

**A GOLDEN TREATISE OF MENTAL
PRAYER, WITH DIVERS SPIRITUAL
RULES AND DIRECTIONS, NO LESS
PROFITABLE, THAN NECESSARY,
FOR ALL SORTS OF PEOPLE**

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A golden treatise of mental prayer, with divers spiritual rules and directions, no less profitable, than necessary, for all sorts of people by Peter de Alcantara & Giles Willoughby

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FIRST COMPOSED BY THE VENERABLE AND BLESSED
FATHER FR. PETER DE ALCANTARA
OF THE SERAPHICAL ORDER OF ST. FRANCIS,

Beatified the 18th of April, 1622.

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH,
BY GILES WILLOUGHBY.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED, A BRIEF RELATION OF THE LIFE AND
DEATH OF THE SAME FATHER, WRITTEN BY GILES WIL-
LOUGHBY, OF THE SAME ORDER AND OBSERVANCE.

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BRIEF RELATION
OF
THE LIFE AND DEATH
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FR. PETER DE ALCANTARA,
FRANCISCAN FRIAR,

WRITTEN BY GILES WILLOUGHBY, OF THE SAME ORDER AND
OBSERVANCE.

THE PROLOGUE.

MISERICORDIAS Domini in æternum cantabo:
“*I will sing the mercies of our Lord for ever,**”
saith that kingly Prophet David. And not
without cause; for, so great and unspeakable
are the mercy-works of the Almighty, which
out of the bowels of his infinite goodness, he
hath shewed to mankind, from the first instant
of his creation, that the tongues of men and
angels are never able to express them.

How wonderful was this benefit; that cre-
ating man after his own † image and likeness, ‡

* Psalm 88.

† Gen. i. v. 26.

‡ Magister Sent. lib. 2. dist. 20.

he would have made him partaker of eternal felicity, and vested with his original justice without death,* or any passage by misery, would have associated him with the company of angels, if he had not, by his own default, violated the laws of his creator. Notwithstanding this act of malice, the divine clemency would not suffer the work of his powerful hands so to perish, but he, according to the diversity of times,† always ordained opportune remedies, to reduce wandering man to the right way of his own salvation. Now manifesting his divine pleasure, by the means of angels, now sending the patriarchs replenished with his heavenly grace, who by their good example, might stir them up to piety; then sending the prophets illuminated with his holy spirit, not only to preach the present benefits exhibited to mankind, but also to foretell the future incarnation of the Son of God, with the mystery of his death and passion, by means of which, man should be loosed from the power of Satan, and eased of the heavy load of his transgressions.

* Gabriel. lib. 2. dist. 19, quæst. unica. art. 2.

† Scotus lib. 4. dist. 1. qa. 7. n. 2.

Thus far hath that impenetrable abyss of the divine clemency sweetly disposed all things, requisite for the saving of the soul of man. But if we will extend our thoughts a little further, and call to mind the great benefits, still heaped upon man, after the ascension of our Blessed Saviour, we shall find them innumerable. Who is not astonished at the vocation of mankind, that the apostolical trumpet of a few men, sounding to human ears, the evangelical truth, through the whole world, shall rouse up* souls, making them† happy, and thrice happy, to forsake all worldly vanities? to betake themselves to a state of perfection; to sell all they have and give to the poor; to live in perpetual chastity, and simple obedience, to

* (*Religiosi*) *Ecclesie pars selectior, et sapientior; si quidem ii sapientiores habendi sunt, quam reliquum mortalium vulgus, qui se ipsos a mundi consortio segregarunt, ut vitam suam Deo consecrarunt Nazianz, ora in laudem Basilii.*

† *Beati illi certe, ac ter beati, ut qui Dei amore flagrant, atque ob ejus amorem omnia pro nihilo duxerunt, siquidem lacrymas profunderunt dieque ac nocte in luctu versati sunt, ut aeternam consolationem adipiscerentur; carnes suas fame et siti, et vigiliis confecerunt, ut illic paradisi delicie, et gaudia illos exceperent. Damascen. in hist. B. Josaphat.*