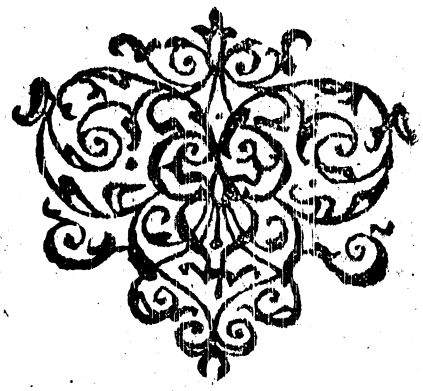
# AN Excellent Treatise of Consideration and *Prayer.*

Written by the same Au-
thour, F. LEVVES de GRANADA,
*in Portugall: and annexed to his*
*Booke of* MEDITA-
TIONS.



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# To the worshipfull and his euer approued fatherly good friend, Maister *Iohn Banister* Chirurgion, and licentiate in Phisick, health & happines.

*FAther, receiue at your sons hand this excellent treatise, the true testimonie of my vnfained affection: and some dutifull remembrance for so many fauours I haue receiued from you.*

*To your learned Iudgement I commende the goodnesse of the worke: which as heeretofore it hath been of most singular regard amõg the best, so can it not endure any reproch nowe that may come from the worst. So praying for the long life of my louing good father: humbly I take my leaue.*

*The Phiſicke Art*
*For ſicke and ſore doth teach*
*A ſouéraigne ſalue,*
*to eaſe thy griping griefe.*
*But onely they*
*who ſacred ſcripture preach,*
*Haue wherewithall*
*to work thy ſoules reliefe.*

*Ply therefore them*
*that Phiſicke doe profeſſe,*
*The way to eaſe*
*thy bodies ſore and ſmart.*
*But the defaults*
*of ſoule for to redreſſe,*
*Lay vp this little*
*volume in thy hart.*

Of

# Of the great profit and neceſsitie of *Conſideration.*

## CHAP. I.

FOrſomuch as in the exerciſe of Conſideration, it cannot bee, but that ſome labour and paines muſt needes bee taken as well by reaſon of the imploying and occupying of the time, which it requireth of vs euery day: as alſo in regard of the quieting, and cloſe recollecting of the hart, (which is a thing very requiſite for the ſame,) I think it therefore very neceſſary before al other things, to declare here, what great fruites and commodities doe enſue of this exerciſe, to the intent that the heart of man, which without great promiſes and allure-

ments is not mooued to take great paines, may by this meane bee the more mooued and prouoked, to the loue of this holy exercise, and to bestow greater paines and labour therin.

*Consideratiõ helpeth al vertues in their exercises.*

Now the greatest commendation wee can giue to this vertue, is this, that it is a greater helper & furtherer of all other vertues. I meane not in supplying the proper office of them, but in helping thé in their exercise. Insomuch, that like as deuotion is a generall stirrer and prouoker vnto all vertues (as one of the Fathers affirmeth,) and as the hearing of a Sermon, (if it be heard with such attention and deuotion as it ought to be,) is also an exercise that moueth vs, not to any one vertue alone, but to all vertues, (forsomuch as each good instruction is directed to this end:) euen so likewise is Consideration a great help & furtherance, not onely to any one vertue alone, but vnto all kinde of vertues. For there is no more difference betweene a Sermon and Consideration, than is betweene the reading of a lesson, & the repetition of the same reading, or



or betweene the meate that is set before vs in a dish, and the same meate when it is digested and concocted in the stomacke.

*The proper praise of Cõsideration.*

Now this is one of the greatest and most assured praises wee can giue to this vertue. For by this meanes it putteth not away the labours of other vertues, but rather maketh prouision how to helpe & further them in their labors, yea, and stirreth and prouoketh them thereunto. This is the thing which by the grace of God we intend now to proue verie manifestly in this place.

*Of those vertues that are common, both to a Christian and an Infidell: and what vertues are peculiar and proper to a Christian onely.*

FOR the better vnderstanding whereof, it is to be known, that among vertues some be common both to the Christian and to the Pagan Philosopher: (as those foure that be called Cardinall vertues,) to wit, Prudence, Iustice, Fortitude, and Temperance. Of which vertues the Philosophers vnderstood, and wrote

*Cardinall vertues.*

very much.) Other vertues there be that are proper and peculiar vnto a Christian; whereof the Pagan Philosophers neither knew nor wrote any thing at al; or if they did, it was surely verie little. These are principally those three most noble vertues, called Theological vertues, to wit; faith Hope, and Charitie. Which haue for their obiect Almighty God himselfe, and their proper office is, to dispose & direct a man towardes him. These Theologicall vertues haue the empire and soueraigntie ouer all other inferior vertues, and therefore they moue and prouoke them to do their operations, whensoeuer the same is expedient for their seruice.

*Theologicall vertues.*

After these there followe other very principall & excellent vertues, (which be very neere of affinitie vnto them.) As the vertue, called Religion; whose obiect is the seruice and honour of God. The vertue, called Deuotion, which is the act and exercise of the same religion, and the office of it is, to make vs verie prompt and ready, to doe all such things as appertaine vnto his seruice. The

*Relegion.*

*Deuotion.*

*Feare*



*Feare of God*, which refraineth and brideleth vs from sinne. Humilitie, which is also after a sort (as a learned Father affirmeth) the roote & foundation of all vertues. And Repentaunce, which is the gate of our saluation; whereunto appertaineth, the sorrow & griefe for our life past, and withall, a firme purpose and determination, to amend our life in time to come.

*The feare of God.*

*Humilitie*

*Repentance.*

Of all these vertues the Pagan Philosophers vnderstood very litle, or nothing at all; notwithstanding that these be the vertues, that haue the soueraignty and principality ouer al others, yea, they be the roots & fountaines of all our weale. First, because (for the most part) they be spirituall vertues, that haue the accomplishment of their perfection in the inward part of our soule, (where all the beauty of the daughter of the King standeth:) and secondlie, because all these vertues (faith excepted) be affectiue vertues, and consequently, they be vnto vs great motions and prouocations to doe good workes. Wherein the prouidence of the grace of God wōderfully appea-

Psal. 45. 14

reth. For like as Nature hath prouided for vs naturall affections & desires, that should be (as it were) certaine spurres, to prouoke vs to doe all such thinges as are requisite for our naturall life; euen so likewise hath the grace of God prouided for vs other supernaturall affectiõs, that might be also spurs and prouocations vnto vs, to do all such things as are behoouefull for our spiritual life. And such bee these vertues before mentioned: to wit, Loue, Sorrowe, Feare, and Hope, with the rest, without the which vertues, the spirituall life were like a Barge without oares, or like a ship without sailes. For so much as without these vertues, wee should not haue any thing to moue & prouoke vs to doe good works.

For (considering that the way of vertue is so sharpe and full of difficultie) what should become of vs, if wee had not these spurs and prouocations of Loue, of Feare, and of Hope, to spur & pricke vs forwards to labour and trauell in the same? For this cause therfore are these vertues so much commended. For besides that they are such principall ver-



vertues, (as we haue alreadie declared,) they bee also very great prouocations and motions, to moone vs to doe good workes.

This foundation being now laid, I say, that the greatest praise wee giue to the vertue of Consideration is, that the same is a great minister and helper vnto all these vertues, as well of the one sort as of the other, according as wee will now declare. Where also it shall appeare that the commendation we giue to this vertue, is not so much in respect of the vertue it selfe, as for the seruice and commmoditie it bringeth to other vertues.

*Why the exercise of consideration is so much commended.*

## *How Consideration helpeth Faith.*

### §. I.

NOW therefore to take our first beginning of Faith: it is manifest, that faith is the first beginning and foundation of all the Christian life. For Faith maketh vs to beleeue, that Almightie GOD is our Creator, our Gouernour, and Redee-

*Faith is the beginning and foundation of the Christian life.*

Heb. 11. 6.

Redeemer, our Sanctifier, our Iustifier, our Glorifier; to bee short, our beginning, and our last end.

Faith is that which teacheth vs, that there is another life after this, and that there shal be a general iudgment of all our workes, and that wee shall receiue either euerlasting glorie for the good, or els euerlasting paine for the euill. And it is cleare, that the faith and beliefe men haue in these things, brideleth their heartes, and causeth them to stand in awe, and to liue in the feare of God. For if Faith were not among vs, as a meane to bridle and direct vs heerein, what (trow yee) would become of the life of man? And therefore the Prophet said: *That the iust man liueth by Faith:* because Faith (by meanes of the representation and Consideration of those thinges that it teacheth vs) prouoketh vs to refraine from sinne and wickednesse, and to follow vertue and goodnesse. And this is the cause why the Apostle willeth vs to take Faith as a shield, against all the firie darts of the enemy. For certainly there is no better shield against the darts of sinne, then to call those things

*Faith causeth men to liue in the feare of God.*

Rom. 1.17
Heb. 10.38
Gala. 3.11
Abac. 2.4.

Eph. 6.16.



things to minde, that faith hath reuealed vnto vs against the same.

Wherefore, that this faith may worke this effect in vs, it is verie requisite, that wee doe sometimes ponder and consider in our minds with good attention and deuotion, such things as our faith teacheth vs. For if we doe not so, it seemeth, that our faith shall bee vnto vs, as it were a Letter closed vp and sealed, in which although there come notable important newes of very great sorrow or ioy: yet it mooueth vs not at all, neither to the one nor to the other, no more then if wee had receiued no Letter at all. And the reason is, because wee haue not opened the Letter, nor considered what things are contained in it.

*Vnlesse wee meditate vpon the misteries of our faith, our faith is as it were a Letter closed vp and sealed.*

Now, what thing could bee said more aptly, or more to the purpose, touching the faith of the wicked and dissolute Christians? For surely there cannot be things of greater terrour and ioy, then those are, which our Faith declareth vnto vs. But the wicked Christians, because they doe neuer open this Letter, to see what things bee contained in it, (I meane hereby,

hereby, becauſe they do neuer think and meditate vppon theſe myſteries of our Chriſtian faith, or if they thinke vpon them, they paſſe them ouer very lightly, and in great haſt,) they cauſe not in them this manner of motion and alteration, to wit, of ioy or of feare.

Wherefore it behooueth vs ſometimes to opē this letter of our faith, I meane the myſteries thereof, and to reade the ſame very leiſurely; and to conſider with good attention, what things are taght vs in the ſame; the which is done by meanes of the exerciſe of Conſideration. For it is Conſideration that openeth that which is locked, and vnfoldeth that which is folded together, & maketh that cleare vnto vs, which is otherwiſe darke and obſcure. And ſo by illuminating our vnderſtanding with the greatneſſe of the myſteries of our Faith, it inclineth our Will, (ſo farre forth as appertaineth to the office of conſideration) to conforme our life to the ſame.

This office of Conſideration, Almighty God figured very notably in the Law, when among the conditi-



ons that were required in the cleane Beaſt, he aſsigned this for one, that the beaſt ſhould chew the cudde, to wit, the meate that it had eaten before. Now it is certaine, that it was little to the purpoſe, whether the beaſt were cleane or vncleane, and ſurely Almighty God made little account of that; but his meaning was, to repreſent vnto vs in that cleane beaſt, the condition, office, and exerciſe of thoſe beaſtes, that bee ſpirituallie cleane, (to wit, of the iuſt and righteous perſons) that are not content only to eat ſuch things as appertain vnto Almightie God, in beleeuing them by fayth, but after they haue eaten them, they do alſo chew them by means of Conſideratiō, in ſearching and pondering the myſteries which they belieue.

*What was ſignified by the cleane beaſt in the Lawe.*

Leuit. 11. 3
Deut. 14. 4

And after they haue vnderſtoode the meaning & excellency of them, they diſtribute and diuide this meat vnto all the ſpirituall members of the ſoule, for the ſuſtentation and repairing of the ſame.

*A notable ſimilitude.*

Inſomuch, that if wee marke this matter well, we ſhall finde, that it fareth in this caſe as in the ſeede of a tree,

tree, which although it do vertually containe within it the ſubſtance of the tree, yet hath it need of the vertu and influence of heauen, and of the benefite and moyſture of the earth, to cauſe the vertue, that is incloſed in the ſeed, to come forth to light, & to growe vp by little and little, and waxe a tree.

Euen ſo in like manner wee ſay, that although faith be the firſt ſeed, and originall of all our weale, yet muſt it needes be holpen with this benefite of conſideration, that by the ſame, and by meanes of Charitie, the greene and fruitfull tree of life (which is vertuallie contained therein,) may growe and come to light.

*Howe Conſideration helpeth hope.*

## §. II.

CONſideration helpeth alſo no leſſe the vertue of hope. This Hope is an affection of our Will, that hath his motiue and roote in the vnderſtanding. As the Apoſtle S. Paule



S. Paule in his Epiſtle to the Romaines ſignifieth plainely vnto vs, ſaying; *All things that are written, are written for our learning: that wee through patience and conſolation, which the Scripture teacheth vnto vs, might haue hope and affiance in almighty God.* Rom. 15.4

For vndoubtedly the holy Scripture is the fountaine, from whence the iuſt man gathereth the water of comfort, wherewith hee ſtrengtheneth himſelfe to put his hope and truſt in God. For firſt of all he ſeeth in the holy Scriptures, the greatnes of the workes and merites of our Sauiour Ieſus Chriſt, which are the principall ſtay and foundation of our Hope. There he ſeeth likewiſe in a thouſand places, the greatneſſe of the goodneſſe, ſweetneſſe, and maieſtie of Almightie God, liuely expreſſed and ſet out to the eye; and withall, the merciſull louing prouidence hee hath ouer them that be his; the gentleneſſe and benignitie wherewith hee receiueth them that come vnto him, and the faithfull promiſes and pledges hee hath giuen vnto them, whereby they are very well aſſured, that he wil neuer forſake them that

*The holy Scripture is the fountain of comfort.*

*The workes and merites of our Sauiour Chriſt, are the principall ſtaie and foundation of our hope in God.*

that repoſe their hope and truſt in him. There he ſeeth, that there is no one thing more ofte repeated in the Pſalmes, more commonly promiſed in the Prophets, more euidently declared in the hiſtories from the beginning of the world, then the louing fauours, graces and benefites, that the Lord continually beſtoweth vpon ſuch as bee his ſeruants, and how he hath moſt mercifully holpen and defended them in all their calamities and diſtreſſes. How he helped Abraham in al his iourneyes; Iacob in his dangers; Ioſeph in his baniſhment; Dauid in his perſecutions; Iob in his aduerſities; Tobias in his blindneſſe; Iudeth in her enterpriſe; Heſter in her petition; The Noble Machabees in their battles and triumphes; and to be ſhort, as many as with humble and religious hearts committed themſelues vnto him.

Theſe and other like examples doe ſtrengthen and encourage our harts in labours and aduerſities, and cauſe it to hope and truſt aſſuredly in God. Now what doth Conſideration worke in all this? Forſooth it taketh this medicine into her hands, & applieth



plyeth it to the weake and diſeaſed member that hath neede of it; I meane heereby, that Conſideration bringeth al theſe things into our remembrance, & repreſenteth them to our hart; it ſearcheth and weigheth the greatneſſe of theſe louing pledges and mercies of Almightie God, and with them, animateth & encourageth the afflicted perſon, that he be not diſmaied, but rather fortifieth him with a ſtrong Hope, & induceth him alſo to put his truſt in that moſt mercifull and louing Lord, who neuer failed any one mā, that had recourſe vnto him with all his heart.

*The fruit of Conſideration.*

By this therefore thou ſeeſt deere Chriſtian Reader, how Conſideration is the miniſter and ſeruaunt of Hope, and how it ſerueth her, and repreſenteth vnto her al ſuch things as may ſtrengthen and encourage her. But that man that conſidereth not any of theſe things, and hath no eyes to ſee any part of them, wherewith can he poſsibly ſtrengthen, and fortifie this vertue of Hope in himſelfe, that it may be profitable vnto him in his labours, and aduerſities?

## *How Consideration helpeth Charitie.*

### §. III.

*Charitie of al vertues is the most excellent.*

AFter Hope, followeth Charitie, whose due praises cannot be vttered in few words. For Charitie is the most excellent vertue of all vertues, as well Theologicall, as Cardinall. Charitie is the life and soule of them all; and Charitie is also the accomplishment of all the Law. For as the Apostle saith; *Hee that loueth,* (that is, he that is in perfect charity) *hath fulfilled the Lawe.* This is the vertue that maketh the yoke of God sweet, and his burthen light. This is the measure, whereby the portion of glorie that shall be giuen vnto vs in the life to come must be measured. This is that vertue that is liking and acceptable vnto almightie God, and for whose sake, all such thinges are very acceptable vnto him as be indeede acceptable vnto him. For truelie without Charitie, neither Faith, nor Prophecie, nor martyrdome, be of any value in the sight of God,

1.Cor.13. 2.13.

Ro.13.10. Mat.11.30.

*According to the measure of our loue, we shall be rewarded of God.*

1.Cor.13.2



God. To conclude, Charitie is the fountaine and original of all other vertues, by reason of the prehemi- nencie and soueraignetie it hath to commaund them, and to make them to doe their offices; as the same Apostle confirmeth, saying; *Charitie is patient and benigne: Charitie is not enuious, it doth no hurt to any man, it is not proud nor ambitious, neither doth it seeke her owne commoditie: Charitie is not angrie, it thinketh no euill, it reioyceth not at wickednesse, and it is verie glad of the truth: Charitie suffereth al things, it beleeueth al things, trusteth al things, & beareth all things.*

*Charitie is the fountain & originall of all the vertues.*

1.Cor.13.4

Now although it be true, that all vertues and good workes, doe helpe vs towardes the obtaining of this most excellent and precious Iewell; yet of all others, Consideration helpeth vs most speciallie. For certaine it is, that our will is a blinde power, that cannot step one foote, vnlesse the vnderstanding doe goe before, and illuminate and teach it, what thing it ought to desire, and withall how much it ought to wil and desire the same.

*Our will is a blind power, and must be guided by our vnderstanding.*

It is also certaine, (as Aristotle affirmeth,

meth) that each good thing is amiable in it selfe, & that euery thing dooth naturally loue his owne proper weale.

*How we be prouoked to loue God, both in regard of his diuine perfections, and of his great loue towards vs.*

TO the intent therefore that our Wil may be inclined to loue Almightie God, it is requisite, that the Vnderstanding doe goe before it, to examine and trie, & so consequently, to declare vnto the Will, how amiable almightie God is, both in respect of himselfe, (to wit, in regard of his diuine perfections,) as also in respect of vs, (to wit, in regarde of his wonderfull loue and mercies shewed towards vs;) that is, the vnderstanding must weigh the greatnesse and excellencie of his bountie and goodnesse, of his benignity, of his mercie, of his beautie, of his sweetnes, of his meekenes, of his liberality, of his nobleneſſe, and of all other his perfections, which are innumerable.

Besides this, the vnderstanding hath



ath to consider, how louing and erciful Almightie God hath beene owardes vs; how much hee hath loed vs; how much he hath done and ffered for our sakes, euen from he maunger, vntill his verie death pon the Crosse; how many great lessings and benefites he hath prepared for vs for the time to come; ow many he doth presently bestow ppon vs; from how many great uils and miseries hee hath deliuered vs; with how great patience hee ath suffered vs; and how gently and ouingly he hath dealt with vs; with ll his other benefits, which bee also nnumerable.

And thus by considering and pondering very much in the consideration of these things, our heart shall by litle and little bee enkindled and enflamed in the loue of such a mercifull and bountiful louing Lord. For if the verie wild and sauage beastes, doe loue their wel-willers and benefactors, and if gifts (as it is commonly said) doe breake the hard and stonie Rockes; and if that man that findeth benefites, findeth withall (as the Philosopher saith) *Chaines*

*where*

*whereby to take and bind mens hearts*
what hart is there then ſo ſtony har
and ſauage, that conſidering the pa
ſing bountifull goodneſſe and grea
neſſe of all theſe ineſtimable ben
fites, is not enkindled and enflame
in the loue of our moſt merciful an
louing Lord, that hath beſtowe
them vpon vs?

*How Almightie God will helpe him, th*
*helpeth himſelfe.*

ADde alſo hereunto, that when
man conſidereth theſe thing
attentiuely with himſelfe, and end
uoreth with the grace of God to do
ſo much as hee is able to doe for hi
part, Almightie God will then alſ
do that, that appertaineth vnto him
that is, Almightie God will moou
him, that moueth himſelfe, and hel
him that helpeth himſelfe: by he
ping our conſideration with the ligh
of the holy Ghoſt, and with the gi
of vnderſtanding; the which th
more it penetrateth & vnderſtandet
al theſe reaſons that induce vs to th
loue of God, the more dooth it en
kindle and enflame vs in the ſam
lou



loue of him.

For like as that euerlaſting light and word of the Father, is not a barren word, but a fruitfull word, which together with the father, produceth the holy Ghoſt, which is a loue conſubſtantiall: euen ſo dooth this light & word of God worke in our harts, by enkindling and inſpiring this loue of God in them.

¶ *How vehement acts of Charitie, are a meane to encreaſe Charitie.*

THis may yet be confirmed & declared more plainely by another reaſon. For it is manifeſt, that although this vertue of Charitie doe grow and increaſe (as we haue ſaid) with the actes of al other vertues, being done in the ſtate of grace: yet dooth it chiefely increaſe with her owne proper acts, when ſuch acts be vehement.

For like as by writing well, and with an earneſt care and diligence, a man attaineth to bee a good writer; by painting, a Painter; and by the exerciſe of ſinging, a Muſitian: e-

euen ſo likewiſe by louing, hee may become a Louer, I meane heereby, that like as the vſe of writing well, cauſeth a man to bee a good writer; and of painting well, a good Painter, &c. euen ſo likewiſe the vſe, exerciſe, and continuance of louing much almightie God, maketh a man at length to become a great louer of God. For albeit this heauenly habilitie and vertue, be the gift of God, and a thing which he infuſeth, poureth and worketh in our ſoules, yet neuertheleſſe hee worketh this by this meane. I meane hereby, that as well the vertues infuſed into our ſoules by Almighty God, as the vertues acquiſite, (to wit, the vertues that bee obtained by our owne labour and induſtrie) do both of them grow and increaſe with the exerciſe of their owne actes, although in a different manner.

*The vſe, exerciſe, and continuance of louing much Almighty God, maketh a man become a great louer of God.*

Whereupon we may inferre thus much, that the more a man ſhal multiplie the acts of the loue of God, & the more he ſhal exerciſe himſelf in this vertue of Charitie, and the longer he ſhall endure and perſeuere in this worke of loue, the more ſhall this



this heauenly gift of charity be rooted and fortified in him. But nowe how can this bee doone without the exerciſe of Cõſideration? Howe can the wil be occupied in louing of almighty God, vnleſſe the vnderſtanding be exerciſed in blowing, enkindling, & diſcouering vnto it, the cauſes of the loue of God?

For like as when two horſes draw in a Chariot, the one cannot go forwardes without the other: euen ſo theſe two powers, to wit, the Will and Vnderſtanding, bee in ſuch ſort linked together, that ordinarilie one cannot goe forwardes without the other; (at the leaſt, the Will cannot mooue without the Vnderſtanding.) Thou ſeeſt nowe good Chriſtian reader, howe inwardly and entirely the exerciſe of Conſideration is annexed to the loue of God. For ſo much as a man can neuer (or very hardly) ſet himſelf to loue, vnleſſe he doe alſo conſider, or haue before cõſidered, ſuch things as may moue him vnto this loue.

Beſides, it is very needfull for vs, to vſe ſome exerciſe of Conſideration, not onelie for the increaſing of

this vertue of Charity, but alſo for the preſeruation of the ſame, that is to ſay, Conſideration is neceſſarie, not only that Charity may increaſe, but alſo that it it may not faile & decreaſe, among ſo many contradictions and ſtumbling blocks, as it hath in this fraile and miſerable life. We ſee that a fiſh beeing out of the water dieth foorth-with: and a drop of water, being out of the Sea, is quickly dried vp: and the fire beeing out of his natural region, is incontinentlie conſumed, vnleſſe there be ſome care and diligence vſed to feede and maintaine it, by putting oftentimes wood vnto it, wherewith to preſerue it. Now the very like neede hath the fire of Charitie alſo to preſerue it in this life, where it is as it were a ſtranger & pilgrime. And the wood wherewith it muſt bee preſerued, is the Conſideration of the benefits of Almightie God, and of his perfections. For each one of theſe things being well conſidered, is as it were a fagot, or a firebrande, that enkindleth and enflameth this fire of the loue of God in our harts.

*Charity is as it were a ſtranger in this tranſitory life.*

Wherefore it behoueth vs, to nouriſh



riſh and maintaine this fire of Charitie, oftentimes with the woode of Conſideratiõ, that this diuine flame may neuer faile in vs. According as Almightie God hath ſignified in the Lawe, when he ſaid, *Vpon my Aulter* (which is the heart of the iuſt man) *there ſhall be alwaies fire.* And therefore let good diligence and care bee taken euery day in the morning, to maintaine this fire of Charitie with wood, (to wit, with the Conſideration of all theſe things) that by this meane it may be alwaies preſerued. And ſo is it ſayde in the Pſalme: *Through my meditation, there is enkindled a fire*, to wit, the fire of charity. Leuit. 6. 12

## *That all vertues may be loſt by diſcontinuance, and want of vſe and exerciſe of them.*

THis neceſſitie of Conſideration may bee proued by another reaſon alſo. For we ſee by experience in all abilities and graces, both ſuch as are naturall, as thoſe alſo that are acquiſite (I meane, gotten by our owne trauaile and induſtrie,) that like as they

they increaſe by vſe and exerciſe: euen ſo are they alſo forgotten, if we leaue to exerciſe them.

And this wee ſee plainly verified euen in ſuch things as be very naturall, and cuſtomably vſed. For what thing is more vſuall then the tongue and language, which a man is enured and acquainted withall, euen frō his Mothers pappes, and yet may it be forgotten in time, if it bee not vſed and exerciſed? But what ſpeake I of the tongue; ſeeing it happeneth ſometimes, that when a man hath lien ſick in his bed, but onely foure or fiue monthes, he can ſcarcely afterwardes frame himſelfe to goe againe when he riſeth, notwithſtanding that going is a thing ſo natural and ſo accuſtomably vſed. Nowe, if the abilities which be ſo natural and ſo much exerciſed, doe ſo much decay whē they be not vſed, what will the ſupernaturall abilities do, which are but as it were certaine props and ſtaies adioyned vnto vs, to ſupplie the defects of nature? And if Charitie with all other vertues infuſed, be in like manner to be reckened in this account, in what caſe then ſhall we



we be, if wee doe but verie ſeldome or neuer exerciſe our ſelus in them? For if that thing that is euen naturall, will be loſt for want of exerciſe, how much more will that bee loſt that is ſupernaturall? And if that thing may be loſt that is faſtnened euen in our verie bowels, what ſhall that doe, that is but as it were onely faſtened vnto vs with little pinnes? Againe, if it bee true that all amitie and friendſhip is both preſerued and increaſed, by meanes of familiaritie and communication: and by the want therof is vtterly quenched and loſt, (according as Ariſtotle affirmeth,) what ſhall then become of thoſe perſons, that haue no manner of communication with Almightie God at al? And what can we hope of them that do neuer ſpeak with him, nor hee with them, nor ſo much as think, conſider, or treate of any heauenly matter?

Thou ſeeſt then (deare Chriſtian Brother) of how great importaunce the exerciſe of Conſideration, and communication with almightie God is vnto vs, for the preſeruation of this vertue of Charitie.

## Howe Consideration helpeth *Deuotion, and all other vertues affective.*

### §. IIII.

THe helpe of Consideration is no lesse behouefull to be had for al such vertues as are called affectiue: that is, appertaining to the affection, whereof we haue made mention before. Among which vertues, one of the most principall is, Deuotion: which is a certaine heauenly abilitie and gift, that enclineth our Will to desire all such things with great affection and earnestnes, as appertaine to the seruice of Almightie GOD, which is one of the things that man hath most need of, in this state of nature corrupted. For wee see by experience, that men doe sinne, not so much for want of vnderstanding, as for want of will: I meane heereby, that they sin not so much for want of knowledge what is good, as for that they are vnwilling to doe the thing, that they know to bee good.

*What Deuotion is.*

And



And this vnwillingnes proceedeth not of the nature of vertue, (which of it selfe is most sweete, delectable, and very agreeable to the nature of man,) but of the corruption of man.

Now, considering that this defect of our Will, is the very chiefe and principall impediment wee haue to hinder vs from vertue and goodnes, our principall care must be, to seeke a remedy for the curing of this defect; for which purpose, one of the things that helpeth vs most, is Deuotion.

*Our owne wil is the principall impediment that hindereth vs from vertue.*

For Deuotion is none other thing but a heauenlie refreshing, & a blast or inspiration of the holy ghost, that breaketh and maketh his waie thorough all these difficulties, shaketh off this heauinesse, cureth this lothsomnes of our Will, and causeth vs to haue a taste and sauour in that thing, that was otherwise vnsauorie, and therby maketh vs very prompt, agile, and quicke vnto al goodnesse. And this wonderful effect of Deuotion, the seruants of God doe dailie try, & perceiue by experience in thē selues, at what time they haue some great and singular Deuotion. For

*The wonderful effect that deuotiō worketh in a mā*

then they find themſelues more willing and luſtie vnto all labour and paines, then they bee at other times. And then it ſeemeth, that the youth of their ſoules reioyceth, and is renued; and then they trie by experience in theſelues, the truth of thoſe words of the Prophet, where he ſaith,

Pſal.103.5 *They that truſt in the Lord, ſhall renue*
Eſay.40.31 *their ſtrength: they ſhal take wings, as it were of an Eagle, they ſhal run and not be weary: they ſhal go and not faint.*

## *That Deuotion is a continuall ſpring of good and holy deſires.*

DEuotion hath alſo another property, which is, to be as it were a certaine fountaine, and perpetuall ſpring of good and holy deſires. For which cauſe in the holy ſcriptures,

Cant.1.& 4 it is commonly called an oyntment, which is compounded of many ſundry ſorts of odoriferous ſpices, and thereby yeeldeth out from it manie ſweete odours. Now the very like operation hath deuotion alſo, for the time it indureth in our hearts, for ſo much



much as it wholly ſpreadeth it ſelfe abroad into a thouſand ſundry kinds of holy purpoſes and deſires, the which the more they increaſe and are dilated, the more doth the ſtenches of our appetite decreaſe and diminiſh, which are the euill deſires that proceede from the ſame. For like as the euill ſauour in a ſick mans Chamber, is not ſo much perceiued when there is a little Frankinſence, or ſome other odoriferous thing burnt therein: euen ſo the ſauour of our euill deſires is not ſo much perceiued, ſo long as the moſt ſweete ſauor of this precious oyntment continueth within vs.

And for ſo much as it is certaine, that all the corruption of our life, commeth of the corruption & ſtench of our appetite, and of the euill deſires that proceede from the ſame, it ſhall bee our part therefore, to vſe great diligence in procuring this heuenly oyntment of deuotion, which is of verie great force and efficacie, to diminiſh and conſume this peſtilent corruption.

And in like manner, as Conſideration ſerueth in all the premiſſes, e-

nen

euen ſo doth it alſo ſerue and further all the other vertues before mentioned, which are, *The feare of GOD: The ſorrow for our ſinnes: The contempt of our ſelues*; wherein conſiſteth the vertue of *Humilitie, and Thankeſgiuing vnto Almightie GOD for his benefits.*

For (as we haue ſaid before) there can be no good affection in the will, vnleſſe it proceede of ſome conſideration of the vnderſtanding. For how can a man haue ſorrow & contrition for his ſinnes, but by conſidering the filthineſſe and multitude of them? The loſſe wee receiue by them? The hatred Almightie God conceiueth againſt them? And withall, how polluted the ſoule of man remaineth by reaſon of them.

Againe, how can a man ſtirre vp his heart vnto the feare of God, but by conſidering the highneſſe of his maieſtie, the greatneſſe of his iuſtice, the profoundnes of his iudgements, the multitude of his owne ſinnes, with other the like things? How can a man humble and deſpiſe himſelfe with all his heart, vnleſſe he conſider the great number of his owne frailties,



ties, infirmities, falles, and miſeries? For if Humilitie bee (as S. Bernard affirmeth) the contempt of our ſelus, which proceedeth of the knowledge of our ſelues, it is manifeſt, that the deeper a man ſhall wade by meanes of Conſideration into this knowledge of himſelfe, and the more hee ſhall digge into this dunghill, the better and more truely ſhall hee vnderſtand what he is of himſelfe, and the more ſhall he contemne & humble himſelfe. S. Bernard.

Now to ſpeake of thankſgiuing vnto Almightie God for his manifold ineſtimable benefites, out of which doe proceede thoſe ſongs and praiſes of God (which is a principall part of true Religion,) from whence (I ſay) doth this rendering of thanks proceede, but from the profound conſideration of the ſame benefites? For the more a man ſhall by meanes of Conſideration penetrate, and vnderſtand the greatnes and excellencie of Gods benefites, the more is he prouoked to praiſe, and giue thankes vnto Almightie GOD, with all his heart for the ſame.

I doe heere alſo paſſe ouer the contempt

contempt of the world, and the hatred of ſin, with other the like vertuous affections, which next after Grace, doe proceede of this exerciſe of Conſideration, which is the ſpurre and prouoker of them all, & the oyle wherewith the Lampe of all theſe vertues and good affections, and of other the like graces, are ſtill nouriſhed and maintained.

## Howe praier ioyned with *Conſideration, helpeth al the vertuous affections.*

### §. V.

PRayer likewiſe when it is ioyned with Conſideration (as ordinarily it is wont to bee) helpeth no leſſe then Conſideration it ſelfe: yea, ſometimes it helpeth much more. For Conſideration commonly is not occupied any further, but onely about enkindling of ſome one of the vertuous affections; but Prayer when it is attent and deuout, and is withall accompanied with Spirite and feruencie of minde, is woont to



to ſtirre vp all theſe vertues aforeſayde. For when the ſoule preſenteth herſelfe before Almightie God, with an earneſt great deſire to appeaſe his wrath, and to deſire him of mercie, then there is no ſtone ſo harde, but that it is mooued heereunto.

I meane hereby, that there is no holy affection, but that it is thē wholie exerciſed and employed to this purpoſe. And it fareth in this caſe as it doth with a Mother, that is deſirous to ſtill her child, or as it doth with a good and louing wife, that hath a deſire to pacifie her husband when ſhee perceiueth him to be angry, in which caſes, they are wont to omit no means they can deuiſe, that may any wiſe further the matter.

### *The offices and effects of Prayer.*

IN the exerciſe of praier, the religious ſoule accuſeth her ſelfe before almightie God; there with the Publican ſhee is confounded; and aſhamed for her ſinnes and offences: there ſhe purpoſeth an amendement

of

of life; there she humbleth her selfe, and trembleth before the supreame diuine Maiesty. There she believeth; there she hopeth; there she loueth; there she adoreth; there she prayseth; there she giueth thanks for all benefits; and there she offereth sacrifice vnto almighty God, both for her selfe, and for al her neighbours. All these things be performed in a deuout prayer.

And because the habites of vertues doe increase with the exercise of their acts, hereof it proceedeth, that the soule by meanes of this exercise of prayer, remaineth verie much beautified, and perfitted in these vertues, as Laurentius Iustinianus affirmeth in these wordes: *In true and earnest praier, the soule is clensed from sin: Charitie is nourished: Faith is illuminated: Hope is strengthened: the Spirit is comforted: the bowels are mollified: the heart is quieted: trueth is discouered: temptation is ouercome: heauines is put to flight: the senses are reuiued: the strength that was weakened, is repaired: luke-warmenes is abãdoned: the rustines of vices is cõsumed: & in this exercise the liuely*



*liuely sparkles of heauenly desires doe arise, and shewe themselues, among which burneth the flame of the loue of God.*

By this we vnderstand, that praier is a most conuenient exercise, for that man that mindeth to reforme his manners and life, and to change himselfe into another man; as our Sauiour hath plainly signified vnto vs, in the mysterie of his glorious transfiguration, wherof S. Luke wri- Luke.9.28.
teth thus; *That as he was praying in the Mount, hee suddainly transfigured himselfe in such wise, that his face shined very bright, like the sunne, and his garments became white, like snow.*

*Why our Sauiour woulde transfigure himselfe rather at the time of prayer, then at any other time.*

OVR Sauiour coulde rightwell haue transfigured himselfe at other times then at prayer, if it had pleased him; but hee would of verie purpose be transfigured whiles hee was at prayer, to signifie vnto vs in the transfiguration of his body, what vertue praier hath to transfigure our soules.

*Praier hath great vertu to transfigure our soules:*

soules: that is, to make them to lose the customes of the old man, and to clothe them with the newe man, which is created after the Image of God. Ther it is, wher the vnderstanding is illuminated with the beames of the true Sonne of Iustice, & wher the garments and ornaments of the soule are renued, and become whiter then snow. This is the very thing, that Almightie God signified to holy Iob, when he said.

Iob.39:29.

*What? Is it by thy wisedome that the Hauke pruneth and chaungeth her feathers, when shee beateth her wings against the South?* Certainely, it is a thing greatly to bee wondered at, that this Birde knoweth howe to cast off her old feathers, and how to feather her selfe with new. And that for this purpose, shee seekth the hot ayre of the South, that with the heat thereof her pores may be opened, & with her mooving, the old feathers fall off, and so giue place to the new that beginne to spring out. But how much more wonderfull is it, to see a soule vnclothe her selfe of Adam, and to put on Christ? To chaunge the conditions of the old man, and to



adorne her selfe with the conditions of the newe man? Nowe this change that is so wonderfull, is then wrought, when the deuout soule turneth himselfe to the South, and there beateth her wings in the ayre. And what is it to turne her selfe to the South, but to lift vp her spirit to the consideration of the eternall light, & to the beames of the true Sonne of iustice?

And what is it to beate the wings in the ayre, but to bee there sighing and panting with heauenly affections and desires, calling vpon Almightie God with great anguish of mind, and desiring most humbly his fauour and grace? For then bloweth the ayre of the South, that is, the heauenlie refreshing of the holie Ghost, who with his temperate heat and sweet mouing, strengtheneth & helpeth vs, to cast off all the old feathers of the old Adam, that they may giue place to the newe feathers of vertues & holy desires, which there doe beginne to growe and bud out. And this is that thing that Ecclesiasticus signified by other wordes, when he said: *They that feare the Lord will* Ecclus 2.18

*wil prepare their harts, & sanctifie the soules before him.*

The which is principally done i the excercise of deuoute praier: F there it is, where the soule presente her selfe most familiarly before A mightie God, (as S. Bernard saith And there it is, whereby approchin neere vnto the euerlasting light, sh seeth more cleerely her own defect and so bewaileth & accuseth them and seeketh remedy for them, des ring the Lord of his grace, and full purposing an amendement on he part; and thus by little and little, sh sanctifieth and amendeth her life Thou seest now good Christian rea der, what a great helpe this exerci of Consideration is, towards the ob taining of those most high and ex cellēt vertues, which are (as we hau said) peculiar to a Christian man.

How



## How consideration helpeth towardes the obtayning of the foure Cardinall vertues: which be, Prudence, Iustice, Fortitude, and Temperance.

### §. VI.

BEsides, Consideration helpeth also (after a sort) towardes the obtaining of the other foure vertues, called Cardinal vertues: which are Prudence, Iustice, Fortitude, and Temperaunce, as Saint Bernarde plainelie affirmeth in his Booke of Consideration, by these words: *First of all* (saith he) *Consideration purifieth & clenseth the very fountain frō whence it proceedeth: which is the soule. Besides that, it gouerneth our natural passions, it directeth our workes, it correcteth our faults, it frameth our manres, it beautifieth and directeth our life: to be short, it giueth knowledge to a man, of thinges both diuine and humaine.*

*The wonderful effects of consideratiō*

*It is Consideration that distinguisheth*

*sheth things confounded, it recollecth*
*those that be scatered abroad, it searche*
*secrets, it seeketh for truthes, and tryet*
*and examineth such things as are inde*
*but apparant & counterfeit. It is Consi*
*ration that disposeth for the time to co*
*& thinketh of the time past, prouidin*
*the one, & bewailing the others, that*
*nothing may remaine without correct*
*and due chastisement. It is Considerati*
*that in the midst of prosperity foresee*
*aduersitie, and therfore is not dismai*
*when it commeth: for that it hath pr*
*uented the same before hand with con*
*deration. Of which two thinges, the o*
*appertaineth to Prudence, the oth*
*to Fortitude.*

*It is Consideration that sitteth dow*
*as a Iudge, to giue sentence between ple*
*sure and necessity, & appointeth to eue*
*of them their bounds and lymits: giui*
*to necessity that which is sufficient, a*
*taking from pleasure that which is supe*
*fluous, and in so dooning, it maketh &*
*formeth the vertue of Temperance*
*whereunto this office appertaineth.*

Thus farre be the wordes of Sai
Bernard, whereby thou maiest pe
ceiue, howe great & general a help

Cons



onsideration is, towardes the ob-
ining of these vertues.

## Howe Consideration helpeth to resist vices.

### §. VII.

Consideration dooth not onely helpe to obtaine vertues, but also to resist the vices that be contrary nto them. For what kind of temptation is there, against which a man doth not fight, with the weapons of prayer and Consideration? For although it bee most necessarie to vse other weapons for this purpose, as fasting, almes deedes, affliction of the bodie, and keeping it vnder, and to eschewe the occasions of euilles, with other like things: yet at a suddaine, what other weapon can bee deuised more readie, and as it were, euer at hand, then prayer and Consideration? With what other weapons dooth the iust man fight, and ouercome in these battailes, them with them?

If hee be assaulted with the cogi-

tation

tation of carnal pleaſure and delig
hee hideth himſelfe wholly in th
holes of the Rocke, that is, in the
precious woundes of our Sauiou
Chriſt crucified. If he bee aſſaulte
with anger and deſire of reuenge, h
thinketh vpon the wonderfull pat
ence and meekeneſſe of our Sauiou
Chriſt, and vpon thoſe ſweete word
he ſpake, when he deſired pardon o
the Croſſe for thoſe very perſon
that crucified him.

If hee be inticed with gluttonie &
delicious fare; if he bee allured wit
the deſire to lie in a ſoft bed, and t
leade a delicate and wanton life, h
lifteth vp his eyes, and conſidere
the bitter gaule and vinegar, whic
that fountaine of life, our ſweete Sa
uiour Chriſt, dranke vpon the croſſe
and alſo the hard bed of the Croſſ
whereupon hee died: and the paine
full and auſtere trouble-ſome life
which hee led for our ſakes. Whe
he beginneth to bee puffed vp wit
pride, he conſidereth the greatnes
our Sauior Chriſts humilitie. Whe
he is mooued with couetouſneſſe, h
conſidereth the extremity of the po
uertie of our Sauiour Chriſt. Whe
ſleep



ſleepe and ſlothfulneſſe maketh him to become heauie and dull, he conſidereth the paineful watchings and trauailes, that our Sauiour endured for vs in his praiers.

When he is wearied with the troubleſome labours and paines of this preſent life, he cõſidereth the greatneſſe of the heauenly treaſures, and glorious delights which he ſhall receiue in the life to come. When he is tempted with the fickle pleaſures & delights of this miſerable worlde, he conſidereth the euerlaſtingnes and bitternes of the horrible paines and torments of hel fire.

When hee is moleſted and wearied with the croſſe, he thinketh vpon the vertuous examples of the Martyres, of the Apoſtles, and of the Prophets, and with the conſideration of that which is paſt, he cauſeth al that he dooth preſently, to ſeeme little vnto him. And when it ſo hapneth, that with all theſe defẽſiues he cannot well ſuſtaine the weight of his burthen, he addeth thẽ vnto the diligence of Conſideration, the voice of Praier, calling and crying with great anguiſh of minde vppon Al-

nighty God, who (bee you well assured) will neuer forsake them that call vppon him, but promiseth that hee will giue eare vnto them; and hath giuen vs very manifest and sundry examples, that he neuer forsook them that called vppon him with all their hearts.

This is that, which the holy Prophet King Dauid affirmeth in many places he did, when he saw himselfe compassed about with the snares of his enemies, and with tribulations and afflictions, saying; *I Cried vnto the Lord with my voyce: with my voice I praied vnto the Lord. I poured out my meditation before him, and declared mine affliction in his presence.*

Ps. 142. 1. 2

## Howe Consideration excludeth not other particular helps vnto vertues.

### §. VIII.

HOwbeit, let no man for all this imagine, that hereby is excluded the particular labor and study, that is



is to bee vsed about euerie one of the other vertues, for that Consideration is so great a helpe to obtaine them. For so much as generall helps do not exclude the particular helpes that be required in euery thing. And the general helpes required towards the obtaining of all vertues, are not onely Consideration, but also Fasting, Prayer, hearing of the Word, receiuing the Sacrament of the bodie and bloud of Christ, with other the like vertues, which bee generall helps and prouocations vnto al vertues. But besides these generall helps that doe giue light to the vnderstanding, and moue the will to goodnes, it is very requisite also to vse the proper exercises of the same vertues, whereby to roote, and make the habites of them more perfect by vse, and to cause a man to haue a more promptnes and facilitie, in the exercise of good workes. For otherwise, like as the sword that neuer cōmeth out of the scabberd, is commonly verie hard to bee drawne out, at the time that a man hath need to occupie it: euen so whosoeuer dooth neuer exercise himselfe in the actes of

*Note the generall helpes vnto all vertues.*

vertues, shall neuer bee prompt or quicke in doing them, when he shall haue need to vse them.

And although Charitie bee the greatest, and most generall helpe we haue vnto all vertues, yet Consideration is, as it were, the generall instrument of Charitie, whereby to attaine vnto all goodnesse, as we haue here declared. And therefore, like as the soule is the first beginning of al the workes of man, and yet it vseth naturall heate, as a generall instrument vnto all such things as it doth: euen so is Charitie the beginning of all our good workes, and yet Charitie vseth Consideration and Deuotion, as general instruments to bring them to passe.

*Charitie is the beginning of all our good workes.*

So that it is no derogation to charitie, to giue this preheminence vnto these vertues: for so much as this preheminence belongeth vnto Charitie, as to the Mistris and principall agent: but to Consideration and Deuotion, as to her instrumentes and helpers.





## How the exercises of Prayer, *Consideration, and Meditation, &c. appertaine not onely to Clergie persons, (though principally vnto them,) but vnto the Laitie also.*

### §. IX.

BVT peraduenture thou wilt say, that these exercises of Prayer, Consideration, and Meditation do appertaine onely vnto Clergie persons, and not to the Laitie. True it is I graunt, that these exercises doe principally appertaine vnto Clergie persons, by reason of their state and profession of life: but yet neuertheless, the Laitie are not excused of vsing the exercise of Prayer, if they mind continually to preserue themselues, & to liue in the feare of God, without committing any deadly sin. For the Laitie are bound to haue Faith, Hope, Charitie, Humilitie, the feare of God, Contrition, Deuotion, and an hatred against sinne.

*What Laymen are bound to haue.*

Now seeing all these vertues bee for the most part vertues effectiue,

(as we haue alreadie declared) which affections most necessarily proceede of some consideration of the Vnderstanding, if this cõsideration be not exercised, how shall these vertues be preserued? How shall a man helpe himselfe by Faith, if he do not sometimes consider such thinges as his faith telleth him? How shal he be enkindled in Charitie, and strengthened in Hope? How shall hee bridle himselfe with the feare of God How shall he be mooued to Deuotion, to sorrow for his sinnes, and to the contempt of himselfe, (wherin consisteth the vertue of Humilitie, which appertaineth vnto all kind of persons) if hee doe not consider those things, wherewith these affections are wont to be enkindled, according as wee haue before declared?

Neither ought a man to passe ouer these things in the exercise of Consideration, with too much speed & in post haste. For among the miseries of mans heart one of the greatest is, that it is so sensible to vnderstand the things of the world, and so vnsensible to vnderstand the things appertaining vnto Almightie God. Insomuch



Insomuch that vnto the one, it is as it were a very dry reed: and to the other, as it were greene wood, that cannot be sette on fire and enkindled, but with verie great labour and trauaile.

Wherefore we must not in our exercise of Consideration, passe ouer these things in such haste, but stay, & pause for a time in them, more or lesse, according as the holy Ghost shall instruct vs; and according also, as the businesse and occupations of euery man in his state & vocation of life shall giue him leaue. And it is not a matter of meere necessity, to haue certain times appointed euery day for Consideration.

Vnto these thinges yee may adde furthermore, the daungers of the world, with all the great difficulties men haue, to preserue themselues without deadly sinne, in a body so euill disposed, & in a world so dangerous, and among so many enemies, as we haue continually assaulting vs on euerie side. And therefore, if, for that thou art no Clergie man, thy state of life doe not binde thee vnto so much exercise of Praier and

Meditation: yet the greatnes of the daunger, wherein thou liueſt in the world, muſt needes binde thee to vſe ſome exerciſe therein.

*Note why the Laity liue in more danger of falling into deadly ſinne then the Clergie.*

The ſtate of a Clergie man, I confeſſe, is greater then thine, but thy danger of falling into deadly ſinne, is alſo greater then his. For the Clergie man is protected and garded by his ſtudy, by obedience, by praiers, by faſtings, by ſaying daily diuine ſeruice, by the auſterity of his miniſtry, by good company & holie conuerſation, and by all other ſpirituall exerciſes: but the Lay-man, liuing, practiſing, and dealing daily and hourely in the throng and preſſe of the world (beſides that hee is deſtitute, & vnprouided of al theſe great helps & ſafegards) hee is compaſſed about on all ſides, with dragons and ſcorpions, and treadeth alwaies vpon Serpents & Baſilisks. I meane, the daungerous conuerſation with wicked perſons, and the continuall occaſions & temptations of falling into deadly ſinne, both at home and abroade, within himſelfe, and without himſelfe, both at doores and at windowes, and hath a thouſande ſeuerall



uerall diueliſh engines and ſnares, laid to entrap him at all times both day and night.

Among all which daungers and temptations, for him to keepe his hart pure, and his eyes chaſt, and his body cleane, in the midſt of the raging fires of youth, of naughtie companie, of lewde conuerſation, and among ſo many euill examples of this wicked world, where there is ſcarcely heard one word of God; but rather ieſting and ſcoffing at all ſuch as be giuen to vertue and godlineſſe, it is one of the greateſt wonders that almighty God worketh in the world. Wherefore, if the Clergie man ought to be alwayes armed, becauſe hee is by his profeſsion a man of warre: euen ſo muſt the Lay-man be armed alſo, by reaſon of the great perill and daunger he liueth in. For as well do they goe armed, that haue enemies, as thoſe that be ſouldiours, and men of warre.

The ſouldiours go armed by reaſon of the bond and dutie of their profeſsion, and the others go armed by reaſon of their neceſsitie. Among which ſpirituall weapons, wee doe

not onely place praier, Consideration, and Meditation; but also fasting, diligent hearing of the Word Preached, reading of deuoute Bookes, often receiuing of the holy Sacrament, auoyding euill companie, resisting the occasions of sinnes, with al other bringing vnder of our rebellious bodies.

All which thinges be, as it were a certaine brine and pickle, to keepe and preserue this corruptible and euill inclined flesh of ours, that it breede not wormes and stench in it. For vndoubtedly, since the corruption of originall sin, it is the greatest and hardest matter of the world, for men to keepe themselues any long time without deadly sinne, liuing in such a corrupt and dissolute wicked world as this is. For if those verie persons, that doe vse all the spirituall helpes and exercises, are, all that notwithstanding, much molested with the feare, and danger of falling into deadly sinne; what shal become of those, that doe neuer vse any of all these spirituall exercises scarcely in all their life?

And if the holy King Dauid, and many



many other saints (that liued so warily and vertuously, & went armed with so many kindes of spirituall weapons) did notwithstanding take such great falles, at what time the occasions of sinne were ministred vnto them, what shall become of them (trow yee) that make none account at all of any of these spiritual exercises?

*An answere to an obiection, that some slothfull Christians doe make against the holy exercises of Prayer, Meditation & Consideration, saying, that they are boūd to no more, but to keepe & obserue the Commaundements of God, and of his Church.*

§ X.

BVT thou wilt say, I am not bound to keepe any more then the Commandements of almighty God, & of his Church. True it is, I grant. But yet to keep wel this wall, we haue neede of a fore-wal or bulwarke; and to keepe this vessell, wee haue neede of a Cupbord to keepe it in; and to raise vp this building, wee

we haue neede of a ſcaffold, and o-
ther engines to raiſe it vp withal. I
meane hereby, that to keep the Law
of God, wee haue neede of manie
things, to ſtrengthen & encourage
our harts, for the keeping & obſer-
uation of the ſame law.

For if the nature of man were in ſo
good plight as it was before ſinne,
then were it a verie eaſie matter to
fulfill our duty heerein; but nowe
(alas) hauing ſo many lets and con-
tradictions, we haue neede to haue
euer two cares, the one how to keep
the Law of God; and the other how
to ſtrengthen our heart, that it may
ouercome the impediments and
contradictons that doe hinder vs
from fulfilling the Lawes and com-
mandements of God.

When the children of Iſraell re-
turned from the Captiuity of Babi-
lon, they went about to build Ieru-
ſalem againe, and they intended to
doe nothing elſe but only to build;
but becauſe the borderers round a-
bout them, ſought to hinder them
in their building, their labor & tra-
uaile was thereby doubled. So that
they were conſtrained to appoint

Nehe. 4. 7.





the one part of the people to attend
to the building, & the other to fight
and driue away their enemies from
the wall.

Now in our caſe, whereas there
be ſo many enemies that doo daily
and hourely ſeeke to hinder vs in
this ſpiritual building of vertues; the
deuils on the one ſide, with a thou-
ſand ſubtile ſnares and deceits; the
world on the other ſide, with a thou-
ſand kinds of ſcãdalous offences &
euill examples; and the fleſh in the
midſt, with diuers & ſundry kindes
of appetites, which be ſo fiery and
ſo contrarie to the law of God, (for
God requireth chaſtitie, & the fleſh
longeth after ſenſuality; God requi-
reth humility, and the fleſh ſeeketh
after vanity; God would haue auſte-
rity of life, & the fleſh hunteth after
delights & pleaſures:) if now there
be no ſpirituall weapons exerciſed
to driue away theſe enemies; if there
be no medicines vſed to cure this
corrupted fleſh, howe ſhall a man
keepe chaſtity among ſo many dan-
gers? charitie among ſo many ſcan-
dalous offences; peace among ſo
many contradictions; ſimplicitie a-

mong so many malicious deceits: cleannes of life, in a body so filthie: and humilitie, in a worlde so much giuen vnto pompous pride and vaine glorie.

Now to cure this flesh, & to make resistance against these enemies, that doe hinder vs in this building of vertues, we haue need of other vertues. Some to carry the burthen, & some others to help vs to carry the same. For the vertue of chastity fulfilleth the burthen of the commandement, which sayth; *Thou shalt not commit adulterie*: but fasting, prayer, auoyding of occasions of sinne, and other the like holy exercises, do help to mortifie the flesh, that it may bee the better able to beare this burthē. All which vertues, although they be not alwaies of precept & bounden duty, yet are they oftentimes of very necessitie, and bounden duty to be exercised, whensoeuer the daunger wee bee in is so great, that it requireth the exercise of them, for the keeping and fulfilling of the commandements.

But among these vertues, and defensiues (that do helps vs to obserue the



the commaundements,) one of the most principall is prayer. For prayer is a principall meane to obtaine Grace, which is the thing that is of chiefest force, to sustaine the burthen of the Law of God. And therefore Ecclesiasticus saith, *He that keepeth the Law, multiplieth Prayer.* For wher as he seeth by experience, that none can keepe the Law of God (by the obseruation whereof euerlasting glorie is obtained) without the grace of God, he helpeth himselfe by prayer to obtaine Grace, by meanes whereof he may be able to keepe the Law of God. Eccl. 35.1. Mat.19.17

The Law commaundeth vs to be chaste. But besides this, the holy Ghost addeth, and saith by the Wise man: *Vnderstanding that none could be chaste, vnlesse thou (O Lord) diddest giue him grace for the same, and it was a great grace to know whose gift it was. I went vnto the Lord, and I demaunded of him this grace with all my hart.* Sap 8.21. 1.Co.15.10 Phil. 2.13. Phil 4.13.

Whereby thou maiest see (according as wee declared in the beginning) that the Wall hath need of a fore-wall or bulwarke, and the Vessell

sell hath need of a Cupbord to keepe it in; and some vertues haue neede of other vertues to defend and gard one another.

Now if this bee true, that thou art bound to keepe the Law of God, and not to commit any deadly sinne, it is good reason, that thou doe seeke out all such meanes, as may helpe thee to keepe the same Lawe, and to preserue thee without deadly sinne.

The which meanes, although generally they bee but of counsell, yet sometimes they may bee of precept, when the necessitie of exercising the (as wee haue said) is so great, that without the vse of those meanes, the very commaundements themselues cannot bee kept and fulfilled, as all the learned Diuines doe affirme.

Howbeit euery Christian, that hath an earnest desire of his saluation, ought not to expect, and delay the seeking for these remedies, vntil the very last and extreme danger, when the knife is alreadie at his throate; but he ought to make good prouision, and to furnish himselfe before hand, by meanes of these foresaid spirituall exercises, that he may liue more



more safe and secure, from the perill of breaking Gods commaundements.

## Of the matter of Consideration.

### §. XI.

HAuing nowe spoken both of the profit and necessitie of Consideration, and our hearts beeing nowe well affected heerewith towards this vertue, let vs begin to treate of the matter of Consideration, which cōsisteth of certain godly and deuoute Considerations, which are of greatest force to induce vs to the loue & feare of God, to the abhorring of sinne, & contempt of the world. For which purpose there be no Considerations better, nor of greater force and efficacy, then those that are taken out of the principall Articles & mysteries of our faith; as the bitter passion and death of our Sauiour; the

the remembraunce of the terrible day of Iudgement: of the horrible tormentes of hell: of the glorie of heauen; of the benefites of Almighty God; of our sinnes; and of our life and death; for euery one of these pointes being well waighed & considered, bee able to prouoke our hearts very much to al the effects aboue mentioned.

These very pointes Bonauenture hath treated, in a Booke that hee intituled *Fascicularius*, and hath diuided them into the seauen dayes of the weeke. And thus he did, that a man might haue euerie day newe foode for the soule, and new prouocations vnto vertue; and so auoide the tediousnes that he should otherwise haue, in thinking alwaies vppon one same matter.

And for this cause it seemeth good vnto me, to followe that same diuision, and if there be any that shall not well like of this diuision, but will follow some other, hee is at free libertie so to doe, and hath also examples to follow therein: for it importeth not much, what order and diuision he follow in the same. And surely



surely that is the best order to bee vsed in these matters, that each man findeth to bee best for himselfe, and wherein hee taketh most profit and commoditie.

## *That the word of God, and the Consideration of heauenly matters, be the foode of our soules.*

MOreouer, I thought it expedient, considering that the food & sustenance of our soule is the word of God, and Consideration of heauenly matter, (for therewith is our soule sustained in the spirituall life, which consisteth in the loue & feare of God,) that like as wee giue ordinarily to our bodies, the refection twise euerie day, to preserue it from fainting in this life; euen so wee should also giue to our soule her ordinarie refection twise euerie day, that she faile not in her life. Howbeit this is not a thing of bounden dutie, nor of precept: but onely of wholesome counsel, especially considering, that the holy Saints, Prophets, & Apostles, haue vsed this exercise more often

often times.

Dan. 6. 10. We reade, that the Prophet Daniell withdrew himselfe to this exercise three times a day; & the Prophet Dauid also vsed to praise God seuen times in the day. And for this cause haue wee here assigned two kinds of Meditations: The one for the Morning, which treateth of those points and matters here before mentioned: the other for the Euening or night, which treateth of the most bitter Passion of our Redeemer.

Psal. 119. Ver. 164.

But if any man shall haue such want of time, or of deuotion, that he cannot withdraw himselfe vnto this exercise twise in the day, let him yet find the meanes to withdraw himselfe therunto at the least once in the day. And that hee may not lose the fruit therof, he may exercise himselfe one weeke in the one sort, and another weeke in the other sort. And in so doing, he may taste and take profite of all these godly instructions, which wee haue here set foorth vnto him.

Of



# Of the fiue parts that may *bee exercised in* Prayer.

## CHAP. II.

### 1. *Preparation.*

BEfore we enter into prayer, it is very requisite that wee doe first prepare our harts vnto this holy exercise; following therein the manner and custome of Musitians, who vse to temper and tune their Lute, Viall or Instrument, before they play vpon it. And therefore Ecclesiasticus saith: *Before thou praiest, prepare thy selfe, least thou bee as one that tempteth God.* Eccl. 18. 22

*What it is to tempt God.*

To tempt God, is to desire that he should work a miracle in such things as may bee done by other ordinarie meanes. Seeing therefore that the pre-

preparation of the heart is such a principall meane to obtaine Deuotion; he that goeth about to obtaine it without this meane, sheweth himselfe to haue a desire, that Almighty God should worke a miracle therein, the which, as Ecclesiasticus saith, is as it were a tempting of God.

### 2. *Reading.*

AFter Preparation, it followeth that a man do read that matter which he hath to meditate vpon that day, according to the diuision of the dayes of the Weeke, which we haue made heretofore. And this manner of Reading, is vndoubtedly very necessarie for such as are nouices and young beginners in this exercise, vntil such time as a man do know what he ought to meditate vpon.

### 3. *Meditation.*

AFterwards, when by the vse and practise of certaine dayes hee is well instructed therin, then this reading shall not bee so needfull, but that he may forthwith proceede vnto Meditation.

a *Thankes-*



### 4 *Thankesgiuing.*

AFter Meditation, there may follow out of hand a deuoute giuing of thankes to Almightie God, for all such benefits as wee haue receiued: the which ought euermore to accompany all our praiers, according as the Apostle exhorteth vs, saying: *Occupie your selues very earnestly in Praier: watching therein with Thankesgiuing.* Colos 4. 2.

For as S. Augustine saith; What thing is there that we can better conceiue in our hearts, better pronounce with our mouths, and better write with our pennes, then this short sentence *Deo gratias*, thankes be vnto God? Nothing can bee saide more briefly, nothing can be heard more sweetely, nor vnderstood more ioyfully, or done more fruitfully. S. Augustin

### 5 *Petition.*

THE last part is Petition, which is properly called Prayer, wherin we desire of Almightie God al such things as are behooueful, aswell for

for the ſaluation of our ſelues, a
our neighbours, & of all the who
Church of God.

Theſe fiue parts may be exerci
in praier; and among other profi
and commodities, that are wont
come therby, this is one, that th
pointes beeing duely exerciſed, d
miniſter vnto a man great plenty
matter whereuppon to medita
ſetting before him all theſe diue
ties of meats, that in caſe he liſt n
eate of one, hee may yet eate of an
ther; and that when he hath ma
an end of meditation in one matte
he may foorthwith enter into an
ther, and ſo finde varietie of matt
wherin to continue his meditatio

I know right well, that neithera
theſe parts nor this order, is alwai
neceſſary for all perſons. Howbei
this manner may ſerue very well fo
al ſuch as are but nouices and youn
beginners in this exerciſe, that
they may haue ſome order & direct
on, wherby to direct thémſelues at th
beginning. For certain it is, that ſo
things be neceſſary in the beginnin
to teach an Arte, which afterward
when they be once knowne, are bu
ſuper-



ſuperfluous. And therefore, of any thing that ſhall be here treated, I wil not that any man ſhould thinke, that I intend to make the ſame a perpetuall law or generall rule. For mine intent is not in theſe inſtructions to make any law, but onely to ſhew an introduction, for the direction of all ſuch perſons as are but nouices and beginners in this way. In which courſe, after that they ſhall bee once entred by following this introduction, then the very vſe and experience they ſhall haue in this exerciſe, and much more the holy Ghoſt wil teach them each thing that they haue to dóe heerein. The which being once ſaid in this place, I deſire it may bee vnderſtoode in all the reſt of this Booke.

## Of Preparation, which is a thing verie requiſite to bee vſed before Prayer and Meditation.

### CHAP. III.

NOw it ſhall bee requiſite for vs, to treate particularly of euerie

one of these fiue parts aforesaid, and first of Preparation, which ought to goe before the other.

Wee said euen now, that it was needfull to vse some preparation of our mind before we enter into prayer. This Preparation may bee made diuers manners of wayes. For a man may dispose himselfe vnto prayer, by calling to mind his sinnes and offences; and namely, such sins as he hath committed that present day, and he may accuse himselfe of them, & desire of the Lord pardon for them, according to the saying of the Wise man, *The iust man at the beginning, an accuser of himselfe.*

*Preparation vnto prayer may be made diuers wayes.*

*Preparation by considering our owne sinnes.*

Prou. 18. 17

This manner of Preparation, seemeth to be as it were the pulling off of our hose and shooes to enter into the Holyland, and (as it were) the washing of our garments to goe to receiue Almightie God, when he commeth to treate with men, and to teach them his holy Law. This manner of Preparation we are taught to vse euen by nature it selfe. For we see it is a common maner, that when we goe to request any benefite of any friend of ours whom we haue offended,

Exod. 3. 5.

Exo. 19. 10



wee doe first desire of him pardon and forgiuenesse, before we demaund any other thing of him. This may be doone sometimes with the hart onely, and sometimes by saying the generall confession, or the fifty one Psalme; or some other like penitent praiers. Wherin good heed must be taken, that these praiers bee not said in post haste, but with as great quietnes, attention, feeling and repentance of hart as we can.

Howbeit, a man ought not to stay ouer long in this consideration of his sinnes, (as some persons do, that both beginne and end heerewith, yea, and passe all their whole life therin.) For albeit this consideration of our sinnes be alwaies good (and at the beginning very necessary,) yet it is meete that it bee taken with such moderation, as that it occupie not that time which should be bestowed about other better matters. Neither is it needful in this exercise, for a man to consider very particularly his sins, and namely such, as the remembraunce whereof may moue him to some euill cogitations: but it is sufficient to make (as it were) a bundle

of them all, and to drowne them in the bottomlesse Sea of the infinite goodnesse and mercie of Almighty God, with good hope to receiue pardon and remedy of him for the same.

*Preparation by considering the maiestie of Almighty God.*

Wee may also prepare our selues vnto praier, by considering the Maiestie and greatnes of that Lord, vnto whome we goe to speake in praier. For this consideration will teach vs, with what great reuerence & humility, & with how great attention, it behoueth such a miserable creature as man is, to speake vnto a Lord of so great Maiesty as almighty God is, concerning a matter of so great importance as is his own saluation. But that thou maist vnderstand somwhat of the Maiestie of Almightie God, thou must consider, that the heauens, the earth, and all that is created, is no more before the Maiesty of Almighty God, then a little Emette, or (as the Wiseman sayth) a graine of waight in the ballance. Now if al creatures be no more then an Emette before him, what shalt thou then seeme to bee before him, that art so small a part of the world?

Wis. 11. 11

This



This consideration of the Maiestie and greatnes of almightie God, is as it were a profound reuerence, that the soule maketh within it selfe, before the throne of that supreme Maiestie, at what time shee entreth into his Pallace to speake with him.

With this manner of humilitie & reuerence the Sonne of God taught vs to Pray, when making his praier, he cast himselfe prostrate vppon the ground: giuing vs therby to vnderstand, how humble and lowly a man ought to bee; & how much he ought to consider of his owne basenes and vilenes, whensoeuer he goeth about to speak vnto Almightie God. With this spirite and humble reuerence, a man may repeate those wordes of the holy Patriarke, where hee saith: *I will speake to the Lord, although I bee but dust and ashes.*

Mat. 26. 39

*The example of Christ teacheth vs how to prepare our selues to pray.*

Gen. 18. 27.

*That it is very good to consider before hand, for what purpose and end wee goe to pray vnto Almightie God.*

BVT aboue all this, it shall helpe vs very much in this Preparation

to consider well what we goe about to doe, when wee settle our selues to Prayer. For if we do well consider it, we go to pray for none other purpose, but to receiue the spirit of God, and the influences of his grace, and the ioie of Charitie and Deuotion, wherewith we see howe the soules of iust persons are repleniſhed at the end of their long & deuout prayers.

Nowe this beeing so, thou maist perceiue heereby, with howe great humilitie and reuerence, and with how great attention and deuotion, thou oughtest to come, when thou doost open the mouth of thy soule to receiue Almighty God. Consider with what great and feruent deuotion the holy Apostles were inflamed, at what time they expected and looked for the comming of the holie Ghost, and by that maiest thou vnderstand, how thou oughtest to prepare thy selfe, when thou goest about to looke for and receiue the same holy Ghost, albeit it be not in such plentifull and aboundant wise as the Apostles was. Acts. 1.14

Hereby thou seest, how close shut thou oughtest to haue the gates of thy



thy vnderstanding and Will, at the time of praier, from all the cares and thoughtes of the world; and how open they ought then to be vnto almightie God alone, that in case hee come to enter therin, he returne not backe againe, finding the gates shut against him, or the Lodging Chambers taken vp and pestered with other guests.

Now with this Preparation and spirit, maist thou present thy selfe in Prayer before the face of the Lord, as that sicke man of the Dropsie did, who stood before him, expecting from his mercifull hand to be restored vnto his health; or as the Leaprous person did, who kneeled downe at his feete, and said humbly vnto him: *O Lord if thou wilt thou canst make me cleane.* Luke. 14.4. Math. 8.2. Mark. 1.40

Consider, that in like manner as a little hungrie dog standeth before his Maisters table, fauning very earnestly vpon him with his eyes, and al his whole bodie, looking euer for some little peece of bread to come from his Table, & after the same sort oughtest thou to present thy selfe before the rich Table of the Lord of

Heauen, confeſsing thy ſelfe to bee vnworthie of the whole aboundance of his mercies, & deſiring him moſt humbly, to beſtow ſome little portion thereof vpon thee for thy reliefe. With this lowly ſpirit maiſt thou ſay the Pſalme: *Ad te leuaui oculos meos, qui habitas in cœlis, &c.* The which albeit it be but ſhort, yet it is verie fit and conuenient, to ſtirre vp and enkindle this foreſaid affection in preparing thy ſelfe vnto prayer.

Pſal. 123. 1.

This manner of Preparation or the other, thou maieſt (gentle Reader) vſe at thy libertie: but the firſt ſeemeth to be more conuenient for the night, when a man ought to examine his conſcience, and deſire pardon and forgiueneſſe of Almightie God, of all ſuch defectes and offences, as he hath offended him in that day.

And the ſecond manner of Preparation is moſt fit for the Morning when he riſeth, before the breake of day, to deſire then of almighty God, the aſsiſtaunce and ſuccour of his grace, whereby hee may the better beſtow that day in his ſeruice.

That



*That to knowe howe to pray as a man ought, is a ſpeciall gift of God.*

BVT becauſe to knowe howe to pray as a man ought, is a verie ſpecial gift of Almightie God, and a worke of the holy Ghoſt, therefore thou oughteſt to deſire the Lorde moſt humbly, both in the one Preparation & in the other, to inſtruct thee howe to doe thy duety heerein, & to giue thee grace, that thou maieſt ſpeak vnto him in thy praier, with ſuch attention and deuotion, with ſuch recollection and cloſeneſſe of minde, and with ſuch feare and reuerence, as is behoueful to be vſed before ſo great a Maieſtie; and withal deſire him, that thou maiſt in ſuch wiſe perſeuere, and ſpend that little time in this exerciſe of Praier, that thou maiſt in the end ariſe from the ſame with new force and ſtrength to doe all ſuch things as appertaine to his ſeruice.

It is thought alſo to bee a good manner of Preparation, to ſay ſome interceſſions or Vocall Praiers be-

*Preparation by vocall Praires.*

fore meditation, of which sort there be many in diuers Bookes of deuotion, and namely in the meditations of S. Augustine, and in the Psalter of Dauid, where there be diuers deuout Psalmes, that will helpe very much to enkindle and stirre vp deuotion. For it is the property of deuout sentences (being saide with an earnest minde and attention) to wound the hart, and to lift it vp vnto Almightie God: the which deuout sentences are so much the more behoouefull & necessary for vs, by howe much wee finde our spirit to be more cold, and distracted.

### *With what intention a man ought to come vnto Praier.*

HEere I thinke it necessary to declare with what intention a man ought to come vnto praier. For hee must not goe thereunto chiefly for his owne consolation and delight, (as some that be great louers of themselues vse to doe) but onely to fulfill heerein the will of Almightie God, and to desire of him his grace, and to dispose himselfe for the obtayning



ning of the same.

And heerewith hee must submit himselfe in such wise into the hands of Almightie God, that he must bee as ready and content to bee without consolations in his praier, as to haue them; remitting himselfe humbly into his hands to dispose of him, and of all things belonging vnto him, as his diuine maiestie shal thinke good; acknowledging on the one side, that hee deserueth not any thing of him, and beleeuing on the other, that although it bee so in very deed, yet the Lord of his infinite goodnesse and mercy, will doe whatsoeuer shall be most conuenient and behooueful for his saluation. And therefore a man ought to content himselfe alike, whether the consolation bee great or little, and to take in good part whatsoeuer vsage the Lord shall shew vnto him, accounting himselfe vtterly vnworthy of all those things that he bestoweth vpon him, and being readie to fulfill all such things as he shal command him, not in respect of the benefites hee hopeth to receiue, but in respect of them hee hath alreadie receiued, and in consideration of his bounden

bounden dutie vnto Almighty God. But wee ſee that many perſons doe quite contrarie to this rule, and bee like herein vnto yong ſhrewd boyes, who vnleſſe they bee dandled and cockred, will not doe the thing that they are commaunded.

*To bee carefull ouer Night what wee muſt meditate the next Morning.*

I thinke it alſo requiſite heere to aduertiſe, that when a man mindeth to vſe the exerciſe of prayer in the morning, hee doe goe to bed with this care ouer night, & like as thoſe that intend to bake the next day, do vſe to lay the Leauen ouer-night, euen ſo muſt a man with a godly carefulneſſe, preuent and recommend ouer night vnto the Lord, that thing which he intendeth to meditate the next day following. And in the Morning ſo ſoone as he awaketh, he ought foorthwith to occupie his heart with this holy thought, before any other doe enter therein. For at that time the diſpoſition of our heart is ſuch, that whatſoeuer thought doth firſt enter into vs, it ſeaſeth and taketh poſſeſsion of our hart in ſuch wiſe for that day, that wee ſhall very hardly afterwards put it away from vs. And for ſo much as the prayer of many



many perſons is very acceptable vnto the Lord, therefore thou ſhalt doe well to conſider in thy Prayer both in the Morning and Euening, what a number of Gods ſeruaunts, both men and women in the world, bee at that time watching and perſeuering before the preſence of Almightie God, humbly confeſsing their ſinnes before him; and crauing pardon for them; and entreating at his hands, ſuch graces and bleſsings as are needfull for them; with which perſons thou oughteſt humbly to ioyne thy ſelfe, that the preſence and ſweete remembraunce of them, may bee vnto thee a prouocation of deuotion, and an example of perſeuerance in thy prayer; and alſo, that whenſoeuer thou ſhalt find thy ſelfe cold and negligent in this exerciſe of prayer, and that ſome thoughtes come into thy mind, mouing thee to end the ſame, thou maieſt bee aſhamed, and reprehend thy ſelfe, by the example of ſo many good and vertuous perſons, which with ſo good attention and carefulneſſe doe perſeuere ſo long time in this exerciſe of Prayer without ceaſing, offe-

ring

ring their bodies and soules vnto almightie God in sacrifice.

# Of Reading.

## CHAP. 1111.

*In what manner we must Reade.*

AFter Preparation followeth reading, the which ought to bee done, not lightly, as passed ouer in haste, but with very great deliberation and attention, applying therunto not only thy vnderstanding, to conceiue such thinges as thou readest, but much more thy Will, to taste those things that thou vnderstandest. And when thou commest to any denout place, thou shalt do wel to stay & pause somwhat longer thereupon, and to make there (as it were) a station, in thinking vppon that matter which thou hast read, and in making some short prayer vpon it, according as S. Bernard counselleth vs, saying: *It is requisite oftentimes, to gather and procure a little spirite and deuotion out of*

*S. Bernard.*



*of the matters that wee reade, and to breake off the course of our reading with some kinde of praier, by meanes whereof, wee may lift vp our harts vnto Almightie God, and talke with him, according as the sense and matter of such things as we reade doe require.*

Heere must I aduertise, that the reading be not very long, least it occupie the greatest part of the time, that ought otherwise to bee bestowed vppon other more principall and necessary exercises. For as S. Augustine saith: *It is very good both to Reade and to pray, if we can doe both the one and the other: but in case we cannot performe them both, then praier is better then Reading.* But because in Praier there is sometimes labour, and in Reading a facilitie, therefore our miserable heart doth oftentimns refuse the labour of praier, and runneth to the delight of Reading, as the same holy Father complaining of himselfe, saith, that sometimes he hath so done.

*Praier is better than Reading.*

True it is I grant, that like as when there wanteth wheaten-breade, men doe eate bread of Rie, or of Oates, because they wold not be altogether fasting,

fasting: euen so when thy hart is in such wise distracted, that it cannot enter into praier, then maiest thou staie somewhat the longer in Reading, or ioyne Meditation and Reading together; by reading one place and Meditating vpon it, & then another, & another, after the like sort. For by this meane, when the vnderstanding is once bounde vnto the wordes of the reading, it cannot so easilie wander abroade into diuers imaginations and thoughts, as when it goeth freely and at libertie. And yet better it were to wrastle all that time with Almightie GOD, as the Patriarke Iacob did, that in the end, when the wrastling is done, he may giue vs his blessing, or graunt vnto vs the deuotion which we seeke for, or some other greater grace, which he neuer denieth vnto them that do faithfully labour and striue for the loue of him.

*Reading with meditation.*

Gen. 32.





# Of Meditation.

## CHAP. V.

### *Two kinds of Meditation.*

AFter reading, it followeth that we doe meditate vpon the place that wee haue read. Concerning which point it is to be knowne, that this meditation is sometimes vpon things that may be figured with the imagination, as are all the points of the life and Passion of our Sauiour Christ. *Imaginarie meditation.*

Sometimes againe, this Meditation is vpon things that doe rather appertain to the vnderstanding, then to the imagination: as when wee thinke vpon the benefits of Almightie God, or vpon his goodnesse and mercie, or vpon any other of his perfections. *Intellectuall Meditation.*

This manner of Meditation is called *Intellectuall*, and the other *Imaginarie*: and wee vse both the one manner and the other in these exercises,

cises, according as the matter of the things doth require.

### *How to vse Imaginarie Meditation.*

THerfore when the mistery wher vpon we intend to meditate, is of the life and Passion of our Sauiour Christ, or of any other thing that may be figured by imagination, as of the last day of iudgement, or of hell, or of heauen, we must then figure & represent euerie one of these matters in our imagination, in such wise as it is, or in such wise as it passed, and make account, that euen there in the very same place where we are, all the same passeth in our presence. And this manner of meditating, serueth to this end, that by meanes of such a representation of these things, the consideration and feeling of them may be the more liuely in vs.

*The effects of Imaginarie Meditation.*

Some there be, that imagine, that euery one of these things wher eupon they meditate, passeth within their owne heart; for sithence our heart is able to containe within it the forme of Cities and Kingdomes, it is no great



great matter for it to containe also within it, the representation and forme of these mysteries. And this manner of meditating, is commonly a great help also to keep in the mind more closely recollected, by causing it to attend to her worke, after the manner of Bees, which worke their Honie combes within their owne hiues. Either of these two waies we may vse in this kinde of Imaginarie Meditation. For in case we goe with our cogitation to Ierusalem, to meditate the thinges that passed there, each thing in his own proper place, it is a thing that dooth commonlie weaken and hurt the head.

And for this very cause likewise, a man must not fixe his imagination ouer much vpon the thinges whereupon he meditateth. For besides that it wearieth the heade, a man may also fall into some deceite by reason of this vehement apprehension, in perswading himselfe that hee seeth the things really in very deed, which he imagineth with such vehemency and force.

# Of Thankesgiuing.

## CHAP. VI.

THese three parts beeing ended, there may followe immediatly a Thanksgiuing vnto almightie God for the benefites wee haue receiued, And that we may not interrupt the course of our deuotion with diuers affections and matters, a man may continue this part with the former, taking occasion of such things as he hath meditated vpon, to giue thanks vnto the Lord for the benefite hee hath done vnto him in that Meditation: and with this benefit to ioyne all other benefits, and to giue him most humble and hearty thankes for them all.

### *In what order we must exercise Thanksgiuing.*

AS for example, when wee haue ended our Meditation vpon any point of the passion, wee may then foorth-



foorthwith giue most humble and harty thanks to the Lord for the benefite of our Redemption? and especially, for that it pleased him, to redeeme vs with so great paines and torments And euen then also let vs giue him most humble thankes for al his other benefits.

In like manner, when we haue meditated vppon our sinnes, wee may giue him thanks for that he hath expected vs so long time, and called vs to repentaunce. And when wee haue meditated vpon the miseries of this life, wee may giue him thankes for that he hath deliuered vs from a great number of them. And when we haue meditated vppon the departing out of this world: wee may giue him thankes, for that hee hath giuen vs life, and granted vnto vs so long a time to repent.

And when we haue meditated vppon the ioyes of heauen, wee may giue him thanks, for that he hath created vs to bee partakers of so great a felicitie. And so likewise may wee proceede in all the rest. And afterwardes (according as we haue declared) a man must ioyne with this benefit,

nefite all other benefies ; as the benefites of Creation, Conseruation, Redemption, Vocation, and Glorification ; of the which benefites wee haue treated heeretofore in the former Meditation. And then for these and other infinite benefites, as well publique as secrete, wee must giue him as many humble and heartie thanks as we can, and call vppon all creatures both of heauen and earth to help vs therein. And with this spirit we may sometimes say that song of the three children; *All ye workes of the Lord* or else the Psalme. *My soule praise thou the Lord, &c.*

Dan.3.57.
Psal.103.1

## *Of Petition.*

## CHAP. VII.

HEere it remaineth that wee doe treat of the last part of all, which is Petition; which containeth in it two partes: in the one parte, wee make Petition vnto Almightie God for our neighbours; and in the other, for our selues.

The



The first part may bee continued with Thankesgiuing, desiring that all creatures may serue and praise the Lord, who is so worthie to bee praised and serued, for that he is so mercifull and bountiful vnto all his creatures. And with this affection and desire of the glorie of Almightie God, let him pray first and principally for all the vniuersall world, that all Nations and people may knowe and serue so mightie a Lord. Then for all the Catholike Church, and for all the Gouernours in the same. As for example, wee must praie for kings, Princes, Magistrats that beare rule, either in the Church, or Commonwealth; and for all other inferiour Officers and Ministers in the same; that they may bee carefull of their dutie, in directing all the faithfull in the knowledge and seruice of their Creator.

*We must pray for the conuersion of al nations vnto God.*

*For all Magistrates & Gouernours*

Likewise, let him praie for all the members of the Catholicke Church; for the iust persons, that it may please Almightie God to continue them in their vertuous life; for sinners, that it may please him to pardon them: let him pray also for his Parents and kinse-

*For al members of the Catholike Church.*

kinsfolkes, friends, and benefactors and for all that be in tribulation and captiuitie, and for all prisoners and sicke persons, vnto whome hee may (without any distraction or intermission of his prayer) doe the workes of mercie, in recommending them vnto almighty God who created them, and referring the necessities of all persons, into those handes which were stretched vppon the Crosse for them all.

### *What things we must demaund for our selues.*

AFter this, hee may desire such things for himselfe, as he perceiueth himselfe to stand in need of, according to the particular necessities and miseries that hee feeleth in his soule, and especially, when he desireth helpe and remedy of Almightie God, against such vices & passions, as doe most trouble and molest him, and to graunt him such vertues as be most needfull for him. This kind of Petition (among other cõmodities) hath this withal, that it renueth daily in the soule some good purposes and desires



desires or vertues, and moueth it to be the more earnest in dooing that thing, which he hath so oftentimes and so heartily desired, & it maketh him to bee the more ashamed of himselfe, when he dooth it not by calling to mind with how great desire and instancie, he hath desired the Lord to grant him grace to doe it. And of this mind is Saint Chrysostome, where he saith thus: *Such as pray earnestlie in very deede, will not suffer their harts to committe any thing that is vnseemelie for such an exercise, but haue euer their eies vpon almightie God, with whome a little before they talked and were conuersant. And so by that cogitatiõ, they put away from them all the suggestions of the diuell, when they thinke and consider what a haynous matter it were, that hee that had a little before talked with Almightie God, and desired of him chastitie and holines, with all other vertues, shoulde immediatlye run to his enemies side, & open the gate of his soule to receiue in filthy and dishoneste delights, and suffer the diuell to place himselfe in that hart, where a little before the holie Ghost made his abode.* S. Chrysost.

But it is verie much to be lamented, that there be some persons that thinke to excuse themselues, by saying, that they know not what thing to desire of Almightie God. Surely this is no sufficient excuse. For what beast is so insensible, but that hee knoweth some manner of way howe to signifie the neede he standeth in? What sick man is there, that cannot say, heere it grieueth me? Consider therefore (O man) thy selfe. Consider (I say) with what vices and passions thou art most troubled & molested: if with couetousnes, if with anger, if with detraction, if with vaine glorie, if with stubbornnesse of thine owne will, if with loosenesse of tongue, if with lightnesse of heart, if with the loue of honour, estimation, and delightes, if with inconstancie in such good purposes as thou intendest, if with selfe loue, or any other the like passions or pestilences of the mind, & discouer all these wounds plainly one by one, vnto that heauenly Phisitian, that he may heale & cure thē with the oyntment of his grace

After that thou hast demaunded remedy against thy vices, desire him then



then to graunt thee all such vertues as be most behoouefull for thy saluation. And because this is a principall part of this exercise of prayer, wherin oftentimes is spent all the time thereof, with verie great taste and profit, I thinke it good to note heere vnto the deuout reader, those principall vertues which bee, as it were, the pillers of the spirituall life, that thou maist alwayes long and sigh for them, and alwayes desire them verie instantly of the Lord in prayer.

*We must pray to obtaine vertues.*

## ¶ Of the most necessarie *vertues that are to be demanded in Petition.*

### §. I.

First thou must desire of the Lord these 4. vertues, which bee as it were the foundation of al the spiritual life; the which vertues we must alwaies haue before our eies, because

be alwayes neceſſarie in all the ſteps of our life.

Theſe vertues be a comly compoſition of the inward and outwarde man: Diſcretion and attention in al ſuch things as we ſhall either doe or ſay; That euery thing may be directed according to the iudgement and order of reaſon; to bridle our tong, and to take a due account of it; And to vſe rigour and auſteritie in the gouernment of our perſon.

Now among theſe vertues, wee haue put the comely compoſition of the inward and outward man in the firſt place; becauſe it is the beginning that diſpoſeth vnto all the others. The compoſition of the inward man, conſiſteth in hauing Almightie God preſent in his hart, & the compoſition of the outwarde man conſiſteth in doing all thinges in ſuch ſort, as is ſeemly for one that is alwaies in the preſence of almighty God, and that he hath him alwayes before his eyes, as the Iudge and witneſſe of his whole life.

After theſe do follow other foure vertues, wherein conſiſteth the ſum of perfection, which vertues bee in ſuch



ſuch wiſe annexed and linked the one to the other, that the one cannot be had without the other. Theſe vertues be, perfect obedience, Mortification of our own proper wil, Fortitude to ouercome all maner of difficultie and labor; And to haue a hatred and contempt of our ſelues. For it is manifeſt that the ſumme of all Chriſtian doctrine, is a perfect obedience and conformitie vnto the will of God, as well in all ſuch things as he commandeth, counſelleth and inſpireth, as in all that he ordaineth & diſpoſeth concerning vs. This obedience cannot be kept vnleſſe we haue a knife in our hand, to cut away all the inordinate appetites of our ſenſualitie and will, which do withſtand the will of Almightie God.

*In theſe vertues conſiſteth the ſumme of perfection.*

But this ſtroke no man is able to giue, vnleſſe he haue great fortitude of mind to fight with himſelfe, and to make mortall warre againſt his own inclinations and appetites. And this kind of warre none other ſhall euer make, but hee that hath for the loue of God attained to haue a true and holy abhorring and contempt of himſelfe. For looke where ab-

horring is, there dooth easily follow euill intreating, and contempt of the thing that is abhorred; but where is nothing but loue, there doth a man verie vnwillingly take the whippe in his hand, to deale roughly with that thing which he loueth. Whereby it appeareth, that no one of these vertues is able to mooue one steppe, without the helpe and succour of the other. After these doe follow immediatly other foure verie high and noble vertues, which bee, Humilitie both inward and outward; Pouertie both of spirit and of bodie; Patience in all aduersities and tribulations; Purenes of intention in good workes, doing all things that we shal doe, all onely for the loue of God, without mixture of any commoditie, or respect either spiritual or temporall.

After these, doe follow other foure vertues, which are the beginning & end of all perfection: to wit, a most firme faith of such things, as Almightie God saith and promiseth: An assured hope in him, as in our true and louing Father in all the necessities and tribulations that shall happen



happen vnto vs; A loue of almightie God, which must alwaies burne in our heartes, and iointly with this loue, to haue a feare and reuerence of his great Maiestie and iustice, which must euermore accompanie all our works.

And with all this aforesayde, wee must ioine perseuerance and continuaunce in the exercise of all these vertues, the which causeth a man in a small time to attaine to the top of perfection. In these foresayde vertues, doth the summe of al perfection principally consist: and therefore all our studie & diligence must bee imployed in seeking them by all meanes possible, and especially by Praier, which is the principal meane whereby all goodnes is obtained.

Heere I thinke good to giue this aduise, that when a man shall demaund of Almightie GOD any of these vertues, he stay himselfe therein for a time; and make as it were a station in euerie one of them, in considering briefely the principall motiues that may induce vs to the loue and exercise of such a vertue.

### How to desire of God the vertue of Charitie.

AS for example. When we shall desire of almightie God the vertue of Charitie, which is the loue of God, we may say in this wise: Grant mee grace O Lord I beseech thee, that I may loue thee with al my hart, and with all my soule, for that thou art an infinite goodnesse and excellencie, that deserueth to bee loued with infinite loue; and besides this, for that thou art my onely benefactor, my Father, my Creator, my last end, and the Spouse of my soule, vnto whom all loue is due.

### How to desire the vertue of Hope.

IN like manner when thou shalt desire the vertue of Hope, thou maist say in this wise: Giue me grace also O Lord I beseech thee, that in all the necessities and tribulations that shall happen vnto mee in this life, I may trust in thee, seeing thy mercie is infinite and thy promises true,



true, and the merites of thy only begotten Sonne bee of infinite value, which doe speake and make intercession for me. After this sort maiest thou desire the feare of God, and humility, with other vertues. The forme of which petitions I thinke not meet to note here particularly in writing. For like as it is said, that that meate doth more profit the sickman, which hee himselfe eateth and cheweth with his teeth, then that which is giuen vnto him in drinke: euen so is that prayer wont to bee more profitable, which is framed by him that prayeth with such words as the holy Ghost teacheth him, then that prayer which is made and compounded with other folks words, which oftentimes be said and passed very lightly ouer, without any manner of attention or affection.

This last part which is Petition; besides that it is verie easie to bee done, is also verie profitable. For as we said before, it is not only an exercise of Prayer, but also of al vertues, and as it were a reading and conference of them all: wherein a man renueth all his good purposes and de-

ſires, and recordeth to his memorie, the principall points and Articles of the Law of God, which is the continuall exerciſe of the iuſt man; of whome it is ſaid, that he meditateth vpon the Law of the Lord both day and night. Pſal. 1:2.

Theſe fiue parts aforeſaid, may be vſed in the exerciſe of Prayer; albeit (as we haue ſaid) they bee not all neceſſarie to bee vſed at all times. For ſometimes all the time of Prayer is ſpent in meditation alone, or in petition. Neuertheles, I thought good to ſpecifie heere all theſe partes of Prayer, that no man might leaue off this holy exerciſe for want of matter, and alſo that at ſuch time as deuotion fayleth, (which is no iuſt cauſe why we ſhould relent and withdraw our ſelues from good exerciſes) a man might haue matter whervpon to occupie himſelfe during that time, doing on his part ſo much as lyeth in him, which is the thing that Almighty God requireth principally of vs.

Here is diligently to be noted, that among all theſe fiue parts of prayer, the beſt is, when the ſoule talketh with



with Almighty God, as it dooth in petition. For in Reading or Meditation, the vnderſtanding diſcourſeth with little labour whereſoeuer it thinketh good. But when we talke vnto Almightie God, then the vnderſtanding mounteth vp on high, and after it followeth alſo the will, and then hath a man commonly on his part, greater deuotion and attention, and greater feare and reuerence of the maieſtie of almightie God, with whom hee ſpeaketh, and withall, an humble and feruent deſire of the thing which hee demandeth of him.

And this mouing and lifting vp of the ſpirite, with all theſe actes of vertues accompanying it, do leaue the ſoule in a more noble ſtate, and better edified, then any other diſcourſe whatſoeuer it bee, as euerie man may perceiue by experiẽce in himſelf. For it is euident, that in the diſcourſe of Meditation, there is no other thing but only a godly inquiſition and conſideration of ſpiritual things, the which as it is an acte of the vnderſtanding, ſo it is of little profite, or commoditie; but in the deuout

deuout praier, there is made a concurrence and general assembly (in a manner) of all vertues, & with their wings, the soule lifteth it selfe vp on high, and attaineth to be ioyned & vnited with the almightie and euer-liuing God.

And although this spirituall communication and cõference with almighty God, be the best point of all the exercises of praier: yet among al the communications with him, the best & most profitable, is the communication of loue, at such time as we be actually louing of Almightie God, and praysing him, and desiring him with great instancie and most earnest desires, to graunt vs that wee may loue him. For sithence Charity is the greatest of al vertues, there is nothing more acceptable vnto almighty God, nor more pleasant and profitable vnto a man, thé the vse, practise, and exercise of this so excellent a vertue.

This the holy fathers do call the exercise of aspiring vnto the loue of God. And to this end were Meditation, Prayer, and all other godly exercises ordained. And therfore it is giuen



giuen for a general rule vnto al such as doe pray, that they labour & endeuour so much as lieth in them, to lift vp their spirite vnto this diuine communication, which is to speak and treate with almighty God himselfe, and especially concerning his loue, and the exercises of aspiring vnto him.

And for this cause it shall do well to leaue this petition of the loue of God, vntill the end of all the exercises of prayer, and so to reserue the best wine for the ende of this banket, to the intent that when a man is come to the end of his iourney, he may stay himselfe herein so long as he listeth. How beit, it shall not be amisse both to begin and ende with this petition of the loue of GOD, whensoeuer the holy Ghost shall open him a way, and direct him vnto the same.

Moreouer, I thinke it meete here to giue this aduertisement, that in all such things as we shall demaund, wee doe alleage alwaies on our behalfe, the merits of Iesus Christ, our onely & true Sauiour; who (as the Apostle saith) *Is our Iustice, wisedome, sancti-* 1.Cor.1.30

*ſanctification and redemption.* Vppon his merites wee ought patiently to ſtay our confidence. And his merits we ought to preſent before the diuine Maieſtie, reckoning them, and offering them one by one vnto the heauenly Father, and taking (as S. Bernard ſaith) out of that Treaſure, all ſuch things as are neceſſarie for vs. For this is that Lord that hath ſanctified and offered himſelf in ſacrifice, to the intent that we might bee holy indeede.

Rom.8.31. Wherefore, *If God bee for vs, who ſhall bee againſt vs? If God iuſtifie vs, who ſhall condemne vs? This is he* (ſayth Saint Peter) *of whome all the prophets* Acts,10.43 *beare witneſſe: that by him is obtained pardon and remiſſion of ſinnes.* So that in the vertue & name of this Lord, wee ought to take a good hart and courage with vs, whē we go to make our prayers vnto Almightie God, and haue this confidence, that what ſoeuer wee ſhal duely demand, by him ſhall bee graunted vnto vs.

For the principal condition that our petition muſt haue, that it may be effectual before Almighty God, is



is (as Saint Iames ſaith) to make the Iam.1.6. ſame with faith and confidence.

### *Whereupon our confidence muſt bee grounded, when we make petition vnto Almightie God.*

THis confidence muſt not bee grounded principally vpon our owne ſelues, nor vppon our owne workes and merites, but vpon the workes and merites of his onely begotten and beſt beloued Sonne, our Sauior IESVS CHRIST, and ioyntly therewith, vppon the infinite mercy and goodneſſe of Almightie God, which can neuer bee ouercome with any kind of ſinne or iniquitie.

And beſides this, our confidence muſt be alſo groũded vpon the truth of the words & promiſes of Almightie God, who hath promiſed in all the holy Scriptures, neuer to faile that man, that with all his heart ſhal conuert himſelfe vnto him, and call vpon him, and repoſe his whole truſt and confidence in him. And albeit he that prayeth, hath been vntil that time

time neuer so great and hainous a sinner: yet let him not therefore bee dismayd, for (as S. Ierom saith) our sinnes past doe not condemne vs, if we take no delight therein. Whereby it appeareth, that they be deceiued, that in considering their owne defects and weaknesse, doe mistrust that Almightie God will not heare them: and they doe not consider that the principall foundations of this confidence are the merites of our Sauiour Christ, and the mercie of Almightie God, and the truth of his holy word, *Which* (as the Prophet saith) *is a shielde vnto them that put their trust in him.*

*S. Ierom.*

*Note three principall foundations of our confidence in prayer.*

Psal. 90. 5.

## Certaine aduises to bee obserued in these fiue parts aboue named: and especially in Meditation.

### CHAP. VIII.

HAuing now spoken of the principall parts of prayer, I thinke it conuenient to giue certaine aduises and instructions, which ought to



be obserued in them al, and especially in Meditation, whereof wee minde to treate principally in this place.

## The first Aduise.

*That in our Meditation, we must not for the obseruing of our ordinarie course, put away from vs any good thought or consideration, wherein we finde more deuotion.*

### §. I.

THE first Aduise is (concerning the matter of Meditation) that although it be well doone for a man to obserue these speciall pointes of Meditation, according as they bee heere before diuided by the daies of the week, for to exercise himselfe in them; yet if in the midst of his waie there be offered vnto him any other consideration, wherein hee findeth more sweetnes and profite, he ought not to put the same away from him to fulfill his ordinarie taske. For it standeth

ſtandeth not with reaſon, that wee ſhould extinguiſh the light which the holy Ghoſt hath begun to giue vs in any good thought, for to occupie our ſelues in another thought, wherein (perhaps) the ſame light ſhall not be giuen vnto vs. And beſides this, ſith the principall end of theſe Meditations, is to obtaine ſome deuotion and feeling of diuine things, it were againſt reaſon, when we haue already obtained the ſame with ſome good conſideration, that we ſhould goe about to ſeeke for it by another way.

Howbeit although this bee verie true, (ſpeaking ordinarily) yet may not a man therefore take heerein ſo great liberty, as vpon euerie occaſiõ that is offered vnto him, to be mooued foorthwith very lightly to forgo that thing out of his handes, which he hath as it were in poſſeſsion, for ſome other thing which hee is deſirous to haue; vnleſſe it be at ſuch a time, as hee perceiueth a more certaine profite in the one, then in the other.





## The ſecond Aduiſe.

*That in our Meditation, we muſt eſchew the ſuperfluous ſpeculation of our vnderſtanding, and commit this buſines to the exerciſe of the affections of our will.*

### §. II.

THE ſecond aduiſe is, that he labour to eſchewe in this exerciſe, the ſuperfluous ſpeculation of the vnderſtanding, and endeuour to vſe this matter rather with affections, and feelings of the Will, then with diſcourſes and ſpeculations of the vnderſtanding.

It is therfore to be noted, that the vnderſtanding on the one ſide helpeth, and on the other ſide it may hinder the operation of the Will, to wit, the loue and feeling of diuine things. For as it is neceſſary, that the vnderſtanding doe goe before the Will to guide it, and giue it knowledge

ledge what it ought to loue; ſo when the ſpeculation of the vnderſtanding is ouermuch, then it hindereth the operation of the will; for ſo much as it ſuffereth it not to haue place and time to worke.

And therefore like as it is ſaid of the poyſon which is put into Treacle, that if it bee little it is wholſome and neceſſarie, but if it be ouermuch it is hurtfull: euen ſo likewiſe may wee ſay after a ſort in this exerciſe, that the ſeeking to know God with ſimplicitie, helpeth the will the more to loue him; but the ſeeking to know him with ouer-much ſpeculation, hindereth the Will, and cauſeth the operation therof for that time to be the more feeble and weake.

And the reaſon thereof is, for that the vertue and power of our ſoule being finite and ſtraited within certaine boundes and limits, the more it imployeth her vertue and force on the one part, the leſſe remaineth to be employed on the other, euen like th: Fountaine that runneth through two Pipes, the more water that it diſchargeth by the one Pipe, the leſſe it hath to yeeld through the other,



her. And after the like ſort doth the ſoule principally by the operation of the vnderſtanding, by the which (for that it is ſo noble and ſo excellent a power) the ſoule imployeth and poureth out all her whole force in ſuch wiſe, that in a manner ſhe worketh nothing at all by her other powers, at ſuch time as the vnderſtanding is verie attent, and earneſtly occupied in the vehement ſpeculation of any matter.

And therefore we find by experience, that a man may with more facilitie preſerue the affection of the deuotion in any exerciſe of the bodie, wherein hee laboureth with his hands, then when he hath his vnderſtanding buſily occupied and attent in the ſpeculation of any matter. For the vnderſtanding and the will, bee as it were two balances of our ſoule, the which are diſpoſed in ſuch ſort, that the aſcending of the one, is the deſcending of the other, and ſo contrariwiſe.

So that if the ſpeculation doe encreaſe ouermuch, then the affection thereby decreaſeth; and if contrariwiſe the affection doe increaſe, then the

the ſpeculation foorthwith decreaſeth: and this is the cauſe why the Patriarke Iacob was made lame of one of his feete, at what time he receiued the bleſſing; for whereas our ſoule hath two feete wherewith to goe vnto Almightie God, which bee the Vnderſtanding and the Will, it is requiſite that the one foote be weakned, to wit, the Vnderſtanding in his ſpeculation, if the Will (which is the other foote) ſhall enioy Almightie God in the reſt and quietneſſe of contemplation.

Ge. 32. 29.

*The vnderſtanding & the will be two feete of our ſoule, whereby it goeth vnto God.*

And ſo it is ſeene by experience, that in caſe at ſuch time as the ſoule is enioying of Almightie God, it doe but turne aſide, to ſeeke to vnderſtand or ſearch ſome point or matter appertaining vnto God, it looſeth foorthwith at the verie ſame inſtant, the deuotion which it had, and that ſoueraigne good thing vaniſheth thé away from him which before he enioyed. And therefore not without good cauſe dooth the Bridegroome aduiſe the Spouſe in the Canticles, ſaying: *Turne away thine eyes from me, for they haue made me to flie.*

Can. 6. 4.

Wherefore I counſaile a man in this



his exerciſe of meditation, to occupie his Vnderſtanding in ſpeculatiō with as little curioſity as is poſſible, and to content himſelfe with a ſimple ſight and knowledge of diuine things, to the intent that the vertue of his ſoule recollecting all her forces together, may imploy her ſelf by his affectiue part, (I meane by the affections of the will) in louing and reuerencing the chiefeſt goodneſſe; to wit, Almightie God.

Wherby it appeareth, that thoſe mē take not the right courſe heerein, that in praier doe meditate in ſuch wiſe vpō diuine myſteries, as if they ſhould ſtudie to preach them; the which diſorderly manner, is rather to cauſe the Spirit to wander more abroade, then to collect it; and rather to goe out of himſelfe, then to keepe within himſelfe. And heereof it commeth, that when they haue an end of their exerciſe of praier, they remaine as drie, and without any iuice of deuotion, and as eaſilie moued to follow euery kind of lightnes, and vanity of the world, as they were before their exercise.

*We muſt not meditate vpon diuine myſteries in ſuch wiſe as if we ſtudied to preach them.*

For (to ſpeak the very truth) they haue

haue not praied, but rather talked & ſtudied, which is a thing farre different from praier.

Such perſons ought to conſider, that in this exerciſe of praier & Meditation, wee rather come to heare then to ſpeake. For (as the Prophet ſaith) *Such as come vnto the Lords feet, ſhall receiue his doctrine*, as hee receiued it, and ſayd: *I will hearken what the Lord ſpeaketh within mee*. Wherefore I conclude, that all this buſines of meditation, conſiſteth in ſpeaking little, and in louing much, and in giuing place to the Will, that it may ioyne it ſelfe with all his forces vnto Almightie God. And we muſt not ſpurre forwardes theſe two powers of the ſoule alike, nor walke in this way with equal paces, but a ſpeciall dexteritie is requiſite to bee vſed to ſtir vp the Will, and to quiet the vnderſtanding, that it hinder not with his curious diſcourſes the operation of loue.

Deut. 33.3

Pſal. 85.8

*In meditation we muſt chiefly exerciſe the affections of our will.*

*In meditation, our vnderſtanding is more forward then our will.*

Thou muſt make account alſo, that in this exerciſe thou goeſt in a Chariot drawne with two Horſes, wherof the one is very forward and quicke, and the other very ſlow and dull,



dull: and that thou muſt beare the bridles in thy hand with ſuch dexteritie, that the one thou muſt haſten forward, and hold the other backe, that ſo they may go together the one by the other.

And if thou deſire to haue another more liuely example, make account that the vnderſtanding muſt behaue it ſelfe towardes the Will, as the Nurſe doth towardes the Child which ſhee nurſeth, who after that ſhe hath chewed the meate, ſhe then putteth it into the childs mouth, that the child may taſte and feede thereupon. For otherwiſe, if the Nurſe ſhould but chewe the meate and alſo eate it vp her ſelfe, leauing the child without any meate, it is certaine that ſhee ſhould doe great iniurie to the child, in ſuffering it to die for hunger, by eating vp that meate, which was giuen vnto her for the child.

*That the vnderſtanding is as it were a Nurſe to feede the Will in the exerciſe of Prayer.*

NOw in this wiſe muſt the Vnderſtanding behaue it ſelfe towards the Wil in the exerciſe of prayer; for it appertaineth to the vnderſtanding to chew the ſpirituall matters, as the Nurſe cheweth meate for the Childe; but the Vnderſtanding muſt not retaine the ſame ſpirituall matters for it ſelfe alone, but after that it hath once chewed them, it muſt offer them to the Will, to the intent that the Wil may taſte & feed thereupon, and be the more enkindled and confirmed in vertue and goodneſſe, with the taſte and feeling of thoſe ſpirituall matters.

The victuals that doe enter in by the gates of a City, ought to pay only a tribute and impoſt; but in caſe the Porter ſhould take vp all the victuals for himſelfe alone, and ſuffer none to come into the Market, it is certaine that the inhabitants of the Cittie would die for hunger. Now in like maner, if the vnderſtanding, which



which is as it were the firſt gate of our ſoule, (whereby the ſpiritual ſuſtenaunce entereth vnto it) doe take vp all that ſhoulde paſſe by it for it ſelfe alone, in what caſe ſhall the wil then be, but euen very hungrie and dry, and in great neceſſity of all vertue and goodnes?

The hunting hound if he be good, will not eate the Hare that he hath taken, but keepeth it faithfully vntill his Maiſters comming; and in like maner ought our vnderſtanding to doe, vvhen it hath founde out anie high and ſecret truthes; forſomuch as it muſt not retaine all for it ſelfe alone, but reaſon would that it ſhold aſsigne them ouer to the Will, that ſhe as the Miſtris in this behalfe may ſerue her ſelfe with them.

And for this reſpect diuers deuout and ſimple perſons are truelie verie happy, who as they know little, ſo whē they come vnto almighty God, they are little hindered with the diſcourſes of their vnderſtanding, and therefore in their praiers and meditations, they finde their willes more tender and more plyant, and better prepared vnto euery godly affection.

Now if thou deſire to know howe thou ſholdeſt behaue thy ſelfe herein, among manie other wayes that may ſerue in this caſe, thou maiſt vſe this; In euery good thing that thou ſhalt thinke vppon, either in prayer or out of prayer, be carefull to goe out of hand therewith vnto almightie God, as the young childe dooth, who with euerie thing that hee findeth, goeth out of hande to his Mother, and tatleth with her of it. And ſo in like manner, when in thy prayer, or at any other times, thou findeſt any ſpiritual Iewel, thou muſt lift vp thy hart to almighty God, eyther to loue him, or to adore him, or to reuerence him, or to prayſe him for the ſame, according as the matter requireth; and thereby alſo to take occaſion to humble thy ſelfe before him, and to deſire of him his grace. It ſhall bee a great helpe alſo heerevnto, to haue the ſpirite of true humilitie, which cauſeth a man to appeare before Almighty God, verie poore and naked, and to proſtrate himſelfe before that moſt high ſoueraigne Maieſtie, & to be more carefull to deſire him of his mercie, for the



the curing of the great miſeries which he knoweth in himſelfe, than to ſearch the profoundnes of his high myſteries to vnderſtand them. And by ſo doing, hee commeth to bee in the preſence of God, as a malefactor that is condemned to death would bee when hee ſhould enter into the Kings Pallace, to aske him pardon; who would go with ſuch a great and deepe impreſsion of his miſery, that he would ſcarcely haue either eies to ſee, or hart to think vpon any other thing, but only vpon his owne preſent neceſsity and danger.

## The third Aduiſe

*Which preſcribeth alſo bounds and limits to the Will, that it be neither too exceſſiue, nor too vehement in her exerciſe.*

### §. III.

THE former aduiſe teacheth vs how wee ought to quiet our vnderſtanding, & commit all this buſi-

neſſe to our Will; but this preſent aduiſe preſcribeth alſo bounds and lymits to the Will, that it be neither too exceſsiue, nor too vehement in her exerciſe.

Wherefore ye muſt vnderſtande, that the deuotion which wee ſeeke to obtaine, is not a thing that may be gotten with force of Armes, (as ſome perſons thinke,) who laie on great loade of enforced ſighings & ſobbings, imagining therby to procure teares and compaſsion, when they thinke vpon the Paſsion of our Sauiour. For ſuch force, doth commonlie cauſe the heart to become more drie, and more vnable to receiue the Lordes viſitation, according as a holy father affirmeth.

Moreouer, it doth commonly preiudice & hurt the health of the bodie; yea, and ſometimes leaueth the ſoule ſo aſtonied and agaſt, (by reaſō of the little taſte ſhe hath there receiued) that ſhe is loth to returne againe to this exerciſe, as to a thing which ſhe hath tried by experience to haue been very painful and yrkeſome vnto her. And therefore if the Lorde ſhall ſend vs teares, or other the



the like feelings in our prayer, wee ought humbly to accept them, and to giue him thankes for them. But for a man to wring them out (as it were) by force of Armes, it is no point of wiſedome.

Hee muſt content himſelfe with doing ſincerely what lyeth in him, that is, hee muſt ſuppoſe himſelfe to be preſent at ſuch grieuous torments as our Sauiour hath ſuffered, beholding with a ſincere and quiet eye, as well ſuch paines as he hath ſuffered, as alſo the loue and Charitie that moued him to ſuffer them. And whē he hath thus done, let him not vexe or trouble himſelfe any further, though the Lord ſend him not teares and compunction of heart.

And he that cannot thus doe, but ſhall perceiue himſelfe to bee ouermuch troubled in this exerciſe, let him not ſtriue to paſſe forwardes, but let him humble himſelfe before Almightie God, with inward quietneſſe and ſimplicitie, and deſire him of his grace, that hee may be able to proceede in his Prayer and Meditation, without ſuch great trouble and daunger vnto him. And in caſe it

shall please the Lord to graunt him this quietnesse of mind, he shall feele a more inward hartie deuotion thereby, then hee was wont to feele with the disquietnesse of his mind, and it shall endure much longer. After this sort may a man continue in prayer and meditation a long time together, without feeling any heauinesse or griefe: but that man cannot so doe, that shall meditate after the other enforced manner before specified.

And for this cause wee must take diligent heede, that if at any time there doe arise in the soule verie feruent motions of sensible deuotion, or excessiue sobbings and sighings, wee suffer not our selues to be carried away with them, but we must temper them with great moderation, and dissemble them as much as wee can, and withall, endeuour to keepe and continue that consideration and thoght within vs, which caused those feruent motions: I meane heereby, that we must remooue away from vs those stormes and alterations of the flesh: to wit, these vehement sobbings and sighings, and enioy in our soule



soule with quietnes, the light and deuotion which almightie God hath then sent vnto vs.

And after this sort we shall continue in our exercise a longer time, & our consolation shall take deeper roote inwardly in our soules, & shall not giue any outward shewe thereof with weeping, sobbing, and other external signes, which can hardly be auoided without great paine, in case a man doe once accustome himselfe very much vnto such sensible motions & feruours, which the stronger and mightier they shew outwardly, the more doe they quench the light inwardly, & be an impediment vnto vs, that wee cannot proceede forward in our praier and Meditation.

True it is, that at the first beginning of nouices in spirituall exercises, such feruours can very hardly be eschewed. For then the great wonder that a man hath of the newnesse and profoundnes of diuine thinges, maketh him to enter into so great an admiration and astonishment, that he cannot refraine himselfe frō this feruency. But after that with the vse of daily meditatiō of diuine things,

the newnes of them ceaſeth, then is his heart quieted, and although he loue Almighty God with greater vehemencie, yet hath he not ſuch ſenſible feruour and diſquietnes in his loue.

And ſo we ſee that the new wine, and the potte of water, when it beginneth firſt to trie the vnwonted heate of the fire, it boileth ſo forceably that it bubleth vp, & runneth ouer the brim: but after that it hath boiled a certaine ſpace, it ſeetheth then much better, and is much hoter, and yet with leſſe noiſe and vehemencie.

That man which was lame from his mothers wombe, whome S. Peter healed, (as it is declared in the
Acts. 3.8. acts of the Apoſtles) ſo ſoone as hee perceiued himſelfe to be whole and perfectly curde of his former lameneſſe, the holy Scripture ſayth, that he walked and leaped, and praiſed Almightie God.

This man was not content onely to goe, but as one that had beene ſo long time as it were bounde handes and feet, and finding by experience his new libertie, hee then ſtretcheth forth



foorth his limmes to the vttermoſt hee could, and leaped and skipped with great ioy and admiration. Howbeit it is to bee thought, that afterwards he would walke more quietly, and not leape and skippe all his life time: but as then, the great ioy hee had of his new and vnaccuſtomed health, would not ſuffer him to bee in quiet.

## The fourth Aduiſe.

*Which followeth of the foreſaid Aduiſes: And here it is declared, what manner of attention wee ought to haue in our exerciſe of Prayer and Meditation.*

### §. IIII.

OF all theſe aduiſes aforeſaid, we may gather what manner of attention we ought to haue in prayer. For in this exerciſe it is chiefely expedient for vs to haue our heart not heauie or dull, but liuely, attent, and lifted vppe on high. In figure whereof, wee reade that the Angell

Ezech.2.1 gell ſaid to the Prophet Ezechiel, that hee ſhould ariſe, and ſtand vpon his feete, when the Angell would talke with him, and declare vnto him the diuine myſteries.

In like maner we reade, that thoſe two Cherubins which Salomon placed at the two ſides of the Ark of the Teſtament, ſtood with their winges lifted vp on high, and ſtretched abroad as if they would flie, to ſignifie what a great attention and lifting vp of the ſpirit, a man ought to haue at ſuch time as hee preſenteth himſelfe before almightie God, to ſpeake and ſtand before him.

1.Reg.6. 24.

But as it is neceſſarie on the one ſide, to be in prayer with ſuch an attention and cloſe recollection of the mind; euen ſo on the other ſide, it behoueth that this attention bee qualified with temperance and moderation, that it bee neither preiudiciall to our health, nor any impediment to deuotion.

For ſome there be that doe weary their heades with ouermuch violence, whiles they labor to be attent vnto thoſe things that they meditate vpon. And others againe there bee that



that to auoid this inconuenience, are in their meditation verie ſlacke and negligent, and verie eaſie to be carried away with euerie wind. Now to eſchew theſe two extremities, it is expedient that wee vſe ſuch a meane, that we doe neither with ouermuch attention wearie our head, nor with careleſneſſe or negligence, ſuffer our thoughts to goe wandering whether ſoeuer they will. So that like as wee vſe commonly to ſay vnto him that rideth vpon a kicking flinging horſe, that hee muſt take good heede how hee holdeth the raines of his bridle, and keepeth a meane therin, that is, he muſt hold them neither too hard nor too ſlacke, that the horſe neither turne backward, nor run too headlong forward: euen ſo muſt we endeuour, that our attention may proceede in our prayers with moderation, and not with violence, and with a temperate carefulneſſe and diligence, and not with exceſsiue labour and trauaile.

*Attention with moderation.*

Of both theſe pointes wee be aduertiſed in the holy Scripture. For of the one Salomon ſaith: *Who ſo ſqueiſeth ouermuch the Pappes to get out milke,*

Pro.30.33

milke, ſhall wring out bloud. And of
Eſa.66.10. the other point, the Prophet Eſay ſaith: *Reioyce with her all yee that mourne for her, that yee may ſuck and be ſatisfied with the breaſtes of her conſolation.*

*Of two extreames, the leaſt is to be choſen.*

Howbeit, in caſe wee faile of the meane, and doe leane vnto any of theſe two extremities, it is leſſe hurt to leane vnto ouermuch attention, then vnto careleſneſſe & neglecting of our attention. For a man is prouoked to careleſneſſe & negligence by his owne corrupt and euill inclined nature: but hee is not ſo prouoked vnto attention. And therefore like as a houſe that is built vpon the ſide of a hill, ſhould not loſe much in the building, if at any ſuch time as it cannot be built by line and leuel iuſt vpright, the building therof doe more bend rather vpwarde then downeward: euen ſo ſhall not our attention take any preiudice, if at what time it cannot continue in our prayers in ſuch a mediocritie as wee deſire, it doe rather decline to that extremitie, wherein is leaſt daunger, which is, (as wee haue ſaid) rather to ouermuch attention, then to care





careleſneſſe and negligence.

This aduiſe is of ſo great importance, that for want hereof wee haue ſeene that certain perſons haue paſſed ouer many yeers with taking little profite by their praiers, for that they haue beene careleſſe, dull, and (as it were) neither hote nor colde therein. And others contrariwiſe, haue fallen into great ſickneſſe, and haue hurt their heades with ouermuch heate and vehemencie, which they haue vſed in their meditations. But eſpecially we muſt be well wary, that at the beginning of meditation, wee doe not trouble and wearie our heads with ouermuch attention.

For by ſo dooing, wee ſhall want force & ſtrength to paſſe forwardes therein; as it commonly happeneth to the trauailer, when he maketh too great haſt in his going at the beginning of his iourney.

## The fift Aduiſe.

*That wee muſt not bee diſmaide, nor giue ouer our exerciſe of Praier and Meditation, at ſuch time as we want deuotion therein.*

### §. V.

BVT among all theſe aduiſes, the principall is, that he that praieth be not diſmaide, nor giue ouer his exerciſe, when he feeleth not forthwith ſuch ſweetneſſe of deuotion as he deſireth: as ſome perſons vſe to doe, who are verie much deceiued herein.

Wherefore it is to be noted, that in very deed the hart of man is very like vnto a troubled water, which cannot ſuddainly be cleered againe, be the diligence neuer ſo great that is beſtowed about it, but it muſt haue time and ſpace, to bee cleered and ſetled by little and little. And in ſuch



ſuch caſe vndoubtedly is our heart, which as it is wont to bee troubled, with the daily intermedling and dealing in worldly affaires, ſo after that it is once troubled, it cannot foorthwith be ſetled and quieted in ſo ſhort a ſpace againe, but it muſt needes haue conuenient ſpace and time for the ſame. And therefore Eccleſiaſtes ſaith verie well; *That the end of prayer is better then the beginning*: becauſe at the beginning of Prayer, the heart is troubled and diſquieted, but in the end it is more ſetled and quieted, and better diſpoſed vnto this holy exerciſe. Eccle. 7. 10

Wherefore, like as he that will enkindle a fire in greene wood, muſt haue patience, and expect vntill the wood be dried by little and little, and beſides all this, it is requiſite, that he continue for a time in blowing & enkindling it, and doe ſhedde alſo ſome teares with the ſmoke, if hee will enioy the fire according to his deſire; euen ſo it behoueth vs oftentimes to labour and perſeuere in the beginning of prayer, in caſe wee will in the end enioy the ſweete & cleare fire of deuotion, and of the loue of God.

Now for this cause it is requisite for him that prayeth, to expect the comming of the Lord with longanimitie and perseuerance. For it is very conuenient, as well in respect of the glorie of his high diuine Maiestie, and baseneſſe of our condition, as also for the greatneſſe and importance of the affaires that we haue in hand, that we doe oftentimes attend and watch at the gates of our sacred Pallace. *Bleſſed is the man*, saith the euerlasting wisedome, *that heareth my wordes, and watcheth dayly at my gates, & tarieth at the porch of my house: for who so shall find mee, shall find life, and he shal receiue saluation of the Lord.* And the Prophet Ieremie saith, *It is good to expect the saluation of the Lord God with silence.*

Prou.8.33

Lam.3.26.

The proud man, and hee that mistrusteth the prouidence of Almightie God, hath neither patience nor humilitie to expect the Lordes comming: but the humble man saith with the Prophet: I expected againe and againe for the Lord, & he heard my prayer.

Psal. 40.1.

If the Fisher or Hunter haue not patience



patience to expect for the game that he seeketh, what profite shall he get by his trauaile? Nowe in this our fishing and hunting in praier, beeing of so great importance as it is, wee may account a long time well bestowed, that is employed in watching & expecting for so rich and so happy a treasure as is the Almighty and euer liuing God.

Of that couragious and constant woman which Salomon describeth in his Prouerbs, (among other notable things) he saith thus: *That shee did as the Merchants ship, which brought her bread from far Countries.* Whereby he giueth vs to vnderstand, that whē wee shall not finde this bread of life forthwith according to our desire, wee must then trauaile and saile so long time, as shal be necessary vntill we find it.

Prou.31.14

If thou shalt perseuere in calling (saith our Sauiour Christ) assure thy selfe that at the length thou shalt haue answere. For it happeneth oftentimes, that that thing which is denied in the beginning of praier, is graunted at the ende of praier with great increase.

Matth.7.7 Mar.11.24

Happy

Happy therefore are those soules, that perseuere in praier after this sort; for vndoubtedlie the greater their perseuerance is, the greater aboundaunce shall they haue of his grace. One of the principall things that those persons must haue, that do dispose themselues to receiue great gifts and fauours of almightie God, is longanimitie & patience of hart, to expect faithfully so long time for them as almightie God would they should expect; and in the meane season to comfort themselues with that hope of the Prophet, which sayth;

Haba. 2. 3. *If he shal delay his comming, I will not faile to tarry for him, for he will surelie come, and wil not stay ouer long.*

Nowe when thou hast after this sort expected a certaine time for the Lords comming, in case the Lorde shall then come vnto thee, giue him most harty thanks for his comming; and if it seeme vnto thee that he cōmeth not, humble thy selfe then before him, & acknowledge that thou art not worthy to receiue that thing which he giueth not vnto thee: and let this content thee for that time, that thou hast made a sacrifice of thy selfe



selfe, denied thine owne will, crucified thy appetite, striuen with the diuell, and with thy selfe, and done at the least what thou couldest for thine owne part.

And in case thou haue not adored the Lord with sensible adoration according to thy desire, it is sufficient that thou hast adored him in spirite and in truth; according as his will is to be adored. And trust mee assuredly in this point, that this is the most daungerous passage of all this nauigation, & the place where true deuout persons are proued and tryed; and that if thou escape well out of this daunger, thou shalt haue prosperous successe in all the rest. Iohn. 4. 24

To conclude, if (all this notwithstanding) it seeme vnto thee, that it were but time lost to perseuere in prayer, and to trouble and weary thy head without any profite, in such a case I account it not any inconuenience, if when thou hast done what lyeth in thee, thou take then some deuout Booke, and change for that time thy prayer into reading. Howbeit with this condition, that thy reading be not passed ouer with too great

great haſt or ſpeede, but leiſurely, & with great attention and conſideration vnto ſuch things as thou doeſt reade, and intermingle now & then in places conuenient, praier with reading, which is a thing both verie profitable, and very eaſie to be performed by all kinde of perſons, bee they neuer ſo rude, and newly entered into this way.

## Of ſixe pointes that are to bee meditated vpon in the holy Paſſion of our Sauiour Chriſt.

*The Laſt Chapter.*

FOrſomuch as the moſt holy Paſſion of our Sauiour Chriſt is the principal matter of meditation, it is meet that ſithence we haue hitherto treated of meditation in general, we do now treate particularlie how we ought to meditate vpon the Paſſion of our Sauiour Chriſt; to the intent that we may know, how to behaue our ſelues in this matter.

But heere we muſt firſt preſuppoſe,



poſe, that among all the deuotions in the world, there is none more ſeure, none more profitable, or more vniuerſal for all kind of perſons then the remembrance of the holy Paſſion of our Sauiour Chriſt. For conſidering that our Sauiour Chriſt is (as he himſelfe ſaith) *The way, the truth, and the life*, there is none other exerciſe more fit and conuenient to direct vs to goe vnto God, to knowe God, and to enioy God, then to fix alwayes our eyes vpon our Sauiour Chriſt. For though Chriſt bee vnto vs the way, the truth, and the life, in all things whereſoeuer wee conſider him, yet is hee moſt ſpecially ſo vnto vs, when wee behold him vppon the Croſſe. And therefore Saint Bernard ſaid verie deuoutly; *Well may I (O Lord) compaſſe about heauen, and earth, yet ſhall I not find thee but vpon the Croſſe. There thou lyeſt, there thou ſleepeſt at noone day.* Ioh. 14. 6. S. Bernard.

But leauing now this matter for another place, I will onely treate at this preſent, after what ſort we ought to behaue our ſelues, when we meditate vpon the holy Paſsion of our Sauiour Chriſt: for there be ſome ſimple

ple persons, that seeke nothing els in this holy exercise, but onely to shed a fewe teares, in taking compassion vpon the bitter paines and sorrowes of our Sauiour, and so do stay themselues in this point alone, without passing any further. And albeit this taking compassion of our Sauiours paines, be verie good and necessarie, (for so much as it is the foundation of all the rest, as hereafter shall bee declared) yet this is not the onely fruit that may bee gathered of this holy tree, but there bee others farre greater then this; for so much as out of the meditation of the holy Passion, doth all the profit of the spiritual life proceede.

*Six things to be considered in the passion of our Sauior Christ*

Wherefore wee must vnderstand, that there be six things (among many others) that may be considered in the holy passion of our Sauiour; to wit; The greatnes of his paines; The grieuousnesse of our sinnes; The excellencie of the benefite; The magnificence of the goodnes of Almightie God; The multitude of the vertues of our Sauiour Christ, which do verie brightly shine in his holy passion; And the conueniencie of this meane,



mean, wherby almighty God vouchsafed to worke our Redemption.

These sixe pointes ought wee to consider for six effects, wherein consisteth all the profit of the spirituall life. For we must consider the greatnesse of the paines of our Sauiour Christ, that we may take compassion of them. I. Wee must consider the greatnesse of our owne sins, that we may abhorre them. II. We must consider the greatnesse of the benefite of his passion, that wee may giue him thankes for it. III. We must consider the excellencie of the goodnesse of Almighty God, which in this holy passion of our Sauiour is discouered vnto vs, that wee may very hartily loue the same passing great goodnes. IIII. We must consider the multitude of the vertues of our Sauiour Christ, which do likewise shine very brightly in his passion, that we may bee prouoked thereby to imitate them. V. And wee must consider the conuenience of the mysterie of his holy Passion, that we may be brought thereby in admiration of the wisedome of Almightie God, and be the more confirmed in the faith of this holy mysterie. VI.

Of these six points we intend now to treate, and of each one of them in his due place and order.

## ¶ Of the passing great paines and torments, which our Saviour Iesus Christ suffered in his most bitter Passion.

### §. I.

First, we must consider the passing great paines of our saviour Christ, to prouoke our selues by that consideration to take compassion of them, as reason is that the members should take cõpassion of their head. Wherefore it is to be noted, that the paines which our Sauior suffered in his bitter Passion, were (as the holy fathers say) the greatest that euer were suffered in this world. This shall appeare manifestly to be true, if we do consider fiue principall causes, frõ whence the passing greatnes of these paines proceeded.

The first cause was, the passing
1. greatnes of his charitie, which made him desirous to redeeme mankinde most aboundantly, and to satisfie



most perfectly for the iniuries & offences cõmitted against the diuine Maiestie. And because the greater paines he should suffer, the more perfectly he should accomplish both the one, and the other, (and he wanted not the forces of grace to beare as great a burthen as he would,) therefore he would that his paines should be passing great, that so likewise the satisfaction which hee should make for our debt, & the worke of our Redemptiõ, might be also passing great.

The second cause (which followeth heereof) was, that he suffered his 11.
paines without any manner of ease or consolation. For (according to the reason before mẽtioned) he shut vp from himselfe al the gates, whereby any maner of consolation might come vnto him, either from heauen or from earth: insomuch that hee was content to be forsaken not onely of his Disciples and friendes, but also of his owne Father, yea, and of himselfe also; to the intent that so beeing destitute of all company, he might be burning in the fornace of his most grieuous paines and torments, without all manner of refre-

ſhing of any eaſe, or cõſolatiõ whatſoeuer, that by any meanes might come vnto him. And therefore hee ſaid in the Pſalme; I am become as
Pſal.88.4. a man deſtitute of all helpe, I am left among the deade, notwithſtanding that I alone am hee that among the deade by right am free from ſin and from death. And in another Pſalme hee ſaith; I am plunged in the bottome of waters and of mire, & I find
Pſal.69.2 no place where to ſtay my feet. This is that forſaking which our Sauiour ſignified vpon the Croſſe, when he ſaide; *My God, my God, why haſt thou*
Mat.27.46 *forſaken me?* For at that time his holy
Pſal.22.1 humanity was forſaken in the midſt of the furious ſtreame of his paines and torments, and was left deſtitute of all things that might either withſtand or mittigate the force and vehemencie of them. This was figu-
Leu.16.8 red in the Law, by thoſe two beaſts that were offered for the ſins of the people: of the which the one was killed, & offered vp in ſacrifice, and the other departed away, & was ſent into the Wilderneſſe, leauing her companion alone in the tormentes. The like was doone in this heauenlie



ly ſacrifice, where God & man was offered for the ſinnes of the worlde; and the one of the two natures, to wit, the humanitie, was ſacrificed, and did ſuffer; but the other nature, to wit, the diuinity departed away, leauing her ſiſter and companion all alone to ſuffer the torments. For albeit that (as concerning the bond of vnion) the diuine nature neuer forſooke the humane nature, which it had once taken: yet as touching the conſolation, and eaſe of the paines and tormentes, it did wholy forſake the ſame. And therefore we ſee, that the Martyrs when they went to ſuffer death, ſhewed themſelues verie couragious, merry, and ioyfull: but our Sauior, being the very fountain of grace and of ſtrength, (through whoſe vertue the Martyrs had ſuch force and courage, to be able to doe that which they did,) trembled, and ſwate euen verie drops of bloud, whē he went to ſuffer paines & torments for vs. For in the Martyrs the vertue of charity, which redounded into the inferior forces of the ſoule, cauſed them to haue very great courage and ioy; but in our Sauiour

Christ, both these & all other influences, were by speciall miracle suspended, that so he might drinke the cup of his most bitter paines, pure and without mixture of any manner of ease or consolation.

III. The third cause of his so grieuous paines, was the tendernes of his cõplexion. For whereas his holy body was formed miraculously by the holy Ghost, & the things that are done by miracle, be more perfect than those that be done by nature (as S. Chrysostome declareth, speaking of the water, which was turned into wine at the mariage) it foloweth that our Sauiors body was the most best complexioned, and most tender of all bodies that euer were or shall be; insomuch as a holie Father saith: *That if there had bin no external violence doone vnto our Sauiours bodie, it would haue endured a very great number of yeares, by reason of the perfection, and tendernes of the composition thereof.*

*S. Chrysost. vpon S. Iohn hom. 2.*

IIII. The fourth cause of his so grieuous paines, was the very kinde of death which hee suffered, with all the circumstances that happened in al the continuaunce of his Passion; for somuch



somuch as each one of them (if they bee well considered) was a kinde of martyrdom by it selfe. And that thou maiest more clearely perceiue the grieuousnes which hee suffered, begin euen from the first entrie of his Passion vntil the end of it, and thou shalt find (amõg others) twelue most grieuous paines, which our Sauiour there suffered; the which I will rehearse here very briefely, notwithstanding that in euerie one of them there is verie much to bee said and considered.

*Twelue most grieuous paines which our Sauiour suffered in his Passion.*

I. The first was, the agonie in the Garden, and that wonderfull bloudie sweate, which trickled downe throughout all the parts of his body vnto the earth, which was the most new and most straungest thing of all that euer hath hapned in the world.

II. The second was, to bee sold for so base a price of his owne Apostle and Disciple, vnto so cruell enemies.

III. The third was, to be so oftentimes caried through the common streetes bound and manacled, as if he had beene a verie thiefe.

IIII. The fourth was, the punishment with whipping & scourging, which, besides that the lashes were very cru-

elly laide on him, and verie many in number, it is not a punishment for a man of any credite, or honestie, but for bondslaues, vagabonds, and men of most vile and base condition.

V. The fift was, that most cruell inuention of the Crowne of Thornes, wherein were ioyned together, both most grieuous shame and dishonor, and withal, most grieuous paine and torment.

VI. The sixt was, those so manifold blasphemies, and sundrie kindes of most villanous mockeries, iniuries, and reproaches, which were ioyned with the torments; as to spet so oftentimes in his face, as though hee had beene a blasphemer; to giue him buffets and blowes, as if he had beene a vagabond; to apparrell him sometimes in white garments, and sometimes in redde, as if hee had beene a foole; to hood-winke his eyes and to ieast at him, saying; *Mat. 26.68* *Areade who hath smitten thee:* as if hee had beene a verie dissard; to clothe him with a purple garment, and set a Reede in his hand, to kneele on one knee before him, to smite him on the head with a Reede, as if hee had



had beene a counterfeite king; and besides all this, to proclaime him through the common streetes as a malefactor. Who euer saw so manie kinds of reprochful iniuries heaped together vpon one man?

VII. The seauenth was, that wonderfull contempt & despite, which was done vnto him (being the sonne of Almighty God,) when they compared him with Barrabas, and made lesse account of him then of Barrabas. Insomuch as that Lord, by whō al things were created, and in whom al things do liue and are preserued, was accounted more vnprofitable, and more vnworthy to liue, than Barrabas an infamous malefactor.

VIII. The eyght was, in that they inforced him to carrie vpon his shoulders, (which were all to rent & bruised,) the very same instrument of the Crosse, whereupon hee should suffer death. The tormentors themselues (which are commonly the ministers of crueltie) doe vse to hide the eyes of them that are to bee beheaded, that they may not see the instrument that shall bereaue them of their life; but heere they doe not

onelie not vſe this kind of humanity towards our Sauiour, but they lay the ſame inſtrument of his death, euen vppon his owne ſhoulders, to the intent that his heart might firſt ſuffer the torment of the Croſſe inwardly, before that his body ſhould proue it outwardly.

IX. The ninth was, the verie martyrdome of the Croſſe, which is a moſt cruel kinde of torment; for it is not a ſpeedie kinde of death (as to bee hanged, or beheaded) but very long and lingering; and the woundes be in the moſt ſenſible parts of the bodie; to wit, in the feete and hands, which are moſt full of veines and ſinewes, which be the inſtruments of feeling. Moreouer, his paynes were increaſed with the poyze & weight of his owne bodie, which alwayes tended and ſwaied downward; and ſo it euer rented and enlarged his woundes, and augmented the griefe of his torments; and this cauſed his martyrdome to become ſo extream grieuous, that although hee had no deadly wound, yet by reaſon of the paſsing greatnes of his paines, his moſt holy ſoule departed out of his moſt



moſt precious bodie.

The tenth was, that whereas our Sauiour was thus tormented vpon the Croſſe, and there became a verie ſea of paines and torments, yea, whereas hee was in ſuch a dolefull caſe, that if wee ſhould ſee a verie dogge in the ſtreetes ſo pittifully tormented, it were able to breake our hearts; yet all this notwithſtanding, his cruell enemies were ſo far off frō taking any pittie or compaſsion vpon him, that euen at that verie time they mocked and ſcoffed at him, and wagged their heads, ſaying; *Fie on thee, that deſtroieſt the Temple of GOD, and within three dayes buildeſt it againe.* Mat. 27.40

XI. The eleuenth was, to haue his moſt innocent mother preſent before his eyes at all theſe martyrdomes, knowing ſo well as he did, what a paſsing great griefe it was vnto her moſt innocent heart.

XII. The twelfth was ſuch a crueltie, as the like was neuer ſeene, to wit, that wheras his moſt holy body was all voide of bloud, and all the fountaines of his veines emptied, and his bowels dried vp, by reaſon of the great aboundaunce of bloud which he

hee had shed, when he requested a little water, they did not onely not graunt it vnto him, but in steede thereof, they gaue him to drinke Vineger and Gaule.

Luk. 16.24 Now what thing could bee more cruelly done then this? True it is, that the rich couetous man, which was tormented in hell, had a drop of water denied him when he required it, but yet hee had no gaule giuen vnto him. But here they doe not onely denie the sonne of God the thing that he desired, but besides that, they increase his most grieuous paines with another new kind of torment.

Euerie one of these pointes being considered seuerally by it selfe, will minister sufficient matter of verie great griefe and sorrow to any good Christian heart. And therefore whosoeuer is desirous to haue an earnest & inward compassion of the paines of our Sauiour, let him goe through euerie one of them, and make a station at each of them; and (be hee neuer so hard hearted) it is not almost possible, but that in some one or other of them, hee shall find verie vehement motions, to prouoke him

vnto



vnto griefe and compassion.

Howbeit, the pains of our Sauior Christ are not thus ended, there be yet others without all comparison, farre greater then these: to wit, the paines of his blessed soule. For all these paines aboue named, do for the most part appertain to the paines of the Crosse, wherin his body suffered outwardly: but besides this visible Crosse, there was yet another inuisible Crosse, wherein his most holy soule was crucified within his body, hauing also foure armes and foure nayles, (which were foure dolorous considerations,) and these were a far greater torment vnto him then the very outward Crosse. For first of all, there was represented vnto him, all the sins of the world, that were present, past, and to come, (for all which he suffered) and that so distinctly, as if they had beene the sins but of one man alone. Nowe to him that bare such a passing great loue and zeale vnto the honor of his father, what an vnspeakable griefe was it, to behold such an infinite number of abhominations and offences, committed against so high a Maiestie? For it is

*The inuisible Crosse of our Sauiour.*

certaine

certaine, that the sinnes of one man alone, were able to torment him more then all the torments of the Crosse. The which being so, what a passing great griefe would the sinnes of all men, and of al the world cause vnto him? Surely there is no vnderstanding able to comprehend the passing greatnesse of this griefe.

II. Secondly, there was also represented vnto him the vngratitude and damnation of manie men, and especially of manie wicked Christians, which would neuer acknowledge this singular benefite, nor endeuour to profit and helpe themselues with this so great and costly a remedie, as he there prepared for them. This was also a far greater torment vnto him then the torment of the Crosse. For it is a greater paine vnto a Labourer to bee denied his day wages, and the fruit of his labour, then the verie labour it selfe, albeit it were verie great. And for this cause our Sauiour complained by his Prophet Esay, of this iniurie vnto his Father, Esay. 49.4. saying; *I said, in vaine haue I trauailed, in vaine and without cause haue I wasted my strength.* And hee complained



plained of this ingratitude not onely to his father, but also euen vnto men themselues, by Saint Bernarde, saying: *O man, consider what cruell torments I suffered for thy sake. There is* S. Bernard. *no paine that tormenteth me so extremely as thy ingratitude doth. I call vnto thee that doe suffer for thee. Behold the paines that doe torment mee: behold the nailes that do pierce through my hands and feet: behold the shameful reproches and despite wherwith they dishonor me. And although the payne which I suffer outwardly be so passing great, yet is the paine far greater which I suffer inwardly, when I see thee so vngratefull and vnkinde towards mee for the same.*

In like manner, there was represented vnto him, the horrible sinne III. of that miserable people of Iewrie, & the terrible punishment that was prepared for thē within a short time after, which vndoubtedly was a greater griefe & torment vnto him, than the cuppe of his bitter Passion. For if the Prophet Ieremy signified, that the sinne which the Iewes committed in going about to kill him, grieued him much more then his owne very

very death, what a griefe (trow you) would it be to our Sauiour, who had without all compariſon, far greater charity and grace, than the Prophet Ieremie.

IIII.

There was moreouer repreſented vnto him the griefes, and dolefull ſword of ſorrow, which pearced the hart of his bleſſed Mother, when ſhe ſaw him ſuffer between two thieues vpon the Croſſe, the which vndoubtedly was ſo great a griefe and paine vnto him, as the loue was great and ineſtimable which he bare vnto her.

Luke. 2.35

Now theſe foure conſiderations & griefs, were as it were four armes of another inward croſſe, wherwith his bleſſed ſoule was likewiſe crucified within his body. So that our Sauior ſuffered that day the paines and torments of two croſſes, the one viſible, & the other inuiſible. Vpon the one croſſe his body ſuffered outwardly, and vpō the other, his ſoule ſuffered much more inwardlie. Nowe how paſsing great the griefe was, which proceeded of theſe foure cōſiderations, there is no vnderſtāding able to comprehend it; and yet we may conieƈture ſomwhat thereof, by that outward



ward ſhewe of his bloudy ſweate in the Garden.

Whoſoeuer then ſhall attentiuely conſider all theſe cauſes, ſhal clearly ſee how paſsing great the paines and torments of our Sauiour were, which is the intent of this firſt manner of meditating vpon his moſt bitter paſſion. Howbeit, this muſt not bee the finall end of this exerciſe, but rather it muſt bee vſed as a meane to come to other ends, to wit, to vnderſtand hereby what a paſsing great loue hee bare vnto thee, that would ſuffer ſo much for thee; and what a great benefit he did vnto thee, in buying thee with ſo deare a price; and how much thou art bound to doe for him, who hath done and ſuffered ſo much for thee; and aboue all this, how greatly thou oughteſt to abhor thy ſinnes, and to bee grieued with them, ſith they were the cauſe of his ſo long and painefull martyrdome. Now for theſe foure ends, (whereof wee will intreate in the Sections following) ſerueth this manner of contemplation. Whereby it appeareth, that this firſt manner of meditating (by way of taking compaſsion of the bitter paines

paines of our Sauiour) is as it were a meane or a ladder vnto al the other. And for this verie cause S. Bonauenture made great account of this maner of meditation vpon the Passion, because it is sensibly seene, that this manner of meditation openeth the way vnto al the other maners of meditating vpon the same.

*How in the Passion of our Sauior Christ, appeareth verie manifestly, what a grieuous thing sinne is in the sight of Almightie God.*

## §. II.

THE second point that wee haue to consider in the Passion of our Sauiour, is the grieuousnesse of our sinnes, whereby to moue our hearts to be sorrowfull for them, and to abhorre them. Wherefore we must vnderstand, that (as all holy learned Fathers doe affirme) our sinnes were the verie cause, why the Sonne of almightie



mightie God suffered such grieuous paines, torments, and cruell death, as he suffered in this world. For it is certaine, that if there had beene no sinne to be the meane and occasion of his suffering, it had not beene needfull for him to haue suffered as he did.

It is not agreed among the learned Diuines, whether the Sonne of GOD shoulde haue beene incarnate, in case man had not sinned, (for some doe affirme it, and some doe denie it,) but this is holden for a most certaine trueth, that in case man had not sinned, the sonne of GOD shoulde not haue died. VVhereby it appeareth, that our sinnes were the very cause that moued him to suffer all these miseries, and that our sinnes were they that threw him into this prison, and that our sinnes were they that nailed him vpon the crosse.

*If man had not sinned, Christ had not suffered.*

And think not, because they were not thy sinnes alone which were the cause hereof, that thou art therefore worthy of the lesse punishment, for according to the lawes of iustice, he deserueth no lesse punishment that killeth

killeth an innocent being accompanied with many in committing the fact, then if he alone had killed him.

So that by this rule thou seest, what greate reason thou hast to moue thee to abhor thy sins, and to be earnestly sorrie for them, by calling to minde, that they were the tormentors, which in very deed crucified the sonne of Almightie God, and caused him to suffer so great paine, and tormentes. This being throughlie considered as it ought, is a farre greater cause to moue a man to abhorre sin, & to be sorry for the same, than all other losses and miseries that ensue of sin, yea, although we should recken among our losses, the depriuation of the euerlasting glorie and felicitie which is lost by sinne, and the euerlasting horrible paines which hee purchased by the same. Nowe according vnto this doctrine, when thou shalt bee occupied in meditating vppon the holie Passion, and shalt see howe the enemies do apprehend our Sauior, and how they accuse him and buffet him, and howe they spit vppon him and whip him, &c. thinke for certaine that



that thou art in very deede in company with them, and that thou hast joyned with them in this conspiracie against our Sauior. So that thou maiest truely say, that thy sinnes do accuse him, that thy dissolute behauiour bindeth him, that thy anger and malice whippeth him, that thy presumption and rashnes buffeteth him, that thy pride crowneth him with thornes, that thy fond brauerie and vanities, doe clothe him with purple, that thy pleasures and delights, giue him to drinke gaule and vineger, and to be short, that thy disobedience, nayleth his hands and feete vppon the Crosse. For so much as the paines, which thou deseruest by these thy sins, hee vouchsafed of his infinite charitie to suffer for thee. For it is certaine, that the tormentors should neuer haue had power to torment him, as they did, in case thy sinnes had not giuen them force and strength to doe the same.

*Of the passing great benefite of our Redemption.*

§. III.

THirdly, we ought to consider in the holy Passion, the greatnes of the benefit vvhich our Sauiour hath doone vnto vs, in redeeming vs by this meane. And although there be infinit things to be said in this matter, yet at this present I will doe no more, but onely note briefely three principall points, which are to bee considered in this most excellent benefite of our Redẽption. First, what I our Sauiour hath bestowed vpon vs II. by the same redemption Secondly, what meane he vsed in giuing it vnto III. vs. And thirdly, with what passing great loue he gaue it vnto vs.

How passing great that is, which our Sauiour hath bestowed vpon vs by this benefit of our Redemption, there is no tongue able to expresse. Howbeit we may conceiue somwhat thereof by two waies. The first way, I is by considering all the euils & miseries whereinto mankind incurred through



through the sinne of the first man Adam: for all these miseries were sufficiently remedied by our Sauiour Iesus Christ, who bestowed vpon vs al such benefits as were contrary vnto these miseries; for so much as it is euident, that hee was giuen vnto vs to be an vniuersal repairer of al the euils and miseries of the world. Now hee that were able to recken how many the miseries are, wherinto the world hath fallen by the sinne of the first man Adam, might also vnderstand, how many the benefites are, that came vnto vs by the second Adam, (to wit, by our Sauiour Christ) which benefites bee vndoubtedly innumerable.

The second way is by consider- II. ing not all the miseries which our first Father Adam brought vnto vs, but all the benefites which came vnto vs by our Sauiour Christ, for so much as we are made partakers of al those benefites, by meanes of communicating his spirit vnto vs. For all such as are made partakers of the Spirit of Christ, are made partakers also of the vertues and merites of Christ. Wherefore the Apostle saith,

That

Gala.3.27 *That all such as haue receiued the Sacrament of Baptisme, haue put on Christ.* Giuing vs thereby to vnderstand, that they all are made partakers of Christ, that are adorned with his vertues and merites, and that so being clothed with this liuerie, they seeme in the sight of the heauenly Father to be such after a sort in their degree, as his owne verie sonne seemeth before him. And therefore for good cause dooth Ecclesiasticus alleadge this wonderfull title of the Sonne of God in his prayer, saying:

Eccl.36.14 *Haue mercie (O Lord) vpon thy people Israel, whome thou hast made equall and like thy first begotten sonne.*

What dignitie, what glory can be greater then this? Now according heereunto, hee that could recken how many the vertues and merites of our Sauiour Christ haue beene, might likewise vnderstand, howe many the benefites haue beene that are come vnto vs by him; for so much as wee are made partakers of them all by the meane of his passion. To conclude, by him is giuen vnto vs Remission of our sinnes, Grace, Glorie, libertie, Peace, Saluation,

*Note what benefits come vnto vs by*



ion, Redemption, Sanctification, Sacraments, Iustice, Satisfaction, Merites, Doctrine, and all other things which hee had, and were behooefull for our saluation. And by reason of this his so bountiful cōmunicating, hee is called in the holy Scriptures, the Father, the Bridegroome, and the vniuersall head of the Catholik Church; because whatsoeuer the Father hath, appertaineth to his children, and whatsoeuer the Bridegrome hath, hee imparteth to his Spouse, and whatsoeuer the head hath, the members are made partakers of the same.

*our Sauiour Christ, in case we be his true faithfull members.*

These are the benefites which our Sauiour Christ hath bestowed vpon vs. But by what meane hath hee giuen them vnto vs? It is euident that by the meane of this holy incarnation and Passion, whereby hee made himselfe partaker of all our debtes and miseries; and so by taking vpon him all our miseries, hee made vs partakers of all his benefites. This taking vpon him all our miseries, is (vndoubtedly) a farre greater thing, then to make vs partakers of all his benefites.

For certainely it is a more wonderfull thing in God to suffer miseries, then to bestow benefits, because as there is nothing more proper and conuenient to his infinite goodnes, then to bestow benefites, so is there nothing more straunge and further off from that infinite felicitie, then to suffer miseries. Whereby it appeareth, that we are much more bound vnto him for the paines & torments which hee hath suffered for vs, then for the great benefits which he hath giuen vnto vs. I meane hereby, that we are much more bound vnto him for the manner whereby he hath remedied our miseries, then for the verie remedie it selfe.

*With what a passing great loue our Sauiour suffered for vs.*

But how passing great was the loue wherewith our Sauiour bestowed all this vpon vs? This is without all comparison farre greater then all the rest. For certainely the desire which Christ had to suffer paines for vs, was farre greater then the verie paines which he suffered; and much more paines would he haue suffered, in case it had beene needfull for vs. Three houres he continued suffering paines and torments vpon the crosse for



for our sinnes. But what is this in cõparison of that, which the greatnesse of his loue could haue vouchsafed to doe for vs? Verilie, if it had been needful for vs that hee should there haue suffered paines and torments vntill the day of Iudgement, the loue was so passing great which hee bare vnto vs, that he would vndoubtedly haue done it. So that albeit he suffered much for vs, yet was the loue which he bare vnto vs far greater, then the paines which hee suffered for vs, much more are wee bound vnto him for that which hee desired to suffer for vs. This consideration is very profitable to prouoke vs to giue most humble and harty thankes vnto him, who hath bestowed so great benefits vpon vs, and withall to loue him, who hath loued vs much more then by his benefits he hath shewed vnto vs.

*Of the wonderfull great goodnes of Almightie God, which appeareth very euidently in the holy Passion of our Sauiour.*

§. IIII.

FOurthly, wee ought to consider the passing great goodnesse and mercy of almighty God, which shineth more euidently & brightly in the holie Pasion of our Sauiour, than in any other of his works.

*Foure principal things to be considered in the Passion of Christ.*

Wherfore thou hast deeply to cõsider therin foure things; which are to be considered in all the whole historie of the holie Pasion, and in euery part thereof. The first is, who suffereth. The second is, what paines he suffereth. The third is, for whom he suffereth. The fourth is, for what cause he suffereth. Now if thou wilt stay thy selfe a while in euery one of these pointes, and consider first the highnesse & excellencie of him that suffereth, which is Almightie God; and in such wise stay in this consideration, that thou art astonied at this so high, & so wonderful a thing; and



and afterwards commest to descend from thence vnto the consideration of the basenes, & vilenes of the most grieuous paines, and reprochfull injuries, which he was content to suffer; & that not for Angels or Archangels, but euen for men, which are most vile & abhominable creatures, and in their works like vnto the diuels themselues; if (as I say) in each one of these points thou make (as it were) a station, and do compare the one point with the other, vndoubtedly thou shalt be greatly amazed and astonied, to consider how much so great & excellent a maiesty would abase himselfe, to redeeme so vile & so base a creature, and then maiest thou crie out with the Prophet, and say; *O Lord I haue heard thy words, and was afraide, I haue considered thy works, and was astonied.* Hab. 3. 2.

But if after all this, thou doe consider the cause of his so great abasing, and commest to vnderstand that it was not for anie manner of commoditie towards himselfe, nor yet prouoked by any desert of ours, but was onelie mooued thereunto with the bowels of his tender mer-

Luke.1.78. cy, & loue towards vs, by the which hee vouchsafed to visite vs from on high. This point beeing well and dulie considered, will lift vppe thy minde into such a great admiration and loue of him, that thou wilt bee astonied, as Moses was in the mount, when hee saw the figure of this my-
Exod.3.3. sterie, and began to proclaime with a loud voice, the vnspeakable great mercy of almightie God, which was there reuealed vnto him. This was the great languishing and faintnesse of spirit, which the Spouse felt in the Canticles, when shee saide; *Stay me vp with flowers, and comfort me with apples, for I languish with loue.*

S. Bernarde. Vpon which words S. Bernarde saith thus; *The amorous soule seeth heere King Salomon, with the crowne which his Mother crowned him withall: shee seeth the oneile sonne of Almightie God carying a Crosse vppon his shoulders she seeth the Lord of maiestie whipped & spet vpon: she seeth the Author of life & of glorie, thrust through with nailes, pearced with a speare, & many despiteful reproaches done vnto him: finally, shee seeth him bestowe his most holy life for his friendes: she*



*seeth all this, and in seeing it, shee is pearced through with a knife of loue, and therefore she saith: Stay me vp with flowers, and comfort me with apples, for I languish with loue.*

## *Of the excellent vertues that doe shine vervie brightly in the holy Passion of our Sauiour.*

### §. V.

THE fift point that wee haue to consider in the holy Passion of our Sauiour, is the great number of vertues that do shine very clearly in it; the which consideration seruеth to encourage vs to endeuour our selues to imitate some part of that which is there represented vnto vs. This is one of the highest manners of meditating that is vpon the holy Passion. For it is manifest, that al the perfection of a Christian life, consisteth in the imitation and following of the vertues of our Sauiour Christ. 1.Pet.2.21
Whereunto the Apostle S. Peter exhorteth vs, saying; *Christ suffered for vs, leauing vnto vs an example, that you should follow his footesteps, who, when*

*hee was euill spoken of, did not speake euill againe: and when hee was tormented, did not threaten them, but deliuered himselfe vnto him that did most vniustly condemne him.*

And albeit that all vertues shined so brightly, and in such excellent wise in all the life of our Sauiour Christ, yet did they much more perfectly shine in his holy Passion. And therfore in his passion principally it behooueth vs to behold the beautie and excellencie of his vertues; the which doe much more euidently shine there among his paines and torments, then doe the flowers among the thornes.

*Humilitie.* Consider therefore first of al, that so profound *Humilitie*, wherewith the most high and onely begotten Son of Almightie God, vouchsafed to be contemned, and lesse esteemed then Barrabas, and to bee crucified vpon a crosse betweene two thieues, as though he had beene a Captaine and Ringleader of malefactors.

*Patience.* Consider his so wonderfull *Patience*, in the middest of so many reprochful iniuries and torments, and withall, his so passing great *Magnanimitie*,



*nimitie*, in that he offered himselfe so willingly into the hands of his enemies, & to suffer the greatest paines and conflicts, that euer were suffred in this world.

Consider that so constant *Perseuerance*, which hee had from the beginning to the end, yea euen to suffer death vppon the Crosse, and to descend into hell, and to finish the worke of our saluation. *Perseuerance.*

Consider his most feruent *Charitie*, which passeth all vnderstanding, by the which onely hee was mooued to offer himselfe in sacrifice for the sinnes of the worlde, and to suffer death, that hee might giue life not only vnto his friends, but also to his enemies, yea euen to those very persons that shedde his most precious bloud. *Charitie.*

Consider his most aboundant *Mercie*, which extended it selfe so far foorth, as to take vpon him all the miseries and debtes of the worlde, & to make satisfaction for them, as if they had been peculiarly his own debts. *Mercie.*

Consider that so perfect *Obedience* which he vsed towardes his Father, *Obedience.*

whom he obeyed vnto death, yea euē to the death of the Crosse: where finallie bowing downe his head, hee offered vp vnto him his most holie soule, giuing vs thereby to vnderstand, that the worke of his obedience was then perfectly fulfilled.

*Meeknes.* Consider that so passing great *Meekenes* which hee shewed in all the processe of his Passion, suffering himselfe to be carried like a sheep to the butcherie, and like a most meeke Lambe that holdeth his peace, when he is sheared.

*Silence.* Consider his so wonderfull *Silence* amongst so many false accusations and lying witnesses, which was so great, that it was able to bring the very Iudge himselfe that condemned him, into a great admiration of him.

*Contempt of the world.* Nowe, if thou bee desirous to see a most perfect patterne of *The contempt of the world*, and of all the honours, riches, pleasures, & delights that be therein, behold our Sauiour vppon the Crosse, so dishonoured, tormented, and naked, that hee had none other bed to lie vpon, but only a crosse; no other pillowe to rest his head



head vpon, but onely a Crowne of thornes; no other delicates to feede vpon, but onely gaule & vineger: no other persons to comfort him, but onely those cruel scoffing ministers, which wagged their heads at him & said: *Fie on thee that destroyest the Temple of God, & in three daies buildest it vp againe, &c.* Mar. 15. I conclude therefore, that the Euangelical pouertie, abstinence and austeritie of life, with all other vertues, doe no where shine more euidently, then in the Crosse.

*The great humilitie & patience of our Sauiour Christ vpon the Crosse.* But among all these vertues, *Humilitie & Patience* do shew themselues most notable in the bitter Passion of our Sauiour. For *Patience* (as the holy Fathers affirme,) was the wedding garment wherewith the Sonne of God clothed himselfe, when hee came to bee affianced with the Catholike Church, and to bee married with her. By which Metaphore they giue vs to vnderstand, that albeit our Sauiour Christ shined most brightly with the garment of all vertues, when he came to celebrate matrimonie with his Church vpon the bedde of the crosse, yet did he most principally shine there with the robe of *Patience*

*tience.* For by meanes of the Act of this vertue, which is to ſuffer, hee dranke the bitter cup of his Paſsion: by the value and merite whereof, the Catholike Church was redeemed, beautified, and eſpouſed by our Sauiour Chriſt. Now on theſe & other the like vertues, we ought to fixe our eyes, when wee meditate vpon the holy Paſsion of our Sauiour, to the intent that we may bee thereby prouoked to imitate ſomewhat of that which was there done, not onely for our redemption, but alſo for our example. For the greateſt glorie that a Chriſtian can attaine vnto in this world, is to haue a ſemblance and likeneſſe vnto our Sauiour Chriſt. Howbeit, not ſuch a likeneſſe as proude Lucifer deſired to haue, but ſuch a likeneſſe of life, as our Sauiour himſelfe commaunded vs to haue, when hee ſaid: *I haue giuen you an example, that as I haue done, ſo ſhould yee doe likewiſe.*

Eſa. 14.14.

Ioh. 13.15.

*Of*



*Of the conueniencie of the myſterie of our Redemption.*

## §. VI.

THE ſixt point that wee haue to contemplate vpon the holy Paſsion, is the conueniencie of the myſterie of our Redemption; to wit, how conuenient a meane this was, which Almightie God choſe, whereby to worke the Saluation of man, and to heale and cure him of his miſeries. This manner of contemplation, ſerueth to illuminate the vnderſtanding, to confirme it more firmely in the faith of this myſterie, and to lift vp the heart of man into a great admiration of the goodneſſe and wiſedome of Almightie God, who choſe ſo wonderfull and conuenient a meane to heale our miſeries, and to relieue our neceſſities.

This is ſo copious and ſo plentifull a matter to meditate vpon, that certainely if a man ſhould continue thinking vpon it vntill the end of the world, hee ſhould alwayes find new reaſons of the conueniencie of this holy

holy myſterie, and new cauſes to induce him to lift vp his ſpirit more and more, in admiration of the high wiſedome & prouidence of almighty God herein. But becauſe this volume would bee too great, in caſe I ſhould treate of this matter at large; I will therefore at this preſent onely ſhewe the order & foundation of this conſideration, to the intent that the deuout and religious ſoule may hereby haue a way opened vnto her, to proſecute all the reſt. Wherefore it is to be noted, that if we wil ſee what proportion and conueniencie a meane hath with his end, it is neceſſarie to make a cõpariſon betweene the ſame meane and the end, and the greater helpes that the meane hath towards the attaining of the end, the more proper and conuenient is the meane for the ſame end. As for example, if we will examine whether a medicine be conuenient for a diſeaſe, we muſt conſider the accidents of the diſeaſe, and the properties & vertues of the medicine: and when wee haue ſeene what proportion ther is between the one & the other, we may iudge whether the medicine be conuenient for the



*The Paſſion of Chriſt is a generall medicine for al the miſeries and neceſſities of man.*

the diſeaſe or no. Euen ſo in like maner is it in this caſe; for whereas it is euident vnto vs, that the Paſsion & bloud of our Sauiour Ieſus Chriſt, is a generall medicine for all the miſeries and neceſsities of man, if wee wil try the conuenience of this medicine, wee muſt make a long compariſon betweene the medicine and the diſeaſe; and in caſe we bee able (thorowly as we ought) to ſearch & examine both the one & the other, we ſhal certainly find, that this medicine is ſo fit & conuenient for the curing of this diſeaſe, & of all the branches & accidẽts of the ſame, as if the medicine had beene only inſtituted for the curing of ech defect in the diſeaſe; the which vndoubtedly is a matter able to bring a man that ſhould conſider of it attentiuely, into a great aſtoniſhment & admiration. If thou be not fully perſwaded herein, tel me then I pray thee, what ſatisfaction could be offered more ſufficient for payment of the common debtes of mankinde, than the moſt precious bloud which the ſonne of Almighty God ſhed for vs vppon the Croſſe? To cure alſo the woũds of our pride, couetouſ-

couetouſnes, ingratitude, pleaſures, delights, and the loue of our ſelues, with all other euils which proceede thereof, what thing could bee more conuenient, than GOD vppon a Croſſe? Likewiſe to giue vs knowledge of the goodnes and mercie of Almighty God, to enkindle vs more in the loue of him, to ſtrengthē more our confidence, and to awake more our forgetfulnes, & vnthankfulnes, what thing could be more conuenient, than God vpon a croſſe?

Moreouer, to enrich a man with merits, to exalt him vnto greater honour, to enkindle his ſpirit in deuotion, to cōfort him in his tribulations, to ſuccour him in his temptations, to helpe him in his labours, to encourage him vnto great enterpriſes, & finally, to giue a perfect example of all vertues, what thing could be more conueniēt, thē Ieſus Chriſt vpon the Croſſe? And to comprehend all in one word, if the Euangelicall life be wel conſidered, it is nothing elſe, but onelie a continuall Croſſe: and ſo conſequently, what thing could be more conuenient to direct a kinde of life which is altogether



gether a croſſe, then another croſſe?

And if thou be yet deſirous to vnderſtand this conueniencie more euidently, conſider attentiuely what thing a Chriſtian life is, (for the leading of a Chriſtian life, is the end of al the trauailes & paines of our Sauiour Chriſt) and the ſame conſideration wil declare verie plainly vnto thee, what conueniencie there is betweene this meane, and this end. A Chriſtian life (taking it in his full perfection) is not ſuch a kinde of life as the Chriſtians vſe to liue at this day in the world; but ſuch a life as our Sauiour Chriſt liued, and ſuch a life as his Diſciples liued, whoſe paines, labours, and miſeries were ſo great, that one of them writeth thus of them: *We are become a ſpectacle vnto God, vnto Angels, and vnto men. For truely ſo great are our paines and miſeries, and in ſuch wiſe are we reuiled and perſecuted of the worlde, that (as though wee were wilde beaſtes baited at a ſtake) wee are ſpecially looked vpon, not onely of men and of Angels, but alſo of Almightie God himſelfe.* And afterwards hee ſaith thus, *Vntill this preſent houre wee doe ſuffer hunger, thirſt*

*Note well this point.*

*What a Chriſtian life is.*

1.Cor.4.9.

*thirſt, nakednesse, and lowes, and haue not ſo much as a denne wherein to hide our ſelues. Wee goe from place to place, and we gaine the bread that wee eate with our owne handes. They curſe vs, and wee bleſſe them: they perſecute vs, and wee ſuffer them: they blaſpheme vs, and wee pray for them. To conclude, in ſuch wiſe are wee turmoyled and contemned of the world, as if wee were the verie dust and dirt that they treade vnder their feete: and as though wee were moſt wicked and abhominable men: the world is fully perſwaded, that nothing can bee more acceptable vnto Almightie God, then to procure our death and condemnation.*

This is (my deare brother) a Chriſtian life. This verie Chriſtian life did the Prophets liue, and ſo did alſo the Martyrs, that liued in the Primitiue Church in the wildernes. To be ſhort, this Chriſtian life did al the Saints liue. And this Chriſtian life the Apoſtle deſcribeth very plainly in his Epiſtle to the Hebrewes, in theſe words.

Heb. 11. 36. *The Saints were mocked, ſcourged, apprehended, impriſoned, ſtoned, ſawed in peeces, tempted, and put to death with*



*with the ſword. They went in this world appareled in ſheepes and goates Skinnes, very poore, needy, and afflicted, of whom the world was not worthy. They liued in the wildernes, & in ſolitarie places, apart from the companie of men, and had none other habitation, but the dens and cliftes of the earth.* This is indeede the perfection of the Chriſtian life, which the Goſpell teacheth vs, and which our Sauiour Chriſt came to bring into the worlde. This Chriſtian life, if it be well conſidered, is a continuall croſſe, and death of the whole man, to the intent that, after he is thus mortified & annihilated, he may be able and diſpoſed to bee transformed into God. For like as there cannot be generation without corruptiō, (forſomuch as that thing which is, muſt periſh, to the end that that may be made which is not,) euen ſo this ſpiritual regeneration & transformation of man into God, cannot be made, vnleſſe the old man doe firſt die, that ſo by death & corruption of the olde man, he may be transformed into God. Whereupon it plainely enſueth, that al the Euangelicall life, is nothing els (as we haue

haue ſaid) but death, and a Croſſe. And therefore vvhat thing can bee more conuenient to direct ſuch a kind of life as is altogether a continual croſſe, than another croſſe? And if there be nothing more apt & conuenient to ingender a fire, then another fire, & if euery thing be moſt apt to ingender a thing like vnto it ſelfe, what thing can bee more proportionable & conuenient to ingéder a croſſe, then another croſſe? vndoubtedly ſo it is: and therfore there is nothing of greater force to encourage & ſtrengthen at this day all men & women, to ſuffer paines, vniuſtice, wrongs, pouerty, ſubiection, hunger, thirſt, cold, nakednes, & to be ſhort, al the troubles, calamities, afflictions, perſecutions, impriſonments, torments & miſeries of this world, and al the auſterity of the Euangelical life, thé to fixe their eies vpon the croſſe. Out of this ſchoole of the Croſſe came the Martyrs. In this ſchoole learned alſo the Apoſtles; and this Schoole hath likewiſe taught and ſtrengthened all the Saints, to liue a holie auſtere kind of life. And it was the Croſſe that hath



hath accompanied and comforted them in all their labours, troubles, paines, afflictions, & perſecutions.

Now, when the deuout ſoule findeth ſo many kindes of fruits in this Tree of life, for all times, and for all neceſsities, ſhee cannot but wonder at the high wiſedome of that ſoueraigne Maieſtie, that hath found out ſuch an excellent meane for our remedie; and ſhee is alſo prouoked thereby to acknowledge the vnſpeakeable goodnes of ſo merciful a Father, who being able to haue holpen and remedied man with his onlie will, choſe rather to put himſelfe to ſo great paines and diſhonors, to the intent that man might be more honoured, and more holpen by this meane, then by any other. Theſe be the ſixe principall waies to meditate vpon the holy Paſsion; and the order that may commonlie be vſed in meditating vpon them, is to beginne at the firſt, to wit, to conſider the moſt grieuous paines which our Sauiour ſuffered for vs, (the which conſideration is as it were the verie foundation of all the others,) and from that conſideration we may goe for-

*The order that may cõmonly be vſed in meditating vpon the Paſſion.*

forwards immediatly vnto all the reſt, according as the verie courſe of meditatiõ wil open vnto vs the way, and eſpecially the grace of the holy Ghoſt, who is the principal teacher of theſe exerciſes.

For as wee haue declared before, when wee haue conſidered the paſſing great paines which our Sauiour ſuffered for vs, we may then immediatly proceede forwardes, and conſider the greatneſſe of our ſinnes and offences, which cauſed him to ſuffer ſo many grieuous paines and torments; and withall, the paſſing greatneſſe of this benefit of our Redemption, in that Almightie God would vouchſafe for the loue of vs to ſuffer ſuch paines and torments; and wee may likewiſe conſider the highnes of the goodneſſe and mercie of Almightie God, who for the great loue hee bare vnto vs, abaſed himſelfe ſo far forth, as to ſuffer ſo many reprochfull contempts, villanies, and miſeries; and aboue all this, we may conſider how great examples of vertues our Sauior Chriſt hath giuen vnto vs herein; to wit, of patience, obedience, charity, humilitie,



tie, meekenes, conſtancie, and of all other vertues, whereof wee haue hitherto treated. Howbeit, although it be a very conuenient order of meditating vpon this holy myſterie, to paſſe orderly by degrees through all theſe foreſaid conſiderations, taking our beginning at the firſt conſideration, and ſo to proceed in order from one conſideration to another, euen to the laſt; yet is it not needfull for a man (ſo often as he meditateth vpon this holy myſtery) to goe in this preciſe manner through them all, (for many times it may ſo fall out that he ſhall not haue ſufficient time for the ſame) but let him content himſelfe in his meditation with that conſideration, wherein he ſhall find moſt ſpirituall taſte and liking; for ſo much as in theſe exerciſes, wee muſt haue reſpect not to the great quantitie of the matter that is meditated vpon, but to the great deuotion wherewith it is done.

*The end of this Booke.*

DEO GRATIAS.

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