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**Translations
from the French
of Madame de la
Mothe Guion**

William Cowper



Translations from the French of Madame de la Mothe Guion

Author(s): Cowper, William

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Description: In March of 1703, Madame Guion (or Guyon) went to live with her son in isolation after her seven years of imprisonment for charges of heresy. During these last fifteen years of her life, she spent much of her time either in prayer or writing religious poetry. William Cowper, a poet and lyricist in his own right, has brought the English-speaking world quality translations of many of Guyon's poems. As in the original French, Guyon's verse reflects her mystical character and passionate search for the divine. The ideas contained within her work, while condemned by some Christians, have influenced evangelical Protestants in particular. Renowned evangelist Charles Spurgeon numbers among her admirers.
Kathleen O'Bannon
CCEL Staff

Subjects: French literature
Modern literature (Individual authors)
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**TRANSLATIONS
FROM
THE FRENCH OF MADAME DE LA MOTHE GUION.
(translated by William Cowper)**

The Nativity

'Tis folly all—let me no more be told
Of Parian porticos, and roofs of gold;
Delightful views of nature, dressed by art,
Enchant no longer this indifferent heart;
The Lord of all things, in his humble birth,
Makes mean the proud magnificence of earth;
The straw, the manger, and the mouldering wall,
Eclipse its lustre; and I scorn it all.

Canals, and fountains, and delicious vales,
Green slopes and plains, whose plenty never fails;
Deep-rooted groves, whose heads sublimely rise,
Earth-born, and yet ambitious of the skies;
The abundant foliage of whose gloomy shades,
Vainly the sun in all its power invades;
Where warbled airs of sprightly birds resound,
Whose verdure lives while Winter scowls around;
Rocks, lofty mountains, caverns dark and deep,
And torrents raving down the rugged steep;

Smooth downs, whose fragrant herbs the spirits cheer;
Meads crowned with flowers; streams musical and clear,
Whose silver waters, and whose murmurs, join
Their artless charms, to make the scene divine;
The fruitful vineyard, and the furrowed plain,
That seems a rolling sea of golden grain:
All, all have lost the charms they once possessed;
An infant God reigns sovereign in my breast;
From Bethlehem's bosom I no more will rove;
There dwells the Saviour, and there rests my love.

Ye mightier rivers, that, with sounding force,
Urge down the valleys your impetuous course!
Winds, clouds, and lightnings! and, ye waves, whose heads,
Curled into monstrous forms, the seaman dreads!
Horrid abyss, where all experience fails,

Spread with the wreck of planks and shattered sails;
On whose broad back grim Death triumphant rides,
While havoc floats on all thy swelling tides,
Thy shores a scene of ruin strewed around
With vessels bulged, and bodies of the drowned!

Ye fish, that sport beneath the boundless waves,
And rest, secure from man, in rocky caves;
Swift-darting sharks, and whales of hideous size,
Whom all the aquatic world with terror eyes!
Had I but faith immoveable and true,
I might defy the fiercest storm, like you:
The world, a more disturbed and boisterous sea,
When Jesus shows a smile, affrights not me;
He hides me, and in vain the billows roar,
Break harmless at my feet, and leave the shore.

Thou azure vault where, through the gloom of night,
Thick sown, we see such countless worlds of light!
Thou moon, whose car, encompassing the skies,
Restores lost nature to our wondering eyes;
Again retiring, when the brighter sun
Begins the course he seems in haste to run!
Behold him where he shines! His rapid rays,
Themselves unmeasured, measure all our days;
Nothing impedes the race he would pursue,
Nothing escapes his penetrating view,
A thousand lands confess his quickening heat,
And all he cheers are fruitful, fair, and sweet.

Far from enjoying what these scenes disclose,
I feel the thorn, alas! but miss the rose:
Too well I know this aching heart requires
More solid gold to fill its vast desires;
In vain they represent his matchless might,
Who called them out of deep primeval night;
Their form and beauty but augment my woe,

I seek the Giver of those charms they show:
Nor, Him beside, throughout the world he made,
Lives there in whom I trust for cure or aid.

Infinite God, thou great unrivalled One!
Whose glory makes a blot of yonder sun;
Compared with thine, how dim his beauty seems,
How quenched the radiance of his golden beams!
Thou art my bliss, the light by which I move;
In thee alone dwells all that I can love.
All darkness flies when thou art pleased to appear,
A sudden spring renews the fading year;
Where'er I turn I see thy power and grace
The watchful guardians of our heedless race;
Thy various creatures in one strain agree,
All, in all times and places, speak of thee;
E'en I, with trembling heart and stammering tongue,
Attempt thy praise, and join the general song.

Almighty Former of this wondrous plan,
Faintly reflected in thine image, man—
Holy and just—the greatness of whose name
Fills and supports this universal frame,
Diffused throughout the infinitude of space,
Who art thyself thine own vast dwelling-place;
Soul of our soul, whom yet no sense of ours
Discerns, eluding our most active powers;
Encircling shades attend thine awful throne,
That veil thy face, and keep thee still unknown;
Unknown, though dwelling in our inmost part,
Lord of the thoughts, and Sovereign of the heart!

Repeat the charming truth that never tires,
No God is like the God my soul desires;
He at whose voice heaven trembles, even He,
Great as he is, knows how to stoop to me—
Lo! there he lies—that smiling infant said,

“Heaven, earth, and sea, exist!”—and they obeyed.
E'en he, whose being swells beyond the skies,
Is born of woman, lives, and mourns, and dies;
Eternal and immortal, seems to cast
That glory from his brows, and breathes his last.
Trivial and vain the works that man has wrought,
How do they shrink and vanish at the thought!

Sweet solitude, and scene of my repose!
This rustic sight assuages all my woes—
That crib contains the Lord, whom I adore;
And earth's a shade that I pursue no more.
He is my firm support, my rock, my tower,
I dwell secure beneath his sheltering power,
And hold this mean retreat for ever dear,
For all I love, my soul's delight is here.
I see the Almighty swathed in infant bands,
Tied helpless down the thunder-bearer's hands!
And, in this shed, that mystery discern,
Which faith and love, and they alone, can learn.

Ye tempests, spare the slumbers of your Lord!
Ye zephyrs, all your whispered sweets afford!
Confess the God, that guides the rolling year;
Heaven, do him homage; and thou, earth, revere!
Ye shepherds, monarchs, sages, hither bring
Your hearts an offering, and adore your King!
Pure be those hearts, and rich in faith and love;
Join, in his praise, the harmonious world above;
To Bethlehem haste, rejoice in his repose,
And praise him there for all that he bestows!

Man, busy man, alas! can ill afford
To obey the summons, and attend the Lord;
Perverted reason revels and runs wild,
By glittering shows of pomp and wealth beguiled;
And, blind to genuine excellence and grace,

Finds not her author in so mean a place.
Ye unbelieving! learn a wiser part,
Distrust your erring sense, and search your heart;
There soon ye shall perceive a kindling flame
Glow for that infant God, from whom it came;
Resist not, quench not, that divine desire,
Melt all your adamant in heavenly fire!

Not so will I requite thee, gentle love!
Yielding and soft this heart shall ever prove;
And every heart beneath thy power should fall,
Glad to submit, could mine contain them all.
But I am poor, oblation I have none,
None for a Saviour, but himself alone:
Whate'er I render thee, from thee it came:
And, if I give my body to the flame,
My patience, love, and energy divine
Of heart, and soul, and spirit, all are thine.
Ah, vain attempt to expunge the mighty score!
The more I pay, I owe thee still the more.

Upon my meanness, poverty, and guilt,
The trophy of thy glory shall be built;
My self-disdain shall be the unshaken base,
And my deformity its fairest grace;
For destitute of good, and rich in ill,
Must be my state and my description still.

And do I grieve at such an humbling lot?
Nay, but I cherish and enjoy the thought—
Vain pageantry and pomp of earth, adieu!
I have no wish, no memory for you;
The more I feel my misery, I adore
The sacred inmate of my soul the more;
Rich in his love, I feel my noblest pride
Spring from the sense of having nought beside.

In thee I find wealth, comfort, virtue, might;
My wanderings prove thy wisdom infinite;
All that I have I give thee; and then see
All contrarities unite in thee;
For thou hast joined them, taking up our woe,
And pouring out thy bliss on worms below,
By filling with thy grace and love divine
A gulf of evil in this heart of mine.
This is, indeed, to bid the valleys rise,
And the hills sink—'tis matching earth and skies;
I feel my weakness, thank thee and deplore
An aching heart, that throbs to thank thee more;
The more I love thee, I the more reprove
A soul so lifeless, and so slow to love;
Till, on a deluge of thy mercy tossed,
I plunge into that sea, and there am lost.

God Neither Known nor Loved by the World

Ye linnets, let us try, beneath this grove,
Which shall be loudest in our Maker's praise!
In quest of some forlorn retreat I rove,
For all the world is blind, and wanders from his ways.

That God alone should prop the sinking soul,
Fills them with rage against his empire now:
I traverse earth in vain from pole to pole,
To seek one simple heart, set free from all below.

They speak of love, yet little feel its sway,
While in their bosom many an idol lurks;
Their base desires, well satisfied, obey,
Leave the Creator's hand, and lean upon his works.

'Tis therefore I can dwell with man no more;
Your fellowship, ye warblers! suits me best:
Pure love has lost its price, though prized of yore,
Profaned by modern tongues, and slighted as a jest.

My God, who formed you for his praise alone,
Beholds his purpose well fulfilled in you;
Come, let us join the choir before his throne,
Partaking in his praise with spirits just and true.

Yes, I will always love; and, as I ought,
Tune to the praise of love my ceaseless voice;
Preferring love too vast for human thought,
In spite of erring men, who cavil at my choice.

Why have I not a thousand thousand hearts,
Lord of my soul! that they might all be thine?
If thou approve—the zeal thy smile imparts,
How should it ever fail! can such a fire decline?

Love, pure and holy, is a deathless fire;

Its object heavenly, it must ever blaze:
Eternal love a God must needs inspire,
When once he wins the heart, and fits it for his praise.

Self-love dismissed—'tis then we live indeed—
In her embrace, death, only death is found:
Come, then, one noble effort, and succeed,
Cast off the chain of self with which thy soul is bound.

Oh! I could cry, that all the world might hear,
Ye self-tormentors, love your God alone;
Let his unequalled excellence be dear,
Dear to your inmost souls, and make him all your own!

They hear me not—alas! how fond to rove
In endless chase of folly's specious lure!
'Tis here alone, beneath this shady grove,
I taste the sweets of truth—here only am secure.

The Swallow

I am fond of the swallow—I learn from her flight,
Had I skill to improve it, a lesson of love:
How seldom on earth do we see her alight!
She dwells in the skies, she is ever above.

It is on the wing that she takes her repose,
Suspended and poised in the regions of air,
'Tis not in our fields that her sustenance grows,
It is winged like herself—'tis ethereal fare.

She comes in the spring, all the summer she stays,
And, dreading the cold, still follows the sun—
So, true to our love, we should covet his rays,
And the place where he shines not immediately shun.

Our light should be love, and our nourishment prayer;
It is dangerous food that we find upon earth;
The fruit of this world is beset with a snare,
In itself it is hurtful, as vile in its birth.

'Tis rarely, if ever, she settles below,
And only when building a nest for her young;
Were it not for her brood, she would never bestow
A thought upon anything filthy as dung.

Let us leave it ourselves ('tis a mortal abode),
To bask every moment in infinite love;
Let us fly the dark winter, and follow the road
That leads to the dayspring appearing above.

The Triumph of Heavenly Love Desired

Ah! reign, wherever man is found!
My spouse, beloved and divine!
Then I am rich, and I abound,
When every human heart is thine.

A thousand sorrows pierce my soul,
To think that all are not thine own:
Ah! be adored from pole to pole;
Where is thy zeal? arise; be known!

All hearts are cold, in every place,
Yet earthly good with warmth pursue;
Dissolve them with a flash of grace,
Thaw these of ice, and give us new!

A Figurative Description of the Procedure of Divine Love

(In Bringing a Soul to the Point of Self-renunciation and Absolute Acquiescence)

'Twas my purpose, on a day,
To embark, and sail away.
As I climbed the vessel's side,
Love was sporting in the tide;
"Come," he said, "ascend—make haste,
Launch into the boundless waste."

Many mariners were there,
Having each his separate care;
They that rowed us held their eyes
Fixed upon the starry skies;
Others steered, or turned the sails,
To receive the shifting gales.

Love, with power divine supplied,
Suddenly my courage tried;
In a moment it was night,
Ship and skies were out of sight;
On the briny wave I lay,
Floating rushes all my stay.

Did I with resentment burn
At this unexpected turn?
Did I wish myself on shore,
Never to forsake it more?
No—"My soul," I cried, "be still;
If I must be lost, I will."

Next he hastened to convey
Both my frail supports away;
Seized my rushes; bade the waves
Yawn into a thousand graves:
Down I went, and sunk as lead,
Ocean closing o'er my head.

Still, however, life was safe;
And I saw him turn and laugh:
“Friend,” he cried, “adieu! lie low,
While the wintry storms shall blow;
When the spring has calmed the main,
You shall rise and float again.”

Soon I saw him, with dismay,
Spread his plumes, and soar away;
Now I mark his rapid flight;
Now he leaves my aching sight;
He is gone whom I adore,
’Tis in vain to seek him more.

How I trembled then and feared,
When my love had disappeared!
“Wilt thou leave me thus,” I cried,
“Whelmed beneath the rolling tide?”
Vain attempt to reach his ear!
Love was gone, and would not hear.

Ah! return, and love me still;
See me subject to thy will;
Frown with wrath, or smile with grace,
Only let me see thy face!
Evil I have none to fear,
All is good, if thou art near.

Yet he leaves me—cruel fate!
Leaves me in my lost estate—
Have I sinned? Oh, say wherein;
Tell me, and forgive my sin!
King, and Lord, whom I adore,
Shall I see thy face no more?

Be not angry; I resign,
Henceforth, all my will to thine:

I consent that thou depart,
Though thine absence breaks my heart;
Go then, and for ever too:
All is right that thou wilt do.

This was just what Love intended;
He was now no more offended;
Soon as I became a child,
Love returned to me and smiled:
Never strife shall more betide
'Twixt the bridegroom and his bride.

A Child of God Longing to See Him Beloved

There's not an echo round me,
But I am glad should learn,
How pure a fire has found me,
The love with which I burn.
For none attends with pleasure
To what I would reveal;
They slight me out of measure,
And laugh at all I feel.

The rocks receive less proudly
The story of my flame;
When I approach, they loudly
Reverberate his name.
I speak to them of sadness,
And comforts at a stand;
They bid me look for gladness,
And better days at hand.

Far from all habitation,
I heard a happy sound;
Big with the consolation,
That I have often found.
I said, "My lot is sorrow,
My grief has no alloy;"
The rocks replied—"Tomorrow,
Tomorrow brings thee joy."

These sweet and sacred tidings,
What bliss it is to hear!
For, spite of all my chidings,
My weakness and my fear,
No sooner I receive them,
Than I forget my pain,
And, happy to believe them,
I love as much again.

I fly to scenes romantic,
Where never men resort;
For in an age so frantic
Impiety is sport.
For riot and confusion
They barter things above;
Condemning, as delusion,
The joy of perfect love.

In this sequestered corner,
None hears what I express;
Delivered from the scorner,
What peace do I possess!
Beneath the boughs reclining,
Or roving o'er the wild,
I live as undesigning
And harmless as a child.

No troubles here surprise me,
I innocently play,
While Providence supplies me,
And guards me all the day:
My dear and kind defender
Preserves me safely here,
From men of pomp and splendour,
Who fill a child with fear.

Aspirations of the Soul After God

My Spouse! in whose presence I live,
Sole object of all my desires,
Who know'st what a flame I conceive,
And canst easily double its fires!
How pleasant is all that I meet!
From fear of adversity free,
I find even sorrow made sweet;
Because 'tis assigned me by thee.

Transported I see thee display
Thy riches and glory divine;
I have only my life to repay,
Take what I would gladly resign.
Thy will is the treasure I seek,
For thou art as faithful as strong;
There let me, obedient and meek,
Repose myself all the day long.

My spirit and faculties fail;
Oh, finish what love has begun!
Destroy what is sinful and frail,
And dwell in the soul thou hast won!
Dear theme of my wonder and praise,
I cry, who is worthy as thou?
I can only be silent and gaze!
'Tis all that is left to me now.

Oh, glory in which I am lost,
Too deep for the plummet of thought;
On an ocean of Deity tossed,
I am swallowed, I sink into nought.
Yet, lost and absorbed as I seem,
I chant to the praise of my King;
And, though overwhelmed by the theme,
Am happy whenever I sing.

Gratitude and Love to God

All are indebted much to thee,
But I far more than all,
From many a deadly snare set free,
And raised from many a fall.
Overwhelm me, from above,
Daily, with thy boundless love.

What bonds of gratitude I feel
No language can declare;
Beneath the oppressive weight I reel,
'Tis more than I can bear:
When shall I that blessing prove,
To return thee love for love?

Spirit of charity, dispense
Thy grace to every heart;
Expel all other spirits thence,
Drive self from every part;
Charity divine, draw nigh,
Break the chains in which we lie!

All selfish souls, whate'er they feign,
Have still a slavish lot;
They boast of liberty in vain,
Of love, and feel it not.
He whose bosom glows with thee,
He, and he alone, is free.

Oh blessedness, all bliss above,
When thy pure fires prevail!
Love only teaches what is love:
All other lessons fail:
We learn its name, but not its powers,
Experience only makes it ours.

Happy Solitude—Unhappy Men

My heart is easy, and my burden light;
I smile, though sad, when thou art in my sight:
The more my woes in secret I deplore,
I taste thy goodness, and I love thee more.

There, while a solemn stillness reigns around,
Faith, love, and hope within my soul abound;
And, while the world suppose me lost in care,
The joys of angels, unperceived, I share.

Thy creatures wrong thee, O thou sovereign good!
Thou art not loved, because not understood;
This grieves me most, that vain pursuits beguile
Ungrateful men, regardless of thy smile.

Frail beauty and false honour are adored;
While Thee they scorn, and trifle with thy Word;
Pass, unconcerned, a Saviour's sorrows by;
And hunt their ruin with a zeal to die.

Living Water

The fountain in its source,
No drought of summer fears;
The farther it pursues its course,
The nobler it appears.

But shallow cisterns yield
A scanty short supply;
The morning sees them amply filled,
At evening they are dry.

Truth and Divine Love Rejected by the World

O love, of pure and heavenly birth!
O simple truth, scarce known on earth!
Whom men resist with stubborn will;
And, more perverse and daring still,
Smother and quench, with reasonings vain,
While error and deception reign.

Whence comes it, that, your power the same
As His on high from whence you came,
Ye rarely find a listening ear,
Or heart that makes you welcome here?—
Because ye bring reproach and pain,
Where'er ye visit, in your train.

The world is proud, and cannot bear
The scorn and calumny ye share;
The praise of men the mark they mean,
They fly the place where ye are seen;
Pure love, with scandal in the rear,
Suits not the vain; it costs too dear.

Then, let the price be what it may,
Though poor, I am prepared to pay;
Come shame, come sorrow; spite of tears,
Weakness, and heart-oppressing fears;
One soul, as least, shall not repine,
To give you room; come, reign in mine!

Divine Justice Amiable

Thou hast no lightnings, O thou Just!
Or I their force should know;
And, if thou strike me into dust,
My soul approves the blow.

The heart, that values less its ease
Than it adores thy ways,
In thine avenging anger sees
A subject of its praise.

Pleased I could lie, concealed and lost,
In shades of central night;
Not to avoid thy wrath, thou know'st,
But lest I grieve thy sight.

Smite me, O thou, whom I provoke!
And I will love thee still:
The well deserved and righteous stroke
Shall please me, though it kill.

Am I not worthy to sustain
The worst thou canst devise;
And dare I seek thy throne again,
And meet thy sacred eyes?

Far from afflicting, thou art kind;
And, in my saddest hours,
An unction of thy grace I find,
Pervading all my powers.

Alas! thou sparest me yet again;
And, when thy wrath should move,
Too gentle to endure my pain,
Thou soothest me with thy love.

I have no punishment to fear;

But, ah! that smile from thee
Imparts a pang far more severe
Than woe itself would be.

The Soul That Loves God Finds Him Everywhere

O thou, by long experience tried,
Near whom no grief can long abide;
My love! how full of sweet content
I pass my years of banishment!

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

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

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

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

My country, Lord, art thou alone;
Nor other can I claim or own;
The point where all my wishes meet;
My law, my love, life's only sweet!

I hold by nothing here below;
Appoint my journey and I go;
Though pierced by scorn, oppressed by pride,
I feel thee good—feel nought beside.

No frowns of men can hurtful prove

To souls on fire with heavenly love;
Though men and devils both condemn,
No gloomy days arise from them.

Ah, then! to his embrace repair;
My soul, thou art no stranger there;
There love divine shall be thy guard,
And peace and safety thy reward.

The Testimony of Divine Adoption

How happy are the new-born race,
Partakers of adopting grace!
How pure the bliss they share!
Hid from the world and all its eyes,
Within their heart the blessing lies,
And conscience feels it there.

The moment we believe, 'tis ours;
And if we love with all our powers
The God from whom it came;
And if we serve with hearts sincere,
'Tis still discernible and clear,
An undisputed claim.

But, ah! if foul and wilful sin
Stain and dishonour us within,
Farewell the joy we knew;
Again the slaves of nature's sway,
In labyrinths of our own we stray,
Without a guide or clue.

The chaste and pure, who fear to grieve
The gracious Spirit they receive,
His work distinctly trace;
And, strong in undissembling love,
Boldly assert and clearly prove
Their hearts his dwelling-place.

Oh, messenger of dear delight,
Whose voice dispels the deepest night,
Sweet peace-proclaiming Dove!
With thee at hand, to soothe our pains,
No wish unsatisfied remains,
No task but that of love.

'Tis love unites what sin divides;

The centre, where all bliss resides;
To which the soul once brought,
Reclining on the first great cause,
From his abounding sweetness draws
Peace passing human thought.

Sorrow forgoes its nature there,
And life assumes a tranquil air,
Divested of its woes;
There sovereign goodness soothes the breast,
Till then incapable of rest,
In sacred sure repose.

Divine Love Endures No Rival

Love is the Lord whom I obey,
Whose will transported I perform;
The centre of my rest, my stay,
Love's all in all to me, myself a worm.

For uncreated charms I burn,
Oppressed by slavish fear no more,
For One in whom I may discern,
E'en when he frowns, a sweetness I adore.

He little loves him who complains,
And finds him rigorous and severe;
His heart is sordid, and he feigns,
Though loud in boasting of a soul sincere.

Love causes grief, but 'tis to move
And stimulate the slumbering mind;
And he has never tasted love
Who shuns a plan so graciously designed.

Sweet is the cross, above all sweets,
To souls enamoured with thy smiles;
The keenest woe life ever meets,
Love strips of all its terrors, and beguiles.

'Tis just that God should not be dear
Where self engrosses all the thought,
And groans and murmurs make it clear,
Whatever else is loved, the Lord is not.

The love of thee flows just as much
As that of ebbing self subsides;
Our hearts, their scantiness is such,
Bear not the conflict of two rival tides.

Both cannot govern in one soul;

Then let self-love be dispossessed;
The love of God deserves the whole,
And will not dwell with so despised a guest.

Self-diffidence

Source of love, and light of day,
Tear me from myself away;
Every view and thought of mine
Cast into the mould of thine;
Teach, O teach this faithless heart
A consistent constant part;
Or, if it must live to grow
More rebellious, break it now!

Is it thus that I requite
Grace and goodness infinite?
Every trace of every boon
Cancelled and erased so soon!
Can I grieve thee, whom I love;
Thee, in whom I live and move?
If my sorrow touch thee still,
Save me from so great an ill!

Oh! the oppressive, irksome weight,
Felt in an uncertain state;
Comfort, peace, and rest, adieu,
Should I prove at last untrue!
Still I choose thee, follow still
Every notice of thy will;
But, unstable, strangely weak,
Still let slip the good I seek.

Self-confiding wretch, I thought
I could serve thee as I ought,
Win thee, and deserve to feel
All the love thou canst reveal;
Trusting self, a bruised reed,
Is to be deceived indeed:
Save me from this harm and loss,
Lest my gold turn all to dross!

Self is earthly—faith alone
Makes an unseen world our own;
Faith relinquished, how we roam,
Feel our way, and leave our home!
Spurious gems our hopes entice,
While we scorn the pearl of price;
And, preferring servants' pay,
Cast the children's bread away.

The Acquiescence of Pure Love

Love! if thy destined sacrifice am I,
Come, slay thy victim, and prepare thy fires;
Plunged in thy depths of mercy, let me die
The death which every soul that lives desires!

I watch my hours, and see them fleet away;
The time is long that I have languished here;
Yet all my thoughts thy purposes obey,
With no reluctance, cheerful and sincere.

To me 'tis equal, whether love ordain
My life or death, appoint me pain or ease;
My soul perceives no real ill in pain;
In ease or health no real good she sees.

One good she covets, and that good alone,
To choose thy will, from selfish bias free;
And to prefer a cottage to a throne,
And grief to comfort, if it pleases thee.

That we should bear the cross is thy command,
Die to the world and live to self no more;
Suffer, unmoved, beneath the rudest hand,
As pleased when shipwrecked as when safe on shore.

Repose in God

Blest! who, far from all mankind
This world's shadows left behind,
Hears from heaven a gentle strain
Whispering love, and loves again.

Blest! who, free from self-esteem,
Dives into the great Supreme.
All desire beside discards,
Joys inferior none regards.

Blest! who in thy bosom seeks
Rest that nothing earthly breaks,
Dead to self and worldly things,
Lost in thee, thou King of kings!

Ye that know my secret fire,
Softly speak and soon retire;
Favour my divine repose,
Spare the sleep a God bestows.

Glory to God Alone

Oh loved! but not enough—though dearer far
Than self and its most loved enjoyments are;
None duly loves thee, but who, nobly free
From sensual objects, finds his all in thee.

Glory of God! thou stranger here below,
Whom man nor knows, nor feels a wish to know;
Our faith and reason are both shocked to find
Man in the post of honour—Thee behind.

Reason exclaims—“Let every creature fall,
Ashamed, abased, before the Lord of all;”
And faith, o'erwhelmed with such a dazzling blaze,
Feebly describes the beauty she surveys.

Yet man, dim-sighted man, and rash as blind,
Deaf to the dictates of his better mind,
In frantic competition dares the skies,
And claims precedence of the Only wise.

Oh, lost in vanity, till once self-known!
Nothing is great, or good, but God alone;
When thou shalt stand before his awful face,
Then, at the last, thy pride shall know his place.

Glorious, Almighty, First, and without end!
When wilt thou melt the mountains and descend?
When wilt thou shoot abroad thy conquering rays,
And teach these atoms, thou hast made, thy praise?

Thy glory is the sweetest heaven I feel;
And, if I seek it with too fierce a zeal,
Thy love, triumphant o'er a selfish will,
Taught me the passion, and inspires it still.

My reason, all my faculties, unite,

To make thy glory their supreme delight:
Forbid it, fountain of my brightest days,
That I should rob thee, and usurp thy praise!

My soul! rest happy in thy low estate,
Nor hope, nor wish, to be esteemed or great,
To take the impression of a will divine,
Be that thy glory, and those riches thine.

Confess him righteous in his just decrees,
Love what he loves, and let his pleasure please;
Die daily; from the touch of sin recede;
Then thou hast crowned him, and he reigns indeed.

Self-love and Truth Incompatible

From thorny wilds a monster came,
That filled my soul with fear and shame;
The birds, forgetful of their mirth,
Drooped at the sight, and fell to earth;
When thus a sage addressed mine ear,
Himself unconscious of a fear:

“Whence all this terror and surprise,
Distracted looks and streaming eyes?
Far from the world and its affairs,
The joy it boasts, the pain it shares,
Surrender, without guile or art,
To God an undivided heart;
The savage form, so feared before,
Shall scare your trembling soul no more;
For, loathsome as the sight may be,
’Tis but the love of self you see.
Fix all your love on God alone,
Choose but his will, and hate your own:
No fear shall in your path be found,
The dreary waste shall bloom around,
And you, through all your happy days,
Shall bless his name, and sing his praise.”

Oh lovely solitude, how sweet
The silence of this calm retreat!
Here truth, the fair whom I pursue,
Gives all her beauty to my view;
The simple, unadorned display
Charms every pain and fear away.
O Truth, whom millions proudly slight;
O Truth, my treasure and delight;
Accept this tribute to thy name,
And this poor heart from which it came!

The Love of God the End of Life

Since life in sorrow must be spent,
So be it—I am well content,
And meekly wait my last remove,
Seeking only growth in love.

No bliss I seek, but to fulfil
In life, in death, thy lovely will;
No succours in my woes I want,
Save what thou art pleased to grant.

Our days are numbered, let us spare
Our anxious hearts a needless care:
'Tis thine to number out our days;
Ours to give them to thy praise.

Love is our only business here,
Love, simple, constant, and sincere;
O blessed days, thy servants see,
Spent, O Lord! in pleasing thee!

Love Faithful in the Absence of the Beloved

In vain ye woo me to your harmless joys,
Ye pleasant bowers, remote from strife and noise;
Your shades, the witnesses of many a vow,
Breathed forth in happier days, are irksome now;
Denied that smile 'twas once my heaven to see,
Such scenes, such pleasures, are all past with me.

In vain he leaves me, I shall love him still;
And, though I mourn, not murmur at his will;
I have no cause—an object all divine,
Might well grow weary of a soul like mine;
Yet pity me, great God! forlorn, alone,
Heartless and hopeless, life and love all gone.

Love Pure and Fervent

Jealous, and with love o'erflowing,
God demands a fervent heart;
Grace and bounty still bestowing,
Calls us to a grateful part.

Oh, then, with supreme affection
His paternal will regard!
If it cost us some dejection,
Every sigh has its reward.

Perfect love has power to soften
Cares that might our peace destroy,
Nay, does more—transforms them often,
Changing sorrow into joy.

Sovereign Love appoints the measure,
And the number of our pains;
And is pleased when we find pleasure
In the trials he ordains.

The Entire Surrender

Peace has unveiled her smiling face,
And woos thy soul to her embrace,
Enjoyed with ease, if thou refrain
From earthly love, else sought in vain;
She dwells with all who truth prefer,
But seeks not them who seek not her.

Yield to the Lord, with simple heart,
All that thou hast, and all thou art;
Renounce all strength but strength divine;
And peace shall be for ever thine:
Behold the path which I have trod,
My path, till I go home to God.

The Perfect Sacrifice

I place an offering at thy shrine,
From taint and blemish clear,
Simple and pure in its design,
Of all that I hold dear.

I yield thee back thy gifts again,
Thy gifts which most I prize;
Desirous only to retain
The notice of thine eyes.

But if, by thine adored decree,
That blessing be denied;
Resigned and unreluctant, see
My every wish subside.

Thy will in all things I approve,
Exalted or cast down;
Thy will in every state I love,
And even in thy frown.

God Hides His People

To lay the soul that loves him low,
Becomes the Only-wise:
To hide beneath a veil of woe,
The children of the skies.

Man, though a worm, would yet be great;
Though feeble, would seem strong;
Assumes an independent state,
By sacrilege and wrong.

Strange the reverse, which, once abased,
The haughty creature proves!
He feels his soul a barren waste,
Nor dares affirm he loves.

Scorned by the thoughtless and the vain,
To God he presses near;
Superior to the world's disdain,
And happy in its sneer.

Oh welcome, in his heart he says,
Humility and shame!
Farewell the wish for human praise,
The music of a name!

But will not scandal mar the good
That I might else perform?
And can God work it, if he would,
By so despised a worm?

Ah, vainly anxious!—leave the Lord
To rule thee, and dispose;
Sweet is the mandate of his word,
And gracious all he does.

He draws from human littleness

His grandeur and renown;
And generous hearts with joy confess
The triumph all his own.

Down, then, with self-exalting thoughts;
Thy faith and hope employ,
To welcome all that he allots,
And suffer shame with joy.

No longer, then, thou wilt encroach
On his eternal right;
And he shall smile at thy approach,
And make thee his delight.

The Secrets of Divine Love Are To Be Kept

Sun! stay thy course, this moment stay—
Suspend the o'er flowing tide of day,
Divulge not such a love as mine,
Ah! hide the mystery divine;
Lest man, who deems my glory shame,
Should learn the secret of my flame.

O night! propitious to my views,
Thy sable awning wide diffuse;
Conceal alike my joy and pain,
Nor draw thy curtain back again,
Though morning, by the tears she shows,
Seems to participate my woes.

Ye stars! whose faint and feeble fires
Express my languishing desires,
Whose slender beams pervade the skies,
As silent as my secret sighs,
Those emanations of a soul,
That darts her fires beyond the Pole;

Your rays, that scarce assist the sight,
That pierce, but not displace the night;
That shine indeed, but nothing shew
Of all those various scenes below,
Bring no disturbance, rather prove
Incentives to a sacred love.

Thou moon! whose never-failing course
Bespeaks a providential force,
Go, tell the tidings of my flame
To Him who calls the stars by name;
Whose absence kills, whose presence cheers;
Who blots, or brightens, all my years.

While, in the blue abyss of space,

Thine orb performs its rapid race;
Still whisper in his listening ears
The language of my sighs and tears;
Tell him, I seek him, far below,
Lost in a wilderness of woe.

Ye thought-composing, silent hours,
Diffusing peace o'er all my powers;
Friends of the pensive, who conceal,
In darkest shades, the flames I feel;
To you I trust, and safely may,
The love that wastes my strength away.

In sylvan scenes and caverns rude,
I taste the sweets of solitude;
Retired indeed, but not alone,
I share them with a spouse unknown,
Who hides me here from envious eyes,
From all intrusion and surprise.

Imbowering shades and dens profound!
Where echo rolls the voice around;
Mountains! whose elevated heads
A moist and misty veil o'erspreads;
Disclose a solitary bride
To him I love—to none beside.

Ye rills, that, murmuring all the way,
Among the polished pebbles stray;
Creep silently along the ground,
Lest, drawn by that harmonious sound,
Some wanderer, whom I would not meet,
Should stumble on my loved retreat.

Enamelled meads, and hillocks green,
And streams that water all the scene,
Ye torrents, loud in distant ears,

Ye fountains, that receive my tears,
Ah! still conceal, with caution due,
A charge I trust with none but you!

If, when my pain and grief increase
I seem to enjoy the sweetest peace,
It is because I find so fair,
The charming object of my care,
That I can sport and pleasure make
Of torment suffered for his sake.

Ye meads and groves, unconscious things!
Ye know not whence my pleasure springs;
Ye know not, and ye cannot know,
The source from which my sorrows flow:
The dear sole cause of all I feel,—
He knows, and understands them well.

Ye deserts, where the wild beasts rove,
Scenes sacred to my hours of love;
Ye forests, in whose shades I stray,
Benighted under burning day;
Ah! whisper not how blest am I,
Nor while I live, nor when I die.

Ye lambs, who sport beneath these shades,
And bound along the mossy glades;
Be taught a salutary fear,
And cease to bleat when I am near:
The wolf may hear your harmless cry,
Whom ye should dread as much as I.

How calm, amid these scenes, my mind;
How perfect is the peace I find!
Oh hush, be still, my every part,
My tongue, my pulse, my beating heart!
That love, aspiring to its cause,

May suffer not a moment's pause.

Ye swift-finned nations, that abide
In seas, as fathomless as wide;
And, unsuspecting of a snare,
Pursue at large your pleasures there;
Poor sportive fools! how soon does man
Your heedless ignorance trepan.

Away! dive deep into the brine,
Where never yet sunk plummet line;
Trust me, the vast leviathan
Is merciful, compared with man;
Avoid his arts, forsake the beach,
And never play within his reach.

My soul her bondage ill endures;
I pant for liberty like yours;
I long for that immense profound,
That knows no bottom and no bound:
Lost in infinity, to prove
The incomprehensible of love.

Ye birds, that lessen as ye fly,
And vanish in the distant sky;
To whom yon airy waste belongs,
Resounding with your cheerful songs;
Haste to escape from human sight;
Fear less the vulture and the kite.

How blest and how secure am I,
When, quitting earth, I soar on high;
When lost, like you I disappear,
And float in a sublimer sphere;
Whence falling, within human view,
I am ensnared and caught like you!

Omniscient God, whose notice deigns,
To try the heart and search the reins,
Compassionate the numerous woes,
I dare not, e'en to thee, disclose;
O save me from the cruel hands
Of men who fear not thy commands!

Love, all-subduing and divine,
Care for a creature truly thine;
Reign in a heart, disposed to own
No sovereign but thyself alone;
Cherish a bride who cannot rove,
Nor quit thee for a meaner love!

The Vicissitudes Experienced in the Christian Life

I suffer fruitless anguish day by day,
Each moment, as it passes, marks my pain;
Scarce knowing whither, doubtfully I stray,
And see no end of all that I sustain.

The more I strive the more I am withstood;
Anxiety increasing every hour
My spirit finds no rest, performs no good,
And nought remains of all my former power.

My peace of heart is fled, I know not where;
My happy hours, like shadows, passed away;
Their sweet remembrance doubles all my care;
Night darker seems, succeeding such a day.

Dear faded joys and impotent regret,
What profit is there in incessant tears?
Oh thou, whom, once beheld, we ne'er forget,
Reveal thy love, and banish all my fears!

Alas! he flies me—treats me as his foe,
Views not my sorrows, hears not when I plead;
Woe such as mine, despised, neglected woe,
Unless it shortens life, is vain indeed.

Pierced with a thousand wounds, I yet survive;
My pangs are keen, but no complaint transpires
And, while in terrors of thy wrath I live,
Hell seems to loose it less tremendous fires.

Has hell a pain I would not gladly bear,
So thy severe displeasure might subside?
Hopeless of ease, I seem already there,
My life extinguished, and yet death denied.

Is this the joy so promised—this the love,

The unchanging love, so sworn in better days?
Ah! dangerous glories! shewn me, but to prove
How lovely thou, and I how rash to gaze.

Why did I see them? had I still remained
Untaught, still ignorant how fair thou art,
My humbler wishes I had soon obtained,
Nor known the torments of a doubting heart.

Deprived of all, yet feeling no desires,
Whence then, I cry, the pangs that I sustain
Dubious and uninformed, my soul inquires,
Ought she to cherish or shake off her pain?

Suffering, I suffer not—sincerely love,
Yet feel no touch of that enlivening flame;
As chance inclines me, unconcerned I move,
All times, and all events, to me the same.

I search my heart, and not a wish is there
But burns with zeal that hated self may fall;
Such is the sad disquietude I share,
A sea of doubts, and self the source of all.

I ask not life, nor do I wish to die;
And, if thine hand accomplish not my cure,
I would not purchase with a single sigh
A free discharge from all that I endure.

I groan in chains, yet want not a release;
Am sick, and know not the distempered part;
Am just as void of purpose as of peace;
Have neither plan, nor fear, nor hope, nor heart.

My claim to life, though sought with earnest care,
No light within me, or without me, shews;
Once I had faith, but now in self—despair

Find my chief cordial and my best repose.

My soul is a forgotten thing; she sinks,
Sinks and is lost, without a wish to rise;
Feels an indifference she abhors, and thinks
Her name erased for ever from the skies.

Language affords not my distress a name,—
Yet it is real and no sickly dream;
'Tis love inflicts it; though to feel that flame
Is all I know of happiness supreme.

When love departs, a chaos wide and vast,
And dark as hell, is opened in the soul;
When love returns, the gloomy scene is past,
No tempests shake her, and no fears control.

Then tell me why these ages of delay?
Oh love, all-excellent, once more appear;
Disperse the shades, and snatch me into day,
From this abyss of night, these floods of fear!

No—love is angry, will not now endure
A sigh of mine, or suffer a complaint;
He smites me, wounds me, and withholds the cure;
Exhausts my powers, and leaves me sick and faint.

He wounds, and hides the hand that gave the blow;
He flies, he re-appears, and wounds again—
Was ever heart that loved thee treated so?
Yet I adore thee, though it seem in vain.

And wilt thou leave me, whom, when lost and blind,
Thou didst distinguish and vouchsafe to choose,
Before thy laws were written in my mind,
While yet the world had all my thoughts and views?

Now leave me, when, enamoured of thy laws,
I make thy glory my supreme delight?
Now blot me from thy register, and cause
A faithful soul to perish from thy sight?

What can have caused the change which I deplore?
Is it to prove me, if my heart be true?
Permit me then, while prostrate I adore,
To draw, and place its picture in thy view.

'Tis thine without reserve, most simply thine;
So given to thee, that it is not my own;
A willing captive of thy grace divine;
And loves, and seeks thee, for thyself alone.

Pain cannot move it, danger cannot scare;
Pleasure and wealth, in its esteem, are dust;
It loves thee, e'en when least inclined to spare
Its tenderest feelings, and avows thee just.

'Tis all thine own; my spirit is so too,
An undivided offering at thy shrine;
It seeks thy glory with no double view,
Thy glory, with no secret bent to mine.

Love, holy love! and art thou not severe,
To slight me, thus devoted, and thus fixed?
Mine is an everlasting ardour, clear
From all self-bias, generous and unmixed.

But I am silent, seeing what I see—
And fear, with cause, that I am self-deceived,
Not e'en my faith is from suspicion free,
And that I love seems not to be believed.

Live thou, and reign for ever, glorious Lord!
My last, least offering I present thee now—

Renounce me, leave me, and be still adored!
Slay me, my God, and I applaud the blow.

Watching unto God in the Night Season

Sleep at last has fled these eyes,
Nor do I regret his flight,
More alert my spirits rise,
And my heart is free and light.

Nature silent all around,
Not a single witness near;
God as soon as sought is found;
And the flame of love burns clear.

Interruption, all day long,
Checks the current of my joys;
Creatures press me with a throng,
And perplex me with their noise.

Undisturbed I muse all night,
On the first Eternal Fair;
Nothing there obstructs delight,
Love is renovated there.

Life, with its perpetual stir,
Proves a foe to love and me;
Fresh entanglements occur—
Comes the night, and sets me free.

Never more, sweet sleep, suspend
My enjoyments, always new:
Leave me to possess my friend;
Other eyes and hearts subdue.

Hush the world, that I may wake
To the taste of pure delights;
Oh the pleasures I partake—
God, the partner of my nights!

David, for the selfsame cause,

Night preferred to busy day;
Hearts whom heavenly beauty draws,
Wish the glaring sun away.

Sleep, self-lovers, is for you—
Souls that love celestial know
Fairer scenes by night can view
Than the sun could ever show.

Watching unto God in the Night Season

Season of my purest pleasure,
Sealer of observing eyes!
When, in larger, freer measure,
I can commune with the skies;
While, beneath thy shade extended,
Weary man forgets his woes,
I, my daily trouble ended,
Find, in watching, my repose.

Silence all around prevailing,
Nature hushed in slumber sweet,
No rude noise mine ears assailing,
Now my God and I can meet:
Universal nature slumbers,
And my soul partakes the calm,
Breathes her ardour out in numbers,
Plaintive song or lofty psalm.

Now my passion, pure and holy,
Shines and burns without restraint;
Which the day's fatigue and folly
Cause to languish, dim and faint:
Charming hours of relaxation!
How I dread the ascending sun!
Surely, idle conversation
Is an evil matched by none.

Worldly prate and babble hurt me;
Unintelligible prove;
Neither teach me nor divert me;
I have ears for none but love.
Me they rude esteem, and foolish,
Hearing my absurd replies;
I have neither art's fine polish,
Nor the knowledge of the wise.

Simple souls, and unpolluted
By conversing with the great,
Have a mind and taste ill suited
To their dignity and state;
All their talking, reading, writing,
Are but talents misapplied;
Infants' prattle I delight in,
Nothing human choose beside.

'Tis the secret fear of sinning
Checks my tongue, or I should say,
When I see the night beginning,
I am glad of parting day:
Love this gentle admonition
Whispers soft within my breast;
"Choice befits not thy condition,
Acquiescence suits thee best."

Henceforth, the repose and pleasure
Night affords me I resign;
And thy will shall be the measure,
Wisdom infinite! of mine:
Wishing is but inclination
Quarrelling with thy decrees;
Wayward nature finds the occasion—
'Tis her folly and disease.

Night, with its sublime enjoyments,
Now no longer will I choose;
Nor the day, with its employments,
Irksome as they seem, refuse;
Lessons of a God's inspiring
Neither time nor place impedes;
From our wishing and desiring
Our unhappiness proceeds.

Watching unto God in the Night Season

Night! how I love thy silent shades,
My spirits they compose;
The bliss of heaven my soul pervades,
In spite of all my woes.

While sleep instils her poppy dews
In every slumbering eye,
I watch to meditate and muse,
In blest tranquillity.

And when I feel a God immense
Familiarly impart,
With every proof he can dispense,
His favour to my heart;

My native meanness I lament,
Though most divinely filled
With all the ineffable content
That Deity can yield.

His purpose and his course he keeps;
Treads all my reasonings down;
Commands me out of nature's deeps,
And hides me in his own.

When in the dust, its proper place,
Our pride of heart we lay;
'Tis then a deluge of his grace
Bears all our sins away.

Thou whom I serve, and whose I am,
Whose influence from on high
Refines, and still refines my flame,
And makes my fetters fly;

How wretched is the creature's state

Who thwarts thy gracious power;
Crushed under sin's enormous weight,
Increasing every hour!

The night, when passed entire with thee,
How luminous and clear!
Then sleep has no delights for me,
Lest thou should'st disappear.

My Saviour! occupy me still
In this secure recess;
Let reason slumber if she will,
My joy shall not be less.

Let reason slumber out the night;
But if thou deign to make
My soul the abode of truth and light,
Ah, keep my heart awake!

The Joy of the Cross

Long plunged in sorrow, I resign
My soul to that dear hand of thine,
Without reserve or fear;
That hand shall wipe my streaming eyes;
Or into smiles of glad surprise
Transform the falling tear.

My sole possession is thy love;
In earth beneath, or heaven above,
I have no other store;
And, though with fervent suit I pray,
And importune thee night and day,
I ask thee nothing more.

My rapid hours pursue the course
Prescribed them by love's sweetest force,
And I thy sovereign will,
Without a wish to escape my doom;
Though still a sufferer from the womb,
And doomed to suffer still.

By thy command, where'er I stray,
Sorrow attends me all my way,
A never-failing friend;
And, if my sufferings may augment
Thy praise, behold me well content—
Let sorrow still attend!

It cost me no regret, that she,
Who followed Christ, should follow me,
And though, where'er she goes,
Thorns spring spontaneous at her feet,
I love her, and extract a sweet
From all my bitter woes.

Adieu! ye vain delights of earth,

Inspid sports, and childish mirth,
I taste no sweets in you;
Unknown delights are in the cross,
All joy beside to me is dross;
And Jesus thought so too.

The cross! Oh, ravishment and bliss—
How grateful e'en its anguish is;
Its bitterness how sweet!
There every sense, and all the mind,
In all her faculties refined,
Tastes happiness complete.

Souls once enabled to disdain
Base sublunary joys, maintain
Their dignity secure;
The fever of desire is passed,
And love has all its genuine taste,
Is delicate and pure.

Self-love no grace in sorrow sees,
Consults her own peculiar ease;
'Tis all the bliss she knows;
But nobler aims true Love employ;
In self-denial is her joy,
In suffering her repose.

Sorrow and love go side by side;
Nor height nor depth can e'er divide
Their heaven-appointed bands;
Those dear associates still are one,
Nor till the race of life is run
Disjoin their wedded hands.

Jesus, avenger of our fall,
Thou faithful lover, above all
The cross has ever borne!

Oh, tell me,—life is in thy voice—
How much afflictions were thy choice,
And sloth and ease thy scorn!

Thy choice and mine shall be the same,
Inspirer of that holy flame
Which must for ever blaze!
To take the cross and follow thee,
Where love and duty lead, shall be
My portion and my praise.

Joy in Martyrdom

Sweet tenants of this grove!
Who sing without design,
A song of artless love,
In unison with mine:
These echoing shades return
Full many a note of ours,
That wise ones cannot learn,
With all their boasted powers.

O thou! whose sacred charms
These hearts so seldom love,
Although thy beauty warms
And blesses all above;
How slow are human things,
To choose their happiest lot!
All-glorious King of kings,
Say why we love thee not?

This heart, that cannot rest,
Shall thine for ever prove;
Though bleeding and distressed,
Yet joyful in thy love:
'Tis happy though it breaks
Beneath thy chastening hand;
And speechless, yet it speaks,
What thou canst understand.

Simple Trust

Still, still, without ceasing,
I feel it increasing,
This fervour of holy desire;
And often exclaim,
Let me die in the flame
Of a love that can never expire!

Had I words to explain
What she must sustain
Who dies to the world and its ways;
How joy and affright,
Distress and delight,
Alternately chequer her days:

Thou, sweetly severe!
I would make thee appear,
In all thou art pleased to award.
Not more in the sweet
Than the bitter I meet
My tender and merciful Lord.

This faith, in the dark,
Pursuing its mark,
Through many sharp trials of love,
Is the sorrowful waste
That is to be passed
On the way to the Canaan above.

The Necessity of Self-abasement

Source of love, my brighter sun,
Thou alone my comfort art;
See, my race is almost run;
Hast thou left this trembling heart?

In my youth thy charming eyes
Drew me from the ways of men;
Then I drank unmingled joys;
Frown of thine saw never then.

Spouse of Christ was then my name;
And, devoted all to thee,
Strangely jealous I became,
Jealous of this self in me.

Thee to love, and none beside,
Was my darling, sole employ;
While alternately I died,
Now of grief, and now of joy.

Through the dark and silent night
On thy radiant smiles I dwelt;
And to see the dawning light
Was the keenest pain I felt.

Thou my gracious teacher wert;
And thine eye, so close applied,
While it watched thy pupil's heart,
Seemed to look at none beside.

Conscious of no evil drift,
This, I cried, is love indeed—
'Tis the giver, not the gift,
Whence the joys I feel proceed.

But, soon humbled and laid low,

Stript of all thou hast conferred,
Nothing left but sin and woe,
I perceived how I had erred.

Oh, the vain conceit of man,
Dreaming of a good his own,
Arrogating all he can,
Though the Lord is good alone!

He the graces thou hast wrought
Makes subservient to his pride;
Ignorant that one such thought
Passes all his sin beside.

Such his folly—proved, at last
By the loss of that repose,
Self-complacence cannot taste,
Only love divine bestows.

'Tis by this reproof severe,
And by this reproof alone,
His defects at last appear,
Man is to himself made known.

Learn, all earth! that feeble man,
Sprung from this terrestrial clod,
Nothing is, and nothing can;
Life and power are all in God.

Love Increased by Suffering

“I love the Lord,” is still the strain
This heart delights to sing;
But I reply—your thoughts are vain,
Perhaps 'tis no such thing.

Before the power of love divine
Creation fades away;
Till only God is seen to shine
In all that we survey.

In gulfs of awful night we find
The God of our desires;
'Tis there he stamps the yielding mind,
And doubles all its fires.

Flames of encircling love invest,
And pierce it sweetly through;
'Tis filled with sacred joy, yet pressed
With sacred sorrow too.

Ah love! my heart is in the right—
Amidst a thousand woes,
To thee, its ever new delight,
And all its peace it owes.

Fresh causes of distress occur
Where'er I look or move;
The comforts I to all prefer
Are solitude and love.

Nor exile I nor prison fear;
Love makes my courage great;
I find a Saviour every where,
His grace in every state.

Nor castle walls, nor dungeons deep,

Exclude his quickening beams;
There I can sit, and sing, and weep,
And dwell on heavenly themes.

There sorrow, for his sake, is found
A joy beyond compare;
There no presumptuous thoughts abound,
No pride can enter there.

A Saviour doubles all my joys,
And sweetens all my pains,
His strength in my defence employs,
Consoles me and sustains.

I fear no ill, resent no wrong;
Nor feel a passion move,
When malice whets her slanderous tongue;
Such patience is in love.

Scenes Favourable to Meditation

Wilds horrid and dark with o'er shadowing trees,
Rocks that ivy and briers infold,
Scenes nature with dread and astonishment sees,
But I with a pleasure untold;

Though awfully silent, and shaggy, and rude,
I am charmed with the peace ye afford;
Your shades are a temple where none will intrude,
The abode of my lover and Lord.

I am sick of thy splendour, O fountain of day,
And here I am hid from its beams,
Here safely contemplate a brighter display
Of the noblest and holiest of themes.

Ye forests, that yield me my sweetest repose,
Where stillness and solitude reign,
To you I securely and boldly disclose
The dear anguish of which I complain.

Here, sweetly forgetting and wholly forgot
By the world and its turbulent throng,
The birds and the streams lend me many a note
That aids meditation and song.

Here, wandering in scenes that are sacred to night,
Love wears me and wastes me away,
And often the sun has spent much of his light
Ere yet I perceive it is day.

While a mantle of darkness envelops the sphere,
My sorrows are sadly rehearsed,
To me the dark hours are all equally dear,
And the last is as sweet as the first.

Here I and the beasts of the deserts agree,

Mankind are the wolves that I fear,
They grudge me my natural right to be free,
But nobody questions it here.

Though little is found in this dreary abode
That appetite wishes to find,
My spirit is soothed by the presence of God,
And appetite wholly resigned.

Ye desolate scenes, to your solitude led,
My life I in praises employ,
And scarce know the source of the tears that I shed,
Proceed they from sorrow or joy.

There's nothing I seem to have skill to discern,
I feel out my way in the dark,
Love reigns in my bosom, I constantly burn,
Yet hardly distinguish the spark.

I live, yet I seem to myself to be dead,
Such a riddle is not to be found,
I am nourished without knowing how I am fed,
I have nothing, and yet I abound.

Oh, love! who in darkness art pleased to abide,
Though dimly, yet surely I see
That these contrarities only reside
In the soul that is chosen of thee.

Ah! send me not back to the race of mankind,
Perversely by folly beguiled,
For where, in the crowds I have left, shall I find
The spirit and heart of a child?

Here let me, though fixed in a desert, be free;
A little one whom they despise,
Though lost to the world, if in union with thee,

Shall be holy, and happy, and wise.