

nity is the restoration of that first happiness, and of Adam's original innocence. It is therefore certain that Christianity is the imitation of God, and that Christians ought to reproduce in themselves that most perfect likeness of the divinity which God impressed upon their souls in the creation ; and restore, to the best of their power, by following the inspirations of grace, those features which have been effaced by sin.

To make then the first step, we must lay down, as a rule of life, that great principle of *never doing anything for which we have not some good reason*. — The Ancients believed that these four expressions : « to follow nature, to be guided by reason, to embrace virtue, to be subject to God, » had one and the same meaning. Philo, the most learned among the Hebrews, gives the following explanation of this opinion : it has often been said by those who excelled in reasoning, that the best of all states is that of living conformably to nature ; that is, to the innocent inclinations of nature, which are the remains of its primitive integrity. For our good inclinations are not completely destroyed, and we still have some remains of them ; just as in an old picture, we can still see a few strokes of a fine painting that has not been entirely blotted out. Thus when the soul follows those inclinations which lead her to virtuous enjoyment, she enters upon the path of virtue, and is governed by reason, so that we can say with truth that she obeys the orders of God. This is the widest principle found in morality. Among the three different elements of good : the useful, the agreeable, and the pure ; or in other words, interest, pleasure, and virtue, we are not allowed to act from any but reasonable motives. And if reason does not command it, we should never let ourselves be drawn by interest or pleasure. However those acts are the most ordinary of all, and such as a man could not neglect without forfeiting his claim to being either an honest man or a Christian. St Thomas teaches us, upon the same principle, that if we wish to live according to virtue, we should never do anything for which we cannot give a reason.

This is assuredly the rock on which we are most likely to split. For, if we examine our conscience faithfully and impartially, we shall see that we hardly ever act from any other mo-