



"You will know them by their fruits." Mt. 7:16

The Sanctification of Madame Guyon

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF MADAME GUYON

(13 of 150 pages selected)

CHAPTER 27

On that happy Magdalene's day my soul was perfectly delivered from all its pains. It had already begun since the receipt of the first letter from Father La Combe, to recover a new life. It was then only like that of a dead person raised, though not yet unbound from grave clothes. On this day I was, as it were, in perfect life, and set wholly at liberty. I found myself as much raised above nature, as before I had been depressed under its burden. I was inexpressibly overjoyed to find Him, whom I thought I had lost forever, returned to me again with unspeakable magnificence and purity. It was then, O God, that I found again in Thee with new advantages, in an ineffable manner, all I had been deprived of; the peace I now possessed was all holy, heavenly and inexpressible. All I had enjoyed before was only a peace, a gift of God, but now I received and possessed the God of peace. Yet the remembrance of my past miseries still brought a fear upon me, lest nature should find means to take to itself any part therein. As soon as it wanted to see or taste anything, the Spirit ever watchful crossed and repelled it. I was far from elevating myself, or attributing to myself anything of this new state. My experience made me sensible of what I was. I hoped I should enjoy this happy state for some time, but little did I think my happiness so great and immutable as it was. If one may judge of a good by the trouble which precedes it, I leave mine to be judged of by the sorrows I had undergone before my attaining it. The apostle Paul tells us, that "the sufferings of this life are not to be compared with the glory that is prepared for us." How true is that of this life! One day of this happiness was worth more than years of suffering. It was indeed, at that time well worth all I had undergone, though it was then only dawning. An alacrity for doing good was restored to me, greater than ever. It seemed to me all quite free and natural to me. At the beginning, this liberty was less extensive; but as I advanced it grew greater. I had occasion to see Mon. Bertot for a few moments, and told him, I thought my state much changed. He, seemingly attentive to something else, answered, "No." I believed him; because grace taught me to prefer the judgment of others, and rather believe them than my own opinions or experience. This did not give me any kind of trouble. Every state seemed equally indifferent if I only had the favor of God. I felt a kind of beatitude every day increasing in me. I did all sorts of good, without selfishness or premeditation. Whenever a self-reflective thought was presented to my mind, it was instantly rejected, and as it were a curtain in the soul drawn before it. My imagination was kept so fixed, that I had now very little trouble on that. I wondered at the clearness of my mind and the purity of my whole heart.

I received a letter from Father La Combe, wherein he wrote that God had discovered to him that he had great designs in regard to me. "Let them be," then said I to myself, "either of justice or mercy, all is equal to me."

I still had Geneva deeply at heart; but said nothing of it to anybody, waiting for God to make known to me His all powerful will and fearing lest any stratagem of the Devil should be concealed therein, that might tend to draw me

out of my proper place, or steal me out of my condition. The more I saw my own misery, incapacity and nothingness, the plainer it appeared that they rendered me fitter for the designs of God, whatever they might be. "Oh, my Lord," said I, "take the weak and the wretched to do thy works, that Thou mayest have all the glory and that man may attribute nothing of them to himself. If Thou shouldst take a person of eminence and great talents, one might attribute to him something; but if Thou takest me, it will be manifest that thou alone art the Author of whatever good shall be done." I continued quiet in my spirit, leaving the whole affair to God, being satisfied, if He should require anything of me, that He would furnish me with the means of performing it. I held myself in readiness with a full resolution to execute His orders, whenever he should make them known, though it were to the laying down of my life. I was released from all crosses. I resumed my care of the sick, and dressing of wounds, and God gave me to cure the most desperate. When surgeons could do no more, it was then that God made me cure them. Oh, the joy that accompanied me everywhere, finding still Him who had united me to Himself, in His own immensity and boundless vastitude! Oh, how truly did I experience what He said in the Gospel, by the four evangelists, and by one of them twice over, "Whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it; and whosoever will save his life shall lose it." When I had lost all created supports, and even divine ones, I then found myself happily compelled to fall into the pure divine, and to fall into it through all those very things which seemed to remove me further from it. In losing all the gifts, with all their supports, I found the Giver. In losing the sense and perception of Thee in myself – I found Thee, O my God, to lose Thee no more in Thyself, in Thy own immutability. Oh, poor creatures, who pass all your time in feeding upon the gifts of God, and think therein to be the most favored and happy.

How I pity you if you stop here, short of the true rest, and cease to go forward to God Himself, through the loss of those cherished gifts which you now delight in! How many pass all their lives in this way, and think highly of themselves! There are others who, being called of God to die to themselves, yet pass all their time in a dying life, in inward agonies, without ever entering into God through death and a total loss of self, because they are always willing to retain something under plausible pretexts, and so never lose themselves to the whole extent of the designs of God. They never enjoy God in all His fullness; which is a loss that cannot be perfectly known in this life. Oh, my Lord, what happiness did I not largely taste in my solitude, and with my little family, where nothing interrupted my tranquillity! As I was in the country, the slender age of my children did not require my application too much, they being in good hands, I retired a great part of the day into a wood. I passed as many days of happiness as I had had months of sorrow. Thou, O my God, dealt by me as by thy servant Job, rendering me double for all thou hadst taken, and delivering me from all my crosses. Thou gavest me a marvelous facility to satisfy everyone. What was surprising now was that my mother-in-law, who had ever been complaining of me, without my doing anything more than usual to please her, declared that none could be better satisfied with me than she was. Such as before had cried me down the most, now testified their sorrow for it and became full of my praises.

My reputation was established with much more advantage, in proportion as it had appeared to be lost. I remained in an entire peace, as well without as within. It seemed to me that my soul was become like New Jerusalem, spoken of in the Apocalypse, prepared as a bride for her husband and where there is no more sorrow, or sighing. I had a perfect indifference to everything that is here, a union so great with the will of God, that my own will seemed entirely lost. My soul could not incline itself on one side or the other, since another will had taken the place of its own, but only nourished itself with the daily providences of God. It now found a will all divine, yet was so natural and easy that it found itself infinitely more free than ever it had been in its own. These dispositions have still subsisted, and still grown stronger, and more perfect even to this hour. I could neither desire one thing nor another, but was content with whatever fell. If any in the house asked me, "Will you have this, or that?" then I was surprised to find that there was nothing left in me which could desire or choose. I was as if everything, of smaller matters, quite disappeared, a higher power having taken up and filled all their place. I even perceived no more that soul which He had formerly conducted by His crook and His staff, because now He alone appeared to me, my soul having given up its place to Him. It seemed to me, as if it was wholly and altogether passed into its God, to make but one and the same thing with Him; even as a little drop of water, cast into the sea, receives the qualities of the sea. Oh, union of unity, demanded of God by Jesus Christ for men and merited by him! How strong is this in a soul that is become lost in its God! After the consummation of this divine unity, the soul remains hid with Christ in God. This happy loss is not like those transient ones which ecstasy operates, which are rather an absorption than union because the soul afterwards finds itself again with all its own dispositions. Here she feels that prayer fulfilled – John

17:21: "That they all may be one as thou Father art in me, and I in thee;

Chapter 33

I would willingly suppress what I am now about to write if anything of it were my own, also on account of the difficulty of expressing myself as because few souls are capable of understanding divine leadings which are so little known, and so little comprehended. I have myself never read of anything like it. I shall say something of the interior dispositions I was then in, and I shall think my time well employed, if it serves you who are willing to be of the number of my children; it serves such as are already my children, to induce them to let God glorify Himself in them after His manner, and not after their own. If there be anything which they do not comprehend, let them die to themselves. They will find it much easier to learn by experience than from anything I could say; expression never equals experience. After I had come out of the trying condition I have spoken of I found it had purified my soul, instead of blackening it as I had feared. I possessed God after a manner so pure, and so immense, as nothing else could equal. In regard to thoughts or desires, all was so clean, so naked, so lost in the divinity, that the soul had no selfish movement, however plausible or delicate; both the powers of the mind and the very senses being wonderfully purified.

Sometimes I was surprised to find that there appeared not one selfish thought. The imagination, formerly so restless, now no more troubled me. I had no more perplexity or uneasy reflections. The will, being perfectly dead to all its own appetites, was become void of every human inclination, both natural and spiritual, and only inclined to whatever God pleased, and to whatever manner He pleased. This vastness or enlargedness, which is not bounded by anything, however plain or simple it may be, increases every day. My soul in partaking of the qualities of her spouse seems also to partake of His immensity. My prayer was in an openness and singleness inconceivable. I was, as it were, borne up on high, out of myself. I believe God was pleased to bless me with this experience.

At the beginning of the new life, He made me comprehend, for the good of other souls, the simplicity and desirableness of this passage of the soul into God. When I went to confess, I felt such an immersion of the soul into Him, that I could scarcely speak. This ascension of the spirit, wherein God draws the soul so powerfully, not into its own inmost recess, but into Himself, is not operated till after the death of self. The soul actually comes out of itself to pass into its divine object. I call it death, that is to say, a passage from one thing to another. It is truly a happy Passover for the soul, and its passage into the promised land. The spirit which is created to be united to its divine Origin, has so powerful a tendency to Him, that if it were not stopped by a continual miracle, its moving quality would cause the body to be drawn after it by reason of its impetuosity and noble ascent. But God has given it a terrestrial body to serve for a counterpoise. This spirit then, created to be united to its Origin, without any medium or interstice, feeling itself drawn by its divine object, tends to it with an extreme violence; in such sort that God, suspending for sometime the power which the body has to hold back the spirit, it follows with ardency. When it is not sufficiently purified to pass into God, it gradually returns to itself; as the body resumes its own quality, it turns to the earth. The saints who have been the most perfect have advanced to that degree, as to have nothing of all this. Some have lost it toward the end of their lives, becoming single and pure as the others, because they then had in reality and permanence what they had at first only as transient fruitions, in the time of the prevalence or dominion of the body. It is certain then that the soul, by death to itself, passes into its divine Object. This is what I then experienced. I found, the farther I went, the more my spirit was lost in its Sovereign, who attracted it more and more to Himself. He was pleased at first that I should know this for the sake of others and not for myself. Indeed He drew my soul more and more into Himself, till it lost itself entirely out of sight, and could perceive itself no more. It seemed at first to pass into Him. As one sees a river pass into the ocean, lose itself in it, its water for a time distinguished from that of the sea, till it gradually becomes transformed into the same sea, and possesses all its qualities; so was my soul lost in God, who communicated to it His qualities, having drawn it out of all that it had of its own. Its life is an inconceivable innocence, not known or comprehended of those who are still shut up in themselves or only live for themselves. The joy which such a soul possesses in its God is so great, that it experiences the truth of those words of the royal prophet, "All they who are in thee, O Lord, are like persons

ravished with joy." To such a soul the words of our Lord seem to be addressed, "Your joy no man shall take from you." John 16:22. It is as it were plunged in a river of peace. Its prayer is continual. Nothing can hinder it from praying to God, or from loving Him. It amply verifies these words in the Canticles, "I sleep but my heart waketh;" for it finds that even sleep itself does not hinder it from praying. Oh, unutterable happiness! Who could ever have thought that a soul, which seemed to be in the utmost misery, should ever find a happiness equal to this? Oh, happy poverty, happy loss, happy nothingness, which gives no less than God Himself in His own immensity, no more circumscribed to the limited manner of the creature, but always drawing it out of that, to plunge it wholly into His own divine essence. Then the soul knows that all the states of self-pleasing visions, openings, ecstasies and raptures, are rather obstacles; that they do not serve this state which is far above them; because the state which has supports, has pain to lose them; yet cannot arrive at this without such loss. In this are verified the words of an experienced saint; "When I would," says he, "possess nothing through self-love, everything was given me without going after it." Oh, happy dying of the grain of wheat, which makes it produce an hundredfold! The soul is then so passive, so equally disposed to receive from the hand of God either good or evil, as is astonishing. It receives both the one and the other without any selfish emotions, letting them flow and be lost as they come. They pass away as if they did not touch. After I finished my retreat with the Ursulines at Tonon, I returned through Geneva and, having found no other means of conveyance, the French resident lent me a horse. As I knew not how to ride I made some difficulty of doing it; but as he assured me that it was a very quiet horse, I ventured to mount.

There was a sort of a smith, who looking at me with a wild haggard look, struck the horse a blow on the back, just as I had got upon him, which made him give a leap. He threw me on the ground with such force that they thought I was killed. I fell on my temple. My cheekbone and two of my teeth were broken. I was supported by an invisible hand and in a little time I mounted as well as I could on another horse and had a man by my side to keep me up. My relations left me in peace at Gex.

They had heard at Paris of my miraculous cure; it made a great noise there. Many persons in reputation for sanctity then wrote to me. I received letters from Mademoiselle De Lamoignon, and another young lady, who was so moved with my answer, that she sent me a hundred pistoles for our house, and let me know besides that, when we wanted money, I had only to write to her; and that she would send me all I could desire. They talked in Paris of printing an account of the sacrifice I had made, and inserting in it the miracle of my sudden recovery. I don't know what prevented it; but such is the inconstancy of the creature, that this journey, which drew upon me at that time so much applause, has served for a pretext for the strange condemnation which has since passed upon.

CHAPTER 37

My soul was in a state of entire resignation and very great content, in the midst of such violent tempests. Those persons came to tell me a hundred extravagant stories against Father La Combe. The more they said to me to his disadvantage, the more esteem I felt for him. I answered them, "Perhaps I may never see him again, but I shall ever be glad to do him justice. It is not he who hinders me from engaging at Gex. It is only because I know it to be none of my vocation." They asked me, "Who could know that better than the bishop?" They further told me, "I was under a deception, and my state was good for nothing." This gave me no uneasiness, having referred to God the care of requiring, and of exacting what He requires, and in whatever manner He demands it. A soul in this state seeks nothing for itself, but all for God. Some may say, "What, then, does this soul?" It leaves itself to be conducted by God's providences and creatures. Outwardly, its life seems quite common; inwardly, it is wholly resigned to the divine will. The more everything appears adverse, and even desperate, the more calm it is, in spite of the annoyance and pain of the senses and of the creatures, which, for some time after the new life, raise some clouds and obstructions, as I have already signified. But when the soul is entirely passed into its original Being, all these things no more cause any separation or partition. It finds no more of that impurity which came from self-seeking, from a human manner of acting, from an unguarded word, from any warm emotion or eagerness, which caused such a mist, as it then could neither prevent nor remedy, having so often experienced its own efforts, to be useless, and even hurtful, as they did nothing else but still more and more defile it.

There is in such case no other way or means of remedy, but in waiting till the Sun of Righteousness dissipate those fogs. The whole work of purification comes from God only. Afterward this conduct becomes natural; then the soul can say with the royal prophet, "Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear. Though war should rise up against me, in him will I confide."

For then, though assaulted on every side, it continues fixed as a rock. Having no will but for what God sees meet to order, be it what it may, high or low, great or small, sweet or bitter, honor, wealth, life, or any other object, what can shake its peace? It is true, our nature is so crafty that it worms itself through everything; a selfish sight is like the basilisk's, it destroys. Trials are suited to the state of the soul, whether conducted by lights, gifts, or ecstasies, or by the entire destruction of self in the way of naked faith. Both these states are found in the apostle Paul. He tells us, "And lest I should be exalted above measure, through the abundance of revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me." He prayed thrice, and it was said to him, "My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness." He proved also another state when he thus expressed himself, "Oh, wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" To which he replies, "I thank God, it is done through Jesus Christ our Lord."

It is He who conquers death in us through His own life. Then there is no longer a sting in death, or thorn in the flesh, capable of paining or hurting any more. At first indeed, and for a pretty long time after, the soul sees that nature wants to take some part with it in its trials; then its fidelity consists in withholding it, without allowing it the least indulgence, till it leaves everything to go on with God in purity as it comes from Him. Till the soul be in this state, it always sullies, by its own mixture, the operation of God; like those rivulets which contract the corruption of the places they pass through, but, flowing in a pure place, they then remain in the purity of their source. Unless God through experience, makes known His guidance to the soul, it can never comprehend it. Oh, if souls had courage enough to resign themselves to the work of purification, without having any weak and foolish pity on themselves, what a noble, rapid and happy progress would they make! But few are willing to lose the earth. If they advance some steps, as soon as the sea is ruffled they are dejected; they cast anchor, and often desist from the prosecution of the voyage. Such disorders doth selfish interest and self-love occasion. It is of consequence not to look too much at one's own state, not to lose courage, not to afford any nourishment to self-love, which is so deep-rooted, that its empire is not easily demolished. Often the idea which a man falsely conceives of the greatness of his advancement in divine experience, makes him want to be seen and known of men, and to wish to see the very same perfection in others. He conceives too low ideas of others, and too high of his own state. Then it becomes a pain to him to converse with people too human; whereas, a soul truly mortified and resigned would rather converse with the worst, by the order of Providence, than with the best, of its own choice; wanting only to see or to speak to any as Providence directs, knowing well that all beside, far from helping, only hurt it, or at least prove very unfruitful to it. What, then, renders this soul so perfectly content? It neither knows, nor wants to know, anything but what God calls it to. Herein it enjoys divine content, after a manner vast, immense, and independent of exterior events; more satisfied in its humiliation, and in the opposition of all creatures, by the order of Providence, than on the throne of its own choice. It is here that the apostolic life begins.

But do all reach that state? Very few, indeed, as far as I can comprehend. There is a way of lights, gifts and graces, a holy life in which the creature appears all admirable. As this life is more apparent, so it is more esteemed of such, at least, as have not the purest light. The souls which walk in the other path are often very little known, for a length of time, as it was with Jesus Christ Himself, till the last years of His life. Oh, if I could express what I conceive of this state! But I can only stammer about it.

Chapter 38

During this time Father La Combe was at Rome, where he was received with so much honor, and his doctrine was so highly esteemed, that the Sacred Congregation was pleased to take his sentiments on some points of doctrine, which were found to be so just, and so clear, that it followed them. Meanwhile the sister would take no care of my

daughter; when I took care of her she was displeased. I was not able, by any means, to prevail on her to promise me that she would try to prevent her contracting bad habits. However, I hoped that Father La Combe, at his return, would bring everything into order, and renew my consolation. Yet I left it all to God. About July, 1682, my sister, who was an Ursuline, got permission to come. She brought a maid with her, which was very seasonable. My sister assisted in the education of my daughter, but she had frequent jarring with her tutoress – I labored but in vain for peace.

By some instances which I met with in this place, I saw clearly that it is not great gifts which sanctify, unless they be accompanied with a profound humility; that death to everything is infinitely more beneficial; for there was one who thought herself at the summit of perfection, but has discovered since, by the trials which have befallen her, that she was yet very far from it. O, my God, how true it is that we may have of Thy gifts, and yet be very imperfect, and full of ourselves! How very straight is the gate which leads to a life in God! How little one must be to pass through it, it being nothing else but death to self! But when we have passed through it, what enlargement do we find! David said, (Psalm 18:19) “He brought me forth into a large place.” And it was through humiliation and abasement that he was brought thither.

Father La Combe, on his arrival, came to see me: The first thing he said was about his own weakness, and that I must return. He added, “that all seemed dark, and there was no likelihood that God would make use of me in this country.” The Bishop of Geneva wrote to Father La Mothe to get me to return; he wrote to me accordingly to do it. The first Lent which I passed with the Ursulines, I had a very great pain in my eyes; for that same imposthume which I formerly had between the eye and the nose, returned upon me three times. The bad air, and the noisome room which I was in, contributed hereto.

My head was frightfully swelled, but great was my inward joy. It was strange to see so many good creatures, who did not know me, love and pity me; all the rest enraged against me, and most of them on reports entirely false, neither knowing me, nor why they so hated me. To swell the stream of affliction yet more, my daughter fell sick and was likely to die; there was but little hope of her recovery, when her mistress also fell ill. My soul, leaving all to God, continued to rest in a quiet and peaceable habitation. Oh, Principal and sole object of my love! Were there never any other reward of what little services we do, or of the marks of homage we render Thee, than this fixed state above the vicissitudes in the world, is it not enough? The senses indeed are sometimes ready to start aside, and to run off like truants; but every trouble flies before the soul which is entirely subjected to God.

By speaking of a fixed state, I do not mean one which can never decline or fall, that being only in Heaven. I call it fixed and permanent, compared with the states which have preceded it, which were full of vicissitudes and variations. I do not exclude a state of suffering in the senses, or arising from superficial impurity, which remains to be done away, and which one may compare to refined but tarnished gold. It has no more need to be purified in the fire, having undergone that operation; but needs only to be burnished. So it seemed to be with me at that time.

Chapter 43

As I was ordered to stop at Grenoble, at her house I resided. I placed my daughter in a convent, and resolved to employ all this time in resigning myself to be possessed in solitude by Him who is the absolute Sovereign of my soul. I made not any visit in this place; no more had I in any of the others where I had sojourned.

I was greatly surprised when, a few days after my arrival, there came to see me several persons who made profession of a singular devotion to God. I perceived immediately a gift which He had given me, of administering to each that which suited their states. I felt myself invested, all of a sudden, with the apostolic state. I discerned the conditions of the souls of such persons as spoke to me, and that with so much facility, that they were surprised at it, and said one to another, that I gave every one of them “the very thing they had stood in need of.” It was thou, O my God, who didst all these things; some of them sent others to me. It came to such excess, that, generally from six in the morning till eight in the evening, I was taken up in speaking of the Lord. People flocked on all sides, far and near, friars, priests, men of the world, maids, wives, widows, all came one after another. The Lord supplied me with

what was pertinent and satisfactory to them all, after a wonderful manner, without any share of my study or meditation therein. Nothing was hid from me of their interior state, and of what passed within them. Here, O my God, Thou madest an infinite number of conquests known to Thyself only. They were instantly furnished with a wonderful facility of prayer. God conferred on them His grace plentifully, and wrought marvelous changes in them. The most advanced of these souls found, when with me, in silence, a grace communicated to them which they could neither comprehend, nor cease to admire. The others found an unction in my words, and that they operated in them what I said. Friars of different orders, and priests of merit, came to see me, to whom our Lord granted very great favors, as indeed He did to all, without exception, who came in sincerity. One thing was surprising; I had not a syllable to say to such as came only to watch my words, and to criticize them. Even when I thought to try to speak to them, I felt that I could not, and that God would not have me do it. Some of them in return said, "The people are fools to go to see that lady. She cannot speak." Others of them treated me as if I were only a stupid simpleton. After they left me there came one and said, "I could not get hither soon enough to apprise you not to speak to those persons; they come from such and such, to try what they can catch from you to your disadvantage." I answered them, "Our Lord has prevented your charity; for I was not able to say one word to them." I felt that what I spoke flowed from the fountain and that I was only the instrument of Him who made me speak. Amid this general applause, our Lord made me comprehend what the apostolic state was, with which He had honored me, that to give one's self up to the help of souls, in the purity of His Spirit, was to expose one's self to the most cruel persecutions. These very words were imprinted on my heart: "To resign ourselves to serve our neighbor is to sacrifice ourselves to a gibbet. Such as now proclaim, 'Blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord,' will soon cry out, 'Away with him, crucify him.'" When one of my friends speaking of the general esteem the people had for me, I said to her, "Observe what I now tell you, that you will hear curses out of the same mouths which at present pronounce blessings." Our Lord made me comprehend that I must be conformable to Him in all His states; and that, if He had continued in a private life with His parents, He never had been crucified; that, when He would resign any of His servants to crucifixion, He employed such in the ministry and service of their neighbors. It is certain that all the souls employed herein by apostolic destination from God, and who are truly in the apostolic state, are to suffer extremely. I speak not of those who put themselves into it, who, not being called of God in a singular manner, and having nothing of the grace of the apostleship, have none of its crosses; but of those only who surrender themselves to God without any reserve, and who are willing with their whole hearts to be exposed,

CHAPTER 46

A poor girl of very great simplicity, who earned her livelihood by her labor, and was inwardly favored of the Lord, came all sorrowful to me, and said, "Oh my mother, what strange things have I seen!" I asked what they were, "Alas" said she, "I have seen you like a lamb in the midst of a vast troop of furious wolves. I have seen a frightful multitude of people of all ranks and robes, of all ages, sexes and conditions, priests, friars, married men, maids and wives, with pikes, halberts and drawn swords, all eager for your instant destruction. You let them alone without stirring, or being surprised and without offering any way to defend yourself. I looked on all sides to see whether anyone would come to assist and defend you; but I saw not one." Some days after, those, who through envy were raising private batteries against me, broke forth. Libels began to spread. Envious people wrote against me, without knowing me. They said that I was a sorceress, that it was by a magic power I attracted souls, that everything in me was diabolical; that if I did charities, it was because I coined, and put off false money, with many other gross accusations, equally false, groundless and absurd.

As the tempest increased every day, some of my friends advised me to withdraw, but before I mention my leaving Grenoble, I must say something farther of my state while here. It seemed to me that all our Lord made me do for souls, would be in union with Jesus Christ. In this divine union my words, had wonderful effect, even the formation of Jesus Christ in the souls of others. I was in no wise able of myself to say the things I said. He who conducted me made me say what he pleased, and as long as He pleased. To some I was not permitted to speak a word; and to others there flowed forth as it were a deluge of grace, and yet this pure love admitted not of any superfluity, or a

means of empty amusement. When questions were asked, to which an answer were useless, it was not given me. It was the same in regard to such as our Lord was pleased to conduct through death to themselves, and who came to seek for human consolation. I had nothing for them but what was purely necessary, and could proceed no farther. I could at least only speak of indifferent things, in such liberty as God allows, in order to suit everyone, and not to be unsociable or disagreeable to any; but for His own word, He Himself is the dispenser of it. Oh, if preachers were duly careful to speak only in that spirit what fruits would they bring forth in the lives of the hearers! With my true children I could communicate best in silence, in the spiritual language of the divine Word.

I had the consolation some time before to hear one read in St. Augustine a conversation he had with his mother. He complains of the necessity of returning from that heavenly language to words. I sometimes said, "Oh, my Love, give me hearts large enough to receive and contain the fullness bestowed on me." After this manner, when the Holy Virgin approached Elizabeth, a wonderful commerce was maintained between Jesus Christ and St. John the Baptist, who after this manifested no eagerness to come to see Christ, but was drawn to retire into the desert, to receive the like communications with the greatest plenitude. When he came forth to preach repentance, he said, not that he was the Word, but only a Voice which was sent to make way, or open a passage into the hearts of the people for Christ the Word. He baptized only with water, for that was his function; for, as the water in running off leaves nothing, so does the Voice when it is past. But the Word baptized with the Holy Ghost, because He imprinted Himself on souls, and communicated with them by that Holy Spirit. It is not observed that Jesus Christ said anything during the whole obscure part of His life, though it is true that not any of His words shall be lost. Oh Love, if all thou hast said and operated in silence were to be written, I think the whole world could not contain the books that should be written. John 21:25.

All that I experienced was shown me in the Holy Scripture. I saw with admiration that there passed nothing within my soul which was not in Jesus Christ and in the Holy Scriptures. I must pass over very many things in silence, because they cannot be expressed. If they were expressed they could not be understood or comprehended. I often felt much for Father La Combe, who was not yet fixed in his state of interior death, but often rose and fell into alternatives. I was made sensible that Father La Combe was a vessel of election, whom God had chosen to carry His name among the Gentiles, and that He would show him how much he must suffer for that name. A carnal world judges carnally of them, and imputes to human attachment what is from the purest grace. If this union by any deviation be broken, the more pure and perfect it is, the more painfully will it be felt; the separation of the soul from God by sin being worse than that from the body of death. For myself I may say I had a continual dependence on God, in every state; my soul was ever willing to obey every motion of His Spirit. I thought there could not be anything in the world which He could require from me, to which I would not give myself up readily and with pleasure. I had no interest at all for myself. When God requires anything from this wretched nothing, I find no resistance left in me to do His will, how rigorous soever it may appear. If there is a heart in the world of which Thou art the sole and absolute master, mine seems to be one of that sort. Thy will, however rigorous, is its life and its pleasure.

Chapter 48

One must not judge of the servants of God by what their enemies say of them, nor by their being oppressed under calumnies without any resource. Jesus Christ expired under pangs. God uses the like conduct toward His dearest servants, to render them conformable to His Son, in whom He is always well pleased. But few place that conformity where it ought to be. It is not in voluntary pains or austerities, but in those which are suffered in a submission ever equal to the will of God, in a renunciation of our whole selves, to the end that God may be our all in all, conducting us according to His views, and not our own, which are generally opposite to His. All perfection consists in this entire conformity with Jesus Christ, not in shining things which men esteem. It will only be seen in eternity who are the true friends of God. Nothing pleases Him but Jesus Christ, and that which bears His mark or character. They were continually pressing me to flee, though the Archbishop had spoken to myself, and bidden me not to leave Paris. But they wanted to give the appearance of criminality both to me and to Father La Combe by my flight. They knew not

how to make me fall into the hands of the official. If they accused me of crimes, it must be before other judges. Any other judge would have seen my innocence; the false witnesses would have run the risk of suffering for it. They continually spread stories of horrible crimes; but the official assured me that he had heard no mention of any. He was afraid lest I should retire out of his jurisdiction. They then made the king believe "that I was an heretic, that I carried on a literary correspondence with Molinos (I, who never knew there was a Molinos in the world, till the Gazette had told me of it) that I had written a dangerous book; and that on those accounts it would be necessary to issue an order to put me in a convent, that they might examine me. I was a dangerous person, it would be proper for me to be locked up, to be allowed no commerce with any one; since I continually held assemblies," which was very false. To support this calumny my handwriting was counterfeited, and a letter was forged as from me, importing, that I had "great designs, but feared that they would prove abortive, through the imprisonment of Father La Combe, for which reason I had left off holding assemblies at my house, being too closely watched; but that I would hold them at the houses of other persons."

This forged letter they showed the king, and upon it an order was given for my imprisonment.

This order would have been put in execution two months sooner than it was, had I not fallen very sick. I had inconceivable pains and a fever. Some thought that I had a gathering in my head.

The pain I suffered for five weeks made me delirious. I had also a pain in my breast and a violent cough. Twice I received the holy sacrament, as I was thought to be expiring. One of my friends had acquainted Father La Mothe, (not knowing him to have had any hand in F. La Combe's imprisonment) that she had sent me a certificate from the inquisition in Father La Combe's favor, having heard that his own was lost. This answered a very good purpose; for they had made the king believe that he had run away from the inquisition; but this showed the contrary. Father La Mothe then came to me, when I was in excessive pain, counterfeiting all the affection and tenderness in his power, and telling me "that the affair of Father La Combe was going on very well, that he was just ready to come out of prison with honor, that he was very glad of it. If he had only this certificate, he would soon be delivered. Give me it then," said he, "and he will be immediately released." At first I made a difficulty of doing it. "What! Said he, will you be the cause of ruining poor Father La Combe, having it in your power to save him, and cause us that affliction, for want of what you have in your hands?"

I yielded, ordering it to be brought and given him. But he suppressed it, and gave out that it was lost.

It never could be got from him again. The Ambassador from the Court of Turin sent a messenger to me for this certificate, designing the proper use of it to serve Father La Combe. I referred him to Father La Mothe. The messenger went to him and asked him for it. He denied I had given it to him, saying, "Her brain is disordered which makes her imagine it." The man came back to me and told me his answer. The persons in my chamber bore witness that I had given it to him. Yet all signified nothing; it could not be got out of his hands; but on the contrary, he insulted me, and caused others also to do it, though I was so weak that I seemed to be at the very gates of death. They told me they only waited for my recovery to cast me into prison. He made his brethren believe that I had treated him ill. They wrote to me that it was for my crimes that I suffered; and that I should put myself under the control of Father La Mothe, otherwise I should repent it; that I was mad and ought to be bound; and was a monster of pride, since I would not suffer myself to be conducted by Father La Mothe.

Such was my daily feast in the extremity of my pain; deserted of my friends, and oppressed by my enemies; the former being ashamed of me, through the calumnies which were forged and industriously spread; the latter let loose to persecute me; under all which I kept silence, leaving myself to the Lord. There was not any kind of infamy, error, sorcery, or sacrilege, of which they did not accuse me. As soon as I was able to be carried to the church in a chair, I was told I must speak to the prebend. (It was a snare concerted between Father La Mothe and the Canon at whose house I lodged). I spoke to him with much simplicity, and he approved of what I said. Yet, two days after they gave out that I had uttered many things, and accused many persons; and from hence they procured the banishment of sundry persons with whom they were displeased, persons whom I had never seen or of whom I never heard. They were men of honor. One of them was banished, because he said my little book is a good one. It is remarkable that they say nothing to those who prefixed their approbations, and that, far from condemning the book, it has been reprinted since I have been in prison, and advertisements of it have been posted up at the Archbishop's palace, and

all over Paris.

In regard to others, when they find faults in their books, they condemn the books and leave the person at liberty; but as for me, my book is approved, sold and spread, while I am kept a prisoner for it. The same day that those gentlemen were banished, I received a lettre de cachet, or sealed order to repair to the Convent of the Visitation of St. Mary's, in a suburb of St. Antoine. I received it with a tranquillity which surprised the bearer exceedingly. He could not forbear expressing it, having seen the extreme sorrow of those who were only banished. He was so touched with it as to shed tears. And although his order was to carry me off directly, he was not afraid to trust me, but left me all the day, desiring me to repair to St. Mary's in the evening. On that day many of my friends came to see me, and found me very cheerful, which surprised such of them as knew my case. I could not stand, I was so weak, having the fever every night, it being only a fortnight since I was thought to be expiring. I imagined they would leave me my daughter and maid to serve me. (They did not. Edit.)

CHAPTER 50

At this time I had my first acquaintance with the Bishop of Meaux. I was introduced by an intimate friend, the Duke of Chevreuse. I gave him the foregoing history of my life, and he confessed, that he had found therein such an unction as he had rarely done in other books, and that he had spent three days in reading it, with an impression of the presence of God on his mind all that time. I proposed to the bishop to examine all my writings, which he took four or five months to do, and then advanced all his objections; to which I gave answers. From his unacquaintance with the interior paths, I could not clear up all the difficulties which he found in them. He admitted that looking into the ecclesiastical histories for ages past, we may see that God has sometimes made use of laymen, and of women to instruct, edify, and help souls in their progress to perfection. I think one of the reasons of God's acting thus, is that glory may not be ascribed to any, but to Himself alone.

For this purpose, He has chosen the weak things of this world, to confound such as are mighty. 1 Cor. 1:27. Jealous of the attributes which men pay to other men, which are due only to Himself, He has made a paradox of such persons, that He alone may have the glory of His own works. I pray God, with my whole heart, sooner to crush me utterly, with the most dreadful destruction, than to suffer me to take the least honor to myself, of anything which He has been pleased to do by me for the good of others. I am only a poor nothing. God is all-powerful. He delights to operate, and exercise His power by mere nothings.

Some time after, he endeavored to make me sign his pastoral letter, and acknowledge that I had fallen into those errors, which he there lays to my charge, and made many demands of me of the like absurd and unreasonable nature, threatening me with those persecutions I afterward endured, in case of noncompliance. However, I continued resolute in refusing to put my name to falsehoods. At length, after I had remained about six months at Meaux, he gave me the certificate. Finding Mad.

Maintenon disapproved of the certificate he had granted, he wanted to give me another in place of it. My refusal to deliver up the first certificate enraged him, and as I understood they intended to push matters with the utmost violence, "I thought that although I were resigned to whatever might fall out, yet I ought to take prudent measures to avoid the threatening storm." Many places of retreat were offered me; but I was not free in my mind to accept of any, nor to embarrass anybody, nor involve in trouble my friends and my family, to whom they might attribute my escape. I took the resolution of continuing in Paris, of living there in some private place with my maids, who were trusty and sure, and to hide myself from the view of the world. I continued thus for five or six months.

I passed the day alone in reading, in praying to God, and in working. But the December 27, 1695, I was arrested, though exceedingly indisposed at that time, and conducted to Vincennes. I was three days in the custody of Mons. Des Grez, who had arrested me; because the king would not consent to my being put into prison; saying several times over, that a convent was sufficient. They deceived him by still stronger calumnies. They painted me in his eyes, in colors so black, that they made him scruple his goodness and equity. He then consented to my being taken

to Vincennes. I shall not speak of that long persecution, which has made so much noise, for a series of ten years' imprisonments, in all sorts of prisons, and of banishment almost as long, and not yet ended, through crosses, calumnies, and all imaginable sorts of sufferings. There are facts too odious on the part of divers persons, which charity induces me to cover. I have borne long and sore languishings, and oppressive and painful maladies without relief. I have been also inwardly under great desolations for several months, in such sort that I could only say these words, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!" All creatures seemed to be against me. I then put myself on the side of God, against myself.

Perhaps some will be surprised at my refusing to give the details of the greatest and strongest crosses of my life, after I have related those which were less. I thought it proper to tell something of the crosses of my youth, to show the crucifying conduct which God held over me. I thought myself obliged to relate certain facts, to manifest their falsehood, the conduct of those by whom they had passed, and the authors of those persecutions of which I have been only the accidental object, as I was only persecuted, in order to involve therein persons of great merit; whom, being out of their reach by themselves, they, therefore, could not personally attack, but by confounding their affairs with mine.

I thought I owed this to religion, piety, my friends, my family, and myself. While I was prisoner at Vincennes, and Monsieur De La Reine examined me, I passed my time in great peace, content to pass the rest of my life there, if such were the will of God. I sang songs of joy, which the maid who served me learned by heart, as fast as I made them.

We together sang thy praises, O my God! The stones of my prison looked in my eyes like rubies; I esteemed them more than all the gaudy brilliancies of a vain world. My heart was full of that joy which Thou givest to them who love Thee, in the midst of their greatest crosses. When things were carried to the greatest extremities, being then in the Bastile, I said, "O, my God, if thou art pleased to render me a new spectacle to men and angels, Thy holy will be done!"

December, 1709.. Here she left off her narrative, though she lived a retired life above seven years after this date. What she had written being only done in obedience to the commands of her director. She died June 9, 1717, at Blois, in her seventieth year.

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