweetest harmony of heaven only formed one note to chime in with its full sonorous chord."

Then, dear Angel, she, in contrast with every other even most perfect work of God, was ever as a lily amongst thorns ; so much did her beauty exceed that of all His other creatures. "My child, thou sayest well, but all that thou, and all others, can ever say of her perfection, is so far from what it really is, that we can only say of it, in its own degree, that which we said elsewhere of the deep eternal light of God's wisdom and love : to thee, it ever must be darkness, until thou possessest it, in the possession of eternal light and wisdom. In that light alone canst thou see and know all.

The royal prophet, who had seen and said much of God's greatness, in ecstasy saw Him as He is, and then declared that all that ever could be said or thought of Him was so far from what He really is, that it was like the difference between truth and error. His words were : 'I have said in my excess that every man is a liar'.

Thus also must we speak of the perfection of that ever-blessed Virgin. All that ever can be said of her is like dark-

ness side by side with light. She ever walked on the perfect path of faith, convinced of that which appeared not. 'Blessed are they who have not seen but have believed.' And she was the blessed one amongst all women, amongst all God's creatures. Her light of faith was so bright that, couldst thou see it as it really is, it would blind thee as would the bright sun's rays, if thou didst fix thy eyes upon them.

Hence the sacred writers only present her before thee as a whole, that thou mayest draw thy own conclusions, as to how great and how perfect she must have been in every way. But the details they give thee speak only of the darkness of faith. 'How can this be done to me?' But she understood not the angel's words. 'Son, why hast Thou done thus to us?' Neither did she understand her dear Son's reply. And after His resurrection He appeared not to her, she never saw Him, (?) since thou art expressly told that Mary Magdalene was the first to whom He did appear. She did not see because she was blessed. 'Blessed are they who have not seen but have believed.' And so was it throughout the life of her who was always full of grace. In the bright light of faith thou seest the Incarnate God under the form of bread and wine, and in the bright light of faith she saw that same Incarnate God under the form of her own poor little helpless babe, dependent on her for all. She saw Him powerless in the hands of His cruel executioners, and heard Himself declare, in the agony of death, that He was forsaken by the God whom He had ever called His loving Father, but whom He now only calls His God; and in the light of faith she believed that He, her own Son, whom she saw abandoned by all, even by God Himself, was the Lord and God of all.

Oh, who shall ever dare measure in detail the perfection of her who was God's own Mother and was ever full of grace? The inspired writers dared not do so, and therefore are all but silent. They tell us that she was the flower from which that

fruit had grown, the one of whom was born the Christ. Judge the flower by the fruit! He was her God, and she was His Mother.

God's own ambassador declared her to be full of grace, that is, that there never was a moment in her entire existence in which her life was not a life of the highest perfection, or in which she did not correspond perfectly with every grace bestowed on her.

In a word, there never was a moment in which her life was not a life of faith. She was blessed, for I say again those are blessed who have not seen but have believed. She never saw, but only heard: God's voice guided her in all, and hence her response ever was the same: 'Be it done to me according to Thy word'. 'The just man liveth by faith.' Through faith she had access to the grace which filled her. 'For she walked by faith, and not by sight,' for faith is the evidence of things that appear not. It can never deceive, whereas sight may often do so. How could she, who was ever full of grace, walk otherwise than by the perfect way?"

Dear Angel, then that beautiful, that perfect one is really and truly my Mother.

"Yes, beloved, it is so. And from that thou mayest judge how great must be God's love for thee, since He gives thee for thy Mother that one whom He, the great all-wise and perfect God, chose from amongst all creatures to be His own beloved Mother.

He, being Love Itself, does for every one, as far as each one is capable of it, all that He does for Himself. He loves His own to the end. He loves them as He loves Himself, and therefore wills that they shall be one with Him."

But, dear Angel, tell me why I thus needed a Mother, in the order of grace.

"Beloved, why does each one, in the order of nature, need an earthly mother? God might have created each one

apart, as He did Adam. Thou knowest well that God, being Love Itself, saw, in His eternal wisdom, the course which love marked out, as the one which would attain the end which He proposed to Himself in giving existence to His creatures. As we have often seen, the depths of His eternal wisdom and love are darkness to us, and so they must remain until we enter into possession of His eternal light ; and yet for all that, He does give us a ray of that light, and one so bright and brilliant that nothing is or ever can be really hidden from us.”

And what is that, dear Angel ?

“ It is, beloved, the knowledge that He is, and can only be, Love, and therefore that He can be nothing else. No matter, then, what He does, or what form His works may take, thou knowest that they are, and can only be, full and entire love.

And when thou art asked why He did this or that, or did not do one thing rather than another, thou canst always give an answer complete in every way : He did what He did because, for the attainment of the end which He had in view, and which could only be love, it was more in accordance with eternal love and wisdom. And how art thou to know that ? Thou art to know it from the knowledge thou hast, that He, being Love Itself, can therefore only do that which is in accordance with what He is.

Losing sight of this great truth, beloved, His creatures often impute to Him the result of their own thoughts and acts. But when thou recallest to thy mind that He is not only good and loving, but Love Itself, all will in a moment change.

Thou art terrified when thou thinkest of the awful change which took place in the rebel angels, and of their eternal lot. But He, being Love Itself, did not, and could not, have brought that change about. He could not of Himself have cast them off ; it was they who had to enable Him to do so, and indeed force Him to do it, by themselves casting Him off for ever. And so it is with every sinner that is lost. When, in death, he

stands before God, he has to enable God to cast him off, by himself turning from God, for whom then he is filled with bitter hate. Love would not be love if it did not cast off that which is of another nature and diametrically opposed to it; neither would hate be hate if it did not cast all love away. Our dear Lord Himself tells thee exactly how things really stand, by what He recounts of the prodigal son.

That son demands of his father *his* portion of the substance. There was then a portion of the substance which belonged to him, and over which he had a right, which his father could not deny him. His father, therefore, gives it to him, no doubt with great regret and fear of what the result may be. The son leaves his home, and makes so evil a use of all, that he brings upon himself every kind of misery and suffering. The father wept at home over his poor lost child, longing and hoping for his return, and ready at any moment to receive him with open arms and reinstate him as his dear son.

It was not that loving father who made him suffer, or fed him on the husks of swine; it was not he who stripped him of his costly garments, and clothed him in beggar's rags.

And what was the substance which was and is inherent in the very nature of angels and men—which was theirs, which God had given them with their existence, and which He Himself could no longer take away or refuse to give them? *It was free will.*

The rebel angels and sinners demand their right, and instead of saying to God, 'Not my will but Thine be done; be it done to me according to Thy word,' and remaining subject to Him, they declare that they will not serve, and leave their home, and make evil use of their free wills, which really are their own; thus they are no longer controlled by His laws, and entail upon themselves the terrible results of sin.

Oh, beloved, it is no use to talk of loving God unless thou seest and knowest Him as He really is, and as He only

can be, Love Itself. No one can ever love Him with his entire heart unless he sees and knows Him as He is—Love, and only Love. Had His love a limit, thou couldst only love Him so far; but as His love has no limit, He wills that thou shouldst love Him to the end, as He loves thee.

And if thou wouldst lead souls to love Him, thou canst only succeed by the way of truth, that is, by showing Him to be Love, and only Love, in everything He does. He has but one aspect, and that one aspect is all that is lovable. Then show Him thus to others, and *then* tell them to love Him, and put on their lips the words of love, which tell Him how great is their love for Him."

Thank thee, dear Angel, for all that thou tellest me. I shall go to my dear Mother's Heart with a clearer understanding of her, and her dear Son's love for us.

"Yes, beloved, and I would remind thee of another thing which may give thee further light. Every creature lives in the element to which it belongs, and if it departs from it it dies. The element to which all who are created to the image and likeness of God belong must be the one in which He Himself not only lives, but which is His whole existence, for the very reason that they are created to His image and likeness. And what is that? It is love; and therefore that creature's element is love, just as water is that of a fish or air the element of the birds that fly about and live in it. But if the fish leaves its own element and goes into air, it suffers and dies, and unless it is rescued before death has obtained full possession of it, and is restored to its own element, nothing can ever save it. And if the bird leaves its element of air and goes into water, the same thing occurs. But in neither case can the blame attach to either element; the fish and the bird left that for which their nature was adapted, and entered into that which could only give them death.

So it is with angels and men. If man leaves his element—love for God and that which love implies—he casts himself at

once into the element of hate, which is not his own, or in any way adapted to his nature, and therefore dies to the true life, because he is no longer in the element on which his life depends, and unless he is rescued before leaving the world, his death is eternal. And when the fish dies, it cannot impute its death to the water which no longer reaches it, because it is itself that has left the water, and not the water which has left it. And it is never God, Love Itself, who leaves the soul—that He can never do—it is the soul which, like the prodigal son, leaves Him.

Once more then, beloved, remember that no evil, no sorrow, no suffering of any kind, can ever come from God ; it is only the creature with a free will and knowledge that can produce it.”

Thank thee, dearest Angel ; but it seems to me that thou hast still other things to tell me, before I return to my dear Mother's Heart.

“ It is so, beloved, and they are all to prepare thy way to that loving Heart.”

THE GUARDIAN ANGEL'S LESSON.

“ Beloved, I will now put thee on the path on which thou shouldst ever walk, and sum up in a few words much that thou hast already learnt. God determined in His love to give existence to His creatures who might share His own happiness and glory.

Eternal wisdom, guiding that love to the attainment of its end, indicated that that end would be attained by their being created to His own image and likeness ; and as, without free will, they would not have had that likeness, He gave it to them.

If thou art free, no one can control thee. Another may do all in his power to influence thee, to induce thee to act in accordance with his wishes, and also supply thee with every requisite for the purpose ; but otherwise than by superior strength

with which he may force thee to do his will, he can never make thee do it. But if he deprives thee of thy freedom and robs thee of that which by right is thine, he forces thee to do his will ; but thy act is his, not thine.

And if God acted thus, He would be in contradiction with Himself, as He would be taking away that which He had declared by its bestowal to be an integral part of the likeness which should exist between Himself and the creatures whom He destined to become one with Himself. Angels and men then, being free and so to say independent of God their Father, it should not surprise thee if, claiming their rights and independence, they exercised it—some, as the elder brother of the prodigal, by remaining ever subject to their father's will, and others, as the prodigal son himself, making an evil use of it. But since God gave angels and men free will, it can only have been given in love, since only love can come from God, and therefore no matter what form it may assume or have given to it or to whom or what it may be directed, in itself it can only be good.

Therefore, should the question arise in thy mind, why God did this or that, or why He did not do the other, or why He permits such evils, thou hast always the answer ready, which is, that He did that which in His eternal wisdom He saw accorded most with the love which He is. In a great building thou mayest see many details which thou canst not understand until the work is completed, but when it is finished thou seest all, and the reason of each part. So also is it with God's works and ways. When His work is done, and when at the last day thou standest before it, thou wilt see that all His ways were love. Thou knowest it now by faith, then thou wilt see it, and have to acknowledge that love could have done no more.

When thou considerest this thou needst no longer be surprised at the evils which arose in heaven, neither wilt thou be so at those which reign on earth, or ask why God permits them,

since thou knowest that they are independent of Him, and; so to say, beyond His control. But now what I say, beloved, of angels and men as a whole, applies to each individual and to thyself. Therefore thou must ever bear in mind, in all thy dealings with thy dear loving God and thy dear Mother, that no matter what thou askest, they have to see how far thy will is in accordance with thy words; and unless it is really so, they cannot grant what thou askest, because they cannot deprive thee of thy free will. By delay, and numerous graces, they may at length lead thee to make thy will accord with thy words; and when thou dost so, thou enablest them to begin the work for which thou askest. I say the work begins, because it often happens that high walls have to be raised before the arch which is to receive the keystone is commenced, and only when that is ready can the keystone which completes the work be closely fitted in.

The fall of Adam entailed such ruin on the entire human race that it took four thousand years for it to rise again to the height needed before our Blessed Lord could come to perfect the work of restoration; and it thus rose, but only step by step. And so is it often with His creatures, and many graces which they ask from God and with which their free wills are really in accord require great length of time and much preparation on the creature's part before it is fit for their reception. Our Lord has much work to do within them to clear the way and raise the walls on which He will place His gifts. Thus, if they have not full confidence in Him, in His promises, and in His love, they think He does not grant their prayer. And this applies not only to what they ask for themselves, but also to what they ask for others. If thou only seest the rough stones thrown into the ground as foundations on which to build a palace, thou canst not believe that a palace will ever rise upon such stones as those; but when thou knowest that the order to build has been given by the great king, and an architect charged

to carry out the work, and that these stones are so placed by their orders, thou understandest and knowest that they are necessary, and canst quite believe that the palace would never rise without them, however little they may seem to thee adapted for so great a purpose. So is it with the great work which our Lord does in souls. He has often very much to do before He can grant their prayers, and seldom do they understand what the work is which He is really doing. Thy dear Lord then has His work to do for thee, and thou must let Him do it; but thou also hast thine to do, and the one without the other will be of no avail."

CONTINUATION.

"Thou hast now, beloved, to attend to another important matter, and that is, to see the order which thou hast to follow in carrying out the great work for which God has placed thee in the world.

As we have already often seen, God created angels and men with free will, thus making them independent of Himself. And as they cannot do their own work for themselves without His aid, neither can He do His without their help.

He therefore, before creating them, had to consider whether He would find the co-operation which was necessary to enable Him to do His work, on the attainment of which depended the end for which He would give them existence. If He saw that He would meet with that co-operation, He would call them into existence; otherwise they would not have been created.

Now what was the great work which He, the great God, had to do to make union between Himself and His creatures possible? It was to assume into His Divine Nature a created nature, and that created nature was in His eternal decree to be human nature.

For that purpose it was necessary that the human nature which He would create should be so perfect that it could, by uniting in one point all the highest perfections of which it was capable, present to Him one so full of grace that, as far as a creature could be so, it might be worthy (as was the ever-blessed Virgin) to have taken from it that humanity which He willed to assume into His Divinity.

Raise thine eyes, beloved, to the throne of God in heaven, and behold seated on that throne that which was made from the perfect one, behold that which is a part of her substance, and hear the heavenly choir sing: *Thou alone art holy, Thou alone art God, Thou alone art the Most High.*

But now I have said that in that perfect one should be united every perfection of which human nature is capable, and therefore all that we can imagine of perfection must have been in her in its very highest degree.

She was ever full of grace, because she never placed an obstacle in its way. As we have said elsewhere, God's love presses on every side as the waters of the ocean press all within its bosom, so that, if there are two souls perfectly resembling each other, they both receive the same amount of grace, but that does not prevent God, the *Giver of Gifts*, from bestowing more if He so pleases on the one than on the other; but when He wills to do so, He increases the capacity of the soul thus chosen, and so enables it to receive more and more of the ocean of love which presses it on every side.

Oh then what would be the gifts which He would bestow on her who already had *had* capacity for every highest perfection of which human nature was capable and possessed it all? She was full of grace, and how would He dilate that capacity otherwise than by making it, as far as that might be, vast as the eternity in which He had ever dwelt, since He would now dwell there? Would He, could He, the great Almighty God, dwell in less than that which corresponds with His own eternity as far as the

finite could correspond with the infinite? That measure God alone can measure.

Truly, beloved, we should be silent on this greatness, because there is only one word which can contain it all, since it alone is more, and that word is 'infinite'. Any word less than that would be, so far as we can see, as distant from the reality as the reality itself must be distant from the great infinity. I say as far as we can see, for in the Infinite God there are and must be depths far beyond our view; but because she is in those deepest depths our sight can never reach her, and the word which expresses her and what she is, like the word itself of the Eternal Father, which is darkness to all others, is also darkness to all created beings; she alone of all creatures knows herself, and God knows her."

CONTINUATION.

"Thus, beloved, thou seest the creature by whose co-operation God, because He has so willed it, is enabled to do His work. But, as we have said, all creatures have free will, and so had that Blessed Virgin.

The work which God had to do was to enable angels and men to attain the end for which He would create them, and had He foreseen that that end would not be attained He would not have given them existence.

Of all the human race, the Blessed Virgin was the only one in whom that nature had attained its full perfection, the only one full of grace. But she would not have been full of grace had any perfection of which human nature was capable been wanting in her; but she was full of grace, and therefore the only one of the entire human race who could give to God that human nature without which His own work could not attain its end.

He therefore sent His ambassador to ask her consent to the work which He willed to do.

Now what is it that depends on her will?

As the eternal salvation, or the eternal loss, of the human race depended on the will of Eve, so did, first, the creation of the angels, then the creation of the human race, then the power which would enable man, dead by sin, to be born again, depend on the will of that Blessed Virgin. If God is incarnate, the angels will be created, because they will then have one through whom they can be united with God, the end for which their nature is adapted and given to them, and also be enabled to give that infinity to their love and gratitude and praise which alone can make them worthy of an infinite God. For the same reason existence will be given to the human race which without the incarnation would not have been created, or in the event of death by sin could never have been born again.

And, oh tremendous thought! the great Almighty God throughout His eternity ever made His will and design of creation subject to the will of His perfect one, to whom He would give existence and make independent of Himself! Oh then how great must He have made her, and how like Himself. Thou canst understand, beloved, how the word which could express in all its fulness what she is in every perfection would correspond in its own created order with the eternal Word of the great uncreated God; and if that eternal Word was to assume a created nature He would seek it in a creature whose word corresponded, as far as that could be so, with that which He is Himself, the Word of the Eternal Father.

And now God awaits her will, and in the same moment that her word declares that she is His handmaid to do His will in all, she gives existence to angels and men, she crushes the serpent's head, and enables men who had been led to death by him, to be born again. *Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to Thy word.*

Since then God only awaited her word to say His own by which all are made, and awaited her consent before He would

give the command by which all would be created, how can we say other than that we all owe our existence to her?—first of all the angels, and then and doubly so the human race, for Adam and Eve, as they came from the hand of God, were her children and she was their mother, but they and their children died ; but they were born of her a second time, for at the foot of the Cross she again became their Mother.”

Then, beloved Angel, she is not only our Mother but also thine—the Mother of the angels.

As I used these words a thrill of unutterable bliss seemed to pass through and through that dear Angel, and he paused for a while, and I understood that it was to join in the outburst of love and gratitude towards God of the whole angelic host—for having given them such a Mother, the one whom He had chosen for Himself, which in that moment filled the entire heavens. And that was followed by a fresh outburst of the same love and gratitude towards their own beloved Mother, understanding as they did, fully and entirely, that they owed everything to her.

CONTINUATION.

“From what I have now told thee, beloved, thou wilt easily understand the words of wisdom which the Church applies to that ever-blessed Virgin, and by them thou wilt see the light in which thou shouldst consider her, and the spirit in which thou shouldst approach her.

‘From the beginning, and before the world was created, I came forth from the mouth of the Most High, the first-born before all creatures. I was the holy dwelling-place. I have ministered before Him, and He that made me rested in my tabernacle. I was exalted like a cedar in Libanus. I gave a sweet smell like cinnamon and aromatical balm. I yielded sweet odour like the best myrrh, and my odour is as the purest balm. I am the Mother of fair love, in me is all hope of life

and of virtue. He that hearkeneth to me shall not be confounded, and they that work by me shall not sin. They that explain me shall have life everlasting' (Eccles. xxiv.).

Thou gatherest from this, and from all that has gone before, how, as far as we can see, God made that Blessed Virgin the centre of all creation, and willed that all creation should as it were flow forth from her. Willing that, He also willed that every grace which His creatures might need should also flow through her. Only one thing could give her this predominance over every other creature, and that would be her greater resemblance to Him, the all-perfect one; that is to say, her love for Him must have far exceeded that of all other creatures, and therefore His love for her was great in the same proportion.

He then, knowing that her love for all her dear children, angels and men, was great in the measure of her love for Him, would place every grace she desired for them in her hands as He had done their creation, and this also in order that she might have the happiness of herself bestowing it in His dear name, and of seeing the love and gratitude which would flow from them to Him, the one object of all her love.

But if all graces flow through her to us, surely every prayer, and praise, and act of love, which we would breathe forth to Him, our own loved God, must be embellished a thousand-fold by passing through her hands, and be acceptable to Him in proportion with the love with which she loves Him, and the love with which He loves her.

Thus thou seest, beloved, the frame of mind which should be thine in all thy dealings with our dear Lord, and His and thine own dear Mother. But these dealings are ever to be, not as those of even most favoured subjects with their king and queen, but as those of loving children, ever dwelling with their dear parents. He is our beloved God and Father, loving us with boundless love, and she is our loving Mother, and this should ever be thy frame of mind in all thy dealings with them;

always without restraint, knowing that when thou goest to Him she through whom He gives all is ever there, and when thou goest to her, He is ever there and gives all she asks, because He knows that her love for thee is the same as His own ; they are one, and thou art one with them.”

COLLOQUY WITH MY DEAR LORD AND HIS SWEET MOTHER.

Dear Mother, thou callest me?

“Yes, my own beloved child, come now and take the place in my heart assigned to thee by my own beloved God and Son with His last breath upon the Cross : ever dwell there, and remember all thou hast learnt in the lessons I have taught thee.”

Dearest Mother, after all thou hast done for me, knowing as I do what I am, and how poor is all the return of love and gratitude I can ever make to thee for all thou hast done for me, I could never be happy in thy dear Heart, if unable to do something more.

But I see thy beloved Son, my own dear Lord and Saviour, ever present with thee, and I just give Him a pleading, loving look, and He sees my trouble, and pressing me to His heart, He says : “ My child, thou knowest that thou art My own dear child, and every thought and wish of thine is also Mine ; but I could hardly acknowledge one who did not truly love My own dear Mother, who is all My own love, one not filled with love and gratitude to her to whom he is indebted for all he is and has, and who procured that all for him by her very heart’s blood, and by sufferings far, far exceeding those undergone by any other creature.

I therefore promise to do for thee in regard to our dear Mother, in its own degree, that which I do for all the blessed in heaven. To their love, gratitude, and praise I give the infinite value which alone can make them worthy of the infinite

God to whom they offer them. So will I give to all thy love and gratitude to thy own dear Mother the value which alone can make them worthy of her who is My Mother, the Mother of God, and at the same time make them worthy of thee who art our own beloved child. And when I crowned her in heaven, I saw each act by which thou, filled with love and gratitude to her, wouldst ask Me to repay her for all she had done for thee; and in response to each of thy petitions I added a precious gem to her so brilliant crown!"

Oh thank thee, dear Lord; yes now, dear Mother, I shall ever dwell in perfect peace in thy dear loving Heart!

And now I would beg thy dear spouse, St. Joseph, who is ever one with thee, to tell me the special points to which I should attend. She gave him a loving look; and he, turning to me with love like hers, said:—

MY DEAR FATHER ST. JOSEPH'S INSTRUCTION.

"Beloved soul, remember that God in His eternal love and wisdom has given thee, and to all His creatures, free will. It is theirs, and therefore no longer His; they can claim it as a right, as the prodigal son claimed the share of substance which belonged to him, independent of his father.

That will being free, they can use it for good as did the elder son, or for evil as the prodigal. To the one that free will brought peace and happiness, to the other it brought the extreme of misery and suffering. The evils then and the sufferings which exist in the world are independent of God, and are no more His work than were the evil deeds and sufferings of the prodigal those of his loving and sorrowing father, who ever longed to arrest their course, but could not do so until his son was himself willing.

All the sufferings then, called the chastisements of sin, are the fruits directly or indirectly produced by the sin itself which the

sinner commits in the exercise of his own free will. The sufferings resulting from sin in this world cannot, strictly speaking, be called the punishment of sin ; they are only indirectly so, by accident as it were.

First, a child may have contracted disease perhaps even by its own fault, and its loving mother seeks to save its life by an operation which is in itself painful ; but the pain of that operation is only the indirect consequence of the disease, and the operation which produces it is not performed by way of causing it. Thus indirectly God doing a work, seen or unseen by us, but always done in love, may make us suffer in this world, where, as long as there is life, there is also hope, but no matter what He does He is always the loving mother. Second, I receive a wound which immediately causes pain. What does that pain indicate ? It indicates that a wound has been inflicted, and the pain is the struggle of nature to give forth the juices which if encouraged and allowed to flow will heal the wound, and it indicates that life is there ; if the part was dead there would be no suffering. And this law pervades all nature throughout the world.

So is it with sin ; the sufferings which result from it, in this world, are the efforts which nature and grace are making to throw off the frightful evil and heal the dreadful wound.

Thus, dear child, whenever thou sufferest pain in mind or body thou canst always say : Ah, there is a wound somewhere, and that suffering is healing it. Thank thee, dear Lord ! Or, the suffering may be a steep hill up which thou hast to climb when our Lord is leading thee to high perfection !

Indirectly the sufferings of this life may become the real punishment of sin. If a child after a painful operation in its rage tears off the bandages, because they make it suffer, that operation which would have saved its life now hastens its death. And if instead of bearing patiently, and in conformity with God's will and mercy the sufferings of this life which really flow as

healing balms from the wounds inflicted by sin, the creature rebels against them, those sufferings which would have healed the wounds now make them mortal and give eternal death.

And thus often with sinners the sufferings resulting from their crimes, and which might have been healing balms, become only the commencement of the eternal death which must be their lot for ever when they leave this world.

Then never look on our dear Lord and God as anything but what He really is, Love, and Love only ; and therefore ever have unbounded confidence in Him, loving Him with thy entire heart, and letting Him do His will in all.

See the loving mother who never leaves the bedside of her child, though so diseased that no other will approach it. She disposes of all her substance in the hope that she may thus save its life. Only when death has ended all, and she can do no more, does she turn aside, weeping bitter tears and leave it for ever. That is what our dear Lord is and ever must be to each one of us, His dear children, no matter how diseased by sin. Only when He can do no more, and His own child in death casts Him off with bitter eternal hate, has He also to turn aside, and cast off for ever that hate which can never combine with love. Oh cruel soul, He has given thee all His love, His entire Heart, His entire Self, and thou with bitter hate castest Him away ; crying out, *Depart!*

Ah, beloved child, He can now no longer weep, but as long as tears could flow He wept over thee in deepest bitter anguish. Oh, my child, what love, what goodness and love are His ! And how He longs for the return of His poor prodigal children to His loving arms, that He may give Himself to them ! Oh ! With what desire does He desire to make them one with Himself ! *Oh Father ! grant that these may be one, they in Me, and I in Thee.* No matter what thy crimes, or what thy ingratitude to God may hitherto have been, couldst thou see Him as He really is, ever standing before thee, thou

wouldst only see tenderest loving compassion in His beautiful eyes ever fixed on thee, and hear, flowing from His lips like sweetest honey, earnest appeals entreating thee to return home to His loving and almost broken Heart. And why so much sorrow? Because He sees thee, His own beloved child, on thy way to eternal death. And why does He not arrest thee on thy course? It is because He cannot; thou hast free will, thy portion of the substance, to deal with as thou wilt.

The next thing thou hast ever to remember is His promise that, if thou askest, thou shalt receive. The very moment thou askest, in that same moment He keeps His promise. He is the Eternal Truth, who can never deceive. But there are many things to be considered. Is the thing thou askest really for thy good? That He alone knows. I may have promised to grant thee all that thou askest, and thou desirest to read, but to do so thou must learn the letters of the alphabet which I place before thee, and if thou makest the same request for another, the same means must be adopted, and if thou and he refuse those means, I cannot give thee what thou askest. Thou must apply this to everything, and call to mind the many explanations thou hast already received on this important point.

He is all love for thee, and there is nothing He would not do for thee that thou canst ask, provided always that in His eyes, which see all as it really is, it is for thy good, and provided also that thou really willest it, and *that* thou knowest by the efforts thou makest to attain it; for we always must do all we can, and He supplements our efforts and thus enables us to do what we cannot do ourselves.

The next thing to which thou hast to attend is to keep thy soul free from the disease of sin. When the body is ailing, it is unable to do its work, and the most nourishing food not only fails to give it strength, but if taken might be very often a cause of death. That freedom from sin engenders peace in the soul in which alone the spirit of love can dwell. Thou pre-

sentest a flame to a flame, and the two become one, and thus our Lord's peace meeting thine combines with it. *My peace I leave you, My peace I give you.*

Now what is it that disturbs and destroys that peace in many souls who earnestly desire to love and serve their dear Lord? It is doubt as to whether they are in a state of grace. Oh how many souls say: *Did I but know that I really am in a state of grace, if our Lord appeared to me and told me that such was the case, there is nothing I would not do to serve Him.*

And yet, beloved, of all the means of grace provided for thee, there is not one which seems to divest itself so fully of the dark garment of faith, to clothe itself in a light, bright even to the senses, as does the Sacrament of Penance. That sacrament gives a certainty of immunity from sin, only short of the certainty of faith and short of that only because divine revelation alone can give the certainty of faith.

When a man breaks a law, he has to be brought for trial before a judge in open court. Witnesses are called, and give their evidence in the face of the world. If conviction follows, the judge pronounces sentence on the criminal, and when he has undergone his punishment he is set at liberty and can never be tried again for the same offence. Man by sin breaks the law of the great eternal God, and must on leaving the world appear before His judgment-seat; and terrible indeed will be that judgment, for the time of mercy has then gone by, and justice alone remains.

But our dear Lord tells us that it is He who will be the judge, that all judgment is given to the Son and that the Father judges no one. Then He addresses the Priests of His Church, and declares that that power which is His, He transmits to them: *As the Father hath sent Me, I send you*; and then breathing on them He as it were confirms the power He has given, and specifies the details of that power: *Receive, He says, the Holy Ghost; whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven, and whose*

sins you retain, they are retained, thus making their judgment final.

And therefore those who have been thus tried and judged can never be tried again; and in the next world, if tried at all, it can only be for sins committed since their last confession, or for venial sins not confessed, that is to say, for all the sins for which they have not already been judged in this world.

And then to facilitate in every possible way the trial of His dear children here, that loving Lord allows no publicity to be given to it; it is to be hidden from all, and the only witness admitted will be the sinner himself, and his evidence alone will be taken by the judge, and on that evidence only will the judge pronounce sentence, and in the moment when he says: I absolve thee from thy sins, those sins are cast to the bottom of the sea, and God remembers them no more.

But when our Blessed Lord was pleased to make it known that He had power to forgive sins, He confirmed His assertion by a miracle, saying to the man sick of the palsy: *Take up thy bed and walk*. So also does He confirm the power He has given to His priests by another miracle; for He places a seal on their lips, so that they may never reveal to any living creature the sins for which they have tried and judged their penitents.

But our Lord has not given them a power which He does not possess Himself; they cannot forgive a part of their mortal sins, leaving others unremitted; it must be all or nothing. If then all are not taken away, all remain with the additional sin of sacrilege. I say all, for even those sins which have not been confessed, though not wilfully omitted, are also taken away, and when in a future confession they have to be confessed it is not in order that they may be forgiven, for that they have already been but it is in order to comply with the obligation of confessing every sin, and if, dear child, thou failest to do this, the sins them-

selves do not, and never can, return, but thou committest a new mortal sin. Rare indeed is it that a sinner, though his sins have made him red as scarlet, does not rise from under the judge's hand as far as eternal guilt is concerned whiter than driven snow. And should it be otherwise, it is all but impossible that he should not know with certainty the sacrilege he has committed, and by which he has profaned the sacrament, and it would stand before his eyes in no doubtful or shadowy form, but as a very mountain.

The enemy, enraged at the sight of the beautiful and rich garden ground which thy soul has now become, and seeing it thus capable of producing fairest flowers and most delicious fruit for the Kingdom of God, seeks to cast a mist over it, that so the sun's bright rays, which would warm and make it productive, may never reach it. Oh, beloved child, fly from all those doubts and imaginings, for few things can there be more detrimental to thy soul ; thou knowest from whom they come ; the enemy hides himself in the obscurity of that mist which he has raised, to strike thee fatal blows ; fly then from them with unbounded confidence, love, and gratitude to the loving arms of Him who is all love for thee, but ever remember that thou art in the world to work ; for thou hast ever to do thy part, and do all thou canst, as if all depended on thyself alone, and when thou dost all thou canst thyself, then thou mayest expect with confidence that thy dear Lord and thy beloved Mother will do for thee that which thou canst not do thyself. When thy dear Lord desired to feed the thousands who had followed Him into the desert, He sought for all the food He could find for the purpose, and only on seeing that that would not suffice did He raise His eyes to His eternal Father, who supplied the rest, but in such abundance that when all had eaten the remnants filled twelve baskets. And now, beloved, this opens out a subject on which depends eternal life.

CONTINUATION.

As Jesus fed the multitude in the desert when they were weak and needed strength, so will He feed His beloved children. Raise, then, thy eyes, beloved, and see how He fed that multitude ! See how He took the loaves and fishes into His hands, and having, by His almighty power, enabled them once more, as He had done of old, to increase and multiply, He gave them to His disciples and commanded them to distribute that food to all assembled there. See how the hunger of all is satisfied, and yet the remnants exceed in quantity that of which they had only formed a part. Whether one or thousands ate, all received the same.

Once more, beloved, raise thy eyes and fix them on that of which thou hast but seen the shadow, and on Him who worked the wonder.

Follow Him as did that multitude, and listen to His words ; for He is indeed the Eternal Father's Word spoken to thee in a language intelligible to thee—the Word made flesh, Love incarnate, the true Light shining in the world. Follow Him ; love Him ; listen to Him ! for He not only loves thee, but He is Love Itself.

Fear Him not, but only fear thyself ; for thou alone canst inflict the wound which may give thee eternal death.

Since He is only love, He can only love. He has no power to repel ; the creature alone can enable Him so to do, nay even must force Him. Neither can He make His creature suffer, unless the creature opens out the way ; and even then He can only make it suffer in the tenderness of His love, in order to heal a wound or to save life, or, as He often does, to lead to higher perfection.

And even if those who in death have cast Him off for ever suffer eternal torments, it is only because they have, in spite of all He could do for them, and in the exercise of their own free wills, transformed themselves into that which in contact with the

fire of His love, which everywhere exists, must for ever burn. But they have done it all themselves—God could not have done it. They have opposed to all His love deepest, bitterest hate, and in that hate ever cast Him off.

See the loving mother, who would rather die than make her dear child suffer; yet when she sees a wound which might lead to death, she pours upon it the fiery balm, which, though it burns, will heal.

And never will she forsake her child, no matter how loathsome it may be, or spare herself in any way, as long as it has life. Only when that life is gone and she can do no more, does she turn aside.

That is what thy own dear Lord ever is and ever must be for thee and for all His creatures.

Then once more remember His words, which tell thee that only those who follow Him, walk not in darkness. He is, I say again, the true light shining in the world. But what is that light? It is the light of love which He is. Then if thou ever seest Him in any other light, if thou ever lookest at Him, or at any of His dealings with His creatures in any other light than in that of love, thou seest not the truth, thou art in utter darkness.

Thou art weak, my child, and needest that which will give thee strength. Thou hast fallen into sin, and He has supplied thee with the means whereby to rise from that death to life, but thou needest food which will restore the powers of soul and body of which mortal sin has robbed thee. Thou hast heard the teachings of His love, and now He will tell thee what that food is which He, Love Itself, will give to thee, and to all His beloved children.

If He was only good and loving, thou mightest content thyself with the manna filled with every sweetness which He gave His people in the desert; but knowing that He is Love Itself, that would not suffice thee, since He still could give more. And so thou wouldst ever say, no matter what He gave:

Dear Lord, thou canst give a great deal more than that—and love knows no bounds. And so He, Love Itself, also thought ; for He calls manna death, in comparison with the true life-giving bread, which He will give His children.

And then He tells thee that those who eat that bread which He will give, unlike those who ate the manna and were dead, will livè for ever.

But only eternal life itself can impart eternal life, and therefore He who gives the bread which is to be its source must Himself be that bread ; and He tells us that so it is, that He Himself is the bread of life of which, when we shall have eaten, we never more shall hunger nor ever thirst again, and that, without that bread, we can have no life in us. Neither can we ever say that He could have given more. Truly is this a hard saying to all who believe that He only loves, but those who believe that He is Love Itself could not have believed Him really to be so had He given less.

He then tells thee that the will of His heavenly Father is, that of all that He had given to Him, He should lose nothing, and that when lifted up He will draw all things to Himself. Thou seest, beloved, how the great oak is, so to say, concentrated in the little acorn, which drops into the earth, and there absorbs the juices which it can assimilate with itself, and grows and grows until it attains its full proportions. So will thy dear Lord and God concentrate Himself into the form of a little bit of bread, and then as food entering into thee will absorb thee into Himself, and it will no longer be thou who wilt live, but He will live in thee.

And that bread must be Himself, neither broken nor divided, but whole and entire.

And therefore thou must eat His flesh and drink His blood ; for thus only canst thou receive Him at all since He is the living God, but now God Incarnate—true God and true man, not two persons separable, but only one, the Person of God the Son.

This is what He teaches thee, beloved. But now let us see Him carry out His promise and feed the multitude of His children.

Thou seest how great, how surpassing great, is His love for them: it is that true love which craves, as we are told that love does crave, not for union only, but for unity with the object of its love. Nothing less than that can ever satisfy its longings.

Now with such craving, longing love as was that of our dear Lord, thou canst understand the agony of suffering caused by delay, suffering comparable only in its intensity with the love which is its source.

Who therefore can ever tell, what intelligence can ever form an idea of the intensity of the suffering which our dear Lord underwent on this point alone throughout His entire life, and to which He gave expression, saying: 'With desire I have desired to eat this Pasch with you,' or the intensity of His happiness when He had reached the longed-for moment?

Oh how His heart longed, from the moment of His incarnation, and throughout His life, for that happy moment, when at length He could become one with the objects of His love! But, beloved, if He sees such happiness in store He also foresees agony so great that it can only be measured by the depth of all His love, and that agony is that of unrequited love, which comes under two forms:—

The first is, when giving Himself to the creature of His love, He encounters, not love, but the bitter hatred of mortal sin, which casts Him off, and compels Him to repel it with the hatred with which it repels Him.

His creature forces Him, who had loved it so much and tenderly that He had spared Himself in nothing, and craved and longed to make it His own for ever, now to say: Depart from Me, ye cursed. Oh what an agony for that loving heart!

The second is, when His love meets with no response, and finds only icy coldness.

Oh how He in all His love has longed for His creature's love! Oh what has He not done to win it, and yet it is denied Him!

Beloved, wilt thou not return Him love for love, wilt thou ever call in question the greatness of His love? Oh no, ever be beforehand with Him, and before He reaches thee let Him hear thy voice calling out to Him: Dear Lord, how, oh how, I have longed for Thee! Never, never grieve that loving, loving heart.

I see, beloved, that thy only thought will ever be, how to give Him in thy heart the welcome which His love so ardently desires.

Thou hast learnt how to free thy soul from sin; thou knowest now how to strengthen it and make it live for ever, for He like a loving mother will feed thee on His own substance under the form of bread and strengthen thee unto life eternal.

At length the moment has arrived which will give Him that for which He has longed and suffered so much all the days of His life, and for which He has toiled and laboured so very hard.

Those dear beloved children, His own Apostles, have followed Him, they have listened to His teachings, and now are seated round Him, and He will feed them and all who through them will be one with Him. And taking the bread in His hands, He by His almighty power changes it into the bread which He had promised them, the true bread from heaven, which He is Himself: *This is My body, this is My blood; take and eat ye all of this*; and distribute it to the multitude:—*do this in commemoration of Me.*

And I seemed to see it ever multiplying, feeding all His children to the end of time; and whether one or thousands ate, all received the same. And yet that food was ever there to feed all who hungered for it.

I wondered how this could be ; and I seemed once more to hear His words : *This is My body, this is My blood*, pronounced by Him but once : and as His apostles were only charged by Him to do that which He had done, they were to do it not in their own names but in His name alone. They were, so to say, to give extension to His words and distribute what He by those words placed in their hands, as they had done with the loaves and fishes in the desert.

And as those words, pronounced but once, reach full and entire the minds and hearts of all His children, so also do they carry to them that precious body and blood into which they have transformed the bread and wine now become the food of all who in obedience to His command take and eat of it. And yet under either form He ever is Himself whole and entire, Love Incarnate, the one Person of God the Son.

Love then, beloved child, has attained its end, has attained that for which it had sighed and longed for three and thirty years, each moment of which had been changed by that very love into countless ages, and thus might we say was He enabled, during those countless ages, to see one by one each of His beloved children, and supply all their wants in the measure of His love—love which indeed had no measure in itself, but only that imposed upon it by the object on which it fell.

See Him then issuing forth from that last happy banquet, singing a hymn of love and praise to His eternal Father, in thanksgiving for the marriage which He had made for Him, a marriage feast in which He was enabled to become one with the objects of His love, and for which He had so long sighed and wept and suffered.

And His only prayer to His eternal Father seems to be : Confirm, O God, that which Thou hast done in us to make us one. Grant, Father, ‘ that they all may be one, as Thou, Father, in Me and I in Thee : that they also may be one in us—I in them and Thou in Me : that they may be made perfect in one’.

There, beloved, is the love of Him who loved His own and loved them to the end.

Never lose sight of the anguish of unrequited love, and as He ever says to thee : ‘ With desire I have desired to eat this Pasch with thee,’ do thou ever say the same when thou drawest near to Him.

But now, beloved, there is still another point which thou hast to bear in mind, when thou wouldst take part in that marriage feast.

Thou art thyself the bride whom then the heavenly Bridegroom makes one with Himself.

The closest union which exists in nature is that which God creates when in marriage, the mutual consent having been given, He makes the contracting parties one : a union so close that even he, to whom on earth the power of binding and loosing is given by God Himself, can never loose that tie. And yet His apostle tells us that that union, close though it be, is only the shadow of that which really does exist between our Lord and His Church and each individual soul.

But before that marriage can take place between the soul and God the mutual consent must also be given, and in the very moment of that consent thou canst say : I live, not I, but Christ lives in me.

Then when thou goest to that marriage feast, to which thy great God and King has called thee, He declares that He takes thee for His bride to be one with Him for ever, and only awaits thy consent to perfect that great work ; and in the moment in which that consent is given, when thou respondest : ‘ I will be all Thine,’ the great work is done and thou art one with Him for ever.

But if, as too often is the case and even unseen by thee, the words ‘ I will’ when analysed by Him present only a very small part of the all they should contain, the great work is suspended for a time, in order that thou mayest enter into thyself, and

seeing all that thy words imply, and what is really wanting, thou mayest work and work until thou hast renounced thyself in all ; and the moment thou hast done this, the great work really is done, and thou art then His for ever.

That thou mayest better understand and realise the work which is ever going on between Him and the souls that seek Him, He permits that work in some favoured souls to assume the external form of real espousals, as we read in the lives of many of His saints, and this in order that others hearing of it may better understand the work that God's love is doing in themselves and what they have to do to correspond with it.

Often then, beloved, raise thy mind and heart to Him and say : 'I will, I will, dear Lord ; I will, O beloved Spouse of my soul, be Thine and Thine for ever '.

Follow out well all these instructions which I have now given thee, and all will be well with thee."

Then that dear Spouse of the pure and spotless Virgin and my true father, turning to my Guardian Angel, desired him to give me his final counsels.

MY GUARDIAN ANGEL'S LAST INSTRUCTIONS.

I raised my eyes to that dear loving Angel who seemed now more than ever inflamed with love for the great good God who in that moment seemed to be bestowing on him a very special blessing.

He then turned to me with a look of such affection and love that it seemed to concentrate in itself his all but boundless love. No tongue could ever give expression to that glance of love which he poured into my poor soul. I felt as if I had already left the world and entered into possession of eternal happiness. How long I remained in this state of bliss I know not, but the voice of that dear Angel aroused me from it, and he thus addressed me :—

“Beloved child, entrusted to my charge by the God and

Father who loves us both with tenderest, boundless love, thou art now about to pass from the exceptional state in which, for thy own benefit and that of many souls, thou hast been so long. I then, as thy guardian, once more, and with the greatest earnestness, entreat thee, and all who may in any way be influenced by thee, to do everything in thy power to inflame thy mind and heart with most ardent love and unbounded confidence for and in our good and loving God and Creator, and to do everything thou canst in every possible way to lead others to that love. Remember that it is for that purpose alone that thou art in the world, and the moment thou turnest from that one thing, thou ceasest to do the one thing for which God created thee and placed thee in the world. Everything thou dost should tend in that direction, and ever lead thee to greater and greater love.

The enemy of souls, knowing this, does all in his power to divert thee from it. The moment he vanquished man and obtained dominion over him and over all that universe which had been given him as a means whereby ever to grow in love, he threw darkness over his intellect so that that which hitherto had been in him true wisdom now became folly.

And how did he bring this about? He persuaded man that God's action in his regard arose not from love for him or desire for his good and happiness, but from want of full entire love: that if He loved him He would not deny him that, by eating which He knew full well that he would become a God like Himself.

And it was only when Adam doubted God's love that he hated Him, and rebelled against Him, and died the death. Remember well, beloved, that when thou admittest into thy soul the smallest doubt of God's love, in any of His dealings with His creatures, thou enterest on the path which leads far, far from Him, and ends in eternal death. The enemy well knows this, and, therefore, is ever seeking in every possible way

to lead men to doubt the greatness of God's love for them. He is ever asking them why God did this when He could have done that; he leads them on step by step, and at length induces them to look, as Eve did, at the forbidden fruit, and judge His actions and dealings with them in the light, not of His true wisdom and love, but in the darkness of their own folly, and then they are at once deceived and fall away from Him.

What is the course that thou hast now to follow? Thou hast ever to bear in mind that God is and can only be goodness and Love Itself, and therefore, no matter what He does, He never can, He has not power to do anything which is not that which He Himself is, goodness and Love Itself.

His love then is ever pouring down on all His creatures; but as the sun's rays are varied in their appearance by the mediums through which they pass, or the objects on which they fall, so is it with God's love, which in itself never varies.

It often reaches thee through earthly mediums which have been distorted by the enemy, and have imparted to its rays a hue which really is not theirs, and therefore if thou thinkest to acquire real knowledge only by what thou canst see, and judgest God's dealings with His creatures by the form they may assume in thy mind, thou wilt undoubtedly fall into deepest error, for, as we have seen elsewhere, knowledge of truth no longer comes to us by sight, that is, by our own knowledge and understanding of things, but only by hearing. I repeat to thee, beloved, that which I have said many, many times: Ever judge God and all His ways, not by what they may appear to thee—they are incomprehensible to thee and He has not explained them—but judge them by what He is, for that thou knowest, He Himself has taught thee: He is Love Itself."

I now seemed to feel again the sweet presence of my own dear Mother, and I heard her say: "Dear child, now ask

some very great favour of me ; all shall be granted !” Oh how good of thee, dear Mother. Yes I will ask a very great favour of thee, and that is, that thou wilt ask something very special of me, something which thou wilt ever look upon as a real effort on my part, to make to thy dear Son and to thyself some return for all that He has done for me.

“ Be it so, dear child. Prepare thy soul and then go to Him in the Sacrament of His love and make Him a solemn promise, that from this time forward and throughout thy life thou wilt ever do all thou canst to lead all within reach of thy influence to see and understand Him as He is, Love and only Love, all lovable in all His dealings with all His creatures. Divest Him of the obloquy so often cast on Him, and thus enable souls to give Him all their love, to love Him, and love Him alone.” I promise all thou askest, dearest Mother : bless me for the work. And she gave the blessing.

In this moment a bright cloud overshadowed me, and I heard from its midst a voice which filled eternity, and its words were :—

THOU SHALT LOVE THE LORD THY GOD.

And I stood alone.

FINIS.



