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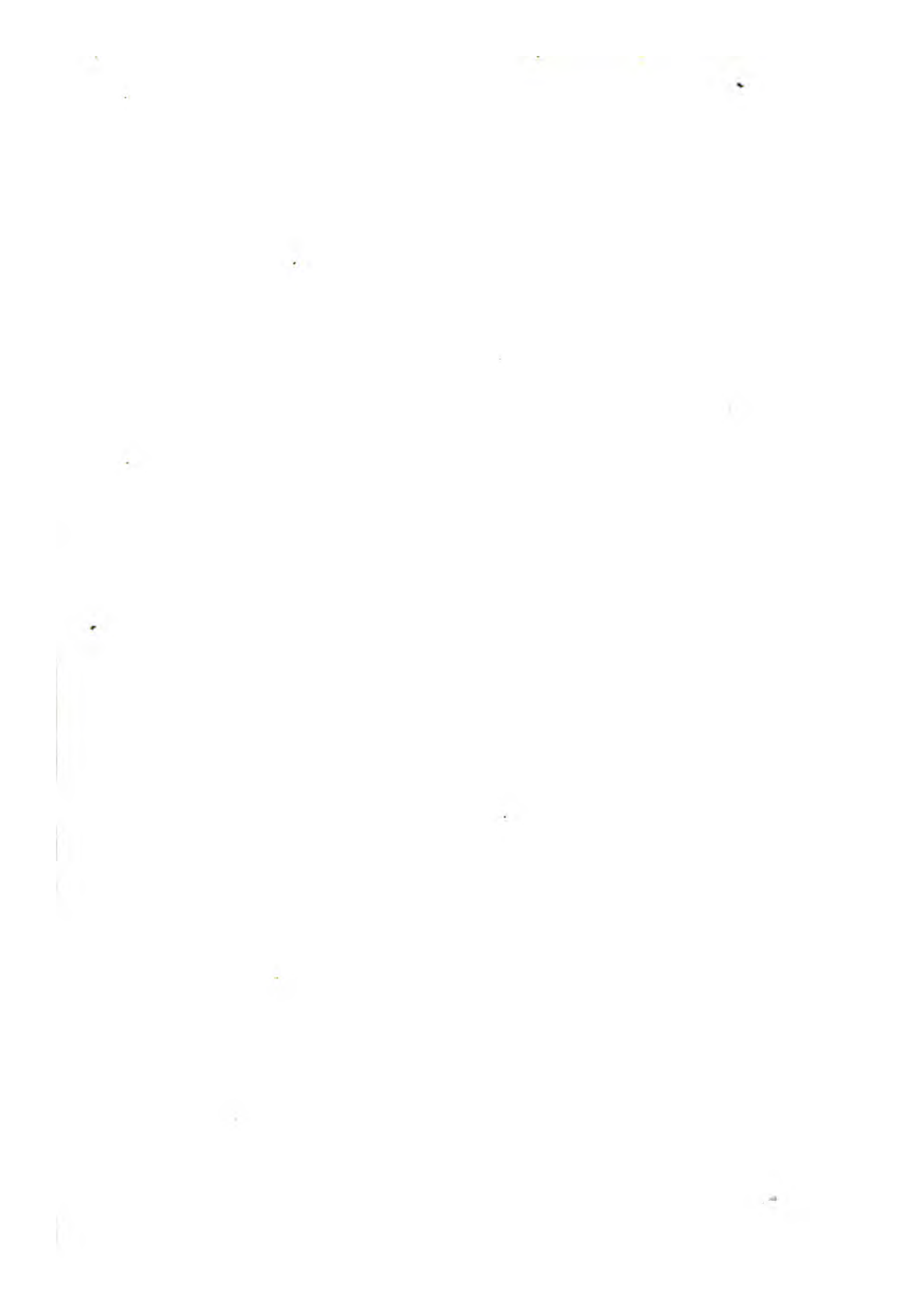


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48. 1673.







LONDON :  
PRINTED BY LEVEY, ROBSON, AND FRANKLYN,  
Great New Street, Fetter Lane.



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GRATIA DEI IN ME  
VACUA NON FUIT.



QUIS NOS SEPARABIT A CHARITATE DEI, QUÆ  
EST IN CHRISTO JESU DOMINO NOSTRO.

F. P. BEAT. PAULI AD ROM.

A  
LITTLE BOOK  
OF THE  
LOVE OF GOD.



JUGUM MEUM SUAVE EST ET ONUS MEUM LEVE

MAT. XI.

LONDON, J. BURNS, MDCCCXLIX.

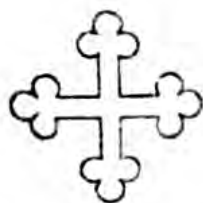




A  
LITTLE BOOK  
OF  
THE LOVE OF GOD.

Translated from the German of Count Stolberg

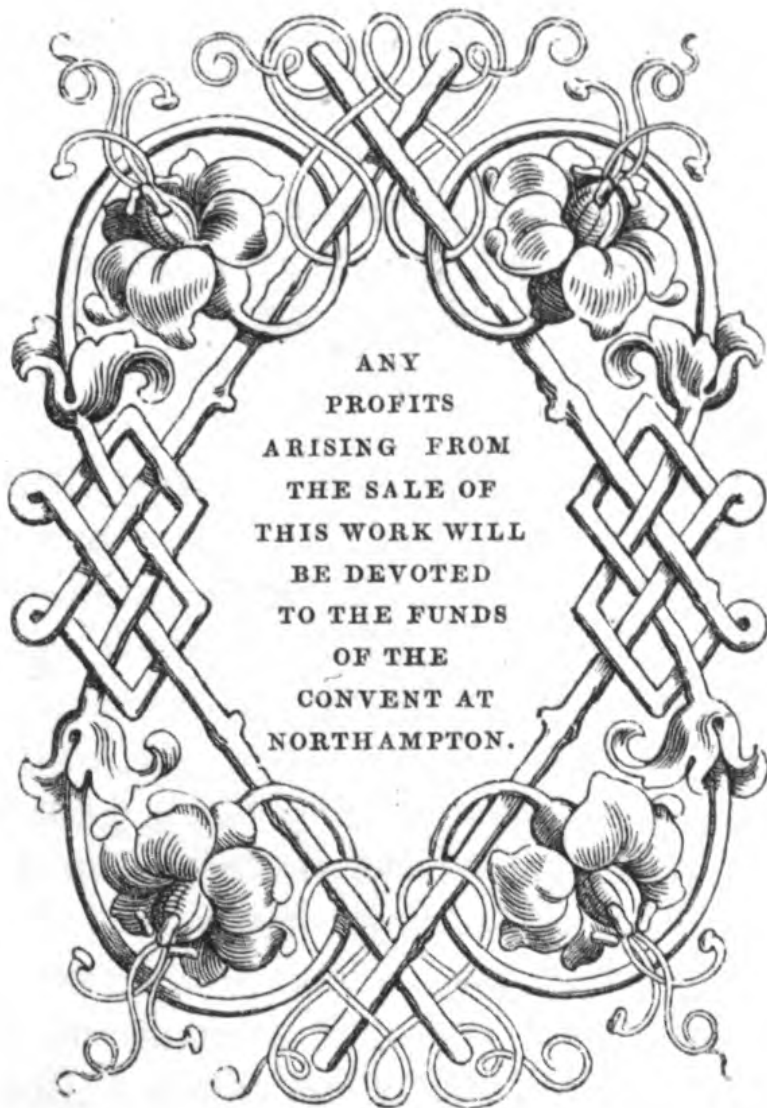
BY  
REV. JOHN DALTON.



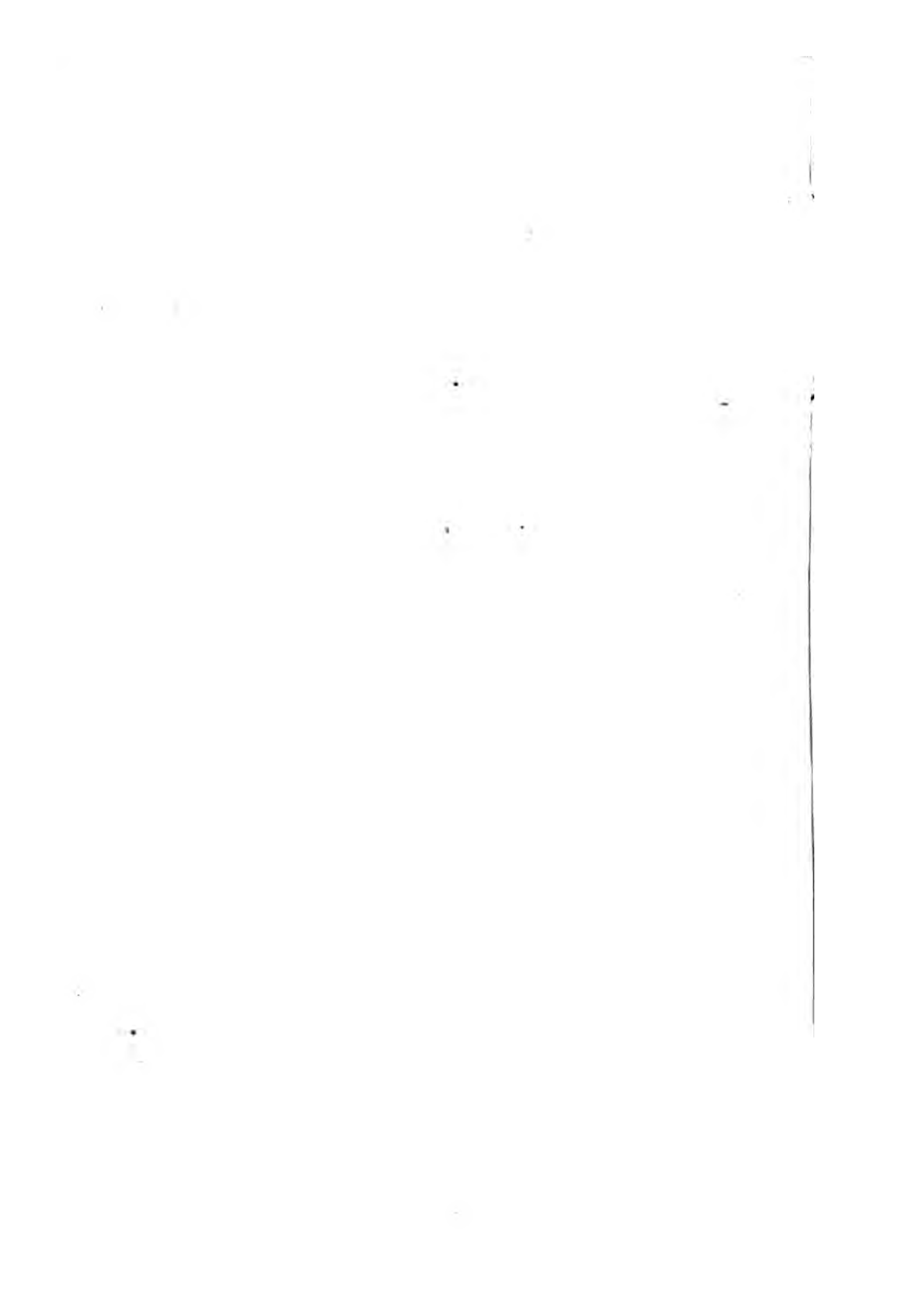
LONDON:  
JAMES BURNS, 17 PORTMAN STREET,  
PORTMAN SQUARE.

1848.





ANY  
PROFITS  
ARISING FROM  
THE SALE OF  
THIS WORK WILL  
BE DEVOTED  
TO THE FUNDS  
OF THE  
CONVENT AT  
NORTHAMPTON.



## To the Reader.

**T**HE idea of translating the present beautiful little work was first suggested by the following passage in a "Preface" prefixed to Bishop Ullathorne's Sermon on the Love of God:<sup>1</sup> "Will no one give us this admirable little treatise, so perfectly adapted to our language and modes of thought? The present writer commenced the task in the course of his last voyage from Australia; but feeling his limited knowledge of the German tongue, and wanting time, he abandoned it." (pp. 81, 82.)

On reading these lines, I wrote to his Lordship, and offered to translate the work, if his Lordship would please to lend it to me. His Lordship very kindly sent it immediately. Whatever may be the merit of the translation, all who read it will, I think, agree that the treatise itself is admirable for its practical piety, simplicity, and the unction with which the revered author delivers the solemn truths of religion. He is free, in a remarkable manner, from what is gene-

<sup>1</sup> "Sermons, with Prefaces," by W. Ullathorne, D.D., O.S.B. T. Jones; London, 1842.

rally called "German mysticism;" a style and mode of thought and writing so foreign to our English taste. The division of the chapters into paragraphs is novel; but it has many advantages that will easily suggest themselves to the reader.

Should the present translation meet with the approbation of the public, it will encourage me to undertake others of a similar character, feeling confident that approved translations of *spiritual* works will do more good, by the Divine blessing, both to Catholics and Protestants, than mere controversial treatises.

JOHN DALTON.

BISHOP'S HOUSE, NORTHAMPTON,  
*Feast of St. Peter of Alcantara, 1848.*





## Memoir of Count Stolberg.

THE family of Stolberg belonged to the twelve noble houses of Saxony, out of which, prior to the conquest of that country by Charlemagne, the dukes and kings were elected in time of war.

Frederick von Stolberg was born on the 7th of November, 1750, at Browstadt, in Holstein, a little town six leagues from Hamburg. He had the happiness of receiving from his parents—who were Lutherans—a very religious education; and he gave early tokens of the most tender piety.

At the age of fifteen he had the misfortune to lose his father; but he and his elder brother Christian were brought up at home, under the eye of their excellent mother. Both brothers soon gave promise of extraordinary talents, and made such proficiency in the Latin language, that before they repaired to the University, they had already read a great portion of the Roman Classics. In the year 1772, Frederick and his brother, accompanied by a tutor, proceeded to Göttingen, where they attended lectures on history and jurisprudence, and prosecuted with great ardour the study of Grecian literature. In that very year a number of other young men, who were afterwards destined to attain the



greatest literary renown (such as Voss, Höltz, Bürger, Cramer, &c.) had commenced their academical career at Göttingen. From Klopstock, who had been the friend of their childhood, the two brothers had early imbibed a strong love for poetry; and they were soon admitted into the poetical brotherhood which the above-named young men had already formed.

The brothers left the University in 1773; and after travelling in Germany and Switzerland, where they formed several valuable acquaintances,<sup>1</sup> they returned home. Frederick was now appointed Chamberlain to the King of Denmark; and in the year 1777 received from the Duke of Oldenburg the honourable post of Ambassador to the Court of Copenhagen. His brother Christian was in the same year appointed governor of a town in Holstein. During this year, both the brothers published various pieces of lyric poetry, which soon acquired for them a high reputation throughout Germany. In the autumn of the year 1778, appeared a translation of the Iliad by Frederick, which is allowed to abound with beauties, and to be executed with a high poetical spirit. In the year 1782, Stolberg was united in marriage to a lady distinguished for her personal charms, intellectual endowments, and amiable qualities. In this bright springtide of his life, our author directed all his leisure hours to a diligent study of the Greek poets, historians, and philosophers, as well as to the composition of original works. In the year 1789 he was appointed Danish Ambassador to the Court of Berlin. At this period he entered into an interesting correspondence with a Rationalist friend,

<sup>1</sup> Among others, they became acquainted with the celebrated Lavater.

wherein he sums up with great skill some of the leading evidences of Christianity, and which reflects as much credit on his piety as on his talents.

In February 1790, having obtained leave of absence for a year and a half, he and his consort commenced their travels; and passing through Westphalia, made the acquaintance of the Princess Gallitzin at Münster; an acquaintance which was destined to exercise the most decided influence on the future destinies of Stolberg and his wife.<sup>1</sup> In passing through various parts of Germany and Switzerland, Stolberg renewed his acquaintance with some of the leading literati of those countries,—such as Goethe, Jacobi, Gleim, Herder, Lavater, &c. Shortly after his return, he gave to the world the result of his tour in four volumes; and a more pleasing and elegant book of travels, it has never been my fortune to peruse. In reference to the great change which, several years afterwards, took place in Stolberg's religious convictions, this work offers some points of considerable interest.

In the autumn of 1792, the Count and his family returned to Germany. The French Revolution was now in its midway course, spreading dismay and desolation far and near. The thoroughly democratic character of that revolution Stolberg had recognised from the first; and, so far from sharing in the enthusiasm with which his venerable friend Klopstock had greeted its first rise, he asked: "How freedom could spring out of ungodliness?" "Liberty," he said, "must be grounded on laws; laws on morality; and morality on religion." While the tragic spectacle of the revolution was engaging his attention, and filling his mind with most

<sup>1</sup> This lady was his second wife.

earnest reflections, a sermon of the illustrious Fenelon, on the necessity of a divine authority in the Church, made the deepest impression on him and his excellent spouse. It was at this time the Princess Gallitzin, accompanied by her venerable chaplain Overberg, paid a visit to Stolberg, and passed several weeks at his house. The conversation of this eminent personage, favoured with so many divine and natural gifts, opened out new paths to Stolberg's meditation; and these favourable impressions were strengthened by a visit which, in the following year (1794), he received from the Baron Gaspar von Vischering and his younger brother, Clemens August, who was destined, in subsequent years, to prove one of the Count's most valuable friends.

From this time forward Stolberg and his consort prosecuted, with unremitting zeal, their inquiries into the evidences of the Catholic religion, daily invoking the light of the Holy Spirit to guide their way. The writings of St. Augustin, St. Chrysostom, St. Bernard, St. Theresa, Thomas à Kempis, Taulerus, and Fenelon and Bishop Sailer,<sup>1</sup> formed the Count's favourite reading.

In the years 1796-97, he published an elegant translation of *Select Dialogues* of Plato, in three parts, to which he appended excellent historical, critical, and philosophical notes. In 1802, he brought out a translation of Æschylus, which was published at a time when the amazing flexibility of the German tongue, in translating the metrical forms of ancient and modern poetry was not yet known. The Homer of Voss and the Shakspeare and Calderon of August W. von Schlegel had not yet appeared.

In 1797, Stolberg was sent on an embassy to St.

<sup>1</sup> Styled "the German Fenelon."

Petersburg, where he was decorated by the Emperor with the Order of St. Alexander Newski. On his return, he found the Princess Gallitzin and the venerable Overberg, whom Providence had evidently sent to him as angels to cheer and guide him into the paths of rest. In 1799, he proposed to a venerable French emigrant Prelate, Mons. Asseline, Bishop of Boulogne, his religious doubts; and the latter replied by Remarks, which have since been published under the title of "*Lettres et Réflexions sur les Points de Doctrines controversés entre les Catholiques et les Protestants.*"

At length, after a long and diligent investigation of the truth, fervent and assiduous prayer, and many inward struggles, Stolberg and his excellent spouse made their profession of the Catholic faith on Whitsunday, June 1st, 1800, in the domestic chapel of the Princess Gallitzin at Münster. The children, with the exception of the eldest daughter, followed the example of their parents. Stolberg, a short time after, surrendered his dignities into the hands of the Prince, and took up his residence at Münster, the capital of Westphalia. The religious condition of Germany was in a most deplorable state at this time, when the subject of our memoir took this momentous step—a step that was to be attended with such mighty consequences. "We Catholics," said a distinguished German divine to the writer of these pages, "we Catholics were cold in zeal, dead in works, and fearful and almost dumb, when Providence raised up a Stolberg—a second Moses, versed in all the science of the Egyptians, to bring us out of the house of bondage."

The sacrifices which Stolberg made for the purchasing of the inestimable pearl of faith were many and



various. His return to the ancient faith excited a prodigious sensation in Protestant Germany. Voss, who had received from him so many proofs of kindness and affection, now began a yell of rage and obloquy, which was never discontinued till the death of his victim. Jacobi, another friend, turned against him; Gleim spoke of him as "an apostate from his God;" Herder pronounced his defection to be not only "an indecorous and intolerant act, but an extremely mean one." But under this and other storms of scoffs and reproaches which the noble-minded Stolberg had to encounter, he was blessed with a serenity of joy—an unutterable peace of heart, which the world can neither give nor understand. The Protestant members of Stolberg's family, however, after a brief interval of coldness, renewed their wonted relations of affection with him. His amiable brother in particular, Count Christian, though he remained a Protestant, continued united with him in the strong ties of love and literary intercourse.

The conversion of Stolberg was hailed by the Catholics of Germany, as well as of other climes, not only as a joyous, but as a very important event. But few could then have anticipated all the great results that were thence to flow.

In Münster he retrenched much from the splendour of his former life; and these savings were devoted to works of charity and beneficence, to the support of the needy and suffering. The Count and his consort will be long remembered by the poor of Münster for their numerous charities. Here Stolberg found a circle of congenial friends. The principal members were, that admirable Princess Gallitzin; the venerable Overberg, her spiritual director; the two Barons Droste

von Vischering ; Dr. Katerkamp, and Dr. Kellermann, &c. These were nicknamed by the Protestant party, "The Holy Family;" but the force of these words they little understood, for from that very circle has, in a great degree, proceeded the moral and intellectual regeneration of Catholic Germany.

The first fruits of Stolberg's conversion were translations from St. Augustin's two works, *De Vera Religione* and *De Moribus Ecclesiæ Catholicæ*, which appeared in 1803. In the following year, Clemens August Droste von Vischering, then a canon at Münster, wrote a highly interesting letter to Stolberg, and spoke of the want of a Church History, where our divine Mediator Jesus Christ would be represented as the central figure—the Alpha and Omega round which all the destinies of mankind, in ancient and modern times, must be grouped. He concluded his letter by calling upon our author to undertake a work of this nature. Stolberg admired the suggestion of his friend, but alleged his unfitness for so arduous a task. At length, however, he yielded to the entreaties of numerous friends, and, in his fifty-fourth year, commenced the great work which was to immortalise his name, viz. *The History of the Religion of Jesus Christ, from the Beginning of the World.*<sup>1</sup>

In the year 1806, the first two volumes of this history were published; it was concluded in the year 1818, and consists of fifteen volumes. This work is admirable in many respects for the display of great classical and archæological lore, and patristic learning ;

<sup>1</sup> *Geschichte der Religion Jesu Christi.* Von Fr. Leop. Grafen zu Stolberg. Hamburg, 1806-1818.

for the solid judgment and the strong masculine sense which pervades it,—a sense refined by the spirit of prayer and deep meditation on God's Word. The unction too, and the suavity of feeling which run through this history, form other peculiar charms. The style also, as in all the productions of Stolberg, is remarkable for clearness, dignity, and elegance.

But the example and the writings of Stolberg were destined to exert their stirring influence far beyond the narrow circle of his own acquaintance. In the year 1808, he had the happiness of seeing his example followed by one of the greatest writers and thinkers that have ever adorned his country, Frederick Schlegel,<sup>1</sup> then in the bright morning of his fame. On the 30th of April, he and his accomplished wife, the daughter of the Jewish philosopher Mendelssohn, made their profession of faith in the Cathedral of Cologne. For some time before he took the important step, Schlegel had carried on a correspondence with Stolberg, on the important subject which engaged his attention ; and thus an intimacy grew up between these two illustrious men, born to love and appreciate each other. The converts with whom our own Church in England has of late years been blessed, ought to hold in especial reverence those two illustrious converts, who, in evil times, and in an age distinguished as much for its frivolity as for its pride, bore so glorious a witness to the truth. Their example and writings were not without weight on our own excellent and learned Digby, who, possessed of a genius and character in many respects similar to Stol-

<sup>1</sup> See Mr. Robertson's valuable Memoir of F. Schlegel, prefixed to his translation of the *Philosophy of History* (Bohn, 1848).



berg's, had, twenty years ago, a kindred mission to accomplish among the higher and cultivated classes of this country.

On concluding his great *History of Religion*, Stolberg published, in the year 1817, a *Life of St. Vincent of Paul*, in one volume. It is an extremely engaging and edifying piece of biography, written with the simple elegance, calm wisdom, and unction of feeling that characterise all Stolberg's works. He also published a *Life of King Alfred*, and another work, entitled *Reflections on Holy Writ*, both being distinguished by the same genuine piety, judicious observation, extensive research, and dignity of style and sentiment that characterise all the author's productions. But the '*cycnea vox et oratio*' of Stolberg was the beautiful little treatise on *Divine Love* now presented to the public. Digby justly calls it "a golden treatise." On his death-bed Stolberg blessed Providence that He had enabled him to bring it to a conclusion;<sup>1</sup> for it was completed only a few days before his death. How could our pious author better close his days, than by a hymn on Divine Love!

In the year 1808, Stolberg, at his country seat, had the happiness of seeing himself surrounded by a numerous circle of affectionate relatives. Providence had blessed him with a vigorous old age, which had enabled him to bring to a conclusion all his literary enterprises; as also

<sup>1</sup> These are his words: "Die liebste Arbeit, das Büchlein von der Liebe, ist vollendet." In another place he again alludes to it: "Mein Büchlein von der Liebe ist nun fertig; das habe ich noch recht mit Liebe geschrieben. Ich ginge nun gern," &c. (See *The Last Days of Count Stolberg*, written by his surviving children.)

to take a part in all the innocent joys of domestic life : and when death came at last, it found him prepared, with his lamp full of oil. This sad event took place on the 5th of December 1819, in the seventieth year of his age. The following most edifying account of his death is, in substance, the same as that left us by Stolberg's surviving children. It was translated by the Very Rev. F. C. Husenbeth, from a small publication in German by Professor Probst, late professor in Basel ; and this translation Mr. Husenbeth kindly allows me now to reprint, it having appeared in the *Catholic Magazine* for October 1832.

“ As our good father had been a pattern to us in life, so was he destined to be in sufferings and death. On Sunday, November 28th, 1819, our beloved father said to Xavier, one of his sons, who had arrived at Sondermüchlen about noon with the elder children, that he felt severe pain in his bowels ; but that our mother was not to be told of it, for fear of making her uneasy. Xavier, however, from tender love for his father, considered it a duty to inform her ; and she immediately wrote to the physician, Lepaix, who resided only four leagues from Sondermüchlen, and who was always called in with great confidence by our parents in all serious attacks of illness, desiring him to come as soon as possible.

“ On Monday, the 29th, papa looked very ill, complained of violent pain inwardly, and kept his bed ; he was visited towards evening by the Very Reverend Dean Kellermann from Münster. Papa received him, as his particularly intimate and domestic friend, with great joy and cordiality ; and hearing that he intended to leave us on Saturday, said smiling, ‘ Are you deter-

mined to go on Saturday? I am going to be very ill, so Kellermann must stay.' As the symptoms meanwhile became every day visibly worse, notwithstanding all medical aid, Mr. Lepaix became very serious, and expressed a wish that the sick Count should go to confession. Dean Kellermann was therefore immediately called to communicate this to papa. He received the intelligence without the least surprise, and said: 'Yes, most willingly; but I have not yet prepared myself for the sacred duty of confession.' Kellermann made him easy on that head, by reminding him that he had been to confession but a short time before; upon which the sick man made his confession. When this was finished, he conversed some time with his confessor, Kellermann, and mentioned several circumstances which rendered it easy to him to depart out of this world immediately.

"Then Mr. Kellermann, to prepare him for the holy communion, reminded him of the promise of Jesus Christ (St. John vi.): 'He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath everlasting life: and I will raise him up in the last day. For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. *He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood abideth in Me, and I in him.*' Mr. K. further repeated to him the institution of the holy Eucharist, which passages of the holy Scripture our beloved father listened to with lively faith, interior devotion, and the humility of a little child. We all knelt round the bed of him whom we loved so tenderly. My God! what calm repose, what serenity and joy were in his countenance; what contentment was diffused over his whole being! It was impossible, even at so moving a spectacle, to give way entirely to grief; for his brightened countenance, full of

the sweetest hope, poured a soothing balm into our afflicted souls. 'My little children,' said the venerable old man, with a soft and tender voice, 'my little children, be comforted, for all is well with me. Consider, my dear children,—I have lived a long time; seventy years have gone over my head; what more could you wish? God knows how tenderly I love you all, and your mother; yet I now willingly leave this earthly habitation. God has so kindly ordered every thing. Kellermann is here now; he will pray for me too, that God may be merciful to me. My little book on Divine Love is now finished, which I have written with love. I go now willingly to my heavenly country; but certainly, if God's will be to leave me yet longer here, I am content.'

"At his earnest desire, he now received the holy communion, our mother and most of us being present. Soon after the holy communion, Mr. Kellermann recited for him the prayer of St. Ignatius, for which he had a singular affection:

"Anima Christi sanctifica me,  
Corpus Christi salva me," &c.

He repeated every word after him with lively emotion. The salutation to our Saviour, which his confessor pronounced—*Praised be Jesus Christ!*—he returned with a solemn tone of voice, and added, lifting up and clasping his hands, *For ever! for ever! Amen.*

"He now felt new vigour, and said with composed voice, 'I was afraid of great pains; but if God sends them me, it is well.' He was beyond all description calm, joyful, and full of holy charity. About eight o'clock he sent again for his confessor, to whom he



had something particular to say. Afterwards he exclaimed: 'O purgatory, purgatory! Oh, who is pure! who is pure before the holy and just God! My deceased wife was a pure and innocent soul; yet I prayed for her every day, and often many times in the day. Pray for her also, dear Kellermann, and for me, as long as you live.' As he spoke of his sins, Mr. Kellermann observed, that he had loved God; to which he replied, 'Yes, I have loved God; I have loved Jesus Christ. Ah, how could I do otherwise! God has shewn Himself so bountiful and full of love, in sending His Son Jesus Christ.' After a pause, he said again to Mr. Kellermann: 'But He, our great Master and exalted Mediator, prays for us to the Father: He has compassion on our infirmity.' Our beloved father spoke again of his sins in sentiments of the most profound humility. 'It is indeed a momentous consideration for me,' said he to his confessor; 'I must soon appear before the throne of the great Judge of the world!' By his earnest desire the rector of Melle came, and administered to him extreme unction. We were all present, as well as the whole household. The reverend rector was much affected at his great devotion and perfect resignation to the will of God.

"The suffering of our beloved parent had now almost subsided. He slept composedly, and when he awoke, he appeared to brighten up, and spoke of the love of God and of all mankind. At one time he awoke out of a doze with this sentence on his lips: 'Jesus Christ is made to us from God wisdom, and justice, and sanctification, and redemption.' (1 Cor. i. 30.)

"He said to our mother and to Dean Kellermann, 'My epitaph must be: *Here lies Frederick Leopold*

*Stolberg, born Nov. 7, 1750, died ———. ‘For God so loved the world, as to give His only-begotten Son; that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting.’ (St. John iii. 16.)* I composed this epitaph for myself thirty years ago. I must entreat you, however, to add nothing to it; for when we speak of the eternal, we must be silent on things temporal.’ Then, turning to our mother, he said, ‘Fix deeply in the children’s hearts, *humility, vigilance, and prayer* for themselves, and then particularly fidelity in interceding for others. If God shews me mercy, though I am a grievous sinner, believe me, it is because—if I may dare to say it—I have endeavoured to fulfil faithfully this duty of charity.’

“Xavier and Joseph had sat up the first half of Saturday night, and Caius and Clement the second. That night the patient was very ill; the pain in his stomach increased to an alarming degree, and he could not lie at all easy. With what sweetness and benevolence he expressed his gratitude for every little relief which could be procured for him!

“At four in the morning, Julia (his daughter) found him much weakened, his hands were cold, and he began to rattle in his throat. She bathed his forehead and temples carefully with eau de Cologne, which we often did, finding that it had a good effect upon him. When he had a little revived, he said, ‘I think God will take me to Himself, by my extreme weakness. I know well enough, that great weakness may be supported; but mine is too great. I earnestly wish that my Saviour may this day take me to Himself; but I still know how to be obedient to His will. May God bend my stubborn mind to suffering!’

“ By his desire, Mr. Kellermann was called again, to pray by him. He requested the prayers for the dying, which he had asked for the day before. Mr. Kellermann, however, chose other prayers, as he did not think the sick man in such immediate danger. He began, ‘*Adjutorium nostrum in nomine Domini* ;’ Papa answered, with a weak and soft, but perfectly intelligible voice, ‘*Qui fecit cælum et terram.*’ Then Mr. K. recited the fiftieth Psalm, *Miserere*, and some other prayers, which were repeated by the patient with the greatest devotion.

“ Soon after, he exclaimed, in violent pain and anguish, ‘ This is agony !’ Mamma repeated to him the words of Christ, ‘ I am the resurrection and the life ;’ to which he added, ‘ He that believeth in Me, although he be dead, shall live.’ (St. John xi. 25.) The physicians in attendance were much struck to see the Count so earnestly long for the day when he should depart out of this world and be with Christ. Doctor Lepaix was particularly moved and affected at the sick man’s wish to return home to his heavenly country. One physician observed, that he did not believe that any man, however wicked, could have been otherwise than moved and converted on witnessing this happy soul already half glorified. With what feeling did the patient frequently repeat, ‘ Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me !’

“ About one in the afternoon he desired to see us all. It was a moving sight, to see us all kneeling in deep affliction round the bed of our father, whom we so tenderly loved. He looked upon us with the most affectionate satisfaction, and said, with a feeble but impressive voice, ‘ I am here before the face of that God who



is every where present, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and beseech these three divine Persons of the most holy Trinity, whom I have ever adored, to embrace us all, myself, my deceased wife, and my wife now living, my brothers and sisters, dead and living, my dearly-beloved children, alive and dead, my sons-in-law, nephews and nieces, grandchildren, and each one of us in one bond of love, by faith, hope, and charity; that no one of this little number may fall away, and we may all be one day united before the throne of the Most High. For, although I am a grievous sinner, I joyfully go to that other world, with faithful confidence in Jesus Christ.—I must be short.—I beg pardon of all my children and domestics, and all my friends and acquaintance, for my many acts of uncharitableness, and the many times I have given them scandal; and I pray God to remove whatever injury they have caused, and not to lay the consequences on them, but on me.—I entreat all my children to pray for me, and for us all.—May the Spirit of our Lord fill me and all of us with His love, that we may be all one, as the Father in the Son. Should any of my dear children, or my dear relations, think that any one has at any time offended me, or done me any injury, I conjure him not to resent it, but only to pray earnestly for the person in private of whom he so thinks.

“ ‘ And now, my dear and tenderly-loved children! I wish deeply to impress this one thing on your hearts. *We are mortals, we all sin; but keep your hearts ever open to your Saviour, never give way to too much fear before Him, never be ashamed of Him.* For in whom, —ah! in whom else can we rest our hopes, when the cold hand of death shall grasp us, on the bed of sickness!’

“ The physicians now came into the room. When he perceived them together, he said to them, ‘ You are partakers of my prayer.’ When Dr. Richard said, that if good could be done, they would still try every possible remedy, he only replied, ‘ I shall recover no more.’ He felt again fresh pain, but listened with great satisfaction to that passage, 2 Corinth. iv. 17, 18, ‘ Our present tribulation, which is momentary and light, worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory. While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.’

“ His confessor was constantly with him, and repeated to him, from time to time, sentences from the holy Scriptures. He was greatly composed by them, and often repeated the animating passages of Holy Writ, which, in him, were proved to be the words of God, and not of men.

“ We and the physicians all thought that he could not live till the next day. After some time, he exclaimed, with deep emotion, ‘ Lord Jesus, thou Son of David, thou Saviour of sinners, have mercy on me!— Yes, He has had mercy on me; the Lord has been merciful to me. Through His exceeding great mercy, the rising light hath appeared to me from on high.’

“ After this a shivering fit came on. Julia washed him with eau de Cologne; and calling Dr. Lepaix, he said to him, ‘ Will it be over with me to-morrow, or the day after to-morrow?’ To this the physician replied, ‘ As you have such lively faith, and earnest desire to enjoy God, I may well venture to tell you, that you will not survive till midnight.’ ‘ *God be praised!*’

said he, grasping both the hands of the physician, and pressing them strongly; 'I thank you,—I thank you with all my heart. *Praised be Jesus Christ!*' With these words, his head sunk on one side, and, after one gentle respiration, he departed to a better land, to his God and to our God, to his Father and to our Father.'—Thus far the narrative of Stolberg's children.

Thus died LEOPOLD, COUNT VON STOLBERG; thus died a man, formerly a Protestant, but who had been converted to the Catholic Church. The witling may laugh, the scoffer may give full scope to his raillery, and the proud man of fortune may lift his shoulders in contempt; but, for my part, I can say nothing, and wish nothing better, than that we may all have so happy an end, and leave this world with joy and peace like his. "May my soul die the death of the just, and may my last end be like to theirs!"

Let us now endeavour, in conclusion, to sum up the moral and intellectual qualities of this great man, the ornament of his age and country. In every relation of life he was most exemplary. Dr. Katerkamp, who had opportunities of knowing him, both when a Protestant and a Catholic, bears the following testimony to his character:—"A more tender husband, a more affectionate father, a warmer friend, and a more kind and indulgent master towards his inferiors, never existed than Stolberg, in the bosom of his family, and the circle of his friends."<sup>1</sup> But the soul of all these high moral qualities was a vivid and loving faith in his Saviour, a warm attachment to the Catholic Church, which formed the all-pervading principle of his life and writings. "This faith it was," to use the words of

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Princess Gallitzin*, p. 249, German ed.

F. Schlegel, "which gave not only repose to his feelings, but energy to his genius." If as a man and a Christian, Stolberg is entitled to our veneration, he claims as a writer a pre-eminent rank in the literature of his country. "An impartial posterity," says Niebuhr, "will assign a very high place to Frederick Leopold von Stolberg." As a lyric poet, he is remarkable for fervour, as well as for dignity of feeling, and a full, free flow of diction; and as a Church historian, he yields to none in classical and patristic learning, in solidity of judgment, suavity of feeling, and noble elegance of style.

His genius dwelt in that temperate zone which lies between mere acuteness of reason on the one hand, and depth of understanding on the other. If he had not the profound Platonic speculation, he possessed, in an eminent degree, the Socratic wisdom.

The venerable Countess of Stolberg terminated a most edifying life in Belgium, in the year 1842.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The above Memoir has been kindly furnished by J. B. Robertson, Esq., to whom I return my very sincere thanks.









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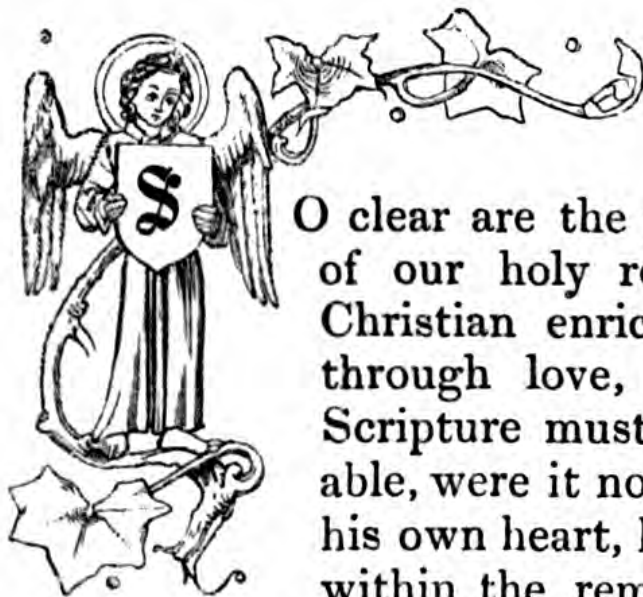
God, being the greatest good, is alone entitled to our deepest love. This truth would penetrate the hearts of all men, did not our corrupt nature resist its impression. The fatal consequences of pride and sensuality. God has in manifold ways endeavoured to awaken men from their lethargy. The repentance of love is necessary, in order to become the friends of God. We must love God with a pure love. Denial of our own will leads to this "pure love." False shame is a very dangerous enemy. Sufferings are the portion of the children of God . . . . .	182
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A Little Book of  
THE LOVE OF GOD.

CHAPTER I.



O clear are the proofs of the truth of our holy religion, that, to a Christian enriched with his faith through love, a disbelief in the Scripture must appear inconceivable, were it not that, looking into his own heart, he always perceives within the remains of that bitter root of pride, and that benumbing flower of sensuality, from which all our woe has sprung, still springs, and will spring, as long as men dwell upon the earth.

2. Religion informs us of our original dignity, and of our fall.

3. She tells us that man is not now such as he originally came forth from the hand of his almighty and all-wise Creator ; that his nature has become disordered ; and hence are produced those contradictions which he finds within him ; hence arises that inward contest when we waver between the choice of the desired evil and the known good ; hence is sin produced in us ; and hence also arise, even according to the forced acknowledgment of an enemy to Christianity, the traditions of almost all ancient nations.<sup>1</sup>

4. The religion of Jesus Christ alone teaches us the origin and the nature of our corruption : she alone extends to us a hand to lift us up again from our fall, and again to restore us to our original dignity.

5. And as it was worthy of the mercy of God to *will* our restoration, and to provide us with those means whereby we might attain it ; so also it was indeed worthy of His wisdom to impress such marks of authenticity on His doctrines, as to afford us the deepest conviction of their truth.

6. This He hath done in many ways. Religion alone gives us a proper idea of the nature of God, and she alone solves the problem of our present state. Grounded on facts, religion is proved historically in a more satisfactory

<sup>1</sup> “ La chute de l’homme dégénéré, est le fondement de la théologie de presque toutes les anciennes nations.”—Voltaire, *Philosophie de l’Histoire*.

manner than any other history. Nay, the deeper we examine, the more do the proofs crowd upon us. We find among all nations, scattered as it were upon Sibylline leaves, certain truths (traces of a holier tradition) and narrations; but unconnected, mingled with fables, and disfigured by false wit. But in the divine Scriptures, written by men divinely inspired, we find these truths and narrations united in one great whole; whose deep sense is evident to the understanding, to whose dignity the unbiassed reason bows, and the beauty of which enraptures the heart.

7. The period in which these holy Books were written embraces a thousand years and more. Nevertheless, we must consider them as one book; because, being produced by one Spirit, they have one object; viz. the reconciliation of man with God, that mystery of love, "on whom the angels desire to look." (1 St. Peter i. 12.)

8. And as this inspiration, moving every where in those divine writings, gives them a unity, which is, however, often misunderstood by sensual men; so they also possess another character of unity, which it is inconceivable could escape any reader endowed with a sound judgment, had not pride and sensuality revolted against truth. This character of unity manifests itself in the manifold relations the Books bear one to another. For, not to mention promises and prophecies, the fulfilment of

which took place often after many hundred years, we also find in those earliest rites commanded by God, as, for example, in the Passover, and in historical and typical events, such as Abraham about to offer his son in sacrifice, and in Isaac, who was ready willingly to be sacrificed; in the sacerdotal king Melchisedeck, who, as a priest, offered bread and wine, and whom the royal prophet, 900 years afterwards, compared with the Son of God;<sup>1</sup> in Osee, to whom Moses gave the name of Josue,<sup>2</sup> because this hero was to conduct the children of Israel into the promised land; in the brazen serpent, which was raised on a stake, in order that all who were bitten by the serpents might be healed, when they looked with confident faith upon the brazen image;—in these rites and types, I repeat, do we not find evident allusions—the signification of which is still clear after so many hundred years—whereby it is plainly manifest that “one Spirit,” higher than any mortal, acts in these divine records of the Divine goodness towards man?

9. Very beautifully doth holy Ambrose speak:<sup>3</sup> “It is as if God walked in the holy Scriptures, as if He were present in them. And when the sinner reads them, then he heareth the voice of God.”

<sup>1</sup> Psalm cix. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Josue and Jesus are one and the same name.

<sup>3</sup> De Paradiso.



10. Yes, truly doth God walk in the divine writings; but corrupt nature goeth away from Him, as Adam and Eve, after their fall, wished to hide themselves among the trees of the garden, before the face of the God of gods, when they heard His voice.

11. No one who reads the Scripture, can help noticing that the mysteries of religion, the doctrine of man's reconciliation with God through His Son, and that of the Trinity, ever rise clearer and clearer from its perusal; even the earlier allusions to these mysteries, allusions which were cleared up by their later fulfilment, plainly prove (no less than the fulfilment of the prophecies) that, as the chief Apostle saith: "The holy men of God spoke, inspired by the Holy Ghost." (2 St. Pet. i. 21.)

12. Obscure was the promise by which our merciful Judge, immediately after the fall of our first parents, awaked "the great expectation," which, from that period, was ever more and more intense; but yet it remained dark for a long time. Still, from the days of Adam, this expectation formed the soul of the religion of the old Covenant; and so God was pleased, in manifold ways, to enlighten, as it were, by flashes of light, the darkness of this period, in order to keep the minds of His true believers fixed on that promise.

13. In the history of Abraham we see how, among the guests that visited him, one declared Himself to be the Lord Jehova; the other two

were angels. Abraham called Him the "Judge" of all the earth,<sup>1</sup> but He called Himself Jehova.

14. But this Jehova is different from another, who is also called Jehova; for when He was about to destroy the wicked cities, it is said of Him, "And the Lord rained upon Sodom and Gomorrha brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven." (Genesis xix. 24.)

15. And what can those pretended divines say, who hypocritically praise Christianity—though in a very ambiguous way—while, at the same time, they lay the axe to its root, by striving so anxiously, and yet so vainly, to explain away all those allusions in the Old Testament that relate to the Son of God, who is, nevertheless, the only proper object of all the holy Scripture,—what, I repeat, can they say to the following passage, in which the wise man asks, "Who hath ascended up into heaven and descended? Who hath held the wind in His hands? Who hath bound up the waters together as in a garment? Who hath raised up all the borders of the earth? What is His name, and what is the name of His Son, if thou knowest?" (Proverbs xxx. 4.)

16. What can those false expounders say to the words of the prophet Micheas? "And thou, Bethlehem-Ephrata, art a little one among the thousands of Juda; out of thee shall He come forth unto me that is to be the ruler in Israel:

<sup>1</sup> "Thou who judgest all the earth, wilt not make this judgment." (Gen. xviii. 25.)



and His going forth is from the beginning, from the days of eternity. Therefore will He give them up even till the time wherein she that travaileth shall bring forth ; and the remnant of His brethren shall be converted to the children of Israel. And He shall stand, and feed in the strength of the Lord, in the height of the name of the Lord His God : and they shall be converted, for now shall He be magnified even to the ends of the earth. And this Man shall be our peace," &c. (Chap. v. 2-5.)

17. Here the place of the birth of the Messiah is fixed ; His eternal Godhead clearly spoken of ; His wonderful birth from a virgin pointed out ; and also the return of the Gentiles, who, united with the original community at Jerusalem, shall henceforth form but one people. He is pointed out as the King, who, like unto a shepherd, shall feed His people ; whose kingdom will extend beyond the boundaries of earth ; who shall give peace to the world.

18. Of this seed of the woman, already promised in Paradise, Isaias also speaketh, the contemporary of Micheas : " Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and His name shall be called Emmanuel.<sup>1</sup> And the government is upon His shoulder ; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, God the mighty, the Father of the world to come, the Prince of peace. His empire shall be multiplied, and there shall be no end of peace : He shall sit

<sup>1</sup> That is, God with us.

upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom; to establish it and strengthen it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth and for ever." (Chapters vii. and ix.) So sings the sublime seer, who hath so distinctly foretold the sufferings and death of the Son of God.

19. This is not the place to dwell on the many proofs relating to the Messiah, nor to mention the passages in which the Holy Trinity is spoken of. A few texts, out of many, will be sufficient. "By the word of the Lord the heavens were established, and all the power of them by the spirit of His mouth." (Psalm xxxii. 6.) It is well known that in Hebrew, like Πνεῦμα in Greek and *Spiritus* in Latin, by the "Word" is signified Spirit.

20. In another work of mine<sup>1</sup> I have proved that the Rabbis were well acquainted with the doctrine of the Trinity; some of whom expressed themselves in the very same words that we do, viz. the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. They found this doctrine in the holy Scripture; and as almost all nations, especially those of Asia, had drawn from a holier tradition—people who had no intercourse with the Jews, and who were even more ancient than they were; so also among all nations, as the holy records inform us, traces of the history of mankind (then still young), and of the earliest events, are found, especially of the universality of the deluge, and of the preservation of our

<sup>1</sup> Geschichte der Relig. J. C. Th. i.

race by one family that was wonderfully saved; and this, indeed, is a wonder which appears strange to our feelings and understanding, but which the tradition of all nations hath preserved in such remembrance among men, that no one who is acquainted with these traditions can reasonably call them in doubt, if even the holy Scriptures were to pass them over in silence,—writings in which we find all the scattered traces connected together.

21. Should any one of my readers think that in this first chapter of the little “Book of Love,” I have strayed from my intended subject, and have spoken more of the proofs of our holy religion than of “Love,” which is the soul of our divine faith, let him remember that faith, hope, and love, those sister-virtues of Christianity, cannot be separated; and that although love is “the greater of these,” yet we must first believe in the *object* of our love, in order to be able to love Him.

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## CHAPTER II.

1. As our love rests on our belief in God, such as the holy Scripture reveals Him to us—a God Three in One, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; so likewise the manifestation of God’s love, such as the Scripture gives us, is the greatest proof of the inspiration of this Book of books.

2. And, moreover, as the Apostle saith, that love is far more valuable and precious, than to speak with the tongues of men and of angels, more precious than prophecy, than the understanding of all mysteries, than all knowledge, than all faith, even if it could remove mountains; than all good works, yea even more than martyrdom itself; so also one can say, that "the charity of God, poured forth into our hearts by the Holy Ghost," imparts a far more living conviction than any words that could be uttered by the tongues of angels or of men; than all prophecy, together with its fulfilment; than the display of all knowledge, and the discoursing of mysteries; than all wonders that could be seen, were even mountains to be thereby removed; than all good works which edify us; than the martyrs' blood, which bears testimony to truth.

3. Love, therefore, remains "one and all," because from it all good proceeds, and without it all else is but idle talk.

4. The love of God, then, of which the Apostle saith, "that it is poured forth into our hearts by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us" (provided we are the children of God); this love is the source, the condition of all our good; it is not, however, the highest source of this good, for all blessings are derived from something still higher, viz. *the love of God towards us*.

5. Wherefore, he whom Jesus loved hath



said, "In this is charity; not as though we had loved God, but because He hath first loved us, and sent His Son to be a propitiation for our sins." (1 St. John iv. 10.)

6. And this same beloved disciple saith, "God is love."

7. This expression is not only not unsuitable, but it is the only one which accurately and perfectly expresses the idea intended to be conveyed.

8. Finite beings are capable of love; they love so far as they participate in the source of love. Plato thus speaks as justly as he does beautifully: "All that is beautiful is beautiful only by its connexion with the source of beauty, the contemplation of which forms the destiny and the highest happiness of man; a contemplation at which he can gradually arrive, by the consideration and love of beautiful objects, that first appear sensual, and then spiritual, being accompanied by Eros, the genius of love, that intercedes between man and the Divinity."

9. Thus speaks Plato, justly called by the ancient Greeks "the Divine;" or rather his renowned teacher, Socrates, the most honourable and revered of philosophers, whose intelligent and yet humble inquiries, united with a burning thirst after truth and love, God rewarded by giving him a share of truth and of love.

10. God says of Himself, "I am who am." This name could never have come into the

mind of any mortal; and its truth is, nevertheless, so clear, that one might suppose every inquirer could have found it out.

11. Has not God alone true existence, since He hath in Himself the *cause* of existence?

12. No; He hath not existence, for existence is something out of Him; the possessor, then, must be different from the person possessing. He hath likewise no cause. Dost thou desire to seek the spring of this eternal cause?

13. He is the fulness of existence. He is who He is.

14. All creatures have but a borrowed existence; an existence which He renews every moment of time. Could this Sun for an instant become dark, then all the firmament and their worlds would sink back into their original darkness and nonentity.

15. 'The Creation was His will, uttered by the "Word." His eternal will, declaring itself by the "Word," is the preservation of all creatures.

16. "God is love." From eternity, according to the doctrine of the holy Fathers, He begets the Son, while He contemplates Himself, and sees Himself. In Him there is no yesterday, to-day, or to-morrow. Wherefore, by the royal prophet, the eternal Father speaks thus to His eternal Son: "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten Thee." (Psalm ii. 7.)

17. And as the will was concealed from men, until He made it manifest by the "Word,"



which is somewhat different from, and yet the same with, His will; so God declared His will (as from eternity the period was to come forth,) when He uttered the eternal word: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (St. John i. 1.) "The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was made nothing that was made:" thus the world came into existence. •

18. We address our prayers to One in Three, to Three in One—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. The Church teaches us that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son. And the doctrine of the holy Fathers tells us, that the Holy Spirit proceeds eternally from the love of the Father to the Son, and from the love of the Son to the Father.

19. Of the Father, the Apostle saith: "Who only hath immortality, and inhabiteth light inaccessible; whom no man hath seen, nor can see," &c. (1 Timothy vi. 16.)

20. The Son of God saith of Himself: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No man cometh to the Father but by Me." (St. John xiv. 6.) And in another place He saith: "And no one knoweth the Son but the Father; neither doth any one know the Father but the Son, and he to whom it shall please the Son to reveal Him." (St. Matthew xi. 27.) He is the way to the Father.

21. And as it is said of God, "God is

love;" so the Son saith of Himself, "I am the truth and the life." He doth not participate in truth, as our minds do through Him: *He is the truth!* He was not brought into existence, as through Him we have been: "He is the life!"

22. Of Him St. John saith, "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men." (Chap. i. 4.) Truth and love are the light and heat of His beams. Truth and love are the element of souls—their true life. Wherefore we say of them, when "they stand not in the truth"—to use the words of our Saviour, speaking of the devil—that they die an everlasting death. They have, indeed, an existence, because they are immortal; but no more have they their *true* life. Their light became darkness, their love hatred. Love is the life of life.

23. The enkindling and nourishing of this love in the hearts of the children of God are especially ascribed to the Holy Spirit; so saith St. Paul: "Because the charity of God is poured forth into our hearts by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us." (Romans v. 5.)

24. The scope of the holy Scripture is, to prove God's love to us.

25. Our Saviour saith, "For God so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son; that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting." (St. John iii. 16.)

26. And His beloved disciple tells us, "God

is charity; and he that abideth in charity, abideth in God, and God in him. . . . Let us, therefore, love God, because God first hath loved us." (1 St. John iv. 8, 16, 19.)

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### CHAPTER III.

1. LOVE is our life, love is our calling, love is our salvation; love is, properly, that only which God requires of us; for from it cometh the fulfilment of all duties.

2. By the mouth of Moses the Spirit of God hath thus spoken to His chosen people: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole strength." (Deuteronomy vi. 4, 5.)

3. And unto the same people He also spoke again, saying, "Thou shalt love thy friend as thyself. I am the Lord." (Leviticus xix. 18.) And in order that the Israelites, on account of the hard-heartedness inherent in their, or rather in *our*, corrupt nature, might not apply the expression "thy friend" to their own countrymen, it was also said to them, "If a stranger dwell in your land, and abide among you, do not upbraid him. . . . You shall love him as yourselves; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. I am the Lord your God." (Leviticus xix. 33, 34.)

4. No one can be so ignorant of holy Scripture as not to know how our Saviour, when a doctor of the law asked, "Which was the first commandment of all?" referred him to these two divine sentences, and said unto him, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. And the second is like to this: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." (St. Matthew xxii. 37-39.)

5. When this Jewish doctor, to whom many doctors of our day are like, asked him, in order to justify himself, "And who is my neighbour?" then Jesus replied to his question by that affecting account of a certain man that fell among robbers, who stripped him, wounded him, and left him half dead on the road, and how a priest passed him by, and then a Levite, without helping him, until a Samaritan, seeing him, was moved with compassion, bound up his wounds, and, setting him upon his own beast, took care of him. Then our Saviour asked the doctor of the law, to whom, no doubt, the Samaritan was an abomination, "Which of these three, in thy opinion, was neighbour to him that fell among robbers? But he said, He that shewed mercy to him. And Jesus said to him, Go, and do thou in like manner." (St. Luke x. 30, &c.)

6. Like unto our divine Master, His Apostle also speaks; for having exhorted the faithful of



Rome to the fulfilment of various duties towards the "higher powers," and their fellow-citizens, he continues, "owe no man any thing, but to love one another. For he that loveth his neighbour hath fulfilled the law." (Romans xiii. 8.)

7. We satisfy the demands of government by paying tolls and taxes; we do enough for our fellow-Christian by discharging his debts; we comply with the duties of good manners by shewing proper reverence to our superiors, and a due regard for our equals or inferiors; but the debt of love we must pay to *every one*. And we prove our love by works of mercy performed for our neighbour, since we are bound to do them, if our circumstances allow us; and thus we always owe him love. A truly blessed debt! For with regard to it, and especially works of mercy, true are the words of our Saviour, which St. Paul has preserved for us in a tender farewell address: "It is a more blessed thing to give rather than receive." (Acts xx. 35.)

8. The same Apostle thus speaks in a passage from his Epistle to the Romans: "Thou shalt not commit adultery; thou shalt not kill; thou shalt not steal; thou shalt not bear false witness; thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is comprised in this word: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. The love of our neighbour worketh no evil. Love, therefore, is the fulfilling of the law." (xiii. 9, 10.)

9. In a few words he says the same to the

Galatians: "But by charity of the Spirit serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." (v. 13, 14.)

10. In another place St. Paul calls love "the bond of perfection;" for by it all true virtues are united, and where it is wanting, all fall asunder.

11. What we do through love, we do not by compulsion; wherefore St. James calls the law of the Gospel, "the perfect law of liberty." (i. 25.)

12. What the proud disciples of Zeno boasted of themselves—viz. that a stoic only was rich, was in health, was free, was mighty, was wise, and hence also, that he only was happy;—this is true of a Christian alone; for *he* is a genuine disciple of the Gospel. How can *he* help being rich, who desires nothing, because he knoweth that all which God gives him must be profitable to him? How can he be otherwise than in good health, whom no disease disturbs; who, in harmony with himself (which is true healthfulness), because in harmony with the will of God, receives all outward sorrows and afflictions from His hand, not only with patience, but even with joy and thankfulness, as so many proofs of his Father's love, who wishes to prove and to perfect him by sufferings? Why should *he* not be free, who, loosed from the bonds of his passions, not only adores the will of God, but also loves it, in all the events that befall



him? Why cannot he be mighty, who, because his will is one with the Almighty, participates, as it were, in omnipotence? Why cannot he be wise, who, being instructed by Wisdom itself, strives to comply with all His precepts, in thought, word, and work? Why should he not be happy, who, possessing these precious goods, considers them only as the *pledges* of still more noble and endless blessings, which he is to enjoy for eternity? But what is still more consoling, he prizes these precious treasures, "the powers of the world to come," the graces which he receives in time, and expects in eternity; he prizes them not so highly on their own account, as on account of the "Donor," whose love will eternally be his greatest bliss.

13. Let us hear the Apostle speaking of this happiness of a true Christian: "And we know that to them that love God all things work together unto good; to such as, according to His purpose, are called to be saints. For whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be conformable to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren. And whom He predestinated, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified, them He also glorified. What shall we, then, say to these things? If God be for us, who is against us? He that spared not even His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how hath He not also, with

Him, given us all things? And who shall accuse against the elect of God? God that justifieth. Who is he that shall condemn? Christ Jesus that died. Yea, that is risen also again; who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who, then, shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or persecution, or the sword? (As it is written, For thy sake we are put to death all the day long. We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.) But in all these things we overcome, because of Him that hath loved us; for I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor might, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Epist. to Romans viii. 28-39.)

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#### CHAPTER IV.

1. " BUT it is good for me to adhere to my God, to put my hope in the Lord God." (Ps. lxxii. 28.)

2. So sang the holy prophet. To adhere to God, is to love Him " with our whole heart, with our whole soul, with our whole mind, and with all our strength." This is our salvation.

3. We are always bound up with Him, whether we will it or not. "In Him we live, and move, and be." (Acts xvii. 28.) The Atheist lives in God; the powers and gifts which he abuses are the gifts of God in him. His life, also, is the breath of God constantly renewing itself; and when he breathes his last, he breathes with the breath God gave him. Even the devils live in God, move in Him, exist in Him. This they know themselves; this it is that excites their animosity, that sharpens their torments.

4. He that adheres not to God by love hath frustrated the end of His creation; he "standeth not in the truth."

5. As in the visible world all bodies tend to a central point in the earth, and fall as soon as they rise unless supported, so there dwelleth in souls a natural aspiration to ascend unto God.

6. But this longing the pride of the fallen angels opposes. Withdrawing themselves from that pure light in which the Almighty dwelleth, they were hurled down into darkness; and as (because their doom is not yet entirely accomplished) liberty is given them to leave hell many times; so they still carry a hell about with them, in the disorder of their nature, in the contest of this original striving to be united to the eternal fountain of life, light, and love, with their hatred of God, which alone makes their restoration to their innate dignity impossible.

7. Man fell by sensuality and pride. Both

allured him at the same time to the commission of crime. As he yielded, he was eternally lost. Then love, which, when he loved God above all things, was the life of his life, took two courses, both of which led him to destruction. In one way, it dissipated itself on sensual objects; in another, it led him back upon himself. Sensuality made him like to the serpent, which creeps on its belly; self-love made him also like to the serpent, because it folds itself up in its own windings. The wounded pride of this self-love, if God had not taken compassion upon him, might have excited in him also, as in the fallen angels, eternal hatred against the Almighty.

8. Let us imagine what would become of this earth were it to wander from its path round the sun: hurled about by tempests, it would sink into the boundless wastes of chaos. This is but an imperfect image of the misery and disorder of a soul which has renounced God.

9. In the instructive history of the fall of our first parents,—the deep meaning of which few understand,—we see how, immediately after eating the forbidden fruit, an impulse—till then pure—was stained with wicked lust; otherwise they would not have been ashamed of their nakedness.

10. With the purity of this impulse, love also departed. Adam blamed Eve! True love for each could no longer exist, since no longer they loved God, as is evident from the insolent



words with which Adam, casting the blame on Eve, dared to accuse God Himself: "The woman whom Thou gavest me to be my companion gave me of the tree, and I did eat." (Genesis iii. 12.)

11. God, who foresaw their fall from eternity, had compassion upon them from eternity also. We cannot, I think, doubt but that when they heard the sentence pronounced against them, God's Holy Spirit excited in their heart true repentance, and enkindled within them a new love. The great promise of a Redeemer could not fall upon hard, stony ground, but upon a soil that had been blessed by Him.

12. Grace was given unto them, and a way to obtain grace was opened to their future successors also; but not without conditions. While God allows His mercy to rule, His justice likewise rules; but His mercy prevails. Full of confidence, we can appeal from the one to the other, because this very confidence, when it springs from a pure love, disarms His justice, which was appeased by a deed of the deepest love.

13. Here we see the boundless depth of God's wisdom and mercy.

14. Adam and Eve, through pride and sensuality, had lost their title to be children of God.

15. The eternal Son, "who is the image of the invisible God, by whom all things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible . . . .



were created . . . . who is before all, and by whom all things consist," made reparation to the Divine justice, when He, the promised "seed of the woman," became man, being born of a virgin; and by assuming our nature, not only did He humble Himself exceedingly, but He suffered for our wickedness on a sorrowful cross; on an ignominious cross He suffered for our pride, and thus, by restoring us to the friendship of God, He purchased for us eternal redemption.

16. But not without conditions. We must work out our salvation by renouncing pride and sinful sensuality.

17. We cannot, indeed, in our present degenerate state, do any thing of ourselves. The Son of God Himself saith, "Without me you can do nothing;" but, saith His Apostle, "I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me:" for Christ, not only by His example, which so deeply confounds our pride and sensuality, makes us mighty to resist these enemies, but He also imparts to us strength to renounce them, by the assistance of His Holy Spirit given unto us, provided only we believe in Him with humble sentiments of sorrow for our sins.

18. By the compassionate wisdom of God, faith was made the appointed means of salvation, because it opposes at the same time sensuality and pride; sensuality, inasmuch as it commands us to prefer the invisible and eter-

nal, to the visible and temporary ; and pride, which rises up against the humble knowledge of our own misery, and also against truths, the meaning of which exceeds the comprehension of our understanding, which is as assuming as it is limited.

19. Although the proofs of our holy doctrines are so clear, that any understanding, not blinded by pride, can embrace them, yet God is willing to grant us the gift of faith, provided only we fervently seek for it, and fly unto Him for knowledge with an earnest love of truth, and endeavour to follow the precepts of His holy commandments ; the moral perfection of which even the understanding of the unbeliever must acknowledge.

20. So does His Son promise, “ the Author and Finisher of our faith,” who, when He dwelt among us in the flesh, thus spoke to the proud and sensual Jews : “ My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me. If any man will do the will of Him, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of Myself.” (St. John vii. 16, 17.)

21. After this declaration of the Son of God, who can dare object to religion, that it requires a *blind* faith ?

22. It would not require a blind faith from us, even did it only demand the consideration of the interior and exterior proofs of its Divinity ; and these are : the Prophecies that were given at so early a period, and fulfilled in

part after centuries, nay, after thousands of years; those miracles which bring conviction, and which, to use the words of the greatest man of the 18th century, "are for all men equally clear and equally numerous."<sup>1</sup> The rapid extension of our holy religion, at a time when the world was buried in the deepest and most universal corruption, which was brought on partly by proud and atheistical philosophers, and partly by a system of impure idolatry steeped in blood; the rapid spread of the Gospel by twelve poor fishermen and publicans; the innumerable martyrs who bore witness to it; that miracle, now acting before our eyes, —foretold first by Moses, and then by the Son of God,—of the state and condition of the Jews, now scattered to the four winds of heaven; whose continuance seems to hang on their Temple, and their separation from other nations; and after so many centuries, ever since the destruction of their Temple and city, the seed of their being scattered over the globe, in spite of so many persecutions and such powerful and renewed efforts to root it up, still remains! It remains, and even their unbelief and their continuance in a religion which cannot be practised, prove, in the clearest manner, the Divinity of the Prophecies.

23. Religion certainly requires that we should weigh and prove these powerful and clear proofs; and great will be the responsi-

<sup>1</sup> Haller.

bility of those who, influenced by sensuality or pride, neglect this examination and consideration; but though so evident and convincing as they are, yet the Son of God invites us to a more easy examination, so worthy both of His and our dignity; for if we do the will of His Father, we shall then become, as He himself hath promised, inwardly persuaded that His doctrine is from God.

24. Who is there to whom this sacred duty of examination does not appear evident? What keeps us, then, from it? The vain enjoyments which we expect from this transitory life, the pleasures of which are so uncertain, so deceitful, so void, and perishable besides; whose sorrows are so comfortless for him that hopeth not in God? Or do we expect some kind of consolation from those airy systems of our philosophers, which vanish away, one after the other, like the figures of a magic-lantern on the wall? What weapons do these sophists furnish us with out of their poor armoury against the passions of youth? against the gnawing cares of manhood? against the afflictions of old age? against the terrors of death?

25. For us, yes, even for us, not only for the rebellious children of the old Covenant, but for us, the rebellious children of the New Testament, God hath spoken holy words by the mouth of the prophet Jeremias: "Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this; and ye gates thereof be very desolate, saith the Lord. For my people have



done two evils. They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living water, and have digged to themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water." (ii. 12, 13.)

26. Let us listen, again, to our Saviour; let us be on our guard, while it is time, against false doctrine, and follow, while we have time, the kind words of His friendly invitation: "At that time Jesus answered, and said, I confess to Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones. Yea, Father; for so hath it seemed good in Thy sight. All things are delivered Me by my Father; neither doth any one know the Father but the Son, and he to whom it shall please the Son to reveal Him. Come to Me, all you that labour, and are burdened, and I will refresh you. Take up my yoke upon you, and learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart; and you shall find rest to your souls. For my yoke is sweet, and my burden light." (St. Matthew xi. 25-30.)

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## CHAPTER V.

IN order to enlighten our understanding, that was darkened by the sinfulness of our corrupt nature, and to animate our heart, estranged from the love of God, with that love which is



our salvation, God wrought that wonder of His mercy, into the depth of which “the angels desire to look.” (1 Peter i. 12.)

2. The Almighty, who hath called us into existence, and destined us to possess eternal happiness, gave us “His only-begotten Son.” His only-begotten Son took our flesh and blood; He humbled Himself, and became “obedient unto death, even the death of the cross:” and the Holy Spirit sanctifies our souls by Him who pours the charity of God into our hearts, provided only we desire to be sanctified by Him, and are willing that He should fill us with the love of God.

3. Yes; even before we were capable of a choice between good and evil, between life and death, between God and the world, when we were but new-born infants, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, received us unto their holy covenant.

4. Hear the Apostle: “For the grace of God our Saviour hath appeared to all men. Instructing us, that, denying ungodliness and worldly desires, we should live soberly, and justly, and godly in this world; looking for the blessed hope and coming of the glory of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and might cleanse to Himself a people acceptable, pursuing good works,”<sup>1</sup> &c. And a little further he saith: “But

<sup>1</sup> Epistle to Titus ii. 11-14.

when the goodness and kindness of God our Saviour appeared, not by the works of justice which we have done, but according to His mercy, He saved us by the laver of regeneration, and renovation of the Holy Ghost, whom He hath poured forth upon us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that, being justified by His grace, we may be heirs, according to the hope of life everlasting.”<sup>1</sup>

5. Let us dwell a little on the means which He hath provided for our salvation.

6. The whole visible creation proclaims His might, His wisdom, His love. This manifestation of the great Invisible speaks to us through all our senses: “The heavens shew forth the glory of God, and the firmament declareth the work of His hands. Day to day uttereth speech, and night to night sheweth knowledge. There are no speeches nor languages where their voices are not heard. Their sound hath gone forth into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.” (Psalm xviii. 2-5.) Thus doth the royal prophet sing of this manifestation: through the senses it speaks to the understanding, which it invites to consideration; and it speaks to the heart also, which it invites to return thanks to that great Giver, who not only imparts to us all that can delight our soul, that can fill our understanding with wonder, and our heart with joy, but who has also given us our

<sup>1</sup> Epistle to Titus iii. 4-8.

understanding, our mind, and our heart, when He called us from nonentity into existence.

7. He gave us conscience, and the natural light of our understanding. The Son of God—"the Word"—is that true light, "which enlighteneth every man coming into this world."

8. The Apostle gives us the comfortable assurance that the heathens, to whom the manifestation of the Divine will was not made known by religion, but who, attending to the voice of conscience, became a law to themselves, according to which they faithfully lived, that these were justified before God. (See Romans, chapter ii.)

9. We know, however, that many did not correspond faithfully with this inward light; in fact, it was very difficult for them to do so, surrounded as they were by crimes of injustice and vice of every description, and by an idolatrous worship, which not only permitted uncleanness, but even *required* it, as well as human sacrifices also.

10. Moreover, the traditions of holier truths, the traces of which we find every where, were so scattered and disfigured, and so much mixed up with the frauds of heathenism, that they were quite unable to give any guiding light.

11. Certain individuals, indeed, arose, who were illumined by a natural light, and thus they gained some little attention; they were even followed as Atheists, although they proclaimed a Divinity; while, on the other hand, the priest-

craft that lay beneath the delusions of idolatry exposed the comfortless, benumbed spectre of Atheism to those who penetrated its meaning, concealed under various masks.

12. But the Divine mercy had not left the holy fire of truth on earth, to a weak, human, and oft unfaithful, protection. When the sacred traditions began to be falsified, He made Himself manifest to an individual whom He rescued from idolatry. He promised him that his posterity should be as countless as the stars of heaven; He also gave him a still higher pledge, "that through his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed." God likewise manifested Himself to Joseph, the grandson of Abraham, by whom this manifestation was extended to a then numerously increasing people. To this people God gave His holy law by means of Moses, the mediator of the old covenant, that eminent and beloved individual with whom the Lord spoke "face to face, as a man is wont to speak to a friend." The Almighty shewed Himself to be the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, by wonders, of which the Egyptians and the whole people of Israel were witnesses; and for forty years He miraculously guided and supported this people by the instrumentality of this man. In the desert the Mosaic books were composed—those Divine records of the creation of heaven and earth, which, in short but powerful sketches, contain the elements of our religion, of all wisdom; and of science itself, and from



which the history, as well as the traditions of all nations are derived. Since, then, religion rests on the history of the Divine mercy towards men, so in the historical books of the Holy Scripture, God has given us the history of His chosen people; and in the prophetic books, the history of the then distant future. Thus, as He is, "that is, and that was, and that is to come;" and in Him there is no yesterday, no to-morrow, but one to-day; so likewise His holy word, by narration and promise, by prophecy and its fulfilment, unites the present with the past and with the future; and the soul of all—(from, "In the beginning God created heaven and earth," until the last promise of His future, still expected by us, "Behold, I come quickly," to which the sigh of love adds, "Come, Lord Jesus")—the soul of all is ever He who "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God," through whom all things were made: "I am alpha and omega, the beginning and the end, saith the Lord God; who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty."

13. The spirit of the old Law breaks forth into longing desires after Him who was "the expectation of nations;" it speaks likewise through the consecrated lips of the sublime bard Isaias: "Oh, that Thou wouldst rend the heavens, and wouldst come down; the mountains would melt away at Thy presence." (lxiv. 1.)

14. He came "when the fulness of the time



was come ;” “ He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him He gave them power to be made the sons of God, to them that believe in His name. Who are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we saw His glory, the glory, as it were, of the Only-begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth.” (St. John i. 10-15.)

15. He fulfilled the law, as well as all promises and prophecies. His holy life was the bright mirror of His holy doctrines, which He confirmed by miracles. His whole life was one act of boundless love. His Passion and sorrowful death were not, as with the martyrs, the accidental consequences of His sojourn on earth, but they were the end and object of His life ; because His all-atoning sufferings and death were resolved upon from eternity, in the designs of Eternal love ; and hence He is called “ the Lamb, which was slain from the beginning of the world.” (Apoc. xiii. 8.)

16. How much language here fails us, since our weak heart, to its deep confusion, feels itself so powerless to express such boundless love ! May this confusion lead us to humility, before which alone the gates of heaven are opened ; but which no key of knowledge unlocks for the proud, learned man.

17. And as mercy prevails over fear in the law as well as in the Gospel, so in the books of the old Covenant we see the love of God to man displayed in a manner worthy of our adoring astonishment. How lovingly did God condescend to our first parents! then to the patriarchs! The Ten Commandments He established as the foundation of love. How He manifested Himself to His people, that so often fell away from Him! How affectionately does He invite the Jews to His holy service! How He hallows all the relations of love and respect among men, when He employs them for Himself and His people! He calls Himself their King, their Father. By the mouth of Isaias He saith, "Give praise, O ye heavens, and rejoice, O earth; ye mountains, give praise with jubilation; because the Lord hath comforted His people, and will have mercy on His poor ones. And Sion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and the Lord hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her infant, so as not to have pity on the son of her womb? And if she should forget, yet will not I forget thee. Behold, I have graven<sup>1</sup> thee in my hands." (xlix. 13-16.) He calls Himself the bride, the spouse of His people; and in the sublime "Canticle of Can-

<sup>1</sup> At different times and in different countries, it was customary with men, in order to remember persons or events, to burn marks on their hands or arms. God speaks affectionately with men, and makes use of their forms of speech.—*Author.*

ticles" the royal prophet, inspired by the Holy Spirit, shews us, under images of the most ardent affection of a lover for a beloved, the union of eternal love between God and a soul entirely sanctified by Him, or between God and His Church.

18. How the prophets, animated by the spirit of God, exult at the thought, that at some future period the knowledge of the Lord will be extended over all nations, that all peoples will become the adopted sons of God!

19. And shall *we*, children of the new Law, allow ourselves to be content with a cold worship of God? How can we dare to say we honour Him, when we reject His invitations? when we wish to see only a "wise and good ruler of the world" in Him who, through His Son, has given Himself to be acknowledged by us as a Father? when, cold and reserved, we correspond not with His longing affection for our soul?

20. Oh, how ought not our hearts to break forth into praise, love, and adoration, when we remember the countless blessings which the Father, through the Son (who was unto us a Son and a Brother) and the Holy Ghost, has given us, and will give us!

21. The Son of God does not disdain to call us brothers. Yes, He hath said, "Whosoever shall do the will of my Father who is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother."

22. When He lived on earth, "when he went

about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed by the devil," how much did he feel for poor mortals who "were distressed, and lying like sheep that have no shepherd!" How He grieved when He wept over Jerusalem, and announced to the unholy city its approaching sorrowful downfall! How pathetically doth He thus complain: "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered together thy children, as the hen doth gather her chickens under her wings, and thou wouldest not!" How lovingly doth He invite all those that labour and are burdened to come unto Him, and He will refresh them, that so they might find rest to their souls! What love did He not shew to His disciples at that most holy Supper, before He entered the garden of Gethsemane, before He commenced His conflict with death! "With desire I have desired," He saith, "to eat this pasch with you before I suffer."

Why did He feel this desire so deeply at that awful hour which was to be followed by countless sorrows? Because He desired to institute that most sacred banquet of love, in which He fed His disciples with His body, and gave them His blood to drink; and He it is that still daily comes down upon our altars, to offer Himself for us to His Father; and thus He feeds *us* with His body and blood!—an invention of love, which the heart of man could



never have conceived. How did He manifest His love, when He, who was Lord of heaven and earth, in order to give His disciples an example of humility, having washed their feet, delivered His parting words to them, both in the chamber and on His way to Gethsamene! What must they have felt when He, lifting up His eyes to heaven, said, "Father, the hour is come, glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son may glorify Thee. As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He may give eternal life to all whom Thou hast given Him. Now this is eternal life: That they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent. I have glorified Thee on earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do. And now glorify Thou Me, O Father, with Thyself, with the glory which I had, before the world was, with Thee: I have manifested Thy name to the men whom Thou hast given Me out of the world: Thine they were, and to Me Thou gavest them; and they have kept Thy word. Now they have known that all things which Thou hast given Me are from Thee; because the words which Thou gavest Me I have given to them, and they have received them, and have known in very deed that I came out from Thee; and they have believed that Thou didst send Me. I pray for them; I pray not for the world, but for them whom Thou hast given Me, because they are Thine. And all my things are Thine, and Thine are



Mine ; and I am glorified in them. And now I am not in the world, and these are in the world, and I come to Thee. Holy Father, keep them in Thy name whom Thou hast given Me ; that they may be one, as We also are. While I was with them, I kept them in Thy name. Those whom Thou gavest Me have I kept ; and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition, that the Scripture may be fulfilled. And now I come to Thee : and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy filled in themselves. I have given them Thy word, and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, as I also am not of the world. I pray not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldst keep them from evil. They are not of the world, as I also am not of the world. Sanctify them in truth : Thy word is truth. As Thou hast sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And for them do I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth. And not for them only do I pray, but for them also who, through their word, shall believe in Me : that they may all be one, as Thou, Father, in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us ; that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me. And the glory which Thou hast given Me, I have given to them : that they may be one, as We also are one. I in them, and Thou in Me ; that they may be made perfect in one ; and the world may know

that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me. Father, I will that where I am, they also whom Thou hast given Me may be with Me; that they may see My glory which Thou hast given Me, because Thou hast loved Me before the creation of the world. Just Father, the world hath not known Thee; but I have known Thee; and these have known that Thou hast sent Me. And I have made known Thy name to them, and I will make it known: that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me, may be in them, and I in them.” (St. John xvii.)

23. Thus did He speak to His disciples when on the point of fighting the great fight, and to those also amongst us who, through their word, shall believe in Him. In this prayer He committed, as a legacy of eternal salvation, His disciples into the hands “of His Father and our Father, of His God and our God.” And now He enters upon the death struggle, in which He divested Himself of the glory of His divinity, and deprived Himself of the sight of the Father (whom no finite spirit can see) through love for us; while this His Godhead so exalted the strength of His human nature, that it suffered not the afflictions of the soul, the pains of which cannot be conceived by any mortal. Before His view passed the crimes and abominations of our whole race, and He suffered, with merciful sympathy, the torments

even of the damned!<sup>1</sup> On Him the sentence weighed from which, freely obedient, He lovingly delivered those who resist not grace, who bring not upon themselves eternal death. All outward sufferings which He endured for us, terrible as they were—such as His scourging, crowning with thorns, and death on the cross—are only weak signs of what His Divine soul must have suffered; but our pride and sensuality, for which He atoned, required such tokens; because we are more capable of feeling sympathy for *them* than for the infinitely greater sufferings of His inmost soul, which forced from Him the sigh, “Abba, Father, all things are possible to Thee; if this chalice may not pass away, but I must drink it, Thy will be done.” The sentence which He freely and lovingly underwent for us was allowed to overcloud His soul, the life of our life, as well as the love of the Father. Therefore it was that He exclaimed on the cross, (from which just a little while before He had, as God, made this promise to the good thief: “This day thou shalt be with Me in paradise,”) “My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?”

24. With what gratitude and affection should not our heart *glow* for such love! Might not one suppose that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, occupied themselves exclusively with us? that they thought only of *OUR* salvation? And when each one of us considers the

<sup>1</sup> This is the opinion of some of the Fathers.—*Tr.*

ways of God over us, when we allow not ourselves to be carried away by the tumult and vanity of the world, or our hearts to fall away from grace, do we not then experience how, both inwardly and outwardly, God hath shewn Himself a God to us, as if *we* were the only objects of His protection and love?

25. It was not sufficient for the Son of God to assume our weak nature, to live for us, to enlighten us by His example, to manifest His Father to us by His holy doctrine, to suffer and to die for us on the cross. When about to give Himself up for us to death, He gave His disciples, and us also, a great and consoling promise.

26. "And I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Paraclete,<sup>1</sup> that he may abide with you for ever. The Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive,<sup>2</sup> because it seeth him not, nor knoweth him: but you shall know him, because he shall abide with

<sup>1</sup> The meaning of the original word is very extensive. It expresses a comforter, an adviser, a helper called in a counsellor. And with reason has the Greek word been retained in the Vulgate, because no Latin, and much less German word can so well express the meaning of it.

<sup>2</sup> "Whom the world cannot receive." No worldly-minded man, as long as he remains in his blindness, can receive the Holy Spirit, wherefore the Apostle saith: "But the sensual man perceiveth not these things, which are of the Spirit of God; for it is foolishness to him, and he cannot understand; because it is spiritually examined." (1 Cor. ii. 14.)



you, and shall be in you." (St. John xiv. 16-18.)

27. A few days after He had thus spoken, and after His resurrection, He came again unto them, and spoke, as before, "words of eternal life." He doth not leave us orphans; He dwelleth among us in our churches. "Behold the tabernacle of God with men!" We adore Him, then, in the most Holy Sacrament, in which, with inexpressible love, He gives Himself unto us. But He also cometh into our hearts, He and His heavenly Father, when we truly love Him. This He hath promised: "If any man love Me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and We will come to him, and will make our abode with him." (St. John xiv. 23.)

28. From the beginning, in powerful and manifold ways, the Holy Ghost hath promoted the salvation of mankind, in the Divine establishment of religion, and in the hearts of men. He enlightened "the holy men of God who spoke, inspired by the Holy Ghost." He gave us, in the Holy Scripture, His word, which "is a lamp to our feet, and a light to our path." By Him the Holy Virgin conceived the promised Saviour, the Son of God. He descended upon the twelve Apostles, and gave gifts to His Church; He now rules over the Church founded by the Son of God. The consecration with which He blessed the Apostles is, through Him, still continued to our



bishops ; whose ordination, following from imposition to imposition of hands, independent of the virtue or vices of individuals, is the guardian of holy doctrines, in union with the successor of St. Peter (that rock on which Christ promised His Church should be built, to whom He said, "Feed my lambs, feed my sheep, feed my flock"), according to the promise of the Son of God, that "the Paraclete, the Spirit of truth, should abide with them for ever." "He will teach you all things," He saith, "and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you. He will teach you all truth."

29. This promise was given not only to the Apostles, but also to the bishops their successors, who stood in need of this assistance much more than the Apostles ; and that such a promise *was* given is evident from what our Saviour said, that the Holy Ghost would remain with them *for ever*. And hence the Church of Jesus Christ had infallibility promised to the judgment of the majority of bishops, united with their visible head, in matters of faith and doctrine ; and these promises are not grounded on mere human opinions, but on the words which the Son of God Himself spoke to His Church.

30. But not alone in this universal Divine institution, established for our salvation, doth the Holy Ghost shew such great goodness to the children of God : this, and other blessings, would all be lost to us, did He not efficaciously

descend into the hearts of men. Wherefore the Apostle saith, that the Spirit of God dwelleth in believers, and that "if by the spirit we mortify the deeds of the flesh (that is, fleshly lusts), we shall live." For the Apostle continues, "Whosoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For you have not received the spirit of bondage again in fear; but you have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry, Abba<sup>1</sup> (Father)." (Romans viii. 13-15.) And, again, the same Apostle saith, "For the Spirit himself giveth testimony to our spirit, that we are the sons of God. And if sons, heirs also: heirs indeed of God, and joint heirs with Christ: yet so, if we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified with Him." (Ibid. 16, 17.)

31. Again, it is a gift of the Holy Spirit, not only to receive with resignation all the afflictions God may send us, but also to thank Him for them with our whole heart, because He lovingly sends them unto us for our greater good. Sufferings are necessary for our purification, as a proof of our virtue, and as a means of enabling us to turn our heart to God. Wherefore St. Paul saith, "And not only so; but we glory also in tribulations, knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience trial; and trial hope. And hope confoundeth not; because the charity of God is poured forth in

<sup>1</sup> An oriental name for father, used by loving children, the same as our Papa.

our hearts by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us." (Romans v. 3-5.)

As the Apostle, in the above quoted passage, considers suffering with the Son of God a condition of enjoying future glory with Him, so we need not wonder when special favoured souls *long* after sufferings, like holy Theresa, who was all on fire with Divine love, was wont to pray, "Either to suffer or to die!" and as another devout soul, who had not been visited for a long time with afflictions, thus complained to God, and asked "if He had forgotten her?"

32. "Know you not," saith St. Paul to the Corinthians, "that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" What ought we not to do, and what ought we not to suffer, during these fleet days of our probation? Do we not know that the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us? But even in this life, the lot of the true children of God is a blessed lot! And hence our Saviour invites the wearied and heavy-burdened to come unto Him, because He "will refresh" them; hence He exhorts them: "Take up my yoke upon you . . . and you shall find rest to your souls. For my yoke is sweet, and my burden light."

33. Even to the Jews, that still walked in the twilight of the Divine promises, and not "in the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ," Moses said: "This commandment

that I command thee this day is not above thee, nor far off from thee; nor is it in heaven, that thou shouldst say, Which of us can go up to heaven to bring it unto us, and we may hear, and fulfil it in work? Nor is it beyond the sea, that thou mayest excuse thyself, and say, Which of us can cross the sea, and bring it unto us, that we may hear, and do that which is commanded? But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart, that thou mayst do it. Consider that I have set before thee this day life and good, and on the other hand death and evil, that thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and walk in His ways, and keep His commandments, and ceremonies, and judgments, and thou mayest live." (Deut. xxx. 11-16.)

34. The beloved disciple saith: "This is the charity of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not heavy." And our Saviour Himself saith: "If you love Me, keep my commandments;" and again, "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me; and he that loveth Me, shall be loved of my Father; and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him." (St. John xiv. 15, 21.)

35. Is it possible that we, whose eternal salvation depends upon our observance of the bond of Divine love, can imagine this to be difficult? So difficult, though God hath wrought, and still daily works so many countless prodigies of love



for us? So difficult, while God, as if His infinite Holiness stood in need of our salvation, is always shewing His affection for us, like a spouse doth to his bride? His Spirit admonishes us, invites us, allures us to enter into ourselves, and animates His ministers whom He sends unto us, and who say with the Apostle: "For Christ, therefore, we are ambassadors; God, as it were, exhorting by us. For Christ, we beseech you to be reconciled to God. Him who knew no sin, for us He hath made sin, that we might be made the justice of God in Him." (2 Cor. v. 20, 21.)

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## CHAPTER VI.

1. "AND you shall be as Gods, knowing good and evil," said the serpent, or rather the enemy of God and man, through its mouth.

2. Thus, being led away by curiosity and sensuality, our first parents allowed themselves to be seduced by the vain fancy and hope that their nature would be exalted; that they themselves would become Gods!

3. Hence it is that the natural man hath no love for God; rather his heart rises up against Him. He becomes his own idol; he makes himself the centre-point of his imaginations, ideas, of all his thoughts and aspirations. He



is "godless," in the proper sense of this significant word of our language; for he gets rid of God—as far as he can.<sup>1</sup>

4. He has retained, indeed, a striving after happiness; but none, except God, can make him happy. "Thou hast created us for Thyself," saith the holy St. Augustine, "and our heart cannot rest until it rest in Thee."<sup>2</sup> "There is no peace to the wicked, saith the Lord."

5. He that erects an altar in his heart to his proud self flatters his self-love; no blessings rest upon him, and whence can pardon come unto Him?

6. But God hath not allowed Himself to be hidden from mankind. All nature proclaims Him; the nature of man himself, and the voice of his conscience proclaim Him.

7. Few indeed follow it; few correspond with the inward motions of the Holy Spirit. The generality of men are unwilling either to renounce their lusts, or to humble themselves before the great Invisible.

8. But still that aspiration after a something higher was not extinguished in them.

9. They worshipped false gods, and expected from chimeras things which they themselves could not give. From these gods they bor-

<sup>1</sup> "Er ist gottlos; denn er macht sich, insofern er das kann, *los von Gott*."

<sup>2</sup> "Quia fecisti nos ad Te, et inquietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in Te." (*Lib. Confess. cap. i.*)

rowed their passions ; the satisfying of which they accordingly knew how to unite with the public worship ; and any outbreak they endeavoured to subdue by laws, only so far as without laws no comfort of life could be secure among creatures, each one of whom made himself the centre-point of his exertions ; and if his pride relied upon any power, shining gift, and advantages of outward circumstances, then he ventured to make himself the centre also of his neighbours' exertions. Such desired not only to move round their own ashes, but also that *others* should form a circle around them. Hence ambition is the most destructive of all passions ; for it keeps, in a great measure, other passions alive with a powerful sway, since it desires to possess alone all things.

10. In such shameless monsters we see human corruption in its horrible nakedness.

11. Without the love of God there can be no true love. Let us learn it of Him who pours forth "the charity of God in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us ;" then will our whole being be penetrated through and through by love ; then shall we "love God with our whole heart, with our whole soul, with our whole mind, and with our whole strength." But God must be loved more than our neighbour, and more than ourself.

12. "Ourself" is our idol ; and however much its shrine may be concealed, the truth is,

that if we do not love God, we cannot truly love our neighbour.

13. And since the knowledge, although obscured, of good and evil dwells within us, we have a sense of the unrighteousness and baseness of our self-seeking self-love, and we blush at it. This shame disturbs us in our adoration of "self." By self-delusion we seek to escape from it.

14. When a man is sunk in the base passions of ambition, avarice, lust, drunkenness, and gambling, he no more feels the necessity of self-esteem. He gives the reins to his lawless passions, which are kept within bounds only by the fear of men, or by the excess which destroys all enjoyment of them.

15. Between such base slaves to their lusts and the purest souls among those who need self-esteem, there are many gradations; and hence, also, between the illusions with which they blind themselves. The base sensualist believes that he loves the woman he has seduced, but he loves only the gratification of his passion; this is the case likewise with the prostitute. And is that vain, conceited lady any thing better than these; she who, without passion, or even without impure desires, spreads her net like a spider, in order to receive the flattering homage of her captives? Or does that man love who dreams by day and by night of the object of his love; who fancies that he loves her before all things else, yea even above

himself, and lies in ambush for her as a hawk does for the dove? He may be *enamoured*, but he loves not.

16. There are many other finer delusions of self-love, both in love and in friendship.

17. The natural man, of fine perception, is capable of enjoying high pleasure in company with his beloved, or with his friend, whose lovely qualities delight him. He will perhaps believe that he loves the friend as himself, and the beloved one even more than himself. But if this love be estranged from God, then he becomes his own idol. He is enamoured, to his own satisfaction, with the good qualities of his beloved or of his friend; but, properly speaking, he does not love. He is enamoured of his imaginary love—with an image that appears beautiful in the glass of *his* imagination; he is enamoured with the imagination of himself! His case is the more dangerous, as it appears to him the more noble and excellent. He dreams eternal love. But death some day unveils his inmost soul: it breaks the glass, and love departs away.

18. "This is a hard saying, and who can hear it?" the Apostles once said to our Saviour; and by the Apostles He Himself once said: "All men take not this word, but they to whom it is given." Both sentences were spoken on different occasions, but they both apply here.

19. When the Son of God was instructing "a master in Israel" on the necessity of a new



birth, He said unto him, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit." According to the style of Scripture language, all that belongs to nature corrupted by sin, not only the body, but the powers and affections of the soul, are often called the "flesh;" while these same powers and affections, which are sanctified by regeneration and the Holy Ghost, are called the "spirit." Our Saviour, therefore, teaches us in these words, that every thing which is not sanctified by Divine love is of no value in the sight of God. And what is of no value before God, can be of no value to us.

20. Shall we, then, consider the sweetest feelings of love and friendship worthless? Yes, and no also!

21. Yes, when they have no relation to God, but only to our own idolised self. No, when they are referred to God. Every thing is vain, the end and object of which is not God.

22. When "the charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us," then, with its holy flames, it consumes the false love that relates to our idolised self. Let us hear our Lord: "If any man come to Me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple." (St. Luke xiv. 26.) How so? Doth the mouth of eternal love, the mouth of our Saviour, who always commended, and always



exercised love, whose whole teaching was one aspiration of love, whose entire sojourning on earth was one unbroken act of love, doth *He* recommend hatred to our friends and nearest relations as the condition of being His disciple?

23. Far from it! He desires that we should love our neighbour as ourselves. He Himself sanctified the love due to parents by that filial love and obedience He shewed to His Mother and St. Joseph, and by that tender care with which, when hanging on the cross, He recommended His holy Mother to the disciple whom He loved, giving her as a mother to him, and him to her as a son: "When Jesus, therefore, had seen His Mother, and the disciple standing, whom He loved, He saith to His Mother, Woman, behold thy Son. After that He saith to the disciple, Behold thy mother. And from that hour the disciple took her to his own." (St. John xix. 26, 27.) And the same beloved disciple saith of Him: "Having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them unto the end." How often, how emphatically, how forcibly doth He command His disciples to love each other in His parting address to them! The expression "to hate" often signifies in the Hellenistic dialect—that is, in the idiom of the Israelites when they write in Greek—"to love less." Thus our Saviour saith: "No man can serve two masters. For either he will hate the one, and love the other; or he will sustain the one, and despise the other. You cannot serve

God and mammon.”<sup>1</sup> (St. Matthew vi. 24.) In these words we see our Saviour only reminds us of His command, that we must love God above all things.

24. Whomsoever He calleth to be His disciple, and indeed He calleth all of us, he must leave all things to follow Him. This means, he must renounce his own natural selfish inclinations that in any way relate to his loved “self,” though it may be veiled under the most beautiful tapestry. His proud nature, hitherto so carefully attended to, shudders at this; partly because it is unwilling to acknowledge this selfish covering, and partly because it plainly appears that the sweetest conceptions of its own beauty must be renounced. But he who, putting his confidence in God, and in the power of His grace, forces timid nature to take the leap, as it were, just as he would act with a stubborn horse, will be superabundantly rewarded—even here below—even in those natural but now purified relations in which he moves.

25. “Behold, I make all things new,” were words which the beloved disciple heard coming from the throne. Let us hear our Saviour: “And Peter began to say unto Him, Behold, we have left all things, and have followed Thee. Jesus, answering, said: Amen I say

<sup>1</sup> In the Septuagint we find this expression: “Because the Lord heard that I was despised (hated), He hath given this also to me.” (Gen. xxix. 33.) Jacob loved Lia, but he loved Rachel more.

unto you, there is no man who hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or children, or lands, for My sake and for the Gospel, who shall not receive a hundred times as much, now in this time; houses and brethren, and sisters and mothers, and children and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come life everlasting." (St. Mark x. 28-30.)

26. It is evident, that the expression "a hundredfold" must not be taken literally, but collectively. The sacrifice of our false, because selfish love, is already here below abundantly rewarded by the possession of that *pure* love, with which the new-born man loves his parents, his sister, his wife, and his children; with a tender and pure love, because with a love which is referred to God, he now loves them. And provided they also love the Almighty, this relation gives them an immortality, which a merely natural love cannot possess; for "that which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the spirit is spirit." The Almighty promises, also, for whatever is offered to Him (although He already abundantly repaid the offering of a mere natural love by a noble return,) great blessings, viz. that peace of soul, and that peace with God, which infinitely surpass all the goods of life, and ennoble their enjoyment; and should these worldly comforts be snatched away from us, the other blessings would repay us more than a hundredfold.

27. Such souls who, inflamed by the love of God, have arrived at this pure love for their children, parents, or friends, wish, with a holy zeal for the Divine love, that their beloved might adhere more to God than to them, yea, would love them only through God and in God.

28. Such souls are not understood by the world. They appear as enthusiasts in regard to God, and, at the same time, "cold" to men, and dead to love and to friendship, in which the world perceives only the glitter of those perishable ice-flowers, that are formed from the frozen vapour of a winter's night; while it regards not those never-fading flowers which grow in the garden of the inmost soul devoted to God; and, blooming under the rays of His love, they exhale a sweet odour, pleasing unto Him, and animate all else around them.

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## CHAPTER VII.

1. "LITTLE children, keep yourselves from idols." Thus the disciple whom Jesus loved ends his first Epistle; and this conclusion appears to me so much the more important, as it has, I acknowledge, so many times surprised me.

2. To the faithful to whom this letter was addressed, the holy Evangelist gives this great



testimony: "I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake. I write unto you, fathers, because you have known Him who is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because you have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, babes, because you have known the Father. I write unto you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and you have overcome the wicked one." (1 St. John ii. 12-15.)

3. Is it said that these Christians stood in need of being cautioned against idols?

4. But almost all Christians here below, as long as they carry about with them the treasure of God's grace "in earthen vessels," require to be cautioned against that more subtle idolatry, which pays homage to an idol neither with prayer nor with fat bullocks, but to the objects of an inordinate inclination in the recesses of the heart, objects that withdraw us from the deepest love. Hence St. John thus continues: "Love not the world, nor the things which are in the world. If any man love the world, the charity of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, is the concupiscence of the flesh, and the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life, which is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the concupiscence thereof; but he that doeth the will of God, abideth for ever."

5. And as a false love for creatures, which



cometh not forth from the eternal spring, maketh our idolised "self" the last and highest object of its homage; so also doth ambition, which seeks not the Divine will, but courts the vain applause of men.

6. A deserved good name among men is indeed to be prized, both on its own account, and as an encouragement grounded in the order of things—that is, in the Divine arrangement; and because to him who is adorned therewith, it giveth greater opportunities of labouring both for the glory of God (to whom alone honour belongs) and for the welfare of men.

7. But "our honour" must not, and cannot, be the exciting motive of our actions. Him that acts nobly and justly, honour surrounds as a shade; but not for the sake of the shade must we act. He that goeth along against the sun, seeth not his shadow which followeth behind him; and so, also, he that striveth to walk before God with a pure heart, will place no great value either upon the pleasure or displeasure of men; for these, by a false judgment, often prize, and only look to the *outward* acts; but the inward soul and intention, according to which alone praise or censure should be given, God only can judge.

8. He that acts only to please men, even should his actions be in themselves praiseworthy, can have no merit in the sight of God; yea, our endeavour to please the world, without our striving to do His will and pleasure, is a

grievous sin of infidelity against Him ; and as this soon becomes a custom, so we shall also easily be seduced to commit actions which are bad in themselves, in order that we may gain the applause of men ; and this applause often doth crown with a perishable wreath, not only *false* virtues, but even vice itself ; the crown, like the laurel of Cæsar, adorns a cold head.

9. The history of all times, and of all nations, shews us individuals who, the more they were honoured by their blind and deluded contemporaries and by posterity, the more unrighteous were the successful attempts, whether of upstarts endeavouring to raise themselves to a throne, and to oppress the people, or of conquerors that laid waste the country, and sacrificed many thousands to their ambition.

10. Such men, however, sought to *justify* their actions. They could not understand that they acted only through ambition. They boasted of having re-modelled old rotten institutions, or of having secured their fatherland against the attacks of its enemies, and of having enlarged its boundaries by conquests.

11. Later times, in the time of Christianity, a period in which the holy doctrines of religion formed saints (as she always, and in all places, will do), whose spotless lives were evident to men, and shone before them, but provoked their animosity, and the opposition of the world—the spirit of which, in every contest, is an enemy to the Gospel ; such times raised, for

the vain honour and applause of men, like unto the bloody altar of Moloch, and the impure one of Chamos,<sup>1</sup> which Solomon, being corrupted by strange women, had erected on a hill over against Jerusalem; such times raised that altar which still lifts itself up against the altar of the Eternal.

12. The honour, that is, the applause of men, is the idol which the children of the world, with a base contempt of God, alone adore.

13. The people that blush not to acknowledge that they are vain and selfish beyond all others, have for a century most devoutly worshipped this idol. Kings, that call themselves "most Christian," are not ashamed to make it known, in public proclamations, that, for the sake of glory, they would declare war against a foreign nation; and, participating in this glory, the vain nation idolised itself. Thus, these sovereigns did not even blush to set an example of adultery to their subjects; and their amours were celebrated by the giddy people, as acts deserving of love and praise!

14. Such is the spirit of the world, that enemy of the Gospel. The religion of Jesus Christ breathes chastity, love, humility; but the spirit of the world breathes lust, pride, and hatred. It is not sufficient for worldlings to allow themselves to be carried away by impure impulses, arrogance, and anger; their law-giver, the world, has its tables, which are set

<sup>1</sup> The idol of Moab (see 3 Kings xi. 7).

in opposition to the Ten Commandments of God.

15. It teaches every one to make himself an idol; and it serves as many idols as it has desires. It prattles about virtue: but the virtues which it prizes are false virtues; and the honour which is shewn them is the worship of idols. Oftentimes we hear the world speak of God, whom it rather names "the good Heaven," and contents itself with receiving blessings from Him. Very striking is what St. Augustine says of worldings:—"They use God, and enjoy the world."<sup>1</sup> Seldom do they call upon His name; they blaspheme it more frequently than they call upon it. Even the day that is consecrated to His service is to them a day of noisy diversions, idle talk, downright idleness, luxurious feasting, or riotous revelling.

16. The breath of the world makes the heart cold; and hence it weakens the holy bond of families instituted by our heavenly Father. But where covetousness or ambition rules the father, where the mother desires to shine in the circles of vanity, there child-like love is not to be found; there the children are not gently led in the leading-strings of love and reverence; there they are not conducted to that great Friend of children, who still calls out to parents: "Suffer the little children, and forbid them not to come to Me; for the kingdom of heaven is for such." (St. Matthew,

<sup>1</sup> "Utuntur Deo et fruuntur mundo."



xix. 14.) Still He stretches out His hands unto them, as of old, when, “embracing them, and laying His hands upon them, He blessed them.” But worldlings bring them not unto Him. Educated without true love, they are cold and estranged from religion: whether it be that her holy doctrines are impressed only on their memory, or that the example of the parents nullifies all instructions. What respect, what love, can parents expect from such children?

17. Divine and human laws forbid murder under pain of death; but the world admires the ambition of a lawless warrior, whom fortune, one of its most esteemed idols, favours.<sup>1</sup> And, as if in mockery of Divine as well as human laws, the world even excites individuals to murder, when the regulations of a false honour command revenge. God saith: “Thou shalt not kill.” The justice and necessity of this command have been acknowledged at all times and in all places. Every where self-revenge was, and is, forbidden. The law of love forbids every Christian to take revenge: and what mind does not feel that revenge—a

<sup>1</sup> The world often judges an undertaking according to its success or failure, not by the eternal rules of justice. Juvenal says, “We make thee, O Fortune, a goddess, and to heaven we raise thee.”

“Nos te,  
Nos facimus Fortuna deam, cœloque locamus.”

*Sat. x.*



base, ignoble, selfish passion, is unworthy of a good man, and its commission a crime? But the world enjoins revenge for the loss of a temporary false honour, that rises far beyond the conviction of a good conscience, and lifts itself up against the will of the Almighty. For the loss of this honour the world commands both the offended and the offender to place themselves on the brink of the fearful abyss of eternity, and the one to hurl the other down it! What rebellion against God can be more base and wicked? What contempt of His holy law, and even of Himself, can be more insane and detestable? Nay, the laws of the world do not allow the injured party to forgive the offender; or should an opportunity occur for reconciliation, they do not release him from the supposed obligation to take revenge, even when the passion has evaporated, the heat of which might, perhaps, in some degree, lessen the guilt of the crime. It is a sorrowful, though a very important consideration, that not only those who actually commit this crime, but all those who, with cold blood, favour the murderous law, and declare themselves ready to observe it, when they themselves happen to be so situated that a duel is considered indispensable; such being in the pay of the world, must endeavour to get some notoriety; and so they swear fidelity to their colours, and shew themselves determined, in spite of the danger of eternal damnation, to prefer the things of

the world to those of heaven, and even to God Himself! And what shall we say of "the tender sex," at least tenderly-formed ladies, who, though not themselves subject to this law of false honour, so often give to this base passion, by a kind of pleasure they take in it, an elevation which excites a thirst for blood? and this is frequently the case when a woman's vanity has occasioned the quarrel, and she boasts of the daring of the deluded individual who, for her sake, exposes his soul to danger!

18. A reverence or contempt for the marriage tie determines the morality of a nation. By the law of the Gospel marriage is indissoluble. Among no nations of antiquity was marriage so much honoured, and the dignity of the woman so deeply recognised, as among the Jews. God Himself compares the relation in which He stood with this people with that of marriage. In the new law the Church is called the wife,—the bride of the Son of God. He gave to the marriage state its highest dignity and sacredness.

The laws of the world forbid adultery, and threaten it with punishment. But the lawless spirit of the world weakens the dignity of marriage in manifold ways. And this happens in Christian lands, in opposition to the express command of Jesus Christ, where even the laws so favour divorces, that man and wife, for most trifling excuses, and often through mere caprice,

separate from each other ; and both parties then contract new engagements, which the Gospel cannot approve. We have seen examples of married people, who, as if in mockery of the Gospel, provided in the marriage-contract for the chance of a divorce. The immorality of the man is scarcely censured by the world ; and the infidelity of the wife, when she does not violate outward decency, is excused, as an act of frailty, with an interest exceeding sympathy !

Every base passion, every outbreak of lust, is palliated with a fine show of words. The theatre is the school of worldly inclinations ; and therefore do mothers take their daughters to the play, where every virtuous sentiment is banished, where every desire of a sensual heart is flattered. Nay our *houses* even are converted into theatres, in which the sons and daughters of families, in presence of their parents, appear as male and female actors ; thus paying homage to the spirit of the world and its pleasures. And here also, by the early destruction of that youthful modesty, which, in young persons, often affords a security for the future worth of the man ; and by the extinction of that sweet bashfulness, which is the greatest ornament of a maiden, and which makes the parents weep tears of joy ; no sooner are young minds defiled with the poisonous applause of company, and deeply initiated in the hollow wisdom of the world, than, losing their innocence and

religion, they are torn away from God their Saviour.

19. The security of property is considered most important by worldlings, whose claims and desires are bound by time. Mammon hath a golden throne on their Olympus. Therefore it is that the observance of the command, "Thou shalt not steal," is kept with scrupulous strictness; with a strictness, too, that often pays little regard to the excusable circumstances in the condition of some unfortunate individual, whose wife and children are pining away in undeserved poverty. This command alone appears to the world to possess a kind of sanctity; but it pardons the conqueror's plunder and devastation of whole countries. "He is lucky," men say; and thus they recognise in him as little of the robber as of the murderer. The plunder of churches, and the confiscation of establishments founded by our pious and charitable forefathers, are, and will be, approved. The wealth of institutions for the instruction of youth, for the care of the poor, the old, and the infirm, is squandered away; and the public authorities confirm the robbery of property, "as an unfortunate sacrifice" to a revolution, the natural aim and intention of which is, to turn every thing "topsy turvey;" and such *must* be the end, since it strives to annihilate every thing holy, and to satisfy the shameless demands of the most audacious selfishness.

20. Where justice exists not, there is neither



love nor truth. False witnesses are punished by earthly tribunals; and the Divine command says, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour." But when was false testimony more given against virtue, and in favour of vice, than at the present time, when good is counted bad, and bad good? "Wo to you that call evil good," saith the holy prophet, "and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter." (Isaias v. 20.)

21. "Thou shalt not covet," saith the command of God. No other lawgiver could speak in this manner, but He who searcheth our inmost soul. A mortal lawgiver can check only the outbreak of passion. But what shall we say of those bad desires, the effects of which are so manifest in the lives of worldlings?

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## CHAPTER VIII.

1. WE must choose between the world and God. When I say "the world," I mean not only the din of its riotous joys, not merely its outward manifold relations by which we are so easily entangled, but I mean its mode of thought, from which a Christian can keep himself pure, though, by his state of life, he is brought up amid its turmoils, and takes a part in its re-



lations and events. The poison of the world, however, even a monk in his cell, or a hermit in his rocky cavern, can carry with him.

2. But many choose the service of the world ; or rather, without thinking of God and eternity, they allow themselves to be hurried away by its pleasures. And great is the number of those, also, on whom the fearful truths and conceptions of eternity make an impression ; but, at the same time, adhering to the world in their heart, they wish to serve both God and the world. To the one they are willing to dedicate the period of youth ; to the other their old age !

3. Such wicked madness requires only a few words of animadversion.

4. We are mortal ; we cannot count upon a day.

5. Every delay of repentance makes the duty more difficult ; and this difficulty increases every day, with a continually increasing progression. The laziness of an individual would appear to us foolish, though still one can conceive it, who, knowing that he would have to reach a certain appointed place before midnight, at the risk of losing his wealth, his honour, or his life, should make a resolution to delay on the road, hoping he would afterwards, by redoubled speed, arrive at the place appointed ; and yet not remembering some accident might happen to prevent him, or night might overtake him. But how much more foolish, or

rather how mad would be his conduct, had he resolved not only to stop very late on the road, though the journey was so important, but on the morning of the same day should mount an unmanageable horse, and, turning it in an opposite direction, should let it go where it liked!

6. Now this is just the way *he* acts who defers his conversion. It does not depend upon himself to *remain* in his present state. His case grows worse and worse; partly because his delay of repentance is a great crime, partly because, in turning away from God, he is always sinking deeper into sin; and lastly, because he is hurried away more and more by his unbridled passions. Does he flatter himself that his passions will leave him with his youth, the gratification of which contaminates him more and more? But, granting that they will leave him, which is seldom the case, how will he renounce his ambition, his worldly ideas, his injustice, his false shame, his covetousness in old age, and many other vices deeply rooted in his nature? how can he do this with a will already corrupted by its infidelity to God? Will he, with the powers of his mind already sinking, be able or willing to take fresh courage to enter upon a new course? Will he be able or willing to give to God that heart which has long been hardened by its obstinacy? Can he, dare he hope that God, without whose assistance we can do nothing, will grant him that

assistance which was so often offered, and yet so often despised ?

Has God entered into an agreement with us, that we should spend our life in rebellion against Him—a life prolonged for our sake ; and that, when standing on the brink of eternity, we should return unto Him by a miracle of grace ? Far be it from any Christian to deny the possibility of such a miracle of grace, since the return of any sinner to God is a prodigy of grace ; but can such an one dare to hope, after having so long resisted the Holy Spirit, that the same Holy Spirit will cleanse him, and pour His grace and His love into a heart dead to God ?

7. But there is also another way in which men are divided between God and the world ; a way which is adopted by many, either on account of a certain outward decency, or from a fear of the Divine judgments. Such people do not wish positively to renounce religion on account of the future, nor are they willing entirely to renounce the world on account of the present. They are not, indeed, so rash and shameless as those who dare to give to the world the years of their strength and maturity, and intend to devote to God the days of an uncertain, decrepid old age ; but yet, being too sensual and confused, and, above all, too cold to comprehend the spirit of the Gospel, which appears austere to them, because they have not seen the love of the Father in the countenance of the Son, they vibrate backwards and for-

wards, till at length they form some "worldly-wise" scheme, by which they hope to adjust and smoothen the difficulties that rise against them on both sides, by satisfying the demands of the world and those of religion at the same time, in order that, while enjoying the delights of the world, they may not lose the joys of eternity! The love of the world at all times prevails in such a plan. It proceeds from an impure mind, and differs only according to the degree of this impurity, which is to be judged more by the clearness or obscurity of the conscious resolve to remain divided between the world and God, than by the varied contrivances of the act itself.

8. When our Saviour saith, "Render therefore to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's," He does not wish that we should belong partly to Cæsar and partly to God; but that, for His sake, to whom we entirely belong, we should give to human government what He, from whom all power cometh, hath commanded us to give.<sup>1</sup> All that we do should be done for God's sake; but we cannot, for God's sake, be conformed to this world; nor to its customs, nor to its mode of thought, can we accommodate ourselves; for the world is the enemy of God, and we have already seen how diametrically opposite its laws are to the laws of God.

<sup>1</sup> "Let every soul be subject to higher powers," &c. (Romans xiii. 1.)



9. To the "worldly-wise" Christian we may say, what Elias of old said to the Israelites, "How long do you halt between two sides? If the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him." (3 Kings xviii. 21.)

10. But there are other worldly-wise Christians, more plausible in their manner of life than those that entirely give themselves up to the pleasures of the world; but by this very plausibility they are the more exposed to danger. Finding themselves in some easy, comfortable state, which removes them from the gross outbreak of any passion, and favours the exercise of pleasing virtues, it is a very easy thing for such worldly-minded Christians to appear models of virtue. Adopting more and more the ideas of the world, the applause and conversation of which flatter their vanity and natural propensities, they value themselves according to the judgment of the world; and thus more and more are they removed from God, fancying that it is sufficient to serve Him, "who searcheth the reins," with a heart cold and impenitent, because it is a heart which appears to itself upright, but which knows but little of its inborn sinfulness and infidelity. Every vain delusion is allowed to rock them into a death-slumber; and so they remain void of love, because they want humility; and hence they are also void of a living faith, and Divine hope in the mercies of Jesus Christ.



11. These men give no public scandal, like those who deliver themselves up without shame to their desires; but a concealed scandal many more souls give, who, being blinded by their false virtues, go after them self-pleased with such an easy way. Thus the rock that projects out of the waters is not so dangerous to sailors as the concealed sand-bank.

12. May such Christians that delight themselves with such a hollow righteousness, weigh well the earnest words which the beloved disciple St. John addressed, by the command and in the name of Jesus, to a certain bishop who boasted of this righteousness: "And to the angel of the Church of Laodicea write: These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, who is the beginning of the creation of God: I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot. I would that thou wert cold or hot. But because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will begin to vomit thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and made wealthy, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. I counsel thee to buy fine gold, fire-tried, that thou mayest be made rich; and mayest be clothed in white garments, and that the shame of thy nakedness may not appear; and anoint thy eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see. Such as I love, I rebuke and chastise. Be zealous, therefore, and do penance.

Behold, I stand at the gate and knock. If any man shall hear my voice, and open to Me the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me. To him that shall overcome, I will give to sit with Me in my throne; as I also have overcome, and am set down with my Father in His throne." (Apocalypse iii. 14-21.)

13. Our imaginary abundance of human virtue, and that righteousness, which is of no value before God, we must give up, in order that God may bestow upon us that righteousness which His Son purchased for us on the cross; that He may give unto us "gold, fire-tried;" that is, virtue, which lovingly flies to Him; and "the white garment" of renewed innocence; and the "eye-salve" of an humble self-knowledge.

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## CHAPTER IX.

1. THE virtue of humility is so much the peculiar property of the true religion, that most of the nations of antiquity, even the Greeks and Romans, had no names for it in their language; only one people, among whom the sacred traditions remained longer and purer than any others, knew how to name it.

2. The great and intelligent Socrates, who was faithful to that true light "which en-

lighteneth every man that cometh into the world," knew, practised, and taught humility, even though his language possessed no word to express it. Among various expressions of this real sage, I will quote only one: "Virtue dwelleth not in us naturally," he saith, "nor is it to be learned; but it is a gift of the Divine bounty."<sup>1</sup> What a deep and clear insight into the weakness, into the wants of our nature, and into the Source from which alone we must derive assistance! How remarkable is this humble acknowledgment in the mouth of the wisest of the Grecian sages! How different from the words of those arrogant, worldly-wise ones, who turn their backs upon the light which he sought, and which, in part, was manifested to him!

3. In some of the sayings of the great Chinese philosopher, Confucius, who flourished some generations before Socrates, we also find the idea of humility: many passages from more ancient philosophers of his nation are also quoted by him.

4. The virtue of humility is of heavenly origin. It comes from the pure region of the world of spirits: from truth and from love.

5. Without humility there can be no true virtue.

6. Humility dwelleth in pure spirits; for they know well that of themselves they are nothing, but all their power and virtue come

<sup>1</sup> Plato in Menon.

from God, whom they love above all things, and from whose knowledge and love they draw all their sanctity, as from an eternal spring.

7. The sons of light were darkened when humility left them; "they stood not in the truth," and so from holy angels they were changed into wicked demons.

8. The humility which reconciles man with God, consists in the knowledge of his natural corruption, and likewise of his wickedness, increased by the sins he has committed; in the conviction of his inability of escaping from his misery by his own power; and in a faithful confidence, grounded on the Divine promises, that God, through the merits of Jesus Christ, will again restore to him his lost adoption, provided he believe in Him with a living faith; love Him with his whole heart, and, through this love for Him, walk in the way of His commandments by the grace of the Holy Spirit which is given unto him.

9. The humility of the Christian, however, has its sorrows as well as its joys.

10. How deeply must the conviction of our sinfulness afflict *him* who has acquired this self-knowledge? How must the sufferings and death of the Son of God, He who endured all these things for him; who did penance for him; who even died on a cross for his sake; how must they not fill him with the deepest sorrow—and this the more so, as through his own impenitence he often, and for a long time, frus-



trated the fruit of His sufferings and death? And what a source of sorrow must not his sinfulness be, which still adheres to him, and of which he is daily reminded by his often-repeated acts of infidelity?

11. But these sufferings are sufferings of love. The sorrow of a true repentance is succeeded by a sweet feeling of gratitude for such mercy. To him who glows with the gratitude of love, his soul is dear; and the souls of his neighbours also are so much the dearer, since not only did eternal love give them a being, but He received them into His mercy when they were already lost.

12. The love of the children of God for their Saviour cannot exist without suffering, so long as they walk here below "by faith, and not by sight." But what are all the joys of this world; what *could* they be, if even they were neither dangerous nor transitory, in comparison with the hopeful longing of that soul, which exclaims with the royal prophet: "But it is good for me to adhere to my God, to put my hope in the Lord God?"

13. The feeling conviction of our natural sinfulness and weakness keeps the children of God humble and little in their own eyes; but they are great in the eyes of God. And this conviction grieves them not, because they rely upon God's assistance, who, seeing their upright will, "keeps them from evil." True children of God have a child-like mind; and the



child whom a father carries over a rapid torrent feels not any fear on account of his weakness, when he puts his arm round the neck of his father.

14. Our Saviour saith : “ Blessed are the poor in spirit ; for theirs is the kingdom.”

15. Such child-like souls possess simplicity of heart ; they walk in righteousness before Him, because they feel themselves happy and blessed in being guided by Him ; they deceive not themselves, and wish not to deceive others ; they appear not great in their own eyes, and desire not to appear so before others ; they make no pretensions ; and in their intercourse with other men they are mild and gentle, but independent of them and the whole world in what belongs to God. The freedom of worldlings is slavery ; for “ whosoever committeth sin, is the servant of sin ;” and again, “ if the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.” This glorious liberty of the children of God, gives them an heroic courage both in life and in death ; for with a joyful confidence they exclaim : “ Whether we live, we live unto the Lord ; or whether we die, we die unto the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord’s.” (Romans xiv. 8.)

16. The true Christian excuseth not, nor doth he ennoble with fine names base desires, from the dominion of which he was made free by the Divine grace ; and as to those inordinate desires which still rise within him, by the strength

of God's grace he endeavours to subdue them also ; and this victory he is attaining more and more. Hence he does not speak with a noble pride, nor with a proud self-feeling ; but as the Apostle saith : " If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern my infirmity, that the power of Christ may dwell in me ;" and He said unto him ; " My grace is sufficient for thee ; for power is made perfect in infirmity." (Cor. xi. 30 ; also xii. 9.)

17. An experienced guide in the way of salvation thus beautifully speaks : " The humble man God protects and delivers ; the humble man He loves and comforts ; to the humble He inclines Himself ; to the humble He gives grace ; and, after he has been depressed, raises him to glory. To the humble He reveals His secrets, and, sweetly draws and invites him to Himself. The humble man, having received reproach, maintains himself well enough in peace ; because he is fixed in God, and not in the world." <sup>1</sup>

18. The world has no inclination for this virtue, and hence, generally speaking, for no genuine virtue at all ; for without humility no virtue is meritorious before God. He only that ascribes every good to God, in what he thinks, speaks, and does, speaks and acts in a manner pleasing to God. But he that courts the applause of men in what he thinks, speaks, and does, he " hath already received his reward."

<sup>1</sup> Thomas à Kempis, book ii. 2.

19. So also he that walks righteously, not for God's sake, but for his own flattering self-feeling, hath already received a temporary reward.

20. "I am the Almighty God: walk before Me, and be perfect," saith the Lord unto Abraham.

21. It is only by this offering of our heart to God that we can please Him: only by thus walking before Him during life, can we securely pass unto Him over the dark stream of death.

22. With this holy feeling did David sing: "For though I should walk in the midst of the shadow of death I will fear no evils, for Thou art with me." And in another place: "For Thou lightest my lamp, O Lord; O my God, enlighten my darkness."

23. True humility dwelleth only with true simplicity. The lowly and meek are free from all frivolous thoughts and views, because they look only to God, and desire to please Him alone.

24. All men endowed with a will and understanding have a certain object in their actions. This regulates the merit of the action. The Son of God compares it with the eye: "The light of thy body is thy eye," He saith; "if thy eye be single, thy whole body shall be light-some. But if thy eye be evil, thy whole body shall be darksome. If, then, the light that is in thee be darkness, the darkness itself, how

great shall it be!" And, in another place, our Saviour continues: "Take heed, therefore, that the light which is in thee be not darkness. If, then, thy whole body be lightsome, having no part of darkness, the whole shall be lightsome, and, as a bright lamp, shall enlighten thee." (St. Luke xi. 35, 36.)

25. Here our Saviour speaketh, if I am not deceived, of those actions which are good in themselves, the merit or demerit of which God judges by the intention. The will to do an act good in itself He calls "the light." But should this will not be influenced by the love of God, but by a vain desire of pleasing men, or by proud efforts after self-pleasure in our virtue, then this will is not merely light, it is darkness.

26. On this account, therefore, does the Son of God so much enjoin simplicity and a child-like mind. On this account it is that He loved children so tenderly. On this account it was that He rebuked His disciples when they harshly treated those mothers who brought their children unto Him: "Suffer the little children to come unto Me," He saith, "and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God. Amen I say to you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall not enter into it. And embracing them, and laying His hands upon them, He blessed them." (St. Mark x. 14-16.)

27. Let us conclude this chapter with the



example of humility which the Mother of our Saviour hath given us. When the Archangel had announced to her the highest dignity which could be given to a mortal being, she was not elated thereat; she looked not to herself, but only to the fulfilment of God's will; and she said, in the sweetest words of the most exalted and lowliest simplicity: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to Thy word." (St. Luke i. 38.)

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## CHAPTER X.

1. HERE some one may perhaps ask, how this sweet and sacred relation of love between God and man (which the Holy Spirit itself in so many passages of Scripture compares to the relation a father holds to his children, a married man to his wife, and a bridegroom to his bride)—how this Divine relationship can agree with the fear of God, of which the same holy Scripture speaketh so often and so emphatically, and commandeth also so strictly; that the expression, "the fear of God," frequently implies the possession of every virtue?

2. Many there are who seem to incline to the opinion that the old Covenant was grounded almost entirely in *fear*, but that the new Law is established almost on *love alone*. Although these opinions seem very plausible, yet it ap-

pears to me, that neither on the one side nor on the other should they be pressed too far, as is often the case.

3. On this point St. Augustine appears to express himself as clearly as he does beautifully: "Manifold and solid are the proofs that in the Old Testament 'fear' prevailed most; whilst in the New 'love' predominates: although in the Old the New lay concealed, and in the New the Old."<sup>1</sup>

4. Many often confound the restraint which was placed on the Jews by the code of rites and ceremonies, with the essence of the old Law, the Ten Commandments, which embrace the doctrine of God and His promises. This restraint was placed upon them as a punishment for their apostacy, when they worshipped the golden calf; that is, by punishment I mean a wholesome discipline; and the object of this was partly, that, by means of these ceremonies, the Israelites might be the further separated from the Gentiles; and partly, in order to bind the levity of their wicked inconstancy by tiresome observances, as well as to bend their stiff necks under a yoke, which would not have been imposed on them had they remained obedient to God. Thus the Almighty Himself speaks by the mouth of His prophet: "There-

<sup>1</sup> "Multum et solide significatur, ad Vetus Testamentum timorem potius pertinere, sicut ad Novum dilectionem; quamquam et in Vetere Novum lateat, et in Novo Vetus pateat."

fore I brought them out from the land of Egypt, and brought them into the desert. And I gave them My statutes, and I shewed them My judgments (that is, the Ten Commandments); which, if a man do, he shall live in them. Moreover, I gave them also My Sabbaths, to be a sign between Me and them; and that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them. But the house of Israel provoked Me in the desert; they walked not in My statutes, and they cast away My judgments, which, if a man do, he shall live in them; and they grievously violated My Sabbaths. Because they had not done My judgments, and had cast off My statutes, and had violated My Sabbaths, and their eyes had been after the idols of their fathers; therefore I also gave them statutes that were not good, and judgments in which they shall not live." (Ezechiel xx. 10, &c.)

5. What is said of these statutes of outward rites and ceremonies, that "they were not good," means that, *in themselves*, they were without value; that of themselves they were insufficient for sanctification, although the observance of them was pleasing unto God, when it proceeded from obedience and love for Him.

6. Such statutes were imposed neither upon our first parents, nor upon the children of God in the primitive world, nor upon Noe or his posterity. In walking before God, they not only feared God, but they were devout and loving. "Can I hide from Abraham what I

am about to do?" said God, to the father of the faithful; and with what bold, child-like confidence did he, who was "but dust and ashes," intercede before the Judge of the whole world for the wicked city of Sodom! How lovingly did the Almighty listen to him! and thus also with Isaac, and with Jacob, and Moses, "the Lord spoke face to face, as a man is wont to speak to his friend." But even to the Jews, burdened with these observances, God proved Himself to be a God of wonderful patience. He continued to manifest Himself to them; He shewed them their base and oft-repeated infidelities; and He complained of them by the mouth of His holy prophets, as tenderly as a father doth over his profligate son; as lovingly as a spouse over the coldness of his beloved.

7. How can any one, therefore, object to the old Covenant, that it inculcated only fear, since the Ten Commandments are grounded on love to God and our neighbour; since the whole worship of God referred to the sacred promises of Divine mercy, which were fulfilled by Jesus Christ?

8. By Him, by the Son of God and of man, the Divine love was manifested far more gloriously than in the shade of the old law; but this shade was no night-shade, it was a shade that gave evidence of the sun, for over the twilight hovered abundant blessings.

9. In the most sublime book of the holy



Scriptures it is said : " And God said to man, Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom : and to depart from evil is understanding." (Job xxviii. 28.) And St. Augustine writes : " Fear smoothens for love the path to righteousness, which is perfect wisdom." We forbid our children to do what is bad ; but we must first often excite fear in them, before we can induce them to do good, to be virtuous.<sup>1</sup>

10. Wherefore a wise king saith : " The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." (Proverbs i. 7.) And as the first rudiments of a science is not the science itself, so *mere* fear does not insure salvation to us : this is the property of love. And as, after we have learnt a science, we forget not the rudiments thereof, so he that loveth Christ, should he even no longer stand in need of the fear of punishment, still he cannot renounce the fear of God ; or rather this fear becomes more and more filial, more and more active in him, the longer he is defiled with sin ; that is, the longer he dwelleth here below.

11. Not of the fear of offending God in any way ; not concerning the fear of any clouds which might in some manner obscure the clear sunshine of His ever-present love ; but of that

<sup>1</sup> Horace, who, among many rash and wanton expressions, often lays down excellent maxims, says :

" Virtus est vitium fugere, et sapientia prima  
Stultitia caruisse."

[*Epist.* i. 42.]

more timorous fear of punishment doth the disciple speak whom Jesus loved, where he saith: "Fear is not in charity; but perfect charity casteth out fear, because fear hath pain; and he that feareth, is not perfected in charity." (1 St. John iv. 18.)

12. The first among our Lord's disciples had not yet arrived at this perfection, when, thinking he could raise himself above all fear and danger, he wished to reach his Divine Master on the waves of the raging sea; but he lost courage at the tempest; and when he began to sink, he was saved by that hand which hath preserved us all from sinking. But a ray of Divine love ripened in him that love, with which, after his grievous fall, he was inflamed more than the rest of the disciples; for many sins were forgiven him, since he hath loved much; and, in return for this love, our Saviour bestowed upon him the highest commission a mortal could possess—that of "feeding His lambs and His sheep."

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## CHAPTER XI.

1. WITHOUT a love for God we cannot please Him, for he is estranged from all good who loves not the highest good, the source of all good. Thus does reason, thus does the law, thus does the Gospel teach us; with this doc-

trine resound all the consecrated churches of Jesus Christ. And if some false guides along the road of salvation have dared to assert that, through an historical faith in the revealed truths and mysteries of religion, and by good works, we can become justified, without the love of God, this blasphemous assertion is so manifestly absurd, that, to a true Christian, it cannot prove a stumbling-block.

2. For how is it possible to believe in the Father, who, through love, gave unto us His only-begotten Son; in the Son, who, through love, became man, and died on a cross for us; in the Holy Ghost, by whom "the charity of God is poured forth" into the hearts of believers, without at the same time believing that we must love God?

3. If any one was really desirous of uniting these opposite assertions in his belief, that belief would be vain, even were he to suffer martyrdom for it.

4. Let it be sufficient to have mentioned this mad and wicked assertion, as if we spoke of some monster that could only excite horror and disgust within us; although the number of those is not small, who seem to put more value on the above-mentioned good works, and on historical faith, than upon love, without which faith and works are dead.

5. But there is another danger, which weak and sensitive minds are especially exposed to. Like to a glossy serpent that glides between

the trees and flowers, this delusion insinuates itself by agreeable feelings and soft emotions, that sport in the garden of fancy, and even penetrate the heart; but they do not press into its inmost part, nor work upon the will, for they quickly vanish again.

6. Religion, that gives us wonderfully great and wonderfully beautiful ideas of God, of our nature, of the relations existing between God and us, of God's boundless love, of our sacred and eternal destination; and which also delivers into our hands the Divine Scriptures, that proclaim unto us these sacred and important objects with a child-like simplicity and Divine sublimity, and the whole scope of which relates to promises early made, always becoming, however, clearer and clearer as the future is unfolded, until at length they announce "One," who, both God and man, unites heaven and earth together, and is the problem of our existence, which would be inexplicable without Him, whose manifestation, birth, doctrine, sojourn upon earth, death for the love of us, resurrection, and eternal kingdom, fill us with wonder and joy;—this religion, I repeat, is divinely beautiful; so enrapturing to the soul, so inexpressibly beneficial to the heart, that only the deep corruption of our nature can keep us from doing homage to it with all the powers of our mind, with all the feelings of our heart; and from walking before God with a lowly soul on the path of self-denial, along which



our Saviour hath Himself first preceded us, "leaving for an example that you should follow His steps." (1 St. Peter xi. 21.)

7. To this our corrupt nature opposes itself, which easily gives ear to self-esteem, but wishes to fly from self-denial; and thus it willingly falls into the delusion of supposing that agreeable feelings and emotions, in which it takes pleasure, form the essence of religion, which, nevertheless, consists in something quite different. Yes, however pleasing and sweet these religious feelings and tender affections may be, and however gratefully a true Christian may receive those that are pure and genuine from the hands of his heavenly Father, yet he knows that even pure religious feelings form not the essence of religion; and that they are given unto him as an encouragement, when God, for the strengthening of the inward man, withdraws from him outward consolation, that then he may, with redoubled strength and fidelity, follow his Saviour along the strait and narrow way of self-denial. He said not only to His Apostles, but, as St. Luke expressly remarks, to all others who were present, "If any man will follow Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. . . . And whosoever doth not carry his cross and come after Me, cannot be My disciple."

8. When our Saviour, not long before His Passion, told His disciples, "that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the

Ancients and Scribes and chief-priests," and Peter, taking Him aside, began to rebuke Him, saying, "Lord, be it far from Thee; this shall not be unto Thee." But He, turning, said to Peter: "Go behind Me, Satan; thou art a scandal unto Me, because thou savourest not the things that are of God, but the things that are of men." (St. Matthew xvi. 21-23.)

9. It is evident that Peter allowed himself to be carried away by a feeling that, to himself, appeared pure and good, when he sought to prevent his beloved Master from delivering Himself up to the sorrows and death that he saw prepared for Him. But the Son of God taught him to distinguish between the mere feelings of nature, and that genuine love which relates to God.

10. The women of Jerusalem who followed our Saviour when He was led out to be crucified, might have justly been satisfied with their signs of condolence in weeping and striking their breasts; but these signs, so natural in themselves, and evincing such tender feelings of compassion, were not joined with a wholesome repentance; and this appears to me evident from the words with which He addressed them: "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not over Me; but weep for yourselves and for your children." (St. Luke xxiii. 27-31.)

11. How different was this transient feeling from that deep, nameless, inexpressible, and yet supernatural grief of the Mother of our Savi-

our, of the disciple whom Jesus loved, of the sister of our Redeemer's Mother, and of Mary Magdalen, who stood under the cross: truly, by His sufferings, the sword of grief foretold by holy Simeon deeply pierced that Virgin's heart.

12. It is a very convenient practice and custom of pretended piety, to allow itself to be carried away by the pleasing fancies of pious emotions, or by the representations of the joys of this life, which many people fancy shine in the background of the picture, in order that the prospect of the "night of death" may not deaden the enjoyment of the fleeting pleasures of life; or in order that, after weeping over the death of some beloved one, they may justify before themselves and others the enjoyment of sinful pleasures, while, in the mean time, they are exhorted to listen to the consoling truths of religion.

13. And so also in old age, when many pleasures of life leave us, some endeavour to fill up the vacant places with the comforts of religion, to which, however, their dispositions give them no title, until they sincerely repent, and bring forth "fruit worthy of penance." They imagine they have renounced that very thing which goes against their inclination, and yet they continue with trembling hands to grasp those worldly pleasures which they are still capable of enjoying.

14. In the time of youth they would not listen to the warning voice of the king who

had run the entire course of wisdom and of foolishness ; and who, doubtless, only at last, after a deep and heartfelt repentance for his base apostacy, wrote that serious book (*Ecclesiastes*), in which he powerfully and severely animadverts upon the nothingness and vanity of worldly things : “ Remember thy Creator,” he exclaims, “ in the days of thy youth, before the time of affliction come, and the years draw nigh of which thou shalt say, They please me not.” (xii. 1.)

15. This exhortation is so much the wiser, as not only the uncertainty of death makes the delay of repentance so dangerous, but also old age makes it more difficult : partly, because our sins have then taken deep root ; partly, because the will, as well as the other powers of the soul, is weak ; and lastly, because the faint — the almost deluded soul of an old man often seeks those false consolations of worldly piety, on which our age, as confident as it is light-minded, impresses a character that will not be recognised as genuine in the realities of eternity.

16. But however manifold, and however dangerous those delusions may be, by which men allow themselves to be blinded as to the true character of their present relations with God, still they might easily withdraw themselves from these deceits, if they kept a guard over their heart, if they lent a believing ear to the voice of God in the Holy Scripture, and wished not to turn a deaf ear against Him when He



spoke to their inmost hearts. These delusions originally sprung not in the understanding, but in the heart; in the corrupted will—devoted to the world, and estranged from God.

17. He that hath observed himself and others with any degree of care, will soon become sensible how often beautiful conceptions and tender affections produce little or no effect towards a true repentance, a reformation of the will.

18. Attracting, captivating, and beautifully expressed conceptions, which flatter the passions, strengthen, on the other hand, the corrupt will of the natural man in every respect; and this so much the more, when the infirmities of nature are raised to virtues, and homage is paid to the passions; hence it is, that the theatre—the temple of worldliness—attracts so many people, and the greater part of romances produce so much mischief.

19. Sensitive souls are often easily moved by sacred hymns, spiritual books, and good sermons. Many of these individuals, however, if they knew how to enter into their inmost soul, would be compelled to acknowledge, that these feelings and emotions left no trace behind them. They were delighted to see the arrow skilfully pointed, and, with a sounding noise, part the air, which quickly closed again after it. The arrow was destined for their heart, and it flew away over their head. Such passing feelings might even injure them, if they took any kind of delight in them. If their heart is not

united with the will of God, let them remember that such, good and beautiful as they may be in themselves, are not suitable for them.

20. God can indeed, according to the multitude of His mercies, cause these to become the occasion of a true, heart-felt repentance. They are, then, like to certain exciting medicines, which, for a short time, animate the weak constitution of the invalid, and by this means make him capable of being restored to perfect health. But souls that rest with self-delight on such feelings, may be deluded and injured by them.

21. It may, perchance, even happen, that nature, influenced by an apparently pious feeling, becomes by this very impulse more sensitive, and shews itself more susceptible than before of impure feelings. Then nourishment, good and wholesome in itself, feeds the fever of the sick man; and self-love knows how to take advantage of that which was calculated and intended to excite a love of God within the soul.<sup>1</sup>

22. But how shall we discover the marks of a true love of God in us?

23. By self-denial, which shews itself by fidelity in the service of God, and by a true love for our neighbour. The Son of God Himself hath given us an example of both the one and the other. He saith: "I came down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of

<sup>1</sup> "Sincerum est nisi vas, quodcunque infundis acescit."  
[Horace, *Epist.* ii. 54.]

Him that sent Me." And, in another place : " My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, that I may perfect His work ;" and again, " Not My will, but Thine be done." And when, after His last supper, He went with His disciples to Gethsemane, He then saith, " But that the world may know that I love the Father ; and as the Father hath given Me commandment, so do I : arise, let us go hence."

24. " He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross."

25. And when hanging on this cross, between heaven and earth, then did He accomplish His great work of love for His heavenly Father, and of love for us, His brethren and sisters on earth.

26. " Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into His glory ?" He hath pointed out to us the way along which we must follow Him. By His sufferings He gave us " power to be made the sons of God." " And if sons, heirs also ; heirs indeed of God, and joint-heirs with Christ ; yet so, if we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified with Him." (Romans viii. 17.)

27. These sufferings, which the Apostle and the Son of God Himself lay down as conditions of salvation, when He saith, " If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me ;" these sufferings we need not seek ; it is sufficient that we shun them not ; for they happen to us at all

times. They consist in the daily crucifixion of our will, which we should always be ready to offer, and, in effect, should offer, in submission to the adorable will of God, not only in great events, which seldom occur, but likewise on those minor occasions, which daily present themselves. In order to be enabled to do this, we must with earnestness and devotion seek the Divine will. Thus doth the Apostle admonish us: "And be not conformed to this world; but be reformed in the newness of your mind, that you may prove what is the good and the acceptable, and the perfect will of God." (Romans xii. 2.) This "proving" requires candour; and we must conduct ourselves before God in such manner that our eye be "single;" and earnestly pray unto Him that His holy Spirit may manifest His will to us. Thus did the royal prophet pray: "Make the way known to me wherein I should walk. . . . Teach me to do Thy will, for Thou art my God. . . . Thy good Spirit shall lead me into the right land." (Psalm cxlii.)

23. By the mortification of our own will, always offering it to be united with the Divine will, and by a faithful practice of the love of our neighbour, we should daily become more and more like our blessed Saviour; and although the difference is infinitely great between the "Sun of Justice," that shines in Him, and its reflected light, which, as drops of dew on flowers, casts its ray into the hearts of the faithful; yet



we shall all, " beholding the 'glory of the Lord with open face, be transformed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord." (2 Cor. iii. 18.)

29. The greater and more excellent are the gifts which Jesus Christ purchased for us, so much the more should we, by watchfulness, prayer, and a feeling sense of our weakness, and by trust in God, strive accordingly, and beseech Him that He would preserve us from the delusion of presumptuous and imaginary piety.

30. We must ever endeavour to walk according to the rules and precepts which He, " the author and finisher of our faith," hath given us : " He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me. And he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father ; and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him. . . . If any one love Me, he will keep My word ; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and will make our abode with him." (St. John xiv. 21-23.)

31. If we wish to " keep" His word, we must keep it wholly and entirely, and remember the exhortation He gave to His disciples when, in the evening immediately preceding His agony and conflict, He poured out His heart in love, saying, " A new commandment I give unto you ; that you love one another, as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this shall all men know that you are My disciples,

if you have love one for another. . . . These things I command you, that you love one another." (St. John xiii. 34, 35.)

32. To love our neighbour as ourself, God had already commanded us by Moses; and so doth our Saviour likewise. But why does He say, "A new commandment I give you?" Is it not on this account, because even this command, being just the moment that He was about to *seal* His doctrine by the most sublime act of love, acquires a new importance and a new efficacy? And because, by His sufferings, He gained strength for us to follow His example?

33. Let us, then, call unto Him with the devout Thomas à Kempis: "Thy life is our way, and by holy patience we walk on to Thee," &c.<sup>1</sup>

34. Let us exclaim, with a holy confidence, in the words of a father of the Church, whose heart burnt with love: "Give what Thou pleasest, and command what Thou wilt." (St. Augustine.)

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## CHAPTER XII.

1. WE are taught by certain proud worldlings, with whose shallow prattle religion is reproached, that, according to the impulse of an ignoble selfishness, we must practise virtue and avoid vice, while religion herself leads us like little children

<sup>1</sup> "Vita tua via nostra, et per sanctam patientiam ambulamus ad Te," &c. (Lib. iii. 18.)

by the leading-strings of fear and of hope. It behoves the wise man, they say, to love virtue on her own account, and hence to practise it also for her own sake, provided he be rewarded with a good and noble self-consciousness. And as he believes in the recompense of the good and of the bad after death, so he also certainly hopes that a reward awaits his virtue. But this hope requires both some little incitement, in order to act uprightly, as well as the fear of punishment, on the other hand, in order to restrain him from bad actions.

2. Virtue is an abstract idea. Virtue is found only in the virtuous; hence it is confined to man, because man himself is bounded. If we love virtue, we love it also in the virtuous; but above all in God—the source of all good—and hence the source also of every virtue.

3. Every worldly wise one loves himself in virtue, of which he says, that he practises it for the sake of his self-esteem; but a Christian loves virtue for God's sake, and practises it through love of God. In order that *we* may likewise practise it, God gives us His grace and strength. Hence it follows, that a Christian loves not himself in his virtues, but God.

4. We have already seen that the law of the old Covenant was grounded on the love of God and our neighbour, the love of our neighbour proceeding from the love of God; and that the Son of God gave to this twofold law not only a new sanction, but likewise, by His doctrines,

His example, His sufferings, and His death, He hath increased our strength for the practice of those virtues.

5. Whoever shall consider any other motive to do good more pure, more beautiful, more noble or powerful, than a love for the living, eternal Origin of all that is good and beautiful, for the eternal Source of love itself; and whoever dreams of finding this motive in the attainment of his own self-esteem, such a one seems desirous of exalting himself above God, while he sinks down, by his vain and wicked pride, below humanity itself.

6. That man is as blind as he is shameless when, seeking only himself, and making himself a God, he falsely objects to religion, that it teaches us to act by selfish motives, and that the gates of heaven will be opened to him who follows such motives.

7. It is indeed true that religion gives us certain convictions of what many heathen nations believed, and still believe, and what the greatest of their philosophers taught, viz. the doctrine of rewards and punishments which each one receives after death.

8. Had this doctrine of the reward of the good, and the punishment of the wicked, been taught only darkly, oh! how would the enemies of religion rejoice thereat! They would say, "Religion lays hidden snares for her children; for while she requires from them the practice of a difficult self-denial, she leaves them in doubt



as to the consequences of a good and wicked life which await us after death."

9. The enemies of the Gospel are ever like to those of whom our Saviour speaketh, that they "despised the counsel of God against themselves." And the Lord said, "Whereunto, then, shall I liken the men of this generation? And to what are they like? They are like to children sitting in the market-place, and speaking one to another, and saying, We have piped to you, and you have not danced; we have mourned, and you have not wept." (St. Luke vii. 31, 32.)

10. In the Holy Scripture God places before us heaven and earth, eternal death and eternal life. He claims our fear and our hope. He threatens and He allures. It is His love that threatens and allures us for our salvation.

11. In that degraded state, of which the Almighty informs us in the Holy Scripture, and from which He offers to deliver us,—men, whose original destination was eternal life, had become such slaves to sensuality, and clung so much to the present life, that even the promise of a holier future could awake but few from the lethargy of sin which had kept them in chains, if a wholesome fear did not terrify them.

12. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Generally speaking fear moves us to repentance sooner than hope; and with reason. For before a man does penance he is guilty, deserving of eternal death; he can hope

only when he has sincerely returned to God, and his sins are forgiven him. But then it is he not only *can*, but he *ought*, to hope; and with the left hand supporting itself by faith, and the right hand clasping love, hope thus becomes, by such a union, a Christian virtue.

13. A Christian must hope with confidence in the mercy of God; but as he is aware of his weakness and manifold infidelities, this hope cannot exist without fear; and when the one tempers the other, then the Christian is preserved from a false security.

14. The wholesome but alarming fear which first awakes the conscience from the sleep of death, becomes more and more filial in him whose sins have been forgiven. To that perfect love, of which the beloved disciple says, that it "casteth out fear," only very few indeed attain; and even this expression of the holy Apostle we must take with some allowance and modification of the meaning, according to the Latin proverb, "Cum grano salis." The joy of which St. John speaks in the above passage can never become, in the perfect Christian, so obscured, as that his just distrust in himself should not be surpassed by his joyful and filial confidence in the mercies of God, purchased for us by His Son Jesus Christ.

15. One of the most dangerous delusions which, at different times, has happened to many who profess themselves Christians, but who have ever been condemned by the Church of

Jesus Christ, is the fancy that every Christian must consider his future happiness as *secure*; that this conviction is a mark of true Christianity, without which no one can be a child of God. Nay, some even go so far as madly to assert, that they are sure this conviction is a certain pledge of salvation!

16. The Apostle Paul taught not so when he wrote to his beloved Philippians: "With fear and trembling work out your salvation." He only wishes that this holy fear, being grounded on a distrust of ourselves, should not drive away from us a joyful confidence in God. Wherefore to the same Philippians he writes: "Rejoice in the Lord always: again I say, rejoice."

17. To the faithful at Rome he likewise beautifully speaks: "For you have not received the spirit of bondage again in fear; but you have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry, Abba (Father). For the Spirit Himself giveth testimony to our spirit, that we are the sons of God." (Epistle to the Romans viii. 15, 16.) But this testimony does not give us any security that we shall continue in a state of grace. Even Peter could fall! And he would certainly have been lost, had not his Saviour whom he denied prayed for him, "that his faith might not fail."

18. The Apostle thus warns us against a false security: "Wherefore he that thinketh himself to stand, let him take heed lest he fall." (1 Cor.

x. 12.) How earnestly doth he again speak to the same Corinthians: "Know you not that they that run in the race, all run indeed, but one receiveth the prize? So run that you may obtain. And every one that striveth for the mastery refraineth himself from all things; and they, indeed, that they may receive a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible one. I, therefore, so run, not as at an uncertainty; I so fight, not as one beating the air. But I chastise my body, and bring it into subjection, lest, perhaps, when I have preached to others, I myself should become a cast-away." (1 Cor. ix. 24-27.)

19. This great Apostle did not consider himself perfect, did not look upon himself as one who had already gained the victory. Thus he writes to the faithful of Philippi: "Not as though I had already attained, or were already perfect; but I follow after, if I may by any means apprehend, wherein I am also apprehended by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended. But one thing I do; forgetting the things that are behind, and stretching forth myself to those that are before, I press towards the mark, to the prize of the supernal vocation of God in Christ Jesus." (Chap. iii. 12-14.)

20. If the Apostle speaks thus, who are *we* that we should already dream of promising ourselves the *certain* possession hereafter of eternal glory? Nevertheless, we may confidently hope in the



mercy of Jesus Christ, "for the Spirit Himself giveth testimony to our spirit, that we are the sons of God." The spirit of the world will indeed attack us; but we are the children of God, and "greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world." And when we continue watching, as the Son of God commands us all to do, when He spoke to His disciples: "And what I say to you I say to all, watch;" and when, also, we persevere in putting our trust in God, and being humble, then "the inward man is renewed day by day," and while the "outward man" grows old, the old man of sin likewise decays more and more.

21. I think I have said enough, or rather I have incontrovertibly proved from the Holy Scripture, how vain is the objection which proud worldlings cast upon the religion of Jesus Christ, as if it taught us to renounce vice and cling to virtue only according to the "selfish" impulses of fear and hope. Religion, on the contrary, teaches us how to learn what is good at its true source—God, the eternal source of all good; from this spring she tells us to drink, and to love every thing that is beautiful and good, for the sake of the eternal origin of what is beautiful and good; to follow it, and to practise it. She, and she only, teaches us whence we can derive strength for this purchase; whence we *ought* to look for it; and while she convinces us of our weakness, she, at the same time, insures for us the assistance of

Divine grace : hence, while keeping us humble in our hope, she preserves us from that dangerous conceit of self-love, which, more than any other of our enemies, works in opposition to the love of God, because it makes us incapable of attaining our eternal destiny—a holy union with Him.

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### CHAPTER XIII.

1. As the Divine mercy, in all the sacred regulations and resources of religion, had no other object in view than to conduct back again unto Him all those who were estranged from Him ; so hath it especially ordained prayer, and thereby given to man buried in sin an arm, as it were, of the Spirit, with which he can stretch forward towards Him, and obtain grace and strength from on high.

2. To raise one's self from the dust of the earth unto the Eternal and Invisible could never have entered into the mind of the first men, if they had a like nature with us, as some worldly-wise ones wish to persuade us, and had been neglected by their Maker immediately after their creation, and abandoned to themselves without light from above, which had enlightened their minds, just as the sun warms the eggs that are left by the ostrich.

3. But such a supposition never had any

reality. By it, the first men could never have arrived, even at speech; nay, being attacked by raging desires within, and by wild beasts without, against which man asserts his existence only by his understanding, these men, themselves creeping on four feet, would quickly have become a prey to their other four-footed companions of the field.

4. As the Holy Scriptures inform us, God, immediately after the creation, made Himself manifest to them; and no doubt the first idea Adam had was the idea of a God, who by the creation had manifested Himself to him in a visible form; and hence his first wondering look gazed upon that beloved One who manifested Himself to him in his heart, when it beat for the first time.<sup>1</sup>

5. Amidst all the infidelities of men, amid all the miseries which mankind have suffered, the necessity and idea of prayer has prevailed in all climes, among all people, and at all times.

6. The holy prophet saith, "Oh, hear my prayer: all flesh shall come to Thee!"

7. When our first parents, in their state of innocence in Paradise, surrounded by abundance of blessings, happy in their bridal love, and superabundantly blest by God's love for them and their love for God, felt themselves in no need of any thing, then there was no occasion

<sup>1</sup> . . . . . "timidumque ad lumina lumen  
Attollens, pariterque cum cælo vidit amantem."  
[Ovid. *Metam.* x. 293-4.]

for prayer. Their hearts poured themselves forth only in praises to God for His blessings, for their existence, for His holy graces, and for His infinite perfections.

8. But now prayer is the daughter of necessity. When, after our first parents had lost their primeval innocence, a way was opened for them and their posterity, by the infinite mercy of God, for the recovery of the Divine favour, which had been lost through disobedience, then a new means of reconciliation between God and man was made manifest.

9. They were obliged to leave Paradise; and being now cast on the wide world, their dwelling on the bare earth, amidst wild beasts no longer obedient to them, and being exposed to contend with the elements, all this made them deeply feel their dependence upon God. But it was not so much the voice of an angry judge as that of a wise Father, who had commanded them to leave Paradise, where, living in continual plenty, they would have thought less of God than they did now, when they eat their bread "in the sweat of their face," and for all that they stood in need of were indebted not only to their labour, but to the blessing of God, without which the fruits of their toil could not prosper.

10. The kindness with which the Almighty, before He drove them from Paradise, clothed them, whereby He provided at the same time for the necessities of their body, weakened by



sin, and also for the greater necessities of their soul, stained with wicked passions, was a proof that He wished to continue a Father to them in their spiritual and bodily wants.

11. We cannot doubt but that He oftentimes manifested Himself to them, since we see how He warned Cain, saying, "If thou do well, shalt thou not receive? but if ill, shall not sin forthwith be present at the door? but the lust thereof shall be under thee, and thou shalt have dominion over it." (Genesis iv. 7.)

12. With child-like minds they presented their petitions before Him, when He manifested Himself to them; and thus He Himself, without doubt, taught them how to pray; and even when He did not manifest Himself to them, He taught them how to lay their wants before Him, both spiritual and temporal; and the audiences which were granted them, both nourished and strengthened their confidence in Him.

13. Proud, worldly-wise men, "vain in their thoughts," have cast away the idea of a God. "Why should God require," they say, "that we should tell Him our wants, when He knows them better than ourselves?" Others say less boldly, but in contradiction with themselves, "God is not influenced by our prayers, though our prayers may be pleasing unto Him, because it gives us comfort in affliction and confidence in the Almighty; and so far prayer is good." And how? consolation grounded on erroneous ideas, and trust grounded in like manner, can

these be pleasing to God? Can He, and will He, favour such false notions, He the God of truth? Oh, what an unworthy supposition! But if our confidence and trust were so grounded, how can these men dare, by the publication of their doctrines, to rob their fellow-creatures of this beneficial confidence and trust? How can they dare frustrate the views and intentions which they ascribe to God?

14. The least instructed Christian, a believing child, knows well, that our wishes and necessities are known to God before we mention them. But a faithful child often begs its loving father and mother to grant its least wishes, although it knows its parents were long cognisant of them, because it very frequently expressed them.

15. It is true, we indeed stand in need of prayer. But because we stand in need of it, in order not to forget God; in order to be able to put our trust in Him; in order to animate the flickering flame of our love with a living breath; to breathe the true life of the Spirit, and to be enabled to receive within us grace, that so we may return love for love unto *Him* who alone is worth all our love:—this is the reason why God does not allow this holy necessity to rest upon a vain and erroneous opinion.

16. He who regulated the powers of the visible world, regulated also the powers of the invisible world; He entered into a covenant

with weak man, who, weak as he is, still feels, with all the spiritual world, the necessity of depending upon God. "It is good for me," exclaims holy David, "it is good for me to adhere to my God, to put my hope in the Lord God." (Psalm lxxiv. 28.) God, therefore, has instituted prayer, and given to it a powerful efficacy.

17. From the different conditions, feelings, and circumstances of the soul, arise different forms of prayer, all of which are pleasing unto God, when they come from a lowly heart that trusteth in Him.

18. On the wings of prayer all pure spirits rise up in praise of God; the consideration of His perfections filleth them with eternal joy. On the wings of prayer, mortal man also, still stained with sin, but reconciled to God through the Son of God,—he likewise may and ought to ascend.

19. The minds of many men, however, are so carnal, that they can form no conception of this joy; and the thought of eternal life, to which eternal love gives its value, flatters them only as far as they like not the thought of their existence one day ceasing. They mistake the original necessity of their nature. Buried in sensuality, and blinded by fooleries, they suffer every thing that surrounds them to remove them from God, to whom, nevertheless, all things point.

20. Thus idolatry originated, when creatures

who so loudly spoke of the power, and wisdom, and goodness of the Creator were honoured as gods.

21. Whatever usurps in our heart that place which belongs to God, becomes our idol. From this source all our miseries have arisen.

22. Our nature, feeling the great and holy necessity of a union with God, and originally longing after Him, gives to its boundless desires after happiness, when the Almighty withdraws Himself, a false direction; and this happiness it can nowhere find but in God. With the spasmodic convulsions of one in a fever, we long after imaginary pleasures, and grasp the empty air.

23. And as the wooden idol must bear witness to him who adores it, of that living God who made the tree to grow from which it was cut; so even the passions, follies, and crimes of the wicked, bear testimony of that God, from whom they turn away, by seeking to extinguish their burning thirst in the enjoyment of their passions: a thirst which always increases; but which, if they knew how to interpret it, would lead them to God, who alone can satisfy the cravings of immortal spirits.

24. Truth is often mixed with error; thus the idea of true happiness lies at the bottom of our false ideas.

25. But we must come to particulars.

26. Our sensuality is captivated by the superficial view of creatures, in whom it seeks its



happiness. But it is delivered by the consideration that true happiness can be found only in the Invisible, only in God.

27. Let us open the eye of our soul to Him ; and then we shall be convinced that whatever beauty attracts us, is only a weak image of His eternal beauty ; that every good thing is only a feeble expression of His original fountain of goodness ; that every beneficent and kind feeling is only a dim spark from His furnace of love.

28. Following this light, let us now turn from creatures to the Creator. We shall not lose—as the sensual man fears—the pleasures which arise from what is beautiful, good, and pleasing to the imagination. But, on the contrary, all that is beautiful is ennobled by that original beauty from which it sprung ; every good thing is enhanced by that Being “ who alone is good ;” and every feeling pleasing to the heart is immortalised by the thought, that we are surrounded by the eternal Source of love.

29. Thus the whole visible world that delighted us, the ideas which obscurely fluttered before our mind, now for the first time acquire for us a true interest—a reality. A true light now rises upon that man, in whom such a reality exists and moves. He is like unto a traveller, who, with uncertain steps, walks at night amidst an *ignis fatuus* ; but now the sun has risen upon him in all his brightness and glory, and darts his beams upon millions of

dew-drops that were before cold and drooping ; while his warmth gilds the snow-clad mountains of the highest Alps, and clothes the naked rocks with garments of flowers.

30. Praising and thanking go mutually together in prayer. While we are praising the Eternal, how can we help being thereby reminded, that He hath manifested Himself to us as a Father ? that He hath taken compassion upon us with infinite mercy ? Heart-uplifting is indeed the rapture with which such a Christian, who praises the Almighty, thinks only of Him, feels only Him, being torn from himself, and lost in the contemplation of the Divine perfections. But mortal man is not a cherub ! And when the canticles of his prayer sink into the region of thanksgiving, then such thanksgiving is also pleasing unto God ; for it is a return of love for love ! And oft he soars again into canticles of praise !

31. How pleasing such expressions of thanks are unto God, numerous passages of holy Scripture testify ; the Psalms, inspired by the Spirit of God Himself to His prophet, are the most sublime and glorious of all canticles, and of all hymns.

32. But every filial prayer, even when it is neither expressed nor intended, includes a prayer of thanksgiving, and leads to that heartfelt confidence, which is no less pleasing unto God than grateful thanks. I appeal to the feelings of parents, whose relation to their

children can open to them many an insight into the heart of their heavenly Father.

33. And thus, as the consideration of God's infinite perfections becomes an act of praise, and the remembrance of His benefits and mercies a prayer of thanksgiving, so doth it also end in a lowly feeling of the necessity of filial prayer, which God so readily hears. We must lay every thing before Him; our bodily and spiritual wants, our earthly and spiritual necessities; our wishes for what is temporal, and our wishes for that which is eternal.

34. But since we know not what is profitable for us, it would be unwise and improper to ask unconditionally for temporal things. Never should we do so without desiring, from our heart, that our will may not be done if it agree not with the will of God. And in order to quicken this wish, which oftentimes is so difficult to our weak nature, we do well to express it in prayer, and to lay it before God, that so He may assist us Himself. If we act thus with sincerity, our prayer will be well-pleasing to Him; and when He grants not our petition in His wisdom, yet He will give us His blessing.

35. If we pray with humility, we may, with a strong confidence, beg for those spiritual gifts, the granting of which will assist us along the road of salvation. Even in spiritual things God does not always grant what we ask; but often He gives us still greater gifts in return.

36. Three times did St. Paul pray to be delivered from a temptation, and God heard him not. And why did He hear him not? For the very same reason that He allowed the angel of Satan to buffet him, viz. in order to keep him humble, "lest the greatness of the revelations" should exalt him, which he received when he was rapt even to the third heaven.

37. God, indeed, heard him not, but He gave unto him superabundant consolation: "My grace is sufficient for thee," He said; "for power is made perfect in infirmity." St. Paul experienced the fulfilment of this consolation, for he said, "Gladly, therefore, will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may dwell in me." The temptation could not hurt him; on the contrary, he struggled and prayed against it; but it gave him a profitable opportunity of still further struggling, with a stronger confidence in God, and with more humility.

38. He could now, with so much the more power, give consolation to others also in the trials of their temptations; thus he wrote to the Hebrews, "For we have not a high-priest who cannot have compassion on our infirmities, but one tempted in all things like as we are, without sin. Let us go, therefore, with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace in seasonable aid." (Chap. iv. 15, 16.)

39. To him that prays with earnestness, help always is given: "Likewise the Spirit also



helpeth our infirmity. For we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit Himself asketh for us with unspeakable groanings." And almost immediately after these words the Apostle saith, "And we know that to them that love God, all things work together unto good." (Epist. to the Romans viii. 26-28.)

40. This confidence giveth great joy to a faithful soul that trusts in God. But as she knoweth well that, as long as we dwell here below, we have the treasure of grace entrusted to us by God, "in earthen vessels, that the excellency may be of the power of God, and not of us;" so she is not exalted on this account, but feels how unworthy she is of grace: hence her joy is accompanied with humility, without which every joy is deceitful, delivering us up to a false security that leads to destruction.

41. The life of a Christian is not a constant, cloudless sunshine, but rather it resembles a mild spring, in which sunshine and rain mutually ripen the fruit. Others may boast of their wintry clear sunshine, and grow numb in the cold breeze of a north wind; but a true Christian knoweth how sinful he still is, and how often he feels this, though he may not be conscious of guilt. But a great Apostle hath said, "For I am not conscious to myself of any thing, yet I am not hereby justified; but he that judgeth me is the Lord." (1 Cor. iv. 4.) Wherefore the pious Christian exclaims with

David, "Who can understand sins? From my secret ones cleanse me, O Lord; and from those of others spare Thy servant. If they shall have no dominion over me, then shall I be without spot, and I shall be cleansed from the greatest sin." (Psalm xviii. 13, 14.)

42. But often he is conscious of his state; but he wonders not at it, because to himself he ascribes nothing good; but, turning himself to his heavenly Father, he acknowledges his guilt to Him, and begs for grace and strength to walk uprightly before Him.

43. "A just man shall fall seven times," saith a wise king, "and shall rise again; but the wicked shall fall down into evil." The wicked man is he that walketh without God.<sup>1</sup>

44. But the just man may cease to be just; he is exposed to danger as long as he lives, and fall he certainly will, if he be not humble: "Pride goeth before destruction; and the spirit is lifted up before a fall," saith Solomon. Yes, this pride, which even seduces us to ascribe our own righteousness to ourselves, and to rely upon our own strength, such a pride is already the deep fall, of which the sinner is often first made conscious by the pit into which he has tumbled, because he trusted in himself.

45. Let us hear St. Augustine: "Illa prorsus ruina quæ fit in occulto, præcedit ruinam quæ fit in manifesto, dum illa ruina esse non putatur. . . . Et ideo audeo dicere, superbis esse utile

<sup>1</sup> "Gottlos ist wer ohne Gott wandelt."

cadere in aliquod apertum manifestumque peccatum, unde sibi displiceant, qui jam sibi placendo ceciderunt.”<sup>1</sup> (*De Civit. Dei*, cap. xiv. 13.)

46. Oh, how much should the remembrance of our natural corruption keep us humble, of our inability to deliver ourselves from it, of the many sins we have committed, and do daily commit, and of the danger we are exposed to of falling!

47. But as humble prayer protects us from the danger of sin, so also humble supplications for mercy are able to raise us up again after a fall. But because every sin which we deliberately commit proceeds from pride; and disobedience is pride, though this pride by public sins is often more grieved than humbled, nay, becomes more hardened by the mortification of self-love; so there is also required for the salvation of him who hath fallen, so much the more grace from God, as by his fall he had despised preceding graces.

48. But when this grace cometh to him, he gives it a place in his penitent soul, and, from the bottom of his heart, he exclaims with David, who fell from such a sublime height of virtue into such a deep abyss, “Have mercy on me,

<sup>1</sup> “That fall which secretly takes place, precedes the fall that is public, while it is thought not to be a fall. . . . And therefore I venture to assert, that it is useful for the proud to fall into some open and public crime, by which they may reproach themselves, who fell by taking complacency in themselves.”

O God, according to Thy great mercy. And according to the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my iniquity. Wash me yet more from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my iniquity, and my sin is always before me. To Thee only have I sinned, and have done evil before Thee, that Thou mayest be justified in Thy words, and mayest overcome when Thou art judged. For behold, I was conceived in iniquities; and in sins did my mother conceive me. For behold, Thou hast loved truth: the uncertain and hidden things of Thy wisdom Thou hast made manifest to me. Thou shalt sprinkle me with hyssop, and I shall be cleansed: Thou shalt wash me, and I shall be made whiter than snow," &c. (Psalm l.) This grace of repentance is given to him who has fallen away from Divine grace, that he may offer to the Lord the sacrifice of a contrite and humble heart; that he may now, more firmly than before, rely upon God, and that he may now love Him the more, after so "much has been forgiven" him. In such souls the words of the Apostle are verified in a most remarkable manner: "That to them that love God all things work together unto good." (Romans viii. 28.) Yea, even their very fall itself, which produces such repentance, that, in its turn, produces such love, makes them more pleasing unto God than they were before their fall.

49. How different is the judgment of a



worldly judge from that of God, who judgeth all the earth! A mortal judge compares the deed of the guilty with the law, and at the same time takes into account the extenuating circumstances which accompanied the act; but he pays no consideration to the repentance, and this he cannot do, partly because God only can estimate it in a searching manner, and partly because public justice requires its victim, since God Himself demands it, who hath commanded the punishment.

50. How very different also is the lawful punishment inflicted by government from the hard-hearted judgment of the world upon those guilty individuals, whom often, for only "*one*" offence, it banishes from its regards with unappeasable severity, unmindful of human frailty, and unmoved by the most sincere repentance! This world, which often gives a false splendour to crime, and honours *false* virtues, while it mocks at true virtue, proceeding from Divine love, pays no regard to extenuating circumstances, and laughs at repentance. It asks, "Of what value is repentance, since it cannot annul the consequences of a bad act?" Therefore, he who has once forfeited its esteem is for ever abandoned by the world, as if a man were not capable of improvement, as if the will of a weak mortal were unchangeable. This will, which deserves only praise or censure, is indeed easily led away; but it can turn from bad to good again. He who hath lost the esteem of the

world, for the most part grounded on doubtful rewards, and often on mere outward imposing appearances, hath lost it for ever. This honour of the world a poet compares to an island, whose rugged cliffs prevent him who has once left it from returning.<sup>1</sup>

51. He that displeases God forfeits true honour, and only *he* forfeits it. But God is not inexorable. The proud Scribes and Pharisees objected to His Son, "that He received sinners, and eat with them." But He related to them the parable of the lost sheep, after which the shepherd went until he found it, and then, putting it on his shoulders, he carried it home rejoicing; and He also spoke to them of the woman that lost the groats; how she swept the house, and sought diligently until she found them; and then He related the parable of the lost son, which drew tears even from the eyes of unbelievers.

52. In the Old Testament even, how ready did the Almighty shew Himself to receive sinners! Yea, how tenderly did He invite them to repentance, to return unto Him! With what affection doth He speak by the prophet whom He sent to announce to the Gentiles their future salvation, and to reproach the people of Israel with their disobedience! Hear his words:

’ “ L’honneur est comme une île escarpée et sans bords :

On n’y peut plus rentrer dès qu’on en est dehors.”  
[Boileau, *Sat. x.*]

“They have sought Me that before asked not for Me; they have found Me that sought Me not. I said, Behold Me, behold Me, to a nation that did not call upon My name. I have spread forth My hands all the day to an unbelieving people, who walk in a way that is not good, after their own thoughts.” And some verses lower: “And it shall come to pass, that before they call I will hear; as they are yet speaking I will hear.” (Isaias lxxv. 1-2, 24.) And in the next chapter: “Thus saith the Lord: Heaven is My throne, and the earth My footstool: what is this house that you will build to Me? And what is this place of My rest? My hand made all these things, and all these things were made, saith the Lord. But to whom shall I have respect but to him that is poor, and little, and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at My words?” (Chap. lvi. 1, 2.)

53. How lovingly doth He speak to Israel by the prophet Jeremias: “The Lord hath appeared from afar to me. Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore have I drawn thee, taking pity on thee. . . . They shall come with weeping, and I will bring them back in mercy; and I will bring them through the torrents of waters in a right way, and they shall not stumble in it; for I am a Father to Israel, and Ephraim is My first-born. Hear the word of the Lord, O ye nations, and declare it in the islands that are afar off, and say, He that scattered Israel will gather him; and He will

keep him as the shepherd doth his flock. . . . Surely Ephraim is an honourable son to Me, surely he is a tender child; for since I spoke of him I will still remember him. Therefore are My bowels troubled for him; pitying I will pity him, saith the Lord. . . . For I have inebriated the weary soul; and I have filled every hungry soul." (xxxii. 3-9, 10, 20, 25.)

54. In the prophet Osee we hear the Lord thus speak: "In their affliction they will rise early to Me: Come, and let us return to the Lord; for He hath taken us, and He will heal us; He will strike, and He will cure us. He will revive us after two days; on the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight. We shall know, and we shall follow on, that we may know the Lord. His going forth is prepared as the morning light, and He will come to us as the early and the latter rain to the earth. What shall I do to thee, O Ephraim? What shall I do to thee, O Juda? Your mercy is as a morning cloud, and as the dew that goeth away in the morning." (Chap. vi. 1-4.) Again: "And Ephraim is become as a dove that is decoyed, not having a heart." (vii. 11.) "Return, O Israel, to the Lord thy God; for thou hast fallen down by thy iniquity. Take with you words, and return to the Lord, and say to Him, Take away all iniquity, and receive the good, and we will render the calves of our lips." (Chap. xiv. 2, 3.) This strong and bold oriental expression scarcely requires the expla-



nation, that a feeling of repentance which, proceeding from the depth of the heart, breaks forth into words, is an offering which pleases God, an offering which is only symbolically signified by the outward burnt-offering of calves. Immediately after the passage above quoted, we read the following affecting words: "I will heal their breaches, I will love them freely; for My wrath is turned away from them. I will be as the deer, Israel shall spring as the lily, and his root shall shoot forth as that of Libanus. His branches shall spread, and his glory shall be as the olive-tree, and his smell as that of Libanus. They shall be converted that sit under his shadow; they shall live upon wheat, and they shall blossom as a vine; his memorial shall be as the wine of Libanus." (Osee xiv. 5-8.)

55. Since we cannot please God without loving Him, and we cannot love Him if we love not our neighbour, according to what St. John saith, "If any man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother, whom he seeth, how can he love God, whom he seeth not? And this commandment we have from God: That he who loveth God love also his brother." (1 Epist. iv. 20, 21.) So prayer is an unceasing duty, and by the omission of it we sin against God, against our neighbour, and against ourselves. For earnest and hopeful prayer fulfils a duty of obedience to

God, a duty of love to our neighbour, and the duty of taking care of our own salvation.

56. Thus the Apostle Paul exhorts the faithful of Ephesus : “ By all prayer and supplication, praying at all times in the spirit ; and in the same watching with all instance and supplication for all the saints ;<sup>1</sup> and for me that speech may be given me, that I may open my mouth with confidence to make known the mystery of the Gospel, for which I am an ambassador in a chain,<sup>2</sup> so that therein I may be bold to speak according as I ought.” (Chap. vi. 18-20.)

57. He often requested the different communities of the faithful to pray for him ; and he relied upon God to hear their petitions.

58. In his First Epistle to Timothy, he enjoins prayer for all men : “ I desire, therefore, first of all, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made by men, for kings, and for all that are in high stations ; that we may lead a quiet and a peaceable life,

<sup>1</sup> “ For all the saints,” that is, according to the usual expression made use of at that period, for all Christians, who, being dedicated to God, are sanctified (*geheiliget sind*) by Him.

<sup>2</sup> St. Paul was at Rome ; and from this city, during his first residence there, he sent this epistle to the Ephesians, not being in confinement, for he was at liberty to go about where he liked. But because he appealed from the governor Festus to Cæsar, hence the former had sent him to Rome under the command of a body-guard, as if a state-prisoner ; there, according to the Roman custom, he was guarded by a soldier bound with him to a chain.

in all piety and chastity. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth." (Chap. ii. 1-4.)

59. Since God Himself hath ordered and hallowed the relations between man and wife, between parents and children, between sisters and brothers; so hath He, in a special manner, also commanded us to pray for those persons who are thus related to us; likewise for our rulers, and for all governments that receive their power from God. And moreover, it is only natural and proper, that we should, when praying, recommend our "fatherland" to Him.

Our love, flowing from closer connexions, gradually pours itself out through the wider relations of a universal love for men. That patriotism which wishes to pass over these closer connexions, is not a true love for our "fatherland;" it is an error of the understanding, which leaves the heart cold. Could it become universal, it would quickly vanish away, as a dream of the imagination.

60. Our parents and sisters, the companions of our childhood and youth, and more especially our wives and children, must make our "fatherland" dear to us. Or ought we not rather to love our wife and children, our parents and sisters, on this account particularly, because they are our fellow-citizens? Language is a beautiful bond that unites us with our "father-

land ;" but justly do we name it " the mother-tongue ;" and when our children begin to lisp it, it becomes then also dear to our heart.

61. Would not the troops of that people who almost idolised their " fatherland," feel their courage inflamed by the thought, that they were to fight for wife and children, for grey old age, for the graves of their fathers ?

62. Thus those have judged very erroneously who, preferring a universal cosmopolitanism, wish to consider the love of " fatherland" a prejudice. Such a view may appear proper to those who desire to deprive their country of all its just claims ; since such a state would not, they say, load us with demands on our time, on our independence, on our labour, and on our life.

63. Being suckled at our mother's breast, and dandled by her, growing up in respect and love for our parents, for our sisters and relations, for the friends and neighbours of our house, we form a circle of affections that gradually widens, and embraces our " fatherland ;" but not our " fatherland" exclusively, for it must embrace *all* men. Nations have not—as some of the ancients fancied—sprung up each one on the soil where he lives ; but God, " who giveth to all life and breath, and all things, hath made of one all mankind, to dwell upon the whole face of the earth, determining appointed times, and the limits of their habitation. That they should seek God, if happily



they may feel,<sup>1</sup> after Him, or find Him; although He be not far from every one of us; for in Him we live, and move, and be: as some, also, of your own poets said: For we are also His offspring." (Acts of the Apostles, xvii. 25-28.)

64. Our holy religion, the daughter of Divine love, and the mother of our love, teaches us that we all come from the same origin; that we are all made according to God's image; that all had lost the friendship of God, and were cleansed from all sin "by the blood of Jesus Christ His Son;" and that by the same Son of God we are now all invited to partake of that salvation which He hath purchased for us.

65. Wherefore our love also must embrace all men; though in different relations, and in different ways.

66. Herein also hath the Son of God, who became man for the love of us, left us His example for our imitation. He performed the duties of a loving son to His holy Virgin Mother, and to holy St. Joseph, His step-father. He, "the Lord of Glory," was subject to His

<sup>1</sup> I think it necessary to remark, as I have done elsewhere, that the Apostle St. Paul, in his discourse to the Athenians, expresses the idea of "feeling" by one word, which is used when speaking of the blind, or of those who grope in the dark, viz. *ψηλαφᾶν*; because in that discourse he speaks of the knowledge of a God being learnt from nature, and from ourselves even, though unenlightened by revelation.

own creatures. And in that moment when He was reconciling earth with heaven, He recommended to the disciple whom He loved His afflicted Mother, and the disciple to her.

67. He subjected Himself to the regulations of the public worship, of which He Himself was the Object, though unknown by the teachers in Israel: He, "the King of kings, and the Lord of lords," subjected Himself also to worldly powers.

68. He honoured poor fishermen and a tax-gatherer with His particular friendship, and called them "brothers!"

69. He, whose compassionate love embraced all mankind, lived, suffered, and died for all men; from Adam and Eve, down to those who, at the last day, when the trumpet shall sound, "shall rise again incorruptible; and we shall be changed." He shewed especial love to His people, that knew Him not: He wept over Jerusalem; and He thus warned its inhabitants: "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered together thy children, as the hen doth gather chickens under her wings, and thou wouldest not." And immediately before He ascended into heaven, He told His Apostles: "But you shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you, and you shall be witnesses unto Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and Samaria, and even to the uttermost part of the

earth ;" first to the Jews, then the Samaritans, who sprung from the Israelites, and afterwards to all nations.

70. Though our Saviour, on every occasion, both taught and practised love and humility, yet He exercised these virtues in a special manner towards His enemies. Alas ! we see those who call themselves Christians, and even consider themselves as such, because they lead a respectable life, and perform the outward duties of Christianity, and even assist at the public worship of the Church, and partake of that feast of love in which their Redeemer giveth Himself to us ; even such we see full of hatred and envy against their neighbours ! Have these self-deluded Christians never read, never heard, what the Son of God hath said on the subject ? Listen : " If, therefore, thou offer thy gift at the altar, and there thou remember that thy brother hath any thing against thee, leave there thy offering before the altar, and go first to be reconciled to thy brother ; and then coming, thou shalt offer thy gift." (St. Matthew v. 23, 24.) Hence, according to this doctrine, it is not sufficient that we bear no hatred and malice against our neighbour ; we must also endeavour so to act, as far as circumstances may allow, that our neighbour shall have nothing against us ; and, moreover, out of love for him, we should endeavour to banish all angry feelings from his heart ; which, as long as he entertains them, remove him from

God. How earnestly does He enjoin love for our enemies! How much did He practise it Himself! Let us listen to His words: "You have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thy enemy. But I say to you, Love your enemies; do good to them that hate you; and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you: that you may be children of your Father who is in heaven; who maketh His sun to rise upon the good and bad, and raineth upon the just and the unjust. For if you love them that love you, what reward shall you have? Do not even the publicans do this? Be you, therefore, perfect; as also your heavenly Father is perfect." (St. Matthew v. 43, 48.)

71. His whole life was a sacrifice of love, a constant offering for ungrateful enemies. When hanging on the cross, He prayed for those that were crucifying Him: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." This was an act of love which the sublime prophet, to whom the circumstances of the Messiah's birth, life, sufferings, and glory were so clearly revealed, had before foretold: "And He hath borne the sins of many, and hath prayed for the transgressors." (Isaias liii. 12.)

72. In that Divine prayer which He Himself hath taught us, He commands us to pray to "our Father who is in heaven." And we say likewise, "and forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors." But at the end of this



Divine prayer, which embraces heaven and earth, He only returns again to this one prayer, and saith: "For if you will forgive men their offences, your heavenly Father will forgive you also your offences. But if you will not forgive men, neither will your Father forgive you your offences." (St. Matthew vi. 14, 15.)

73. We need hardly remark, how our Saviour wishes us not, when we pray to our Father, that each one should think of himself alone, or should pray for himself alone, but for others also: hence we must not say, *my* Father, but *our* Father who art in heaven, give *us* this day our daily bread; and forgive *us* our debts, as we also forgive our debtors; and lead *us* not into temptation, but deliver *us* from evil. We unite in spirit with our neighbours, as with children of one Father, in the first three petitions, by which we pray for the glorifying of His power in us; and in the last four we lay our own and our neighbours' wants before His fatherly heart.

74. In that prayer which our Saviour offered for us immediately before His passion, in which He prayed for His disciples and for us, He made one request for the greatest of all His gifts, viz. that we might be united with Him, and through Him with His heavenly Father!

75. Praying for all those that have injured us, or against whom we nourish some little ill-feeling, is a wholesome means for supporting

and animating that love, of which our naturally selfish heart stands so much in need.

76. Hence it would be both wise and kind of us, it would be profitable to ourselves and our neighbour, and very pleasing to God, if, when any injury and affront were offered to us, we prayed for the offenders; and if, when we do any injury to others, we pray at the same time for those whom *we* have injured. It would be also highly pleasing to the Almighty, if we prayed for our neighbour under any vexing remembrance of, or hostile feeling against, him, whenever he may have touched the too sensitive spider-web of our self-love. And as all the nearer relations in which we stand with others, furnish us with more opportunities for the exercise of love than towards those with whom we have but *little* intercourse; so both we who suffer, and we who are the cause of the sufferings, &c. must consider, the one with inward sorrow and humility, and the other with heartfelt forgiveness, and with the humiliating conviction that we deserve much more than our present sufferings; and moreover, that it would shew the shameless self-love of a proud and wicked heart, were we, "who account the long-suffering of our Lord as our salvation," not to shew compassion to our brother, who, with us, is destined to the like salvation. Should we not have good cause to fear that terrible judgment which befell the unmerciful servant who "throttled" his fellow-servant, and threw him

into prison for a small debt, after his master had forgiven him a great debt? Our Lord, having finished the parable, said, "So also shall My heavenly Father do to you, if you forgive not every one his brother from your hearts." (St. Matthew xviii. 35.)

77. But in unfriendly as well as in other relations, oftentimes we cannot speak to our neighbour, because in the one case we might only exasperate him the more, and in the other we might trouble him. But nothing can hinder us from loving him; nothing can hinder us from praying for him! A virtuous mother once gave this advice to her virtuous daughter, who was married to a worldly husband: "My daughter, often speak of God to thy husband; but still oftener speak to God about thy husband!" Men who live here in a false security, commonly defer their repentance, and turn a deaf ear to the most solemn admonitions, like a debtor closes his chamber-door; but the ear of God is ever open to devout prayer.

78. Our petitions are never in vain, even should the object for which we pray not be granted. For as the "peace" which the disciples of Jesus wished to whatever house they entered, rested on the children of peace, but returned to them again if none such were in the house; so is it with the blessing of prayer, if it be earnest, and be directed to God from a faithful confidence and a hearty love for our neighbour.

79. If we love God and our neighbour with our whole heart, and if our neighbour's soul be dear to us, so must we fervently pray that God's name may be "hallowed," that is, sanctified; that His kingdom may come, and that His will may be done on earth as it is in heaven. But what is the will of God? "That all men be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth." Wherefore we should pray for our holy Church, for its bishops, its pastors, and for the flock; for all who call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and for those who do not call upon Him—for all men! Yea, the arms of prayer embrace not only this earth, they embrace likewise the souls that depart hence in peace, but yet requiring some purification for their venial sins; and being no longer exposed to dangers as we are, they no doubt pray more earnestly and powerfully for us than we do for them; still, as they suffer more than we, they have a holy right to our prayers.

80. Prayer exalts us to a high eminence even here upon earth. For by it we unite ourselves not only with the "just made perfect," who pray for us at the foot of the throne, but with the Son of God Himself, "who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us," and with "our advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the just," &c.

81. The eternal High Priest, "who is able also to save for ever them that come to God by Him; always living to make intercession for



us; He who prays for us, and can Himself hear our prayer, honours us with an active share in the work of reconciliation! He wishes not only that we should earnestly co-operate with Him for our own salvation, but also that we should labour with Him for the salvation of our brothers and sisters, for the salvation of all men! Thus speaks the prince of the Apostles to the faithful: "But you are a chosen generation, a kingly priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people." And the disciple whom Jesus loved greeted the seven Churches in Asia with these words: "Grace be unto you, and peace from Him that is, and that was, and that is to come, and from the seven spirits which are before His throne, and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the first-begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth, who hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in His blood, and hath made us a kingdom, and priests to God and His Father, to Him be glory and empire for ever and ever. Amen." (Apocalypse i. 4-6.)

82. Can we, then, be allowed, even here below, though sinners dwelling in the dust of the earth, and still exposed to dangers, to take a part in the great work of reconciliation, and thus to become co-operators with the Son of God? Yes.

83. No false delusion of unworthiness must prevent us from doing what God commands. We know well that our prayer, so far as we

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mans viii. 26.)

84. I think it is clear, from many passages  
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that prays, although this certainly gives great  
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done to thee, as thou hast believed."

85. But the Son of God shewed Himself par-  
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o believe, Lord; help my unbelief." Then Saviour drove the devil out of him. (See Mark ix. 17-27.)

6. So also did He speak to the sick woman, who was under an issue of blood twelve years. Though humility she was unwilling to trouble Him with her petition, and therefore, trusting in His power, she came in the crowd behind Him, and touched His garment, saying within herself, "If I shall touch but His garment I shall be whole;" and immediately she was healed of the evil. And He said to her, "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole: go in peace, and be thou whole of thy disease." (St. Mark v. 25-34.)

87. In like manner He spoke to Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue, who had brought Him much, saying, "My daughter is at the point of death; come, lay Thy hand upon her, that she may be safe, and may live. But while he was yet speaking, some came from the ruler of the synagogue's house, saying, Thy daughter is dead. . . . But Jesus, having heard the word that was spoken, said to the ruler, Fear not; only believe. . . . And He entereth in where the damsel was lying. And taking the damsel by the hand, He restored her to life. (St. Mark v. 22, 23, 35, 43.)

88. The Gospel has preserved for our warning and encouragement two beautiful examples of the most lively confidence and heartiest unmi-

consider our own worth, or rather unworthiness, would be quite useless and unprofitable, if God did not give it efficacy. Yea, we could not pray in any manner pleasing unto Him, if His Spirit did not also "help our infirmity;" if the Spirit Himself did not ask for us "with unspeakable groanings." (See Epistle to Romans viii. 26.)

84. I think it is clear, from many passages of Holy Writ, that not only the holiness of him that prays, although this certainly gives great weight to our petitions, but the "living faith" especially with which we pray, makes our prayers powerful. Hence we often read that our Saviour, in granting a petition, said, "Thy faith hath made thee whole;" or, again, "Be it done to thee, as thou hast believed."

85. But the Son of God shewed Himself particularly pleased with those who united a profound humility with heroic faith; and this appeared on many occasions, if I may venture so to name those events which He Himself caused to happen. When the father of a child who, from his infancy, had been tormented by an evil spirit, begged Him to heal his son, but doubted of his request being granted, because the disciples were not able to help him, saying to our Saviour, "If Thou canst do any thing, help us, having compassion on us;" Jesus saith to him, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." And immediately the father of the boy crying out, with tears, said,



“I do believe, Lord; help my unbelief.” Then our Saviour drove the devil out of him. (See St. Mark ix. 17-27.)

86. So also did He speak to the sick woman, “who was under an issue of blood twelve years;” through humility she was unwilling to trouble Him with her petition, and therefore, trusting in His power, she came in the crowd behind Him, and touched His garment, saying within herself, “If I shall touch but His garment I shall be whole;” and immediately she was healed of the evil. And He said to her, “Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole: go in peace, and be thou whole of thy disease.” (St. Mark v. 25-34.)

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lity on the part of two Gentiles, one a Roman centurion, and another a Canaanean woman. The centurion having asked our Saviour to heal his servant, who was sick of the palsy, received this answer from Jesus, "I will come and heal him." And the centurion said, "Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter my roof; but only say the word, and my servant shall be healed," &c. And Jesus, hearing this, marvelled; and said to those that followed Him, "Amen I say to you, I have not found so great faith in Israel." Then He said to the centurion, "Go, and as thou hast believed, so be it done to thee." And the servant was healed at the same hour. (St. Matthew viii. 5-13.)

89. Jesus met the Canaanean woman with apparent harshness, in order to give her an opportunity of exercising faith and humility to a high degree. "And she followed Him, crying out, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously troubled by a devil. And He answered her not a word. Then His disciples came and besought Him, saying, Send her away, for she crieth after us. And He, answering, said, I was not sent but to the sheep that are lost of the house of Israel. But she came and adored Him, saying, Lord, help me. Who, answering, said, It is not good to take the bread of the children, and to cast it to the dogs. But she said, Yea, Lord, for the whelps also eat of the crumbs that fall from the table of their masters. Then Jesus,

answering, said to her, O woman, great is thy faith; be it done to thee as thou wilt: and her daughter was cured from that hour." (St. Matthew xv. 21-28; St. Mark vii. 24-30.)

90. For three years our Saviour had instructed His disciples by word and by example, had taught them how to pray, had given them a form of prayer; named after Himself, "The Lord's Prayer;" but on that last evening of His still mortal life, on that evening in which the Source of Life poured itself out so abundantly in "words of eternal life," He thus spoke to them: "Amen, amen I say to you, if you ask the Father any thing in My name He will give it you. Hitherto you have not asked any thing in My name. Ask, and you shall receive, that your joy may be full." (St. John xvi. 23, 24.) And in St. Matthew He had already said, "Again, I say to you, that if two of you shall consent upon earth concerning any thing whatsoever they shall ask, it shall be done to them by My Father who is in heaven. For where there are two or three gathered together in My name, there I am in the midst of them;" but it seems they had mistaken this expression, "in My name," like they mistook many other words, or they did not reflect upon it, and hence did not apply it to themselves. He had scattered this, like so many other seed-corns, which in due time should produce fruit, just as His Spirit, "the Spirit of Truth," either by the maxims of His Divine word, or by His ministers, or by

means of other enlightened and favoured souls, may allow a word to fall into our heart, upon the true meaning of which a clear light arises only later, and this often gradually, often all at once. This frequently happens, according to the will of God, who imparts the gifts of the Spirit as our inward state requires them, and suffers us to remain children in knowledge, because our good will is still weak, in order that too much truth may not blind us nor confuse us, before love becomes powerful in us; so that we can say with St. Augustine, "Da quod jubes, et jube quod vis." But often, very often this knowledge is not given by our own fault, when we neglect the seed-corns, so that they grow not, or the shoot, so that it flourishes not; for such neglect we are accountable to the great "Sower."

But let us now return back to the injunction of the Son of God, that in His name we should pray to our heavenly Father. This command is grounded on our relation to God the Father, and to God the Son. God the Son "inhabiteth light inaccessible, whom no man hath seen, nor can see." He is the Eternal Thought, which, from eternity, expressed itself in eternal words, "by which all things were made; and without Him was made nothing that was made. In Him was life; and the life was in the light of men." The Son is the Word. He is the "Be it done," which called forth all creation from nothing. He is



“And it was done;” by whom the whole world subsisteth. Had He not become our Mediator and Redeemer between God and us, we should have remained in our original guilt, though He would still have been a kind of mediator between us and God, as He is between God and all spirits; between God and the whole creation; He “whom God hath appointed heir of all things; by whom also He made the world. Who being the brightness of His glory, and the figure<sup>1</sup> of his substance, and upholding all things by the word of His power,” &c. (Hebrews i. 2, 3.)

91. But in a peculiar and most intimate manner, He is our Mediator of redemption between God and us. By Him, “the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father,” we are inwardly united with the Father and with the Holy Ghost, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, and with His love is poured forth into the hearts of the faithful, whereby we cry, “Abba, Father.” Yea, the same Apostle saith: “And because you are sons, God hath sent the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.” (Galatians iv. 6.) When the Spirit of the Son recommends the children of God to the Father, the Son also prays for them, although “the Father Himself loveth us,” as the Son declareth;

<sup>1</sup> “Figure,” *χαρακτήρ*, that is, the impression of His substance. St. Chrysostom explains the expression by these words: *τὸ ὅμοιον εἶναι κατὰ πάντα, κατ’ οὐσίαν.*

“Because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came out from God.” But precisely because God loves us, “whom no man hath seen,” so He gave “His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting.” And again: “No one knoweth the Son but the Father; neither doth any one know the Father but the Son, and he to whom it shall please the Son to reveal Him.” And the Son saith: “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No man cometh to the Father but by Me.”

92. To pray in the name of Jesus is the same as acknowledging that we can only hope for our petitions being granted through the infinite merits of Jesus Christ; and hence we offer to the Eternal Father the sacrifice of His Son, beseeching Him that, for the sake of His Son, whom He gave us through love, He would have pity on us, that we may all receive of His fulness grace for grace.

93. Since to the Son “all things are delivered by the Father;” since to Him all power in heaven and on earth has been given; and since likewise the Father and the Son always will the same things, Jesus has said: “Whatever you shall ask the Father in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you shall ask Me any thing in My name, that I will do.” (St. John xiv. 13, 14.)

94. Some wicked enemies of the Cross of

Christ are accustomed to ridicule certain passages, in which the Son of God says, "that whatever the just ask for, they shall receive;" and these men inquire, "If experience confirms this promise?" Such mockers interpret the words of our Saviour in a sensual, not in a spiritual manner. But all true Christians know that God ever attends to the prayers of His children, when they come from a lowly and devoted heart; and that even when He does not grant just what they ask for, He gives them something better in return. He always hears prayers for the forgiveness of sin, for our sanctification, for increase in holiness, and for the gifts of His Holy Spirit; provided our petitions be made in earnest, and accompanied with a resolution to strive after holiness with our whole heart, by the destruction of our self-will, by true self-denial, and ardent love of God. This we can do; for we can depend upon the grace of God to assist us. Thus our Saviour speaks: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened. What man is there among you, of whom, if his son shall ask bread, will he reach him a stone? Or if he shall ask him a fish, will he reach him a serpent? If you, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in

heaven give good things to them that ask Him?" (St. Matthew vii. 7-11.)

95. Prayer is the breath that enkindles, nourishes, and supports the fire of love in our hearts, when it is said in good earnest, and does not degenerate into a mere lip-service, with which we deceive ourselves, and then wonder that our prayers are of no avail. Our Saviour told the Jews what Isaias had already said in the name of God: "This people honoureth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me." (St. Mark vii. 6.)

96. How often is even the "Lord's Prayer" profaned, when it is prattled over in a thoughtless way; as if we could serve God, who requires our heart, with words we pay no heed to! The oftener we repeat this most sacred prayer, the more do we only profane it when it is recited in this way, with a quick tongue, and without thought or feeling. Our prayer then ascends, not as a burning sacrifice to heaven, but as smoke that hides the countenance of God from us, by placing itself between Him and us. When the Son of God was struggling with death, and most fervently praying for us in the garden, then a bloody sweat ran down the tender limbs of His holy body, devoted as a sacrifice for us; and shall we dare to repay such love with senseless prattling? Can we reach eternity in this way? Even the most sacred words are unmeaning in the mouth of him whose heart is far from God.



97. As in private prayer we exercise acts of the love of God and the love of our neighbour, so also we do the same in public prayer, at which two, or three, or more persons may assist. To such prayers our Saviour has promised special graces. Let us hear Him: "Again I say to you, that if two of you shall consent upon earth, concerning any thing whatsoever they shall ask, it shall be done to them by My Father who is in heaven. For where there are two or three gathered together in My name, there I am in the midst of them." (St. Matthew xviii. 19, 20.) What encouragement have we here from such love towards us, and for a corresponding love on our part for Him! What ingratitude and slothfulness are we guilty of, when we heed not this sweet invitation!

98. As this kind of prayer is at the same time a petition for the good of our neighbour, so there breathes from it so much the more love, and consequently we have in those prayers so much more grounds for hope.

99. But not only persons who live in one place, but even those who are separated from each other, may unite in common prayer; nay, the words of our Saviour, "on earth," appear to relate to such a union of distant persons.

100. If such efficacy be promised by the Son of God to the united prayers of two or three individuals, how powerful must be the prayers of a whole community assembled together in a

temple dedicated to the service of God! To such an assembly, in the midst of whom our Saviour descends on our altars, veiled in visible forms, but perceived by the eye of believing love, how powerful doth He shew Himself! And how efficacious also must be the prayers of His Church, rising in all parts of the world from many thousand temples!

101. But how very powerful must His presence be in those sacred Councils of the Church, presided over by the shepherd of His flock, whom the Holy Ghost hath placed as Bishop, "to rule the Church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood." (Acts of the Apost. xx. 28.) I must not omit mentioning that our Saviour, immediately after He gave His disciples power to bind and to loose, gave also the promise that He would hear the prayers of those who should unite together in His name. We may draw conclusions from small things to great. If, then, the prayers of two or three children of God united together be so efficacious, how much more powerful must be the prayers of the whole Church! how much more powerful also must be the Councils of the shepherds under the guidance of the Holy Spirit!

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## CHAPTER XIV.

1. HE that prays not is no Christian ; he that prays slothfully is not a good Christian.

2. The necessity of prayer has been recognised in all places and at all times ; and whoever prayed in a manner pleasing unto God was always heard.

3. The humble offering up of our will to the will of God, with the conviction that God knows better than we do what is for our good, and with a child-like confidence that He is desirous of bestowing upon us His choicest gifts, these are the necessary conditions of prayer well pleasing to God.

4. He who is not indifferent about the salvation of his soul ; who is not entangled in worldly cares, nor carried away by the tumults of the world, nor inflamed by his passions, nor sunk in pleasures which he is not willing to renounce ; nor deluded by a vain, false wisdom, which represents prayer as unnecessary, or persuades him not to believe in a God, nor in an eternal reward of the good and punishment of the wicked, or that he should believe God pays no attention to our prayers, and should imagine we stand in no need of God's assistance, in order to be virtuous here and happy hereafter ; such a person will scarcely neglect entirely the duty of prayer. He believes in the Gospel with an

historical faith and therefore he will be the less inclined to omit it.

5. But this "historical faith" in the Gospel is not a *living* faith "in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and justice, and sanctification, and redemption." (1 Cor. i. 30.) Without this living faith we can pray neither with humility nor with confidence. He who possesseth not this living faith, to him may be applied the words of the Apostle James: "You ask, and receive not, because you ask amiss." (Chap. iv. 3.)

6. We pray not with humility, nor with child-like confidence, nor with an earnest offering of our own will, if we do not pray for the gift of humility, or for its continuance and increase, as well as for the increase of our confidence and strength to offer our will to God. It is not sufficient that we beg of the Almighty to grant us those spiritual gifts which we desire to obtain; we must, at the same time, beseech Him to give us the assistance of His Spirit, whereby to attain them.

7. But can we hope, *dare* we hope that God will grant us His graces, if we dedicate a few fleeting minutes to Him only in the morning and at evening, and pass the remainder of the day without thinking of Him? Should we be satisfied with our children, were they to salute us only every morning, and every evening only to wish us good night, without ever troubling themselves about us the remainder of the day?



or were they to speak kindly to us only when they wanted something from us? Those parents would love their children but little who should be content to concern themselves as little about them as most Christians—by far the greater part of Christians—seem to concern themselves about their heavenly Father! And would loving parents bless with joy their children, morning and evening, if they knew that, during the whole day, they followed their own will?

8. We cannot draw nigh unto God with recollection of thought, and still less with humility of heart, if we suffer our mind and heart to be filled with worldly cares, worldly schemes, and earthly endeavours; if we stain our soul with countless offences against love, which become more and more habitual the less we heed them. Without a special miracle of grace, which, under such circumstances, we cannot in any way expect, it is impossible at once to tear ourselves away from the dissipations of a life that daily sinks into a deeper forgetfulness of God; that degenerates with more frequent and base offences against the love of our neighbour, and that defiles itself with so many lustful thoughts. Like the rustic who entices to the hive the swarm of bees by merely sounding hollow brass, we cannot at once recall our thoughts and ideas from the four winds of heaven.

9. On this account wise philosophers, who

have recognised the high destiny of man, and those also who followed the light of reason, as well as those who were illuminated by a heavenly revelation, have always recommended and practised still and deep meditation. Some retired for a year into solitude; others found solitude even in cities, amidst the intercourse of men, whether it was under shady trees, or in the halls of temples, or in their quiet chambers. Pythagoras lived for a year in a cavern; and the five years' silence which he recommended and enjoined to his disciples, proves both his strictness as well as their willing obedience and reverence; for from his schools came forth philosophers, statesmen, and heroes, whom all antiquity honoured and admired. Many passages from the writings of Plato and Xenophon prove the high value which the greatest of the Grecian sages, Socrates, set upon still contemplation, in which he recognised the life of the soul, and the preparation for an eternal state hereafter. Three times was Moses alone with God, fasting for forty days and forty nights, on Mount Sinai: "And the Lord spoke to Moses face to face, as a man is wont to speak to his friend."<sup>1</sup> Elias fasted for forty days and forty nights alone in meditation, before God manifested Himself to him, which He did not in a rushing storm that tore up the rocks, nor in the earthquake, nor in fire, but in the "whistling of a gentle air." From his child-

<sup>1</sup> Exodus xxxiii. 11.

hood St. John the Baptist, the forerunner of the Son of God, he of whom it was said, "Amongst those that are born of women, there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist,"<sup>1</sup> was prepared in the desert for his holy office; nay, the Son of God Himself, "in the days of His flesh," was, after His baptism, led by the Spirit into the desert, where, having devoted forty days and forty nights to contemplation, He suffered Himself to be tempted by the devil. But He drove the wicked spirit away in confusion; and thus, by His example, He taught us with what weapons we are to fight against him.

10. All the Fathers of the Church have recommended consideration, and have practised it themselves. And the Church of God has ever made it a duty incumbent on men and women, who, withdrawing themselves from the world, have dedicated themselves entirely to the service of their Creator. The saints of all ages have exhorted the faithful, as far as their circumstances of life will allow, daily, at a fixed hour,<sup>2</sup> to draw from the fulness of the Divine

<sup>1</sup> St. Luke vii. 28.

<sup>2</sup> Every one knows by experience, that every exercise becomes more easy and profitable, when we practise it at fixed hours. For as, according to a true saying, "the morning hath gold on its lips;" so it is the more proper that we should, by prayer and consideration, offer the first part of the day as a morning sacrifice to our Lord; and so likewise, in the evening, self-exami-

gifts, by meditating on the attributes of God, on His infinite mercies, on the doctrine of our holy faith, on the multitude of our sins, on the life and death of Christ, and by examining into our spiritual wants. Not with levity, not superficially; for it might cost us our eternal salvation. Not with anxious timidity must we meditate, for we represent ourselves as we are to our heavenly Father; we pray to Him from the bottom of a heart that speaketh not; and we offer Him the merits of His own beloved Son. Our constant want is the love of God: may we have more and more of this love! Let us sigh after it; let us pray for it; let us struggle for it in prayer; let us exclaim with Jacob, when he wrestled with the angel: "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me," and we shall certainly be blessed.

11. It will profit us in distractions of every kind. The merest representations from common life oftentimes surround us like a cloud of dust. Bad thoughts rise up. Then we must drive the dust away, not by violent emotions of the soul, which only tend to raise more dust; but when we become conscious of our state, we must remain quiet, with our eye steadfastly fixed on God; then will the cloud pass away. But these bad thoughts we should drive from us with horror, without allowing ourselves to be frightened by them; for if we detest them, nation made before the all-seeing eye of God, is the most suitable for an evening offering.



they cannot hurt us. The offering of Abraham was no less pleasing unto God because an impure bird came upon it; since he drove it away. And should we also, in our contest against vain and sinful distractions, not attain to perfect contemplation, still the fidelity with which we endeavour to do so will be no less pleasing unto God.

12. Should the enemy of God and man, by the suggestion of bad thoughts, or by the representation of our sins, seem desirous of preventing us from offering our joy and courage as sacrifices to God; we must suffer this temptation as conducive to our humiliation, but not to our confidence. And yet even so, we should rejoice with the great Apostle, that "power is made perfect in infirmity." To the prophet Zacharias the Lord shewed "Jesus, the high-priest, standing before the Angel of the Lord; and Satan stood on his right hand to be his adversary. And the Lord said to Satan, "The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; and the Lord that chose Jerusalem, rebuke thee. Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? And Jesus<sup>1</sup> was clothed with filthy garments; and he stood before the face of the Angel: who answered, and said to them that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And he said to him: Behold, I have

<sup>1</sup> Jesus, alias Josue, the son of Josedec, the high-priest of that time.

taken away thy iniquity, and have clothed thee with change of garments.”<sup>1</sup> (Zacharias iii. 1-4.)

13. The practice of this inward, silent prayer is more the business of the heart than of the understanding: “My son, give me thy heart, and let thy eyes keep My ways.” (Proverbs xxiii. 26.)

14. If we present ourselves to God with the fidelity of a generous love, and with the disposition of the pious child Samuel, when he answered the Lord, who called “Samuel,” “Here I am . . . . Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth,” we shall then understand His voice. Doth not the Son of God say: “If any one love Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him: and We will come to him, and will make Our abode with him?” Doth He not say: “Behold, I stand at the gate, and knock. If any man shall hear My voice, and open to Me the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me?” (Apocalypse iii. 20.) Should we be desirous of hearing Him, we shall be able to understand Him; and then we must *only listen*.

<sup>1</sup> It is evident that, in this passage, as in many others, the expression, “the Angel of the Lord,” signifies the Son of God; it is also clear, that the word ‘Lord’ is here different from the word ‘Lord’ used in other passages. Thus we have the following verse in Genesis: “And the Lord rained upon Sodom and Gomorrhaim brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven.” (xix. 24.)

There is a time for work, in which, like the pious Martha, we may labour and toil; but the time of prayer is a time for humbly and lovingly listening; for sitting at the feet of Jesus with the devout Mary, and hearkening to His words. As Christ Himself hath said, "This is the one thing necessary."

15. To this inward prayer St. Paul excites us, when he says, "Be renewed in the spirit of your mind;" and how shall we be able to do this, without the assistance of Him who hath said, "Behold, I make all things new?" (Apoc. xxi. 5.)

16. Every practice is liable to be abused. Silent inward prayer is praised by certain enthusiasts in such a way, that it is more depreciated than recommended; yea, it is even exposed to the mockery of worldlings and other such characters, who understand not the nature of prayer. But it is a dangerous enthusiasm to make the essence of this exercise consist in the soul falling into a kind of rapture, and, without any co-operation on her part, in giving herself up to the Divine influence in such a way, as to be unconscious of all clear ideas and precise conceptions; of all acts of faith, hope, and love; of any elevation of the soul, and of all petitions and wishes; nay, some have gone so far as to dream of a case, in which every consideration of ourself, even an act of humility, would not be allowed, nor a desire for our eternal salvation; no, not even a desire for an increase of

love ! A soul that has arrived at such a high degree of perfection, say these teachers, should, with perfect calmness, suffer herself to be filled, like an empty vessel, with the gift of the Divine visitation, and divest herself of every feeling ; that this is true rest and the highest love ! That whosoever should disturb this calm within himself, whether by repeating a prayer,—even though it were the Lord's Prayer,—or by raising a sense of gratitude, or by feeling the most ardent longing after God, that such a one would sin a little against this love ! That by his infidelity he would deprive himself of the highest favours, and sink down again to the lowest degree. In fine, others again following the guidance of their own supposed perfections, have gone so far as to assert, that when the highly-favoured soul is in such a state as to lose all her will, she may so entirely give herself up to the will of God as not to wish for any thing herself, but to be indifferent even about her eternal salvation, and all other graces she might be able to receive from God ; and hence, that she should neither desire any thing, nor pray, and that this state of the soul might be permanent !

17. Far be it from us, to consider these enthusiasts as hypocrites ; but who sees not that this is an error, as dangerous as it is senseless and foolish ? To what a degree of pride must those have reached who imagine they possess the deepest humility, while at the same time they



believe themselves to be above all the ordinary means appointed by the Almighty for our salvation! They fancy themselves to be higher than Isaias was, and the Seraphim whom he saw before the throne of God, when they covered their face with two wings, and their feet also, and with two wings flew; and one cried to the other, "Holy, holy, holy, the Lord God of hosts, all the earth is full of His glory!" (Isaias vi. 3.) They fancy themselves to be exalted even above St. Paul, who exhorted not only the Corinthians to run, like the combatants in the Grecian games, that they might obtain the prize; but he said even of himself, "I therefore so run, not as at an uncertainty; I so fight, not as one beating the air. But I chastise my body, and bring it into subjection; lest, perhaps, when I have preached to others, I myself should become a castaway." To the Philippians he writes: "Not as though I had already attained, or were already perfect; but I follow after, if I may by any means apprehend wherein I am also apprehended by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended. But one thing I do; forgetting the things that are behind, and stretching forth myself to those that are before, I press towards the mark, to the prize of the supernal vocation of God in Christ Jesus." (Chap. iii. 12-14.) But can we wonder, if a well-meaning female enthusiast, thoroughly acquainted with holy Scripture, but who imagined she had discovered for herself

and her followers another way of attaining perfection different from that of the Apostle, who has commanded us to pray, to watch, and to struggle for eternal salvation; I mean, Madame de Guyon, who supposed herself to be the bride mentioned in the Canticle of Canticles? God, however, had pity on her, for she never wished to separate herself from the Church, in which she believed till her last breath; but many still allow themselves to be seduced by her writings, while others confound the vain and imaginary dreams of this enthusiast with that which holy souls experience in secret inward prayer, to which the Church of Christ has at all times encouraged her faithful children. He who has sucked at her breast the pure milk of doctrine, and does not wish to follow his own way, will neither revel in over-heated fantasies, nor will he sneer, with short-sighted worldlings, at the Divine visitations in which the Almighty pours out His graces on those souls who devote themselves entirely to Him. "Oh, how hast Thou multiplied thy mercy, O God! But the children of men shall put their trust under the covert of Thy wings. They shall be inebriated with the plenty of Thy house; and Thou shalt make them drink of the torrent of Thy pleasure. For with Thee is the fountain of life; and in Thy light we shall see light." (Psalm xxxv. 8-10.)

18. But the visitations of God are neither always alike, nor has He fixed limits to the

sweet sensations with which He refreshes souls, nor to the greatness of the gifts He imparts to them.

19. Every soul that wishes to consecrate herself to God with her whole heart, and offers with humility this heart to Him, will certainly be visited by Him; but not always in a sensible manner.

20. Devout teachers, who have been or are acquainted with the ways of God, have all agreed and do agree herein, that many souls are often and richly refreshed with the consoling feeling and sense of God's grace, while others are not so. Many times those who are still weak in faith and in love are inexpressibly refreshed; while, on the other hand, those who are already strong in good works are suffered to remain in dryness. The still tender plant requires a hand to water it, while others, who have already struck deep their roots, grow the stronger when they are exposed to the keen east-wind and the mid-day scorching sun. The weak man is refreshed by trials; the strong is proved by afflictions of the soul, in order that by afflictions he may become the more perfect. To each one God gives according to their necessities, and in His own time.

21. Our Saviour feigned as if He wished to pass through the town of Emmaus, in order that the desire of the two disciples might become more lively, who did not recognise Him for the person He was, but loved Him because

He spoke to them of Him. Often doth He appear to withdraw Himself from loving souls. Then their sun sinks; then they fear to be in darkness, and they exclaim with those disciples: "Stay with us, because it is towards evening, and the day is now far spent." (St. Luke xxiv. 29.)

22. Holy souls have often for a whole year not experienced any sense of His presence; but His secret grace worked the more powerfully on their faith, on the fidelity of their love, on the steadfastness of their hope, and on the watchfulness of their humility. They saw Him not, because He was within them. He strengthened them; and while they considered themselves as unworthy of His consolations (and even the saints, in reality, are not worthy), they walked after Him with unshaken steadfastness, though in darkness, till they found Him "whom their soul loved;" till He kissed them "with the kiss of His mouth."

23. But often doth He withdraw Himself, for the correction of those who begin to grow secure by the sweetness of His refreshments; or who consider His gifts as their own, and wish to depend upon that which was only lent them.

24. It would be a great and a dangerous error, if such gifts, which are given us only as "means" to attain the highest happiness—an union with God—should be considered as the greatest. Just as the dew of heaven, which



the plant drinks in, is not in any way the fruit, the growth of which it only promotes ; so much less are the sweet feelings of God's presence the highest blessing He hath destined for us. In the salutary light of His visitation pious souls bloom. But the bloom will die away, and the tree will appear to mourn, if He ripen not the yet invisible fruit.

25. The one thing necessary is, to *continue* in faith, in love, in hope, and in humility, without which faith, love, and hope evaporate before the soul is conscious of it.

26. Delusion is dangerous. But the children of God run no danger of being deluded, so long as their faith shews itself living by good works, and by the avoidance of sin ; so long as their love of God shews itself strong in true love for their neighbour ; so long as humility teaches them that we can do nothing without God's assistance. " Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abide in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine ; you the branches." (St. John xv. 4, 5.)

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## CHAPTER XV.

1. HE that kindles a fire in his chamber on a cold winter's morning will not long enjoy the heat if he keep not the fire burning ; and so is

it with many Christians. They continue their morning prayers, and some—though the number is but small—seek to walk before God in the still contemplation of mental prayer; and so they ascend unto the house of the Lord. They endeavour to be recollected before the Divine Presence, and even make many good resolutions.

2. But how quickly do all their good resolutions and their religious feelings, all their good thoughts, vanish away! Only in the evening, perhaps, they become aware of their infidelity, when during the day they committed some grievous sin. A wholesome shame produces in them a resolution which they renew in the morning; but this also, like the preceding resolutions, is frustrated. Thus for many long years they live on; they may be compared to Sisyphus in the Grecian mythology, who was condemned in hell to roll a great stone up to the top of a mountain. He rolled it and rolled it again; but before he reached the top, the stone always tumbled down to the bottom.

3. Tired with the fruitless labour, such disheartened Christians renounce mental prayer; and even for vocal prayer they become more and more cold and indifferent, quite disbelieving, perhaps, in the power of prayer, and consequently in that of religion; or they continue to pray in a dead faith and to live in a dead faith, like to a plant which, scarcely rooted in

the dry soil, bears no flowers, and therefore produces no fruit.

4. And yet, in the beginning of their new life, they had experienced something of the strength of grace in vocal and mental prayer; but now they have lost it, and perhaps inwardly murmur at their unhappy state, from which they imagine the Divine grace is still able to free them.

5. Such lazy, lukewarm, and ungrateful souls should reflect deeply on what God said to the Israelites, by the mouth of the Prophet Osee: "What shall I do to thee, O Ephraim? what shall I do to thee, O Jude? Your mercy is as a morning cloud, and as the dew that goeth away in the morning." (vi. 4.)

6. Confounding the means with the end is a common and dangerous error among men in every thing, and especially in spiritual matters. He that takes the means for the end will quickly be disappointed, because he will find himself deceived. The cause of his being deceived lies, however, not in the means, but in himself. The object of all the Divine helps to salvation for men is, their reconciliation with God and their union with Him. To attain this object, we must make use of all the means which He hath offered us. In vain doth he pray who despises and neglects the holy sacraments; in vain also would he have recourse to the sacraments who wished not to pray.

7. But all these means will profit *him* but

little who thinks of God *only* when he uses them; and even then he thinks not of God as he ought to do, for if he did he would think of Him often in the course of the day.

8. The Lord thus spoke to our spiritual father Abraham: "I am the Almighty God: walk before Me and be perfect." (Gen. xvii. 1.)

9. To "walk before God" means, in all places to think of Him, with an active and efficacious faith; to remember more and more frequently that His all-seeing eye is upon us at all times; that He to whom nothing is little because nothing is great, beholds each one of us as if every individual were the *only* object of His view, of His protection, of His chastising justice, or of His compassionating love.

10. Hence not only our actions that immediately relate to His service, but our *whole life* ought to be consecrated to His service, because all that we do or cause to be done should be done with reference to Him and for His sake. Thus writes St. Paul to the Corinthians: "Therefore whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever else you do, do all to the glory of God." (1 Cor. x. 31.)

11. In a two-fold manner we may consecrate all our actions to God's honour: 1st, with relation to ourselves; 2d, with relation to our neighbour; but ever regarding God's holy will in all things.

12. And this we do in relation to ourselves, when, in all our actions, we strive to walk well-



pleasing in His sight, when we pray with sincerity, and say, "Teach me to do Thy will, for Thou art my God; Thy good Spirit shall lead me into the right land," &c.; and when also all our endeavours are animated by the desire of doing God's will.

13. With regard to our neighbour, when, through a love for him which is grounded on our love of God, we scrupulously avoid giving him scandal even in actions allowable in themselves, but not prescribed to us by duty.

14. It is clear that the Apostle, in the above-quoted passage, had in view this duty towards our neighbour, for he adds: "Be without offence to the Jews, and to the Gentiles, and to the Church of God; as I also in all things please all men, not seeking that which is profitable to myself, but to many, that they may be saved." (1 Cor. x. 32, 33.)

15. Love for God and love for our neighbour must ever be our rule in all our actions and conduct.

16. To walk according to this rule, "to walk before God," great watchfulness is required. Our Saviour thus spoke to His disciples: "Watch and pray, lest ye fall into temptation;" and elsewhere: "What I say to you I say to all, Watch."

17. To acquire this spiritual watchfulness, prayer and inward recollection are necessary for us.

18. How beautifully doth the great and re-

vered Fenelon write to his worthy and royal pupil, the Duke of Burgundy, whom God called away in the prime of life, because perhaps the people were unworthy of such a king. Hear his words :

19. " For God's sake, let prayer nourish your soul, as food doth your body. Mental prayer, offered up at appointed times, will be the means of keeping you in the presence of God during the day ; and this remembrance of God often repeated in the day will be a renewal of mental prayer. Such a short and loving recollection of God refreshes the whole man, stills his passions, brings with it light and counsel in important events that may happen, gradually subdues the whole man, and enables him to possess his soul in innocence ; or rather, that he should be possessed by God." " And be renewed in the spirit of your mind," saith St. Paul.

20. The Son of God became the Son of man on this account, that He might give us the most sublime model of holiness. Thus did the great prophet speak of Him : " And there shall come forth a rod out of the root of Jesse, and a flower shall rise up out of his root. And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him : the spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the spirit of counsel and of fortitude, the spirit of knowledge and of godliness. And He shall be filled with the spirit of the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge according to the sight of

the eyes, nor reprove according to the hearing of the ears." (Isaias xi. 1-3.)

21. The holy prophet David himself could not more powerfully express, in human language, the unbroken intercourse of the most holy soul of our Saviour with His heavenly Father than by these words: "And He shall be filled with the spirit of the fear of the Lord." Our natural life is supported in us by our continually breathing out the air we before took in, and by inhaling fresh air. In like manner our Saviour saith: "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, that I may perfect His work." (St. John iv. 34.)

22. Nothing can contribute so much towards our advancement on the road of "walking before God," than the sacred and serious consideration of the doctrines and life of Jesus Christ, our Brother, our Lord, and our God. The holy gospels comprise, in a few words, the substance of the deepest wisdom and of the highest virtues, in all their sweetest loveliness. Not only do we find in the words and actions of our Saviour a pattern and an example for every state, for every circumstance in which we may find ourselves placed, but there cometh out from them such a warm, animating, soul-transforming, and sacred breath of eternal truth and eternal love, that with it we inhale a divine strength; yea, we shall become more and more like to the Son of God Himself, if we read His holy word with simplicity, with an earnest in-

vocation of the Holy Spirit, and with humility and love.

23. The Scripture contains the history of the Son of God, "made of a woman, made under the law, that He might redeem them who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." (Gal. iv. 4, 5.) It tells us of His wonderful birth; and passing over, almost in complete silence, His youth, it gives us a few of His divine sayings, and relates some of His divine actions; and then we are informed of His sufferings, of His atoning death, and resurrection and ascension.

24. But how precious is the little that we know of His divine teaching, and heavenly actions! A few words—a few actions; but what perfect doctrines flow from them! He "who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God" in His relation to His heavenly Father, in which through love for us He appeared as man, gives us here, as well as in His human relation, an example of holiness, of love, of the deepest earnestness, and of the most loving mildness, which must fill every unprejudiced heart with reverence and love, and make it feel only for Him, as only He deserves it. Not only does He point out the way in which we should walk after Him, "who is the way, the truth, and the life," because "no man cometh to the Father, but by Me;" but He also promises to give us strength to follow Him, and this His promise has now been veri-



fied for near two thousand years. Although the number of those who are His true disciples is very small in comparison with those who confess Him only with their lips, nevertheless the Gospel has renewed the form of the earth ; has purified and softened its manners ; has taught new virtues, of which men, before this new Light arose, had no conception ; and it still daily shews those who follow this Light, what mankind would be even here below, if it were received by the generality of men, and they lived according to its precepts. I say the "*generality*"—not all men, for tares are mixed with the wheat ; and the most beautiful virtues of Christianity—patience, constancy, courage, innocence preserved amidst bad example, a forgiving disposition, unshaken confidence in God, love for our enemies—all these evangelical virtues would not have reached their full perfection, would not have extended their beneficent shade so far, would not have produced flowers of such heavenly sweetness, would not have borne such admirable fruit for eternity, if they had not been exercised by intercourse with the children of the world, whose perversity itself serves for the perfection of the children of God, for the glorification of "the author and finisher of our faith."

25. His commands are not heavy ; His law is "the perfect law of liberty," to those who follow it through the love of God, just as God, through love for us, gave it to us. He that

observeth this law will even here on earth have his heart filled with the "peace of God which surpasseth all understanding," because our mere reason cannot, with relation to Divine things, give us any solid satisfaction, any secure, and much less perfect, information respecting our duties; and therefore it can give us no strength whatever to fulfil these duties. Of this "peace of God" the same apostle, St. Paul, says, that it "keeps our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus" (Phil. iv. 7), because it both certifies to true Christians that the command is *Divine*, and at the same time it rewards him with heavenly peace, with a holy feeling of God's grace, and by the joyful expectation of eternal happiness.

26. Our corrupt nature is opposed to the idea of a conscientious following of the Son of God; it fancies that there is in it only restraint and privations; and therefore does it happen, that "the sensual man perceiveth not these things that are of the Spirit of God; for it is foolishness to him, and he cannot understand, because it is spiritually examined." (1 Cor. ii. 14.)

27. He that heareth the voice of the Son of God, and walketh after Him, will find "this following" always becoming lighter and lighter. He does not require, as worldlings imagine, any troublesome fear to go onwards in the journey of life: a traveller that proceeds in the right way, looks not anxiously around at every step; the pilot fears not lest he should

miss his path, when he is following the direction the compass points out ; and thus the children of God walk as pilgrims, confiding in God's grace, with caution, but also with joy ; always keeping the road in view, and often looking up to God, they exclaim, in the words of the royal prophet : " The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear ? The Lord is the protector of my life, of whom shall I be afraid ?" (Ps. xxvi. 1.)

28. The vain labours of worldlings are far more wearisome to the soul than the conscientious watchfulness of a Christian ; and at the same time, how foolish is the worldling's object and aim ! And yet in every place he finds a rival. May his endeavours be as he *wishes* them to be !

29. But in walking before God, the Christian finds no rival. The companions of his holy pilgrimage towards the heavenly Jerusalem are at the same time his helpers. The faith, the hope, and the love of the one, are enkindled by the faith, the hope, and the love of the other ; just as many lights shine the brighter the nearer they are to each other. The worldling reckons on his wisdom or good luck ; but he often reckons amiss, and death, ever fearfully walking before him, seizes him sooner or later (if such a word is allowable when speaking of this transitory life), and forces him to give in an account of all his vain actions, for which he sacrificed " the one thing necessary." But the

true Christian can, at any moment, give an account of the money entrusted to him by God; and when God calls him to Himself, He thus addresses him: "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

30. The frequent consideration and meditation on the life of Jesus Christ, joined with the desire to become more and more like unto Him, will gradually form themselves to a complete ideal<sup>1</sup> in him who applies to this holy exercise, whereby the individual traits in the character of his Saviour become a breathing picture, that preserves and sanctifies the inmost recess of the soul, and affords him light and counsel, when in every event he asks himself the question, "How would my Saviour have judged, spoken, and acted?" He that wishes not the answer would flatter his natural inclinations. This oracle (excuse the expression), when consulted, will obtain for him both light and counsel. Zealous in the service of God, he will never forget that the practice of love to our neighbour is a service most agreeable unto God; but he will also be proof against too much nicety in pleasing men, which is just as far removed from true brotherly love as a morose severity. The same apostle that saith, "I also in all things please all men, not seeking that which is profitable to myself, but to many, that they may be saved" (1 Cor. x. 33), saith also, in

<sup>1</sup> "Sich zu einem vollständigen Ideale ründen," &c.



another place, "For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ." (Gal. i. 10.)

31. Self-love, our most dangerous enemy, which we so easily confound with that well-regulated love which subjects itself to God, and does not exalt itself above others, we oftentimes love as ourselves; and this is that self-love which, since the fall of Adam, has wished to set up in every individual its own will<sup>1</sup> in the place of God; that self-love from which the bitter root of all our vices has sprung, and which, in this life, will never be entirely rooted up from any mortal, although among the children of God the Divine grace is superior to it. This self-love dares not give, in its own proper character and form, any commands to the just; but it often assumes the appearance of Divine love, and whispers wickedness into their ears. When it is injured, it wishes to make its resentment pass for a "holy zeal;" when it flatters you, its guilty fawning is made to appear nothing more than "love for its neighbour." Thus, its licentiousness is considered to be "evangelical freedom;" its indifference to be "toleration;" its intolerance to be "zeal;" in a word, it commands evil under the appearance of good, and knows how to entrap every one by his own peculiar weakness. Thus doth

<sup>1</sup> The original is, "das Ich."

this enemy of God and man—he that “goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour”—he against whom the Son of God warned Peter—thus doth he endeavour to deceive even the just, who are on their guard against their weakness, in order to make them suspect their good thoughts and resolutions to be the motions of self-love; and thus he strives to mislead them into ways which in themselves are not right, and are contrary to their own natural disposition of mind. How shall a Christian be able to avoid so many snares? No otherwise than by continually renewing his resolution to do the will of God, and by having recourse to prayer: “Teach me to do Thy will; for Thou art my God. Thy good Spirit shall lead me into the right land.”

32. So long as the desire of doing the will of God animates the soul of a Christian's spiritual life, and the conviction of his own weakness does not desert him, none of the enemies of his salvation—neither the world, the devil, nor the natural corruption of his heart—can hurt him. A mistrust in himself will be his shield, and confidence in his God his sword. This armour no enemy can withstand. The true Christian may many times stumble, seldom will he fall; but should he even fall, through inadvertence, God will raise him up again; and his very fall will tend to advance his salvation, by increasing his humility and confidence in God.

33. Wherefore St. Paul thus exhorts the Hebrews : “ Do not, therefore, lose your confidence, which hath a great reward. For patience is necessary for you ; that doing the will of God, you may receive the promise,”<sup>1</sup> &c. (Chap. x. 35, 36.)

34. The longer a Christian walketh on the road of salvation, the more experience doth he gain ; and this he must not despise, for thereby he may attain to that refined feeling and sense of discernment which St. Paul recommends to the Philippians in these words : “ And this I pray, that your charity may more and more abound in knowledge and in all understanding :<sup>2</sup> that you may approve the better things ; that you may be sincere and without offence unto the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of justice, through Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.” (Chap. i. 9-11.)

35. But this refined discernment itself, which experience gives, will often fail if we possess

<sup>1</sup> The word ‘ promise ’ here means, according to a common Hebraism, the *object* of the promise. Thus, among the writers of the New Testament, the object of our hope is often called “ hope ; ” the object of our love, “ love ; ” in like manner we say, “ He is my hope,” instead of “ I hope in Him ; ” “ He is my love,” instead of saying, “ I love Him.”

<sup>2</sup> “ Urtheil.” The original Greek word, *αἰσθησις*, expresses every kind of perception, both of the mind, the understanding, and the imagination. The Apostle here seems to speak of that refined discernment which is acquired, and increased also by experience.

not true simplicity of heart, which desireth nothing but the will of God.

36. Very beautifully doth the wise and holy Thomas à Kempis speak on this point: "With two wings a man is lifted up above earthly things; that is, with simplicity and purity. Simplicity must be in the intention, purity in the affection; simplicity aims at God, purity takes hold of Him and tastes Him. . . . . If thou intendest and seekest nothing but the will of God and the profit of thy neighbour, thou shalt enjoy internal liberty. If thy heart were right, then every creature would be to thee a looking-glass of life, and a book of holy doctrine." (Book ii. chap. v.)

37. Simplicity, humility, and love are ever united in a true Christian; they can scarcely be separated even in imagination. Love gives light to the soul and a holy glow to the heart. As the ray of light breaks into seven colours, so all virtues spring from love, and all again unite in love.

38. Wherever, by God's grace, this love exists in its perfection, there the image of God will be renewed, and man's whole existence will be in harmony, though at the same time he may still retain many imperfections, and commit many involuntary faults. His life is a song of praise; "the peace of God which surpasseth all understanding" keeps his heart and mind in Christ Jesus; and the simplicity of his thoughts and actions, undisturbed by any other



cares, gives to him, in the sublimity of all his exertions, such a solid strength as no worldling can ever possess in his strivings after earthly things. Even in temporal matters, this unity of strength and will gives to the true Christian a clearness of vision, an energy in action, and a freedom in affairs, to which the world, without comprehending how this can be, cannot refuse its admiration.

39. "But godliness is profitable to all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." (1 Tim. iv. 8.) Thus doth St. Paul write to his disciple, Bishop Timothy. That these words are true would be more universally acknowledged if the number of the perfect were greater. Would that we might behold more examples of holy souls who could exclaim with the great Apostle, "And I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me. And that I live now in the flesh; I live in the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself for me." (Gal. ii. 20.)

40. Some one, however, may exclaim, "But Paul was an apostle." Rather let us say, "The apostle was also a man!" Let us determine no near boundary, otherwise we might find more difficulty in reaching one that is near than one which is distant, and which we endeavoured to reach with greater love. "Elias was a man passible like unto us,"<sup>1</sup> saith St.

<sup>1</sup> The German translation is, "Elias war ein Mensch gleichen Schwächen der Natur unterworfen wie wir."

James the Apostle ; and what an admirable man was Elias !

41. Shall we allow the wonderful proofs of God's mercies unto us to frighten us ? Ought they not rather to encourage us and enflame us ? We see in the Holy Scripture how many were the friends of God who dwelt here below on the earth, and were themselves " dust and ashes." So *we* also may become the friends of God, and be made perfect through Him and confidence in His assistance. Yes, His beloved Son, and the Son of man, our Lord and our God, calls out unto us : " Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect." (St. Matthew v. 48.)

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## CHAPTER XVI.

1. REASON teaches us to love that which is good and excellent, and to love it with our whole affection ; hence we should love God, as being " the greatest good," from whom cometh every thing that deserves to be called good ; as being worthy of our most ardent love, and *entitled*, therefore, to be loved with our whole heart and soul.

2. This truth, the most sacred of all truths, would be evident to every one, and would animate every heart, if our corrupt nature did not

resist and oppose it. Our sensuality is captivated by visible things ; and the love of temporal, transitory, and deceitful goods, produces within us, as soon as we forget the Creator for the creature, wicked lusts ; to satisfy which, or to endeavour to satisfy them, removes us more and more from God ; while our dissipation not only renders us incapable of thinking on God, but makes us disgusted with the "thought" of Him, as the disturber of our peace and our joy ; and yet the remembrance of God ought to be the life of our soul.

3. Pride accompanies sensuality, though they both seem to be of a different nature. Sensuality will follow its lusts, unmindful of and unconcerned about the holy law of God ; while pride wishes to live according to its own rules, being unwilling to humble itself "under the mighty hand of God," though it ought to do so, "that He may exalt us in the time of visitation."

4. From the fruitful union of pride with sensuality, come forth infidelity and all manner of wickedness, every one of which shews in itself a resemblance to the father and mother. For sins of sensuality also, like disobedience, have pride for their parent ; and we should not venture to commit sins of pride, if we were not seduced by the allurements of things visible and temporal.

5. Both these (pride and sensuality) lead the greater part of mankind to forget God ; and

some even go so far as to deny His existence. For one who is a slave to his passions often becomes so estranged from all that is good and true, that he would rather continue in his proud and voluptuous course, during his short and uncertain life, than renounce his lusts and humble himself before God.

6. "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." (Psalm xiii. 1.) But the light of reason never becomes so darkened as not oftentimes to shine upon the countenance of the worldling: conscience may be silenced, but it cannot be destroyed. The projects of ambition, of avarice, or of sensuality, that have not succeeded, oftentimes make the worldling disgusted with his state and condition: old age weakens his power of enjoyment, and, at the same time, points to the speedy end of them all. The sickness and death of friends and relations frighten the sinner; and still more his own illness alarms him. Then doth he become sensible of the nothingness of temporal things, and he begins to long and to sigh after true and enduring pleasures.

7. God hath been pleased to awaken, in manifold ways, the wicked and foolish children of Adam from their death-slumbers; to make them sensible of their misery, and to excite within them an effective longing for His Divine assistance. Oftentimes the work of His grace takes a long time to advance in our soul; and often, again, it works quickly. A word spoken by



accident, as it were, and not thought of at the time, falls into our heart, and buds only after a long time; then it quickly grows up, becomes green, blooms, and being moistened by the dew of repentance, and quickened by a heavenly beam, it brings forth the fruit of eternity.<sup>1</sup> Oftentimes we are at once seized by Divine grace; and blessed is that man, if then, like St. Paul, he “condescends not to flesh and blood;” but being enflamed by the light from heaven, which suddenly shined round about him, he lovingly follows the attraction of grace, and quickly ripens under its beams.

8. But where the healing power of grace has worked for a long time, often hath it begun by an increasing, and frequently a long-continuing fear of eternity, which before was so little thought of. This fear now makes the sinner disgusted with those worldly pursuits to which he had previously so zealously devoted himself, and also with those hollow and vain pleasures which he so eagerly pursued. He repents of his sins, which had led him to the edge of the precipice of hell. But should he *stop*, and be content with this repentance, and in this disposition make a resolution to do better, he exposes himself to the danger either of considering as the fruit of a true conversion his merely avoiding certain outward bad actions, or the practice of certain exterior good works;

<sup>1</sup> “Trägt Früchte der Ewigkeit.”

and thus he lifts himself up with the vain conceit of his own righteousness, which is of no value before God ; or, sensible of his own weakness and inability to save himself from destruction, he sinks into a state of melancholy, which makes him gloomy and morose, and removes him at a greater distance from God.

9. Those who trust in their own righteousness, as well as those who despond, are in great danger of rendering themselves incapable of receiving grace, and of falling back either into their former state, and then they certainly become worse than they were before, or else they remain as they are ; and thus both are exposed to the danger of never becoming the friends of God ; the one from his vain confidence, and the other from the want of a living faith in the mercies of Jesus Christ.

10. When St. Paul proposes for our example the confidence of Abraham in the Divine promises, he says, that our faith will be reputed to us unto justice, "if we believe in Him that raised up Jesus Christ our Lord from the dead, who was delivered up for our sins, and rose again for our justification." (Rom. iv. 24, 25.) And thus he continues in the next chapter : "Being justified, therefore, by faith, let us have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (v. 1.)

11. We can never attain unto this peace with God without the repentance of love, which is very different from that of fear, although it

often prepares the way for the former : hence “ the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” (Prov. i. 7.)

12. The publican was justified by the repentance of love, when, going up into the Temple,<sup>1</sup> “ he stood afar off, and would not so much as lift up his eyes towards heaven ; but struck his breast, saying : O God, be merciful to me a sinner.” (St. Luke xviii. 13.) But, on the other hand, the proud Pharisee, who boasted of his good works before God, remained in his sins.

13. We have an example of this repentance of love and confidence in the parable of the Lost Son, with whom the father was more pleased than with his eldest son, who had never been disobedient to him, but yet did not love him so much as his repenting brother. With this repentance of love was penetrated the “ sinner” who washed the feet of Jesus (as He sat at meat in the house of the self-justified Pharisee) with her tears, “ and wiped them with the hairs of her head, and kissed His feet, and anointed them with the ointment.”

<sup>1</sup> “ Into the Temple,” that is, into the long *porch* of the Temple, which was called the “ porch of the women.” Here the pious inhabitants of Jerusalem were accustomed to assemble twice or three times a day (for the morning and evening sacrifice), and to pray with their face turned towards that part of the Temple in which was the “ Holy of holies.” When the Evangelists speak of what our Saviour said and did in the “ Temple,” they mean the porch of the Temple.

. . . Wherefore He said of her : " Many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much." (St. Luke vii. 36.)

14. We already know what the power of love can effect upon earth. Without love, nothing prospers or succeeds. The more spiritual our labours are, the more must they be carried on by love ; the more must they proceed from love. Toil and exertion can effect much ; but for a work to be excellent, it must be performed with love. Without a love for what we are doing, no one can accomplish any thing that is beautiful or admirable. Hence the expression, " He has done it *con amore*."<sup>1</sup> What wonders does not human love work, even here below ! How it ennobles, embellishes, and blesses every thing ! What would man be without love ? Powerful even in his wanderings, his passions have armed armies against armies, destroyed cities, and effected revolutions in kingdoms. The amours of men and women have played a powerful part in the stormy and changing scenes of this world's events.

15. But all human love, if it proceed not from Divine love, is but a shadow of true love ; or rather, it is only a *delusion*, unknown to the individual himself, who is carried away by it ; it is only the aim of self-love—for the most part concealed from the person—to seek, in the

<sup>1</sup> " Mit Liebe," with love.



object he so earnestly follows, merely his own enjoyment; or some more base, gross, and refined pleasure.

16. But when this self-love, ceasing to make itself the centre, directs its attention to the "Source" of all that is beautiful and good; to the "Source" whence all things have received their existence; to the fountain of every perfection, in which all that is beautiful is good, and all that is good is beautiful; when our love drinks from this bottomless spring of life, of joy, and of love, oh, how mighty must it then be! How superior to the world! And how happy must the soul be, when she now loves Him who alone is worthy of infinite love, because His perfections are infinite, as well as His love! He gave her existence, and He gives her still love—the life of life; He exalts her; or rather, I may say, He deifies her, in order to pour out Himself into her soul, in order wholly to penetrate her with Himself, in order to unite Himself with her for ever!

17. But, alas! how small is the number of those souls who suffer themselves to be inflamed by this holy flame!

18. The mercies of God are infinite; He loves our soul, and seeks to woo it by manifold ways. He that loves Him not will never see His face; but He rejects not even those in whom He finds only a few sparks of love. But true love is so holy, so divine, that even a spark coming from it, when, by God's grace, it

falls into our heart, and we faithfully preserve it until death (this fidelity proving itself by a sincere desire to please God, and hence to observe His commandments)—this spark sanctifies the soul, and animates it with an ardent desire that its love may always become more faithful, more tender, more glowing, and more fruitful in good works. The degree of our love determines the fervour of this desire.

19. When a child begins to have a little understanding, he begins also to love his mother; but he loves her breasts more than herself; for these he longs, or he lies contentedly on her bosom. And so, in like manner, many Christians love the gifts of God—those gifts by which they hope to obtain eternal life—more perhaps than God Himself; or it may be that they love Him especially for the sake of His gifts, and of the hope of securing thereby their salvation. Ah, how many Christians remain infants even unto the day of their death!

20. Others, however, love God with a purer love. When such souls seek and find comfort and healing in their God, then are they deeply penetrated with a holy humility, which shews them how unworthy they are of those infinite mercies which God bestowed upon them through Jesus Christ, which He still bestows upon them, and will continue to do. They are penetrated by a holy gratitude also towards the Father, who delivered up for them His only-begotten; towards the Son likewise,

who died for them; and towards the Holy Ghost, by whom they were born again to eternal life, who sanctifies their heart, and pours Himself and His love into their soul!

21. Thus do such Christians behold each Person of the most Blessed Trinity occupying Himself with their welfare, just like a mother who is solicitous for her only child—the fruit of her womb. The Incarnation of the Son of God, who wept for us in a crib, who for us led such a painful life, who “had not where to lay His head,” who for us struggled with death, whose divinity forsook His suffering humanity, and gave Him no comfort; for the thought and representation of our sins and of the torments of the damned so oppressed His soul, that His bloody sweat bedewed the ground, while His divinity strengthened His humanity only in order to make it capable of enduring nameless sorrows; and then His other bodily sufferings—such as being mocked, crowned with thorns, scourged at the pillar, and His carrying the cross—these were but faint images of His agony in the garden, and of His agony on the cross, when, perceiving Himself deserted, as it were, by His heavenly Father, He was forced to drink the bitterest dregs of that chalice which, through love for us, “His Father and our Father, His God and our God,” had offered to Him; and this He drank even unto the last drop:—the remembrance of all these sufferings, I repeat, which the Son endured for

us, fills, penetrates, and inflames pious souls with a holy gratitude. They desire to feel their love still more active—to prove to Him, and to return Him a love more perfect; they wish that they were able to inflame all men with a love for God, and “for Christ to beseech them to be reconciled to God. Him, who knew no sin, He hath made sin for us, that we might be made the justice of God in Him.” (2 Cor. v. 20, 21.) With a deep sense of their natural corruption and misery, and of the dignity to which they have been raised by the mercy of God and the merits of His Son—a dignity higher than that from which Adam had fallen—their only complaint is, that they are so often unmindful of such mercies; that they cannot always be exclaiming with the “angels round about the throne,” the number of whom is thousands of thousands, “The Lamb that was slain is worthy to receive power, and divinity, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and benediction;” that they cannot unite themselves “with every creature which is heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them,” in saying: “To Him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb, benediction, and honour, and glory, and power, for ever and ever.” (Apoc. v. 11, 12, 13.)

22. Such souls will resolutely fly from sin, not only through fear of the punishment, but from a grateful love for their Saviour, who suf-



ferred so much to atone for their sins. This fear of offending their Beloved will always keep them watchful; and should they fall through human frailty, their repentance will be more the repentance of love than the repentance of fear.

23. Most persons, as we have already mentioned, are at first awakened from their death-slumber by fear; and thus are they conducted to the right path. Their hope is joined with fear, and both serve as guides. But so long as persons are influenced only by fear and by hope, they are not sanctified; for if we consider their actions, we may compare them to children; such are not yet "children of God." They are not sanctified, neither are their guides, hope and fear, until Divine love is united with them; and then both the guides and the guided are blessed. We can become "children of God" only by beginning to love God, and only by love can we remain so; for without Divine love we shall never be able to attain unto God. The degree of this love determines the degree of our perfection.

24. A soul that has attained unto such love and gratitude as we have described above, by the inward consideration of her own sinfulness, and of the mercies of God towards her, cannot stand still on her journey; as, in general, no pause is allowed either on "the strait way that leadeth to life," or on the "broad way that leadeth to destruction;" for the sinner

always becomes more guilty, not only by fresh crimes, but by merely continuing in his actual state ; and thus the soul whose sins have been pardoned becomes somewhat estranged from God, by every delay in her journey on the road of salvation. Delay is unfaithfulness, and this "grieves the holy Spirit of God," as St. Paul beautifully expresses himself, in warning the faithful of Ephesus against it.

25. But when the soul abandons herself to sloth, then doth she expose herself to the danger of falling, from sin to sin, into a deep pit, and of losing all the graces bestowed on her before.

26. But should she listen to the "warnings" of the Holy Spirit, then she is again awakened from her lethargy by the sorrow of love, and encouraged by confidence to continue her journey with still greater ardour, yea, even with still greater joy, although with a more careful watchfulness ; for confidence in her Beloved gives joy to her watchfulness.

27. The further she continues her journey, the more will her love (which springs from her contrition, and from a grateful sense of the mercies of God), not only increase, but also ennoble the soul.

28. And while her thoughts and feelings are thus occupied with God, she will begin to admire and love His infinite perfections ; and among them His infinite love especially, which she herself experiences with such profit ; and

thus she is so captivated, that forgetting herself, and sinking into the ocean of all that is good and beautiful, which manifest themselves to her mind, not so much according to the measure of her present weakness as to that of her original destiny, she will love God for His own sake, without regard to heaven or hell, without regard to herself, with a much deeper love than merely the love of gratitude.

29. The idea of "pure love," with which a soul soars above the love of gratitude, because she rises above herself (not, however, as if she wished or could cease to be *grateful* to God), and at the same time, raised to a higher degree of contemplation, she loves God so much with her whole heart, with her whole soul, and with her whole strength, that she can rest upon no finite object, and much less upon herself, because it is the peculiar nature of love that the lover should go out, as it were, from himself. This idea of "pure love," I repeat, should not appear *strange* to us when applied to God, since it is well known in regard to men; and tender souls expect and ardently desire such a love from their Beloved, that will rise superior to mere gratitude.

30. If any one, through an impulse of a loving heart, having seen a fellow-creature in chains, were to place himself in his place, as we read some of the Saints did, and even work in the horrible galley, the ransomed captive would indeed be penetrated with pro-

found feelings of gratitude towards his benefactor.

And were he a little later to become acquainted with him, and should he observe in his deliverer an individual who, with noble endowments of the mind, united every pleasing quality of the heart as well as every virtue, would he not then esteem such an individual with deeper love and reverence? Would he not love him with an increasing love? Would not a high and beautiful "ideal" be presented to him in the person of his honoured and beloved friend, which, independent of the gratitude due to his benefactor, he would be induced to prize, honour, admire, and love, for the sake of the "great whole"<sup>1</sup> which sprung from such qualities?

31. Neither a young man nor a young woman, neither man nor woman, if they love each other tenderly and ardently, content themselves with a return of love that is grounded only on gratitude. *True* love is independent of mutual love. Plato hath already said: "He that loveth should be of a more divine nature than the person beloved."<sup>2</sup>

32. Have not many of us, perhaps in the gay period of our youth, admired and loved men and women (whom we never saw or could

<sup>1</sup> "Des grossen Ganzen wegen, das aus solchen Eigenschaften hervorginge," &c.

<sup>2</sup> Stolberg does not give any reference for this quotation.—T.



see), on account of their virtues and good dispositions, and this with a passionate enthusiasm, whether it be those who shine in the annals of history—such as Lycurgus, Timoleon, Hannibal, Scipio, Cato, Panthea, Porcia, and Aria; or those who are famous in the immortal poems of Homer—such as Diomedes, Hector, Achilles, Penelope, and Andromache? These renowned men and women knew nothing of us; a thousand years and more intervene between them and us; we have no other connexion with them than what a love for that which is beautiful produces—for pure love, which is the most beautiful of all virtues.

33. But what is any creature, whether angel or man, however beautiful, good, noble, or estimable, in comparison with *Him* who alone is beautiful, because He alone is good? He alone is good, because He is One who alone exists; because in Him is the source of beauty, of all good, of all being.

34. To think of Him, to be sensible of His presence, is the highest happiness of men, of angels, of all beings. The deeper we think of Him, and the more inward are our feelings of His presence, in the same proportion are to be determined the dignity and joy of every mind.

35. Even here below, His most beloved, because most loving children, are allowed to hear the sound of the heavenly 'Halleluias' with the ear of the soul; and with the eye of the soul to behold something of His beauty, and to love Him,

though very imperfectly, yet "with their whole heart, with their whole soul, with their whole mind, and with all their strength." Who can doubt but that they forget themselves, in the moments of their most inward communications with Him? Then doth their soul wing its flight up to Him, and is lost in Him.

36. Such elevations, such basking in His glory, are granted to the pilgrim, loaded with his earthly covering, only for a short period, because here below "we walk by faith, and not by sight." (2 Cor. v. 7.)

37. But when he returns to himself again, he is still happy. Sweet hours of placid joy, of calm indescribable rest, often follow these sublime raptures. And these he finds in the contemplation of the holy humanity of Jesus Christ, of His crib, of His divine conversation, of His sorrows on the Mount of Olives and on the Cross, and of His resurrection. Then "the charity of Christ presseth him . . . not now to live for himself, but unto Him who died for him, and rose again." And to his soul does our Saviour manifest Himself; then he exclaims, with the spouse in the Canticle of Canticles: "I to my Beloved, and my Beloved to me, who feedeth among the lilies." But he is not alone in his inmost sanctuary; that is the temple of God, in whom the Spirit of God dwelleth: "If any one love me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and will make our abode

with him.” “And I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me. And that I live now in the flesh: I live in the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself for me.” He is a vine of the true vine-stock, in Jesus Christ, in whom he abides, as Christ abides in him; and the same beareth much fruit; for he knows—or rather *because* he knows—that “without Him we can do nothing.” And he is happy in the sense of his own weakness, because Christ hath said to him: “My grace is sufficient for thee; for power is made perfect in infirmity.” Gladly, therefore, does he glory in his infirmities, that the power of Christ may dwell in him.

38. Few attain here below unto the holiness of this “pure love,” whose “will,” perfectly united with the will of God, wills nothing but what He wills; wills all that He wills, and because He wills it; and whose highest aim—for which the soul longs—is not Heaven, but God Himself! Then doth such a soul exclaim with the royal Prophet: “What have I in heaven? and besides Thee what do I desire upon earth? For Thee my flesh and my heart hath fainted away: Thou art the God of my heart, and the God that is my portion for ever.” (Ps. lxxii. 24, 25.)

39. We are, nevertheless, all called to this “pure love,” for in it consists perfection; thus the Son of God invites us all: “Be you, therefore, perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect.” (St. Matt. v. 48.) We are all

obliged to love God with our whole heart, with our whole soul, with our whole mind, and with our whole strength, and our neighbour as ourselves ; we must, therefore, love *God* more than ourselves, and ourselves only as we love our neighbour. But should we love them as we love God, then we become idolators.

40. We cannot attain this pure love of God without the constant denial of our own will, and an offering of it to the will of God ; this, however, we cannot do without His grace, which we must earnestly ask for with sincere fervour ; and this also He will grant, provided our will be determined to become entirely His. He that thus offers up his will, walks, indeed, along a thorny path ; he sees the thorns with the eyes of the flesh ; but the roses, which even here on earth bloom beneath the thorns, he sees at first only with the eyes of faith ; roses that abundantly reward the pilgrim by their paradisiacal beauty and sweetness. This we have heard from those who have experienced such happiness, and still do experience it ; and this happiness is promised to *us* also in the Holy Scripture, as we have already seen from many passages. But we attain not unto this holiness, because the thorns terrify us ; and we are terrified because we have not a living faith ; hence we should always pray with the apostle, " O Lord, increase our faith ! " Without sufferings also we shall not attain unto holiness. Paul and Barnabas went about " confirming the



souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith," &c. ; and they reminded them, " that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God." (Acts xiv. 22.) St. Paul, in his epistle to the Romans, teaches them, that " sufferings" are a condition of their salvation : " and if sons, heirs also : heirs indeed of God, and joint heirs with Christ ; yet so if we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified with Him." (Rom. viii. 17.)

41. The more our effeminate nature, weakened by sin, recoils at this doctrine, the more must we be impressed with its necessity. We must die to our own will, since only by indulging it we become the enemies of God. The whole of our corruption consists in it alone. It is solely by our will, that we are what we are. It is the chief faculty in men and in angels. The good angels are holy and happy by their good will ; the bad angels are unhappy and wicked by their corrupt will.

42. I have already spoken in this Book of our dying daily to our own will, which we must always offer to the will of God ; and I have reminded my readers of the words of our Saviour, which He addresses, not only to His Apostles, but to *all men*, saying : " If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." (St. Luke ix. 23.) Here our Saviour evidently speaks, not of the martyr's death, (for all are not called to be martyrs ; rather very few, in comparison

with the faithful in general,) but of dying to our own will. This denial our Lord alludes to, when He adds, immediately after: "For whosoever will save his life, shall lose it; for he that shall lose his life for My sake, shall save it. For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, and cast away himself?" (vv. 24-25.)

43. Since a "false shame" is the most dangerous of all the enemies we have to contend against in following the Son of God; enemies, which are altogether the children of a mistaken self-love; so our Saviour saith, immediately after the verse above quoted: "For he that shall be ashamed of Me and of My words, of him the Son of Man shall be ashamed, when He shall come in His Majesty, and that of His Father, and of the holy angels." (v. 27.)

44. I know not any vice that destroys so many souls as "false shame." He that courts the applause of the world, he that pays more regard to its praise and dispraise than to the pleasure and displeasure of God, becomes worse and worse every day; that is, his case becomes worse. The sentiments of the world are in direct opposition to the Divine will. The Son of God calls the devil the 'Prince of this world.' Whoever, therefore, loves the doctrines and sentiments of the world, renounces the covenant made with God at his baptism; he fools away his salvation more foolishly than Esau sold his birthright for a mess of pottage; he fools away

his eternal salvation! Becoming more and more dead to all good, in the cold breath of the world's spirit, he makes his repentance more and more difficult. Wherefore, before all things, I conjure young people, by their salvation, by the mercies of God, purchased by Jesus Christ; by the crib of our Saviour, by His painful and merciful sojourn on earth, by His agony in the garden, by His Cross, on which He did penance for our pride and sensuality; by His resurrection and ascension, by His judgment at the last day, and by that other judgment which each one of us must some day undergo, yea, perhaps quickly; perhaps this very day!—I beseech and conjure all young people to love God, and not the world; to consider *His* words, and not the doctrines of the world, which is His and your enemy. "Love not the world," saith the beloved disciple, "nor the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the charity of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world is the concupiscence of the flesh, and the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life, which is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the concupiscence thereof. But he that doth the will of God, abideth for ever." (1 Epist. 11, 15, 16, 17.)

45. All the sufferings of this life require the offering of our will, whether it be by obedience or by submission. We offer our will to the Divine will when we do good in order to fulfil

it, and to do which is opposed to our nature ; and when we refuse to do what is bad, which refusal costs our corrupt nature a victory.<sup>1</sup>

46. Merely human laws command us to avoid evil and do good ; but as they can only bind it and not improve it, rewards and punishments are ordained. Thus honour and disgrace are the temporal rewards and punishments. The " doctrine " of philosophers proposes higher ends ; it desires to *improve* the will ; but as it is unable to give us strength to do good from a pure love for what is good, it deceives us when we take a satisfaction in our actions, since the greatest action which it enables us to do, we stain by taking a vain pleasure in ourselves. Pride is accustomed to indemnify us for the offering we thus present it, but not for pure virtue. Socrates named this " an exchange of one pleasure for another ; " and this truly wise man, who with such fidelity corresponded with the light of nature, wished that we should perform our good actions from a *pure* love for what was good.

47. But a pure love for what is good gives us only a love for God and His grace ; only by these can we present a pure offering of our will ; and this offering is not without sufferings.

48. We offer unto God a well-pleasing offering, not only by doing good and avoiding bad actions, but also by submitting *our* will to His will when He visits us with afflictions ; and

<sup>1</sup> *i. e.* gains a victory over our corrupt nature.—T.



these afflictions He sends His friends, because sufferings are the school of virtue and of love. If a Pagan philosopher<sup>1</sup> says, that it is a spectacle worthy of a God to behold a man steadfast in adversity, so should the humble Christian exclaim : “ And not only so ; but we glory also in tribulations, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience trial, and trial hope. And hope confoundeth not, because the charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us.” (Rom. v. 3-5.)

49. Through “ sufferings ” we are made mindful of ourselves ; sufferings disgust us with the world ; in sufferings we seek comfort and help from God. The more God accounts us worthy to be instructed and formed in this school of virtue, the greater advance do we make on the road of salvation ; and hence holy souls suffer not only with submission to God’s will, but even *rejoice* in their afflictions, because these give them an opportunity of submitting themselves to God with their whole heart, and of testifying their love for Him, which is increased by their gratitude towards *Him* who tries them as gold in the fire ; so that thus they become, by the furnace of their sufferings and the ardour of their love, more pleasing unto Him, because more like unto their Saviour, who suffered for them, and so entered into His glory.

50. But the children of God have not only

<sup>1</sup> Seneca, “ De Providentiâ.”

many sorrows in common with other men, they have also trials and sufferings of the soul unknown to the generality of men : yes, sufferings of the soul ! Being penetrated with a deep love for God, they feel bitter grief that He is known by so few, that He is loved by so few Christians ! That, even in these our days, " Christ crucified is a stumbling-block and foolishness " to baptised unbelievers, as He was once to the Jews and Gentiles ! That infidelity so boldly lifts up its head, that the enemies of the Gospel mock and triumph, and the bones of the faithful are broken, while they say to them, day by day, " Where is your God ? " (Psalm xli. 11.) That the children of darkness, who call themselves the " enlightened,"<sup>1</sup> should prosper more and more in their work, which they begin at night ; and that the blinded cowardice of those who should check them, lends a willing ear to traitors, who, with shameless malice, deny the enduring state of this band ! Penetrated, I repeat, with a deep love for God, His children feel bitter grief that their love is so cold ! They sigh over their sloth in His service ; over their dissipation and distractions ; over their daily faults and imperfections ! This sacred grief, which preserves them in humility, often accompanies them through life. And thus the more their love for God increases (whose infinite perfections they daily become

<sup>1</sup> " Die Erleuchteten."

sensible of), the more do they feel how imperfect is their love for Him!

51. Novices in the Christian religion often cannot comprehend how the favourites of God, who they suppose have reached the top of the ladder of perfection; are yet subject to such afflictions; yea, such men are frequently mistaken concerning them, and so deceived and misled in their notions, that they suspect the sincerity of their humble and repentant expressions. And yet this humility, this repentance is not only sincere, but is also well-grounded. For the further the children of God advance up the steep path of salvation, the more are they convinced that the height they have already gained, conceals from them one still higher, because it directly rises up before them, and this they have yet to mount. Hence, forgetting now "the things that are behind, they stretch forth to those that are before;" and thus they see how far they are, as yet, from perfection.

52. But as "hope confoundeth not," and childlike humility giveth confidence; and as "the peace of God, which surpasseth all understanding, keeps their hearts and minds in Christ Jesus," so even in this life they already enjoy a secure repose, "rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; instant in prayer," and walking after their Saviour. The joy of the Lord is their strength. He indeed sometimes withdraws, for a longer or a shorter period, His sensible presence from them, in order to try

their faith ; and by trying it to prove it ; and by proving it to strengthen it, and thus to make them more pleasing in His sight. And then He rejoices them again more lovingly with the “ gladness of His countenance.”

53. In the beginning of their journey, and for a long time after, though they were children of God’s household, they were not free ; they were as little children led on by fear and by hope. Few Christians can entirely do without these leading-strings here below. But they in whom “ perfect charity casteth out fear” renounce not hope ; rather doth it become more living in them ; but they require it not as a sweet guide, for love leads them by the hand. They enjoy the glorious liberty of being children of God ; for “ where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all beholding the glory of the Lord with open face, are transformed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord.” (2 Cor. iii. 17, 18.)

**Laus Deo semper.**



LONDON :

PRINTED BY ROBSON, LEVEY, AND FRANKLYN,  
Great New Street, Fetter Lane.



