

THE SPIRITUAL MINISTRY OF MAN;
OR
The Ministry of the Spirit-Man
By Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin

FIRST PART. - ON NATURE.

Man, not outward Culture, the true witness of Divinity.

The human understanding, by applying itself so exclusively to outward things, of which it cannot even yet give a satisfactory account, knows less of the nature of Man's own being even than of the visible objects around him; yet, the moment man ceases to look at the true character of his intimate essence, he becomes quite blind to the eternal Divine Source from which he descends: for, if Man, brought back to his primitive elements, is the only true witness and positive sign by which this supreme Universal Source may be known, that source must necessarily be effaced, when the only mirror that can represent it to our minds, disappears.

Then, when praiseworthy writers and well-meaning defenders of truth try to prove that there is a God, and deduce from His existence all its necessary consequences, as they no longer find this human soul sufficiently in harmony to serve as a witness, they go back to Nature, and to speculation taken from the external order. Hence, many excellent spirits in modern times have made use of all the resources of logic, and put every external science under contribution in their endeavours firmly to establish the existence of Divinity; and yet, notwithstanding these numerous testimonies, never was atheism more in fashion.

It must surely be to the glory of our species, and show the great wisdom of Providence, that all the proofs taken in the order of this world are so defective. For, if this world could have truly shown the Divinity, God would have been satisfied with that witness, and have had no need to create Man. In fact, Man was created merely because the whole universe, notwithstanding all the grandeurs it displays to our eyes, never could manifest the riches of Divinity.

A far different effect is produced by those great writers who, in maintaining the existence of God, take Man himself for their proof and the basis of their demonstrations: Man as he should be, at least, if not as he is. Their evidences acquire force and fulness and satisfy all our faculties at once. The evidence drawn from Man is gentle in its effect, and seems to speak the language of our own nature.

That which is drawn from the outside world, is cold and arid, and like a language apart, which requires a laborious study: besides, the more peremptory and decisive this kind of evidence is, the more it humbles our antagonists, and disposes them to hate us.

That which is taken from the nature of Man, on the contrary, even when it obtains a complete victory over the unbeliever, causes him no humiliation, because it places him in a position to feel and partake of all the dignity which belongs to his quality as Man.

And one who is not vanquished by this sublime evidence might, at most, deride it sometimes; but, at other times, he would very likely be sorry not to be able to reach so high a ground, and would certainly never take offence at its being offered to him; and this is enough to show how carefully we ought to sound the depths of Man's being, and affirm the sublimity of his essence, that we may thereby demonstrate the Divine Essence, for there is nothing else in the world that can do it, directly.

..... I repeat, that, to attain this end, every argument taken from this world and nature, is unsatisfactory, unstable. We suppose things for the world, to arrive at a fixed Being, in whom every thing is true; we lend to the world abstract and figurative verities, to prove a Being who is altogether real and positive; we take things without intelligence, to prove a Being who is Intelligence itself; things without love, to demonstrate Him who is only Love; things circumscribed within limits, to make known Him who is Free; and things that die, to explain Him who is Life.

Is it not to be feared, that, in committing ourselves to such an undertaking as this, we may imbibe the very defects which are inherent in the means we use, instead of demonstrating to our opponents the treasures of Him we wish to honour?

Two worlds, outward and inward.

From the foregoing, we shall see a light arise, which may at first seem strange, but it will not be the less real: it is, that, if man (who, be it remembered, is not of this world) is a sure and direct means of demonstration of the Divine Essence; if proofs taken from the external order of this world are defective and incomplete; and if the hypotheses and abstract truths, which we impute to this world, are taken from the metaphysical order, and have no existence in nature; it clearly follows, that we comprehend nothing in the world we are in, but by the light of the world in which we are not; that it is much easier to attain to the light and certainty which shine in the world in which we are not, than to naturalize ourselves with the shadows and darkness which envelope the world we are in; in short, since it must be said, that we are much nearer to what we call the other world than we are to this.

It will not even be very difficult to acknowledge, that, to call the other world the world in which we are not, is an abuse, and that this world is the other world to us.

For if, strictly speaking, two things may be respectively the other to each other, there is, nevertheless, a priority between them, either in fact, or conventionally, which requires the second to be considered as the other in respect to the first, and not the first as the other in respect to the second; for, that which is first, is one, and can offer no difference, having no point of comparison anterior to itself, whereas that which is second finds that point of comparison before it.

Such is the case with the two worlds in question; and I leave it to the reader to compare the light and certainties we find in the metaphysical order, or what we call the other world, with the obscurities, approximations, and uncertainties we find in the one we inhabit; and I also leave it to him to pronounce whether the world we are in has not some right to priority over that we are in, as well on account of the perfections and science it affords us, as of the superior antiquity it seems to have over this world of a day in which we are imprisoned.

For none but slaves of ignorance and hasty judgments could think of making mind descend from matter, and, therefore, what we call the other world, from this; whilst this, on the contrary, seems to derive from the other, and come after it.

Thus then, if the world where we are not, the one we call the other world, has, in an respects, the priority over this, it is truly this world, the one where we are, which is the other world, since it has a term of comparison before it, of which it is the difference; and what we call the other world, being one, or the first, carries with it all its relations, and can be a model only, and not another world.

This also shows how much the Spirit-Man must be out of his line of descent, imprisoned in these material elements, and how far these material elements, or this world, is from sufficing to show the Divinity: moreover, strictly speaking, we never do go out of the other world, or the Spirit-World, though so few people believe in its existence. We cannot doubt this truth, since, to give value to the proofs we draw from matter, or this world, we are obliged to lend it the qualities of mind, or the other world. The reason is, every thing depends upon Spirit, every thing corresponds with Spirit, as we shall see in the sequel.

Thus, the only difference between men is, that some are in the other world, knowing it, and the others are there without knowing it; and, on this head, there is the following progression.

God is in the other world, knowing it, and He cannot but believe and know it; for, being the Universal Spirit Himself, it is impossible that, for Him, there can be any separation between that other world and Himself.

Pure spirits feel well enough that they are in the other world, and they feel it perpetually, and without intermission, because they live by the life of that world only; but they feel that they are only the inhabitants of that other life, and that another is its proprietor.

Man, although in the terrestrial world, is still in the other world, which is every thing; but, sometimes he feels its sweet influences, and sometimes he does not; often, even, he receives and follows the impulse of this mixed and dark world only, which is like a coagulation in the midst of that other world, and, in respect to it, a sore, a boil, an ulcer. Hence it is that there are so few men who believe in that other world.

Lastly, lost spirits, whose existence the reflective man can demonstrate to himself beyond all question, by the simple light of his understanding, and without help from tradition, by probing to the quick, those sources of good and evil which combat each other within him, and disturb his intelligence; these lost spirits, I say, are also in that other world, and believe in it.

But, not only do they not feel its sweet influences, nor enjoy the rest and refreshment which even this apparent world affords to man, but they know the other world only by the endless suffering which the acrid source they have opened causes them. If man, through negligence, allows them to enjoy a moment's respite, it is only for a time, and they have always to restore their ill-gotten goods a hundredfold.

What idea, then, should we form of this Nature, or this universe, which makes us so blind to that other world, that spiritual world, - be it good or evil, - which we are never out of ? The answer is brief.

Without the evil spiritual world, nature would be an eternity of regularity and perfection; without the good spiritual world, nature would be an eternity of abomination and disorder. It is Supreme Love or Wisdom, who, to assuage the false eternity, has thought right to oppose a ray of the true eternity to it. The mixture of these two eternities composes time, which is neither one nor the other, and yet offers an image successively of both, in good and evil, day and night, life and death, &c.

Supreme Love could employ for this work, powers only which descended from the true eternity, for this reason, on the one hand, everything in time is measured, and, on the other, time itself, both general and particular, must necessarily pass away.

But, as the true eternity has, so to speak, come out of itself to contain the false, and the false eternity, on the contrary, has been thereby forced to draw back; this is the reason why we find it so difficult, in time, to distinguish these two eternities, neither of which is here in its place; and this is the reason why it is so difficult to prove God by nature, in which all is fragmentary and mixed, and in which the two eternities show themselves only under the outward veil of corruptible matter.

Man buries himself in the external world.

In the state of apathy into which man sinks, through his daily illusions, and studying only the external order of Nature, he can see neither the source of her apparent regularity, nor that of her disorders; he identifies himself with this external Universe; he cannot help taking it for a world, and even an exclusive and self-existing one.

And, in this state of things, the idea which has the most difficulty of access into man, is that of the degradation of our species, and the fall of Nature herself: he has lost the rights he ought to have had over her, by allowing them to fall into disuse, and ended by confounding this blind dark nature with himself, with his own essence.

Yet if he would, for a moment, take a more correct and profitable view of the external order, a simple remark would suffice to show him, at once, the positive degradation of his species, the dignity of his being, and its superiority over this external order.

How can men deny the degradation of their species, when they see that they can neither exist, nor live, nor think, nor act, but by combating a resistance? Our blood has to defend itself from the resistance of the elements; our minds, from that of doubt, and the darkness of ignorance; our hearts, from false inclinations; our whole bodies, from inertia; our social state, from disorder, &c.

A resistance is an obstacle; an obstacle, in the order of spirit, is an antipathy, an enmity; and an enmity in action is a hostile combatant power: now this power, continually extending its forces around us, holds us in a violent and painful situation, in which we ought not to be, and, without which, this power would be unknown to us, as if it existed not, since we inwardly feel that we were made for peace and quiet.

No! Man is not in his proper proportions; he has evidently undergone a change for the worse. I do not say this of him because I find it in books; it is not because this idea is generally entertained amongst all people; it is because man, everywhere, seeks a place of rest for his spirit; it is because he wants to master all knowledge, even that of the infinite, and although it escapes him continually, he had rather distort it, and make it bend to suit his dark conceptions, than do without it; it is because, during his transient existence on earth, he appears to be in the midst of his fellow creatures, like a ravenous lion amongst sheep, or like a sheep amongst ravenous lions; it is because, amongst that vast number of men, there is hardly one who awakes for anything but to be either the victim or the executioner of his brother.

Man's titles higher than Nature.

Nevertheless, Man is a great being; if he were not, how could he be degraded? But, independently of this proof of the former dignity of our being, the following reflection ought to convince us of our superiority over Nature, even now.

Astral earthly Nature works out the laws of creation, and came into existence by virtue of those laws only.

The vegetable and mineral kingdoms have in them the effect of these laws, for they contain all the elementary, astral, and other essential properties; and that with more efficacy, and in greater development, than the stars themselves, which contain only one-half of these properties, or than the earth, which contains the other half.

The animal kingdom has the use of these laws of creation, since animals have to feed, maintain, and reproduce themselves; and they contain all the principles which are necessary for this. But the Spirit-Man has, at once, the expect, the use, and the free direction or manipulation of these laws. I will give only one material example of this, and that a very familiar one, but, by its means, the mind may rise higher.

This example is: First, a corn-field, which has in it the effect of these laws of Nature; Secondly, a carnivorous animal, having the use of this corn, and may eat it; Thirdly, a baker, who has the control and manipulation of the corn, and can make bread of it; which, though in a very material manner, shows that the powers of Nature are possessed but partially by the creatures which constitute it; but, that the Spirit-Man alone, and in himself, embraces them all.

As for those material rights which man possesses, and which we have summed up above, in the manipulations of the baker, if we rise in thought to Man's true region, we shall, no doubt, find these rights proved more virtually, and on a grander scale, by sounding the wonderful properties which constitute the Spirit-Man, and exploring the high order of manipulations which these properties may lead to.

If Man has the power to be the workman and handicraftsman of earthly productions, why should he not be the same of a superior older? He ought to be able to compare those divine productions with their Source, as he has the power to compare the total effect of Nature with the Cause that fashioned and guides her, and he alone has this privilege.

But experience alone can give an idea of this sublime right or privilege; and, even then, this idea will ever appear to be new, even to him who is most accustomed to it.

But, alas! Man knows his spiritual rights, and he does not enjoy them! What need is there of any other proof of his deprivation, therefore, of his degradation?

Man may recover his titles.

O, Man! Open, then, your eyes for an instant; for, with your rash judgments, you will not only never recover your rights, but you run the risk of annihilating them. You might take a lesson from the physical order: animals are all heart; and it is clear that, though they are not machines, they are without mind (esprit), for this is distinct from them, outside. For this reason, they have no alliance to establish, as we have, between themselves and their principle; but, seeing the regularity of their march, it cannot, to man's shame, be denied, that, taken altogether, these creatures, which are not endowed with freedom, manifest a more complete and constant alliance with their principle than we can form in ourselves, with our own. We might, even, go so far as to say, that all creatures, except man, manifest themselves as so many hearts, of which God is the mind or spirit.

In fact, the world, or lost man, would be all mind (esprit), and thinks he can do without his true heart, his sacred divine heart, if he can but protrude his animal heart, and his vainglory.

In God, there is also a sacred heart and mind, since we are his images; but they are one, as all the pourers and faculties of the Sovereign Being are one.

Now, we have the prerogative of forming, after the similitude of the All-Wise, an indissoluble, eternal alliance between our minds (esprits) and our sacred hearts, by uniting them in the principle which formed them; and it is only on this indispensable condition that we can hope to become again the images of God; and in striving for this, our conviction is confirmed, as to the painful fact of our degradation, and, at the same time, of our superiority over the external order.

Sentiment of immortality.

By striving to become again God's images, we obtain the inestimable advantage, not only of putting an end to our privation and degradation, but of advancing towards what men, greedy for glory, call immortality, and actually enjoying it; for, the vague desire which men of the stream have, of living in the minds of others, is the weakest and most false of all the arguments commonly advanced in favour of the dignity of the human soul.

In fact, although Man is spirit, and, in all his, actions, orderly or otherwise, he always has a spiritual motive of some kind; and although, in whatever emanates from him, he can work only by and for spirit; yet the desire of this kind of immortality is only an impulse of self-love, a sentiment of present superiority over others, and a foretaste of their admiration which he promises to himself, and which warms him; and when he does

not see his way to realise this picture, his zeal cools, and the works which depended on it are affected accordingly.

And we may affirm that this inclination comes rather of a wish for immortality, than of any real conviction about it; and the proof is, that those who indulge in it, are those who, to realize it, have nothing but temporal works to offer, showing that the ground they go upon is within the limit of time: for the tree is known by its fruit.

If they were really convinced of this immortality, they would prove their conviction by trying to work in and for the true God, forgetting themselves; and their hopes of immortal life would not be disappointed, because they would sow their seed in a field where they would be sure to find it again; whereas, by working only in time, and sowing only in men's minds, to be soon forgotten by some, and never heard of by others, is to go to work most awkwardly and disadvantageously, in building for immortality.

If we would reject a little, we should find, close at hand, decisive proofs of our immortality. Only consider the habitual, constant dearth in which man leaves his spirit, - and his spirit is not extinguished. He excites himself, he goes wrong, he gives himself up to error, he becomes wicked, he turns mad, - he does evil when he would do good; but, properly speaking he does not die.

If we treated our bodies with the same carelessness and neglect, if we left them fasting and starved in a similar way, they would do neither good nor evil, they would simply die.

Another indication of our immortality may be noticed in the fact, that, in all respects, man, here below walks all day long by the side of his grave, and that it can be only from some kind of feeling of immortality that he, all the time, tries to show himself superior to this danger.

This may be said of soldiers, who may receive their death at any time. It may be said of the corporeal man, who may be taken out of this world at any time; the only difference being that the soldier is not necessarily victim to the danger that threatens him, whilst natural men must all fall, without a possibility of escape.

But, in both, we perceive the same tranquillity, not to say carelessness, which makes the warrior and the man of nature live as if no danger existed for them; their carelessness being itself an indication that they are full of the idea of their immortality, though they both walk by the edge of their graves.

In his spiritual concerns, man's danger is still greater, and his carelessness more extraordinary still: not only does the Spirit-Man continually walk by the side of his grave, always nearly being swallowed up in the immortal source of all lies, but, may we not

ask, are there many amongst us who do not walk in their graves? And man is so blind that he makes no effort to get out, and inquires not whether he ever shall.

When he is fortunate enough to perceive, if only for a moment, that he is walking in this grave, then he has an irresistible spiritual proof of his immortality, since he has that of his frightful mortality, and even of what we figuratively call his death. Now, how could he feel a horror of this spiritual mortality, if he had not, at the same time, a strong sentiment of his immortality?

It is only in this contrast that he finds that he is punished; just as physical pain is felt, by the opposition of disorder to health. But this kind of proof can be got only by experience, and it is one of the first-fruits of regeneration; for, if we do not feel our spiritual death, how can we think of calling for life?

The father of lies.

Here, again, we also learn that there must be another and a still more unhappy being, - the prince of falsehood, - since, without him, we could not have had the idea of him; seeing that all things can be revealed only by themselves, as we have shown in 'L'Esprit des Choses.'

Not only does this being continually walk in his grave, not only does he never perceive that he is walking in that grave, - for this he could not do without a ray of light to help him, - but, when we approach that grave, we perceive that he is in continual dissolution and corruption; that is, that he is in the perpetual proof and sentiment of his death; that he never conceives the smallest hope of being delivered from it, and thus his greatest torment is the sentiment of his immortality.

Man's primitive dignity, his degradation, and his high calling, shown in the writer's previous publications.

My other writings have sufficiently established the dignity of our being, notwithstanding our abject condition, in this region of darkness.

They have sufficiently shown how to distinguish the illustrious captive, man, from nature, which, though his preserver, is also his prison.

They have sufficiently indicated the difference between the powers, mutually exercised on each other, by the physical and moral orders, the former having over the latter a passive power only, obstructing it, or it leaves it to itself; whereas, the moral has over the physical order an active power, that of creating in it, so to say, notwithstanding our degradation, manifold gifts and talents, which it would never have had of its own nature.

Although I do not flatter myself that I have convinced many of my fellow-creatures, as to our lamentably degraded state, since I first took upon myself to defend human nature, yet I have often attempted it, in my writings, and, I believe I may say, my task is fulfilled in this respect, though this may not be the case with those who have read me.

Those writings have sufficiently shown how the All-Wise, from whom Man descends, has multiplied the means by which he may rise again to his primitive state; and, after laying these foundations in man's integral being, so as to be above suspicion, and so that he might, at any moment, verify them by his own observation, they have represented to him the entire heavenly and earthly universe, the sciences of all kinds, the languages, and mythologies of all nations, as so many depositions which he may consult at his pleasure, in which he will find authentic evidence of all these fundamental truths.

They have particularly recommended, as an indispensable precaution, though universally neglected, that all traditional books whatsoever be considered only as accessories, posterior to those important truths which rest upon the nature of things, and the constituent nature of Man.

They have essentially recommended men to begin by firmly assuring themselves of these primary and impregnable truths, not omitting, afterwards, to gather from books and traditions everything that may come in support of them, without allowing themselves to be so blinded as to confound testimony with facts, which must first be known to exist as facts, before depositions of witnesses are received; for, when there are no certain facts, witnesses can have no pretension to our confidence, nor be of any use.

I have not now to demonstrate man's frightful transmigration; I have said that a single sigh of the human soul is more decisive on this point than all the doctrines derived from external things, or than all the stutterings and noisy clamour of the philosophy of appearances.

Hindoo priests may stifle the widows cries, whom they burn on their funereal pyres; their fanatical songs and the tumultuous noise of their instruments do not the less leave her a prey to the most horrible tortures; and their impostures and atrocious shouts will not make her forget her pains.

No! those only, who make themselves matter, believe they are as they ought to be. After this first error, the second follows as a necessary consequence; for, matter, in fact, knows no degradation; 'in whatsoever condition it may be, it has still no character but inertia; it is what it ought to be; it makes no comparisons: it perceives no order in itself, nor disorder.'

Neither do men, who make themselves matter, discern any better the striking and repulsive contrasts of their state of existence.

Nature is not matter.

But Nature is another thing than matter; it is the life of matter; it possesses an instinct and a sensibility different from matter; it perceives its deterioration, and groans under its bondage.

Therefore, if lost men would only be content to make themselves nature, they would have no doubt about their degradation; but they make themselves matter: and the only torch they have left to guide them, is the blind insensibility and dark ignorance of matter.

A golden age.

Moreover, the reason why those glowing descriptions of a golden age, given to us in poetry and mythology, still rank as fable, is that they would seem to represent enjoyments which had been formerly ours, which is not the case; they represent only our right to those enjoyments, which we might even now recover, if we would but avail ourselves of the resources inherent in our essence. And I myself, when I speak so frequently of man's crime, I mean the whole or general Man, from whom the human family has descended.

Original sin.

As I have shown, in 'Le Tableau Naturel,' we bewail our sorrowful situation here below, but have no remorse about original Sin, because we are not guilty of it; we are under deprivation, but are not punished as the guilty are. Thus, children of an illustrious criminal, some great one of the earth, born after their father's crime, may be deprived of his riches and temporal privileges, but they are not punished personally, as he is, and they may even hope, by good conduct, some day to regain favour, and to be installed in their father's honours.

I have, in my writings, also, sufficiently shown that the human soul is more sensible than nature, which, in fact, is sensitive only. This is why I said that the human soul, when restored to its sublime dignity, was the true witness of the Supreme Agent, and that those who can prove God only by the universe, stand upon a precarious evidence, for the universe is in bondage, and slaves are not allowed as witnesses.

Marriage.

I have made it sufficiently clear, that man's thought feeds on and lives only by admiration, and his heart only by adoration and love. And I now add, that, these sacred privileges, being divided in mankind, between the man, who is more inclined to admire, and the woman, who is more disposed to love and adore, both the man and the woman are thus perfected in their holy intercourse, which gives to man's intelligence, the love in which he is deficient, and crowns the woman's love with the bright rays of intelligence which she wants; both being thus brought back to the ineffable law of Unity.

(Here we may say, in passing, that this would explain why marriage, everywhere, except with the depraved, bears a respectable character; and why this tie, notwithstanding our degradation, is the basis of all political associations, all moral laws, the subject of so many great and small events in the world, and the subject of almost all works of literature, epopee, drama, or romance; finally, why the respect in which this tie is held, with the attacks made against it, becomes, in all civil and religious respects, the source of harmony or discord, a blessing or a curse, and seems to link heaven, earth, and hell, with the marriage of man; for, such extreme results would be astonishing indeed, if this conjugal union had not from the beginning, and from its importance, had the power to determine the happiness or misery of all it embraces, and all that relates to man. And sin has made this marriage subject to very sad consequences, which consist in this, that, everything having gone the wrong way, spiritually; for them both, their spirits are obliged to go out of themselves, if they would mutually attain to that holy unity to which their alliance calls them. And there is nothing which they do not owe to each other, in their intercourse, by way of encouragement and example, that through this medium, the woman may return into the man out of whom she came; that the man may sustain the woman with the strength from which she is separated, and recover for himself that portion of love which he suffered to go out of him. Oh! if mankind knew what marriage really was, how they would at once desire it exceedingly, and fear it ! for it is possible for a man to become divine again through marriage, or to go through it to perdition. In fact, if married couples only prayed, they would recover possession of the garden of Eden; and if they will not pray, I know not how they can stand, so constituted we now are of corruption and infection, both physically and morally; above all, if, to their own moral and physical infirmities, they add the corrosive atmosphere of the frivolous world, which attracts everything to the outside, because it cannot live in or by itself.)

I have sufficiently made it appear, that we alone on earth enjoy the privilege of admiring and loving, on which marriage should rest; and that this reflection alone demonstrates both our superiority over everything in nature, and the necessity of a permanent Source of admiration and adoration, by which our need to admire and adore may be satisfied; it also demonstrates our relations and radical analogy with this Source, whereby we may discern and feel what in it there is to attract our admiration and homage.

Man is the book of God.

I have sufficiently expressed my thought of books, in saying that Man was the only book written by God's own hand; that all other books which have come down to us were ordered or permitted by Him; that sell other books whatsoever, could be but developments or commentaries of this primitive test, this original book; and that thus our primary task, and one of fundamental necessity to us, was, that we should read in Man, who is the book written by God's own hand.

Sacred writings or traditions.

I have been equally explicit as to sacred traditions, in saying that everything must make its own revelation; so that, instead of proving religion merely by traditions, written or unwritten, which is all our ordinary teachers attempt, we have a right to draw directly from the depths which we have within us, since facts, how marvelous soever they may be, must be posterior to Thought; that we ought to have begun with the Spirit-Man and thought, before going to events, especially such as are only traditional; that thereby we might cause to germinate or reveal themselves, both the healing balm, of which we all feel so much need, and religion itself, which should be nothing but the mode or preparation of this sovereign remedy, and ever be substituted for it, as it so often is, in passing through the hands of men.

I have sufficiently made it appear that this was the only sure way to obtain natural, and really positive and efficient evidence, to which alone our understanding can yield its confidence.

Thus, I may be excused from returning to these first principles; the more so, that, if we attentively observe the state of men's minds, we shall acknowledge that we ought less to think of those who are hardened, themselves, than of rescuing some of their prey; especially if we reflect how small the number of those hardened beings is, compared with those who are still capable of recovering their sight; for, it is a striking fact that those who speak against the Truth, amount almost to none at all, compared with those who defend it, though it may be awkwardly; they are fewer still, when compared with those who believe it, even though it be without knowing it, which is the case with most.

Jacob Bohme.

Moreover, a German author, whose first two books I have translated, 'The Aurora,' and the 'Three Principles,' will supply all my deficiencies. This German author, Jacob Bohme, who lived two centuries ago, and was looked upon in his time as the prince of divine philosophers, has left, in his numerous writings, which consist of about thirty different treatises, most astonishing and extraordinary openings, on our primitive nature;

on the source of evil; the essence and laws of the Diverse; the origin of weight; on what he calls the seven wheels or powers of nature; the origin of water (confirmed by chemistry, which teaches that it is a burned body); on the nature of the crime of the angels of darkness; on that of man; on the mode adopted by Eternal Love, for the restitution of mankind in their rights; &c.

I think I do the reader a service, in advising him to make himself acquainted with this author; recommending him, however, to be armed with patience and courage, that he may not be repelled by the unusual form of his works; by the extremely abstract nature of the subjects he treats; and by the difficulty which the author (as he confesses himself) had in expressing his ideas, for the reason that most of the matters in question have no analogous names in our common languages.

The reader will there find that this physical elementary nature is only a residuum, a corruption (alteration) of an anterior nature, which the author calls Eternal Nature; that this present nature constituted formerly, in its whole circumscription, the throne and dominion of one of the angelic princes, called Lucifer: that this prince, wishing to reign only by the power of fire and wrath, put the kingdom (regne) of divine Love and Light aside, instead of being guided by it exclusively, and inflamed the whole circumscription of his empire; that Divine Wisdom opposed to this conflagration a temperate cooling power, which contains it, without extinguishing it, making the mixture of good and evil which is now visible in nature; that Man, formed, at once, of the principle of Fire, the principle of Light, and the Quintessential principle of physical elementary Nature, was placed in this world, to contain the dethroned guilty king; that this Man, though having in him the quintessential principle of elementary nature, was to keep it, as it were, absorbed in the pure element which then constituted his bodily form; but that, allowing himself to be attracted more by the temporal principle of Nature than by the two other principles, he was overcome by it, so as to fall asleep, as Moses expresses it; that, soon finding himself subdued by the material region of this world, he suffered his pure element to be swallowed up and absorbed in the gross form which envelopes us nor; that he thus became the subject and victim of his enemy; that Divine Love, which eternally contemplates itself in the Mirror of its Wisdom, by the author called SOPHIA, perceived in this mirror, in which all forms are comprised, the model and spiritual form of man; that He clothed Himself with this spiritual form, and afterwards with the elementary form even, that He might present to man the image of what he had become, and the pattern of what he ought to have been; that man's actual object on earth is to recover, physically and morally, the likeness of his first pattern; that the greatest obstacle he here meets with is the astral elementary power which engenders and constitutes the world, and for which Man was not made; that the actual procreation of man is a speaking witness of this truth, by the pains which pregnant women experience in all their members, as their fruit is formed in them, and attracts those gross astral substances; that the two tinctures, igneous and watery, which ought to be united in Man, and identify themselves with Wisdom or SOPHIA, (but are now divided,) seek each other ardently, hoping to find, the one in the other, that SOPHIA which they are in

want of; but they only fall in with the astral, which oppresses and thwarts them; that we are free to restore, by our efforts, our spiritual being, to our first divine image, as we are to allow it to take the disorderly, inferior images; and that these divers images will constitute our mode of being, our glory or our shame, in a future state, &c.

Caution to the Reader.

Reader, if you resolve courageously to draw from the well of this author's works, judged by the learned in the human order as those of a madman, you will assuredly not need mine. But if, though you may not penetrate all the depths which he will present to your mind, you are not firmly established on at least the main points which I have just passed in review before your eyes; if you still doubt the sublime nature of your being, notwithstanding the decisive proofs you might, on the slightest examination, find in yourself; if you are not equally convinced of your degradation, written in letters of iron in the disquietudes of your heart or in the dark delirium of your thoughts; if you do not feel that your absolutely exclusive work is to concentrate all your tame to the re-establishment of your being in the active enjoyment of those ancient domains of Truth which ought to be `yours by right of inheritance; go no farther. The object of my writing is not to establish these foundations over again; they have been solidly laid already.

I have the right here to suppose all these grounds admitted, and we are not now called upon to prove them. In a word, this is not an elementary book: I have done my duty in that respect. This work presupposes all the notions I have just laid down, and will suit only such as hold them, or, at least, such as have not absolutely declared against them.

I shall apply myself chiefly to the contemplation of the sublime rights originally granted to us by the Most High, and to deplored, with my fellow-creatures, the lamentable condition in which they now languish, compared with that for which they were destined by their nature. I shall, at the same time, show the consolations which are still in their reach, and, above all, the hope they may yet entertain of again becoming the Lord's workmen, as originally intended; and this part of my work will not be that which is least attractive to me, so great is my desire that, amidst the evils which are eating them up, instead of losing courage and giving themselves to despair, they should begin by seeking strength, not only to bear but to conquer them, and to come so close to Life, that Death shall be ashamed of having thought of making them his prey; so much do I wish, I say, that they should fulfill in spirit and in truth the object for which they received their being.

How to estimate books.

Let all who read this book - you even who may indulge the taste for writing yourselves - learn to reduce your own books and those of your fellow-creatures to their real value. All these productions should be pictures; and pictures, to be worth anything, presuppose real originals, whose features they represent to us, and positive facts, of which they convey a faithful report.

Yes! the annals of Truth ought to be nothing but compilations of its own dazzling lights and wonders; and he who has the happiness to be called to be its true minister ought never to write till he has acted virtually under its orders, and only to tell us of the marvels he may have wrought in its name.

Such, in all times, has been the way of ministers in spirit and in truth of the things of God. They never wrote till they had wrought. Such also should still be man's course, since he is specially destined for the stewardship of the things of God.

What are those enormous heaps of books, the issue of human fancy and imagination, which not only have not waited for works to describe or marvels to relate, but present themselves to us with the puerile and culpable pretension of altogether taking their places?

What are all those writers, whose object is only to make us contribute to their own vain and noisy celebrity, instead of sacrificing themselves for our good? False friends, who are ready enough to talk to us of virtue and truth, but take great care to leave us in peace, in inaction, and falsity; fearful lest if they attempted to pluck us out with sharp words we should desert their school and stand in the way of their glory, and so reduce them to silence and oblivion.

Oh ! throw aside those profitless books, and take the way of work at once, if you are happy enough to know what this really means. Give yourself to work at the cost of your sweat and blood, and take not a pen till you have some discovery to relate in the regions of true knowledge, some instructive experience in the works of the spirit, or some glorious conquest gained over the kingdom of darkness and lies.

Inspired writings.

This is what, in the books of true stewards of God in all ages, communicates to the man of desire a spirit of life wherewith to quench his thirst at all times. These books are like highways between great cities, affording at once beautiful prospects, hospitable shelter, and protection against danger and evil doers. They are like smiting and fruitful banks of rivers, from the waters of which they derive their fertility, and which they confine in their turn, enabling the navigator to sail peaceably and pleasantly upon them.

Responsibility of writers.

All men of God are responsible to the world for their thoughts; for, if they are truly men of God, every thought they receive is intended for the perfecting of things and the extension of the Master's rule.

Therefore, as he who is not a steward of the things that are of God, should distrust his own words, and spare their utterance to others; so, on the other hand, ought he who is one of those stewards, carefully to collect his, and sow them in men's minds even though they be but as germs sent by the Master for planting in the garden of Eden. He will have to give a strict account of all those germs which, through his indifference or neglect, may fail to come to flower, for the adornment of man's abode.

Man is the book of books.

But, if books of stewards of divine things may render such services to the human family, what might that family not expect from Man himself, reinstated in his natural rights? Those books are but the highways between great cities. Man is himself one of the cities. Man is the primitive book, the divine book; other books are only books of the spirit; they merely contain the waters of the river; Man partakes, in some sort, of the very nature of the waters.

O my brethren, read, then, incessantly, in this Man, this book of books; without leaving unread those written by stewards of divine things, which may render you such daily service! With these great means at your command, open the regions of Divinity, which may be called regions of the Word (parole); and then come and relate to us all the life-giving wonders which you meet with, in those regions where all is wonder.

But, do not forget, that, in the state of aberration in which Man is, you have a duty to perform for your fellow-men, more urgent than writing books; that is, so to live and do), as, by your efforts and desires, they may get ears to hear them. This is what is most needed by mankind. If their intelligence do not keep up with your writings, you will do them no service, your work will be dead, and, unfortunately for yourself, your egotism and self-applause will be the only fruit you derive from your undertaking.

Men's minds are biases.

What do I say ? Open men's understanding ! What would the most perfect books avail for this? Men's understanding is debased, it is darkened, it has become childish. The child, like the savage, can understand only by substantial and gross signs, or even the sight of the object itself. Its thought is yet only in its eyes. Do not attempt to treat man's understanding otherwise than as that of the child or the savage. Develop within and

before him, the active powers of Nature, those of the human soul, those of the Divinity, if you would have him to know God, Man, and Nature. On these subjects, his reason is dead; you will lose your pains if you only speak to him about them.

In fact, the time for books is almost past. Man is blase by their abundance; like those high-livers to whom the most succulent viands are insipid.

The time is almost past, not only for books of human imagination and fancy; but, it may even be said, for books of men of God; books of human imagination have taken away their value, and almost entirely annulled their power; and nothing but works of overpowering effect, can now awaken the world from its lethargy.

We know that extremes meet; and man and the savage, reduced in their childishness and ignorance to the impossibility of being awakened by anything but signs of imposing effect, retrace to us inversely the true primitive nature of Man, who ought always to have been nourished with effective wonders, and was reduced to making and reading books, only when he lost sight of the living patterns which ought never to have ceased acting before his eyes.

In short, time is advancing towards its dotage; the spirit-age must now come, since miracles wrought by the power of the Most High are now the only means by which He can be made known, and respected by mortals.

This is why I am so pressing that you should go earnestly into the way of work; that is, if you feel called to it; and, if you do not, at least pray the Master to send workmen.

If you are of the number of these workmen, when you have opened the regions of Nature, forget not those of the Spirit, nor even those of Divinity: when you come to relate their wonders, when you take up your pen to describe them, do not forget the price at which you came to know them; that you acquired the right to speak of them only after pouring out your sweat and blood in these laborious and useful researches; do not forget, even, that, when you describe them, you must still pour out your sweat and blood, to gather new pearls from this inexhaustible mine, in which you are condemned to work all the days of your life.

Your task is double now: and your consolations have sorrow for their mother and companion. To you the sounds of joy are no longer separate from those of groaning: it is useless to distinguish between them; they are forcibly bound together, and not all the joys of your spirit allow any intermission to your sobs.

Man the Universal Rectifier.

Of all the titles which may serve to designate Man, restored to his primitive elements, none so satisfies the mind and the vast and laudable desires of the human soul, as that of Universal Rectifier (ameliateur). For this human soul experiences an urgent want, even to importunity, to see order reign in every class of beings in every region, that every point of existence may contribute to the sovereign harmony which alone can manifest the majesty and glory of Eternal Unity.

It is even the secret presentiment of this universal eternal harmony, which has led men of celebrity, in all ages, to look upon the present state of nature as eternal, in spite of the evils and disorder in which we see it is sunk.

Yes, everything is eternal, in its fundamental ground, but not in the pains and frightful confusion which are visible throughout nature: yes, there is, doubtless, an eternal nature, where everything is regular, and more alive and active than in this our prison; and the strongest proof that this present nature, in which we are imprisoned, is not eternal, is, that it suffers, and that it is the abode of death of all kinds, whereas there is no eternal but life.

Insufficiency of common teaching.

Granted, that you teach me great and useful doctrines, who, by your precepts, call men to brotherly charity, to zeal for the House of God, and to the care of quitting this earthly mire, without being infected by its pollutions.

But have you followed these precepts to the fulness of their meaning? As for me, I feel that something is still wanting to fill the boundless desires which devour me. The prayers and truths which are given and taught us, here below, are too little for us; they are prayers and truths of time, only; we feel that we are made for something better.

I can conceive that brotherly charity may find no more sublime exercise than to forgive our enemies, and do good to those who hate us. But, what of men who do not hate us; and those who are, and ever will be, unknown to us? Is our charity in regard to them to remain inactive, or limited to those vague prayers alluded to when we are told that we must pray for all men? In a word, may not all mankind, past, present, and to come, be the object of our true love?

Granted, that there may appear to be no holier zeal for the House of God, than to publish the divine laws, and to make them honourable, by our example, as well as our preaching. But our God, who is so exceedingly precious to every faculty of our being; this God, who, on so many grounds, may indeed be called our friend, has He no pain, no anguish of heart, by reason that all the wonders He planted in man and the universe

are lost to us in clouds of darkness? And should we allow ourselves an instant's repose till we have brought Him relief?

Finally, the duty of preserving ourselves clean from this earthly mire may seem to imply nothing more important than that we should return to our mother country, without contracting the manners and habits of this wicked world. But, after escaping its pollutions, would it not be something still more excellent to neutralize its poison, or even to transmute it into a balm of life? Are we not advised to do good to our enemies? And can we deny that, in many respects, Nature is one of them?

As for those who are called enemies of God, it is for God, and not for us, to dispense to them the justice they deserve; let us disregard His seeming declaration of open and implacable war against His so-called enemies. God has no enemies; He is too meek and loving ever to have had any. And those who call themselves God's enemies, are only their own enemies, and are under their own justice.

A higher ground for the regenerate man.

I now come to speak with the man of faith and desire, of the different privileges which constitute the eminent dignity of man when regenerate. Let your understanding second my efforts; the rights I maintain may be claimed by all men. We ought, originally, all to have had the same task, that of developing our characters of rectifiers, as having all emanated from the Author of all goodness and loving-kindness. I know too well, O man of desire, that your understanding may be dark; but I also know that, with a decided will, and a conduct in conformity, you may obtain from your Sovereign Principle the light you require, and which is grounded your original titles.

The Father's children.

We here clearly distinguish several tasks to be performed in the spiritual course. Most men who come to it, come to seek virtue or knowledge, only for their own improvement, and their own perfecting. And happy, indeed, are those who come with such intentions as these! And how much to be wished is it, that this happiness were the portion of every individual of the human family!

But if these good, pious, and even enlightened men, cause joy to the Father of the family, by seeking to be admitted amongst his children, they would cause him still more, by seeking to be admitted amongst his workmen, or servants: for these may render him real service; the others render it only to themselves.

The Father's workmen.

Although far from being able to reckon myself of the number of those sublime workmen, or mighty servitors; yet of them chiefly I shall speak in this writing, having already done so fully, to the best of my ability, of what belongs to the children of the Father of the family.

I again call upon the man of desire to look at the fields of the Lord, and seek to labour herein according to his strength, and the kind of work for which he is adapted; in living works, if this be given him; or in developing man's nature, if he has been led to perceive its depths; or even in plucking up the thorns and briars which enemies of truth and false teachers have planted and still plot daily in Man, the image of Eternal Wisdom.

For, to teach one's fellow-creatures their true duties and veritable rights, is also, in a way, to be the workman of the Lord; to provide and put in order the tools and implements of labour, is to be useful to agriculture; only it is necessary to examine very carefully what we are competent to do in any class of work. He who provides implements of husbandry is responsible for what he provides; the sower is responsible for what he sows.

But, as it is impossible to be a true workman in the Lord's fields, without being renewed and re-instated in one's own rights, I shall often dwell upon the paths of restoration through which we must necessarily pass, to be admitted as workmen.*

* I owe likewise some advice to my brethren, when I invite them to qualify themselves for the Lord's service, namely:-

Advice about Spirit communications.

Some men, when they hear of living spiritual works, conceive the idea of communicating with spirits, or what is commonly called seeing ghosts.

With those who believe in the possibility of such a thing, this idea often excites nothing but fright; with those who are not sure of its impossibility, it gives rise only to curiosity; with those who deny or reject all about it, it produces only scorn and contempt, as well for the opinions themselves, as for those who hold them.

I think myself obliged therefore, to say to all such, that a man may go on for ever in living spiritual works, and attain a high rank amongst the Lord's workmen, without seeing spirits. I ought further to tell him who, in the spiritual career, would seek to communicate with spirits, that, supposing him to succeed not only he would not thereby fulfil the chief object of his work, but he might be very far from deserving to be classed with the Lord's workmen.

For, if he think so much of communicating with spirits, he ought to suppose the possibility of meeting with bad ones as well as good.

Thus, to be safe, it would not suffice that he should communicate with spirits; he should also be able to discern from whence they came, and for what purpose, and whether their errand were laudable or unlawful, useful or mischievous; and, supposing them to be of the purest and most perfect class, he should, before all, examine whether he would himself be in condition to perform the works they might give him to undertake in their Master's service.

The privilege or satisfaction of seeing spirits can never be otherwise than quite accessory to man's real object in the way of living, spiritual divine work, and his admission amongst the Lord's workmen; and he who aspires to this sublime ministry would not be worthy of it, if he were drawn to it by the puerile curiosity of conversing with spirits; especially if, to obtain these secondary evidences, he depended upon the uncertain aid of his fellow-creatures, with usurped, or partial or even corrupt powers.

Heaven taken by violence.

Which, then, of all the privileges of the human soul, is that which we should seek to avail ourselves of first, as the most eminent, and one without which all our other privileges would amount to nothing? It is the being able to call God, so to speak, out of the magical contemplation of His own inexhaustible wonders, wonders which have been before Him from all eternity, are born of Him, and are Himself, and from which He can no more separate, than He can from Himself.

It is, in a manner, to drag Him away from the imperious absorbing attraction which eternally draws Him towards Himself, and makes what Is turn continually away from what is not, and towards what Is, as a necessary consequence of a natural analogy.

It is to awake and force Him, if we may use the term, out of that intoxication which is occasioned by the perpetual mutual experience of the sweetness of His own essences, and that delicious sentiment which the active generative soiree of His own existence gives. It is, in short, to draw down His divine countenance upon this lost dark Nature, that its vivifying power may restore her to her former splendour.

But what thought can reach Him, if its analogy with Him is not first restored? What thought can accomplish this awakening in Him, if it is not first made alive again, like Him? What thought can make rivers of sweet and heating waters flow out of Him, if it be not first made pure and meek, like Him? What thought can ever unite with what Is, if it become not again like that which Is, by separating from all that is not? What being can

ever be admitted into the Father's house, and His intimacy, if he have not shown himself to be a true child of this Father?

O Man! If here you see the most sublime of your privileges, that of making God come out of His own contemplation, you see also on what condition such a privilege may be exercised. If you should ever succeed in awaking this Supreme God, and forcing Him out of His own contemplation, do you suppose it would be a matter of small concern to you what condition He found you in?

Let your whole being, then, become a new creature! Let every one of your faculties be revived, even to its deepest roots! Let the living simple oil be subdivided into an infinity of purifying elements, and let there be nothing in you which is not stimulated and warmed by one of these regenerating and ever living elements !

A Helper and Comforter.

If there were no strong One sent to comfort you, and help you to become, like Him the dutiful child of your heavenly Father, how could you attain to the lowest step of your regeneration? Nor are you ignorant that this Agent exists, since He is the very living focus in which your being reposed when you were made, and who has no more abandoned you since, than a mother can abandon her son in any affliction whatever. Unite with Him, without delay or reserve, and your pollution will vanish and your famine be turned into plenty.

Man must perform his Father's work.

Nevertheless, the weight of the work will not cease to be felt, it may even become heavier; for, when the weight of God's hand is on man, and not for his punishment, it must be for work.

In fact, God, having destined man to be the rectifier of Nature, did not give him this appointment without ordering him to fulfil it; He did not order him to fulfill it, without giving him the means; He did not give him the means, without an ordination, nor an ordination without a consecration; He did not give him consecration, without a promise of glorification; nor did He promise this glorification, but because he was to serve as organ to the praises of God, by taking the place of the enemy whose throne was cast down, and opening the mysteries of Eternal Wisdom.

Two kinds of mysteries.

But there are two kinds of mysteries. One comprises the natural mysteries of the formation of physical things, their laws, and modes of existence, and the object of this existence. The other comprises the mysteries of our fundamental being, and its relations with its Principle.

The final intent of a mystery cannot be to remain altogether inaccessible, either to the understanding or to the sweet sense of admiration for which our souls are made, and which we have already recognised as a first necessity for our immaterial being to feed upon.

The intent of the mystery of Nature is to raise us, through the discovery of the laws of physical things, to the knowledge of the higher laws and powers by which they are governed. The knowledge of this mystery of Nature and all that constitutes it, cannot then be prohibited now, even since our fall; otherwise its final intent would be missed.

The final intent of the mystery of divine and spiritual things, which is connected with that of our own being is to move us and excite in us sentiments of admiration, tenderness, love, and gratitude. This mystery of divine and spiritual things ought, then, to be allowed to penetrate to the very ground of our being, otherwise this double mystery, which connects us with divine things, and divine things with us, would fail of its effect. But there is a great difference between these two sorts of mysteries. The mystery of Nature may be more or less known, but Nature itself hardly touches our essential fundamental being at all; and, if we experience pleasure in its contemplation and in penetrating its mysteries, it is because we then rise above Nature, and ascend, by its means, to regions which are really analogous to ourselves; it is herein like a lantern, showing us the way to these high regions, but unable, in itself, to communicate their sweetness.

The spiritual and divine things, on the contrary, touch our faculties of love and admiration far more than our understanding; it seems even as though it were to prepare us for a still higher measure of admiration, that they will not so readily yield themselves to our perceptions; for if we could, at will, subject them to our cognizance, we should not admire them so much, and our pleasure would be less: for, if it is true that our happiness is to admire, it is also true that to admire is to feel, rather than to know; which is the reason why God and Spirit are at once so sweet and so little known.

For the opposite reason, we might say that Nature is so cold because it is more adapted to be known than to be felt; thus the plans of Wisdom are so arranged, that things, on which our true pleasure depends, do not so yield to our intelligence as to quench admiration; and things which are intended less for the nourishment of our admiration, i.e. our true pleasures, as having less analogy to us, afford us a sort of compensation in the pleasures of the understanding.

By the way men have managed these domains, they have allowed these two sources, which would have produced delicious fruit, each after its kind, to dry up; that is, human philosophy, treating of natural sciences, and keeping only on the surface, has prevented us from knowing them, and has not given us even the pleasures of the understanding, which they would have so readily afforded; and teachers of divine things, by darkening them and making them unapproachable, have prevented us from feeling them, and so deprived us of the admiration they would not have failed to awaken in us, if they had been allowed to reach us.

The perfection of mystery is, to unite in a true and harmonious combination, what will at once satisfy our intelligence and nourish our admiration; this we should have enjoyed for ever, if we had kept our first estate. For the door by which God goes out of Himself, is the same by which He enters the human soul.

The door by which the human soul goes out of itself, is the same by which it enters the understanding.

The door by which the human understanding goes out of itself, is the same by which it enters the spirit of the universe.

The door by which the spirit of the universe goes out of itself, is that by which it enters into the elements and matter. This is the reason why the learned, who do not take all these routes, never enter Nature.

Matter had no door by which to go out of itself, nor enter any region inferior to itself; this is the reason why the enemy could have no access to any orderly region, whether material or spiritual.

Instead of watching carefully at his post, Man not only opened all these doors to his enemies, but he closed them against himself, so that he nor finds himself outside, and the robbers within. Can a more lamentable situation be conceived?

Man the mirror of God's wonders.

We see why the superb titles which constituted Man so privileged a being, would have made his ministry in the universe of so much importance; he might have made known the Divine Threefold Unity, our likeness to which has been so often remarked, showing thereby that we should not thus have been His image, if we had not the right of representing Him. And everything, even to the angels, was greatly interested in man's keeping the post which was committed to him.

In fact, as animal life, scattered all through nature, knows neither the spirit of the universe in itself, nor the germs of the vegetables, which are its results, and the sensible expression of its properties, and animals know these things only in the flavour of what they feed upon; so do the angels only know the Father in the Son. They know him neither in Himself nor in Nature, which especially since the first great change, is much nearer to the Father than to the Son, through the concentration it experienced; and they can know Him only in the divine splendour of the Son, who, in His turn, has His image only in the heart of Man, and not in Nature.

For this reason, Man, who, in the beginning of the Universe, was related, principally, to the Son, the Source of Universal development, knew the Father, both in the Son and in Nature. And, for this reason, Angels seek so much the society of Man, believing that he is still in condition to show them the Father in Nature.

Key to the wonders of Nature.

Our task, therefore, since the epoch when Adam was drawn out of the precipice into which he fell, should be to discover, by all possible means, the wonders of the Father, manifested in visible Nature; and this it is the more possible for us to do, because the Son, who contains them and opens them all, restored them to us, by incorporating our first parents in the material form we now bear, and brought the key with Him, when He made Himself like us.

Angels learn by Man.

Oh! what deep things might we not teach, even to angels, if we recovered our rights! St. Paul says, "We shall judge angels" (1 Cor. vi. 3).* Now, power to judge supposes power to instruct. Yes, angels may be stewards, physicians, redressers of wrong, warriors, judges, governors, protectors, &c., but, without us, they cannot gain any profound knowledge of the divine wonders of Nature.

What prevents this is, not only that they know the Father only in the splendour of the Son, and that, unlike the first man, their bodily covering is devoid of essences taken from the root of Nature, but also because we close for them the central eye within us, the divine organ, by which they might have had the means of contemplating the riches of the Father in the depths of Nature; and that is why men of God ought to instruct angels, and open to their eyes the depths which are hidden in the corporification of Nature, and in all its wonders.

This also is the reason why, in sciences and letters, those men are ranked highest who discover the grand laws of Nature; and, in religion, those who have been clothed with the greatest power from the Spirit.

* Scripture speaks of "evil" angels and "fallen" angels, as well as of holy angels. May not Man well be the touchstone by which the former are tried? and may not even the latter look into Man, to know somewhat of the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge? - ED.

Since our degradation, this precious privilege of penetrating the depths of Nature, and becoming, so to say, possessors of them, has been, in part, restored to us; it ought even to be an inheritance, inherent in Man's nature, inasmuch as it constitutes his true riches and original property: of this we have several instances in the patriarchal testaments.

Spiritual testaments.

But men of matter have transposed these sublime rights, and applied them merely to their testaments of earthly goods; although it might be reasonably objected that a man may not dispose of goods which he would cease to possess at his death, and before his will could be executed.

It was, then, to real possessions that the law of testaments should apply, whereby the testator invests his heirs with a living right which he does not thereby lose himself, but which he takes with him to a region in which this right will still increase, instead of diminishing. And, here, our thoughts may expand, and be enriched by meditating upon the patriarchal testaments.

Man the tree, God the sap.

Man is the tree, God is its sap. It is not surprising, then, that when this living sap flows in man, it converts each of his branches into a new tree; nor is it surprising, if some wild branches are grafted on these, that they should soon partake of its excellent properties. Yes, since the fall, Man has been replanted upon the living root which ought to work in him all the spiritual vegetations of his Principle. For this reason, if he rose to the living fountain of admiration, he might, by his existence alone, communicate a living testimony thereof.

This, moreover, is the only means by which the divine purposes can be accomplished; for Man was born only to be Prime-Minister to the Divinity; even now, the material body we bear is very superior to the earth. Our animal spirit is very superior to the spirit of the universe, through its junction with our soul-spirit, (*esprit animique*), which is our real soul; and our soul-spirit is very superior to angels.

But man would deceive himself if he thought he could advance in the work of the Spirit-Man, without this holy sap being revived in him, for it has become, as it were, thick and congealed by the universal corruption.

Luminous foundation for Man's building.

Thus, O man of desire, whatever you have allowed to coagulate and darken within you, must be dissolved and revealed to the eyes of your spirit. As long as you can see a stain there, or the smallest thing remains to obstruct your view, take no rest till you have dispersed it. The more you penetrate to the depths of your being, the better you will know the grounds on which the work rests.

No other ground but this, re-hewn and shaped, can serve for a foundation to your building. If it is not level and true to the plumb, the building can never be raised. No! It is in the inward light of your being alone that the Divinity, and all Its marvellous powers can be made perceptible to you in their living glory.

If you dare not dwell in this region yourself; if your view cannot penetrate so far; or if you fear to look there, on account of its difficulty of access; how can you expect the Divinity to be more at ease there than you, and accommodate Itself to your darkness, and the obstructions which repel you? - the Divinity, which is so radically and altogether luminous and pure, and able to develop the wonders of Its existence, only in atmospheres which are cleared of every obstruction, and free as Itself?

The science of Truth is not like other sciences: it ought originally to have been all mere enjoyment for man; now it is all a mere combat; and this is why the learned and savans of the world have not the least idea of it, became they confound it with their own dark notions, which are acquired passively.

The Universe in pain.

The universe is on a bed of suffering, and it is for us, men, to comfort it. The universe is on a bed of suffering, because, since the fall, a foreign substance has entered its veins, and incessantly impedes and torments its life-principle. It is for us to speak to it words of comfort and encouragement, and the promise of deliverance and covenant of alliance, which Eternal Wisdom is coming to make with it.

This is nothing more than what is just and our bounden duty, since the head of our family was the first cause of its pains. We may say that we made the universe a widower; and it will be waiting for its spouse to be restored, as long as things endure.

O Sun of Righteousness! we are the first cause of thy discomfort and disquiet. Thine eye ceases not to survey, in succession, every region of nature. Thou risest daily for every man; Thou risest joyously, in the hope that they will restore to Thee thy cherished Spouse, the Eternal SOPHIA, of whom Thou hast been deprived; Thou fulfillest thy daily course, asking for her from the whole earth, with burning words, which tell of Thy consuming desires. But, in the evening, Thou settest in affliction and tears, because Thou hast sought thy Spouse in vain; Thou hast demanded her from man, and he has not restored her; and he still suffers thee to dwell in barren places and abodes of prostitution.

The World is dead.

O Man! the evil is greater still! Say not now that the Universe is on a bed of sobering; say it is on its death-bed; and it is for you to perform its funereal rites. It is for you to reconcile it with the pure source from which it descends; a source which, though not God, is one of the eternal organs of His power, and from which the Universe ought never to have been separate; it is, I say, for you to reconcile it, by purging it from all the substances of falsehood with which it has been incessantly impregnated ever since the fall, and by washing it from the consequences of passing every day of its life in vanity.

The Universe would not thus have passed its days in vanity, if you had yourself remained in that throne of glory in which you were originally seated, and if you had anointed it daily with an oil of gladness which should have preserved it from sickness and pain; you would then have done for it what it now does for you, by providing you daily with the light and elementary productions to which you have subjected yourself, and which are now necessary for your existence. Come, then, and ask its forgiveness, for you were the cause of its death.

The evil is greater still! You must no more say the Universe is on its death-bed: it is in its grave! Putrefaction has got hold of it, infection issues from all its members; and you, O man, are to blame! But for you, it would not have thus sunk into its grave; but for you, it would not have thus exhaled infection.

Man must bring the Universe to a new birth.

Do you know the reason why? It is because you have made yourself its sepulchre. It is because, instead of being the cradle of its perpetual youth and beauty, you have buried it in yourself as in a tomb, and clothed it with your own corruption. Inject quickly the elixir of life into all its channels, for it is for you to bring it to life again; and, notwithstanding the cadaverous smell it already emits from all its parts, you are charged to give it a new birth.

Natural light itself, that beautiful type of a former world, which is still left us, contains a devouring power which consumes everything; and the artificial lights we use in its stead subsist only at the expense of the substances they feed upon. And we ought to have had none of those lights; they are a monstrosity in Nature, in which insects burn themselves, mistaking them for the natural light, because Nature's creatures know nothing that is out of order.

Yes, our very trades and manufactures (industries) are a proof of the injury we have done to the world, since this injury, and these pursuits, proceed from the same source, and thus Nature is every way our victim. Oh! how this Nature, if she could speak, would complain of the little good she derives from the vain sciences of men, and from all their scaffoldings, and labours to describe, measure, and analyse her, when they have in themselves the means to comfort and cure her!

Man himself is dead: how he died.

But is not Man himself on his bed of suffering? Is he not on his death-bed? Is he not in his grave, a prey to corruption? And who will comfort him? Who will perform his obsequies? Who will beg him to life again?

The enemy was ambitious from the beginning; he saw into the wonders of glory, and wished to turn their source towards himself, and rule over it. Man's fall did not begin in this way: this was not his crime, for he was to attain these glories only as he accomplished his mission; and, when he first receded his existence he did not know of them. He went astray, first, through weakness, as his children do now, in their infancy, when objects of ambition have no effect upon them, and his weakness was, that he allowed himself to be struck, attracted, and penetrated by the spirit of the world, whereas he was of a higher order, and a region above this world.

When he once descended to this lower region, the enemy found it easy to inspire him with ambitions thoughts, which he would not otherwise have had - with none to speak to him of objects of ambition, of which he knew nothing.

Thus, in his first lapse, he was victim of his own weakness; in his second, he was at once victim and dupe of his enemy, who was interested in leading him astray; and he became entirely subject to this physical world, over which he ought to have been the ruler.

Then his crimes increased in a ratio which it frightens him now to think of! Yes, O Man! you have become a thousand times more guilty since your fall. In your fall, you were a dupe and a victim; but since your fall, you have become the universal instrument of evil, the absolute slave of your enemy, and how often, alas ! his accomplice ?

Man's work must still be done.

And in this condition you have, nevertheless, still to visit the Universe on its death-bed, and restore it to life, not forgetting that the first plan of your own original destination remains also to be fulfilled!

O Man! stop in the middle of this abyss in which you are, if you will not plunge still deeper in. Your work was quite simple when it came out of your First Principle's hands; it has become threefold, through your imprudence and the abominations you have committed: you have now, first, to regenerate yourself; secondly, to regenerate the Universe; then, thirdly, to rise to be a steward of the eternal riches, and to admire the living wonders of Divinity.

In the physical order, we see the remedy comes after sickness, and sickness after health. Now, if sickness leads to the remedy, it must be the same in the spiritual and moral order of man; and, if, here, health likewise preceded his sickness, his malady should lead him to seek the analogous remedy, as physicians seek those for our physical disorders.

The first step, then, towards the cure which man has to work upon himself, is to throw off all those vitiated secondary humours which have accumulated upon him since the fall; honours which have attacked and taken possession of mankind, in the different lapses of the posterity of the first man; those which we inherit from our parents, through the evil influence of vicious generations; and those which we bring upon ourselves by our daily negligence and offences.

Till we have got rid of these honours we cannot move a step towards our recovery, which consists, particularly, in traversing the region of darkness into which we fell, and causing the natural elixir to revive within us, with which to restore the senses of the Universe, which is in a swoon.

Qualification for the work, and test thereof.

Here, O Man! a new condition meets you, if you would go further. It is no longer question of the spiritual nature of your being; of your essential relation to your principle; of your degradation by a first voluntary act; of the ardent love of your generative Source, which led Him, at your fall, and every day since, to come and choose you in the midst of your disgusting filthiness (which the man of the stream may feel, but cannot understand, because he does not look back); it is, in short, no longer question of the overwhelming evidences of every kind, which depose in favour of these fundamental truths, which prove themselves: these points are settled between us, without which I warned you not to proceed; and if it were not so, you would probably not have come thus far.

But you have to see whether you have purged your being from all those secondary defilements which we daily bring upon ourselves since the fall; or, at least, whether you feel an ardent desire to cast them from you at any price whatsoever, and revive that life within you which was extinguished by the first crime, without which you can be neither God's servant nor the world's comforter.

Try even to feel that, perhaps, the only science worth studying, is to be without sin; for, possibly, if man were in that state, he might naturally manifest all lights and sciences.

Probe yourself, therefore, deeply as to these new conditions; and, if, not only you have not cleansed yourself from the results of all your secondary lapses, but even if you have not pulled up by the roots the remotest disinclination you had for the work, I repeat to you, solemnly, go no farther. Man's work requires new men. Those who are not so, will try in vain to form part of the building; when such stones came to be presented for their places, they would be found wanting in the required dimensions, or in finish, and be sent back to the workshop till they were fit to be used.

There is a sign by which to know whether you have made this self-denudation or not.

It is, to see if you feel yourself to be above every other fear, every other care whatsoever, but that of failing to be universally anastomosed with the divine impulse and action.

It is when, far from looking upon our personal sufferings in this world as misfortunes, we confess that none can happen to us but what are our due, and that all we do not suffer are so many favours granted to us, in consideration of our weakness; so that, instead of complaining that our joys and consolations are taken from us in this world, we ought to begin by being thankful that they were not taken from us before, and that some are still left us.

Supposing, then, the two classes of conditions which we have mentioned complied with, the following is the commencement of man's regeneration into his primitive lights, virtues, and titles.

Order of Man's regeneration.

We see that in our material bodies we often feel pain in members which we have lost; now, as in what constitutes our true bodies we have no longer a single member left, the first evidence we can have of our existence as spiritual beings is to feel, either successively or all at once, acute pains in all those members which we no longer possess.

Life must regenerate all the organs we have suffered to perish, and it can do this only by substituting them, through its generative power, for all the foreign and frail organs which now constitute us.

We must feel the spirit making furrows in us, from head to foot, as with a mighty ploughshare, tearing up the trunks of old trees with their roots interlaced in our earth, and all foreign substances which impede our growth and fertility.

Everything that has entered us by charm and seduction, must go out of us by rending and pain. Now, what has come into us is nothing else than the spirit of this very Universe, with all its essences and properties; they have borne fruit in us abundantly; they have become transformed in us into corrosive salts and corrupt humours, coagulated to such a degree that nothing but violent remedies and excessive perspirations can expel them.

O Man! these essences and properties of the Universe have taken possession of your whole being; therefore must the life-pains of regeneration be felt in your whole being, till these false foundations and sources of your errors, your darkness, and your anguish, be replaced by the spirit and essences of another, the primitive real Universe, which Jacob Bohme calls the Pure Element, from which you may effect sweeter and more wholesome fruits.

For, on simply considering your physical situation in this world, you cannot doubt that the grounds of these pains are in yourself, and constitute your existence in the daily wants they cause you to feel, and the incessant care they give you.

Thus we see all your days consumed in making yourself superior to cold, and heat, and darkness, and even to the stars of heaven, which you appear to bring under your dazing sciences by your optical and astronomical instruments.

This clearly proves that your place should not have been in the region of these inclemencies, nor subject to influences which discomfort you; it should not have been below even those superb creations which, notwithstanding their magnificence in the order of beings, must still rank after you.

As these foreign elements have been implanted in your most inward nature, so, in your inmost nature, must the real pains be felt; there, must be developed the real feeling of humility and contrition, which makes us shudder on finding ourselves connected with essences so incompatible with ourselves.

There, in your inmost nature, you must walk in this world, as in a road amongst sepulchres, where you cannot take a step without hearing the dead calling to you for life.

There, by your groans and sufferings, you obtain wherewithal to offer sacrifice, on which the fire from the Lord cannot fail to descend, to at once consume the victim and give new life to the sacrificer, supplying him with powerful assistance, or continually renewed virtualities, for the performance of his universal work.

For, by this meek living substance of our sacrifice uniting with us, our regeneration begins; the purifying sufferings we speak of can only be its initiative; their object being to cut off what is hurtful to us, but not to give what we want.

When we feel ourselves all rent with these excruciating amputations, and blood runs from all our wounds, then the healing balm comes to stanch it, applies itself to our sores, and injects itself into every channel.

Now, as what this balm brings is life itself, we soon feel ourselves born again in all our faculties and virtues, and in all the active principles of our being.

For all these active principles of our being are so oppressed by the weight of the universe, and dried up by the fire which burns them inwardly, that they wait, in eager impatience, for the sole refreshment that can restore their motion and activity.

This refreshing accommodates itself to our littleness. It begins very feebly with man, who is feeble and little; it so bears its care and love towards us, as to make itself child-like with us, for we are less than children, and generally speaking, at every act of our growth, it has to take step by step by our side.

It acts towards us as a mother does towards her child which has bruised itself, or is in pain; she applies all her thoughts to its cure; she throws herself, so to say, altogether into its bruises or suffering members.

She goes into it, as it were, taking the form, and substituting herself for what was bruised or injured in her child; she goes in, in some sort, with the industry of her creative love, and nothing is too troublesome, nothing too little, for this industrious tenderness; whatever may do good seems to her to be necessary.

These means of all kinds, graduated to all requirements, are in activity in the healing languages guided by the true Word [sacred books]. The wonders found in them contain more or less of the activity which was most appropriate to the times in which they appeared.

For this refreshing, after which we all languish, although it may come into us directly, does not disdain to enter by all sorts of ways; and healing languages, with all their denominations and modes of expression, are one of the means it inclines to most, and makes use of in preference.

It is not surprising that it should be necessary for this living active power to come into us to fit us to do its work. Those who know the real state of things are sensible that we must be alive and strong to do this work, or for it to be done in us, for evil is no mere fable, it is a power.

The reign of evil is not to be destroyed by fine speaking, either in nature or in men's spirits. Men and learned doctors may discourse as they will, evil is not thereby put to flight; it even makes progress under this shelter.

Life itself must do all substantially.

In this state of death, in which the Universe languishes, with all fallen regions, could any kind or order of things subsist at all if there were not a Substance of Life disseminated everywhere? It is assuredly this life-substance which prevents their dissolution, and sustains them in all the shocks and violence they undergo continually.

This is what sustains Nature against the hostile powers which harass her: this upholds the universal world, in spite of the darkness which surrounds it, as the sun upholds the earth, notwithstanding the clouds which hide it from our view. This is what upholds nations, notwithstanding the disorders and ravages they excite amongst themselves, and one against another.

This is what sustains man in all the ignorance, extravagance, and abominations which he incessantly pours out.

This life-substance can be nothing else than the Eternal Word, incessantly creating itself, as Bohme has abundantly shown, which ceases not to sustain by its power all the regions it created.

This substance is everywhere buried in a deep abyss, and sighs continually for deliverance, and that quite unknown to Nature; and it is because this Substance of Life ceases not to groan that things still subsist, notwithstanding the continuance and extent of the abominations which surround and pollute them; and these evils are so great, that, if we were to tell them to the spirits, we should send them away weeping.

But as the soul, or radical focus of man, is the first principal seat of this life-substance, it seeks to develop and show itself, especially in him. And if man concurred with it in persevering action, if he felt that he was, by nature, originally nothing less than a divine oratory, where Truth might come at all hours to over pure incense to the Eternal Fountain of All, it cannot be doubted that he would soon see this substance of life strike root in him, and spread over and around him numerous branches loaded with fruits and flowers.

Then the spirits, elated with the sweet sensations they received from us, would charitably forget the evil we had done them before; for every act of this substance is a florescence, which ought to begin at the root of our being, at what may be called our soul-germ (*germe animique*); thence it passes to the life of our mind or understanding, and then into our bodily life; and, as each of these is related to its corresponding region, every florescence which takes place in us communicates with its own atmosphere. But, as the object of this substance, in working these three degrees, is only to give us new life, it can accomplish this only by a threefold transmutation, by giving us a new soul, a new spirit, and a new body.

Process of new birth.

This transmutation can be effected only by a painful process: it can proceed only by a combat between what is sound and what is diseased, and by the physical action of the true will, opposed to that of our false will.

Our own wills accomplish nothing without their being, as it were, injected by the Divine Will, which is the only will to good, with power to produce it: this seems a very simple remark, but it is not the less fecund and spiritual.

It is by these different acts that life succeeds in substituting a pure essence for the corrupt essences of our spirits, souls, and bodies.

Thereby, our desire forms but one with the divine desire, or hunger for the manifestation of truth, and its rule in the world.

Thereby, our understanding forms but one with the Divine Eye, which sees behind as well as before.

Thereby, our bodies, allowing all the substances of lies, corruption, and pollution with which they are constituted to die out, feel their places taken by diaphanous substances, which render them like transparencies of Divine Light and wonders throughout, as natural bodies are transparencies of natural wonders: this is what they who believe that this life-substance is no barren substance, may hope for.

And if they believe that it is no barren substance, this is what they will have to go through if they would recover their first estate and fulfil their destination.

How should this life-substance be barren? It proceeds from and participates in that generative movement which is without time, in which motive-causes (*mobiles*) cannot be separated, otherwise there would be an interval: but in which, nevertheless, these motives cannot but be distinct, otherwise there would be no life or diversity of wonders.

O you! who are able to conceive these sublimities, take courage; for it is given you to attain to them, and to so identify them with your whole being, that their region and yours may be but one, and have but one language.

Then it is divine hunger lays hold on men, and by making us distinguish between our two substances, revives all our ardour and regulates all our movements.

We, then, breathe only for one object, which is, not to allow the substance of life, which this divine hunger brings to us day by day increasingly, to fade or die away, and to prevent its falling under the yoke and chains of tyrants within us.

Our daily bread.

In this spirit even should we take our any food: if man were wise, he would never take his material repasts without first awaking this divine hunger within him.

He would thereby escape that fatal consequence which is so frequent, so common to us in our darkness, that of choking the divine hunger, by our food, whereas our food was intended, and ought to be, only for the renewal of our bodily powers, that we might be enabled to seek this divine hunger more ardently, and bear it better when it comes in power and feeds us so effectively that bodily hunger becomes less pressing in its turn.

And there are two degrees in this regimen. One is for the use of our spiritualised intents and labours, which ought to be our daily diet, without restriction to times or hours, or kinds of aliment, for our labours themselves will determine these.

The other is for active work when it thinks fit to take us into its service; it then serves at once for our guide and for our support.

What I have said of the first degree of this regimen may be said of every other act of our temporal life: we ought never to apply ourselves to anything, without baring first awakened within us the divine hunger; because as this divine hunger has to procure for us the true substance of life, we ought to have no aim, no attraction, no thought, but never to allow this fountain of the divine wonders to pass from us, but, on the contrary, employ ourselves incessantly in reviving it, that it may have the sweet delight of satiating itself with the Substance of Life.

Pains of new birth.

I shall not surprise you, by here telling you, O man, that this life-substance is to be found only in pains of bitter anguish, and a sense of profound and complete desolation, for our own faults and privations, and those of our fellow-creatures; for the real

wretchedness of those who suffer, and, still more, of those who do not suffer; for the sepulchral state of Nature, and the chronic and acute pains of the universal World, seeking to restore, through as, equilibrium and plenitude every where; whilst we, by the mode of being we have, through crime, created for ourselves, keep the Heart of God Himself, in us, on its death-bed, and in a grave of corruption.

Now, why is desolation, thus, the generative source of the Substance of Life? It is because, for us, now, it is the only generative source of speech (*la parole*), the Word; as we see in our sicknesses, our sufferings extort cries, and our cries bring assistance and relief.

For this reason, the man who is called to the Work has no need to remove from his place; the disease and the remedy are everywhere, and he has nothing to do but cry. It is not an earthly, but a spiritual change of place, that can serve us.

And, without stirring from our material place, we ought to reflect incessantly, painfully, on the cold, dark, spiritual place we are in, that we may go and make our dwelling in one that is warmer, lighter, and happier.

When we observe that the Universe is deprived of speech, it is The languor which oppresses it, the pestilential venom which substances only through man's fault and negligence; it would, I one of this, were it not deprived of speech, for it would, otherwise, have had strength to dissipate them, or even prevent their attacks.

It is, then, this privation, which is the real cause that Nature is in that perpetual distress, by wise men called vanity.

Those men knew that speech, the Word, should fill all things, and they groaned because there was something in which it was not heard.

They knew that the Universe, without the Word, and empty, signified nothing to them, since God alone was full, and signified all things; so that, whatsoever does not partake of the plenitude of His divine Being, can show only the reverse of His universal properties.

They knew that man could not pray without preparation, that is, unless his atmosphere were filled with the Word; or, in the widest sense, unless speech were restored to the universe.

And they complained in their sorrow, and in man's name they said: "This universe, this beautiful picture, which we should admire with transport, were we blind to all it wants; this universe is speechless, it can take no part in prayer; it is even an obstacle to it, for we can only pray with our brethren. Alas! then, we shall pray at our ease only when the universe has passed away! and we are obliged to wait till the end of all things, to give

free course to the ardour which burns us!" Who could endure such grief as this ? And their days were passed in agony !

O Man! since you are in the world, there is not one of its storms which you may not feel and share in, since your body participates in the divers influences and temperatures of which the elements are at once the medium and the source.

Yes, since you were able to cause the pains of the universe, you are susceptible of feeling them; and, only in proportion as you are allowed to partake of its pains, can you contribute to the development of its faculties: only by movements coincident with its sufferings, can you succeed in restoring its joys, and hope for freedom to be imparted to your prayer.

You will, indeed, one day, have to enter into the storms of the Spirit, and of God, and the Word, both individually and universally; for the rights of your being call you to act co-ordinately, in both these regions; and then, your new birth will advance, and the Work be enlarged for you.

Creation still groans for deliverance.

Man finds something solemn and imposing in solitudes surrounded by vast forests, or watered by some great river; and these solemn and imposing scenes appear to have still more power over him in the shades and stillness of night.

But he may make an observation of another kind: that is, that the silence of these objects creates a painful impression on the soul, which shows clearly the real cause of the vanity we have above alluded to.

In fact, Nature is like a dumb creature, expressing, as well as it can, by its movements, the wants which devour it most, but which, from want of speech, it cannot express as it desires; and this gives a tone of sadness and seriousness to its happiness, and prevents us from completely enjoying our own.

And, in the midst of these grand scenes, we really feel that Nature is weary of being unable to speak; and our admiration gives way to a languor approaching to melancholy, when we give ourselves up to this painful reflection.

This should suffice to make us understand that everything ought to speak; and the conviction that everything ought to speak, brings this conviction also, that everything ought to be diaphanous and fluid, and that opacity and stagnation are the radical causes of the silence and weariness of Nature.

Nature a prison for Man.

What sort of dwelling, then, is this, for you, O Man, amidst all these objects which can manifest neither joy nor speech? And do you not see what the term of that imperious want of speech and joy you feel yourself must be, and what awaits you when you are delivered out of this prison of Nature, as well as what sort of office you have to fulfil in the world, if you still think of being its comforter?

Study Nature's universal transudation; this oil of bitterness still teach you evidently enough, that all Nature is but a concentrated sorrow.

But, though Nature be condemned to weariness and silence, observe that it speaks louder by day than by night; this is a truth which you can easily verify, and your intelligence will show the reason; it will show you that the Sun is the verb of Nature, that when its presence is withdrawn, Nature no longer enjoys the use of her faculties; but, when it returns to restore her to life by its fiery word, Nature redoubles her efforts to bring forth all that is in her.

All the creatures which compose this Nature, then strive which can best prove its zeal and activity, in glorifying and praising this ineffable source of light. They thereby clearly point out the work we ought to do in this universe, and what awaits us when we go out of this house of traffic, which is nothing but the grave of eternity, where our task is to exchange our foreign coins for the currency of our own country; death for life.

Nature also rejoices in hope.

Take comfort, you men of desire; if Nature's silence is the cause of its weariness, what can be more eloquent than this silence? It is the silence of sorrow, not of insensibility.

The more clearly you examine, the more surely you will observe, that, if Nature has her season of sorrow, she also has her moments of joy, and to you only is it given to discern and appreciate them. She feels life circulating secretly in her veins; and is ever ready to hear, through your organs the sound of the Word which supports her, and places her as a barrier to the enemy.

She seeks, in you, the living fire which burns in that Word, and which, through you, would convey a healing balm to her sores. Yes! although the man of earth perceives nothing but the silence and weariness of Nature, you, O men of desire, are well assured that everything in her is vocal, and prophesying her deliverance in sublime canticles:

And, in holy zeal, and by orders from on high, you announce that every thing in man must break into song, to co-operate in this deliverance, and that all people may one day say like you: that every thing in Nature sings.

You are as harbingers of that reign of Truth for which every thing sighs. You advance in that majestic and divinely healing progression, which restores to each epoch its opposite progression of evil:

Whereby, evil, devouring the life-substance of those great periods, which commenced at the beginning to end only with time, ceases not to fatten on iniquity, till, its measures being fully, it is handed over to judgment.

For, in time, evil is only in privation; yet, has it succeeded in extending its prison's bounds, by corrupting its gaoler, by whom alone it could gain some knowledge of what was passing outside.

But, in the midst of this painful progress of the enemy, you triumph in anticipation, because you also see the healing progression advancing towards its term of glory and victory. You hear it in anticipation, pronouncing sentence of execution on the criminal, who knows nothing of it yet, and will continue in this ignorance till the moment of his final punishment arrives.

Finally, you see it in anticipation, singing, through Nature, and in the souls of true men, the songs of joy, which will crown their desires and labors of prayer. For, if it is true that all is choral in Nature, it is still more certain that all prays, since every thing is in travail and distress.

It is necessary to know the ground of action.

How can any one be employed to bring relief to any thing, without knowing its structure and composition? And how can its composition and structure be known, unless the different substances or which it is constituted be also known, as well as the qualities and properties attached to these substances? Lastly, how can these qualities and properties be known, if the radical sources from which they derive be not known?

Instead of profoundly investigating these foundations, men have allowed their thoughts to be lost in idle questions, which, while they lead them away from the paths they ought to have followed, can teach them nothing. Such, for instance, is that puerile question about the divisibility of matter, which keeps the schools as in their infancy.

It is not matter which is infinitely divisible; it is its ground of action, or, in other words, the spirituous powers of what may be called the material or astral spirit. These powers are innumerable. The moment they are required to transform themselves into sensible characters and figures, the substance is not wanting, for they are impregnated with it, and produce it, in concert with the elementary power, with which they unite. Hence it is, that every thing that exists here below, creates for itself the substance of its own body.

Now the microscopic minuteness of some bodies, animalculae for instance, should not surprise us, though they be so perfectly organised, after their kind. All bodies are but a realisation of the plan of the astral Spirit, added to the individual spirituous operation of each body; and, here, we should bear in mind this important truth, namely, that, as Spirit has no knowledge of space, but only degrees of intensity in its radical virtues, there is not a single spirituous power of Spirit, which, whether materially sensible or not, is not so according to the hidden element, or that higher corporification mentioned before, under the name of Eternal Nature.

Birth of matter.

The passage from this, to the material region, takes place only by the most extreme concentration and attenuation of that spirituous power of Spirit, over which the elementary power has rights, to help it to form its body or covering. This elementary power has complete authority in its own region, and exercises it with an universal empire over every spirituous basis that is presented to it: they unite only in their minimum, which, here, is inversely, one being the minimum of attenuation, the other the minimum of growth or development. The spirituous basis, in its turn, effects a living reaction on the elementary power; so that, in proportion as this basis develops itself, the elementary power is also developed to overtake it, as is seen in the growth of trees and animals.

When, by this means, this basis has acquired strength enough to free itself from the dominion of the elementary power, it separates from it; as is seen in all blossoms, smells, and colours; in short, in the ripening of any production. They all abandon their matrices when these can no longer retain them, and the matrices return to their minimum again, not to say annihilation, because they have no longer any spirituous bases to excite their re-action.

Matter is indivisible.

Thus, in the first place, matter is not infinitely divisible, considered in respect to its substance, the division of which, as we have shown elsewhere, we cannot even attempt, as we see organic bodies cannot be divided, without their perishing; - secondly, it is not infinitely divisible in its particular actions, for each of these actions ceases, as soon as the spirituous basis which serves for its subject is withdrawn; the retreat and disappearance of this basis puts an end to this action.

As for this infinite divisibility, considered abstractedly, it is still less possible, for it is nothing but our own conception which serves as basis for a pretended matter, which we continually forge; and as long as our mind affords such a substratum or germ, matter appropriates it in our thought, and gives it form and covering.

Thus, as long as we stop at this divisibility, or think of its temporal results, we find it possible and real, since a sensible form always follows the basis we offer it; but, as soon as we turn our minds away from this centre of action, which we approach only intellectually, this form disappears, and there is no longer any divisibility in matter.

Matter, a portrait or picture.

If the learned of all times, from the Platos and Aristotles, to the Newtons and Spinosas, had but remarked that matter was only a representation or image of what was not itself, they would not have tortured themselves, nor erred so much, in telling us what it was.

Matter is like a portrait of an absent person; we must absolutely know the original, in order to know whether it is like; otherwise, to us, it will be but a fancy work, on which one may make what conjectures he likes, without being sure that any one of them is correct.

Magism of Nature.

Nevertheless, in this series of formation of things, there is an important point which will not yield to our cognizance; that is, the Magism of the generation of things, and this refuses itself only because we seek by analysis, what can be apprehended only by a secret impression; and even here, we may say, that Jacob Bohme has raised the veil, by opening to our minds the seven forms of Nature, even to the eternal root of all.

The true character of Magism is, to be the medium and means of passage, from a state of absolute dispersion or indifference, which Bohme calls abyssal, to a state of sensibility, in any order, spiritual or natural, simple or elementary.

Generation, or this passage from the insensible to the sensible state, is perpetual. It holds the middle place between the dispersed insensible state of things, and their state of characterised sensibility, and yet is neither of them, since it is not dispersion, like the abyssal state, nor developed manifestation, like the thing which this generation transmits and communicates to us.

In this sense, Nature has its Magism; for it contains all that is above it in dispersion, or all the astral and elementary essences which have to contribute to the production of things; and it contains, besides, all the hidden properties of the higher world, towards which it ever tends to direct our thoughts.

In this sense, each particular production of Nature has also its Magism; for each in particular, say a flower, a salt, an animal, a metallic substance, is a medium between

the invisible, insensible properties which are in its root, its principle of life, or its fundamental essences, and the sensible qualities which emanate from this production, and are made manifest by its means.

In this medium all that has to come forth in every production, is elaborated and prepared. Now this place of preparation, this laboratory, into which we cannot penetrate without destroying it, is, for this very reason, a true Magism for us, although we may know all the springs which concur in its production, and even the law that directs the effect.

Ground of the regeneration of Nature.

The principle of this hidden process is founded in the Divine generation itself, in which the eternal medium for ever serves as passage to the infinite immensity of universal essences. In this passage, these universal essences are respectively impregnated, that, after this impregnation, they may be manifested in their living ardour, with all their individual qualities, and those they have communicated to each other during their abode in this medium, or their passage through it.

Now, without this medium, this place of passage, there would be nothing manifest, nothing apprehensible to us; thus, all the mediums of Nature as it is, and all the mediums of spiritual Nature, are only images of this primitive and eternal medium; they only repeat its law; and, in this way, every thing there is in time is the demonstrator, the commentator, and the continuer of eternity.

Eternity the ground, created things the manifestation.

For, Eternity, or what is, should be considered as the ground of all things. Creatures are only like frames, vases, or active coverings, in which this true and living Essence encloses itself in order to manifest itself by their means.

Some, such as those which compose the universe, manifest the spirituous powers of this highest Essence. Others, such as Man manifest its Spiritual essences, that is, what is most intimate in this one Essence, this Being of beings.

Thus, though we may be ignorant of the generation of things, yet all knowledge towards which we tend, and of which we avail ourselves when we obtain it, has this true Essence for its ground and object: thus, the beauties of Nature, and the useful and gentle properties, which, since God arrested its fall, are still to be found in it, notwithstanding its degradation, also belong to this true Essence, and may still serve for its organ, frame-work, and conductor.

When we ring changes on the existence of these objects, as our false sciences do continually, it is because we do not take time and trouble to seek in them this true essence which they must possess, and which tends but to make itself known; still less can we then revive it in objects in which it is torpid; - and so we prolong the evils we have done to Nature, instead of assuaging them as we ought.

Man, Nature's physician, must know her constitution.

Let us repeat then, supposing it true that the universe were on its death-bed, how should we bring it relief, if we were ignorant, not only of what constitutes the universe in itself, but even of the relations which its different parts, and wheels within wheels, forming the whole machine, and reticulating its movements, must have with each other ?

But, though Man, in his small sphere, is employed daily in restoring harmony, and a healthy constitution, amongst the elements and universal powers which are at war; though he strives to put a stop to the painful discord which distracts Nature around him; yet the idea of his contributing to the relief of the universe, is one which will probably create astonishment, and, at first sight, appear exaggerated, and far beyond our power; so thick is the veil, which the schools, and, above all, the oppressive weight of the universe itself, under which we bend, have spread over our true rights and privileges.

At the same time, the mere idea of our knowing the structure and composition of the universe, how it was made, and what those bodies are, which circulate so grandly in space, is not open to the same objection.

For, it may be said, that these questions have been the object of curiosity and research of men, eager for knowledge, in all ages, though, to judge merely from the doctrines which fame has handed down to us, on these subjects, a very mediocre light seems to have resulted from their researches.

In fact, the philosophers of antiquity give us very little help on this subject. It is a small thing for them to say, with Thales, that the universe owes its origin to water; or, with Anasimenes, that it owes it to air; or, with Empedocles, that it is composed of four elements continually at war amongst themselves, without ever being able to destroy each other:- supposing, of course, we may judge these doctrines in the absence of whatever demonstrations may have justified them to their authors and partisans.

The least I can do is to suspend my judgment;- and this I must, even on the "qualities" of Anaximander, and the "plastic forms" of the Stoics. They may be obscure, but I fear it would be going too far to tax them as follies, and philosophers' dreams. Sentence

cannot, in such cases, be passed by default, and, if these seeming follies have been combated by unbelievers, as, no doubt, they were, it was probably by substituting manifest absurdities for what was merely obscure.

Nor have the moderns much extended our knowledge on these great questions: for, what does Tellamed's system teach us, which makes everything come from the sea; or the monads of Leibnitz; or the integral molecules and aggregates of modern Physics, which are nothing more than the atoms of Epicurus, Leucippus, and Democritus over again?

Unsatisfactory results of human research.

Man's mind, unable to penetrate these depths as successfully as he wished, or unable to make others understand the true signification of the progress and discoveries it made, has always returned to the study of the laws which direct the outward course of our globe, or that of other globes accessible to our view: it is from this we have acquired whatever astronomical knowledge we have gained, whether in ancient or in modern times.

Although these grand acquisitions, which have been so astonishingly extended in our day, through the perfecting of our instruments, and the wonderful assistance of modern algebraical analysis, have afforded us an enjoyment all the sweeter because it is based upon strict demonstrations yet, as they teach us only the external laws of the universe, they do not satisfy us altogether, unless indeed we smother or paralyze within us the secret desire, which all have, for more substantial nourishment.

Thus, notwithstanding Kepler's brilliant discoveries of laws of heavenly bodies; Descartes, who was so celebrated for having applied algebra to geometry, sought still to discover the cause and the mode of their movements.

While Kepler demonstrated, Descartes endeavoured to explain: so great is the attraction of man's mind towards the knowledge, not only of the course of the stars, and the laws, and duration of their periodical movements, but even of the mechanical cause of these movements; yet this led that fine genius into those unfortunate systems which people have rejected, without hitherto substituting anything else for them. The knowledge of the laws of astronomy, and even of attraction itself embraces the movements of the stars, but does not explain their mechanism.

Celebrated men, since Descartes, have endeavoured to penetrate still more deeply into the existence of the heavenly bodies; he tried only to explain their mechanism; they have attempted to explain their origin and primitive formation.

I do not here allude to Newton; for his beautiful discovery of weight and attraction, which applies so happily to every part of the theoretic universe, is still only a secondary law which presupposes a primary law, from which this weight derives, and of which it can be only the organ, and the result.

Hypotheses of Buffon and Laplace.

But I speak of Buffon, who, according to savans of the highest rank, is the first, who, since the discovery of the true system of the heavenly movements, has endeavoured to rise to the origin of planets and their satellites. He supposes that some comet, falling upon the sun, knocked a stream of matter off it, which, uniting at a distance, formed globes of different sizes. These globes, according to Buffon, are the planets and satellites, which, on cooling became opaque and solid.

The learned Laplace does not admit this hypothesis, because it satisfies only the first of the five phenomena which he enumerates (p. 298). But he tries, in his turn (p. 301), to ascend to their tree cause; modestly, however, and with wise hesitation, - offering us something which is not the result of observation and calculation.