

life, he saw in the simple rules of A'Kempis faint glimpses of a happiness for which he pined, but against which his insane vanity ever rebelled? May he not have thought seriously of what he read? and may it not have caused that restlessness and agony which so often disturbed his daily thoughts and midnight slumbers, of which he himself says:—"When my sufferings make me measure sadly the length of the night, and the agitation of fever prevents me from enjoying a single instant of sleep, I often divert my mind from my present state in thinking of the various events of my life; and repentance, sweet recollections, regrets, emotions, help to make me for some moments forget my sufferings." It is pitiful to see the man of three score years, whose impassioned eloquence thrilled all Europe, dying—as he lived—a champion amongst sceptics, and the greatest doubter of modern times.

Let us cast a mantle over his memory and turn to the little volume over which, strange to say, he loved to pore; a volume which has been prized by all classes and creeds, and which has found its way to every part of the civilized world. Few, if any, of the sceptics have become so widely known, and their writings so universally admired, as Thomas A'Kempis and his "Imitation." Neither the rapid strides of literature nor the onward march of centuries have caused it to die—it still occupies a place amongst books, and survives after the lapse of four hundred years. To say that the "Imitation" seems more a production of Divine Inspiration than any other book, the Bible alone excepted, is saying a great deal, yet such is the encomium passed upon it by Dr. Stevens, the historian of Methodism; while Fontenelle declares it to be "the most excellent book that ever came from the hand of man." It certainly is capable of doing a great amount of good, and no earnest reader can peruse it carefully without being benefitted. It was the "constant companion" of Wesley, the "fast friend" of Whitfield, the "daily remembrancer" of Fletcher, and the "prized volume" of Payson. Each of them studied it, each valued it, and each had been greatly benefitted. Surely such a recommendation is to us a sufficient guarantee; let us then sit humbly at the feet of this devout Augustine monk, and learn such lessons of piety, devotion and courage, as may enable us to seek and attain, the "Higher Christian Life."

"A man," says A'Kempis, "is raised above earthly things by two wings—*simplicity and purity*. "Simplicity must preside in the intention, purity in the affection; simplicity strives after God, purity apprehends and enjoys Him. No good action will hinder thee, if thou be free from every inordinate desire. If thou desire nought but the will of God, and the advantage of thy neighbour, thou wilt enjoy internal freedom. If thy heart were right, then would every creature be a mirror of life, and a volume of holy doctrine. . . . If thy heart were good and pure, then wouldest thou see everything without let or hindrance, and wouldest well comprehend all. A pure heart penetrates heaven and hell. Whatever a man is, will influence his judgment of all around him. When a man begins to grow lukewarm, then he dreads trifling labor, and seeks external consolation. But when he begins to master himself thoroughly, and to walk manfully in the divine path, then he cares less about those things which he used to think troublesome and grievous."