

LIFE AND LETTERS

—OF THE LATE—

JAMES A. McMASTER,

EDITOR OF THE NEW YORK FREEMAN'S JOURNAL AND CATHOLIC REGISTER.

BY THE LATE VERY REV. MARK S. GROSS.

CHAPTER XVI. (CONTINUED.)

McMASTER'S SPIRITUAL LETTERS.

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MY MOST SWEET DAUGHTER,—It was not that I forget you, any day of my life, that I was confused, a week ago, and did not write to you for your birthday.

St. Teresa is, especially, the "Pattern shown on the Mountain" to all her daughters. But is there not a special and particular obligation on the sister that bears her glorious name, to seek and follow her? You know that wonderful passage in her life when her Lord—finding her loving any other not only *in* Him but *for* Him—said: "*Now* Teresa, I am all thine, as thou art all mine!" It is a very high, and a very rare grace and virtue even for a Carmelite. Not all, even of the saints have attained it in this life. It is gained by none except after great pains and crucifixion. But it is good as an inspiration. On the instant of reading dear Sister Gertrude's note—who is always thinking of others and forgetting herself—the words of our Lord by the Prophet Isaias, came to my mind: "Can a mother forget her suckling, and not be as one with the child of her own flesh? But if she may forget, (for a moment), I, at least, will not forget thee! I have written thee in my hands, and thy walls, (the willing vows by which thou hast given thyself to me alone), are forever before mine eyes."

Yes, my daughter, my beloved Sister Teresa. It is the desire of my heart that more and more you may grow to love even me, your father, not only *in* our Lord, but *for* our Lord, alone. There can never be a time in your life that you will not seek my spiritual good. For all the rest, turn your eyes to your heavenly spouse. You cannot too often

re-read the solemn office of your profession and veiling, till the words *live* in your soul daily. The accomplishment of that holy office is the whole of your life: "*Amo Christum! In cujus thalamum introivi!*" etc.

For me, poor wretch in the world, I know it to be good, not only sometimes in the day, but as continually as possible, to think of those dear daughters that, day and night in their whole lives, are serving God. And yet, in my very prayers, I am disquieted, and not without reason, for fear that, in you my daughters, I am "loving the creature more than the Creator." In my will I protest otherwise, and that I love our Lord and His Blessed Mother immeasurably more than I love my children. I will it to be so, but the flesh weighs down the spirit.

You, religious—especially you of the "Order of the Mother of God"—should aim higher. St. Bernard, "Doctor of the Church," on the words of the Canticles: "Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth," comments: In the beginning of a Christian life, like Mary Magdalen, the feet of Jesus are kissed. He is worshipped *for the benefits received*. After the crucifixion, Mary Magdalen kissed the hands, also, of the crucified Saviour. This was *loving Him for Himself alone*. St. Bernard, in grand words, adds: The "kisses of the mouth" are reserved for those that love themselves and all dear to them, *only* for Jesus Christ. Out of humility, perhaps that great saint and doctor says: "Of this let those who have attained, speak. I cannot."

Dear daughter, and sister, I could pour out more words, but perhaps I have written already too many.

My heart goes with them.

POOR PAPA.