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ALBERTUS MAGNUS.

[1193--1280.]

**DE ADHÆRENDO DEO,
OF ADHERING TO GOD.**

12642 f. 11

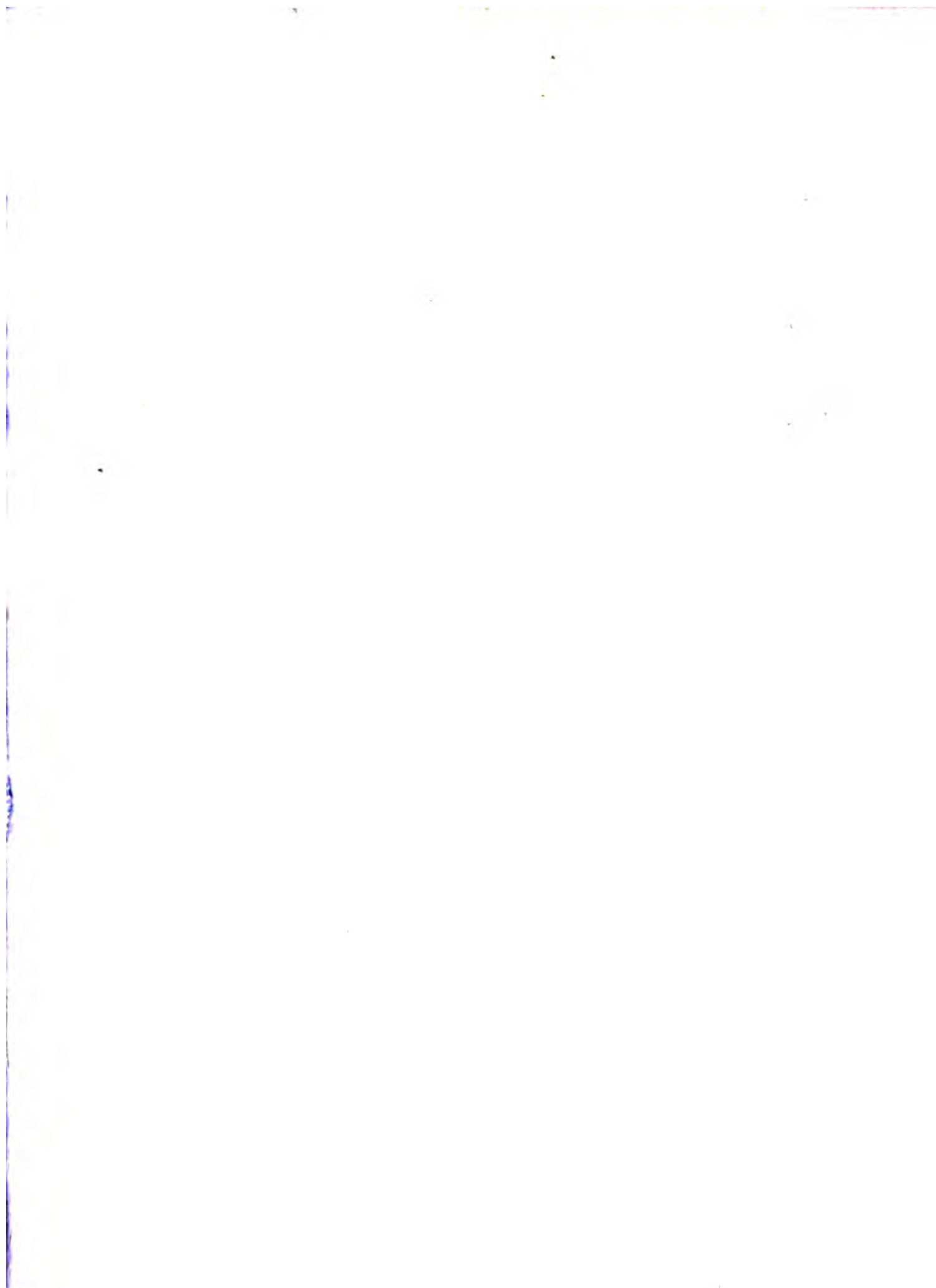


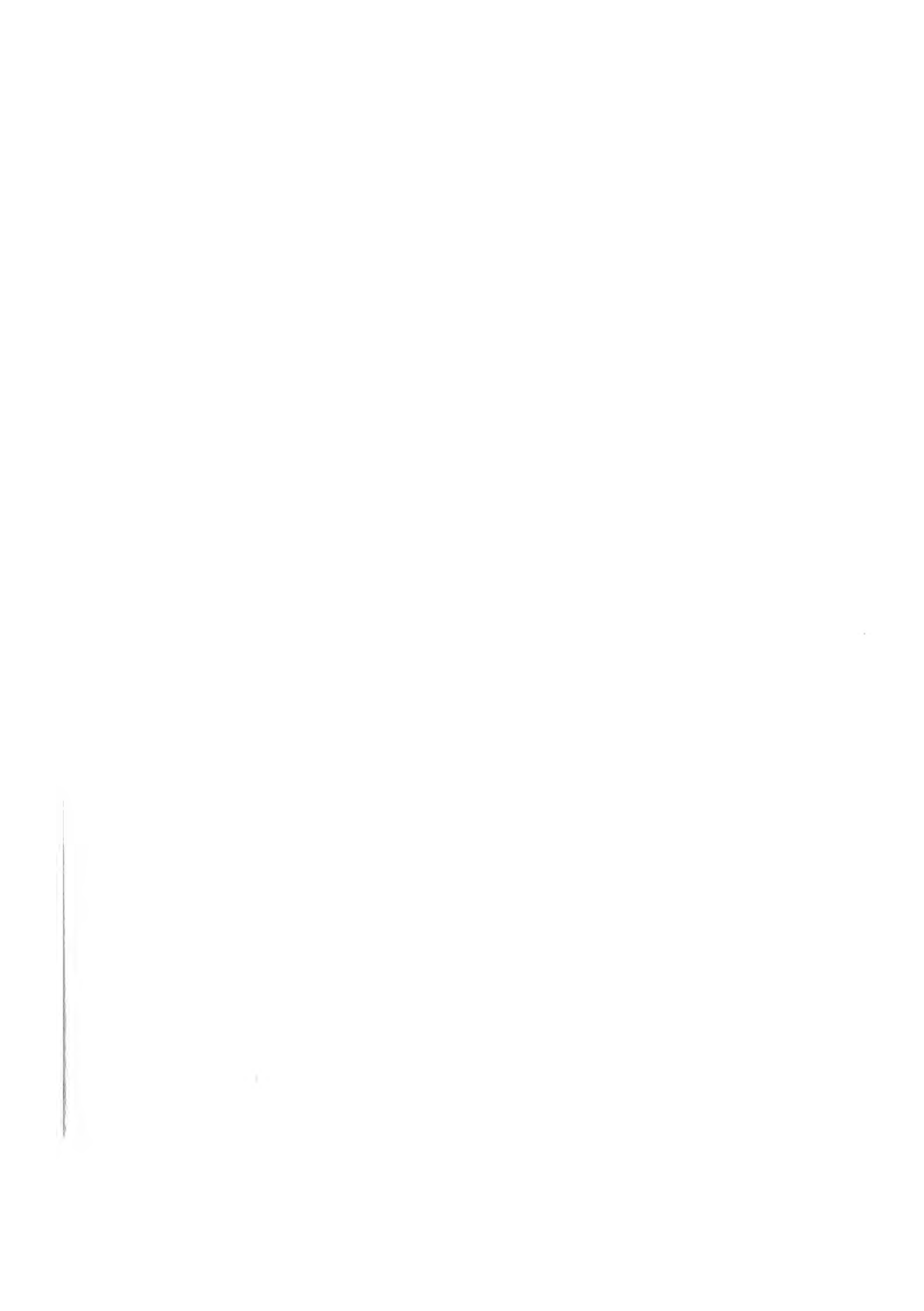
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THE TREATISE

OF

ALBERTUS MAGNUS,

[1193—1280.]

DE ADHÆRENDO DEO:

OF ADHERING TO GOD.

A Translation rom the Latin.

LONDON:
CHARLES GILPIN, BISHOPSGATE STREET,
AND ALL BOOKSELLERS.

Entered Stationers Hall.]

1850.



INTRODUCTION.



THE following little Treatise of ALBERTUS MAGNUS, is one of the few productions of the middle ages which retain actual value by the quality that renders the instruction as perfect and applicable now as in the days when knowledge was so far behind its present advancement.

The author, directing his address to the mind of the reader, leaves far distant the outward circumstances, habits, and forms of his own and all times, and deals wholly with that which constitutes the immaterial, immortal reasonable creature, born in time to live on through eternity.

The *memory*, that storehouse of our knowledge, he shews must be cleared of the materialities which feed the imagination with forms and fictions of fancied good, on which the affections dwell: the *will*, that master of the mind, must be bent in complete humility, to rise in the new life of divine love and heavenly aspiration: the *intellect* awakened from the apprehension of the things that dwell in carnal affection, and perish in the using, to the knowledge and understanding of the things that belong to God and eternity. He discourses of that

which all who have possessed, have pronounced inestimable;—inward religion.

ALBERTUS MAGNUS of the family of the Counts of Böllstadt, lived from 1193 (or according to some, 1205) to 1280. Attached to the Dominican order, his preference was for seclusion and study, but his public life was significant and worthy in a special degree when viewed by the contrast of the majority in parallel circumstances. As a lecturer and public teacher, he labored at Cologne, Paris, Rome, and Lyons; and became a recognised leader of learning and piety of that time. As bishop of Ratisbon he occupied himself almost wholly with the spiritualities of his office, and afterwards resigned his bishoprick in order to a more complete devotion to the exercises of study, meditation, and piety. In almost every department of learning, he was far in advance of the age, and few sciences are free from some obligation for contributions afforded by his powerful and diligent mind. His erudition was comprehensive. His writings were very numerous. The dulness and grossness, not only of the popular mind, but of the reputed educated of the time, besides the ill method of communicating knowledge, led to many misapprehensions of his engagements and purposes; and begat, as might be expected, various and absurd descriptions of some of his acts and productions. To him were attributed both then, and subsequently, many things that probably were wholly unconnected with him, or which correctly related, and

viewed in a light of competent judgment, would stand with the soap-bubble experiments of the later philosopher, and be subject to similar interpretations. Nor will it be forgotten, that as far as science was concerned, he can be justly viewed only with the features of the age in which he lived. Among his apologists and admirers, rank some of the highest names of modern times. The illustrious Humboldt says of him with Roger Bacon, in respect of their scientific research, "they were the first who boldly rent asunder the fetters of the intellect; and thus as it were, absolved nature, and restored her to her ancient rights," particularising some of the results of his study with expressions of delight and admiration. His character and works have come under the review and commendation of Naudé and Theophilus Raynaud, of Brucker in his history of Philosophy; Buhle in the *Jahrbuch der geschichte der philosophie*, and Tiedemann in the history of speculative Philosophy. His highest and lasting praise however must rest on the subject of his piety, and the fruits of his meditation and thought during a long and diligent life. On the theme of spiritual vital intercourse with God, he becomes wholly free from all that obscures and disqualifies. By personal experience, he knew the mind of the Spirit; had drank of the water from the rock in the desert, and rejoiced in the hope of higher and fuller enjoyments when released from the body. The treatise in question was the highest teaching of his well instructed soul. Flowing from the

centre of a mind, which fixed on the immoveable ground of faith, had surveyed the glorious realities of the world in which spirit only lives, it shews that the antepast of that rest which remains for the people of God could and should now be enjoyed by the new-born, in the harmonising influence upon every faculty of the mind which the contemplation of it induces. As others, who have tasted of the powers of the world to come, he felt and saw that the great antagonising power was the world present, in all its material relations and occurrences, distracting and dissipating the capacities of the intellect, and absorbing the affections of the soul; and by personal actual process was fitted to give the precious counsel afforded in this treatise "Of adhering to God." There is nothing that partakes of private bias, or a color of aught that is misanthropic, or peculiar to a particular notion or profession; nothing needing palliation or exception. The indwelling love speaking in the outflowing charity of act, the truth of God here as ever, shews itself the only universal.

No earnest, thoughtful, and devout reader of the Bible, and especially of the New Testament can fail to have been struck with the power and beauty of many passages, which, like jewels in the golden shrine, possess an intensity of worth and meaning which language cannot possibly exhaust or explore: they are alone to be apprehended by that vital perception which transcends the utmost delicacy and force of words;—they are altogether

intrinsic, cannot be described, must be seen and known each for himself. To lead the mind in this upward progress, divesting itself of own works, own words, own imaginations ; pointing the focus of those rays of divine light, which, discerned by the souls' whole faculty, their purity, simplicity, and harmony become more and more revealed—this is the purpose of the treatise “Of adhering to God.”

OF ADHERING TO GOD.

CHAPTER I.

I HAVE purposed with myself, with the greatest accuracy, (as far as it is possible in this our exile and pilgrim state) to give a description of the absolute and plenary abstraction from all things, and our ready, secure, naked, and firm adhering to our Lord God alone: and this the rather, because the very end of Christian perfection, is charity (or Divine love,) whereby we cleave to, and are made one with, the Lord our God. To which Divine adhesion by love, every one is bound that hopes for salvation; and is performed by the observance of the precepts, and conformity to the will of God; the observance whereof, excludes whatsoever is repugnant to the essence and habit of charity. By such means we more readily arrive at our ultimate end, which is God; by the observance of which are likewise excluded all those things, which clog and hinder the activity and fervour of charity, from carrying us up into our Lord God; such as are the denying of all things, yea, even of our

own soul and body ; for seeing that our Lord *God is a spirit, they that would worship Him, must do it in spirit and in truth* : that is, with knowledge and love, with the understanding and affection, devoid of all phantasms, or images. To this purpose, is that command of our Lord, *But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet* ; that is, the inmost retreat of thy heart ; and when thou hast shut thy door, *viz.* the door of thy senses upon thee ; there do thou, with a pure heart, and good conscience, and faith unfeigned, *pray to thy Father which is in secret*, in spirit and in truth. Which is then best done, when a man being disentangled and divested of all other things, and wholly retired within himself ; and having forgot and shut out all, and every thing, in the presence of Jesus Christ, the mind alone doth in silence, with faith and assurance, lay open her desires before her Lord God ; and thus, by the entirest affection of her heart and love, doth most sincerely and fully pour forth and plunge herself into God, with the inmost marrow and strength of all her powers ; dilating, inflaming, and dissolving herself wholly into Him.

CHAPTER II.

NOW whosoever desires, and makes it his business to undertake and enter upon this state or kind of life ; it is needful that he, as it were, shutting his eyes and senses, do not concern or trouble himself with, or be careful and solicitous about anything whatsoever ; but totally reject and renounce all things as impertinent, hurtful, and pernicious ; and in the next place, that he wholly retire within himself, and in that retirement, entertain no other object, but Jesus Christ alone, and him crucified, and so press on through him, into him, *i. e.* through man into God ; through the wounds of his humanity, into the inmost recess of his divinity ; and there, without any further disputing, readily and securely commit himself and all his concerns to his indefatigable Providence, according to that of *St. Peter, casting all your care upon him, who can do all.* And again, *be solicitous for nothing.* And that of the psalmist, *cast thy care upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee ;* and again, *I have set the Lord always before me ;* and with the spouse in the Canticles, *I have found him whom my soul loveth ;* because, as *wisdom* saith, *all good things come together with it.* This is that hidden Heavenly treasure, and that precious pearl which cannot be

purchased, but by the parting with all that we have, this being preferred before all, in the strength of the Spirit. For what advantage will it be to one that hath dedicated himself to God, if he gain the whole world, but at the same time suffer loss in his soul? Or of what profit is the highest profession of religion, or a seeming holy conversation, without living in the spirit of Truth and humility, wherein Christ dwells, through faith wrought and formed by love; wherefore we are told that *the kingdom of God is within us*: which is no other than Jesus Christ himself.

CHAPTER III.

SURE it is that the more solicitously busy the mind is in thinking and managing these inferior and human affairs, at the greater distance it puts itself from superior and heavenly objects, and true inward devotion; and on the contrary, the more fervently she recollects herself from the memory, affection, and understanding of things here below, and betakes herself to those above, the more perfect will her prayer be, and the more pure her contemplation; because it is impossible she should be perfectly intent on both these together, they being as opposite as light and darkness. For he that cleaves to God, is, and walks, in the light; but he that sticks to the world, gropes into the dark. Whence the most sublime perfection of man in this life is this, to be so far united to God, that his whole soul, with all its powers and faculties, be to that degree gathered up into the Lord his God, that he may become one spirit with him, so as to *remember* nothing but God, to feel or *understand* nothing but God; and that all his *affections* being united and centred in the joys of love, may sweetly repose in the sole fruition of their Creator. For the image of God impressed on the soul, consists in these three faculties, *viz.* reason, memory, and will:

and as long as these do not wholly receive their stamp and impress from God, the soul is not deiform, according to the intent and scope of its first creation. For God is the form of the soul, by whom the soul must be impressed, as the wax is by the seal. Now this can never be fully performed, until reason be, according to its capacity, perfectly illuminated with the knowledge of God, who is the sovereign *truth*; and the *will* be perfectly bent and taken up, in loving the supreme *good*; and the *memory* be wholly employed in the beholding and enjoying of eternal happiness, and in a sweet and delightful repose and acquiescence in the same. And forasmuch as in the consummate possession of these, consists the glory of the bliss of Heaven, it is evident that the true beginning and anticipation of these, is the perfection of this life.

CHAPTER IV.

HAPPY therefore is the man, who by a continual effacing of all phantasms and imaginary representations, and by introversion, and the lifting up his mind into God, at last, in a manner, forget and leave behind him all images, and by these means, consequently, operating inwardly with a naked, simple, and pure intellect and affection, about the most pure and simple object, God. Wherefore thou must reject and cast out of thy mind all phantasms, representations, and images, and the forms of all things besides God, to the end that thy whole exercise about God within thee may depend only of thy naked intellect, affection, and will. For indeed, the true end of all thy holy exercises is this, that thou do intend and repose in the Lord God within thee, by the purest act of intellection, and the devoutest affection, without all representations or entanglements whatsoever. For this exercise cannot be discharged by any corporal organs, or the external senses, but by that part in man, by which he is man. Now that which constitutes a man, is understanding and love; and therefore as long as man sports it with his imagination and senses, and fixeth there, he is not yet got beyond the motions

and bounds of his bestial nature, that is, of that part within him, which he hath common with brute beasts; forasmuch as they do perceive, and are affected with such sensible representations, and no other, because the power of their soul reacheth no higher. But the case is otherwise with man, who is created in the image of God, according to his intellect, affection, and free-will; which must be immediately, purely, and nakedly imprest by God, and become united, and firmly cleave unto him. Wherefore also the devil doth with all possible diligence endeavour to hinder and disturb this exercise, as far as in him lies, forasmuch as he knows it to be an entrance and anticipation of eternal life; which makes him to envy so great a happiness to man. For which reason he always endeavours to estrange and alienate the mind of man from his Lord God; sometimes by one temptation, sometimes by another; sometimes by one passion, and sometimes by another; sometimes by superfluous solicitousness, and indiscreet carking; sometimes by disturbance, dissolute conversation, and unreasonable curiosity; sometimes by the study of curious and subtle writings, impertinent discourses, reports, and news; sometimes by adversity,

and sometimes by prosperity. Which though sometimes they may seem to us to be very light, and in a manner, no sins at all, are nevertheless, great lets and hindrances to this holy exercise and work. And therefore, however they may represent themselves to us as profitable and necessary, yet are immediately to be rejected and disowned, as hurtful and pernicious, whether they be small or great, and to be wholly expelled and cast out of our senses. Accordingly it is highly necessary that all things heard, seen, done, or spoken, and other such like, be received by us without phantoms (images) or dwellings upon them; and that neither afterwards, nor before, nor at the perceiving of them, we do form or feed any representations; and when thus a phantom does not enter the memory and the mind, then can it neither hinder a man in his prayer, meditation, and singing of psalms, or in any other spiritual operation or exercise whatsoever; neither will it ever again obviate and disturb him. Thus do thou readily and securely commit thy whole self, and all and every one of thy concerns in silence and rest to the infallible and most certain Providence and wise disposal of the Divine Majesty, who himself

will appear for thee in this combat, and fight for thee, and will with more honour and sweetness deliver and comfort thee, than if thou shouldest continually, night and day, hammer upon the anvil of thy thoughts and imagination about it; and with a vain, vagabond, and yet captived mind, foolishly run up and down from one contrivance to another, spending thy precious time in tiring thy mind and body, and foolishly consuming the strength of them both. Wherefore do thou receive all, and everything, whensoever or howsoever they come upon thee, with an even temper, in silence and tranquillity, as reached forth to thee by the hand of the Paternal Divine Providence. Divest therefore thyself of the images and phantoms of all bodily things, according to the exigency of thy state and profession, that with a naked and simplified mind, thou hast so frequently and entirely devoted thyself, that there may be nothing to mediate or interpose between thy soul and him, that so with a pure and fixed view, thou mayest raise thyself from the wounds of his manhood, into the glorious light and love of his Godhead.

CHAPTER V.

IF so be therefore, thou dost desire and endeavour, by a straight, safe and short path, to arrive to the end of true bliss, here and hereafter, of grace and glory, then do thou with an intent mind, earnestly aspire after continual cleanness of heart and purity of mind, with a constant calm and tranquillity of thy senses, and recollecting the affections of thy heart, continually fix them above, on the Lord thy God; withdrawing thyself in the meantime from thy familiars and acquaintance, and, as far as lies in thee, from all men, and from all things that might be a let or hindrance to thy holy purpose; always watching an opportunity where and when thou mayest find place and time, for sweet rest and contemplation, and the enjoyment of the secret pleasures of silence, avoiding the shipwrecks of this present world, and the noise, hurry, and confusion of it. Wherefore let this be thy chief study at all times, how thou mayest attain to cleanness, purity, and rest of heart, that so continually, having shut the doors of thy carnal senses, thou mayest turn into thyself, and lock up thy heart, as far as is possible, from the repre-

sentations of all sensible things, and the imaginations of earthly objects. It is this purity of heart that excels all spiritual exercises whatsoever, as being the final intention, aim, and reward for all the labours which a religious and spiritual man takes in this life. Wherefore do thou with all diligence, application, and endeavour, rid thy heart, senses and affections from all these things that may impede its freedom; and from every other concern of the world, that hath the least power to allure, bind, and captivate thee. And so strive to recollect and gather up all the wandering excursions of thy heart, and all the affections of thy mind, into that one, true, simple, and Supreme good; and to keep them always recollected within thyself, as in one place: and by this means, endeavour always to cleave with thy mind to God and Divine things, and leaving thy earthly frailty behind, strive to transform thyself continually into the pattern of thy Heavenly things, through thy inward communion with, and retirement into Jesus Christ. Wherefore if thou makest it thy business to strip and purify thyself from all images and representations, and with trust and confidence, to simplify and quiet thy heart and mind in the

Lord thy God, that thou mayest feel, nad take in the fountain of the Divine good pleasure in all thy inward parts, and by thy good will be united to God in thy intellect or understanding, this exercise alone will be sufficient for thee, and serve instead of all study, and reading of the holy Scriptures, and will advance thee to the love of God and thy neighbour, according as the anointing teacheth thee. Wherefore with all study, do thou labour and endeavour to simplify thy heart, that being immoveable, and at peace from any intruding vain phantasms, thou mayest always turn thyself to, and stand fast in the Lord, within thee, to that degree, as if thy soul was got into the always present *now* of eternity, that is, of the Deity ; in such a manner, that for the love of Jesus Christ, from a pure heart, a good conscience, and faith unfeigned, thou mayest wholly forsake and leave thyself, and entirely and fully commit thy whole self to God in all tribulation and every event whatsoever, always desiring to be patiently resigned and obedient to his will and good pleasure.

Now to the end, that thou mayest come to this state, it is necessary for thee, frequently to return to thine own heart, and to abide there ; ridding thyself, as

far as is possible, of all things, preserving the eye of thy mind continually in purity and rest, voiding thy intellect of all images and representations of inferior things, setting free the affection of thy will from all earthly cares, and with a fervent love, from the very bottom and root of thy soul, cleaving to the true supreme Good, having thy memory also continually lifted upwards, and firmly fixed and grounded in the same alone true sovereign, essential, and uncreated Good, to the end, that thy whole soul, with all its powers and faculties, being thus gathered up into God, may become one Spirit with him, which is the highest perfection attainable in this life. It is this unity of Spirit and love, whereby man is made conform in all his desires and wishes with the Supreme and eternal will, so as that he becomes that by grace, which God is by nature. And here we are to observe, that in that very moment wherein any man by the grace of God overcomes his own will, that is, his inordinate love and liking, so as to dare fully and totally trust the Lord God with all his needs and concerns, he does so highly please God, that he freely bestows upon him such a degree of grace, by which he feels that true

charity and love begot in him which expels all doubts and fears, and gives him a sure and confident hope in God. Wherefore nothing can be more happy and advantageous for us, than to cast our All upon him in whom there is no want. And seeing that as long as thou standest in thyself, thou dost not stand fast, cast thy whole self securely upon God, and he will take thee up, heal thee and save thee. If thou dost but continually resolve these things in thy mind, thou wilt find them more conducive to a truly happy life, than all the riches, pleasures, profits and honors, yea, and all the supposed wisdom and knowledge to boot, of this deceiving and corruptible world; yea, though thou shouldst excel in all these, all that ever were before thee.

CHAPTER VI.

WHEREFORE seeing that by how much the more thou shalt empty thyself of all images, and external, worldly, and sensible entanglements, by so much the more thy soul will recover its primitive strength and vigour, and the use of its internal senses to perceive and relish those things that are above; do thou endeavor to quit all phantasms and imaginary representations of bodily things, because, nothing is more pleasing and acceptable to God, than a mind divested of all such like forms and images, for his delights are with the sons of men, that is such, who with a calm mind, purified and simplified from all these occupations, distractions, and passions, do intend, apply, and cleave to him, making him their whole business. For otherwise, if thy memory, imagination and thoughts be often busied about these things, it must needs be inveighed, either with some new things, or the remains of some formerly entertained, or be variously affected and distracted with other occurring objects. *For the holy spirit of disci-*

pline, as the wise man saith, removes itself from thoughts that are without understanding. Wherefore a true lover of Jesus Christ, must be so united in his intellect through good will, to the divine will and goodness, and be so naked and stripped of all phantasms and passions, as not so much as to take notice whether he be derided and flouted at, or loved and honoured, or whether anything else happen to him. For a good will makes up all, and is above and beyond all: wherefore if there be a good will, and that the same in the intellect be purely conform and united to God, it can do no hurt, though the flesh or sensuality and the outward man should incline to sin, and be backward and dead to that which is good; yea, even though the inward man also, should be dead and listless to anything of devotion; for in this case it is sufficient for a man by faith and good will, nakedly to cleave to God in the intellect or supreme part of the soul.

And this he will do, if he thoroughly perceive and be sensible of his own imperfection and nothingness, and know that all his good consists, and is in his Creator ;

and if with all his powers and faculties he abandon himself and all creatures, and totally plunge his whole self into his Creator, so as to direct all his actions purely and entirely to his Lord God, as the sole end and scope of them all, seeking or desiring nothing beside him, in whom he perceives himself to have found all good, with all happiness and perfection. And by this process he becomes in a manner transformed into God, to that degree, that he can neither think, nor understand, nor love, nor remember anything but God, and the things of God; neither doth he love anything save God alone, nor remember or make mention of them or himself, but in God. Now this knowledge of the truth makes a soul very humble, judging itself, but not another; whereas on the contrary, the worldly wisdom makes the soul proud, vain, arrogant, and puffed up with wind. Let us lay down this therefore for a spiritual and fundamental doctrine; that he who would draw near to the knowledge, service, and familiarity or communion with God, and that would really possess him, must of necessity wholly strip and divest his heart from all

sensible love, not only of every person whatsoever, but of every creature ; to the end, that with a simple and entire heart he may reach forward and press unto the Lord God his Creator, freely without all duplicity, care, or solicitousness, with a full assured trust and confidence in his Providence, as to all his concerns.

CHAPTER VII.

MOREOVER, as it is said in the book of *the spirit and the soul*; *to mount to God, is to enter into one's self*. For he who inwardly entering, and intimately penerating into himself, gets above or beyond himself, he truly mounts up to God. Let us therefore gather up our hearts from the various distractions of this world, and recall them to the joys within, that we may at last be able to fix them in the light of divine contemplation. For this is the true life and rest of our heart, when by desire it is fixed in the love of God, and sweetly refreshed with his divine comfort. But the reason why in the experimental taste and relish hereof we are manifoldly hindered, so as that we can by no means reach to him, is plainly this, because the mind of man being distracted with solicitousness, doth not enter into itself by the *memory*; being overshadowed (clouded) with phantasms, doth not retire into herself through the *intellect*, being allured by lusts and concupiscence, doth not turn into herself, through the desire of eternal sweetness, and spiritual

joys; and being thus wholly taken up with these sensible and present things, she can never enter into herself, *viz.* the image of God, in herself. It becometh therefore above all things, and is necessary, that with humble reverence, and great confidence, the mind raise itself, above itself, and every creature, by a total denying and renouncing of them all; and say within herself, He whom of all things, before all things, and above all things I seek, love, long for, and desire; is neither sensible, nor imaginable, but above everything that is sensible and intelligible too: he is not to be perceived by any sense, but wholly desirable by full and perfect desire; neither is he figurable, or representable, but to be most perfectly longed for, by the most intimate affection. He is not to be rated or valued, but wholly to be affected with a pure heart, as being above all things amiable, and delectable; and of infinite goodness, and perfection. And thus she is carried into the darkness of the mind, and becomes higher raised within herself, and enters deep into herself. And this manner of ascending to the enigmatical, or obscure vision of the most Holy Trinity in unity, and unity in Trinity, in Jesu Christ, is by so

much the more fervent, by how much the power of elevation is more intimate to the mind, and so much the more fruitful and profitable, by how much it is nearer, and stronger in affection. For in spiritual things, those are accounted higher, which are more inward, as to spiritual experience. Wherefore, do thou never leave, never rest, until thou get a taste of some pledges or foretastes of the fulness that is to come; and till thou perceive the sweetness of the divine loveliness, by some little first fruits; and not cease running after her in the perfume of her good ointments, until thou come to see the God of Gods in *Sion*. For, in thy spiritual progress, and in this union with, and cleaving to God within thyself, thou must neither desist, nor give back, until thou hast obtained what thou lookest for; whereof we may take an example from those who are going up an high hill: for if in this ascent our spirit through lust and desire, comes to plunge itself into the transitory things here below, it immediately, is led out of the way, by infinite distractions, and crooked winding paths; and being manifoldly divided, is scattered in itself, according to the multiplicity of the objects its concupiscence desires: when necessarily follows, motion

without steadiness, running without attaining, and labour without rest. But, if on the other side, our heart and spirit do withdraw itself by desire and love from the infinite distraction of inferior things here below, wholly quitting them, and by little and little gathering up herself into that one unchangeable, all-sufficient good, learn and accustom herself to stay at home, and with her whole affection do inseparably cleave unto it; so much the more she is gathered up into one, and fortified, by how much she is elevated by understanding and desire, to the things that are above; and becomes so habitually fixed and established in the Supreme Good within herself, till at length, she be made altogether immutable, and arrive at that true life, which is the Lord God himself; so as that perpetually, without any vicissitude of change, or time, she now repositeth herself in that inward quiet, and secret mansion of the Deity; being perfectly fixed and settled within herself, in *Christ Jesus, who is the way, to those that come to him, the truth, and the life.*

CHAPTER VIII.

I SUPPOSE, that from what hath been already said, thou dost perceive that the more thou shalt divest thyself from images, and all worldly and created things, and by good will be united in thy intellect to God, the nearer thou wilt approach to the state of innocence, and perfection; than which, what can be conceived better, more happy, or more delightful? To which purpose, nothing can be of more avail, than that thou keep thy mind naked of all manner of phantasms, and images, and from all entanglements whatsoever, so as not to be concerned, or trouble thyself, neither about the world, nor about friends, or adversity; neither about anything past, present, or to come, either in thyself, or in others; no, nor over much about thine own sins; but with a certain pure simplicity, suppose thyself to be naked, and alone with God, without the world; for if thy soul were already launched into eternity, and separated from the body, surely it would not be busied about secular matters, nor would it be concerned about the course of the world, neither about peace, nor war; fair, or foul weather; or any other

temporal thing, but would uniformly and totally intend, be at leisure for, and cleave to God alone: in like manner, do thou now (according to the present possibility) leave thy body, and all creatures present, and to come, and steadily fix the view of thy mind and spirit, according to thy utmost power, nakedly and readily upon that uncreated light, that thy spirit may be so stripped and divested of all phantasms, and from all entanglements, and cloudy over-shadowings, as may be supposed that of an angel tied to a body, who is not hindered by the activity of the flesh, neither is entangled with vain and hurrying thoughts. Let thy spirit therefore fortify itself against all temptations, vexations, injuries, and affronts whatsoever; so that with the greatest unconcernedness, and evenness of temper, it may immoveably persevere in God, in adversity, as in prosperity. When listlessness to that which is good, or confusion of mind, do chance to seize thee, do not thou therefore think strange, or be discouraged: neither run thou, upon this account, to vocal prayers, or other ways of comfort: but let this only be thy exercise, that thou awaken and stir up thyself through good will in the intellect, that so thou mayest cleave to God with thy mind, whether thy sensual part will or not. For, a devout and truly

religious soul ought to be so intimately united to God, and to have, and make his will so conform to the divine will, that it may not busy itself with, nor cleave to any creature whatsoever, any more than she did before she was created; and as if there were nothing at all besides God and the soul; and that it may with an even temper take all and everything that happens to it, securely, and infallibly, from the gracious hand of the Divine Providence in all things, uniformly suffering the Lord, in patience, tranquillity, and silence. Wherefore it appears, that to strip the mind of all phantasms, doth above any other exercise whatsoever, avail and conduce to a spiritual life, in which, by good will, thou mayest be united to, and become like to God, in thy intellect. For by this means, there will be nothing to mediate, or intervene betwixt thee and God. Consider therefore, how greatly thou dost degenerate from the nobility of thy being, and how highly thou sinnest against the Lord thy God, and against all his righteousness, if thou with thy will and love do cleave to the creature, rather than to the Creator; by this means, preferring the creature before the Creator.

CHAPTER IX.

FORASMUCH therefore as all things besides God, are the effect and work of the Creator, having their power and being, and whatsoever they are or can, stinted and limited; and as at first they were produced out of nothing, so are still surrounded with nullities, and nothingness, and of themselves tend to nothing; it follows, that they must necessarily, every moment receive their existence, conservation, activity, and whatsoever else may be in them, from the sovereign workman God, as being in, and of themselves, insufficient for themselves, and others; to whose Divine working they being compared, have the same proportion, as nothing to something, or a finite thing to that which is infinite. Wherefore, let all our contemplation, life, and operation, be in Him alone, and about him, and for him, and to him; who, with one hint of his will, is able, and knows to produce things infinitely more perfect than those creatures we now see. There can be therefore, neither with respect to the intellect, nor to the will, any contemplation and fruition of love more profitable, perfect, happy, and delightful, than that which hath for its object the

Creator, the true and sovereign Good ; from whom, in whom, through whom, and to whom are all things ; who alone is infinitely sufficient for himself, and all things : who, most simply, fully, and super-eminently contains, and has centred in himself from eternity, the perfections of all things, in whom there is nothing that is not himself ; with whom,* and through whom, the causes of all unstable things have their lasting subsistence, and establishment : in whom are the immutable ideas and principles of all mutable things, and in whom the eternal reasons of all rational, and irrational, and temporal things do live for ever : who fulfils all, and essentially fills all and everything, with himself ; and who is more intimately present by His essence to everything than the thing is to itself ; to whom all things are united and one, and in whom they live eternally. Moreover, if by reason of weakness, or the unaccustomedness of the understanding, any man be obliged to meditate, or contemplate on the creatures, then this will be the best, truest, and most profitable way for him ; that at least in all his contemplations, and meditations, whether about creatures, or about the Creator, a delight in the

Creator himself, the one and true God, may arise within him; and that the fire of divine love and true life may thence flame forth in himself, and in others, for the obtaining of eternal felicity. And here we may observe the difference there is between the contemplation of christian believers, and that of the heathen philosophers: for the contemplation of philosophers is intended only for the perfection of the contemplator, and therefore stops in the understanding, and so their end herein, is intellectual knowledge. But the contemplation of the saints, is taken up for the love of him whom they contemplate, that is, of God; and therefore does not stop in the intellect by knowledge, as in its ultimate end; but passeth over into the affection by love. Wherefore the saints in their contemplation, have the love of God for their principal end, and aim; because it is far more happy and blissful to know and have the Lord Jesus Christ spiritually by grace, than without grace, corporeally, or essentially. Now whilst the soul thus abstracts itself from all things, and reflects into itself, the eye of contemplation by this means becomes dilated, and raiseth itself like a ladder, whereby she mounts to the vision of God: from which be-

holding, the soul becomes inflamed with the love of celestial and Divine good things; and looks upon all temporal things aloof, as if they were just nothing. Thus, when we draw near to God by the way of negation, or removing from him all that is perceptible, or comprehensible; in the first place, we remove from him all that is bodily, sensible, or imaginable; in the next place, all that is intelligible, and last of all, essence, or being itself, as it is in the creatures. And by this means, according to St. *Dionysius the Areopagite*, we approach nearest to the divine essence, and are in the *ready way of being joined to him*. And this is *that thick darkness, where God is said to dwell; and into which Moses entered, and through it passed to his inaccessible light*. But *that which is spiritual is not first, but that which is animal*; so that according to the natural and accustomed order, we are to proceed from the labor of action, to the rest of contemplation; and from the moral virtues, to the theoretical, and speculative. Wherefore, O my soul, why is it that thou busiest thyself to no purpose, about the many vain and superfluous things where thou art always in want; and dost not rather fix thy intention, and love

upon that one best and sovereign Good, which contains all good, and is only sufficient for thee, and all things? Unhappy therefore, yea thrice unhappy he, who knows, and has all things beside him, but is ignorant of Him. For if a man should be supposed to know all things, and him, yet would not he be the happier for knowing them, but him only; whence St. *John* tells us, and *this is life eternal, that they know thee, the only true God, &c.* And the psalmist, *I shall be satisfied at the appearance of thy glory,* or according to the *Hebrew*, when thy image, or likeness shall awake in me.

CHAPTER X.

MOREOVER, do not thou greatly mind actual devotion, sensible sweetness, or tears; but let it suffice thee to be by good will in thy intellect, with thy mind united to God, within thyself; forasmuch as nothing is more pleasing to God than a mind strip'd naked of phantasms, images, and representations of the creatures. It becomes therefore a truly devout person, to estrange himself from all creatures, that he may nakedly and readily intend, apply himself, and adhere to God alone, within himself. Wherefore deny thyself, that thou mayest nakedly follow Christ thy Lord God, who being truly poor, obedient, and chaste, humbled himself and suffered for us, and at whose life and death many were greatly offended, as appears from the history of the gospel. Now as we see that a soul separate from its body, doth not mind or take notice what becomes of it, whether it be burnt, hanged, abused, or cursed; and is not at all troubled or grieved for any injuries that is done to it; but has all its thoughts fixed upon that ever present *now* of Eternity, and the *one thing necessary* our Saviour speaks of in the gospel; in like manner be

thou also affected to thy body, being so unconcerned with it, as if thou wast already out of the body, and have always thy mind fixed upon the eternity of thy soul in God, and earnestly direct and level thy thoughts at that one thing, of which Christ saith, *but one thing is needful*: and by this means thou wilt feel great incomes and assistance of grace, for the attainment of true nakedness of mind, and simplification of heart. And most certain it is, that this *one thing*, is most present to thee, and will appear so, as soon as thou shalt have rid thyself from thy imaginary representations, and all other entanglements; and thou wilt soon find, that now thou canst with a naked, free, and ready mind apply thyself, and cleave to God; and by this means thou shalt be invincible in all things whatsoever that can happen to thee, as the holy martyrs, fathers, and all the elect and blessed saints were; who despising and rejecting all things, only minded the eternal salvation of their souls in God: and being thus armed within, and united to God by good will, they contemned all the things of the world, even as if their souls already had been actually separated from their bodies.

Consider well therefore, how great the power is of a good will united to God; yea, how by this impression of God upon the soul, as by its virtual and spiritual division from the flesh, the soul comes to look upon the outward man as if it were none of hers, and is so unconcerned at anything that is done to it, or its flesh, as if it were done to another body; for *he that cleaveth to God, becomes one spirit with him.* Wherefore do thou never dare in the least to think or imagine anything in the presence of the Lord thy God within thee, which thou wouldst blush that men should hear or see; and that because of the highest reverence which is due to the divine Majesty, in his holy temple. It is also fit and just, that all thy thoughts be erect and lifted up to God alone; and that the view of thy mind be fixed only upon him, as if there were nothing at all besides him, and by close cleaving unto him, enjoy him, which is a perfect commencement and anticipation of the life to come.

CHAPTER XI.

THERE is no man that draws near to God with a true and sincere heart, but he must expect to be tried, and proved with manifold vexations and temptations. Now in all temptations let this precept be observed ; that whenever thou feelest any temptation, that thou do not assent to it, and that thou bear it patiently and quietly, with humility and long sufferance. And if they chance to be blasphemous and filthy injections, take it for a certain rule, that there is no way better to overcome and be rid of them, than by despising them, though they be never so horrible, filthy, and abominable blasphemies ; let this be thy sole armour of defence against them, to neglect them, account them as nothing, and despise them, without imputing them to thyself or charging thy conscience therewith. For thou wilt find this a sure way, to put the enemy to flight, if thou treat him and his endeavors with the greatest scorn and contempt ; for he is exceeding proud, and cannot endure to be despised and set at nought. Wherefore be sure to make use of this, as the best and surest remedy against

all such injections, never to mind them, or be troubled at them, any more than thou art at flies, that buz about thee against thy will. Wherefore let the servant of Jesus Christ take care not to run so easily from the face of the Lord, by being angry, murmuring and vexing himself about the buzzing of a silly fly ; I mean for some slight temptation, suspicion, sorrow, detraction, weakness, or any other kind of adversity ; seeing that by the hand only of good will lift up to God, all these, and a thousand such like, may be easily chased away, and put to flight. For by good will, man has God to be his possessor, and owner, the holy angels his guardians and protectors ; and moreover by the same, all temptations are as easily overcome, as a fly is chased away with the least motion of the hand. Peace therefore is the portion of the men of good will ; neither can any more worthy present be offered to God than it ; forasmuch as good-will in the soul, is the original of all good, and the mother of all virtues ; which, whosoever begins to be posseesd of, he hath without care whatsoever is necessary to a good and happy life ; wherefore if thou willest that which is good, without being able to perform it, God will make up from himself, what is

wanting in thee, and accept the will for the deed ; for an eternal law has unchangeably decreed and established that all merit should consist and be in the will alone, as reward, or punishment, are in happiness or misery. For love is a strong will to serve God, a sweet affection of pleasing God, and a most burning desire of enjoying God. Besides, it is no sin to be tempted, but rather an occasion of exercising one's virtues ; for certain it is, that we get much good by temptation, seeing that our life here upon earth, is but one long continual temptation.

CHAPTER XII.

NOW all these things above said, and whatsoever else are necessary to salvation, cannot be better, more readily, or more savingly performed, than by love; by which the want of everything that is needful to salvation, is easily supplied, and in it is the abundance of all Good; neither does it want the presence of the most desirable object. For it is love alone whereby we are turned to God, transformed into God, cleave to God, and are united to him, to that degree, as to *become one Spirit with Him*, and so are made happy here in grace, and hereafter in glory, from him, in him, and by him. For love never rests but in the beloved object, when it is possessed of the same with a full and peaceable possession. Love or charity is the way of God to men, and of men to God; and God cannot take up his habitation anywhere, but where charity is. If therefore we have charity, we have God himself, *for God is love or charity*. There is nothing more sharp than love, nothing more subtle, nothing more penetrating than love; neither doth it

ever rest, until naturally it have penetrated the whole virtue, profundity, and totality of the amiable object ; it will make itself one with its beloved, and if possible, would be the very same thing with it : and therefore it will not endure any thing to mediate or come between it and the object it loves, which is God, but doth with vehemence press into him, and never rests till it have passed by all things, and he be come not only to him, but into him. For love is an uniting and transforming power or virtue, transforming the lover into the beloved and the beloved into the lover ; so that one lover is in the other, after the most intimate and presential manner imaginable. Which is very apparent in the first place, with reference to the apprehensive powers, viz. that the beloved is in the lover, forasmuch as the beloved object is always sweetly and delightfully recalled and represented in the apprehension of the lover ; and on the other hand, forasmuch as the lover endeavors, not superficially, but intrinsically to discern and penetrate to the most inward parts of the beloved object. And as to the appetitive and desiring powers, the beloved is said to be in the lover, forasmuch as it is most intimately rooted by an affectionate complacency, and pleasurable

delectation in him ; and on the other hand, the lover is in the beloved by means of a total desire and conformity, as having but one willing and nilling, one grief and joy, as if they were indeed one and the same, and no longer two distinct beings. For love, *which is strong as death*, draws the lover out of himself, and placeth him in the beloved object, making him to close most intimately therewith. For the soul is more truly where it loves, than where it moves, because it is in the beloved according to its own proper nature, reason, and will ; but in that which it moves, or animates, it is only so far forth as it is a form, which is also compe- tible in beasts. There is therefore nothing else that can draw us from all outward sensibles, and make us retire within ourselves, and from thence into the heart, and inmost divinity of Jesus Christ, but the love of Christ, and the longing desire after the sweetness of Christ, to feel, perceive, and to taste the intimate presence of Christ's divinity. It is nothing else but the immense power of love, which mounts a man from the dregs of earth, to the high glory of Heaven. Neither is it possible for any one ever to attain the supreme bliss and beatitude, but with the help of love and desire. For

love is the true and genuine life of the soul, the wedding-garment, and its utmost perfection, in which, all the law and the prophets, yea, and *our Lord's commandment* too, are included as being the centre and substance of them all. And therefore *St. Paul* tells us, in his epistle to the *Romans*, that *Love is the fulfilling of the law*. And in his first epistle to *Timothy*, that *Charity is the end of the commandment*.

CHAPTER XIII.

AND forasmuch as we of ourselves are altogether insufficient for these, and all other good things; and that we cannot of ourselves render anything to our Lord God (from whom alone proceeds all good) which was not his own before, save one thing only; according to what he himself, with his blessed mouth and example hath been pleased to instruct us, *viz.*; that we in all cases and events have continual recourse to prayer, (as being guilty, miserable, poor, beggars, weak, destitute, subjects, servants, and sons, and wholly desolate in ourselves) and that we, with the most humble prostration of our mind, in fear and love, recollectedly, and composedly; with a deliberate true naked affection of shame, with earnest desire and fervency, with inward groans of the heart, and with simplicity and sincerity of mind should supplicate him, and lay open before him with full confidence, all our impending dangers; and readily, securely, and nakedly commit, resign, and offer up ourselves totally and faithfully to him, to our very

last breath, as being truly and entirely his, reserving nothing to our selves ; that so the saying of the blessed father *Isaac* may be fulfilled in us, who speaking of this kind of prayer, saith ; “ then is it that we shall be one in God, and our Lord God alone shall be all in all in us, when that perfect love, wherewith he hath first loved us, shall become the love and affection of our heart. Which will then be, when all our love, all our desire, all our study, all our endeavor, and lastly all our thoughts ; yea, and everything that we see, speak, or hope for, shall be God ; and when that unity which now is between the Father and the Son, and between the Son and the Father, shall be transfused into our sense and mind, to that degree, that as he loves us with a sincere, pure, and unchangeable love ; so we also may be joined to him, by a perpetual and inseparable dilection ; being so intimately united to him, that whatsoever we hope, whatsoever we understand, whatsoever we speak and pray, may be God. This therefore must be the purpose, this the endeavor and end of a truly spiritual man, to be found worthy to possess the image of the future beatitude in this corruptible body, and to obtain a foretaste of that celestial bliss, conversation

and glory even in this transitory life. This is the end of all perfection, that the mind being purified from all the dregs of carnality, may be sublimed to that pitch of spirituality, that its whole conversation, and all the outgoings of the heart, be nothing else but one continual never-ceasing prayer. And when the mind thus, having shaken off all earthly defilements and entanglements, doth breathe out itself to God, in whom alone the intention of a spiritual man ought always to be fixed, (from which sovereign good, the least separation ought to be looked upon as present death, and the most pernicious destruction,) and that she (the mind) being well founded and rooted in that peace and tranquility, and let loose from the bands of all carnal passions, and by a most resolute and tenacious purpose cleaves to that one sovereign good, then I say, she will be able to fulfil that command of the Apostle, *Pray without ceasing*, and in all places, lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting. For the scene of the mind being as it were wholly absorbed by this purity, and transformed from its earthly state into a spiritual or angelical likeness, in this condition, whatsoever she takes in, whatsoever she does, will be the purest and truest prayer."

Wherefore if thou shalt without interruption continue this exercise, as has been here set down from the beginning, it will be as easy and obvious to thee, in thy introversion and recollection, to contemplate and enjoy, as it is for thee to live in nature.

CHAPTER XIV.

MOREOVER to attain to this spiritual perfection, purity and tranquillity of mind in God, it will be of no small advantage to us, that, in all things which may be spoke or judged of us, or acted towards us, we always silently betake ourselves, to the inmost retreat of our minds, and there being abstracted from all other things, and totally recollected within ourselves, place ourselves before the tribunal of truth within us, where we shall plainly find and see, that it is not only of no advantage, but a great hindrance to us, to be praised and honoured from without, when according to the knowledge of truth in ourselves we are indeed culpable and guilty. And as in this case it is of no advantage at all to a man to be praised outwardly by men, when his conscience accuseth him within; so neither on the contrary is it any the least hurt or hindrance to a man, if he be despised, reviled, blamed and persecuted from without, when he is inwardly innocent, unproveable and harmless: yea rather he hath great reason in patience, silence, and peace, to rejoice in the Lord on this

account, forasmuch as no adversity can hurt, where iniquity doth not prevail. And as no wickedness ever goes unpunished, so no good can be without its reward : neither let us be willing with hypocrites to expect or receive our reward or recompense from men, but of our Lord God alone ; not at present, but hereafter ; not in this transitory time, but in eternity. It is evident therefore that there is nothing of greater moment, or better for us, than alway in every tribulation and event to retire to the inmost secret of our minds, and there to call upon the Lord Jesus Christ himself, who is our helper in temptations and tribulations, and there to be humbled before him, confessing our sins, and to praise God and our father, who as he bruises and chastens, so he also comforts and heals us : and over and above all this, to take and accept of all and everything readily and securely happening to ourselves or others, whether prosperous or adverse, with an even quiet temper of mind, from the hand of his unerring Providence, and orderly disposing of all things : from the faithful discharge of which exercise and duty will follow the remission of our sins, the expulsion of all bitterness, the collation of sweetness, peace, and security, the infusion

of grace and mercy, the attraction and strengthening of familiarity and communion, with most abundant comfort in him, and firm cleaving to, and union with Him. But by no means let us be willing to imitate those, who through hypocrisy, and pharisaical pride, make it their endeavour to be seen, esteemed, and to appear more holy outwardly before men, than the truth within them bears witness to, which certainly is a piece of the extremest folly and madness, to desire and long for human praise and glory from one's self, or others, when at the same time we are inwardly full of the flickering enticements of this world, and most grievous sins. And certainly whoever pursues these most vain things, the foresaid good will fly from him, and he fall into shame and disgrace: wherefore have thou always before thine eyes thy manifold sins and wickedness, and thy unfitness for anything that is good; and endeavour to know thyself, that thou mayest be humbled; and do not refuse, or be afraid to be esteemed and judged by all, as the vilest, unworthiest, and most abject off-scouring and filth, because of thy most grievous sins, and great iniquities. Do thou therefore repute thyself amongst others, as dross amongst gold, as

tares amongst wheat, as chaff amongst corn, as a wolf amongst sheep, and as Satan amongst the sons of God. Neither do thou in the least desire to be revered or honoured by men, or to be preferred before others; but rather with thy whole heart and spirit flee from the infection of this pestilence, the poison of praise, and the pride of boasting and ostentation; lest the *wicked be praised in the desire of his heart*, and so be in the condition of those of whom the prophet saith; *O my people! they which call thee blessed, cause thee to err, and overturn the way of thy going*; or fall under that curse of our Lord: *Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you, for so did their fathers to the false prophets.*

CHAPTER XV.

THE more therefore that any man knows his own vileness, the more distinct and clear is his view and vision of the divine Majesty; and the more base and vile any one appears in his own eyes, for God truth and righteousness, the more precious he is in the sight of God. Wherefore let us strive, with the total effort of our desire, to think ourselves the vilest of all men, and to believe ourselves unworthy of every benefit; to displease ourselves, and to please God alone, and be willing to be judged by others the most inconsiderable and despicable creatures. Moreover let us endeavor not to be moved by any tribulations, afflictions or injuries; nor to be troubled at those that bring them upon us, nor to entertain any hard thoughts, or to have indignation against them, but with an even and quiet mind to believe that we do well deserve all injuries, fightings, chastisements and derelictions. For certainly he who truly mourns and is penitent according to God, he abhors to be honored or beloved by others; and doth not avoid or refuse to be hated, trod upon, and wholly despised; to

the end that he may be truly humbled, and with a pure heart may sincerely cleave to the Lord God alone. Now that we may arrive to this loving of the Lord God alone, and the abhorring of ourselves above all things, and to the desire of being despised by others, there is not required any outward labor, or health and strength of body, but rather solitude of the body, labor of the heart, and quiet of the mind ; that by labor of the heart and affection of the inmost mind we may raise ourselves above, and bodily withdraw ourselves from these inferior things, and so rise and mount up to those that are heavenly and divine. For, doing this, we change ourselves into God's likeness ; and this is then chiefly done, when we choose from our hearts, without any judging, condemning or contemning of our neighbour, to be esteemed by all men as mere off-scouring, filth, and reproach, yea, to be abhorred and trampled upon by all, as the dirt in the streets, rather than to abound in pleasures and deliciousness, or to be honored and lifted up by men ; or to enjoy any corporal and transitory health or advantages ; or to desire any other comfort in this present mortality and bodily life, but to mourn, lament and bewail our offences, faults, and sins, without

ceasing ; perfectly to set at nought and annihilate ourselves, and to be esteemed daily still viler and viler by others, and appear daily more unworthy in our own eyes, that we may please God alone, love him only, and cleave unto him : being unwilling to be affected with anything, save only with our Lord Jesus Christ himself ; not being solicitous or careful about anything but him, under whose rule and providence all things subsist and have their course. Know then, that henceforward it is not for thee to delight thyself, but to mourn and lament the more, for that thou hast brought upon thyself this cause of grief and sorrow, because of thy most grievous offences and infinite sins. For as a malefactor who receives his sentence of death is not concerned about the ranging of sheriff's men, or the multitude of the spectators ; so he who in good earnest mourns and bewails his sins, cannot give his mind to pleasures, or anger, or vain glory, or indignation, or any other such like. And as the habitations of citizens and condemned malefactors are very different ; so the state, manner, and behaviour of those that mourn, for being guilty of sins that bind them over and make them obnoxious to punishment, ought to be very

different from those who are not guilty : for otherwise there would be no difference made between a guilty and innocent person by reward and punishment ; and unpunishment and unrighteousness would be more free, than innocence. So that all things are to be denied, all things are to be contemned, all things are to be cast away and avoided, that with full faith, a good and sure foundation may be laid for the sorrow of repentance. Wherefore he that loves Jesus Christ in truth, and that mourns after him, and that bears him in his heart, and in his body, that truly mourns for his sins and offences, and earnestly seeks for the kingdom to come, and in true faith possesseth the memory of the torments of hell and of eternal judgment, and imprinteth firmly and perfectly in his heart the sense and fear of his own death, such a one will no farther strive, care, or be solicitous about anything whatsoever. Let him therefore who hastens to attain that blessed impassibility, and to approach to God himself, account that every day wherein he is not reproached, reviled, or contemned, he suffers great loss and damage. Now this impassibility here mentioned, is nothing else, but a freedom from vices and passions, purity of heart, and

the entire ornament of virtues and grace. Suppose thyself therefore already dead, whom thou doubttest not but must die certainly. And let this be the last and highest proof, and surest trial of all thy thoughts, words and actions, to prove whether they be according to God or no, if by them thou becomest more humble, and more recollected and fixed within thyself and in God; but if thou findest the effect otherwise, thou wilt have good reason to suspect, that they were not according to God, and neither well pleasing to him, nor profitable for thee.

CHAPTER XVI.

NOW to the end that according to the foregoing instructions, we may without let or hindrance, readily, securely, and nakedly be carried towards the Lord our God, with the greatest freedom and tranquillity become joined with him and united to him, and may firmly cleave unto him, with an evenness of temper whether in prosperity or adversity, life or death ; it is of absolute necessity that we resign and commit all and everything, without the least doubt, or hesitation, and with the greatest assurance, to his unsearchable and infallible Providence. Neither ought we to think strange of this counsel, forasmuch as it is he alone, that gives to all things their being, power, and activity, that is, their substance, virtue, operation, kind, manner and order, and that in number, weight and measure. And this, the rather because as all artificial works, pre-suppose the works of nature, so every work of nature pre-supposeth the work of God, creating, preserving, ordering and administering : since to him alone belongs infinite power, wisdom, goodness ; and essential mercy, justice, truth and charity ;

immutable eternity and immensity. Wherefore it is evident, that nothing doth or can subsist by its own virtue; nor act, save only in the virtue of God himself, that is of the first mover and first principle, who is the cause of all action, and operates in every agent. For with respect to the true order of the administration of the world, God immediately provides and takes care for all things, even to the utmost individuals: so that nothing from the highest to the lowest can escape or avoid the eternal Providence of God, whether in things natural or voluntary, or casual and fortuitous which were never intended by the particular agent. Neither can God make anything, but what must of necessity resort or fall under the order of his Providence, no more than he can make anything, which is not subject to his operating power. It follows therefore that the Divine Providence doth extend itself to all and everything, even to very thoughts of mens' hearts. Upon which foundation the Scripture builds the following instructions. "Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you. Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee. Look at the generations of old and see, did ever any trust in the Lord, and was forsaken? Or did ever any abide in his fear, and was confounded?" And that of our Saviour; "Take no thought

for your life, what you shall eat, &c.” Wherefore let us assure ourselves, that whatsoever or how great soever the things are that we hope or expect from God, we shall without doubt receive the same, according to that promise in Deuteronomy; “Every place whereon the soles of your feet shall tread, shall be yours.” Because as much as every one can desire, so much shall he receive; and as far as he can reach with the foot of his trust and confidence, so far shall he possess. Accordingly *Bernard* tells us: “God the author of all things doth abound with such bowels of love and mercy, that to how great a degree soever of grace, we can extend the reach of our trust and confidence, the same we shall undoubtedly receive and be possessed of:” to which purpose our Saviour also assures us: “What things soever ye desire when we pray, believe that you receive them, and ye shall have them.” Now the stronger and more instant this trust and reliance in God is; and by how much the more forcibly it lifts itself up to, and presseth into God, with humility and reverence, the more assuredly, abundantly, and swiftly it will obtain the desired good. But and if it should happen, that by reason of the multitude or greatness of sin, the affiance should be luke-warm and slow in lifting up itself to God, let such a one consider, that all things

are possible with God ; and that whatsoever he wills must necessarily come to pass ; and that what he wills not, is for that very reason impossible ; and that it is as easy for him to forgive and blot out innumerable sins, how enormous soever they may be, as one only sin. **A**nd that as a sinner cannot by all the power that is in him, raise himself up again from his innumerable sins, shake them off, and free himself from them, so neither from one only. “For we are not sufficient of ourselves to think anything that is good, (much less to do it) but our sufficiency is from God.” Though indeed it be much more dangerous to be entangled with many sins (all other circumstances being alike) than with one alone, because there is no evil without its punishment, and an infinite punishment is due to every mortal sin, and this according to the rigor of justice, because every such sin is committed against God who is of infinite reverence, dignity, and honor. Moreover we are to consider that, according the apostle, the Lord knows those that are his : and that it is impossible for any of those to perish, in whatsoever windings and floods of errors, scandals, schisms, persecutions, dissensions, heresies, tribulations, adversities and temptations they may be involved, seeing that the number of his elect, and the bound of their merits hath been eternally and unchange-

ably foreseen by him ; so that all things whether good or evil ; proper, or strange and foreign ; prosperous or adverse, do all work together for their good, save only that they appear yet more glorious and acceptable to God in adversity than prosperity. Let us therefore securely and readily commit all and every of our and others concerns with a plenary trust and confidence to the divine Providence, who therefore permits all manner of evils, in what way soever, to be done ; and it is good and well done of him, that he suffers them to be done ; neither can they be more or otherwise done, than as he permits them to be, because he knows, can, and will change and dispose them to something that is better. For as all good things are done by his operation, so by his permission all evil things are made good. And by this means are manifested his power, wisdom, and clemency through our Saviour Christ ; his mercy and justice, the virtue and strength of his grace, and the weakness and failure of nature ; the beauty of the universe, which springs from the contraposition of opposites, the praise of the good, and the wickedness and punishment of reprobates.



CONCLUDING NOTE.

IN the teaching of the Bible, and wholly so of the New Testament, we must observe its universal fitness and application to man of all times and in all circumstances is to be attributed to the fact of its dealing with man as to his essential constitution. The subject-matter of the Divine teaching is that which expresses its supreme importance without further description—LIFE; the end of the Divine teaching, how to *live*, now and for ever.

Our Lord therefore spake, as never man spake, the ‘hard sayings, which who could bear?’ He opened the gates of light and revealed to the view of man, what the world, and what the world to come;—what man, as the moving automaton of flesh and blood, and what as the being of body soul and spirit;—what the worship of our own, and what the worship of the true God;—how we are to leave the sensuous and ascend to the spiritual. Thus in His words are found an unfathomable depth and inexhaustible fulness which may be penetrated and realised ever *more*;—but experimentally alone.

It is not difficult to trace the degree and quality of

mens' religion by so much as they live, move, and have their being in the outward material world, or forsake it, in its relationships and enjoyments.

The first and startling announcement to the mortal inhabitant of earth from his Lord is, "Ye must be born again;" but not again of carnality, not again to be introduced to the elements of earth, and its associations, to grow up in receiving its counsel, deriving its knowledge, pursuing its contents and properties as the objects of good, fitted to satisfy thy desires and give thee that for which thou hast being—*happiness*; but of the Spirit;—which to thy carnal apprehension is more mysterious than the coming of the wind;—*that* must work and cause thy new birth, opening the powers of thy real being, *thy* spirit, and from infantile knowledge of the goodness of God which gave thee being, if thou wilt, lead thee up to the apprehension of his purposes concerning thee, to become the child of God, the heir of happiness illimitable. And this thou shalt see is thy great redemption which thy Immanuel on the earth as man spoke to the outward ear, and so reaching thy inward understanding and moving thy life's love from the lower to the upper world.

Now the carnal mind which dwells in and rests upon the outward world, being as various as the complexions of countenance, the names, forms, and characters of mens' chief good are as various; and that those who assume

what apparently may seem far higher and nobler than others, are in truth on but the same ground, if earthly, our Lord fully shewed, not excepting what was accounted the straitest sect of religion; and in his teaching He ever leads men back from the present, outward, seen; to the omnipresent, inward, unseen; unfolding the true composition of the human mind apart from its temporary accompaniment of a fleshly body. Thus following Him in the regeneration, *his* disciples find that the kingdom of God is within them.

It will be few who know anything of heart religion, who will not agree as to the necessity of its dwelling within, but the common associations of mortals, not only in temporals but in matters of religion, lead so easily to a respect of outward things, engagements and habits, that the communion with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ, is regarded too much as a desirable but distant object almost past attainment, rather than as the first and only positive religion of the heart, and from which must and will flow in just proportion to its integrity and intensity, the righteousness of outward conduct in all relations with fellow mortals, the peace which rests secure in all the transitory events of time, and that transcendant joy which will remain even while the animal sensibilities may be wrought, or pained or distressed in temporal things, and survive as the final fruition of the redeeming work.

Notwithstanding the teaching of our Lord, the unhappy experience that lies open in the history of the church up to the present moment, attests the fact that from our eyes the veil is not removed, and enlightened as we are on the whole, like the early converts we are ever learning yet never coming to the knowledge of the truth;—again and again laying the foundation, we do not advance, leaving the first principles and going on to perfection. If it be asked why it is, the answer is ready,—we forsake the fountain of living water given in the teaching of the Lord. The structure of a society, the formulæ of doctrine, the orthodoxy of creed, the form of worship, nay even of the house of such supposed worship, are matters of so high account, that they come to stand in the place of His teaching, with whom these things were all as though they were not, and while the *true* house of God is neglected, in which the altar should be crowned with the perpetual incense of the spirit of love and devotion.

It would be possible and consistent to shew the philosophical propriety and necessity of a method which deals with the essential constitution of the human spirit on subjects of divine import, apart from the adventitious circumstances of social, intellectual, and religious habits by which each finds himself surrounded. But it is not needful to do so, seeing the common consent of reason must pronounce, that while these vary as greatly as the individual forms of the forest trees, there must be

a final appeal to which the spirit of man may come, whence he may get the knowledge of true unity. Here then the Light of the world comes to illuminate that soul open to His entrance, and ever the promise remains he who seeketh findeth. Shall the last query of a humanity-seeking and exterior-loving tutored intellect, enquire for apostolical authority and direction, the apostles' testimony was harmonious with their master's teaching, and they tell ever of *faith* in the Lord Jesus Christ. Now faith is the evidence of things not seen, the substance of things hoped for; and in the unity of *this* faith, which is too pure, too vital, to dwell in a fabric of words engraved on stone, *existing* only engraven in the heart, we find the true catholicity which at once realises the communion of the saints; and of time and place, they who near and those afar, alike mingle in the banquet where are gathered to the kindred soul in that moment, the number which no man can number. Then best shall we use, and rejoice in *all* that will prove means of grace, and in the apostles declaration—all things are yours and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's.

THE END.

