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## Spirit's Day Studies

The Writings of Jane Lead

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*Shake, shake your earthly dust away  
Now it's the Spirit's Day,  
that will admit of no delay.*

The Eight Worlds

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Abbreviations used in this study  
[www.janelead.org/SDS\\_Abbreviations.pdf](http://www.janelead.org/SDS_Abbreviations.pdf)

## The Universality of Divine Love

### Or, Does God Never Change?

Francis Lee's Preface to  
Jane Lead's Everlasting Gospel

[EG P:1] §.That which was from the beginning declare we unto you; that *God is Love*. But if that be His *everlasting* and *immutable* nature, it may be demanded, *What then is that Wrath of God which is to be revealed against all impenitent sinners? And what will become of not only some portions, but even of the greatest part of the Scriptures* (those most adorable records of truth), *which are so filled with scenes of woe and misery, that in above ten thousand places of these very writings, that we believe to have been dictated through His Spirit, we have plain and distinct footsteps of this wrath, and of an appearing mutability of the Divine Nature?* With judgments and curses; with bitter imprecations and lamentations; with all manner of plagues (both internal and external), said to be inflicted by His wrathful displeasure; with various (apparent) mutations of His design: His repentance, His reconciliation, and His actual superseding of what He has (more than once) expressly and positively declared by His messengers the prophets; with those most unaccountable methods of His, with respect to His turning the hearts and wills of men (and so by parity of reason of *all* kinds of spirits too) as the streams of water: His hardening the heart of one, His mollifying that of another, His pouring out the spirit of *deep sleep*,<sup>1</sup> His stopping the ear, His closing the eye, together with all the intellectual and spiritual faculties.

[EG P:2] If then God is *Love*, and if the Scriptures are true (which are the revelation of His *will*, and none other than the very dictates of *Truth* itself), here lies the main knot to be resolved: How there can be that continual vicissitude of good and evil, light and darkness, mercy and judgment, which is found to run throughout both the Testaments: How God, who is in Himself so unchangeable, *with whom there is no variableness*, neither so much as a *shadow of turning*, may yet be said to alter His first design; to curse that which He had originally blessed; and then to bless again that which He had before cursed; how He can seem to be pleased at one time, and displeased at another; to make alive and to kill; to build up and to throw down; to give and to take away again what was given; to lift up and to remove the light of His countenance; to hear and to be deaf; to pity and to despise; to save and to condemn.

[EG P:3] And most especially how He, who is so expressly, emphatically, and pompously asserted to be *Love*, can for one or more acts of rebellion in His children, who were *made subject* to variation in their very *primary* constitution, recede so far (as to our view) from it; as to alter His original purpose, to

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estrangle Himself from the effluence of His own being, and to reverse His decree which had gone forth in their production toward making them partakers with Him of light and glory; so far as to suffer the greatest part of them (according to the common belief) to fall into utter darkness and misery, which could not but be diametrically opposite to those ends proposed by Him, and repugnant not only to the goodness, but even to the justice of His nature: who as He gave them their existence at first, so still sustains and upholds it every moment.

[EG P:4] And if by many it be deemed so very inconsistent with the truth and wisdom of the Divine Being, to annihilate that which it has made, how much more inconsistent will it be (with the deepest reverence and abasement be it spoken) with both these, either to create from the beginning that which is most directly contrary to its will, that which may oppose the beauty of the divine harmony, may violate the order and scale of beings, and live a life that is incomparably worse than death itself, full of discord, anguish and misery: or else to preserve in existence by a mighty hand of power (no less than that which did create the same at first), that which has alienated itself from the bright Image of *Light* and *Love*, and even broken asunder the very *essential* band of unity, truth and goodness; introducing in the stead thereof, duality, falsehood, and evil?

[EG P:5] If then the same Fountain does not send forth *sweet water and bitter*, and if *creation* and *sustentation* are but one and the same continued act in the Creator (who is *Light*, in whom there is no *darkness* at all; and by consequent *Love* also, in whom there is no *wrath*, as He himself says, *Fury is not in me*); whoever can untie such a complication of difficulties (with many more that might be instanced) so as to harmonize all the divine attributes one with another, and to reconcile both the whole body and the several portions of the Holy Scripture relating to the dispensation both of the Law and of the Gospel, into an unanimity of consent; may not unreasonably be supposed to have been assisted by a Superior Beam of Light in making this discovery.

[EG P:6] And it will still be the more wonderful if this be done by a person of no extraordinary capacity or learning; if also by one that had rather an aversion from, than a propensity to it; and especially if there could be no encouragement from without, but all manner of opposition was to be expected. But if the Person besides be so far from being extraordinary in the eye of the world, as not to be at all considerable; if it be one that is simple and unlettered; if it be a woman who can therefore have no authority, and against whom many not unjust prejudices do lie; if it be one who had let this rest for many years after the knowledge of it, and could hardly be prevailed upon to let it be published—even by the commanding voice and hand of Heaven; and if not only all manner of opposition from without, but even from within also, from the very Household of Faith itself, such as are initiated into the very same Spiritual Life and Light; and if it must become both *foolishness* to the more *exterior*, and a *stumbling-block* even to the more *interior Christian*; This will be the more admirable still, and bespeak our examination and attention as to this small apologetic treatise for the *eternity* and *universality* of the Divine Love.

[EG P:7] Whereby all the aforesaid difficulties, with the most considerable objections of the learned *atheists* and *theists*, either against the nature and attributes of the Deity, or against the creation itself, or thirdly, against the authority of the Scriptures; will be made to vanish as of themselves, and like wax to melt before the fire. For thus it will be seen how God was Love from the beginning; how He is Love at present, even in the Day of Wrath and Misery; and how He *will be* Love unto the end. It will be seen, how all that contrariety and mutability which have been before represented, are not in God or derivable from God; who is the very same *unchangeably*, towards every one of His creatures, now at this very instant as He was the first day, yet the first moment of their creation; and that He *will* and *must* be the same towards them, even towards every individual of them, for all eternity of eternities. And that *in*

*Himself* he remains the same yesterday, today, and forever, Love without end, and the Rock which cannot be moved; while yet *in nature*<sup>2</sup> He may not improperly (with respect to vulgar apprehensions) be said to vary, and so to move Himself this way or that way, according to the different affections, passions and alterations either in man, or in any other intelligent creature.

[EG P:8] It will also be seen how the righteousness, holiness, and mercifulness of God may come to be perfectly harmonized; how the order and beauty of the creation, and of His whole economy towards angels and men, may be distinctly discerned; how the sacred authority of the Scriptures may be preserved inviolable against the attacks of its most potent enemies; and how even all whatever may seem the most to oppose, shall but serve to a greater, higher, and more glorious manifestation and illustration of that Love of God, which endures forever, when all scenes, shadows and accidents shall pass away.

[EG P:9] §.Which if, after many revolutions, *eons*, and transient circles of duration, it may consist with the justice and truth of God to bring about for His Glory; let it not seem strange to us if this *message* of peace and good will from Him unto *All* (that is, unto everyone in their *Order*, and according to the *Degrees* of their alienation), be called the *Everlasting Message*, and the *Gospel of the Everlasting Love*. For if it be the declaration of that which was from the beginning, even before the foundations of this world, and that the Tree of Good and Evil was planted in it: then it seems to me it may not unfitly be called Everlasting *Backwards*. And if it be also the declaration of that which is to be, even after the end and consummation of it, when that Heaven and Earth shall have passed away, then may it on the other side, too, be called Everlasting—that is, Everlasting *Forwards*. So that if the message prove but *true*, this title will on *both* sides be compatible with it.

[EG P:10] §.Now that it may be *true*, and that after various revolutions all judgment may be at last swallowed up *in victory*, I dare appeal to the most rigid opposers to examine their own hearts, whether they would not find there some relentings towards their offending Brother, after a most long and grievous punishment inflicted upon Him upon their account. I dare appeal to the customs of all (even barbarous) nations, to those that are called *common* and *innate* notions; to the early traditions of mankind in general, and of the Church of Christ in particular; and to the very procedures even in human courts of judicature, and the manner of sovereign princes: Whether all punishments ought not to be for some end, for the good either of the criminals themselves, or of others, or of both; and whether also there may not possibly be a reserve for mercy, both in and after judgment.

[EG P:11] Who is it that can set bounds to the Almighty, and can say unto Him, That He shall not dispense with the rigor of His own Law, or alleviate the severity of His own sentence (allowing even the most rigorous interpretation of it), but that the fierceness of His wrath shall endure beyond all ages of worlds, and that He shall not be pacified at last towards the works of His hands? What He has done He may do again. And that He has both moderated His own Law and found room for grace—even after the sentence of condemnation has been pronounced—numerous instances from the Holy Scriptures might be produced. And that this is not in the least derogatory to His essential *truth*, but highly consistent with it, will be manifest to every impartial eye in the above distinction of GOD in *Himself*, and GOD *in Nature*.

[EG P:12] For that in Himself He varies not, moves not, is not angry, condemns none. But *in nature* He may be said to vary and to move; and in it (as corrupted, that is, removed farther from Him, its right Center and Bias), to be angry, and by consequent to condemn whatever is opposite to Him. Which wrath therefore, and condemnation, not being founded in the essential truth of the Divine Nature, but being merely *accidental*, and grounded in the contrariety, vanity, and mutability of the creature; it does not appear (however it may be expressed), that it *must* be everlasting, in the strictest sense of the word. Nay,

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it appears that it ought to be everlasting only in that ground in which it stands, or in a lower and looser sense of the word.

[EG P:13] §.Now if this lower sense be not expressly against Scripture and nature, and may serve to vindicate the rectitude of God against the greatest enemies of religion: however frightful it may appear to some, it is humbly hoped that very few, if any, will much condemn it in their cool and calm thoughts. But that it is not against the Scriptures, I leave the critics, and all those that understand the propriety of either of the originals to decide. They that understand the languages in which the Scriptures were written, are here the only capable judges: and let these speak. Some of them have already spoken their sense, and the sense of antiquity. And persons of the most celebrated fame, and highest dignity in the established Church of *England* and *Ireland*, have made no contemptible advancements hereto—which they would never certainly have done, had they seen in the Scriptures what some do think they see there.

[EG P:14] §.And that it is not against nature, I leave all the natural philosophers, and as many as have any understanding in the principles of true and solid physiology, to determine. And surely there may be some warrantable prejudice against the contrary sentiment (of a strict eternity applied to a *dying* life, or a *living* death): as not according to nature, when the naturalists are, by the maintainers of it, so generally descried, as they are, for not believing it.

[EG P:15a] §.It matters not what names the zealots of any party fix upon what they have once received an aversion against. Truth will be truth and error will be error under whatever disguise they pass. If Scripture and nature be not against us, we hope we shall not be afraid or ashamed, though we should have as many opponents as either *Origen*, or *Athanasius* had. Neither shall the name of *Origen* be at all a matter of confusion, if objected. There is a *letter of resolution concerning him*, known well enough to have been written by an eminent and learned bishop, and printed in the year *1661*. That must be first confuted, together with other authors of no mean name, before we shall be ashamed of this great man. But whatever it might be that gave such offence in him, we shall not therefore be so over-solicitous as to fly into the adverse party, or to condemn him without a full hearing or perfect understanding of what he maintains as to this point.

[EG P:15b] For after long examinations we are well convinced that the opposite doctrine, or the grounds upon which it stands (and only *can* stand), would insensibly lead us, if followed, into the heresies of the *Manichees* and *Anthropomorphites*—both of which, they who most eagerly assert it, do abominate with the greatest detestation. And therefore it would be a piece of great uncharitableness, as well as injustice, to charge them with consequences which are not presently, or to every one discernible: and which they do condemn as much as the others. We cannot now stand to examine into the origin of these gross and pestiferous errors; both arising from the same source, though looking different ways. But the pillars hereof are perhaps nowhere so overturned as in this little treatise: as may, if demanded, be made good.

[EG P:16] §.And indeed however the Scriptures may ascribe *human* passions to God, it is most certain that they cannot be understood until we see through all these, and behold that He is *God who changes not*. So also, however they may ascribe evil, misery, vengeance and the Curse to God, it is not possible that anything of this nature should be understood as it ought to be, until we can see through all this, that He is sovereign and absolute in His will. For if the contrariety to His will can ever cease, then must evil and misery be at an end, which do proceed from that contrariety. And if His will be indeed sovereign and absolute (as it is unchangeable), all contrariety to it, in *all manner* of spirits, must at last cease; except we could conceive that God could will both parts of a contradiction, or would create beings that

might oppose and war against Himself eternally. Let but His will then be allowed to be superior to the (asserted) liberty and supremacy of that of the creature, and that there is no co-eternal contrary will un-created, and the natural and easy consequences thereof will be, that this will of God (which is no other than *Love* itself), may come to be done by every creature, in all regions and worlds; and the Curse being thus taken away, *all the Sons of God to shout for joy*, as they did in the beginning, before any curse entered into nature.

[EG P17] §.When the wrath of God *in nature* shall totally expire, and vengeance being perfectly satisfied shall be forced to withdraw, that so after a long restrain the tender bowels of compassion may be made manifest, and the dark cloud be removed from before the face of the eternal *Sun of Righteousness* (then arising with *healing* in His rays to all universally), this Universal Jubilee comes now to be proclaimed and testified in an acceptable and *due time*, for the honor (as we hope and believe) of GOD only; And not for the lessening of His justice and holiness (as some will say), but for the vindicating and exalting of them both, no less than of His mercy.

[EG P:18] §.Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabbath: let your whole creation be full of your glory; yea, let the very place of your footstool not be left void and empty of you forevermore; but let the Earth, and all that is under the Earth, be made to praise you, O Eternal LOVE.

## Timotheus

[Known to be Dr. Francis Lee]

Preface from The Everlasting Gospel.

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