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GIOVANNI PICO  
DELLA MIRANDOLA

SIR THOMAS MORE

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GIOVANNI PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA.

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# GIOVANNI PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA:

HIS LIFE BY HIS NEPHEW GIOVANNI

FRANCESCO PICO:

ALSO THREE OF HIS LETTERS; HIS INTERPRE-  
TATION OF PSALM XVI.; HIS TWELVE RULES  
OF A CHRISTIAN LIFE; HIS TWELVE  
POINTS OF A PERFECT LOVER;  
AND HIS DEPRECATORY  
HYMN TO GOD.

TRANSLATED FROM THE LATIN BY  
SIR THOMAS MORE.

EDITED WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

By J. M. RIGG, ESQ.,

OF LINCOLN'S INN, BARRISTER-AT-LAW.

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## INTRODUCTION.



IOVANNI PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, "the Phœnix of the wits," is one of those writers whose personality will always count for a great deal more than their works. His extreme, almost feminine beauty, high rank, and chivalrous character, his immense energy and versatility, his insatiable thirst for knowledge, his passion for theorizing, his rare combination of intellectual hardihood with genuine devoutness of spirit, his extraordinary precocity, and his premature death, make up a personality so engaging that his name at any rate, and the record of his brief life, must always excite the interest and enlist the sympathy of mankind, though none but those, few in any generation, who love to loiter curiously in the bypaths of literature and philosophy, will ever care to follow his eager spirit through the labyrinths of recondite speculation which it once thriddled with such high and generous hope.

For us, indeed, of the latter end of the nineteenth century, trained in the exact methods, guided by the steady light of modern philosophy and criticism, it is no easy matter to enter sympathetically into the thoughts of

men who lived while as yet these were not, men who spent their strength in errant efforts, in blind gropings in the dark, on abortive half-solutions or no-solutions of problems too difficult for them, mere *ignes fatui*, it would seem, or at best mere brilliant meteor stars illuminating the intellectual firmament with a transitory trail of light, and then vanishing to leave the darkness more visible, yet without whose mistakes and failures and apparently futile waste of power philosophy and criticism would not have come into being.

Among such wandering meteoric apparitions not the least brilliant was Pico della Mirandola. Born in 1463, he grew to manhood in time to witness and participate in the effectual revival of Greek learning in Italy; yet his earliest bias was scholastic, and a schoolman in grain he remained to the day of his death. How strongly he had felt the influence of the schoolmen, how little disposed he was to follow the humanistic hue and cry of indiscriminate condemnation, may be judged from the eloquent apology for them which, in the shape of a letter to his friend Ermolao Barbaro, he published in 1485. It was the fashion to stigmatize the schoolmen as barbarians because they knew no Greek and could not write classical Latin. That was the head and front of their offending in the eyes of men who had no idea of a better method of philosophizing than theirs, nor indeed any interest in philosophy, mere rhetoricians, grammarians, and pedagogues, while at any rate the schoolmen, however rude their style, were serious thinkers, who in grappling with the deepest problems of science human and divine displayed the rarest patience, sagacity, subtlety and ingenuity. Such is the gist of Pico's plea on behalf of the "barbarians," in urging which he exhausts the resources of rhetoric, and the ingenuity of

the advocate ; nor is there reason to doubt that it represents at least the embers of a very genuine enthusiasm. That challenge, also, which he issued at Rome, and in every university in Italy in the winter of 1486-7, summoning as if by clarion call every intellectual knight-errant in the peninsula to try conclusions with him in public disputation in the eternal city after the feast of Epiphany, does it not recall the celebrated exploit of Duns Scotus at Paris, when, according to the tradition, he won the title of Doctor Subtilis by refuting two hundred objections to the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary in a single day? Only, as befitted "a great lord of Italy," Pico's tournament is to be on a grander scale. Duns had but one thesis to defend ; Pico offers to maintain nine hundred, and lest poverty should reduce the number of his antagonists he offers to pay their travelling expenses. Moreover, to Duns, Aquinas, and other of the schoolmen, Pico is beholden for not a few of his theses ; of the rest, some are drawn direct from Plato, others from Neo-Pythagorean, Neo-Platonic and syncretist writers, while a certain number appear to be original. Pico, however, was not so fortunate as Duns : the church smelt heresy in his propositions, and Pope Innocent VIII., though he had at first authorised, was induced to prohibit their discussion. (Bull dated 4th August, 1487). Thirteen were selected for examination by a special commission and were pronounced heretical. Pico, however, so far from bowing to its decision, wrote in hot haste an elaborate "Apologia" or defence of his orthodoxy, which, had it not been more ingenious than conclusive, might perhaps have been accepted ; as it was, it only brought him into further trouble.

This Apology "elucubrated," as he tells, "properante

stilo" in twenty nights, Pico dedicated to Lorenzo de' Medici, modestly describing it as "exiguum sane munus, sed fidei meae, sed observantiae profecto in omne tempus erga te maxime non leve testimonium," "a trifling gift indeed, but as far as possible from being a slight token of my loyalty, nay, of my devotion to you." Hasty though its composition was, it certainly displays no lack of either ingenuity, subtlety, acuteness, learning, or style. Evidently written out of a full mind, it represents Pico's mature judgment upon the abstruse topics which it handles, and is a veritable masterpiece of scholastic argumentation. After a brief prologue detailing the circumstances which gave occasion to the work Pico proceeds to discuss *seriatim* the thirteen "damnatae conclusiones," and the several objections which had been made to them. The tone throughout is severe and dry and singularly free from heat or asperity. Some of the theses are treated at considerable length, others dismissed in a page or two, or even less. Altogether, when the rapidity of its composition is borne in mind, the treatise appears little less a prodigy.

The obnoxious theses were as follows:—(1) That Christ did not truly and in real presence, but only *quoad effectum*, descend into hell; (2) that a mortal sin of finite duration is not deserving of eternal but only of temporal punishment; (3) that neither the cross of Christ, nor any image, ought to be adored in the way of worship; (4) that God cannot assume a nature of any kind whatsoever, but only a rational nature; (5) that no science affords a better assurance of the divinity of Christ than magical and cabalistic science; (6) that assuming the truth of the ordinary doctrine that God can take upon himself the nature of any creature whatsoever, it is pos-

sible for the body of Christ to be present on the altar without the conversion of the substance of the bread or the annihilation of "paneity;" (7) that it is more rational to believe that Origen is saved than that he is damned; (8) that as no one's opinions are just such as he wills them to be, so no one's beliefs are just such as he wills them to be; (9) that the inseparability of subject and accident may be maintained consistently with the doctrine of transubstantiation; (10) that the words "hoc est corpus" pronounced during the consecration of the bread are to be taken "materialiter" (i.e., as a mere recital) and not "significative" (i.e., as denoting an actual fact); (11) that the miracles of Christ are a most certain proof of his divinity, by reason not of the works themselves, but of his manner of doing them; (12) that it is more improper to say of God that he is intelligent, or intellect, than of an angel that it is a rational soul; (13) that the soul knows nothing in act and distinctly but itself.

It is undeniable that some of these propositions smack somewhat rankly of heresy, and Pico's ingenuity is taxed to the uttermost to give them even a semblance of congruity with the doctrines of the Church. The following, however, is the gist of his defence. Christ, he argues, did actually descend into hell, but only in spirit, not in bodily presence; eternal punishment is inflicted on the finally impenitent sinner not for his sins done in the flesh, which are finite, but for his impenitence, which is necessarily infinite; the cross is to be adored, but only as a symbol, not in and for itself, for which he cites Scotus, admitting that St. Thomas is against him. The thesis that God cannot take upon himself a nature of any kind whatsoever, but only a rational nature, must be understood without prejudice to the omnipotence of God, which is

not in question ; God cannot assume the nature of any irrational creature, because by the very act of so doing he necessarily raises it to himself, endows it with a rational nature. The thesis that no science gives us better assurance of the divinity of Christ than magical and cabalistic science referred to such sciences only as do not rest on revelation, and among them to the science of natural magic, which treats of the virtues and activities of natural agents and their relations *inter se*, and that branch only of cabalistic science which is concerned with the virtues of celestial bodies ; which of all natural sciences furnish the most convincing proof of the divinity of Christ, because they show that his miracles could not have been performed by natural agencies. The sixth thesis must not be understood as if Pico maintained that the bread was not converted into the body of Christ, but only that it is possible that the bread and the body may be mysteriously linked together without the one being converted into the other, which would be quite consistent with the words of St. Paul, 1 Cor. x. 16 : “ The bread which we break is it not the communion of the body of Christ ? ” if interpreted figuratively. With regard to the salvation of Origen, Pico plunges with evident zest into the old controversy as to the authenticity of the heretical passages in that writer’s works, and urges that his damnation can at most be no more than a pious opinion. In justification of the position that belief is not a mere matter of will he cites the authority of Aristotle and St. Augustine, adding a brief summary of the evidences of the Christian faith, to wit, prophecy, the harmony of the Scriptures, the authority of their authors, the reasonableness of their contents, the unreasonableness of their contents, the unreasonableness of particular heresies, the stability of the Church, the

miracles. As to transubstantiation, Pico professes himself to hold the doctrine of the Church, merely adding thereto the pious opinion that the Thomist distinction between real existence and essence is consistent with the theory that the bread itself remains in spite of the transmutation of its substance, and thus with the doctrine of the inseparability of subject and accident ; as for the words "hoc est corpus," it appears from their context and their place in the office that they are not to be taken literally, for the priest, when in consecrating the bread he says, "Take, eat," does not suit the action to the word by offering the bread to the communicants, but takes it himself, and so when in consecrating the wine he says, "qui pro vobis et pro multis effundetur," it is not to be supposed, as if the words were to be taken literally it must be supposed, that he means that the blood of Christ actually will be shed, or that he does not mean to claim the benefit of it for himself as well as the congregation, and the "many." That the value of Christ's miracles as evidences of his divinity lies rather in the way in which they were wrought than in the works themselves, is supported by Christ's own words in St. John xiv. 12 : "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also ; and greater works than these shall he do ; because I go to my Father ;" which are quite inconsistent with the idea that the works are themselves evidence of his divinity. In support of the proposition that intellect or intelligence cannot properly be ascribed to God, Pico invokes the authority of Dionysius the Areopagite, who holds the same doctrine, but does not on that account deny to God an altogether superior faculty of cognition, even farther removed from angelic intelligence than that is from human reason. The last pro-

position, viz., that the soul knows nothing in act and distinctly but itself, being extremely subtle and profound, Pico forbears to enlarge upon it, pointing out, however, that it has the authority of St. Augustine in its favour. The reference is to the *De Trinitate*, x. 14.<sup>1</sup> The doctrine itself is of peculiar interest, for in it lay the germ of the Cartesian philosophy.

Pico concludes the "Apologia" with an eloquent appeal to his critics to judge him fairly, which was so little heeded that some of them saw fit to impugn its good faith, and raised such a clamour about it that Pico, who in the meantime had gone to France, was peremptorily recalled to Rome by the Pope. He complied, but through the influence of Lorenzo was permitted to reside in the Benedictine monastery at Fiesole, while the new charge was under investigation. Meanwhile Garsias, Bishop of Ussel, published (1489) an elaborate examination of the "Apologia," nor did Pico hear the last of the affair until shortly before his death, when Alexander VI., by a Bull dated 18th June, 1493, acquitted him of heresy and assured him of immunity from further annoyance.

An oration on man and his place in nature—with which Pico had designed to introduce his theses to the

<sup>1</sup> *Utrum emin aeris sit vis vivendi, reminiscendi, volendi, cogitandi, sciendi, judicandi; an ignis, an cerebri, an sanguinis, an atomorum, an præter usitata quatuor elementa quinti nescio cujus corporis, an ipsius carnis nostræ compago vel temperamentum hæc efficere valeat, dubitaverunt homines: et alius hoc, alius aliud affirmare conatus est. Vivere se tamen et meminisse, et intelligere, et velle, et cogitare, et scire, et judicare quis dubitet? Quandoquidem etiam si dubitat, vivit: si dubitat unde dubitet, meminit; si dubitat, dubitare se intelligit; si dubitat, certus esse vult; si dubitat, cogitat; si dubitat, scit se nescire; si dubitat, judicat non se temere consentire oportere. Quisquis igitur aliunde dubitat, de his omnibus dubitare non debet: quæ si non essent de ulla re dubitare non posset.*



learned audience which he had hoped to gather about him to listen to the discussion—was not published until after his death. The theme is the familiar one of the dignity of man as the only terrestrial creature endowed with free will, and thus capable of developing into an angel and even becoming one with God, or declining into a brute or even a vegetable. On this Pico descants at some length and with much eloquence, and a great display of erudition—Schoolman and Neo-Platonist, Cabalist and Pythagorean, Moses and Plato, Job, Seneca, Cicero, and the Peripatetics jostling one another in his pages in the most *bizarre* fashion. With Pico, as with Dante, theology is the queen of the sciences, and the true end of man is so to purify the soul by the practice of virtue and the study of philosophy—moral and natural—as that it may be capable of the knowledge and the love of God. His own theological speculations are contained in three works, viz.: (1) a commentary on the first twenty-six verses of the first chapter of Genesis, published in 1489, under the title of “Hep-taplus,” and dedicated to Lorenzo de’ Medici; (2) an essay towards the reconciliation of Plato and Aristotle, entitled “De Ente et Uno,” published in 1491; (3) a commentary on Girolamo Benivieni’s “Canzone dello Amore Celeste e Divino,” the date of which has not been precisely fixed.

This curious trilogy is a signal example of the insane extravagances into which an acute and subtle intellect may be led by philosophical and theological *arrière pensée*. Pico’s problem is essentially the same with that on which the most powerful and ingenious minds of the Middle Ages had spent their strength in vain, to wit—how to reconcile theology and philosophy. The dif-

ference is that, whereas the older thinkers had but little knowledge of any other philosopher than Aristotle, and knew him but imperfectly, Pico in the full tide of the renaissance has to grapple with the gigantic task of reconciling Catholic doctrine not merely with Aristotle, but with Plato, the Neo-Platonists, Neo-Pythagoreans, the pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, the Orphic and Hermetic theosophies, and indeed with whatever of recondite, obscure, and mysterious in that kind the Pagan world had given birth to. The result is what might be expected — the wildest possible jumble of incompatible ideas, which not even the most dexterous legerdemain can twist into the remotest semblance of congruity.

In the dedicatory letter prefixed to the “Heptaplus” Pico explains to Lorenzo the scheme of the work, and the motives which induced him to undertake it. Besides the inestimable advantage which he derived from being the immediate recipient of divine revelation, Moses, it appears, was the greatest of all philosophers. Was he not versed in all the science of the Egyptians, and was not Egypt the source whence the Greeks drew their inspiration? Was not Plato rightly called by Numenius<sup>1</sup> Μωσῆς Ἀττικίζων? True it is that Moses has not the least of the appearance of a philosopher, but even in the account of the creation seems only to be telling a very plain and simple story, but that must not be allowed to detract from his claims. Doubtless he veiled a profound meaning under this superficial show of simplicity, and spoke in enigmas, or allegories, even as Plato and Jesus Christ were wont to do, in order that they might not be

<sup>1</sup> Numenius of Apameia in Syria, a syncretistic philosopher, supposed to have lived in the age of the Antonines. For the phrase see Mullach, *Frag. Phil. Græc.* iii. 167.

understood except by those to whom it was given to understand mysteries.

In all true wisdom there should be an element of mystery; it would not be right that everyone should be able to understand it. The task of interpreting the Mosaic account of the creation has been taken in hand by a host of writers, who have struggled mightily with three cardinal difficulties, which, it would seem, they have one and all failed to surmount. These difficulties are (1) to avoid attributing to Moses commonplace or inadequate ideas; (2) to make the interpretation consecutive and consistent from beginning to end; (3) to bring him into harmony with subsequent thinkers. Where his predecessors have failed Pico hopes to succeed.

The interpretation is worthy of the proem. In the threefold division of the Tabernacle Pico finds a type of the three spheres—angelic or intelligible, celestial, and sublunary—which, with man, the microcosm, make up the universe; and thus has no difficulty in understanding why the veil of the Temple was rent when Christ opened a way for man into the super-celestial sphere. These four worlds are all one, not only because all have the same first principle and the same final cause, and are linked together by certain general harmonies and affinities, but also because whatever is found in the sublunary sphere has its counterpart in the other two, but of a nobler character (*meliore nota*). Thus to terrestrial fire corresponds in the celestial sphere the sun; in the super-celestial, seraphic intelligence. Similarly, what is water on earth is in the heavens the moon, and in the super-celestial region cherubic intelligence. “The elementary fire burns, the celestial vivifies, the super-celestial loves.” What cherubic intelligence does Pico forgets to say; but

fire and water being opposed, it is clear that it ought to hate.

In the intelligible world God, surrounded by nine orders of angels, unmoved Himself, draws all to Himself; to whom in the celestial world corresponds the stable empyrean with its nine revolving spheres; in the sublunary world the first matter with its three elementary forms, earth, water, and fire, the three orders of vegetable life, herbs, plants, and trees, and the three sorts of "sensual souls," zoophytic, brutish, human, making together "nine spheres of corruptible forms."

Man, the microcosm, unites all three spheres; having a body mixed of the elements, a vegetal soul, and the senses of the brute, reason or spirit, which holds of the celestial sphere, and an angelic intellect, in virtue of which he is the very image of God.

Now it is true that Moses in his account of the creation appears to ignore all this, but it is not for us on that account to impute to him ignorance of it. On the contrary, we must suppose that his cosmogony is equally true of each of the four worlds which make up the universe, and must accordingly give it a fourfold interpretation. A fifth chapter will be rendered necessary by the difference between the four worlds, and a sixth by their affinities and community.

We have thus six chapters corresponding with the six days of creation. A seventh is devoted to expounding the meaning of the Sabbath rest; and to indicate this sevenfold division of the work Pico entitles it "Heptaplus."

The plural method of interpreting Scripture, it must be observed, was by no means peculiar to Pico, indeed was in common use in his day. As a rule, however, commentators were content with three senses, which they distinguished as mystical, anagogical, and allegorical. To

Pico's philosophic mind this, no doubt, seemed a pitiful empiricism. For what was the ground of the triple method? Why these three senses and no more? He scorned such grovelling economy and rule of thumb, and determined to place the interpretation of the Mosaic cosmogony once for all on a firm and philosophic basis. Digging, accordingly, deep into the nature of things for the root, as he calls it, of his exegesis, he comes upon the Ptolemaic system with its central earth surrounded by its nine concentric revolving spheres, the nearest that of the moon, the most remote that of the fixed stars, in the interspace the solar and other planetary spheres, and beyond all the stable empyrean. To this he joins the Platonic theory of an intelligible world behind the phenomenal, and the Christian idea of heaven, borrows from the pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite his nine orders of angels to correspond with the nine celestial spheres, discerns in the stable empyrean the type of the immutability of God, in matter as the promise and potency of all things, the evidence of His infinite power and fulness, throws in the Neo-Platonic doctrine of the microcosm and macrocosm, and lo! the work is done, and a cosmology constructed, which to elicit from Genesis may well demand a sevenfold method of interpretation. The minor details of this curious mosaic, to wit, the correspondence between the nine spheres of corruptible forms and the nine planets, between seraphic intelligence and the sun, between cherubic intelligence and the moon, seem, for what they are worth, to be all Pico's own.

Having thus found, as he thinks, a philosophic basis for his exegetical method, Pico proceeds to apply it to the Mosaic text with the utmost rigour and vigour. It would be tedious to follow him through all the minutiae of his elaborate and extraordinary interpretation. A few

examples of his art will amply suffice; and we cannot do better than begin at the beginning. What, then, did Moses mean by "In the beginning"? The solution of this weighty problem Pico plainly regards as his greatest triumph, and accordingly reserves it for the closing chapter, when he introduces it with a mighty flourish of trumpets. These pregnant words, "In the beginning," contain, it appears, the following mystic sentence: "Pater in Filio et per Filium, principium et finem, sive quietem, creavit caput, ignem, et fundamentum magni hominis fœdere bono," which is elicited from them by various dexterous permutations and combinations of the letters which make up their Hebrew equivalent. The key to the interpretation of the sentence is found in the idea of the microcosm.

Man being the microcosm, the macrocosm, or universe, may be called "magnus homo," whose "caput," or head, is the supercelestial or intelligible world, while his "ignis," fire, or heart, is the celestial world or empyrean, and his "fundamentum," or base, the sublunary sphere, all which are bound together "fœdere bono," by ties of kinship and congruity. In plain English, then, the initial words of the first chapter of Genesis mean, according to Pico:—"The Father in the Son, and by the Son, who is the beginning and the end, or rest, created the head, the heart, and the lower parts of the great man fitly joined together;" and thus contain an implicit prophecy of the Christian dispensation.

After this splendid *tour de force*, everything else in Pico's exposition will seem tame and trivial. We may observe, however, that four being a square number, he finds in the fourth day an adumbration of the fulness of time in which Christ came to earth; in the sun, moon, and stars types of

Christ, His Church, and His Apostles; in the waters under the firmament, which on the third day were gathered together unto one place, a type of the Gentiles; in the earth, a type of the Israelites; and in the fact that before the creation of the sun the waters produced nothing, and the earth little that was good, while after the sun had shone upon them they became fruitful abundantly of moving creatures, birds, and fishes, a prophecy of the spiritual revolution wrought by Christianity—were not the Apostles fishers of men? and a plain, unmistakable proof that his exposition is no mere fancy, but solid truth. It is absurd to criticize such folly seriously, but it may be worth while to note in passing that Christ being according to Christian theology co-eternal with the Father, the creation of the sun serves but ill as a type of His advent.

Pico, however, is so little disturbed by this consideration, that he finds another type of Christ in another created object—to wit, the firmament—which, while separating the waters above it from those below, nevertheless unites them as every mean unites its extremes, and thus enables the former to fecundate the latter, as Christ enables the divine grace to descend upon man. At the same time, however, he is careful to affirm the orthodox position that Christ is the first begotten of every creature.

Such are some of the meanings which Pico finds in the Mosaic text when interpreting it of the creation of the intelligible or super-celestial sphere. The same terms have, of course, quite different imports when applied to the creation of the other spheres. Thus, in relation to the sublunary sphere, “heaven” means efficient cause, “the earth” matter, and “the waters” on the face of

which the Spirit of God moved, the accidents of matter.

But the reader has probably had already far too much of these absurdities, which, however, when due allowance has been made for the differences of the times, are perhaps hardly grosser than some of the ingenious attempts by which more recent writers have sought to reconcile Genesis with modern science.

It is time, however, to take a glance at the treatise "De Ente et Uno." This little tractate purports to be an essay towards the reconciliation of Plato and Aristotle—an essentially hopeless undertaking, on which Poryhyry had long before spent his strength for nought. We may therefore spare ourselves the trouble of even asking how far Pico is successful. The interest of the treatise consists in the insight which it affords into Pico's own views of the nature of God and His relation to the world. It is, in fact, a chapter, and by no means an unimportant chapter, in the long dialectic on the nature of universals and their relation to particulars, which formed the staple of mediæval thought. All cultivated people have heard of this great debate, but few have any clear idea of the issues involved in it, and why so many subtle and ingenious thinkers spent their best energies upon it. Nay, it is sometimes contemptuously dismissed by those who should know better as mere piece of frivolous logomachy. In truth, however, this apparently barren controversy was big with the most momentous of all the problems with which the human mind can concern itself—first, "Utrum sit Deus"—whether God exist? second, if He exist, in what way His relation to the universe is to be understood—whether in the way of a transcendent cause or an immanent principle, or in both ways at once?



Saturated as mediæval theology was with ideas derived from Plato and Aristotle, and but imperfectly understood, it was inevitable that when men attempted to philosophize about God, they should conceive Him—or at any rate tend to conceive Him—rather as a universal principle, or archetypal source of ideas, than as a concrete personality. Hence nominalism, with its frank denial of the existence of universals, conceptualism with its reduction of them to figments of abstraction, seemed equally to involve atheism; even realism of the more moderate type, which, while asserting the objective existence of the universal, denied its existence *ante rem*—*i.e.*, apart from the particular—was viewed with suspicion as tending to merge God in the cosmos; while realism of the high Platonic order, by its assertion of the existence of a world of pure universals—archetypes of the particulars revealed to sense—found favour in the eyes of men in whom the philosophic interest was always strictly subordinated to the theological.

In the treatise “*De Ente et Uno*” the question as between the transcendence and the immanence of God comes to the surface with remarkable abruptness. Is “the One,” *i.e.* God, to be regarded as “Being” or as “above Being?” Aristotle is supposed to maintain the former position, Plato undoubtedly holds the latter. To the Platonic doctrine Pico gives in his unqualified adhesion, and attempts to constrain Aristotle to do so likewise. His Platonism is of the most uncompromising type, the idealism of the Parmenides with the Parmenidean doubts and difficulties left out. Abstract terms such as “whiteness” or “humanity” signify, he asserts dogmatically, and apparently without a shadow of doubt as to the truth of the doctrine, real existences which are what they are in their own right

and not by derivation from or participation in anything else, while their corresponding concretes denote existences of an inferior order which are what they are by virtue of their participation in the abstract or archetypal ideas. Upon this theory he proceeds deliberately to base his theology. As whiteness in itself is not white, but the archetypal cause of that particular appearance in objects, and in the same way heat in itself is not hot, but the cause of the particular sensation which we call heat; so God is not "Being" though, or rather because, He is the "fulness," *i.e.* the archetypal cause, of "Being." As thus the one primal fountain of "Being" He is properly described as "the One." "God is all things and most eminently and most perfectly all things; which cannot be, unless He so comprehends the perfections of all things in Himself as to exclude whatever imperfection is in them. Now, things are imperfect either (1) in virtue of some defect in themselves, whereby they fall short of the normal standard proper to them, or (2) in virtue of the very limitations which constitute them particular objects. It follows that God being perfect has in Him neither any defect nor any particularity, but is the abstract universal unity of all things in their perfection. It is, therefore, not correct to say that He comprehends all things in Himself; for in that case neither would He be perfectly simple in nature, nor would they be infinite which are in Him, but He would be an infinite unity composed of many things infinite, indeed, in number, but finite in respect of perfection; which to speak or think of God is profanity." In other words, in order to get a true idea of God we must abstract from all plurality, all particularity whatever, and then we have as the residue the notion of a most perfect, infinite, perfectly simple being. God may, then,

be called Being itself, the One itself, the Good itself, the True itself; but it is better to describe Him as that which is "above Being, above truth, above unity, above goodness, since His Being is truth itself, unity itself, goodness itself," better still to say of Him that He is "intelligibly and ineffably above all that we can most perfectly say or conceive of Him," and with Dionysius the Areopagite to define him by negatives. And so he quotes with approval part of the closing sentence of the treatise "De Mystica Theologia" in which agnosticism seems to exhaust itself in the exuberant detail of its negations. "It" (*i.e.* the First Cause) "is neither truth, nor dominion, nor wisdom, nor the One, nor unity, nor Deity, nor goodness, nor spirit, as far as we can know; nor sonship nor fatherhood, nor aught else of things known to us or any other creature; neither is it aught of things that are not nor of things that are; nor is it known to any as it is itself nor knows them itself as they are; whose is neither speech, nor name, nor knowledge, nor darkness, nor light, nor error, nor truth, nor any affirmation or negation." And then, to give a colour of orthodoxy to his doctrine he quotes the authority of St. Augustine to the effect that "the wisdom of God is no more wisdom than justice, His justice no more justice than wisdom, His life no more life than cognition, His cognition no more cognition than life; for all these qualities are united in God not in the way of confusion or combination or by the interpenetration as it were of things in themselves distinct, but by way of a perfectly simple ineffable fontal unity": a summary statement of some passages in the sixth book of the treatise "De Trinitate," which is of course misleading apart from the context in which they occur.

Such is Pico's theory of the Godhead—a theory which

in fact reduces it to the mere abstraction of perfect simplicity and universality, a theory wholly irreconcilable with the Christian faith, wholly unfit to form the basis of religion. Nor was its author insensible, rather he would seem to have been only too painfully conscious of the barrenness of the results to which so much toil and trouble had brought him; for he has no sooner enunciated it than he turns, as if with a sigh, to Politian, and addresses him thus:—"But see, my Angelo, what madness possesses us. Love God while we are in the body we rather may than either define or know Him. By loving Him we more profit ourselves, have less trouble, please Him better. Yet had we rather ever seeking Him by the way of speculation never find Him than by loving Him possess that which without loving were in vain found"—words that since Pico's day must have found an echo in the heart of many a thinker weary with the vain effort to gain by philosophical methods a clear insight into the divine nature.

The treatise involved Pico in an amicable controversy with his friend Antonio da Faenza (Antonius Faventinus or Cittadinus), who criticised it in some detail, and to whom Pico replied with no less detail. The correspondence was protracted during his life, and was continued after his death by his nephew, but it sheds little additional light on Pico's views. How far he seriously held them, and whether he had some esoteric method of reconciling them with the orthodox faith, are questions which we have no means of answering. It is curious, however, in reference to this matter, to compare the opening chapters of his commentary on Girolamo Benivieni's *canzone* on "Celestial Love." Benivieni also was a Platonist, and having saturated himself with

the Symposium and the Phædrus, the fifth book of the third Ennead of Plotinus, and Ficino's commentaries, thought himself qualified to write a *canzone* on ideal love which should put Guinicelli and Cavalcanti to shame. The result was that he produced a *canzone* which has a certain undeniable elevation of style, but is so obscure that even with the help of Pico's detailed commentary it takes some hard study to elicit its meaning. The theme, however, is the purifying influence of love in raising the soul through various stages of refinement from the preoccupation with sensuous beauty to the contemplation of the ideal type of the beautiful, and thence to the knowledge of God, who, though, as Pico is careful to explain, He is not beautiful Himself, since beauty implies an element of variety repugnant to His nature, is nevertheless the source of the beautiful no less than of the true and the good.

The commentary consists of two parts; the first a philosophical dissertation on love in general, its nature, origin, and place in the universal scheme of things; the second a detailed analysis and exposition of the poem, stanza by stanza, almost line by line. Both parts, in spite of the good Italian in which they are written, are unspeakably tedious, being mostly made up of bald rationalizations of Greek myths. The first few chapters, however, are theological or theosophical; and here we find God described consistently with the doctrine of the "De Ente et Uno" as "ineffably elevated above all intellect and cognition," while beneath Him, and between the intelligible and the sensible worlds is placed "a creature of nature as perfect as it is possible for a creature to be," whom God creates from eternity, whom alone He immediately creates, and who "by Plato and likewise by the ancient philosophers, Mercury Trismegistus and

Zoroaster is called now the Son of God, now Mind, now Wisdom, now Divine Reason." Here we have a fusion and confusion of the "self-sufficing and most perfect God" created by the Demiurge of Plato's *Timæus* to be the archetype of the world, the Son of God of Philo and later theosophists, and the *Noûs* of Plotinus, the first emanation of the Godhead. This Son of God, however, Pico bids us observe, is not to be confounded with the Son of God of Christian theology, who is Creator and not creature, but may be regarded as "the first and most noble angel created by God."

This is virtually Pico's last word on theology or theosophy, and it leaves the question of his orthodoxy an insoluble enigma. Did he really believe in the Son of God of Christian theology, or had he not rather dethroned Him in favour of the syncretistic abstraction which he calls the first and most noble angel created by God, though he was too timid to avow the fact. We have seen that he did not scruple to find types of Christ in created things, such as the firmament and the sun. Little stress can be laid on this, and if it stood alone it might be dismissed as a piece of sheer inadvertence, but read in connection with the pregnant passage from the commentary on Benivieni's poem, it certainly makes in favour of the idea that in the passion for unity which evidently possessed him Pico had abandoned his trinitarianism, and that the treatise "De Ente et Uno" contains his most mature and profound theological convictions. If so, the caution against confusing the two Sons of God must be interpreted as a mere device to save appearances.

However this may be, it is undeniable that Pico was, even in the conventional Christian sense, a sincerely religious man. The letter to his nephew, Giovanni

Francesco, on the spiritual life, translated by More, has in it the ring of genuine simple Christian godliness, and though Savonarola saw fit to consign him to the purgatorial fire for his refusal to devote himself entirely to the religious life, he did so probably rather in sorrow than in anger, on the principle that whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, regarding Pico as one who had in him the making of a saint, but who by a *gran rifiuto* failed of attaining unto the prize of his high calling.

That Pico should have found a theology which reduces God to a *caput mortuum* of which nothing can be said but that it is above all things, and Christ to a "great angel," the first of created beings, compatible with the simple and ardent piety of a Catholic saint would indeed be a notable phenomenon, but, at the same time, one which sound criticism would accept without attempting to account for it, much less to explain it away. No exercise of ingenuity would ever succeed in harmonising his theology with the Catholic or any form of the Christian faith, and it is equally impossible to dispute the sincerity of his piety. It is all part and parcel of the peculiar, unique idiosyncrasy of the man's nature, a nature compounded of mysticism and rationalism, credulity and scepticism, in about equal proportions.

He finds strange hidden meanings in the simple words of Moses, he believes in natural magic, and holds that it testifies more clearly of Christ than any other science, yet he cannot credit the story of Christ's descent into hell, or the doctrine of transubstantiation, or the eternity of punishment, and writes an elaborate treatise in twelve books against the pretensions of astrology. A man of immense and varied learning, not merely classical but oriental, he yet permitted himself to be imposed on by a

Sicilian Jew, to whom he gave an immense sum for some worthless cabalistic treatises, under the impression that they were the lost works of Ezra.

Perhaps it is unfair to take seriously what may have been merely a compliment less sincere than gracious; but it certainly does not tend to raise one's impression of his critical powers to find Pico, in a letter to Lorenzo de' Medici, setting Lorenzo's insipid verses above anything that Dante or Petrarch ever wrote.

With all this it is more easy to do injustice than justice to Pico. It is impossible to study him attentively without seeing at last that amidst all his vagaries, absurdities, perversities, there was real faculty in him, and faculty of an order which, matured by a severer discipline than his age could afford, would have won for him a place, though perhaps no very exalted one, among philosophers. The philosophic instinct, without doubt, he had, and in high measure, a veritable passion not merely for truth but for a consistent, harmonious body of truth. The high originaive faculty which discovers a method was denied him. Hence he remained a mere syncretist forlornly struggling to weave the discordant utterances of rival schools into a coherent system. His importance for the student of philosophy is that he made this attempt, made it with wider knowledge and more passionate zeal than any of his predecessors, and failed, and that with his failure scholasticism as a movement came to an end. Individual thinkers indeed there have been, such as Leibniz and Coleridge, in whom something of Pico's spirit has survived, whose laudable anxiety to justify the ways of God to man has led them to attempt the reconciliation of the irreconcilable, of atomism, *e.g.*, with idealism, of transcendentalism with the Christian faith,



and such men are in effect schoolmen born out of due time. Nevertheless that which in the specific sense we call scholasticism made in Pico its final effort, was beaten by the sheer intractability of its problem, which the new learning made ever more apparent, and died out.

Schoolman, however, though Pico was, it must not be forgotten that he was also a humanist. His style, even where, as in the "Apologia," he is at his driest and most formal, and in the attempt to reconcile his heresies with Catholic doctrine, becomes, in the fineness of his distinctions, almost more scholastic than the subtlest doctor that ever spun intellectual cobwebs in Oxford or Paris, effectually distinguishes him from "the barbarians," and proclaims him a child of the renaissance; and long and justly celebrated were the "golden letters" in which, in all the luxuriance of Ciceronic periods, he praises Politian's translation of the *Enchiridion* of Epictetus or Lorenzo's verses, discusses the rival claims of the old and new learning with Ermolao Barbaro, descants on the regal dignity of philosophy and philosophers to Andrea Corneo, exhorts his nephew to the practice of the Christian life, or expatiates to Ficino on his new-born zeal for oriental studies.

In none of these does he appear to better advantage than in one of the earliest, written in reply to a flattering letter from Politian, which in effect admitted him to the confraternity of learned men.

"I am as much beholden to you," he writes, "for the high praise you give me in your last letter as I am far from deserving it. For one is beholden to another for what he gives, not for what he pays. Wherefore, indeed, I am beholden to you for all that you write of me, since in me there is nothing of the kind, for you in no way owed it to

me, but it all came of your courtesy and singular graciousness towards me. For the rest, if you examine me, you will find nothing in me that is not slight, humble, strictly limited. I am a novice, a tiro, and have advanced but a step, no more, from the darkness of ignorance. It is a compliment to place me in the rank of a student. Something more is meant by a man of learning, a title appropriate only to you and your likes, too grand for me; since of those matters which in letters are most important I have as yet obtained no thorough knowledge, scarcely more indeed than, as it were, a peep through a lattice window. I will endeavour indeed, and that I now do, to become some time or another such as you say and either really think, or at any rate would fain think, that I am. Meantime I will follow your example, Angelo, who excuse yourself to the Greeks by the fact that you are a Latin, to the Latins on the ground that you grecize. I too will have recourse to a similar subterfuge, and claim the indulgence of the poets and rhetoricians because I am said to philosophize, of the philosophers because I play the rhetorician and cultivate the Muses; though my case is very different from yours. For in sooth while I desire to sit, as they say, on two chairs, I fall between them, and it turns out at last (to be brief) that I am neither a poet, nor a rhetorician, nor a philosopher." How strictly these gloomy forebodings were realised in the matter of philosophy we have already seen. From attempting to decide how far his cultivation of the Muses was rewarded we are precluded by Pico's own act, the destruction of his early love poems. Of these the following sonnet alone has been preserved:—

Da poi che i duo belli occhi che mi fanno  
Cantar del mio Signor sì nuovamente,  
Avvamparo la mia gelata mente,  
Già volge in lieta sorte il second' anno.

Felice giorno, ch'a sì dolce affanno  
Fu bel principio ; onde nel cor si sente  
Una fiamma girar sì dolcemente,  
Che men beati son que' che 'n ciel stanno.

L'ombra, il pensier, la negligenza, e'l letto  
M'avean ridotto, ove la maggior parte  
Giace ad ogn' or del vulgo errante e vile.

Scorsemi Amore a più gradito oggetto :  
E se cosa di grato oggi a 'l mio stile,  
Madonna affina in me l'ingegno e l'arte.

Since first the light of those twin stars, thine eyes,  
That me to hymn my Lord thus newly move,  
Kindled my frost-bound soul with fires of love,  
Years twain their course have run in happy wise.

O blessed day, of such sweet heaviness  
Such fair beginning ! Since when to and fro  
Within my heart a gentle flame doth go,  
That not in hēaven is found such happiness.

Recluse I lived, in musing lost, nor care,  
Nor action knew, wellnigh become a part  
Of the vile herd of errant men and base.

Love roused my soul to seek an end more fair :  
And if my style to-day has aught of grace  
My lady 'tis refines my mind and art.

If this somewhat insipid sonnet is a fair sample of Pico's amatory effusions, one can more readily understand why he burned them than the regret which their destruction caused Politian, and which drew from him the following epigram :—

Πολλάκι τοξευθεὶς φλεχθεὶς θ' ὑπὸ Πίκου ἐρώτων  
Οὐκ ἔτλη προτέρω, πάντα δ' ἀφείλεθ' ὄπλα,  
Τόξα, βέλη, φαρέτρας, καὶ νήσας τά γε πάντα  
Ἦψεν ὁμοῦ σωρὸν λαμπάσι ληϊδαίσι.  
Σὺν δ' αὐτοὺς μάρψας ἀμενηνὰ χερύδρια δῆσεν  
Ταῖς νευραῖς, μέσση δ' ἔμβαλε πυρκαϊᾶ.  
Καὶ πυρὶ φλέξε τὸ πῦρ· τί δ' ἄφρονες αὐτὸν ἔρωτες  
Τὸν Πίκον μουσῶν εἰσεποτάσθε πρόμον ;

Ficino took a different view from Politian. "Somewhat of love," he wrote after Pico's death, "he had written in the heat of his youth, which in his riper judgment he condemned and determined altogether to destroy, nor could it have been published without damage to his reputation." This, however, probably refers not so much to the literary merit of the poems as to their moral tone. His nephew, Giovanni Francesco Pico distinctly states that they were destroyed "religionis causa." It is evident also from the way in which Politian refers to them that they were such as a less severe moralist than Ficino might have censured. "I hear," he wrote, "that you have burned the little love poems which you made in the past, fearing perhaps lest they should injure your fair fame or the morals of others. For I cannot think that you have destroyed them, as Plato is said to have destroyed his, because they were not worthy of publication. For as far as I remember nothing could be more terse, more sweet or more polished." Pico was wont to solace himself with Propertius, and had wantoned with other ladies than the Muses, so that in all likelihood his love poetry was decidedly more ardent than chaste. More (p. 13 *infra*) is inaccurate in stating that the "five books" thus destroyed were in the vulgar tongue. They were written, as we learn from Giovanni Francesco Pico "elegiaco carmine," *i.e.* in Latin elegies, probably modelled on Propertius. The Italian poems, however, were destroyed at the same time. Of Pico's Latin elegiacs two specimens survive: (1) a hymn to God written probably after his conversion; (2) an encomiastic poem on his friend Girolamo Benivieni. For the first no high merit can be claimed. The attempt to give poetical expression to the mysteries of Christian theology is nearly always unsuccessful, and Pico's "Depre-

catoria" forms no exception to the rule. The most that can be said for it is that it is tolerable Latin. Such as it is, however, it is here printed for comparison with More's translation, which will be found at page 74 *infra*.

JOANNIS PICI MIRANDULÆ DEPRECATORIA AD DEUM.

Alme Deus ! summa qui majestate verendus,  
Vere unum in triplici numine numen habes :  
Cui super excelsi flammantia moenia mundi  
Angelici servit turba beata chori :  
Cujus et immensum hoc oculis spectabile nostris  
Omnipotens quondam dextra creavit opus :  
Æthera qui torques, qui nutu dirigis orbem,  
Cujus ab imperio fulmina missa cadunt :  
Parce, precor, miseris, nostras, precor, abluere sordes,  
Ne nos justa tui pœna furoris agat.  
Quod si nostra pari pensentur debita lance  
Et sit judicii norma severa tui,  
Quis queat horrendum viventis ferre flagellum  
Vindicis, et plagas sustinuisse graves ?  
Non ipsa iratæ restabit Machina dextræ,  
Machina supremo non peritura die.  
Quæ mens non primæ damnata ab origine culpæ,  
Aut quæ non proprio crimine facta nocens ?  
Ast certe ille ipse es proprium cui parcere semper,  
Justitiamque pari qui pietate tenes :  
Præmia qui ut meritis longe maiora rependis,  
Supplicia admissis sic leviora malis.  
Namque tua est nostris major clementia culpæ,  
Et dare non dignis res mage digna Deo est.  
Quamquam sat digni, si quos dignatur amare  
Qui quos non dignos invenit ipse facit.  
Ergo tuos placido miserans, precor, aspice vultu,  
Seu servos mavis, seu magis esse reos :  
Nempe reos, nostræ si spectes crimina vitæ,  
Ingratæ nimium crimina mentis opus :  
At tua si potius in nobis munera cernas,  
Munera præcipuis nobilitata bonis,  
Nos sumus ipsa olim tibi quos natura ministros  
Mox fecit natos gratia sancta tuos.

Sed premit heu ! miseros tantæ indulgentia sortis,  
 Quos fecit natos gratia, culpa reos.  
 Culpa reos fecit, sed vincat gratia culpam,  
 Ut tuus in nostro crimine crescat honor.  
 Nam tua sive aliter sapientia, sive potestas,  
 Nota suas mundo prodere possit opes,  
 Major in erratis bonitatis gloria nostris,  
 Illeque præ cunctis fulget amandus amor,  
 Qui potuit cœlo Dominum deducere ab alto,  
 Inque crucem summi tollere membra Dei :  
 Ut male contractas patrio de semine sordes  
 Ablueret lateris sanguis et unda tui :  
 Sic amor et pietas tua, Rex mitissime, tantis  
 Dat mala materiem suppeditare bonis.  
 O amor ! O pietas nostris bene provida rebus !  
 O bonitas servi facta ministra tui !  
 O amor ! O pietas nostris male cognita sæclis !  
 O bonitas nostris nunc prope victa malis !  
 Da, precor, huic tanto qui semper fervet amori  
 Ardorem in nostris cordibus esse parem :  
 Da Sathanæ imperium, cui tot servisse per annos  
 Pœnitet excusso deposuisse jûgo :  
 Da, precor, extingui vesanæ incendia mentis,  
 Et tuus in nostro pectore vivat amor :  
 Ut cum mortalis perfunctus munere vitæ  
 Ductus erit Dominum spiritus ante suum,  
 Promissi regni felici sorte potitus  
 Non Dominum sed Te sentiat esse Patrem.

The poem on Benivieni is in a happier vein :—

Lætor, io, Tyrrhena, tibi, Florentia, lætor !  
 Clamet, io Pæan, quisquis amicus adest !  
 Quale decus, quæ fama, tibi, quæ gloria surgit !  
 Tolle caput, Libycas tolle superba jubar !  
 Ille tuos agros intra et tua mœnia natus,  
 Atque Arni liquidas inter adultus aquas,  
 Cui cum divinum sit sacro in pectore numen  
 Quam bene de sacro nomine nomen habet !  
 Ille, inquam, plausu jam cœpit ubique frequenti,  
 Jam cœpit multo non sine honore legi.  
 Sicelis Ausonias illius Musa per urbes  
 Fert celebrem magna candida laude pedem.

Auctorem patriæ quisquis legit invidet illi,  
 Atque optat patriæ nomina tanta suæ.  
 Gaude, gaude iterum tanto insignita decore,  
 Et vati adplaudas terra beata tuo.  
 Cinge coronatos vernanti flore capillos,  
 Conveniunt titulo Floridaserta tuo.  
 Undique Achæmenio spargantur compita costo,  
 Et per odoratas lilia multa vias.  
 En! stirps in nostras Benivenia protulit auras  
 Etruscum docto qui gerat ore senem!  
 Ponite Avernales jam gens Etrusca cupressus,  
 Quas rapta immiti funere Laura dedit.  
 Pellantur queruli fletus; en! Laura revixit;  
 Spirat; et argutum novit, ut ante, loqui.  
 Quin solito nitet illa magis, majorque priore  
 Nescio quæ cultu gratia ab ore venit.  
 Reddidit hanc nobis laus nostræ Hieronimus urbis,  
 Et dedit infernos posse iterare lacus:  
 At certe (procul hinc O Livor inique facessas)  
 Nunc graviore sonat grandius illa chely.  
 Di Superi! sublime ales modulatur, ut æqua  
 Sit jam Romano Tusca loquela sono.  
 Nec tamen ille Euros frondosus jactat inanes:  
 Plus quam promittit fronte recessus habet.  
 Quid referam, quam lenis erat? quam carmina plano  
 In numeros currunt ordine juncta suos:  
 Sic memini me sæpe sacros vidisse liquores  
 Profluere, imbriferi vis ubi nulla Noti.  
 Sed quis miretur meditato in carmine tantum  
 Cultus, cum pariter non meditata canat?  
 Quis non hunc juret Phœbum, modo pendeat arcus?  
 Cornua sint, Bromium quis neget esse Deum?  
 Audivi hunc quoties cithara cantare recurva,  
 Abduxit sensus protinus ille meos.  
 Et quid non possent digiti mulcere loquentis?  
 Sisteret his rapidi flumina magna Padi:  
 Phœbeos medio firmaret in æthere currus:  
 Lunares pictos sisteret axe boves.  
 Terribilem sævis Martem revocaret ab armis:  
 Leniret Ditem, falciferumque senem:  
 Et quas non potuit quondam Rhodopeius Orpheus  
 Flectere Strymonias flecteret ille nurus.

The poem was apparently written after the death of Lorenzo, whose successor Pico hails in Benivieni. The epithet "Sicelis," applied to Benivieni's muse, refers to his bucolics; one of which (in praise of poetry) is entitled "Lauro," after Lorenzo; in another, which bears the name of "Pico," Lorenzo and Pico converse in amœbean strains. "Laura" stands apparently for Lorenzo's muse. "Etruscum qui gerat ore senem," is an uncouth and somewhat obscure phrase. "Nec tamen ille Euros frondosus jactat inanes" is plainly corrupt, but it is not easy to suggest a satisfactory emendation. "Quid referam, quam lenis *erat*?" is too bad Latin to have been written by Pico. Perhaps the true reading is "quam lene sonet." The verses are undeniably spirited, though somewhat too rhetorical for true poetry.

It is, indeed, only as a rhetorician that Pico can claim to have succeeded. The letter to Ermolao Barbaro in defence of the schoolmen, and that to Lorenzo in praise of his verses are admirable examples of the rhetorical exercise pure and simple — for as such they must primarily be regarded—a little too elaborate, perhaps, too artificial, too declamatory, but still decidedly meritorious in their kind. The air of sincerity they certainly have not—indeed the scholastics of Padua were so far from taking Pico's eloquent panegyric of their predecessors seriously that they were inclined to suspect him of laughing at them in his sleeve. Nor is it easy to believe that Pico was really sincere in the exaggerated encomium which he passed on the verses of Lorenzo, one of the most insipid writers which even that age of learned insipidity produced. The real man, however, undoubtedly speaks in the letters on the philosophic and Christian life, the latter written, it must be remembered, when Pico



was solemnized by the recent death of Lorenzo. The minor letters exhibit Pico in the pleasant light of the scholar writing to his friends to give or solicit information on various literary questions. One closes them, however, with a sigh of regret that the scholar should predominate so much over the man.

How thankful we should have been for a few easy gossiping letters in the vulgar tongue revealing Pico to us as he was in his moments of complete *abandon*. Perhaps, however, he knew none such, and there was nothing to reveal that he has not revealed. Sense of humour he seems certainly to have lacked; I have not found in him the least suggestion that he had any faculty of hearty laughing in him at all. If he ever had it, severe study must have crushed it out of him. Probably the basis of his nature was a deep religious melancholy, not at all lightened by the fact that learning had impaired his hold on the faith.

As his short life drew towards its close Pico's pre-occupation with religion became more intense and exclusive. Besides the "Rules" of a Christian Life, and the "Interpretation" of Psalm XVI., translated by More, he wrote an Exposition of the Lord's Prayer, and projected, but did not live to execute a Commentary on the New Testament, for which he prepared himself by diligent collation of such MSS. as he could come by; also a defence of the Vulgate and of the Septuagint version of the Psalms against the criticisms of the Jewish scholars, and an elaborate apology for Christianity against seven classes of opponents; to wit (1) atheists, (2) idolators, (3) Jews, (4) Mahometans, (5) Christians who reject a portion of the faith, (6) Christians who adulterate the faith with profane superstitions, (7) orthodox Chris-

tians who live unholy lives. Some idea of the scale of this vast undertaking may be gathered from the fact that the treatise "Adversus Astrologos," which occupies 240 closely printed folio pages formed only a small fragment of it.

But while thus zealous for the defence of the faith, Pico seems never to have seriously contemplated entering the Church, though often urged to do so not only by Savonarola but by other of his friends, who thought he might reasonably aspire to the dignity of cardinal. Their solicitude for his advancement he rebuked with a haughty "Non sunt cogitationes meæ cogitationes vestræ." Probably he considered that he could render religion truer service in the character of lay advocate than if he were trammelled by clerical offices.

Short as his life was, he survived his three most intimate friends, Lorenzo de' Medici, Ermolao Barbaro, and Politian, all of whom died within the two years 1492-4. Probably the grief caused by this succession of misfortunes had much to do with inducing or aggravating the fever of which he died hardly two months after Politian, on 17th Nov. 1494. The corpse, invested by Savonarola's own hands with the habit of the order of the Frati Predicanti, in which he had ardently desired to enrol Pico during his life, was buried in the church of S. Marco. The tomb was inscribed with the epitaph :

" Joannes jacet hic Mirandula : cætera norunt  
Et Tagus, et Ganges, forsan et Antipodes."

Ficino, who had been to him "in years as a father, in intimacy as a brother, in affection as a second self," wrote another epitaph, which was not, however, placed upon the tomb : " Antistites secretiora mysteria raro admodum

concedunt oculis, statimque recondunt. Ita Deus mortalibus divinum philosophum Joannem Picum Mirandulam trigesimo (*sic*) anno maturum."

The generous enthusiasm which prompted Politian to confer upon his friend the high-sounding title of "Phoenix of the wits" (Fenice degli ingegni) has not been justified by events. Once sunk in his ashes the Phoenix never rose again.

The pious care of Giovanni Francesco Pico, who published his uncle's life and works at Venice in 1498, did much, indeed, to avert the oblivion which ultimately fell upon him. This edition, however, was imperfect, the Theses and the Commentary on Benivieni's poem, with some minor matters being omitted. These were added in the Basel edition of 1601. The "Golden Letters" have passed through many editions, the last that of Cellario in 1682. The Commentary on Celestial and Divine Love was reprinted as late as 1731.

Pico figures in a dim and ever dimmer way in the older histories of philosophy from Stanley, who gives a rude and imperfect translation of the "Commentary" to Hegel, who dismisses him and his works in a few lines. More recently, however, one of Hegel's laborious fellow-countrymen, Georg Dreydorff, discovered a system in Pico and expounded it.<sup>1</sup>

But most Englishmen probably owe such interest as he excites in them to Mr. Pater's charming sketch in his dainty volume of studies entitled "The Renaissance," or the slighter notices in Mr. J. A. Symonds' "Renaissance in Italy," or Mr. Seebohm's "Oxford Reformers."

The Life by Sir Thomas More now reprinted is a

<sup>1</sup> "Das System des Johann Pico Grafen von Mirandula und Concordia," *Marburg*, 1858.

somewhat reduced and inaccurate version of Giovanni Francesco Pico's work. The reprint is executed from a small black-letter quarto in the British Museum, printed by Wynkyn de Worde about 1510. The old spelling and, as far as possible, the old punctuation has been retained, though in many places it has been necessary to alter the latter in order to avoid intolerable harshness or obscurity.

The chronicles of Mirandola, edited for the municipality in 1872, under the title "Memorie Storiche della Città e dell' Antico Ducato della Mirandola," are an authority of capital importance for the history of the Pico family and its connexions. The notes to Riccardo Bartoli's "Elogio al Principe Pico" (1791) also contain some valuable original matter. The critical judgment of the last century on Pico's services to the cause of the revival of learning is given by Christoph Meiners in "Lebensbeschreibungen berühmter Männer der Wiederherstellung der Wissenschaften." Some of Pico's letters translated, into the ponderous English of the period, connected by a thread of biography, and illustrated by erudite notes, will be found in W. Parr Greswell's "Memoirs of Angelus Politianus," etc. 1805. The best modern Italian biography is that by F. Calori Cesis, entitled "Giovanni Pico della Mirandola detto La Fenice degli Ingegneri" (2nd edn. 1872).

HERE IS CONTEYNED THE LYFE OF JOHAN PICUS  
ERLE OF MYRANDULA A GRETE LORDE OF  
ITALY AN EXCELLENT CONNYNGE MAN IN ALL  
SCIENCES & VERTEOUS OF LYVYNGE. WITH  
DYVERS EPYSTLES & OTHER WERKES OF YE  
SAYD JOHAN PICUS FULL OF GRETE SCIENCE  
VERTUE & WYSEDOME WHOSE LIFE &  
WERKES BENE WORTHY & DYGNE  
TO BE REDDE AND OFTEN  
TO BE HAD IN  
MEMORYE.







UNTO HIS RYGHTE ENTYERLY BELOVED  
SYSTER IN CHRYSYSTE JOYEUCE LEYGH<sup>1</sup>  
THOMAS MORE GRETYNG IN OUR LORDE.



IT is and of longe tyme hath bene my well beloved syster a custome in the begynnyng of y<sup>e</sup> newe yere frendes to sende betwene presentes or gyftes, as the wytnesses of theyr love and frendshyp & also sygnifyenge that they desyre eche to other that yere a good contynuaunce and prosperous ende of that lucky bygynnyng. But comunely all those presentes that are used customably all in this maner betwene frendes to be sente be suche thynges as pertayne onely unto the body eyther to be fed or to be cledde or some otherwyse delyted: by whiche hit semeth that theyr frendshyp is but flesshely & stretcheth in maner to the body onely. But for asmoche as the love & amyte of chrysten folke sholde be rather goostly frendshyp then bodely: syth y<sup>t</sup> all faythfull people are rather spirituall then carnall: for as th'apostle seyth we be not now in fleshe but in spyryte yf Chryste abyde in us: I therefore myne hertly beloved syster in good lucke of this newe yere have sente you suche a present as maye bere wytnes of my tendre love & zele to the happy contynuaunce and graciously encrease of vertue in your soule: and where as

the giftes of other folke declare y<sup>t</sup> they wyfsheth theyr frendes to be worldly fortunate, myne testyfyeth y<sup>t</sup> I desyre to have you godly prosperous. These werkes more profitable then large were made in laten by one Johan Picus Erle of Mirandula a lordshyp in Italy, of whose connyng & vertue we nede here nothinge to speke, for asmoche as here after we peruse the course of his hole lyfe rather after our lytel power slenderly then after his merites suffyciently. The werkes are suche that truely good fyfter I suppose of the quantyte there cometh none in your hand more profitable: neyther to th'achyvynge of temperaunce in prosperite, nor to y<sup>e</sup> purchafynge of pacience in adversite, nor to the dyspyfyng of worldly vanyte, nor to the desyryng of hevenly felycyte: whiche werkes I wolde requyre you gladly to receyve: ne were hit y<sup>t</sup> they be suche that for the goodly mater (how so ever they be translated) may delyte & please any persone that hath any meane desyre and love to God: and that your selfe is suche one as for your vertue and fervent zele to God can not but joyously receyve any thyng that meanely sowneth eyther to the reproche of vyce, commendacyon of vertue, or honoure and laude of God, who preserve you.







## THE LYFE OF JOHAN PICUS, ERLE OF MIRANDULA.

**J**OHAN PICUS OF THE faders<sup>2</sup> fyde descended of the worthy lynage of th'emperoure Constantyne by a newew of the sayd Emperour called Picus, by whom all the Auncestres of this Johan Picus undoubtedly bere that name. But we shal let his auncestres passe, to whome (though they were ryght excellent) he gave agayne as moche honour as he receyved. And we shal speke of hym selfe reherfyng in parte his lernynge and his vertue. For these be the thynges whiche maye accompte for our owne, of whiche every man is more proprely to be commended then of y<sup>e</sup> noblenes of his auncestres: whose honoure maketh us not honorable. For eyther they were them selfe vertuouse or not: yf not, then had they none honour them selfe had they never so grete possessyons: for honoure is the rewarde of vertue. And how may they clayme the rewarde y<sup>t</sup> proprely longeth to vertue: yf they lak the vertue that y<sup>e</sup> rewarde longeth to. Then yf them selfe had none honour: how myght they leve to theyr heyres y<sup>t</sup> thyng whiche they had not them selfe. On y<sup>e</sup> other fyde yf they be vertuous and so consequently

honorable, yet maye they not leue theyr honoure to us as enheretaunce : no more then the vertue that them felfe were honourable for. For never the more noble be we for theyr noblenes : yf our felfe lak those thynges for which they were noble. But rather the more worshipfull that our auncestres were, the more vile and shamfull be we : yf we declyne from y<sup>e</sup> steppes of theyr worshypfull lyvynges : y<sup>e</sup> clere beauty of whose vertue makith the darke spotte of our vyce the more evydently to appere and to be y<sup>e</sup> more marked. But Picus of whom we speke was him felfe so honorable, for y<sup>e</sup> grete plentuouse habundaunce of all fuche vertues, y<sup>e</sup> possessyon wherof very honoure foloweth (as a shadowe folowith a body) y<sup>t</sup> he was to all them y<sup>t</sup> aspyre to honour a very spectacle, in whose condycyons as in a clere pullished myrrour they myght beholde in what poyntes very honour stondeth : whose merveyulous connyng & excellent vertue though my rude lernyng be ferre unable suffyciently to expresse : yet for as moche as yf no man sholde do hit but he y<sup>t</sup> might suffyciently do hit, no man sholde do hit : & better it were to be un suffyciently done then utterly undone : I shal therefore as I can brefely reherse you his hole lyfe : at the leest wyse to gyve some other man here after (y<sup>t</sup> can do hit better) occasyon to take hit in hande when hit shall happely greve hym to fe the lyfe of fuche an excellent connyng man so ferre unkonnyngly wryten.

#### OF HIS PARENTES AND TYME OF HIS BYRTH.

In y<sup>e</sup> yere of our Lorde God . M . CCCC . lxxiii . Pius the seconde beyng than the generall vycare of Chryste in his chyrche : and Frederyk the thyrde of y<sup>t</sup> name rulyng the empyre : this noble man was borne the last chylde of

his mother Julya, a woman comen of a noble stok,<sup>3</sup> his father hyght Johan Frauncife, a lorde of grete honoure and auctorite.

## OF THE WONDRE THAT APPERED BEFORE HIS BYRTH.

A merveyloufe fyght was there scene before his byrthe: there appered a fyery garlande standynge over y<sup>e</sup> chaumbre of his mother whyle she travelled & fodenly vanifshed away: which apparence was peradventure a token that he whiche sholde y<sup>t</sup> houre in the companye of mortall men be borne in the perfeccion of understandyng sholde be lyke y<sup>e</sup> perfyte fygure of that rounde cyrcle or garlande: and that his excellent name sholde rounde aboute the cyrcle of this hole world be magnifyed, whose mynde sholde alway as the fyre aspyre upwarde to heavenly thyng, and whose fyry eloquence sholde with an ardent hert in tyme to come whorship and prayfe almighty God with all his strength: and as that flame fodenly vanifshyd so sholde this fyre sone frome y<sup>e</sup> eyen of mortal people be hydde. We have oftyntymes red that fuche unknowen and straunge tokens hathe gone before or foloweth the natyvytete of excellent wyfe and vertuouse men, departynge (as hit were) and by Goddes commaundement feverynge the cradyls of fuche specyall chyl dren fro y<sup>e</sup> company of other of the comune forte: and shewynge y<sup>t</sup> they be borne to the acchevyng of some grete thyng. But to passe over other. The grete Saynt Ambrose: a swarme of bees flewe aboute his mouth in his cradle, & some entred in to his mouthe, and after y<sup>t</sup> yffuyng out agayne and fleyng up on hyghe, hydyng them selfe amonge the cloudes, escaped bothe y<sup>e</sup> fyght of his father and of all them that were present: whiche pronostycacyon one

Paulinus<sup>4</sup> makynge moche of, expowned it to signifye to us the swete hony combes of his plefaunt wrytynge: whiche sholde shewe out the celestially gyftes of God & sholde lyfte up the mynde of men from erthe in to heven.

#### OF HIS PERSONE.

He was of feture and shappe femely and beauteous, of stature goodly and hyghe, of fleshe tendre and softe: his vyfage lovely and fayre, his coloure white entermengled with comely ruddes, his eyen gray and quicke of loke, his teth white and even, his heere yelow and not to piked.<sup>5</sup>

#### OF HIS SETTYNGE FORTHE TO SCOLE AND STUDY IN HUMANTYE.

Under y<sup>e</sup> rule and governaunce of his mother he was set to maysters & to lernynge: where with so ardent mynde he labored the studyes of humanite: y<sup>t</sup> within shorte whyle he was (and not without a cause) accompted amonge the chyef Oratours and Poetes of that tyme: in lernynge mervaylously swyfte and of so redy a wyt, that y<sup>e</sup> verfis whiche he herde ones red he wolde agayne bothe forwarde and bakwarde to the grete wonder of the herers reherse, and over that wolde holde hit in fure remembraunce: whiche in other folkes wonte comenly to happen contrary. For they y<sup>t</sup> are swyfte in takynge be oftentimes slowe in remembrynge, and they y<sup>t</sup> with more labour & dyffyculte receyve hit more fast & fuerely holde hit.

#### OF HIS STUDY IN CANONE.

In the fouretene yere of his age by the commaundement of his mother (whiche longed vere fore to have hym preest) he departed to Bononye to study in y<sup>e</sup> lawes of the chyrche, whiche whan he had two yere tasted, per-

ceyvynge that the faculte leyned to nothings but onely mery tradicions and ordinaunces, his mynde fyll frome hit : yet lost he not his tyme therin, for in that two yere yet beyng a chylde he compyled a brevyary or a fumme upon all the decretalles, in whiche as brefly as poffyble was he compryfed th' effeete of all y<sup>t</sup> hole grete volume, and made a boke no sclender thyng to ryght connyng & perfyte doctours.

### OF HIS STUDY IN PHYLOSOPHYE & DEVYNYTE.

After this as a defyrous enferchour of the secretes of nature he lefte these commyn troden pathes and gave hym felfe hole to speculation & philosophy as well humane as devyne. For the purchasyng wherof (afte the maner of Plato and Appollonius)<sup>6</sup> he scrupulously fought out all the famous doctours of his tyme, vifytyng studeously all the unyverfyties and scoles not onely through Italy but also through Fraunce. And so infatigable laboure gave he to those studies : that yet a chylde and berdles he was bothe reputed and was in dede bothe a perfyte philosophre and a perfyte devyne.

### OF HIS MYNDE AND VAYNGLORYOUSE DISPICIONS OF ROME.

Now had he ben. vii. yere converfaunt in these studies whan full of pryde & defyrous of glory and mannes prayse (for yet was he not kendled in y<sup>e</sup> love of God) he went to Rome, and there (covetyng to make a shew of his connyng : & lytel confideringe how grete envye he sholde reyfe agaynst hym felfe) ix. C. questions he purposed, of dyverse & fondry maters : as well in logike and philosophye as dyvynyte with grete study piked and fought

out as well of the laten auctours as the Grekes : and partly fet oute of the secrete misteryes of the Hebrewes, Caldeyes, & Arabies : and many thynges drawn out of y<sup>e</sup> olde obscure philofophye of Pythagoras, Trimegiftus, and Orpheus,<sup>7</sup> & many other thynges straunge : and to all folke (except ryght fewe specyall excellent men) before that daye : not unknowen onely : but also unherde of. All whiche questions in open places (y<sup>t</sup> they myght be to all people y<sup>e</sup> better knowen) he fastened and fet up, offeryng also hym selfe to bere the costes of all fuche as wolde come hyther out of ferre countrees to dyspute, but thorughe y<sup>e</sup> envye of his malicyous enemyes (which envye lyke y<sup>e</sup> fyre ever draweth to y<sup>e</sup> hyghest) he coude never brynge a bouthe to have a day to his dyspicyons appoynted. For this cause he taryed at Rome an hole yere, in all which tyme his envyours never durste openly with open dispicyons attempt hym, but rather with crafte and sleight and as it were with pryvey trenches enforced to under myne hym, for none other cause but for malice and for they were (as many men thought) corrupte with a pestylent envye.

This envye as men demed was specyaly rayfed agaynst hym for this cause that where there were many whiche had many yeres : some for glory : some for couetyse : gyven them selfe to lernynge : they thought that hit sholde happely deface theyr fame & minyfshe th'opynyon of theyr connyng yf so yonge a man plenteouse of substaunce & greate doctryne durste in the chyefe cyte of the worlde make a profe of his wyt and his lernyng : as well in thinges naturall as in divinite & in many fuche thynges as men many yeres never attayned to. Nowe when they perceyved that they coude not agaynst his connyng any thyng openly preuayle, they brought forth the serpentyne of false crime, and cryed out that

there wer. xiiij. of his. ix. C. queſtyons ſuſpecte of heryſye. Then joyned they to them ſome good ſymple folke that ſholde of zele to y<sup>e</sup> fayth and pretence of relygion impugne thoſe queſtions as newe thynges & with whiche theyr eres had not be in ure. In whiche impugnacyon though ſome of theym happely lacked not good mynde : yet lacked they erudicyon and lernynge : whiche queſtyons notwitſtondyng before that not a fewe famous doctours of divynyte had approved as good and clene, and ſubſcribed theyr names undre them. But he not berynge the loſſe of his fame made a defence for thoſe xiiij. queſtyons : a werke of greate erudicyon and elegant and ſtuffed with the cognytyon of many thynges worthy to be lerned. Whiche werke he compyled in xx nyghtes. In whiche hit evedently appereth : not onely that thoſe concluſyons were good and ſtondyng with the fayth : but alſo y<sup>t</sup> they whiche had barked at theym were of foly and rudeneſſe to be reprovèd : whiche defence and all other thynges that he ſholde wryte he commytted lyke a good chryſten man to y<sup>e</sup> moſt holy judgement of our mother holy chyrche : whiche defence receyved : & y<sup>e</sup> xiiij. queſtions dully by delyberacyon examyned : our holy father y<sup>e</sup> pope approved Picus and tenderly favoured hym, as by a bull of our holy father pope Alexandre the vj, hit playnly appereth : but the boke in whiche the hole. ix. C. queſtions with theyr concluſions were conteyned (for as moche as there were in them many thynges ſtraunge and not fully declared, and were more mete for ſecrete communycacyon of lerned men then for open herynge of commune people, whiche for lacke of connyng myght take hurte therby) Picus deſyred hym ſelfe y<sup>t</sup> hit ſholde not be redde. And ſoo was the redyng therof forboden. Lo this ende had Picus of his hye mynde and proud pur-

pose, that where he thought to have gotten perpetual prayse there had he moche werke to kepe hymselfe upryght: that he ranne not in perpetual infamy and sclaundre.

### OF THE CHAUNGE OF HIS LYFE.

But as hym selfe tolde his newewe he judged y<sup>t</sup> this came thus to passe: by the especiall provision and synguler goodnes of almyghty God, that by this fals cryme untruely put upon hym by his evyll wyllers he sholde correcte his very errours, and that this sholde be to hym (wanderynge in derkenes) as a shynyng lyght: in whiche he myght beholde & confydre: how ferre he had gone out of y<sup>e</sup> waye of trowth. For before this he had bene bothe desyrous of glory and kyndled in vayne love and holden in voluptouse use of women. The comelynes of his body with the lovely favoure of his vyfage, and therwith all his mervelouse fame, his excellent lernyng, grete rycheffe and noble kyndred, fet many women a fyre on hym, frome y<sup>e</sup> desyre of whome he not abhorryng (y<sup>e</sup> waye of lyfe fet a fyde) was som what fallen in to wantonnesse. But after that he was ones with this variaunce wakened he drewe backe his mynde flowyng in riot & turned hit to Chryst, womens blandimentes he chaunged into y<sup>e</sup> desyre of hevenly joyes, & dispisyng the blaste of vaynglorie which he before desyred, now with all his mynde he began to feke the glory and profytè of Chrystes chyrche, and so began he to ordre his condicions y<sup>t</sup> from thens forth he myght have ben approved & thoughte his enemye were his judge.

### OF THE FAME OF HIS VERTUE AND THE RESORTE UNTO HYM THERFORE.

Here upon shortly the fame of his noble connyng and



excellent vertue bothe ferre & nygh began gloryously to sprynge for which many worthy philofophres (& that were taken in nombre of the moost connyng) reforted bifely unto hym as to a market of good doctryne, fome for to move questions and dyspute, fome (that were of more godly mynde) to here and to take the holesome leffons and instruccyon of good lyvyng: whiche leffons were fo moche y<sup>e</sup> more fet by: in how moche they came from a more noble man and a more wyse man and hym also whiche had hym felfe some tyme folowed y<sup>e</sup> croked hilles of delycyouse pleasure. To the fastenyng of good dyscyplyne in the myndes of y<sup>e</sup> herers those thynges seme to be of grete effecte: whiche be bothe of theyr owne nature good & also be spoken of fuche a master as is converted to the way of justyce from the croked & ragged path of voluptuouse lyvyng.

#### THE BURNYNG OF WANTON BOKES.

Fyve bokes that in his youthe of wanton versis of love with other lyke fantasies he had made in his vulgar tongue: all togyther (in detestacyon of his vyce passed) and lest these tryfles myght be some evyll occasyon afterwarde, he burned them.

#### OF HIS STUDY AND DILYGENGE IN HOLY SCRYPTURE.

From thensforth he gave him felfe day & nyght moost fervently to the studyes of scrypture, in whiche he wrote many noble bokes: whiche well testyfyne bothe his anglyke wyt, his ardent laboure, and his profounde erudicyon, of whiche bokes some we have & some as an inestimable treasure we have loste. Grete lybraries hit is incredible to confydre with how mervelouse celeryte he red them

over, and wrote out what hym liked : of y<sup>e</sup> olde fathers of y<sup>e</sup> chyrch, so gret knowlege he had as hit were harde for hym to have y<sup>t</sup> hath lyved longe & all his lyfe hath done nothyng els but red them. Of these newer dyvynes so good jugement he had y<sup>t</sup> it myght appere there were nothyng in ony of them y<sup>t</sup> were unknowen to him, but all thyng as rype as though he had all theyr werkes ever before his eyen, but of all these new doctours he specyally commendeth Saynt Thomas<sup>8</sup> as hym y<sup>t</sup> enforfeth hym selfe in a fure piller of truth. He was very quick, wise, & subtyl in dispicions & had grete felicite therin while he had y<sup>t</sup> hie stomak. But now a grete while he had bode suche conflictes farewell : and every daye more & more hated them, and so gretely abhored them that when Hercules Eftenfis Duke of Ferrare<sup>9</sup> : fyrst by messengers and after by hym selfe : defyred hym to dispute at Ferrare : bycause the generall chapytre of freres prechours was holden there : longe hit was or he coude be brought therto : but at the instant request of the Duke whiche very syngulerly loved him he came thyder, where he so behaved hym selfe y<sup>t</sup> was wondre to beholde how all y<sup>e</sup> audyence rejoyced to here hym, for hit were not possyble for a man to utter neyther more connyng nor more connyngely. But hit was a commune sayenge with hym y<sup>t</sup> suche altercacyons were for a logition and not metely for a phylosophre, he sayd also that suche disputacyons gretely profited as were exercised with a peasyble mynde to th'enferchyng of the treuth in secrete company without grete audyence : but he sayd that those dispicions dyd grete hurte y<sup>t</sup> were holden openly to th'ostentacion of lernyng & to wynne the favoure of the commune people & the commendacyon of fooles. He thought that utterly hit coude unneth be but that with the desyre of worlhyp (whiche these gafyng

dyfputers gape after) there is with an infeparable bonde annexed the appetite of his confufyon & rebuke whome they argue with, whiche appetyte is a dedly wounde to y<sup>e</sup> foule, & a mortall poyfion to charite. There was nothing paffed hym of thofe capicions foteltes & cavilacions of fophystrye, nor agayn there was nothyng y<sup>t</sup> he more hated & abhored, confyderyng that they ferved of nought but to y<sup>e</sup> fhamyng of fuche other folke as were in very fcyence moche better lerned and in thofe trifles ignoraunt : and y<sup>t</sup> unto th'enfercherchyng of y<sup>e</sup> treuth (to which he gave contynuall laboure) they profyted lytell or nought.

#### OF HIS LERNYNGE UNYVERSALLY.

But bycaufe we wyll holde the reder no longer in hande : we wyll fpeke of his lernyng but a worde or twayne generally. Some man hathe fhyned in eloquence, but ignorance of naturall thynges hathe difhonefted hym. Some man hath floured in the knowledge of dyvers ftraunge languages, but he hath wanted all the cognicion of philofophye. Some man hath redde the invencyons of the olde philofophres, but he hath not ben exercifed in the new fcoles. Some man hath fought connyng as well philofophie as dyvinite for prayfe and vayneglorye and not for ony profyte or encrease of Chryftes chyrche. But Pycus all these thynges with equall ftudy hath fo receyved y<sup>t</sup> they myght feme by hepis as a plentyoufe ftreme to have flowen in to hym. For he was not of y<sup>e</sup> condycion of fome folke (which to be excellent in one thyng fet al other afyde) but he in all fciences profyted fo excellently : that which of theym fo ever he had confydered, in him ye wolde have thought y<sup>t</sup> he had taken that one for his onely ftudy. And all these thynges were in hym fo moche the more merveloufe in y<sup>t</sup> he came therto by hym felfe

with y<sup>e</sup> strength of his owne wytte for the love of God and profyte his chyrche without maysters, so that we may faye of hym that Epycure the philosophre sayd of hym that he was his owne mayster.<sup>10</sup>

FYVE CAUSES Y<sup>T</sup> IN SO SHORTE TYME  
BROUGHT HYM TO SE MERVELOUSE  
CONNYNGE.

To the bryngynge forth of so wondreful effectes in so small tyme I confidre fyve causes to have come togyder : fyrst an incredyble wyt, secondely a merveylouse fast memore, thyrde grete substaunce by y<sup>e</sup> which to y<sup>e</sup> byenge of his bokes as wel laten as greke & other tonges he was especyally holpen. viij.M. ducates he had layde out in the gaderynge to gyther of volumes of all maner of litterature. The fourth cause was his besy and infatigable study. The fyfte was the contempt dispyfyng of all erthly thynges.

OF HIS CONDYCYONS AND HIS VERTUE.

But now let us passe over those powers of his soule which appertayne to understondynge & knowledge & let us speke of them y<sup>t</sup> belonge to y<sup>e</sup> achevyng of noble actes, let us as we can declare his excellent condicions y<sup>t</sup> his mynde enflamed to Godwarde may appere, and his riches gyven out to poore folke may be understonde, th'entent y<sup>t</sup> they whiche shall heere his vertue may have occasyon therby to gyve especiall laude & thanke to almyghty God, of whose infynyte goodnesse all grace and vertue cometh.

OF THE SALE OF HIS LORDESHYPPES  
AND ALMYSSE.

Thre yere before his deth (to th'ende that all the charge

& besynes of rule or lordshyp fet a fyde he myght lede his lyfe in rest and peace, wele confyderynge to what ende this erthely honour & worldly dignite cometh) all his patrymonye and dominyons : y<sup>t</sup> is to say : the thyrde parte of th'erldome of Mirandula and of Concordia : unto Johan Francis his newewe he folde, and that so good chepe that hit femed rather a gyft then a fale.<sup>11</sup> All that ever he receyved of this bargayne partly he gave out to poore folke, partely he bestowed in y<sup>e</sup> byenge of a lytell londe, fyndyng of hym & his housholde. And over y<sup>t</sup> : moche fylver vessell & plate with other precyouse & costly utensiles of howsholde he devyded amonge poore people. He was content with meane fare at his table, how be hit somewhat yet reteynyng of y<sup>e</sup> olde plenty in deynty vyande & fylver vessel. Every daye at certayne houres he gave hym selfe to prayer. To pore men alway yf ony came he plentioufly gave out his money : & not content onely to gyve that he had hym self redy : he wrote over y<sup>t</sup> to one Hierom Benivenius<sup>12</sup> a florentin, a well letred man (whom for his grete love towarde hym & y<sup>e</sup> integrite of his condycions he singulerly favored) y<sup>t</sup> he sholde with his owne money ever helpe poore folke : & gyve maydens money to theyre maryage : and alway sende him worde what he had layde out that he myght paye hit him ageyn. This offyce he commytted to hym that he might y<sup>e</sup> more easely by hym as by a faythful messenger releve y<sup>e</sup> neccessyte & miseri of poore nedy people suche as hym selfe happely coude not come by y<sup>e</sup> knowlege of.

#### OF Y<sup>E</sup> VOLUNTARY AFFLECCION & PAY- NING OF HIS OWN BODY.

Over all this : many times (whiche is not to be kepte secrete) he gave almes of his owne body : we knowe

many men which (as Saynt Hierom<sup>13</sup> fayth) put forth theyr hande to poore folke : but with the plesure of y<sup>e</sup> fleshe they be overcomen : but he many days<sup>14</sup> (and namely those dayes whiche represent unto us y<sup>e</sup> passyon & deth y<sup>t</sup> Chryste suffred for our sake) bet and scourged his owne fleshe in the remembraunce of that grete benefyte and for clenfyng of his olde offences.

### OF HIS PLACABILITE OR BENYNGNE NATURE.

He was of chere alwaye mery & of so benyngne nature y<sup>t</sup> he was never troubled with angre & he fayd ones to his newew that what so ever sholde happen (fell ther never so grete myfadventure) he coude never as hym thought be moved to wrath but yf his chyftes peryfshed in whiche his bokes laye y<sup>t</sup> he had with grete trauayle & watche compiled : but for as moche as he confydered y<sup>t</sup> he laboured onely for y<sup>e</sup> love of God & profyte of his chyrche : & y<sup>t</sup> he had dedicate unto him all his werkes, his studyes & his doynge : & sith he sawe y<sup>t</sup> syth God is almyghty they coude not miscarye but yf it were eyther by his commaundement or by his sufferaunce : he veryly trusted : syth God is all good : y<sup>t</sup> he wolde not suffre hym to have that occasion of hevynes. O very happy mynde which none aduersyte myght oppresse, which no prosperyte might enhaunce : not the connyng of all philosophie was able to make hym proude, not the knowledge of the hebrewe, chaldey & arabie language besyde greke and laten coude make hym vayngloryouse, not his grete substaunce, not his noble blode, coude blowe up his herte, not y<sup>e</sup> beauty of his body, not y<sup>e</sup> grete occasyon of synne were able to pull hym bak in to y<sup>e</sup> voluptuouse brode way y<sup>t</sup> ledeth to helle : what thyng was ther of so

mervayloufe strength y<sup>t</sup> might overtorne y<sup>t</sup> mynde of hym : which now (as Seneke fayth) was goten above fortune <sup>15</sup> as he which as well her favoure as her malice hath fet at nought, y<sup>t</sup> he myght be coupled with a fpiritull knot unto Chryfte and his hevenly cytezeynes.

#### HOW HE ESCHEWED DYGNITES.

Whan he fawe many men with grete labour & money defyre & byfely purchafe y<sup>e</sup> offices & dygnites of y<sup>e</sup> chirche (whiche are now a dayes alas y<sup>e</sup> whyle comunely bought & folde) him felfe refused to recyve them whan two kynges offred them : whan an other man offred hym grete worldely promocyon yf he wolde go to y<sup>e</sup> kynges courte : he gave hym fuche an anfwere, that he fhoulde well knowe that he neyther defyred worshop ne worldly ryches but rather fet them at nought y<sup>t</sup> he might y<sup>e</sup> more quyetyly gyve hym felfe to ftudy & y<sup>e</sup> fervyce of God : this wyfe he perfuaded, y<sup>t</sup> to a phylofophre and hym y<sup>t</sup> feketh for wyfedome it was no prayfe to gather rycheffe but to refufe them.

#### OF THE DISPYSYNGE OF WORLDLY GLORYE.

All prayfe of people and all erthly glorye he reputed utterly for nothyng : but in y<sup>e</sup> renayeng of this shadowe of glory he laboured for very glorye which ever more foloweth vertue as an unfeparable fervaunt. He fayd that fame often tymes dyd hurte to men while they lyve, & never good whan they be deed. So moche onely fet he by his lernynge in how moche he knewe that hit was profytable to y<sup>e</sup> chyrche & to y<sup>e</sup> extermynation of errours. And over that : he was come to that prycke of perfyte humilite that he lytell forced wyther his workes went out under his owne name or not fo that they might as moche profite as yf they

were gyven oute under his name. And nowe fet he lytel by ony other bokes save onely y<sup>e</sup> bible, in y<sup>e</sup> onely studi of which he had appoynted hym selfe to spende the refedewe of his lyfe, favyng that y<sup>e</sup> commune profyte pricked him whan he confydered so many & so grete werkes as he had conceyved & longe travayled upon howe they were of every man by and by<sup>16</sup> defyred and loked after.

### HOW MOCHE HE SET MORE BY DEVOCYON THAN CONNYNGE.

The lytell affeccyon of an olde man or an olde woman to Godwarde (were it never so small) he fet more by : then by all his owne knowlege as well of naturall thynges as godly. And oftentymes in communicacyon he wolde admonysh his familyar frendes how gretly these mortall thynges bowe and drawe to an ende, howe slyper & how fallynge hit is y<sup>t</sup> we lyve in now : how ferme how stable it shall be y<sup>t</sup> we shal here after lyve in, whether we be throwen downe in to hell or lyfte up in to heven. Wherefore he exhorted them to turne up theyr myndes to love God, which was a thyng farre excellynge all the connyng y<sup>t</sup> is possible for us in this lyfe to obtaine. The same thyng also in his boke whiche he entytled *De Ente et Uno* lyghtfomely he treateth where he interrupteth y<sup>e</sup> course of his dispicion and turnynge his wordes to Angelus Politianus (to whom he dedycateth that boke) he wryteth in this wyfe. But now beholde o my welbeloved Angell what madnes holdeth us. Love God (while we be in this body) we rather maye : than eyther knowe him or by speche utter hym. In lovyng him also we more profyte our selfe, we laboure lesse & serve hym more, & yet had we lever alwaye by knowlege never fynde y<sup>t</sup> thyng that



we feke: then by love to poffede y<sup>t</sup> thynges whiche alfo without love were in vayne founde.<sup>17</sup>

### OF HIS LIBERALITE & CONTEMPT OF RYCHESSE.

Liberalite onely in hym paffed meafure: for fo ferre was he from y<sup>e</sup> begynnyng of ony diligence to erthely thynges that he femed fom what befprent with the frekyll of negligence. His frendes oftentimes admonyfhed hym that he fhoulde not all utterly difpyce rycheffe, fhewynge hym y<sup>t</sup> hit was his difhonefte and rebuke whan it was reported (were it treue or falfe) that his negligence & fettyng nought by money gave his fervauntes occafyon of difceyt & robbery. Nevertheles that mynde of his (which evermore on hyghe cleved faft in contemplacion & in th'enferchyng of natures counfel) coulde never let downe hit felfe to y<sup>e</sup> confideracion and overfeynge of thefe bafe abjecte and vyle erthly tryffles. His hygh ftuarde came on a tyme to hym & defyred hym to receyve his accomt of fuche money as he had in many yeres receyved of his: and brought forth his bokes of rekenynge. Picus answered hym in this wyfe, my frende (fayth he) I knowe well ye have mought oftentimes and yet may defceyve me and ye lyft, wherfore the examinacyon of thefe expenfes fhall not nede. There is no more to do, yf I be ought in your det I fhall pay you by & by,<sup>18</sup> yf ye be in myn pay me: eyther now yf ye have hit: or here after yf ye be now not able.

### OF HIS LOVYNGE MYNDE & VERTUOUSE BEHAVOUR TO HIS FRENDES.

His lovers and frendes with grete benygnite & curtefye he entreted, whom he ufed in all fecrete communinge vertuoufly to exhorte to Godward, whofe goodely wordes fo

effectually wrought in y<sup>e</sup> herers y<sup>t</sup> where a connyng man (but not so good as connyng) came to him on a daye for y<sup>e</sup> grete fame of his lernyng to commune with hym, as they fell in talkyng of vertue he was with the wordes of Picus so throughly perced that forth with all he forfoke his accustomed vyce and reformed his condicions. The wordes y<sup>t</sup> he sayd unto hym were these: yf we hadde ever more before our eyen y<sup>e</sup> paynful deth of Chryst which he suffred for the love of us: and than yf we wolde agayne thynke upon our deth: we sholde wele beware of fynne. Merveyloufe benignyte & curtesy he shewed unto them: not whom strength of body or goodes of fortune magnified but to them whom lernyng & condicions bounde hym to favoure: for simylytude of maners is a cause of love & frendeshyp. A likenes of condicions is (as Appollonius sayth) an affinyte.<sup>19</sup>

#### WHAT HE HATED AND WHAT HE LOVED.

There was nothyng more odious nor more intolirable to hym than as (Horace<sup>∞</sup> sayth) y<sup>e</sup> proud palaces of stately lordes: weddyng and worldly befynes he fled almoost a lyke: notwithstandinge whan he was axed ones in sporte whyther of those two burdeynes semed lyghter & whiche he wolde chese yf he sholde of necessite be dryven to that one and at his eleccyon: whiche he stiked thereat a wyle but at y<sup>e</sup> last he shoke his heed and a lytell smylyng he answered y<sup>t</sup> he had lever take hym to maryage, as y<sup>t</sup> thyng in whiche was lesse servytude & not so moche jeoperdy. Lyberte above all thyng he loved, to which both his owne natural affeccion & y<sup>e</sup> study of phylosophy enclyned hym: & for y<sup>t</sup> was he alwaye wanderyng & flytyng & wolde never take hym selfe to ony certayne dwellyng.<sup>21</sup>

## OF HIS FERVENT LOVE TO GOD.

Of outward obfervaunces he gave no very grete force: we fpeke not of thofe obfervaunces which the chyrche commaundeth to be obferved, for in thofe he was dilygent: but we fpeke of thofe cerymonyes which folke brynge up fettynge y<sup>e</sup> very feryyce of God a fyde, which is (as Chryft fayth) to be worshipped in fpirite & in treuth. But in the inwarde affectes of the mynde he cleved to God with very fervent love and devocyon: fome tyme that merve loufe alacrite langwyfshed and almooft fell, and eftē agayne with grete ftrength rofe up in to God. In the love of whome he fo fervently burned that on a tyme as he walked with Johan Frauncis his nevewe in an orcharde at Farrare, in y<sup>e</sup> talkynge of the love of Chryft he brake out in to thefe wordes, nevew, fayd he, this wyll I fhewe the, I warne the kepe it fecrete: the fubftaunce y<sup>t</sup> I have lefte after certayne bokes of myne fynyfhed I entende to gyve out to pore folke, & fencynge my felfe with the crucifyx, bare fote walkynge about the worlde, in every towne and caftell I purpofe to preche of Chryft. Afterwarde I underftande by the efpeyall commaundement of God he chaunged that purpofe and appoynted to profefse hym felfe in the ordre of freres prechours.

## OF HIS DETH.

In y<sup>e</sup> yere of our redempcion, M.CCCC.xCiiii. whan he had fulfyllēd y<sup>e</sup> xxxii. yere of his age & abode at Florence, he was fodenly taken with a fervent axes<sup>22</sup> which fo ferforth crepte in to y<sup>e</sup> interiori pertes of his body, y<sup>t</sup> hit dyspyfed all medycynes & overcame all remedy, and compelled him within thre dayes to fatisfye nature and repaye her y<sup>e</sup> lyfe whiche he receyved of her.

OF HIS BEHAVYOUR IN THE EXTREMES  
OF HIS LYFE.

After that he hadde receyved the holy body of our Savyour whan they offred unto hym the crucyfyx (y<sup>t</sup> in the ymage of Chrystes ineffable passion suffred for oure sake he myght ere he gave up the ghoft receyve his full draught of love and compaffyon in the beholdyng of that pytefull figure as a ftronge defence agaynst all adverfyte and a fure port culiouse agaynst wikked fpirites) the preeft demaunded hym whether he fermly beleved y<sup>t</sup> crucyfyx to be the Image of hym that was very God & very man: whiche in his Godhed was before all time begoten of his father: to whome he is alfo equall in all thyng: and whiche of y<sup>e</sup> Holy Ghoft God alfo: of hym & of the Father coeternalli goyng forth (whiche .iiij. perfones be one God) was in y<sup>e</sup> chafte wombe of our lady a perpetuall virgyne conceyved in time: which suffred hungre, thruft, hete, colde, laboure, travayle, & wathe: and whiche at the lafte for wafshyng of our spotty fynne contracted and drawen unto us in the fynne of Adame, for the foveraigne love that he had to mankynde, in the aulter of the croffe wylyngely & gladly fhedde out his mooft precyouse blode. When y<sup>e</sup> preeft enquiryed of him thefe thynges & fuche other as they be wonte to enquire of folke in fuche cafe, Picus answered hym y<sup>t</sup> he not onely beleved hit but alfo certaynly knewe it. Whan y<sup>t</sup> one Albertus<sup>23</sup> his fyfters fone: a yonge man both of wit, connyng, & condicyons excellent: began to conforte hym agaynst deth: & by natural reason to fhewe hym why hit was not to be fered but ftrongely to be taken: as y<sup>t</sup> onely thyng which maketh an ende of all y<sup>e</sup> laboure, payne, trouble, & forowe of this fhort miserable deedly

lyfe: he answered y<sup>t</sup> this was not the cheyefe thyng y<sup>t</sup> sholde make hym content to dye: bycaufe y<sup>t</sup> deth determyneth the manyfolde incommoditees and paynfull wretchednes of this life: but rather this cause sholde make hym not content onely but also glad to dye: for that deth maketh an ende of fynne: in as moche as he trusted y<sup>e</sup> shortnes of his lyfe sholde leve hym no space to fynne and offende. He asked also all his servauntes forgyvenes, yf he had ever before that daye offended ony of them. For whom he had provyded by his testament viij. yeres before, for some of them mete and drynk, for some money, eche of them after theyr deservynge. He shewed also to the above named Albertus & many other credible persons y<sup>t</sup> y<sup>e</sup> quene of heven came to hym y<sup>t</sup> nyght with a mervaylouse fragrant odour refresshynge all his membres y<sup>t</sup> were brosed & frusshed<sup>24</sup> with that fever, & promysed him that he shold not utterly dye. He lay alwaye with a plefaunt and a mery countenaunce, and in the verye twytches and panges of deth he spake as though he behelde y<sup>e</sup> hevens opene. And all y<sup>t</sup> came to hym & faluted hym offerynge theyr servyce with very lovyng wordes he receyved, thanked, & kyffed. The executour of his moveable goodes he made one Antony his brother.<sup>25</sup> The heyer of his landes he made y<sup>e</sup> pore people of the hospytall of Florence. And in this wyfe in to y<sup>e</sup> handes of oure Savyoure he gave up his spiryte.

#### HOW HIS DETH WAS TAKEN.

What forowe and hevynes his departyng out of this worlde was: both to ryche and pore, hygh & lowe: well testyfyeth the prynces of Italye, well wytnesseth the citees & people, well recordeth the grete benygnyte and fynguler curtesye of Charles kynge of Fraunce,<sup>26</sup> which as

he came to Florence, entendinge from thens to Rome and so forth in his vyage agaynst the Realme of Naples, herynge of the fykenes of Picus, in all convenient haste he sent hym two of his owne phisicians as embassiatours both to viset hym and to do hym all y<sup>e</sup> helpe they myght : and over that sent unto hym letters subscribed with his owne hande full of fuche humanyte and courteyse offres as the benevolent mynde of fuche a noble prince and the worthy vertues of Picus required.

### OF THE STATE OF HIS SOULE.

After his deth (and not longe after) Hieronimus<sup>27</sup> a frere prechour of Ferrare, a man as well in connyng as holynes of lyvyng moost famous, in a fermone whiche he reherced in the cheyfe chyrche of all Florence sayd unto the people in this wyse. O thou Cyte of Florence I have a secrete thyng to shewe the which is as true as y<sup>e</sup> gospell of Saynt Johan. I wolde have kept hit secrete but I am compelled to shewe hit. For he that hath auctoryte to commaunde me, hath byd me publyshe hit. I suppose veryly that there be none of you but ye knewe Johan Picus Erle of Mirandula, a man in whom God had heped many grete gyftes and synguler graces, y<sup>e</sup> chyrche had of hym an inestymable losse, for I suppose yf he myght have had the space of his lyfe prorogyd : he sholde have excelled (by fuche workes as he shold have lefte behynde hym) all them y<sup>t</sup> dyed this .viii.C. yere before him. He was wonte to be conversaunt with me and to breke to me y<sup>e</sup> secretes of his herte : in whiche I perceyved that he was by privey inspyracion called of God unto relygion. Wherefore he purposed oftentymes to obey this inspyracyon and folowe his callynge. Howbehit not beyng kynde ynoughe for so grete benefices of God : or called

bak by the tendernes of his fleshe (as he was a man of delicate complexion) he shranke from the labour, or thinkynge happely y<sup>t</sup> the religion had no nede of hym differred it for a tyme, howbehit this I speke onely by conjecture.<sup>28</sup> But for this delaye I thretened hym two yere togyther: y<sup>t</sup> he wolde be punyshed yf he forflowthed that purpose which our Lorde had put in his mynde, & certeynely I prayed to God my felse (I wyll not lye therfore) that he myght be som what beten: to compell hym to take that waye whiche God had from above shewed hym. But I desyred not this scourge upon hym y<sup>t</sup> he was beten with: I loked not for that: but oure Lorde hadde so decreed that he sholde forsake this present lyfe and leve a parte of that noble crowne that he sholde have had in heven. Notwithstondyng y<sup>e</sup> most benygne juge hath dalt mercyfully with him: and for his plentyoufe almes gyven out with a free and liberall hande unto poore people & for the devout prayers whiche he moost instantly offred unto God this favoure he hath: though his soule be not yet in the bosome of oure Lorde in the heavenly joye: yet is hit not on y<sup>t</sup> other fyde deputed unto perpetual payne, but he is adjudged for a whyle to the fyre of purgatory, there to suffre payne for a seafon, which I am y<sup>e</sup> gladder to shewe you in this byhalfe: to the entent y<sup>t</sup> they which knewe hym: & suche inspecially as for his manyfolde benyfyces are singulerly beholden unto him: sholde now with theyr prayers, almes, & other suffrages helpe hym. These thynges this holy man Hierom, this servaunt of God openly affermed, and also sayde that he knew wel if he lyed in that place: he were worthy eternall dampnacion. And over y<sup>t</sup> he sayd y<sup>t</sup> he had knowen all those thinges wythin a certain tyme, but y<sup>e</sup> wordes which Picus had sayde in his fykenes

of y<sup>e</sup> aperyng of our lady caufed him to doubt & to fere left Picus had ben deceyved by some illufyon of y<sup>e</sup> devyll : in as moch as the promyfe of our lady femed to have ben frustrate by his dethe : but afterward he understode y<sup>t</sup> Picus was deceyved in the equivocacyon of y<sup>e</sup> worde whyle she fpake of y<sup>e</sup> feconde deth & ever laftyng & he undertoke her of y<sup>e</sup> fyrft deth & temporall. And after this y<sup>e</sup> fame Hierom shewed to his acquayntaunce y<sup>t</sup> Picus had after his deth apered unto him all compaced in fire & shewed unto him y<sup>t</sup> he was fuch wise in purgatorye punyshed for his neglygence & his unkyndnes. Now fyth hit is fo that he is adyged to y<sup>t</sup> fyre from which he shal undoubtedly depart unto glory & no man is fure how longe hit shalbe fyrft : & may be y<sup>e</sup> shorter tyme for our interceffions : let every chryften body shewe theyr charite upon hym to helpe to spede hym thyder where after the longe habitacion with y<sup>e</sup> inhabytauntes of this derke worlde (to whom his goodly converfacion gave grete lyght) & after y<sup>e</sup> darke fyre of purgatory (in whiche venyall offences be clenfed) he may shortly (yf he be not all redy) entre y<sup>e</sup> inaccessible & infinite light of heven ; where he may in y<sup>e</sup> prefence of y<sup>e</sup> foveraygne Godhed fo praye for us y<sup>t</sup> we may y<sup>e</sup> rather by his interceffion be perteyners of y<sup>t</sup> inspecable joy which we have prayed to bryng hym spedely to. Amen. Here endeth y<sup>e</sup> lyfe of Johan Picus Erle of Mirandula.

*Here foloweth thre epistles of y<sup>e</sup> sayd Picus : of which thre two be wryten unto Johan Fraunfces his newew, the thyrde unto one Andrewe Corneus a noble man of Italy.*



THE ARGUMENT & MATER OF THE  
FYRST EPYSTLE OF PICUS UNTO HIS  
NEVEW JOHAN FRAUNSCES.

Hit apereth by this epistle y<sup>t</sup> Johan Fraunsces the newew of Picus had broken his mynde unto Picus and had made hym of counceyll in some secrete godly purpose whiche he entended to take upon hym: but what this purpose sholde be upon this lettre can we not fully perceyve. Nowe after y<sup>t</sup> he thus entended, there fell unto hym many impedimentes & divers occasyons whiche withstode his entent and in maner letted hym & pulled hym bak, wherfore Picus comforteth hym in this epystle and exorteth hym to perseveraunce, by such meanes as are in the epystle evydent and playne ynough. Notwithstondyng in y<sup>e</sup> begynnyng of this lettre where he sayth that the fleshe shall (but yf we take good hede) make us dronke in the cuppes of Cerces and myfshappe us in to the lykenes & fygyure of bruyte beestes: those wordes yf ye perceyve theym not be in this wyse understonden. There was somtyme a woman called Circes whiche by enchauntemente as Vyrgyll maketh mencyon used with a drynke to turne as many men as receyved hit in to dyvers likenes & fygyures of fondrye beestes, some in to lyones, some in to beeres, some in to fwyne, some in to wolves, which afterwarde walked ever tame aboute her house and wayted upon her in fuche use or servyce as she lyst to put unto them. In lykewyfe the fleshe yf it make us dronke in y<sup>e</sup> wyne of voluptuous pleasure or make the foule leve the noble use of his reason & encline unto sensualite and affeccions of y<sup>e</sup> body: then the fleshe chaungeth us from the figure of reasonable men in the lykenes of unreasonable beestes, and y<sup>t</sup> dyversly: after the convenience & fymylytude

betwene our fenfuall affeccyons and the brutyshe pro-  
 prytees of fondry beeftes : as the proude harted man in  
 to a lyon, the irous in to a beere, the lecheroufe in to a  
 gote, the dronken gloten in to a fwyne, the ravenous  
 extorcyoner in to a wolfe, the falfe defceyvoure in to a  
 foxe, mokkyngge gester in to an ape. From which beeftly  
 flappe may we never be reftored to our owne lykenes  
 agayn : unto the tyme we have caft up agayne the drynke  
 of the bodely affeccyons by which we were in to thefe  
 fygures enchanted. Whan there cometh fomtyme a  
 monftroufe beeft to the towne we ronne and are glad to  
 paye fome money to have fyght therof, but I fere yf men  
 wolde loke upon them felfe advyfedly : they fholde fe a  
 more monftroufe beeft nerer home : for they fholde  
 perceyve themfelfe by y<sup>e</sup> wretched inclinacion to divers  
 beeftly paffyons chaunged in theyr foule not in to the fhap  
 of one but of many beeftes, y<sup>t</sup> is to faye of all them whose  
 brutyfh appetytes they folow. Let us then beware as  
 Picus councelleth us y<sup>t</sup> we be not dronken in y<sup>e</sup> cuppes of  
 Cerces, y<sup>t</sup> is to fay in y<sup>e</sup> fenfuall affeccions of y<sup>e</sup> flefh,  
 left we deforme y<sup>e</sup> image of God in our foules, after whose  
 image we be made, & make our felfe worfe then idolatres,  
 for yf he be odioufe to God whiche turneth y<sup>e</sup> image of a  
 beeft in to god : how moche is he more odious which  
 torneth the ymage of God in to a beeft.

JOHAN PICUS ERLE OF MIRANDULA TO  
 JOHAN FRAUNSCES HIS NEVEW BY HIS  
 BROTHER HELTH IN HYM THAT IS  
 VERY HELTH.

That thou haft had many evyll occafyons after thy  
 departyngge which trouble the & ftonde agaynft the ver-  
 tuoufe purpofe that thou haft taken there is no caufe my

fone why thou sholdest eyther mervayle therof, be fory therefore, or drede hit, but rather how grete a wondre were this yf onely to y<sup>e</sup> amonge mortall men y<sup>e</sup> way laye open to heven with out fwet, as though y<sup>t</sup> now at erst the difceytfull worlde & the curfed devyll fayled, & as thoughe thou were not yet in y<sup>e</sup> fleshe : which coveyteth agaynst the spyrite : and which false flessh (but yf we watche & loke wel to our self) shal make us dronke in y<sup>e</sup> cuppes of Circes & so deforme us in to monstrous shappes of brutysh & unreasonable beestes. Remembre also that of these evyll occasyons the holy apostle faynt James sayth thou hast cause to be glad, wrytynge in this wyse. *Gaudete fratres quum in temptationes varias incideritis.* Be glad sayth he my brethren whan ye fall in dyvers temptacions, and not caufeles : for what hope is there of glorye yf there be none hope of victorye : or what place is there for victory where there is no batayl : he is called to the crowne & triumphe whiche is provoked to the conflycte & namely to that conflyct : in which no man may be overcom against his will, & in which we nede none other strength to vaynquysh but y<sup>t</sup> we lyst our selfe to vaynquish. Very happy is a christen man fyth y<sup>t</sup> y<sup>e</sup> victory is bothe put in his owne fre wyll : & the rewarde of the vyctory shal be farre greter than we can eyther hope or wyfshe. Tell me I pray y<sup>e</sup> my moost dere fone if ther be ought in this life of all those thingis : y<sup>e</sup> delite wherof so vexeth and toffith these erthly myndes. Is ther I say oni of those trifles : in y<sup>e</sup> geting of which a man must not suffre many labours many displeasurs & many miseries or he get hit. The marchaunt thinkith him selfe well ferved if after X yeres failing, after a m. incommoditees, after a m. jeopardyes of his lyfe he may at last have a litle the more gadered to gyther. Of the court & feryyce of this worlde there is

nothyng y<sup>t</sup> I nede to wryte unto the, the wretchednes wherof the experience hit felfe hath taught the & dayly techeth. In obtaynyng y<sup>e</sup> favour of y<sup>e</sup> prynces, in purchafynge the frendshyp of y<sup>e</sup> company in ambicyoufe labour for offyces & honoures what an hepe of hevynes there is: how grete anguifsh: how moche besynes & trouble I may rather lerne of the then teche y<sup>e</sup>, whiche holdyng my self content with my bokes & reſte, of a chylde have lerned to lyve within my degree & as moche as I maye dwellynge with my felfe nothyng out of my ſelf labour for, or longe for. Now then theſe erthly thynges flyper, uncertayne, vyle & commune alſo to us and bruyte beeft fwetyng & pantyng we ſhall unneth obtayne: and loke we than to heavenly thynges & goodly (whiche neyther eye hath ſeen nor ere hath herde nor herte hath thought) to be drawn flumbry & ſlepyng magrey our teth: as though neyther God myght reygne nor thoſe heavenly citezyns lyve without us. Certaynely if this worldly felicity were gotten to us with ydelnes and eaſe: than myght ſome man that ſhrynketh frome labour rather cheſe to ſerve y<sup>e</sup> worlde then God. But now yf we be ſo labored in the waye of ſynne as moche as in the waye of God and moche more (wherof the dampned wretches crye out: *Laffati fumus in via iniquitatis.* We be weryed in the waye of wyckednes) then muſt it nedes be a poynte of extreme madnes yf we had not lever labour there where we go from labour to rewarde then where we go from labour to payne. I paſſe over how grete peace & felycite hit is to the mynde whan a man hath nothyng that grudgeth his conſcience nor is not appaled with the ſecrete twiche of ony prevye cryme. This pleaſure undoubtedly farre excelleth all y<sup>e</sup> pleaſurs y<sup>t</sup> in this lyfe may be obteyned or deſyred: what thyng is there to be deſyred amonge y<sup>e</sup> delytes of this worlde:

which in y<sup>e</sup> fekyng very us, in y<sup>e</sup> havynge blyndeth us, in y<sup>e</sup> lefyng payneth us. Doubtest thou my sone whether the myndes of wycked men be vexed or not with contynuall thought and torment: hit is y<sup>e</sup> worde of God whiche neyther maye deceyve nor be deceyved. Cor impij quasi mare fervens quod quiescere non potest. The wycked mannes herte is lyke a stormy see y<sup>t</sup> maye not rest, there is to hym nothyng sure, nothyng pefeable, but all thyng ferefull, all thinge sorowfull, all thyng deedly. Shall we then envye these men: shall we folow them: & forgetyng our owne countre heven, & our owne heavenly Father where we were free borne: shall we wylfully make our selfe theyr bondemen: & with them wretchedly lyvyng more wretchedly dye: and at y<sup>e</sup> last moost wretchedly in everlastyng fyre be punished. O the derke myndes of men. O the blynde hertes. Who seyth not more clere than lyght that all these thynges be (as they fey) truer than trueth hit selfe, & yet do we not that y<sup>t</sup> we knowe is to be done. In vayne we wolde pluk our fote out of the clay but we styk styll. There shall come to the my sone doubte hit not (in these places namely where thou art converfaunt) innumerable impedimentes every hour: which myght fere the frome the purpose of good and vertuouse lyvyng & (but yf thou be ware) shall throwe the downe hedlyng. But amonge all thynges the very deedly pestylence is this: to be converfaunt daye and nyght among them whose lyfe is not onely on every syde an allectyve to synne: but over that all fet in the expugnacion of vertue, under theyr capitayne the devyll, under the banayre of deth, under the stipende of hell, fightyng agaynst heven, agaynst our Lorde God and agaynst his Christ. But crye thou therfore with y<sup>e</sup> prophete. Dirumpamus vincula eorum & projiciamus a nobis iugum ipsorum.

Let us breke the bandes of them and let us cast of the yooke of them. These be they whom (as y<sup>e</sup> gloriouse apostle Saynt Paule feith) our Lorde hath delyvered in to the paffyons of rebuke and to a reprovablenesse to do those thynges that are not convenyente, full of all iniquite, full of envye, manslaughter, contencion, gyle, & malice: backbiters, odiouse to God, contumeliouse, proude, stately, fynders of evell thynges, folyfshe, diffolute, without affeccion, without covenauant, without mercy. Whiche whan they dayely se the justice of God, yet understonde they not y<sup>t</sup> suche as these thynges commytte are worthy deth: not onely they y<sup>t</sup> do suche thynges: but also they which consent to y<sup>e</sup> doynges: wherfore my chyld go thou never aboute to please them whome vertue displeaseth: but evermore let these wordes of y<sup>e</sup> apostyll be before thyn eyen. *Oportet magis Deo placere quam hominibus.* We must rather please God then men. And remembre these wordes of Saynt Paule also. *Si hominibus placerem, servus Christi non essem.* If I sholde please men I were not Christes servaunt. Let entre in to thyn herte an holy pryde & have dyfdayne to take them for maysters of thy lyvynges whiche have more nede to take y<sup>e</sup> for a maister of theirs. Hit were farre more femynge y<sup>t</sup> they sholde with y<sup>e</sup> by good lyvynges begyn to be men then thou sholdest with them by y<sup>e</sup> levynge of thy good purpose shamfully begyn to be a best. There holdeth me somtyme by almyghty God as hit were even a fwone and an insensibilite for wondre when I begyn in my selfe: I wot never whether I shall sey: to remembre or to forowe, to mervayle or to bewayle the apetytes of men, or yf I shall more playnly speke: y<sup>e</sup> very madnes not to beleve the gospell whose trouthe the blode of marters cryeth, y<sup>e</sup> voyce of apostles fowneth, miracles proveth, reason confermeth, y<sup>e</sup> worlde testifyeth, y<sup>e</sup> elementes spekeh,

devylls confeffeth. But a ferre greter madnes is hit yf thou doubt not but that the gofpell is true: to lyve then as though thou doubttest not but that hit were falfe. For yf thefe wordes of the wordes of the gofpell be true, that hit is very harde for a riche man to entre the kyngedome of heven why do we dayly then gape after the hepyngge up of riches. And yf this be true that we fhoulde feke for the glorye and prayfe not that cometh of men, but that cometh of God, why do we then ever hange upon the jugement & opinyon of men and no man rekketh whether God lyke hym or not. And yf we furely beleve y<sup>t</sup> ones the tyme fhall come in whiche our Lorde fhall faye, go ye curfed people in to everlaftyngge fyre, & agayne, come ye my bleffed chyldren poffede ye the kyngdome y<sup>t</sup> hath ben prepared for you from y<sup>e</sup> fourmyngge of the world, why is there nothyng then y<sup>t</sup> we leffe fere then hell, or y<sup>t</sup> we leffe hope for then the kyngedome of God. What fhall we fay elles but y<sup>t</sup> there be many chryften men in name but fewe in dede. But thou my fone enforce thy felfe to entre by the ftreyght gate y<sup>t</sup> ledeth to heven & take no hede what thyngge many men do : but what thyng y<sup>e</sup> verey law of nature, what thyng very reason, what thyngge our Lorde hym felfe fheweth y<sup>e</sup> to be done. For neyther thy glory fhall be leffe yf thou be happy with fewe nor thy payne more eafy yf thou be wretched with many. Thou fhalt have .ii. fpecyally effectuall remedyes agaynft y<sup>e</sup> worlde & the devyll with whiche two as with .ii. whynges thou fhalt out of this vale of miferye be lyfte up in heven, that is to faye, almes dede & prayer. What maye we do without the helpe of God, or how fhall he helpe us yf he be not called upon.

But over that : certaynely he fhall not here the whan thou calleft on hym yf thou here not fyrft y<sup>e</sup> pore man

whan he calleth upon y<sup>e</sup>, and verely hit is accordyng  
that God sholde despyse the beyng a man whan thou  
beyng a man despysest a man. For hit is wryten: in  
what mesure y<sup>e</sup> ye mete, hit shall be mete you agayne.  
And in an other place of y<sup>e</sup> gospell hit is sayd: blyssed be  
mercyfull men for they shall gete mercy. Whan I styre  
the to prayer I styre y<sup>e</sup> not to y<sup>e</sup> prayer whiche stondeth  
in many wordes, but to that prayer whiche in y<sup>e</sup> secrete  
chambre of the mynde, in the prevy clofet of y<sup>e</sup> soule  
with very affecte speketh to God, and in y<sup>e</sup> moost lyght-  
some darkenes of contemplacion not onely presenteth the  
mynde to the Father: but also unieth hit with him by  
inspekable wayes which onely they knowe y<sup>t</sup> have affayed.  
Nor I care not how longe or how short thy prayer be,  
but how effectuell, how ardente, and rather interrupted &  
broken betwene with sighes then drawen on length with  
a contynuall rowe & nombre of wordes. Yf thou love  
thyne helth, yf thou desyre to be sure from y<sup>e</sup> grennes<sup>29</sup> of  
y<sup>e</sup> devyll, from the stormes of this worlde, from th' awayte  
of thyn enemyes, yf thou long to be acceptable to God, yf  
thou coveyte to be happy at the last: let no day passe the  
but thou ones at the lest wise present thy selfe to God by  
prayer, and fallyng downe before hym flat to y<sup>e</sup> grounde  
with an humble affecte of devout mynde, not frome y<sup>e</sup> ex-  
tremyte of thy lippes but out of y<sup>e</sup> inwardnes of thyn herte,  
cry these wordes of y<sup>e</sup> prophete. *Delicta juventutis mee  
& ignorantias meas ne memineris, sed secundum misericor-  
diam tuam memento mei propter bonitatem tuam Domine.*  
The offences of my youth and myn ignoraunces remembre  
not good Lorde, but after thy mercy Lorde for thy goodnes  
remembre me. Whan thou shalt in thy prayer axe of God:  
both y<sup>e</sup> Holy Spyrte which prayeth for us & eke thynowne  
necessyte shall every houre put in thy mynde, & also



what thou shalte praye for : thou shal fynde mater ynough in y<sup>e</sup> redyng of holy scrypture which y<sup>t</sup> thou woldest now (settyng poetes fables & tryfles a syde) take ever in thyn hand I hartly pray y<sup>e</sup>.<sup>30</sup> Thou mayst do nothyng more pleasaunte to God, nothyng more profitable to thy selfe: then yf thyn hande cease not day nor nyght to turne and rede the volumes of holy scrypture. There lyeth pryvely in them a certayn hevenly strenght quyke and effectual, wich with a merveyulous power transfourmeth & chaungeth y<sup>e</sup> reders mynde in to the love of God, yf they be clene and lowly entreated. But I have passed nowe y<sup>e</sup> boundes of a lettre, y<sup>e</sup> mater drawyng me forth & the grete love y<sup>t</sup> I have had to the, bothe ever before : & specyally fyth y<sup>t</sup> houre in which I have had fyrst knowledge of thy moost holy purpose. Now to make an ende with this one thyng I warne y<sup>e</sup> (of which whan we were last togyther I often talked with y<sup>e</sup>) that thou never forget these. ii. thynges, y<sup>t</sup> both y<sup>e</sup> Sone of God dyed for y<sup>e</sup> & y<sup>t</sup> thou shalt also thy selfe dye shortly, lyve thou never fo longe. With these twayne as with two spurres, y<sup>e</sup> one of fere y<sup>e</sup> other of love, spurre forthe thyn hors through y<sup>e</sup> shorte way of this momentarye lyfe to y<sup>e</sup> rewarde of eternall felicyte, fyth we neyther ought nor maye preferre our selfe onye other ende than the endles fruycion of y<sup>e</sup> infinite goodnes bothe to soule & body in everlastyng peace.

Fare well and fere God.<sup>31</sup>

THE MATER OR ARGUMENT OF THE  
EPISTLE OF PICUS TO ANDEWE  
CORNEUS.

This Andrewe a worshypfull man and an especiall frende of Picus hadde by his lettres gyven hym counceyll to

leve the study of phylosophy, as a thyng in which he thought Picus to have spent tyme ynough & whiche : but yf it were applyed to y<sup>e</sup> use of some actuall besines : he juged a thyng vayne & unprofytable : wherfore he counceyled Pycus to surceace of study and put hym selfe with some of y<sup>e</sup> grete prynces of Italy, with whome (as this Andrew sayd) he sholde be moche more fruytefully occupied then alway in the studye & lernyng of philosophye, to whom Picus answered as in this present epeistle appereth. Where he sayth these wordes (By this hit shold folowe y<sup>e</sup> hit were eyther servyle or at the left wyfe not pryncely to make y<sup>e</sup> study of phylosophy other then mercennari) thus he meaneth. Mercennary we cal all those thynges whiche we do for hyre or rewarde. Then he maketh philosophy mercennary & useth hit not as connyng but as marchaundyse whiche studyeth hit not for pleasure of hit selfe : or for the instruccyon of his mynde in mortall vertue : but to applye hit to suche thynges where he may get some lucre or worldly advauntage.

JOHAN PICUS ERLE OF MYRANDULA  
TO ANDREWE CORNEUS GRETYNGE.

Ye exhorte me by your letters to the cyvyle and actyve lyfe, sayenge y<sup>e</sup> in vayne : and in maner to my rebuke & shame : have I so longe studyed in philosophy : but yf I wolde at the last excercise y<sup>e</sup> lernyng in y<sup>e</sup> entretyng of some profitable actes & outwarde bysynes. Certaynly my welbeloved Andrewe I had cast away bothe cost & laboure of my study : yf I were so mynded that I coude fynde in my herte in this mater to assent unto you & folowe your councell. This is a very deedly and monstrous persuacyon which hath entred the myndes of men : belevyng that y<sup>e</sup> studyes of philosophye are of estates &

prynces : eyther utterly not to be touched : or at lest wife  
 with extreme lypes to be fypped : and rather to the pompe  
 & ostentacion of theyr wit then to the culture & profyte  
 of theyr myndes to be lytel & easely tasted. The wordes  
 of Neoptolemus they holde utterly for a fure decree : that  
 phylosophy is to be studyed eyther never or not longe :<sup>32</sup>  
 but the sayenges of wyse men they repute for japes &  
 very fables : that fure & stedfast felicity stondest onely in  
 the goodnes of the mynde, & that these outwarde thynges  
 of y<sup>e</sup> body or of fortune lytle or nought pertayne unto  
 us. But here ye wyll saye to me thus. I am contente ye  
 studye, but I wolde have you outwardly occupied also.  
 And I desyre you not so to embrace Martha that ye sholde  
 utterly forsake Mary. Love them & use them both, as  
 well study as worldly occupacion. Truly my welbeloved  
 frende in this poynt I gayne sey you not, they that so do I  
 fynde no fault in nor I blame them not, but certaynly hit is  
 not all one to sey we do well yf we do so : and to sey we do  
 evyll but yf we do so. This is farre out of the way : to  
 think that from contemplacyon to the actyve lyving, that  
 is to sey from the better to the worse, is none errour to  
 declyne : and to thynke that it were shame to abyde  
 styll in the better and not declyne. Shall a man then be  
 rebuked by cause that he desyryth and ensueth vertue  
 only for hit selfe : by cause he studyeth y<sup>e</sup> mysteryes of  
 God : by cause he ensercheth the counceyll of nature : by  
 cause he useth continually this plesant ease & rest :  
 fekyng none outwarde thyng, dispysing all other thyng :  
 syth those thynges are able suffyciently to satisfye y<sup>e</sup>  
 desyre of theyr folowers. By this rekenyng hit is a  
 thyng eyther servyle or at y<sup>e</sup> lest wife not princely to  
 make y<sup>e</sup> study of wysdom other then mercenarye : who  
 may well here this, who may suffre hit. Certaynly he

never studyed for wysedome which so studied therefore that in tyme to come eyther he myght not or wolde not study therefore, this man rather excercised y<sup>e</sup> study of marchaundyse then of wysedom. Ye wryte unto me that hit is tyme for me now to put my selfe in houfhoule with some of the grete prynces of Italy but I fe well y<sup>t</sup> as yet ye have not knowen the opynion that phylosophres have of them selfe, which (as Horace sayth) repute them selfe kynges of kinges:<sup>33</sup> they love lyberte: they can not bere y<sup>e</sup> proud maners of estates: they can not ferve. They dwell with them selfe and be content with the tranquyllyte of theyr owne mynde, they suffyce them selfe & more, they seke nothyng out of them selfe: y<sup>e</sup> thynges that are had in honoure amonge y<sup>e</sup> commune people: amonge them be not holden honourable. All that ever the voluptuose desyre of men thyrsteth for: or ambycyon sygheth for: they set at nought & despise. Which while hit belongeth to all men: yet undoubtedly it perteyneth moost proprely to them whome fortune hath so lyberally favoured that they may lyve not onely well and plenteously but also nobly. These grete fortunes lyfte up a man hie and sett hym out to the shewe: but ofentymes as a fyerse and a skyttysh hors they cast of theyr mayster. Certeynly alway they greve and vexe hym and rather tere hym then bere hym. The golden mediocrite, the meane estate is to be desyred whiche shall bere us as hit were in handes<sup>34</sup> more easeli: which shall obey us & not maystre us. I therefore abydyng fermely in this opynyon set more by my litle house, my study, the pleasure of my bokes, y<sup>e</sup> rest and peace of my mynde: then by all your kynges palaces, all your commune besynes, all your glory, all the advauntage that ye hawke after and all the favoure of the court. Nor I loke not for this fruyte of my study y<sup>t</sup> I may therby

herafter be toffed in the flode and rombelyng of your worldly befyneffe: but y<sup>t</sup> I may ones bryng forth the chyldren that I travayle on: y<sup>t</sup> I may gyve out some boke of myn owne to the commune proffyte which may sum what favour yf not of connyng yet at the lest wyse of wyt and dylygence. And by cause ye shall not thynk that my travayle & dylygence in study is ony thyng remytted or slakked: I gyve you knowledge y<sup>t</sup> after grete fervent labour with moch watch and infatygable travayle I have lerned both the hebrew language and the chaldey, and now have I fet hande to overcome the grete dyffyculte of the araby tonge. These my dere frende be thynges whiche to apertaine to a noble prynce I have ever thought and yet thynke. Fare ye well. Wryten at Paris the .xv. daye of Octobre the yere of grace. M.CCCC.lxxxxii.<sup>35</sup>

#### THE ARGUMENT OF THE EPYSTLE FOLLOWYNGE.

After that Johan Fraunces y<sup>e</sup> nevew of Picus had (as hit apereth in y<sup>e</sup> fyrst epistle of Picus to hym) begon a change in his lvyng: hit semeth by this lettre y<sup>t</sup> the company of the court where he was converfaunt diversly (as hit is theyr unmanerly maner) descanted therof to his rebuke as them thought: but as trueth was unto theyr owne. Some of them juged hit foly, some called hit hypocresy, some scorned him, some sclaudred hym, of all whiche demeanour (as we maye of this epistle conjecture) he wrote unto this erle Picus his uncle, whiche in this lettre comforted & encourageth him, as hit is in y<sup>e</sup> course therof evydent.

JOHAN PICUS ERLE OF MYRANDULA TO  
FRAUNSCES HIS NEVEW GRETYNGE IN  
OUR LORDE.

Happy art thou my sone whan that oure Lorde not onely gyveth the grace wel to lyve but also that whyle thou lyvest wel he gyveth y<sup>e</sup> grace to bere evyl wordes of evyll people for thy lyvyng well. Certaynly as grete a prayse as hit is to be commended of them y<sup>t</sup> are commendable, as grete a commendacion it is to be reproved of them y<sup>t</sup> are reprovabell. Notwithstondyng my sone I call the not therfor happy by cause this fals reprove is worshypfull & gloryous unto the, but for bycause y<sup>t</sup> our Lorde Jesu Chryst (which is not onely true but also trueth hit selfe) affermeth that oure rewarde shall be plenteous in heven when men speke evyll to us & speke all evyll agaynst us lyvyng for his name.<sup>36</sup> This is an Apostles dignyte: to be reputed dygne afore God to be defamed of wykked folke for his name. For we rede in the gospell of Luke that the appostles went joyfull and glad from y<sup>e</sup> counseill house of the Jewes bycause God had accepted them as worthy to suffre wronge and repressure for his sake. Let us therefore joye and be glad yf we be worthy so grete worshyp before God y<sup>t</sup> his worshyp be shewed in our rebuke. And yf we suffre of y<sup>e</sup> world any thyng that is grevous or bytter: let this swete voyce of our Lorde be our consolacion. Si mundus vos odio habet, scitote quia priorem me vobis odio habuit. Yf the worlde (sayth our Lorde) hate you, knowe ye y<sup>t</sup> hit hated me before you. If y<sup>e</sup> worlde then hated him by whome y<sup>e</sup> worlde was made: we moost vyle & simple men and worthy (yf we confydre our wreched lyvyng well) all shame & reprove: yf folke bakbyte us & faye evyll of

us: fhall we fo greuously take hit y<sup>t</sup> left they fhould fay evyll we fhoulde begyn to do evyll. Let us rather gladly receyve thefe evyl wordes, and yf we be not fo happy to fuffre for vertue & trueth as the olde feyntes fuffred betynges, byndynges, pryfon, fwerdes, & deth: let us thynke at the left wife we be well ferved yf we have y<sup>e</sup> grace to fuffre chydyng, detraction, & hatred of wikked men, left y<sup>t</sup> yf all occafion of defervynge be taken away ther be lefte us none hope of rewarde. Yf men for thy good lyvyng prayfe the: thy vertue certaynly in y<sup>t</sup> hit is vertue maketh the lyke unto Chryft: but in that hit is prayfed hit maketh the unlike him: which for the reward of his vertue receyved y<sup>e</sup> opprobryoufe deth of the croffe: for which as the apofte fayth God hath exalted hym and gyven hym a name y<sup>t</sup> is above all names. More defyre-full is than to be condempned of the worlde and exalted of God then to be exalted of the worlde and condempned of God: y<sup>e</sup> worlde condemneth to lyfe, God exalteth to glorye: y<sup>e</sup> worlde exalteth to a fall, God condempneth to y<sup>e</sup> fyre of hell. Fynaly yf y<sup>e</sup> worlde fawne upon y<sup>e</sup>: unneth hit may be but y<sup>t</sup> thy vertue (which all lyfte upwarde fhoulde have God alone to please) fhall fomwhat unto y<sup>e</sup> blandifshynge of y<sup>e</sup> worlde & favoure of y<sup>e</sup> people inclyne. And fo thoughe hit lefe nothyng of y<sup>e</sup> integrite of our perfeccion: yet hit lefeth of the rewarde, which reward whyle hit begynneth to be payde in y<sup>e</sup> worlde where all thyng is lytle, hit fhall be leffe in heven where al thing is grete. O happy rebukes which make us fure: y<sup>t</sup> neither y<sup>e</sup> floure of our vertue fhall wyther with the peftilent blaft of vaynglorye: nor our eternall rewarde be mynyfhed for the vayn promocion of a lytell populare fame. Let us my fone love thefe rebukes, & onely of y<sup>e</sup> ignomyne and represe of our Lordes croffe

let us lyke feythfull fervauntes with an holy ambycyon be proude. We (fayth Saynt Paule) preche Chryft crucified, which is unto y<sup>e</sup> Jewes dispite, unto y<sup>e</sup> Gentyles foly, unto us y<sup>e</sup> vertue and wyfedom of God. The wyfdom of this worlde is folyfshnes afore God, & the foly of Chryft is y<sup>t</sup> by which he hath overcome y<sup>e</sup> wyfedom of y<sup>e</sup> worlde : by whiche hit hath pleased God to make his belivng people safe.

If that thou doubt not but y<sup>t</sup> they be madde whiche bakbite thy vertue : which the chryften lyvyng y<sup>t</sup> is very wifedom reputeth for madnes : confidre than how moche were thy madnes, yf thou fholdest for the judgement of madde men fwarve frome the good intitucion of thy lyfe, namely fith all errour is with amendement to be taken away & not with imitacion & folowyng to be encreafed. Let them therefore nyghe, let them bawl, let them barke, go thou boldely forth thy journey as thou haft begone, and of the wyckednes & myfery confidre how moche thy felfe arte beholden to God : whiche hath illumined y<sup>e</sup> fyttynge in the shadowe of dethe, and tranfлатыng the out of the company of them (which lyke dronken men with out a gyde wandre hyther and thyther in obfcure derkenes) hath affociate the to the chylde of lyght. Let that fame fwete voyce of our Lorde alwaye fowne in thyn eres. *Sine mortuos fepelire mortuos fuos, tu me fequere.* Let deed men alone with deed men, folowe thou me. Deed be they that lyve not to God, and in the fpace of this temporall dethe laboriously purchafe them felfe eternall deth. Of whom yf you axe wherto they drawe : wherto they referre theyr fudyes, theyr werkes & theyr befynes, & fynally what ende they have appoynted them felfe in the adepcyon wherof they fhoulde be happy : eyther they fhall have utterly nothyng



to answere, or they shall bryng forth wordes repugnaunt in them self & contrary eche to other lyke the ravyng of bedelem people. Nor they wot never them selfe what they do, but lyke them that swyme in swyfte flodes they be borne forth with y<sup>e</sup> violence of evyll custome as hit were with the boystious course of y<sup>e</sup> streame. And their wickednes blyndyng them on this syde : & the devyl prikkyng them forward on that syde : they renne forthe hedlyng in to all mischief, as blynde guydes of blynde men, tyll that dethe set on them unware, & tyll that hit be sayd unto them that Chryst sayth in the gospell, my frende this nyght y<sup>e</sup> devylles shall take thy soule from the : these goodes then that thou haste gedered whose shall they be. Then shall they envy them whom they despised. Then shall they commend them that they moked. Then shall they coveyte to ensuew them in lyyvng whan they may not : whom whan they myght have ensuewed they pursuewed. Stop therefore thyn eres my moost dere sone, & what so ever men sey of y<sup>e</sup>, what so ever men thynke on y<sup>e</sup>, accompt hit for nothyng, but regarde onely y<sup>e</sup> judgement of God, which shall yelde every man after his owne werkes when he shall shewe hym selfe frome heven with y<sup>e</sup> aungels of his vertue : in flame of fyre doynge vengeance upon them that have not knowen God nor obeyed his gospell, wiche (as the apostle seyth) shall suffre in deth eternall peyn, from y<sup>e</sup> face of our Lorde, & frome the glory of his vertue, whan he shall come to be gloried of his seyntes & to be made merveyulous in all them y<sup>t</sup> have beleved. Hit is wryten. Nolite timere qui corpus possunt occidere, sed qui animam potest mittere in gehennam. Fere not them (seyth our Lorde) that may sle the body : but fere hym y<sup>t</sup> may cast the soule in to helle. How moche lesse then be they to be fered : y<sup>t</sup>

may neyther hurt foule nor body : which yf they now bak-  
 byte y<sup>e</sup> lyvyng vertuously, they shall do the fame never the  
 leffe : yf (vertue forsaken) thou were over whelmed with  
 vyce : not for y<sup>t</sup> vyce displeaseth them but for y<sup>t</sup> y<sup>e</sup> vyce  
 of bakbytyng alway pleaseth them. Flee yf thou love  
 thyn helth, flee as ferre as thou mayst theyr companye,  
 and retournynge to thy selfe oftentimes secretly pray  
 unto y<sup>e</sup> moost benygne father of heven, cryenge with the  
 prophete. *Ad Te Domine leuavi animam meam : Deus  
 meus in Te confido, non erubescam, etiam si irrideant me  
 inimici mei. Etenim uniuersi qui sperant in Te non con-  
 fundentur. Confundantur iniqua agentes superuacue.  
 Vias tuas Domine demonstra mihi, et femitas tuas edoce  
 me. Dirige me in veritate tua, et doce me : quia Tu es  
 Deus Salvator meus, et in Te sperabo tota die.*<sup>37</sup> That is to  
 faye. To Y<sup>e</sup> Lorde I lyfte up my foule : in The I trust, I shall  
 not be shamed, & thoughe myne enemies mok me. Cer-  
 tainly all they y<sup>t</sup> trust in The shall not be a shamed. Let  
 them be a shamed that worke wyckednes in vayne. Thy  
 weyes good Lorde shewe me, and thy pathes teche me.  
 Direcete me in thy trueth, and teche me : for thou arte God  
 my Savyoure, in The shall I trust all the daye. Remembre  
 also my sone y<sup>t</sup> the dethe lyeth at hande. Remembre  
 that all the tyme of our lyfe is but a moment & yet leffe  
 than a moment. Remembre how curfed our olde enemy  
 is : whiche offereth us y<sup>e</sup> kyngdomes of this world that he  
 myght beryve us y<sup>e</sup> kyngdome of heven : how false the  
 flesshly plesures : which therefore embrace us y<sup>t</sup> they  
 might strangle us : how disceyteful these worldly  
 honoures : which therefore lyfte us up : y<sup>t</sup> they myght  
 throwe us downe : how deedly these rycheffes : whiche  
 the more they fede us, y<sup>e</sup> more they poyson us : how  
 shorte, how uncertayne, how shadowe like false ymaginary

hit is y<sup>t</sup> all these thynges togyther may brynge us : & though they flowe to us as we wolde wyfsh them. Remembre agayne how grete thynges be promysed and prepared for them : which dispifynge these present thynges desire and longe for that countre whose kynge is y<sup>e</sup> Godhead, whose law is charite, whose mesure is eternite. Occupy thy mynde with these meditacyons and suche other y<sup>t</sup> may waken the when thou slepest, kyndle y<sup>e</sup> when thou waxes colde, conferme the when thou waverest, & exhibit y<sup>e</sup> whynges of the love of God whyle thou laborest to hevenwarde, that whan thou comest home to us (which with grete defyre we loke for) we may se not onely hym that we coveyte but also suche a maner one as we coveyte. Fare well and love God whom of olde thou hast begon to fere. At Ferare the. ii. day of July the yere of our redempcion. M.CCCC.lxxxxii.

THE INTERPRETACION OF JOHAN PICUS  
UPON THIS PSALME CONSERVA ME  
DOMINE.<sup>38</sup>

Conferva me Domine quoniam speravi in Te. Dixi Domino : Deus meus es Tu, quoniam bonorum meorum non eges. Sanctis qui sunt in terra mirificavit voluntates suas. Multiplicate sunt infirmitates eorum postea acceleraverunt. Non congregabo conventicula eorum de sanguinibus : nec memor ero nominum eorum per labia mea. Dominus pars hereditatis mee & calicis mei : Tu es qui restitues hereditatem meam mihi. Funes ceciderunt mihi in preclaris : etenim hereditas mea preclara est mihi. Benedicam Dominum qui tribuit mihi intellectum : et vsque ad noctem increpuerunt me renes mei. Providebam Deum in conspectu meo semper, quoniam a dextris est mihi ne commovear. Propter hoc letatum est

cor meum et exultavit lingua mea infuper et caro mea  
requiescet in spe. Quia non derelinques animam meam  
in inferno : nec dabis sanctum tuum videre corruptionem.  
Notas mihi fecisti vias vite : adimplebis me letitia cum  
vultu tuo. Delectationes in dextera tua vsque in finem.

Conferva me Domine. Kepe me good Lorde. If ony  
perfyte man loke upon his owne estate there is one parell  
therin, y<sup>t</sup> is to wyte, lest he wax proude of his vertue, and  
therfore Davyd spekyng in y<sup>e</sup> person of a ryghteous man  
of his estate begynneth with these wordes. Conferva me  
Domine. That is to faye, kepe me good Lorde : whiche  
worde kepe me : yf it be well confydered : taketh awaye  
all occasyon of pryde. For he that is able of hym self  
ony thyng to gete is able of him self that same thyng  
to kepe. He that asketh then of God to be kepte in the  
state of vertue signifyeth in that askyng that from the  
begynnyng he gote not that vertue by hym selfe. He  
then whiche remembreth y<sup>t</sup> he attayned his vertue : not  
by his owne power but by the power of God : may not be  
proude therof but rather humbled before God after those  
wordes of th apostle. Quid habes quod non accepisti.  
What hast thou that thou hast not receyved. And yf thou  
hast receyved hit : why arte thou proude therof as  
though thou haddest not receyved it. Two wordes then  
be there which we sholde ever have in our mouthe : y<sup>e</sup>  
one. Miserere mei Deus. Have mercy on me Lorde :  
whan we remembre our vyce : that other. Conferva me  
Deus. Kepe me good Lorde : when we remembre our  
vertue.

Quoniam speravi in Te. For I have trusted in Y<sup>e</sup>.  
This one thyng is it that maketh us obtayne of God oure  
petycion, y<sup>t</sup> is to wyte, whan we have a full hope & trust  
that we shall spede. Yf we observe these two thynges in

our requestes, y<sup>t</sup> is to wyte, y<sup>t</sup> we requyre nothyng but that whiche is good for us and y<sup>t</sup> we requyre hit ardently with a fure hope that God shall here us, our prayers shall never be voide. Wherfore whan we misse the effecte of our petycyon, eyther hit is for y<sup>t</sup> we aske such thyng as is noyous unto us, for (as Christ sayth) we wot never what we aske, and Jefus sayd what so ever ye shall aske in my name hit shall be gyven you (this name Jefus signifiyeth a favyour, and therfore there is nothyng asked in y<sup>e</sup> name of Jefus but that is holfome and helpyng to the salvacion of the asker) or elles God hereth not oure prayoure by-cause that though y<sup>e</sup> thyng y<sup>t</sup> we requyre be good yet we aske hit not well, for we aske hit with lytle hope. And he y<sup>t</sup> asketh doubtyngely asketh coldely & therfore Saynt James biddeth us aske in fayth nothyng doubtyng.

Dixi Domino : Deus meus es Tu. I have sayd to our Lorde : my God arte Thou. After that he hath warded & fenced him selfe agaynst pryd he descrybeth in these wordes his estate. All the estate of a ryghteous man standeth in these wordes. Dixi Domino : Deus meus es Tu. I have sayd to oure Lorde : my God arte Thou. Whiche wordes though they seme commune to all folke, yet are there very few y<sup>t</sup> may faye them truely. That thyng a man taketh for his god that he taketh for his chyefe good. And that thyng taketh he for his chyefe good which onely had, though all other thynges lak, he thynketh hym selfe happy, & whiche onely lakyng, though he have al other thynges, he thinketh him self unhappy. The negard then seyth to his money : deus meus es tu, my god art thou. For though honour fayle & helth and strenghte and frendes, so he have money he thynketh him selfe well. And yf he have al those thinges y<sup>t</sup> we have spoken of, yf money fayle he thinketh him selfe unhappy. The gloton

feyth unto his fleshly luft, y<sup>e</sup> ambyciouse man feyth to his vaynglory: my god art thou. Se than how few may trewly sey these wordes, I have sayde to oure Lorde: my God arte Thou. For onely he maye trewly faye it whiche is content with God alone: so y<sup>t</sup> yf there were offred hym all the kyngdomes of the worlde and all the good that is in erth and all the good that is in heven, he wolde not ones offende God to have them all. In these wordes than, I have feyd to our Lord: my God art Thou, standeth all the state of a ryght wyse man.

Quoniam bonorum meorum non eges. For thou hast no nede of my good. In these wordes he sheweth y<sup>e</sup> cause why he sayth onely to our Lorde: Deus meus es tu, my God art Thou. The cause is for that onely oure Lorde hath no nede of oure good. There is no creature but y<sup>t</sup> it nedeth other creatures, and though they be of lesse perfeccyon than hit selfe, as phylosophers and divynes proven: for yf these more imperfyte creatures were not, y<sup>e</sup> other that are more parfyte coude not be. For yf ony parte of y<sup>e</sup> hole unyverfyte of creatures were dystroyed & fallen to nought all the hole were subverted. For certainly one part of that univerfyte perisshyng all parties perissh, and all creatures be partis of y<sup>t</sup> univerfyte, of which univerfyte God is no parte, but he is the begynnyng nothyng there upon dependyng. For nothyng truely wanne he by y<sup>e</sup> creacyon of this worlde, nor nothyng sholde he lese yf the worlde were adnychylate and turned to nought agayn. Than onely God is he whiche hath no nede of oure good. Well ought we certainly to be a shamed to take fuche thyng for god as hath nede of us, & fuche is every creature. Moreover we shold not accept for god, y<sup>t</sup> is to faye for the chyefe goodnes, but onely y<sup>t</sup> thyng whiche is the moost

foverayne goodnes of all thynges, and that is not the goodnes of ony creature, onely therefore to our Lorde ought we to faye : my God art Thou.

Sanctis qui sunt in terra ejus mirificavit voluntates suas. To his fayntes that are in y<sup>e</sup> londe of hym he hath made marvelous his willes. After God sholde we specially love them which are nereft joyned unto God, as be the holy aungelles & blyffed fayntes that are in theyr countree of heven: therefore after that he had sayd to oure Lorde : my God arte thou : he addeth therunto that oure Lorde hath made marvelous his wylles, y<sup>t</sup> is to faye he hath made marvelous his loves and his defyres towarde his seyntes that are in the londe of hym, that is to wyte, in the countree of heven whiche is called y<sup>e</sup> londe of God and the londe of lyvyng people. And verily yf we inwardly confydre how grete is the felicite of that countree & how moche is y<sup>e</sup> misery of this worlde, how grete is y<sup>e</sup> goodnes and charyte of those blessed citezyns: we shall continually desyre to be hens that we were there. These thynges & such other whan we remembre, we shold ever more take hede y<sup>t</sup> our meditacions be not unfruytfull, but that of every meditacyon we shold alwayes purchase one vertue or other, as for ensample by this meditacyon of the goodnes of that hevenly countree we sholde wynne this vertue that we sholde not onely strongly suffre deth and pacyently whan our tyme cometh or yf hit were put unto us for y<sup>e</sup> faith of Chryst: but also we sholde wyllyngely and gladly longe therefore, desyryng to be departed out of this vale of wretchydnes y<sup>t</sup> we may reygne in y<sup>t</sup> hevenly countree with God & his holy fayntes.

Multiplicate sunt infirmitates eorum postea acceleraverunt. Theyr infyrmytees be multiplyed and after

they haſted. Theſe wordes the prophete ſpeketh of wycked men. By infyrmytees he underſtondeth idoles and ſo hit is in y<sup>e</sup> hebrew text. For as good folke have but one God whom they worſhyp, ſo evyll folke have many goddes and idoles, for they have many voluptuouſe pleaſures many vayne deſyres many dyvers paſſyons whiche they ſerve, & wherfore ſeke they many ſondry pleaſures? certainly for bycauſe they can fynde none y<sup>t</sup> can ſet theyr herte at reſt & for y<sup>t</sup> (as y<sup>e</sup> prophete ſayth) wycked men walk about in a circuet or compaſſe wherof there is none ende. Now after theſe wordes: theyr Idoles be multiplied: hit foloweth. After they haſted: y<sup>t</sup> is to ſay: after theyr Idoles, after theyr paſſyons and beeaſtly deſyres they ronned forth hedlynge unadvyſedly without ony conſideracyon. And in this be we taught that we ſholde as ſpedely ronned to vertue as they ronned to vyce, & y<sup>t</sup> we ſhold with no leſſe dylygence ſerve our Lorde God than they ſerve theyr lorde y<sup>e</sup> devyll. The juſt man conſydering y<sup>e</sup> eſtate of evyll folke determineth fermly with hym ſelfe (as we ſholde alſo) that utterly he wyll in no wyſe folowe them, & therefore he ſayth. Non congregabo conventicula eorum de ſanguinibus: nec memor ero nominum. I ſhall not gather the congregacyon of them frome the blode: nor I ſhall not remembre theyr names, he ſayth, from the blode: both bycauſe Idolatres were wont to gather the blode of theyr ſacrefyce togyther and therabout to do theyr ſerymonyes: and alſo for that all the lyfes of evyll men forſaken reaſon whiche ſtondeth all in the ſoule, and folowen ſenfualyte that ſtondeth all in y<sup>e</sup> blode, the prophete ſayth not onely that he wyll not gather theyr congregacyon togyther from y<sup>e</sup> blode, that is to ſay y<sup>t</sup> he wolde do no ſacrefyce to thoſe idoles but alſo that he wolde not remembre theyr names,



that is to say that he wolde not talke nor speke of y<sup>e</sup> voluptuose delytes whiche are evyll peoples goddes, which we myght yet lawfully do: shewynge us by y<sup>t</sup>: that a parfyte man sholde abstayne not onely from unlawfull pleasures but also frome lawfull, to th'ende y<sup>t</sup> he may all togyther hole have his mynde in to hevenwarde and the more purely entende unto the contemplacion of hevenly thynges. And for as moche as some man wolde peradventure thynke y<sup>t</sup> hit were foly for a man utterly to depryve him selfe from all pleasures, therfor y<sup>e</sup> prophete addeth. *Dominus pars hereditatis mee.* Our Lorde is y<sup>e</sup> part of myn enheretaunce. As though he wolde saye. Mervayle the not though I forsake all thynges to th'entent y<sup>t</sup> I may have y<sup>e</sup> possesseyon of God in whom all other thynges also be possessed. This shold be the voyce of every good chrysten man. *Dominus pars hereditatis mee.* God is the parte of myne enheretaunce. For certaynly we chrysten people to whom God is promysed for an enheretaunce ought to be ashamed to desyre ony thyng beyde hym. But for y<sup>t</sup> some man myght happely repute hit for a grete presumpcion y<sup>t</sup> a man sholde promyse hymselfe God for his enheretaunce, therefore y<sup>e</sup> prophete putteth therto. *Tu es qui restitues hereditatem meam michi.* Thou good Lorde arte he that shall restore myne enheretaunce unto me. As though he wolde saye. O good Lorde my God I know well that I am nothyng in respect of Y<sup>e</sup>, I wote well I am unable to assende by myne owne strength so hyghe to have Y<sup>e</sup> in possesseyon, but Thou arte he y<sup>t</sup> shalt drawe me to the by thy grace, Thou arte he that shalt gyve thy selfe in possession unto me. Let a ryghteous man then confydre how grete a felicitye hit is to have God fall unto hym as his enheretaunce: hit foloweth in the psalme. *Funes ceciderunt mihi in preclaris.* The

cordes have fallen to me nobly. The partes and lottes of enherytaunces were of olde tyme met out and dyvyded by cordes or ropes. These wordes then, the ropes or cordes have fallen to me nobly, be as moche to fay as the parte or lot of myne enherytaunce is noble. But for as moche as there be many men which though they be called to this grete felycite (as indede all chriſten people are) yet they ſet lytel thereby and often tymes chaunge hit for a ſmall ſymple delyte, therefore y<sup>e</sup> prophete ſayth ſuyngly. *Hereditas mea preclara eſt michi.* Myn enheritaunce is noble to me. As though he wolde fay that as hit is noble in hit ſelfe ſo hit is noble to me, that is to ſaye I reputed hit noble, and all other thynges in reſpecte of hit I repute (as Saynt Paule ſayth) for donge. But for as moche as to have this lyght of underſtandyng whereby a man may know this gyft that is gyven hym of God to be the gyft of God, therefore the prophete ſuyngely ſayth. *Benedicam Dominum, qui tribuit intellectum.* That is to ſaye. I ſhall blyſſe our Lorde which hath gyven me underſtodyng. But in ſo moche as a man oftentymes entendeth after reaſon to ſerve God, and y<sup>t</sup> notwithſtodyng yet ſenſualite and the fleſh repugneth: than is a man perſyde whan y<sup>t</sup> not his ſoule onely but alſo his fleſh drawe forthe to Godwarde after thoſe wordes of the prophete in an other pſalme. *Cor meum & caro mea exultaverunt in Deum vivum.* That is to ſaye. My mynde & my fleſhe both have joyed in to livyng God. And for this the prophete ſayth here ſuyngely. *Et uſque ad noctem increpauerunt me renes mei.* My reynes or kidney hath chyden me unto the nyght. That is to ſaye. My reynes, in which is wont to be the greteſt inclinacyon to concupiſcence, not onely nowe encline me not to ſynne but alſo chyde me, that is to fay, withdrawe me from ſynne unto the nyght, that is to ſaye,

they so ferforth withdraw me from synne that wyllyngly they afflyct and payne my body. Afflyccyon is in scrypture oftentimes signified by the nyght bycause hit is the moost dyscomfortable feason. Then suyngly the prophete sheweth what is y<sup>e</sup> rote of this privacion or takynge awaye of fleshy concupiscence in a man, sayenge. *Providebam Deum in conspectu meo semper.* I provyded God alway before me sight. For yf a man had God alwaye before his eyen as a ruler of all his werkes, & in all his werkes he sholde neyther feke his owne lucre his glorye nor his owne pleasure but onely to y<sup>e</sup> pleasure of God, he shold shortly be perfyte. And for as moche as he y<sup>t</sup> so dooth prospereth in al thyng, therefore it foloweth. *Ipse a dextris est mihi ne commovear.* He is on my ryght hand that I be not moved or troubled. Then the prophete declareth how grete is y<sup>e</sup> felycite of a just man, whiche shall be everlastyngly blyffed bothe in body and in soule, and therefore he sayth. *Letatum est cor meum.* My soule is glad knowyng y<sup>t</sup> after deth heven is made redy for hym. *Et caro mea requiescet in spe.* And my fleshe shall rest in hope. That is to saye that thoughe it joye not by and by as in receyvynge his gloryous estate medyatly after the deth,<sup>39</sup> yet hit resteth in the sepulcre with this hope that it shall aryse in the daye of judgemente immortall and shynynge with his soule. And also the prophete more expreffely declareth in the verse folowing. For where he sayd thus, my soule is glad, he addeth the cause, sayenge. *Quia non derelinques animam meam in inferno.* For thou shalt not leve my soule in hell. Also where the prophete sayd that his fleshe sholde rest in hope he sheweth the cause, sayeng. *Nec dabis sanctum tuum videre corruptionem.* Nor thou shalte not suffre thy saynt to be corrupcyon, that is to saye, thou shalte not suffre y<sup>e</sup> fleshe of a good man to be cor-

rupted. For that that was corruptible shall aryse incorruptible. And for as moche as Chryft was the fyrst whiche entred paradife and opened the lyfe unto us, and was the fyrst that rose agayne and the cause of our resurreccyon : therefore these wordes that we have spoken of the resurreccyon ben pryncipally understonden of Christ, as Saynt Peter y<sup>e</sup> apostle hath declared, & secondaryly they may be understonden of us in y<sup>t</sup> we be the membres of Christ, which onely never sawe corrupcyon, for his holy body was in his sepulcre nothyng putrified. For as moche then as y<sup>e</sup> way of good lyvyng bryngeth us to a perpetuall lyfe of soule & body, therefore y<sup>e</sup> prophete sayth. *Notas mihi fecisti vias vite.* Thou hast made the wayes of lyfe knowen unto me. And bycause that all the felycite of that stondesth in the clere beholdyng and fruycion of God, therefore hit foloweth. *Adimplebis me letitia cum vultu tuo.* Thou shalt fyll me full of gladnes with thy chere. And for that our felicite shall be everlastyng, therefore he sayth. *Delectationes in dextra tua usque in finem.* Delectacion & joy shall be on thy ryght hande for ever : he sayth on thy ryght hand bycause y<sup>t</sup> our felycite is fulfilled in the vyfyon and fruytion of the humanyte of Chryft which sitteth in heven on y<sup>e</sup> ryght hande of his father's majeste, after y<sup>e</sup> wordes of Saint Johan. *Hec est tota merces, vt videamus Deum, & quem misisti Jesum Christum.* That is all oure rewarde that we maye beholde God and Jesus Chryft whome thou hast sent : to whiche rewarde he brynge us that sitteth there and prayeth for us. Amen.

HERE BEGYN .XII. RULES OF JOHAN  
PICUS ERLE OF MYRANDULA PARTELY  
EXCYTYNG PARTELY DYRECTYNGE A  
MAN IN SPYRYTUALL BATAYLE.<sup>40</sup>

Who fo to vertue eftemeth the waye  
Bycaufe we muft have warre contynuall  
Agaynft y<sup>e</sup> worlde, y<sup>e</sup> flefh, y<sup>e</sup> devyll, that aye  
Enforce them felfe to make us bonde & thrall,  
Let hym remembre that chefe what way he fhall  
Even after the worlde, yet muft he nede fufteyn  
Sorow, adverfite, labour, greyfe, and payne.

THE SECONDE RULE.

Thynke in this wretched worldes befyy woo  
The batayll more fharp & lenger is I wys  
With more labour and leffe fruyte alfo  
In whiche the ende of labour labour is :  
And when the worlde hath left us after this  
Voyde of all vertue : the rewarde when we dye  
Is nought but fyre and payne perpetually.

THE THYRDE RULE.

Confydre well that foly it is and vayne  
To loke for heven with pleafure and delyght.  
Sith Chryft our Lorde and fovereyne captayne  
Ascended never but by manly fyght  
And bytter paffion, then were it no ryght  
That ony fervaunt, ye wyll your felfe recorde,  
Sholde ftonde in better condicyon than his lorde.



## THE FOURTH RULE.

Thynke how that we not onely sholde not grudge  
But eke be glad and joyfull of this fyght,  
And longe therefore all though we coude not judge  
How that therby redounde unto us myght  
Ony profyte, but onely for delyght  
To be confourmed and lyke in some behaviour  
To Jefu Chryft our bleffed Lorde & Savyoure.

As often as thou doft warre and ftryve,  
By the refyftence of ony fynfull mocyon,  
Agaynft ony of thy fenfuall wyttes fyve,  
Caft in thy minde as oft with good devocyon  
How thou refembleft Chryft : as with fowre pocyon  
If thou payne thy taft : remembre therewithall  
How Chryft for the tafted eyfell<sup>41</sup> and gall.

Yf thou withdrawe thyn handes and forbere  
The raven of ony thyng : remembre than  
How his innocent handes nayled were.  
Yf thou be tempte with pryde : thynke how that whan  
He was in forme of God : yet of a bonde man  
He toke the fhap and humbled hym felfe for the  
To the mooft odioufe and vyle deth of a tree.

Confydre when thou arte moved to be wrothe  
He who that was God, and of all men the beft,  
Seynge hym felfe fcorned, fcorged both,  
And as a thefe betwene .ii. theves threft  
With all rebuke and fhame : yet from his brest  
Came never signe of wrath or of difdayne,  
But pacyently endured all the payne.

Thus every snare and engyne of the devyll  
Yf thou this wyse peruse them by and by :  
There can be none so curfed or so evyll  
But to some vertue thou mayst it applye.  
For ofte thou shalt : refyftyng valyauntly  
The fendes myght and fote fyery darte :  
Our Savyour Cryft refemble in some parte.

#### THE FYFT RULE.

Remembre well that we in no wyse muft  
Neyther in the forefayd efpirytuell armoure  
Nor any other remedy put our trust,  
But onely in the vertue ftrength of our Savyour :  
For he it is by whose myghty powre  
The worlde was veynquyfhed & his prynce caft out :  
Whiche reigned before in all the erthe about.

In hym let us trust to overcome all evyll,  
In hym let us put our hope and confydence,  
To fubdewe the flefshe and master y<sup>e</sup> devyll,  
To hym be all honour and lowly reverence :  
Oft fholde we requyre with all our dyligence  
With prayer, with teeres, & lamentable playntes  
The ayde of his grace and his holy fayntes.

#### THE SYXTE RULE.

One fynne vaynquyfhed loke thou not tarye,  
But lye in awayte for another every houre,  
For as a wood<sup>42</sup> lyon the fende our adverfarye  
Rynneth aboute fekyng whom he may devoure :  
Wherefore contynually upon thy towre,  
Left he the unpurveyed and unredy catche,  
Thou muft with the prophete ftoude & kepe watche.

## THE .VII. RULE.

Enforce thy felfe not onely for to ftonde  
Unvaynquyſhed agaynſt the devyls myght,  
But over that take valyauntly on hande  
To vaynquyſhe hym and put hym unto flyght :  
And that is whan of y<sup>e</sup> fame dede thought or fyght  
By whych he wolde have the with fynne contract  
Thou takeſt occaſyon of ſome good vertuouſe acte.

Some tyme he ſecretly caſtyth in thy mynde  
Some lawdable dede to ſtere the to to pryde,  
As vayn glorye makyth many a man blynde.  
But let humylite be thy fure guyde,  
Thy good wark to God let hit be applyede,  
Thynke hit not thyn but a gyft of his  
Of whoſe grace undowtedly all goodnes is.

## THE .VIII. RULE.

The tyme of batayle ſo put thy felfe in preace<sup>43</sup>  
As though thou ſhuldeſt after that victorye  
Enjoye for ever a perpetuall peace :  
For God of his goodnes and lyberall mercy  
Maye graunt the gyfte, & eke thy proude enemy,  
Confounded and rebuked by thy batayle,  
Shall the no more happely for very ſhame affayle.

But when thou mayſt ones y<sup>e</sup> triumphe obtayne  
Prepare thy felfe and trymme the in thy gere  
As thou ſholdeſt incontinent fight agayn,  
For yf thou be redy the devyll wyll the fere :  
Wherfore in ony wyſe ſo ever thou the bere



That thou remembre and have ever in memory  
In victory batayle in batayle victory.

#### THE .IX. RULE.

If thou thynke thy felfe well fenced and sure  
Agaynst every fotell fuggestion of vyce,  
Confydre frayle glaffe may no dystres endure,  
And grete adventurers ofte curs the dyce :  
Jeopard not to farre therfore and ye be wyse,  
But evermore eschewe the occasyons of fynne,  
For he that loveth parell shall peresh therein.

#### THE .X. RULE.

In all temptacyon withstonde the begynnyng :  
The curfed infantes of wretched Babilon<sup>44</sup>  
To suffre them wax is a jeoperdous thyng :  
Bete out theyr braynes therfore at the Stone :  
Perylous is the canker that catcheth the bone :  
To late cometh the medicine yf thou let the fore  
By longe contynuaunce encrease more & more.

#### THE .XI. RULE.

Though in the tyme of the batayle and warre  
The conflecte feme bytter sharpe and fowre,  
Yet confydre hit is more pleasure farre  
Over the devyll to be a conqueroure  
Then is in the use of thy beestly pleasure :  
Of vertue more joye the conscience hath within  
Then outwarde the body of all his fylthy fynne.

In this poynt many men erre for negligence,  
For they compare not the joye of the victory  
To the sensuall pleasure of theyr concupiscence,

But lyke rude beeftes unadvisedly  
Lakkyng difcrecyon they compare & applye  
Of theyr fowle synne the voluptuoufe delyght  
To the laberous travayle of the conflyct & fyght.

And yet alas he that ofte hath knowen  
What gryefe it is by longe experyence  
Of his cruell enemye to be over throwen,  
Sholde ones at the left wyfe do his diligence  
To prove and affaye with manly defence  
What pleasure there is, what honour peace & rest  
In glorioufe victorye tryumphe and conquest.

#### THE .XII. RULE.

Though thou be tempted difpayre the nothyng :  
Remembre the gloryous apofte Saynt Paule  
Whan he had feen God in his perfyte beyng,  
Left fuche revelacyon fholve his herte extolle,  
His flefshe was fuffred rebell agaynft the foule :  
This dyd almyghty God of his goodnes provide  
To preferve his fervaunt fro y<sup>e</sup> daunger of pryde.

And here take hede that he whom God dyd love,  
And for his mooft especiall vefsell chofe,  
Ravyfhed into the thyrde heven above,  
Yet ftode in peryll left pryde myght hym depofe :  
Well ought we then our hertes fence & clofe  
Agaynft vaynglorye the mother of reпрыefe,  
The very crop and rote of all myfchefe.

Agaynft this pompe & wretched worldes glofe  
Confydre how Crift the Lorde, fovereyne powere,  
Humbled him felfe for us unto the croffe :

And peradventure deth with in one houre  
Shal us bereve welth ryches and honowre :  
And bryng us down ful low both smal & grete  
To vyle caryon and wretched wormes mete.

Here folowe the .XII. wepens of spiryтуal batayle  
which every man shuld have at hand when y<sup>e</sup> plesure of  
a synful temptacyon commeth to his mynde.

The plesure lytle & short.	Eternal joy eternal payne.
The folowers gryef & hevynes.	Ye nature & dygnyte of man.

The losse of a bettyr thyng.	Y <sup>e</sup> peace of a good mynde.
This lyfe a dreame and a shadowe.	The grete benfytes of God. The peynful cros of Cryst.

The deth at our hand & unaware.	The wytnes of martyrs and example of fayntes.
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Y<sup>e</sup> fere of impenitent de-  
partyng.

THE .XII. WEPENS HAVE WE<sup>45</sup> MORE AT  
LENGTH DECLARED AS HIT FOLOWYTH.

THE PLEASURE LYTLE AND SHORT.

Confydre well the pleafure that thou haft,  
Stande hit in towchyng or in wanton fyght,  
In vayne smell or in thy lycoroufe taft,  
Or fynally in what fo ever delyght  
Occupyed is thy wretched appetyght :  
Thou shalt hit fynde when thou haft al caft  
Lytle, fymple, short, and fodenly paf.

THE FOLOWERS GRYEFE & HEVYNES.

Ony good wark yf thou with labour do,  
The labour goth, the goodnes doth remayne :  
If thou do evyl with pleafure joyned therto,

The pleasure which thyne evyll wark doth contayne  
Glydeth his wey, thou maft hym not refrayne :  
The evyl then in thy brest cleveth behynde  
Wyth grudge of hert and hevynes of mynde.

#### THE LOSSE OF A BETTER THYNG.

When thou laboreft thy pleasure for to bye  
Upon the pryce loke thou the well advyfe,  
Thou selleft thy foule therefore evyn by & by  
To thy mooft uttre dispiteoufe enemyes :  
A mad merchaunt, o folifsh merchaundyfe,  
To by a tryfle, o chydyshe rekenyng,  
And pay therefore fo dere a precyouse thyng.

#### THIS LYFE A DREME AND A SHADOW.

This wretched life (the trust & confidence  
Of whose contynuaunce maketh us bolde to fynne)  
Thou perceivest well by experience,  
Sith that houre in which hit dyde begynne,  
Hit holdeth on the course and wyll not lynne,<sup>45</sup>  
But fast hit rynneth on and passen shall  
As doth a dreme or a shadowe on the wall.

#### DETH AT OUR HAND AND UNWARE.

Confydre well that ever nyght and daye,  
Whyle that we befyly provyde and care  
For oure disport revell myrth and play,  
For plefaunt melody and deyntye fare :  
Deth stelyth on ful flyly, and unaware  
He lieth at hand and shall us entreprife  
We not<sup>47</sup> how soone nor in what maner wife.

## FERE OF IMPENITENT DEPARTYNGE.

If thou sholdest God offende thinke how therefore  
Thou were forthwith in very jeopardous case  
For happely thou sholdest not lyve an houre more  
Thy synne to clense, & though thou haddest space.  
Yet peradventure sholdest thou lacke the grace :  
Well ought we then be a ferde to done offence  
Impenitent lest we departen hens.

## ETERNALL REWARDE ETERNALL PAYNE.

Thou feest this worlde is but a thorowfare,  
Se thou behave the wisely with thy hooft :  
Hens must thou nedes departe naked & bare,  
And after thy deserte loke to what cooft  
Thou arte convayed at suche tyme as thy gooft  
From this wretched carkas shall dyffever :  
Be hit joye or payne, endure hit thou shall for ever.

## THE NATURE AND DYGNITE OF MAN.

Remembre how God hath made the resonable  
Lyke unto his image and fygure,  
And for the suffred paynes intollerable  
That he for aungell never wolde endure.  
Regarde o man thyne excellent nature :  
Thou that with aungell arte made to bene egall,  
For very shame be not the devylles thrall.

## THE PEACE OF A GOOD MYNDE.

Why lovest thou so this brotle worldes joye :  
Take all the myrth, take all the fantasies,  
Take every game, take every wanton toye,

Take every sport that man can the devyfe :  
And amonge them all on warantyfe  
Thou shalt no pleafure comparable fynde  
To th'ynwarde gladnes of a vertuous mynde.

### THE GRETE BENEFYCES OF GOD.

By fyde that God the bought & fourmed both  
Many a benefyte haft thou receyved of his :  
Though thou have moved hym often to be wroth  
Yet he the kepte hath and brought us up to this,  
And dayly calleth upon the to his blys :  
How mayft thou then to hym unlovyng be  
That ever hath ben fo lovyng unto the.

### THE PAYNFULL CROSSE OF CHRYST.

Whan thou in flame of the temptacyon fryeft  
Thynke on the very lamentable payne,  
Thynke on the pyteoufe croffe of wofull Chryft,  
Thynke on his blode bet out at every vayne,  
Thynke on his precyous herte kerved in twayne :  
Thynke how for thy redempcyon all was wrought :  
Let hym not lese that he fo dere hath bought.

### THE WYTNES OF MARTYRES & EXAMPLE OF SAYNTES.

Synne to withtonde faye not thou lakkest myght :  
Suche allegacyons folye hit is to use :  
The wytnes of fayntes, & martyrs constant fyght  
Shall the of flouthfull cowardyfe accuse :  
God will the helpe yf thou do not refuse :  
Yf other have stande or this thou mayft eft soone :  
Nothyng impossible is that hath bene doone.

THE .XII. PROPERTEES OR CONDICYONS  
OF A LOVER.

- To love one alone and contempne all other for y<sup>t</sup> one.  
To thynke hym unhappy that is not with his love.  
To adourne hym felse for the pleasure of his love.  
To suffre all thyng, thoughe hit were deth, to be with his  
love.  
To defyre also to suffre shame harme for his love, and to  
thynke that hurte fwete.  
To be with his love ever as he may, yf nót in dede yet in  
thought.  
To love all thyng y<sup>t</sup> perteyneth unto his love.  
To coveite the prayse of his love, and not to suffre ony  
dysprayse.  
To beleve of his love all thynges excellent, & to defyre  
that all folke sholde thynke the fame.  
To wepe often with his love : in prefence for joye, in  
abfence for forowe.  
To languyshe ever and ever to burne in the defyre of his  
love.  
To ferve his love, nothyng thynkyng of ony rewarde or  
profyte.

THE .XII. PROPERTEES WE HAVE AT  
LENGTH MORE OPENLY EXPRESSED IN  
BALADE AS HIT FOLOWETH.<sup>48</sup>

The fyrst poynt is to love but one alone,  
And for that one all other to forsake :  
For who so loveth many loveth none :  
The flode that is in many chanelles take  
In eche of them shall feble stremes make :

The love that is devyded amonge many  
Unneth suffyfeth that ony parte have ony.

So thou that haft thy love fet unto God  
In thy remembraunce this enprynt & grave :  
As he in foverayne dignyte is odde,  
So wyll he in love no partynge felowes have :  
Love hym therfore with all that he the gave :  
For body, fowle, wytte, connynge, mynde & thought,  
Parte wyll he none, but eyther all or nought.

### THE SECONDE PROPERTE.

Of his love lo the fyght and company  
To the lover fo glad and pleafaunt is,  
That who fo hath the grace to come therby  
He judgeth hym in perfyte joye and blys :  
And who fo of that company doth myffe,  
Lyve he in never fo prosperous estate,  
He thynketh hym wretched and infortunate.

So sholde the lover of God esteeme that he  
Whiche all the pleafure hath, myrth and disporte  
That in this worlde is possible to be,  
Yet tyll the tyme that he maye ones reforte  
Unto that blyffed joyfull heavenly porte  
Where he of God may have the glorious fyght,  
Is voyde of parfyte joye and delyght.

### THE THYRDE PROPERTE.

The thyrde poynt of a parfyte lover is  
To make hym freyshe, to fe that all thyng bene  
Apoynted well and nothyng fet a mys,



But all well fafshoned, propre, goodly & clene :  
That in his parfone there be nothyng fene  
In fpeche, apparayll, gefture, loke or pace  
That may offende or mynyfshe ony grace.

So thou that wylte with God gete in to favoure  
Garnyfshe thy felfe up in as goodly wyfe,  
As comely be, as honeft in behavoure  
As hit is poffyble for the to devyfe :  
I meane not hereby that thou fholdeft aryfe,  
And in the glaffe upon thy body prowle,<sup>49</sup>  
But with fayre vertue to adourne thy foule.

#### THE FOURTH PROPERTE.

If love be ftronge, hote, myghty, and fervent,  
There may no trouble, greyfe or forow fall,  
But that the lover wolde be well content  
All to endure and thynke hit eke to fmall,  
Thoughe hit were deth : fo he myght therwithall  
The joyfull prefence of that perfone get  
On whom he hath his herte and love i set.

Thus fholde of God the lover be content  
Ony dystres or forow to endure,  
Rather then to be from God abfent,  
And glad to dye, fo that he maye be fure  
By his departyng he ns for to procure  
After this valey darke the heavenly lyght,  
And of his love the gloryoufe fight.

#### THE FYFT PROPERTE.

Not onely a lover content is in his herte,  
But covetyeth eke and longeth to fufstayne

Some labour, incommodite or smarte,  
Loffe, adverfyte, trouble, greyfe or payne :  
And of his forowe joyfull is and fayne,  
And happy thynketh hymfelfe that he may take  
Some myfadventure for his lovers fake.

Thus fhouldest thou that loveft God alfo  
In thyne herte wyfshe, coveyte and be glad  
For hym to fuffre trouble, payne and woo :  
For whom yf thou be never fo woo beftade,  
Yet thou ne fhalt fufteyne (be not adrad)  
Halfe the dolour, gryefe and adverfyte  
The he all redy fuffred hath for the.

#### THE .VI. PROPERTE.

The parfyte lover longeth for to be  
In prefence of his love both nyght & daye :  
And yf hit happely fo be fall that he  
May not as he wolde : he wyl yet as he may  
Ever be with his love, that is to faye,  
Where his hevye body nyl be brought<sup>50</sup>  
He wyll be converfaunt in mynd and thought.

Lo in lyke maner the lover of God fhoulde  
At the left in fuche wyfe as he may,  
If he may not in fuche wyfe as he wolde,  
Be prefent with God and converfaunt alway :  
For certes who fo lyft he may purvey,  
Though al y<sup>e</sup> worlde wolde hym therfro beryven,  
To bere his body in erth, his mynde in heven.

#### THE .VII. PROPERTE.

There is no page or fervaunt moft or left  
That doth upon his love attende & wayte,

There is no lytle worme, no fymple beft,  
Ne none fo fmall a tryfle or conceyte,  
Lafe, gyrdell, poynt, or propre glove frayte :  
But that yf to his love hit have ben nere,  
The lover hath hit precyous, leyfe, & dere.

So every relyque, image or pycture,  
That doth pertayne to Goddes magnyfycence,  
The lover of God fhoulde wyth all befye cure  
Have hit in love, honoure and reverence :  
And fpecyally gyve them preemynence  
Which dayly done his bleffed body nyrche,<sup>51</sup>  
The quyk relyques, the mynyftres of his chyrch.

#### THE . VIII. PROPERTE.

A very lover above all erthly thyng  
Coveyteth and longeth evermore to here  
T'honoure, lawde, commendacyon and prayfyng,  
And every thyng that may the fame clere  
Of his love : he may in no manere  
Endure to here that therefro myghten vary,  
Or ony thyng fowne in to the contrary.

The lover of God fhoulde coveyte in lyke wyfe  
To here his honoure, worfhyp, laude and prayfe,  
Whofe fovereigne goodnes none herte may compryfe,  
Whom hell, erth, and all the heven obayfe :  
Whofe parfyte lover ought by no maner wayes  
To fuffre the curfed wordes of blafphemy,  
Or ony thyng fpoken of God unreverently.

#### THE . IX. PROPERTE.

A very lover beleveth in his mynde,  
On whom fo ever he hath his herte i bent,

That in that persone men may nothyng fynde  
But honorable, worthy and excellent,  
And eke furmoutyng farre in his entent  
All other that he hath knowen by fyght or name :  
And wolde that every man sholde thynke the fame.

Of God lyke wyfe so wonderfull and hye  
All thyng esteeme & judge his lover ought,  
So reverence, worthyp, honour & magnyfy,  
That all the creatures in this worlde i wrought  
In comparyson sholde hee set at nought :  
And glad be yf he myght the meane devyfe  
That all the worlde wolde thynken in lyke wyfe.

#### THE . X . PROPERTE.

The lover is of colour deed and pale :  
There wyl no slepe in to his eyen stalk :  
He favoereth neyther mete, wyne, nor ale :  
He myndeth not what men about hym talke :  
But ete he, drynke he, syt, lye downe or walke,  
He burneth ever as hit were with a fyre  
In the fervent hete of his defyre.

Here sholde the lover of God enfample take  
To have hym contynually in remembraunce,  
With hym in prayer and medytacyon wake,  
Whyle other playe, revell, fyng, and daunce :  
None erthly joy, disport or vayne plefaunce  
Solde hym delyte, or ony thyng remove  
His ardent mynde from God his hevynly love.

THE .XI. PROPERTE.

Dyverfly paffyoned is the lovers herte :  
Now plefaunt hope, now drede and grevous fere,  
Now parfyte blyffe, now bytter forowe fmarte :  
And whether his love be with hym or elles where,  
Oft from his eyen there falleth many a tere :  
For very joy when they togyther be :  
Whan they be fondred for adverfyte.

Lyke affeccyons feleth eke the brest  
Of Goddes lover in prayer and meditacyon :  
Whan that his love lyketh in hym rest  
With inwarde gladnes of pleafaunt contemplacyon,  
Out breke the teres for joye and delectacyon :  
And whan his love lyst este to parte hym fro,  
Out breke the teres agayne for payne & woo.

THE .XII. PROPERTE.

A very lover wyll his love obaye :  
His joye it is and all his appetyght  
To payne hym felfe in all that ever he maye,  
That parfone in whom he fet hathe his delyght  
Dylygent to ferve bothe day and nyght  
For very love without ony regarde  
To ony profyte, gwerdon or rewarde.

So thou lyke wyfe that haft thyne herte i fet  
Upwarde to God : fo well thy felfe endevere,  
So studyoufly that nothyng may the let  
Nor fro his fervyce ony wyfe diffevere :  
Frely loke eke thou ferve that therto never

Truft of rewarde or profyte do the bynde,  
But onely faythfull herte & lovyng mynde.

Wageles to ferve .iii. thynges may us move :  
Fyrft yf the fervyce felfe be defyrable :  
Seconde yf they whom that we ferve & love  
Be very good and very amyable :  
Thyrdely of reafon be we fervyfable  
Without the gapynge after any more  
To fuche as have done moche for us before.

Serve God for love then, not for hope of mede.  
What fervyce maye fo defyrable be  
As where all turneth to thyne owne fpede.  
Who is fo good, fo lovely eke as he,  
Who hath all redy done fo moche for the,  
As he that fyrft the made, and on the rode  
Eft the redemed with his precyous blode.

#### A PRAYER OF PICUS MIRANDULA UNTO GOD.

O holy God of dredefull mageftee  
Verely one in .iii. and thre in one :  
Whom aungelles ferve, whose werk all creatures be,  
Which heven and erth directeft all alone :  
We The befeche good Lorde with wofull mone,  
Spare us wretches & wafshe away our gylt  
That we be not by thy juft angre fpylt.

In ftraye balance of rygorous judgement  
If Thou fholdeft our fynne pondre and wey :  
Who able were to bere thy punyfshment.

The hole engyne of all this worlde I faye,  
The engyne that enduren shall for aye,  
With fuche examynacyon myght not stande  
Space of a moment in thyne angry hande.

Who is not born in fynne originall.  
Who doth not actuall fynne in fondry wyfe.  
But thou good Lorde arte he that sparest all  
With pyteoufe mercy temperynge iustyce :  
For as Thou doest rewardes us deuyce  
Above our meryte, so doest thou dispence  
Thy punysshement farre undre our offence.

More is thy mercy farre then all our fynne :  
To gyve them also that unworthy be  
More godly is, and more mercy therin.  
Howbehit worthy inough are they perdee :  
Be they never so unworthy : whom that he  
Lyft to accept : where so ever he taketh  
Whom he unworthy fyndeth worthy maketh.

Wherfore good Lorde that aye mercyfull arte,  
Unto thy grace and foverayne dygnyte  
We fely wretches crye with humble herte :  
Oure fynnes forget and our malygnite :  
With pyteous eyes of thy benygnyte  
Frendly loke on us ones thyne owne,  
Servauntes or fynners whether hit lyketh The.

Synners, yf Thou our cryme beholde, certayne :  
Our cryme the warke of our uncorteyse mynde :  
But yf thy gyftes Thou beholde agayne,  
Thy gyftes noble wonderfull and kynde :

Thou shalt us then the same perones fynde  
Which are to The, and have be longe space  
Servauntes by nature, chyldren by thy grace.

But this thy goodnes wryngeth us alas :  
For we whom grace had made thy chyldren dere  
Are made thy gylty folke by our trespace :  
Synne hath us gylty made this many a yere.  
But let thy grace, thy grace that hath no pere,  
Of our offence furmouten all the peace,<sup>53</sup>  
That in our fynne thyne honour may encrease.

For though thy wifdom, though thy soverayn powre  
May other wyfe appere suffycyently :  
As thynges whiche thy creatures every houre  
All with one voice declare and testyfy :  
Thy goodnes yet, thy synguler mercy,  
Thy pyteous herte, thy gracyous indulgence  
Nothyng so clerely sheweth as our offence.

What but our fynne hath shewed that mighty love :  
Whiche able was thy dredful magestee  
To drawe downe in to erth fro heven above  
And crucefyed God : that we poor wretches we  
Sholde from our fylthy fynne iclensed be  
With blode and water of thyne owne fyde,  
That stremed from thy blyssed woundes wyde.

Thy love and pyte thus o hevenly Kyng  
Our evyll maketh mater of thy goodnes.  
O love, o pyte, our welth ay provydyng,  
O goodnes servyng thy servauntes in distres.  
O love, o pyte, well nygh now thankles.



O goodnes, myghty, gracyous and wyfe,  
And yet almost now vanquysshed with our vyce.

Graunt I The praye fuche hete into myne herte  
That to this love of thyne may be egall.  
Graunt me fro Sathanas fervyce to astert,  
With whom me rueth fo longe to be thrall.  
Graunt me good Lorde and Creatour of all  
The flame to quenche of all fynfull defyre,  
And in thy love fet all myne herte a fyre.

That whan the journey of this deedly lyfe  
My fely goost hath fynysshed, and thense  
Departen must without his flesshly wyfe,  
Alone in to his Lordes hygh prefence :  
He may The fynde : o Well of Indulgence :  
In thy lordeshyp not as a lorde : but rather  
As a very tendre lovyng father.

Amen.

Enprynted at London in the Fletestrete  
at the sygne of the Sonne, by me  
Wynkyn de Worde.



NOTES.





## NOTES.



**COLLATION OF MORE'S TEXT** with the original showed that in a few instances he had inaccurately or inadequately rendered it. In such cases, or where for any other reason it seemed desirable, the words of the original are given in the notes, the letters G. F. P. or P. subjoined in brackets indicating that the reference is to the Latin life by Giovanni Francesco Pico or to Pico's works. A few misprints have been silently corrected.

1. This lady may be either Jocosa or Joyce, daughter of Richard Culpeper of Hollingborne, Kent, and wife of Ralph Leigh, undersheriff of London, or her daughter, Jocosa or Joyce Leigh, sister of Sir John Leigh who succeeded to the manor of Stockwell, Surrey, on the death of his uncle, Sir John Leigh, 27 Aug., 1523. Tanswell, "History and Antiquities of Lambeth," pp. 41-2. Manning and Bray, "History of Surrey," iii. 497-8.

2. Pico was the third son and youngest child of Giovanni Francesco Pico, Count of Mirandola and Concordia in the Modenese. He had two brothers, Galeotto, and Antonio Maria, and three sisters, Catterina, Lucrezia and

Giulia. Galeotto had to wife Bianca, daughter of Niccolò d'Este, lord of Ferrara; Antonio Maria married twice, viz., (1) Costanza, daughter of Sante Bentivoglio, lord of Bologna, (2) a Neapolitan lady. Pico's eldest sister, Catterina, married (1) Leonello Pio, lord of Carpi, by whom she had Alberto, mentioned in connection with Pico's death; (2) Rodolfo, lord of Gonzaga. Carpi and Gonzaga are little towns in the Modenese. Lucrezia also married twice, viz. (1) Pino Ordellafo, lord of Forli; (2) Gherardo Appiani di Piombino, Count of Montagnana. The third sister, Giulia, took the veil.

Pico's pedigree has been carried back as far as Manfredo of Reggio, a contemporary of Charlemagne; but the descent from the nephew of Constantine is mythical.

"Memorie Storiche della Mirandola," Litta, "Celebr. Fam. Ital." Pico, *Opera* (ed. 1601), *Life* by G. F. Pico; and "Adversus Astrologos," ii. cap. ix.

3. The Boiardi. Giulia was the daughter of Feltrino Boiardo, first Count of Scandiano, and aunt of the poet, Matteo Maria Boiardo, author of the "Orlando Innamorato." Litta, "Celebr. Fam. Ital." Venturi, "Storia di Scandiano," p. 83.

4. Paulinus was secretary to S. Ambrose, and wrote his life; from which the story in the text is taken.

5. "Flavo et in affectato capillitio" (G. F. P.). Apparently Pico was somewhat careless about the arrangement of his hair.

6. Apollonius of Tyana, fl. 70 A.D., travelled throughout the ancient world expounding Neo-Pythagoreanism, and working wonders, esteemed miraculous.

7. For an account of these spurious compositions, written at various dates between the first century before and the third century after Christ, but which were uni-

versally regarded as genuine in Pico's day, see Zeller, "Philosophie der Griechen."

8. Aquinas.

9. With whom Pico was connected by affinity. See note 2.

10. For this vaunt of Epicurus see Diogenes Laertius, "Vitæ Philosph." x. 13 sc. *τοῦτον Απολλόδωρος ἐν χρονικοῖς Λυσιφάνους ἀκοῦσαι φησι καὶ Πραξιφάνους· αὐτὸς δὲ οὐ φησιν ἀλλ' ἑαυτοῦ, ἐν τῇ πρὸς Ἐυρύδικον ἐπιστολῇ.*

11. Pico's conduct in this matter was not altogether so generous as it appears in the text. Soon after his father's death his brothers had fallen out about the partition of the family estates, and matters went so far that in 1473 Galeotto surprised Antonio Maria and incarcerated him in the citadel of Mirandola, while he made himself master of the entire inheritance, apparently ignoring Pico's title altogether. Antonio Maria remained a close prisoner in Mirandola for about two years, at the close of which he was released in deference to the intercessions, or perhaps menaces, of his friends, fled to Rome, and appealed to the Pope. He returned in 1483 with a small army furnished by the Duke of Calabria, possessed himself of Concordia, and negotiated a treaty of partition with his brother. The treaty was, however, by no means strictly observed. Pico had taken no part in the quarrel, and was probably the more ready to cede his rights to his nephew that any attempt to vindicate them for himself would certainly have excited the determined hostility of his brothers. The conveyance was executed on 22 April 1491. "Memorie Storiche della Mirandola," i. 108 ; ii. 43. Calori Cesis, "Giovanni Pico."

12. Girolamo Benivieni, author of the "Canzone dell'

Amore Celeste e Divino” on which Pico wrote the commentary referred to in the Introduction p. 24. For an account of him see Mazzucchelli, “Scrittori Italiani.”

13. St. Jerome, author of the Vulgate version of the Bible. The passage referred to is as follows :—“ Scimus plerosque dedisse eleemosynam, sed de proprio corpore nihil dedisse ; porrexisse egentibus manum, sed carnis voluptate superatos dealbasse ea quae foris erant, et intus plenos fuisse ossibus mortuorum.” “Epistola ad Eustochium Virginem,” *Opera* (fol.) i. 65. g.

14. “Potissimum” (G. F. P.), especially. So in “Romaunt of the Rose,” l. 1,358-9, the pomegranate is described as a fruyt fulle well to lyke, “*Namely*, to folk whanne they ben sike.”

15. A reminiscence of the “De Sapiientis Constantia.”

16. “Passim” (G. F. P.), on all hands. In fourteenth and fifteenth century literature “by and by” frequently means severally, or one by one, as in “Romaunt of the Rose,” l. 4,582, “These were his wordis by and by.” The “Promptorum Parvulorum” (Camden Soc.) translates it “sigillatim.” Thence the transition to the sense of the text is not difficult.

17. See Introduction, p. xxiii.

18. “Quam primum” (G. F. P.), as soon as possible.

19. See note 6.

20. A reminiscence of Epode II.

21. After leaving Bologna, Pico spent two years at Padua, the stronghold of scholasticism in Italy. He also studied for a time at Ferrara, under Battista Guarino, the humanist, whom in one of his letters he addresses as *praeceptor meus*. In 1482 he returned to Mirandola, in the vicinity of which he built himself a little villa, which



he describes as "pleasant enough, considering the nature of the place and district," and on which he wrote a poem now lost. Here he entertained Aldo Manuzio, who about the same time, doubtless by Pico's recommendation, was appointed tutor to his nephew, Alberto Pio, and a Greek scholar, Emanuel Adramyttenus, a refugee from Crete, where the Moslem was triumphant. He now began to correspond with Politian, and on a visit to Reggio made the acquaintance of Savonarola, who had come thither to attend a chapter of Dominicans. In 1483 he went to Pavia, taking with him Emanuel Adramyttenus, who acted as his Greek master. There Emanuel died, and Pico then joined Aldo Manuzio at Carpi. About this time he began the study of the oriental languages, his master being one Jocana, otherwise unknown. In 1484, if not earlier, he went to Florence, and made himself known to Marsilio Ficino, who had then just completed his translation of Plato. Pico urged him to crown his labours by performing the same office for Plotinus. Ficino, who was so little above the common superstitions of his time that he believed firmly in astrology, saw in Pico's unexpected appearance at this critical juncture an event not to be explained by natural causes, and taking his suggestion as a divine monition, forthwith set about the work: nor, when it was completed, did he omit to recount, in dedicating it to Lorenzo, the incident which led to its initiation. Pico appears to have remained at Florence until the latter part of 1485, when we lose sight of him for a time. We obtain, however, a transient glimpse of him in a somewhat novel light from a letter from his sister-in-law, Costanza, to Fra Girolamo, of Piacenza, dated 16 May, 1486, and printed in "Memorie Storiche della Mirandola," ii. 167. From this it appears

that he had then recently left Arezzo with a Florentine married lady, who, Costanza is careful to state, "accompanied him voluntarily," but had been attacked by some boors, who cut to pieces his attendants, wounded him in two places, and carried him back to Arezzo. Whether the outrage is imputable to the jealousy of the lady's husband, Costanza cannot say. How the affair ended does not appear, but in the following October we find Pico at Perugia, and in November at Fratta in the Ferrarese. Then followed the visit to Rome, the affair of the Theses, and the journey to France, where he was presented to Charles VIII. After his recall to Italy he resided either at Fiesole or Florence until the summer of 1491, when he accompanied Politian to Venice. They returned to Florence in time to be present at the deathbed of Lorenzo (8 Ap. 1492). The rest of his life Pico spent partly at Ferrara and partly at Florence.

The foregoing brief record of Pico's wanderings reposes mainly upon the evidence afforded by his letters and those of Aldo Manuzio, Politian, and Ficino. Many of these, however, are undated, and all are singularly poor in personal detail. See also Calori Cesis, "Giovanni Pico della Mirandola," 2nd ed., 1872; Parr Greswell, "Memoirs of Angelus Politianus," &c.; and Villari's "Savonarola," Eng. tr. 1889, ii. 74.

22. "Insidiosissima correptus est febre" (G. F. P.), "Axes" is of course merely *access*.

23. See Note 2.

24. "Cæli reginam ad se nocte adventasse miro fragrantem odore, membraque omnia febre illa *contusa contractaque* refovisse" (G. F. P.). "Brosed" = bruised ("contusa"). "Frushed" appears to be derived from the

French *froisser*, which may mean either to bruise or to rumple ; whence also probably "froyse" used locally for a pancake. See "Promptorium Parvulorum" (Camden Soc.) *Froyse*.

25. See note 2.

26. Charles VIII., to whom Pico had recently been presented. See note 21.

27. Girolamo Savonarola. For what little is known of his relations with Pico see note 21, and his life by Villari, Eng. tr. (1889).

28. "Verum divinis beneficiis male gratus, vel ab sensibus vocatus, detractabat labores (delicatæ quippe temperaturæ fuerat); vel arbitratus eius opera religionem indigere, differebat ad tempus: hoc tamen non ut verum sed ut a me conjectatum et præsumptum dixerim" (G. F. P.). But unmindful of God's favours to him, or led away by the senses, he shrank from the labours (he was of a delicate constitution); or thinking that religion had need of his services he yet deferred them for a time: not, however, that I state this as truth, but only as what I conjecture or presume to be so.

29. "A diaboli laqueis" (P.), from the snares of the devil. So in Holinshed, "History of Scotland," Ethodius, 194 H. B., we read of "nets and grens" for snaring hares.

30. "Suggeret tibi cum Spiritus qui interpellat pro nobis, tum ipsa necessitas singulis horis quod petas a Deo tuo: suggeret et sacra lectio, quam ut omissis jam fabulis nugisque poetarum semper habeas in manibus etiam atque etiam rogo" (P.). It shall be taught thee both by the Spirit which intercedes for us and by thine own needs every hour what thou shouldest ask of thy God; and also by the reading of the holy scriptures, which, laying now

aside the frivolous fables of the poets, I earnestly entreat thee to have ever in thy hands.

31. The letter is dated from Ferrara, 15 May, 1492, *i.e.* shortly after the death of Lorenzo.

32. A fragment of the lost Neoptolemus of Ennius:—

“Philosophari est mihi necesse, at paucis, nam omnino haut placet ;  
Degustandum ex ea, non in eam ingurgitandum censeo.”

Ribbeck, “Frag. Lat. Reliq.” i. 53 ; cf. Cic. “Tusc. Dispt.” ii. 1.

33. Epist I. i. *ad fin*:—

“Ad summam : sapiens uno minor est Jove, dives,  
Liber, honoratus, pulcher, rex denique regum ;  
Præcipue sanus, nisi cum pituita molesta est.”

34. “Uti mannus” (P.), like a draught-horse. Doubtless in More’s edition the word was spelt *mānus* ; hence the curious mistranslation.

35. “*Perusie* xv. Octo Mcccclxxxvi. anno gratiæ” (P.). It is not easy to account for the double error into which More has here fallen.

36. “*Mentientes propter eum*” (P.), lying (*i.e.* to our disadvantage) because of him.

37. Ps. xxv. 1-5 in the authorized and revised versions. The Vulgate, where it appears as Ps. xxiv., has a slightly different rendering:—“Ad Te Domine levavi animam meam : Deus meus in Te confido, non erubescam : Neque irrideant me inimici mei : etenim universi, qui sustineant Te, non confundentur. Dirige me in veritate tua, et doce me, quia Tu es Deus Salvator meus, et Te sustinui tota die.”

38. Ps. xvi. in the authorized and revised versions, xv. in the Vulgate, which is as follows:—“Conserva me Domine, quoniam speravi in Te. Dixi Domino : Deus

meus es Tu, quoniam bonorum meorum non eges. Sanctis qui sunt in terra ejus mirificavit omnes voluntates meas in eis. Multiplicatæ sunt infirmitates eorum: postea acceleraverunt. Non congregabo conventicula eorum de sanguinibus: nec memor ero nominum eorum per labia mea. Dominus pars hereditatis meæ, et calicis mei. Tu es qui restitues hereditatem meam mihi. Funes ceciderunt mihi in præclaris: etenim hereditas mea præclara est mihi. Benedicam Dominum, qui tribuit mihi intellectum: insuper et usque ad noctem increpuerunt me renes mei. Providebam Dominum in conspectu meo semper: quoniam a dextris est mihi ne commovear. Propter hoc lætatum est cor meum, et exultavit lingua mea: insuper et caro mea requiescet in spe. Quoniam non derelinques animam meam in inferno: nec dabis sanctum tuum videre corruptionem. Notas mihi fecisti vias vitæ, adimplebis me lætitia cum vultu tuo: delectationes in dextera tua usque in finem."

39. "By-and-by" is here evidently *forthwith*, and "medyatly" *immediately*.

40. These rules, of which More's verses are rather a paraphrase than a translation, were written by Pico in prose, and were translated into prose by Sir Thomas Elyot, author of the "Boke of the Governour," as follows:

"THE RULES OF A CHRISTIAN LYFE MADE  
BY JOHAN PICUS THE ELDER ERLE  
OF MIRANDULA.

"Firft if to man or woman the way of vertue dothe feme harde or paynefull, bycaufe we muſte nedes fyghte agaynſte the fleſhe, the divell, and the worlde, lette hym

or her calle to remembraunce, that what so ever lyfe they wyll chofe accordynge to the worlde, many aduersities, incommodities, moche hevynes and labour are to be suffred.

“ Moreover lette them have in remembraunce, that in welth and worldly poffeffions is moche and longe contention, laboriouse also, and ther with unfrutefulle, wherin travayle is the conclufyon or ende of labour, and fynally payne everlaftyng, if thofe thynges be not well ordered and charitably difpofed.

“ Remembre also, that it is very folifhnes to thinke to come unto heven by any other meane than by the fayde batayle, confidering that our hed and mayfter Chrifte did not afcende unto heven but by his paffion : And the fervaunte oughte not to be in better aftate or condicion than his mayfter or foverayne.

“ Furthermore confyder, that this bataile ought not to be grudged at, but to be defired and wifhed for, all though thereof no price or rewarde mought enfue or happen, but onely that therby we mought be conformed or joynd to Chrifte our God and mayfter. Wherefore as often as in refiftinge any temptacion thou doeft withftande any of the fences or wittes, thinke unto what part of Chriftes paffion thou mayfte applye thy felfe or make thy felfe lyke : As refiftinge glotony, whiles thou doeft punyſhe thy taft or appetite : remembre that Chrifte receyved in his drynke ayfelle myxte with the gall of a beaſte, a drinke moſte unfavery and loathſome. Whan thou withdraweſte thy hande from unlefſull takinge or kepinge of any thinge, whiche liketh thyne appetite : remembre Chriftes handis as they were faſt nayled unto the tree of the croſſe. And refifing of pryde, thinke on him, who being very God almighty, for thy ſake received the forme

of a subjecte, and humbled hym selfe unto the mooste vile and reproachefull deathe of the crosse.

“ And whan thou art tempted with wrathe : remembre that He whiche was God, and of all men the most iuste or rightwyse, whan He behelde hym selfe mocked, spit on, fcoured, and punished with alle dispites and rebukes, and sette on the crosse amonge errant theves, as if He Hym Selfe were a false harlot, He notwithstanding shewed never token of indignacion or that He were greved, but suffering al thinges with wonderful pacience, aunswered al men most gentilly. In this wise if thou peruse al thinges one after an other, thou mayst finde, that there is no passion or trouble, that shall not make the in some parte conformable or like unto Chrifte.

“ Also putte not thy truste in mannes helpe, but in the onelye vertue of Chrifte Jesu, whiche sayde : Truste well, for I have vaynquishid the worlde. And in an other place He sayde : The prince of this worlde is caste oute thereof. Wherefore let us truste by his onelye vertue, to vaynquishe the worlde, and to subdue the divell. And therefore oughte we to aske his helpe by the prayers of us and of his sainctes.

“ Remembre also, that as soone as thou hast vanquished one temptation, alway an other is to be looked for : The divell goeth alwaye aboute and seketh for hym whome he wolde devoure. Wherefore we ought to serve dylygently and be ever in feare, and to say with the prophete : I will stande alwaye at my defence.

“ Take heed more over, that not onelye thou be not vaynquished of the dyvel, that temptith the, but also that thou vanquishe and overcome him. And that is not onelye whan thou doeste no syn, but also whan of that thinge wherin he tempted the, thou takest occasion for to do good.

As if he offrith to the some good acte to be done to the intent that therby thou mayste fall into vayneglory : furth with thou thinkinge it not to be thy deede or warke, but the benefitte or rewarde of God, humble thou thy selfe, and judge the to be unkynde unto God in respecte of his manyfolde benefytes.

“ As often as thou doest fyghte, fyght as in hope to vanquishe, & to have atte the laste perpetuall peace. For that paradventure God of his abundante grace shal gyve unto the, and the divell beyng confusid of thy victory, shall retorne no more agayne. But yet whan thou haste vaynquishid, beare thy selfe so as if thou sholdest fyghte agayne shortly. Thus alway in battayle thou muste thinke on victory : and after victory thou must prepare the to bataile immediately.

“ All though thou felest thy selfe wil armed and redy, yet flee notwethstandyng all occasyons to fynne. For as the wise man saith : who loveth perylle shall therein peryshe.

“ In all temptations resyste the begynnyng, and beate the children of Babilon againe the Stone, which Stone is Christe, and the chyldren be yvell thoughtes and imaginations. For in longe contynuinge of fynne, feldome warketh medycyne or remedy.

“ Remembre, that althoughe in the sayde conflicte of temptation the battayle seemeth to be verye daungerouse : yet confyder howe moche sweter it is to vanquishe temptation, than to folowe sinne, wherto she inclyneth the, wherof the ende is repentance. And herein many be foule deceyved, whiche compare not the swetnesse of victory to the swetnesse of fynne, but onely compareth battayle to pleasure. Not withstandyng a man or woman, whiche hathe a thousande times knowen what it is to gyve place to temptation, shoulde ones assaye, what it is to vanquishe temptation.



“If thou be tempted, thynke thou not therfore that God hath forsaken the, or that he setteth but lyttell by the, or that thou art not in the fight of God good or perfecte: but remembre, that after Sayncte Paule hadde feene God, as He was in his divinitie, and suche secrete misteryes as be not lefull for any man to speake or reherce, he for all that suffred temptation of the fleshe, wherwith God suffred hym to be tempted, lest he shoulde be assaulted with pryde. Wherin a man ought to consider that Saynt Paule, which was the pure vessell of election, and rapte in to the thyrde heven, was not withstandynge in perylle to be proude of his vertues, as he faith of hym selfe. Wherefore above al temptations manne or woman oughte to arme theym mooste stronglye agaynste the temptation of pryde, fens pryde is the rote of all myfchyfe, agaynste the whiche the onelye remedye is to thynke alway that God humbled hym selfe for us unto the crosse. And more over that deth hath so humbled us whether we wyl or no, that our bodyes shal be the meate of wormes lothesome and venymouse.”

41. “Recordare illum felle potatum et aceto” (P.). For “eysell” cf. Shakespeare, Hamlet, v. i. l. 264, “Woo’t drink up eisel?” and Sonnet, cxi. l. 10, “Potions of eisel ’gainst my strong infection.”

42. “Wood” or *wode* in the sense of *mad* is not uncommon in our older writers. So Demetrius in “A Midsummer Night’s Dream,” ii. 1, l. 192,

“And here am I, and wode within this wood,  
Because I cannot find my Hermia.”

43. “Preace” would seem to be a corruption of *prest*, ready, used substantivally, “put thyself in preace” mean-

ing *make thyself ready*. See Skeat, "Etymological Dictionary of the English Language," art. *Press*.

44. Cf. Ps. cxxxvii. 8, 9: "O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed; happy shall he be, that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us. Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones."

45. Here More speaks in *propria persona*, with perhaps a *double entendre* in the "We More." There is nothing in Pico corresponding to the verses which follow.

46. For "lynne," cease, cf. Spenser, "Faery Queen," i. canto v. 35.

"And Sisiphus an huge round stone did reele  
Against an hill, ne might from labour lin."

47. "Not" is for *ne wot*, *i.e.* know not. So Chaucer concludes the description of the Merchant in the Prologue to the "Canterbury Tales," l. 286 :

"But soth to sayn I n'ot how men him call."

48. The stanzas on the "Propertees" are original except the last two, which are a paraphrase of the following sentence :—

"Solemns autem ad hoc induci præcipue ex tribus causis. Prima est quando servitium ipsum per se est appetibile : secunda quando ille cui servimus est in se valde bonus et amabilis : sicut solemus dicere, servimus illi propter suas virtutes. Tertia est quando ille prius quam inciperes multa tibi beneficia contulit. Et hæc tria sunt in Deo : quia pro servitio ejus nihil naviter accipitur quod non sit nobis bonum : et quoad animam et quoad corpus : quia servire ei non est aliud quam tendere ad eum : hoc est ad summum bonum. Similiter ipse est optimus et pulcherrimus et sapientissimus : et habet omnes condiciones quæ solent nos movere ad amandum aliquem et serviendum ei gratis : et in nos contulit summa beneficia

cum nos et ex nihilo creaverit et per sanguinem Filii ab inferno redemerit.” (P.) There are, moreover, three principal considerations by which we are accustomed to be impelled to this service. The first is that the service itself is desirable for its own sake. The second arises when he whom we serve is in himself very good and amiable, and we serve him, as we are in the habit of saying, on account of his virtues. The third, when before the commencement of your service he whom you serve has conferred on you many favours. And these three considerations coexist in the case of God, for nothing whatever is accepted by way of His service which is not for our good both of soul and of body: for to serve Him is nothing else but to seek after Him: *i.e.* after the chief good. Likewise He Himself is of all beings the best, and most lovely and wisest: and has in Himself all the properties which are wont to move us to love and serve any one without reward: and has conferred on us the greatest favours, since He has both created us from nothing, and redeemed us from hell by the blood of His Son.”

48. Cf. “*Promptorium Parvulorum*” (Camd. Soc.). “*Prollynge, or sekyng. Perscrutatio, investigatio, scrutinum:*” and Chaucer, “*Canterbury Tales*,” l. 16880. “*Though ye prolle ay, ye shal it never find.*”

50. Cf. note 47.

51. “*Nyrche*” has been substituted by way of conjectural emendation for “*wyrche*,” which is unintelligible: “*Nyrche*” as = nourish gives the sort of sense required by the context; and the eccentric spelling may be merely due to the roughness with which the r was pronounced in More’s time.

52. “*Peace*,” cup: from the low Latin, *pecia*. See “*Promptorium Parvulorum*” (Camden Soc.) *Pece*; and Du Cange, *Pecia*.



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