



OF
PRAYER,
AND MEDITA-
TION.

WHEREIN ARE CON-
TAINED FOWERTIEN DE-
uoute Meditations for the seuen daies of the weeke,
bothe for the morninges, and eueninges. And in
them is treyed of the consideration of the princi-
pall holie Mysteries of our faith.

WRITTEN FIRSTE IN THE
Spanishe tongue, by the famous Religious father. F. LEWIS
de GRANADA, Prouinciall of. the holie order
of preachers in the Prouince of Portugall.



Imprinted at ROVEN, by GEORGE LOISELET.
Anno Domini. M. D. LXXXIIII.



TO THE RIGHTE
HONORABLE, AND
WORSHIPFULL, OF THE

fower principal howses of Cowerte in
London, professinge the studie of the
Common Lawes of oure Realme,
RICHARDE HOPKINS wilhethe
dewe consideration of the holye Myste-
ries of the Christian Religion.

TH E holie scriptures affirme
in diuers places, that the nearer
we approche towards the com-
minge of Antichriste, and the
ende of the worlde, the more pe-
rillous will the tymes be for all
Christians. And the perill hereof ariseth the cheefe-
lye of the greate enuye and malice of Satan, who
fearinge the ende of the worlde, knowinge that
then his tyrannous kingdome therein will haue an
ende also therewith, extendeth the vtermoste of
his rage againste all faithfull Christians, and as-
saulteth them dailie more and more with diuers
wilie temptations, and terrible persecutions, to
procure them thereby to folowe his most wicked

Dan. 9.
11. & 12.
Matt. 24.
Marc. 13.
Luc. 21.
2. Thes. 2.
1. Tim. 4.
2. Tim. 3.
2. Pet. 2.
& 3.
Iude. 1.
vers. 18.
Apo. 11.
12. & 13.

rebellious example: that is, to breake gods holie commaundementes, to cōtemne his diuine ordinances, to negleete his seruice, & honoure, & by pryde and rebellion to lose the image of god, & embrace the image of Satan, and so to be vtterlie vnapt to attaine vnto those euerlastinge heauenlie mansiōs of felicitie, and glorie, for which man. was created.

Wherefore to the intēt. that al Christians might be more circumspecte, and strengthened, to resiste faithfullie against all Satans wylie deceitefull temptations in this our daungerous age, approachinge so neare towards the comminge of Antichriste, and the ende of the worlde, (as by manye coniecturall signes it seemeth) a holie Angell hath forewarned vs hereof verie precisely in the reuelacions of S. Ihon, thunderinge out theise wordes with a greate voice: Woe be to the lande, and sea, because the Deuill is descended vnto you, hauing a greate rage, for that he knoweth he hath but a shorte tyme. And this greate rage of his is the more to be feared in this our corrupte age, for that we reade also in Saint Ihons reuelacions, that the Deuill shalbe let lose towards the ende of the worlde for a smalle tyme. In other ages and tymes of our holie Christian forefathers the deuills exceedinge greate malice and mightie power hath bene moche restrained, and bownde, through the greate vertue of the Crosse, and Passion of our Sauour Iesus Christe, communicated then verie plentifully vnto the Christian people generallye by their deuoute frequentinge of the holie Sacramentes of the Catholike Church,

(which

Apo. 12.
vers. 12.

Apo. 20.
vers. 3.

The deuill shalbe let lose more and more

(which be holie vessels of grace) whereby our Christian forefathers haue bene greatelie strengthened to resiste faithfullie againste the moste horrible temptations of Schisme, Heresie, Infidelitie, and Atheisme, and to liue generallie verie holie and austere Christian liues in the feare and seruice of almighty god, and in dewe reuerente obedience to the Catholike Church. But nowe whereas in this our vngracious age suche a number of horrible Sectes, & Hereses, & suche a general corruption with pride, dysobedience, lyenge, detraction, gluttonie, incontinencie, infidelitie, Atheisme, and all kinde of dissolute wickednes doe abounde and raigne more and more in all partes of Christendome, woe be therfore to the Lande, and sea, (as the holie Angell hath forewarned vs) because the Deuill is nowe descended, and let lose towards the ende of the worlde for a smalle time, hauinge a greate rage, for that he knoweth he hathe but a shorte tyme to continue his tyrannous kingdome in this worlde.

And the verie cause of this so extraordinarie letting lose of the deuill now more & more towards the comminge of Antichriste in the ende of the worlde, sainte Paule seemeth to explaine in this sense: that for so muche as the wicked will not receiue the true doctrine of the Catholike Church with charitie, humilitie, obedience, and thankfulness, to the ende they maye besaned, therfore Al-

daylie increasing vnto worse & worse sectes, is an euident argument that the diuill is more and more let lose towards the comminge of Antichrist.

2. Thes. 2
vers. 10.
& 11.

The Catholike Religion daylie decreaseth

mightie god letteth lose the deuill nowe emonge them, by permitting him to sowe in their proude inconstante wilfull myndes. manye erroneous opynions, & Heresies, that they maye belieue in lyenge.

Note Sa-
tā's wylie
proce-
dinges
in this
corrupte
age.

And certainlie, if we will aduisedlye cōsider the wylie proceedinges of the deuill in sowinge so manifolde Sectes and Heresies in this vngracious age, and the finall ende whereunto he directeth them, we maie euidentlie perceaue, that it is to cause all Christians nowe towards the comminge of Antichriste to be first dissolute in their liues, and after doweftull in their faith, and then to contemne all the holie Sacramentes, and other Mysteries of the Christian Religion, and afterwarde hauinge by degrees remoued awaie out of their Churches all holie memories of our Sauour Christe, and of his blessed Mother, Apostles, Martirs, & other of his glorious Saintes, and also out of their myndes all feare of God, & of his dreadefull iudgements, then they be easelye induced by him shortelie after to become harde harted, and vn sensible to conceiue anie spirituall thinges, and also at the laste to become Atheistes, without anie conscience, Religion, or beliefe that there is a God. And so Antichriste findinge his waie so open and readie prepared for him, maie then come frielye when he will, & cause himselfe to be receiued as a Messias, and adored as God, findinge the Christian people generallie without anie deuotion and Zeale to the seruice and honour of our Sauour Iesus Christe, and without anie beliefe that there is a God.

Nowe emonge all the wylie deceitfull deuises

of Satan

of Satan for ouerthrowinge of the Christian Religion, and so to prepare the waie for Antichristes comminge, there is none (in my simple iudgemente) of greater force, and consequence, than his so earnest endeuour to procure all Christians viterlye to contemne and forgette all the holie Misteries of the Christian faith. which if he coulde possiblie cōpasse (as he laboureth verie earnestlie therein by diuers craftie meanes in this our corrupte age) then vndowtedlye all the whole Christian Religion, and euen our Sauour Christe himselfe, and his blessed Mother, and all his holie Apostles, and Martirs, and other of his glorious Saintes woulde consequentlie in a shorte time after be generallie contemned, neglected, and forgotten throughout all Christian countries.

And to write here freelie my minde as I thinke, it woulde seeme verie meruailous vnto me, (if I were not fullie perswaded that the deuill is nowe more and more let lose (as Saint Ihon in his reuelations hath forewarned vs he shoulde be for a shorte time towards the ende of the worlde,) howe the deuill coulde preuaile so farfoorth emonge Christians, as to induce a whole newe late Settle of Heretikes that be called Puritans (professinge in gaie wordes to be more pure, more sincere, and better professors of Christes gospell, than anie other Christians either be, or haue bene in anie age since the Apostles time) to write of late so vnchristianlie by common consent euen in English printed booke, against obseruing in the Church the moſte auncient yearelie solemn

In the
puritans
replie
again
D. W.
gifte
pag.
121.
& 16

& in R.
brownes
boke of
reforma-
tion.

holie Feastes of Christmase, Easter, & Pente-
coste, and againste all speciall meditations at
anie one solerane time of the yeare more than at
others, either of Christ's natiuitie, or Resurrectio, or
of the Cominge of the Holie Ghoste, or of the hower
of our death: because (saye they) these meditatio-
ns shoulde be vsed continewallie euerie daie in the
yeare, & ought not to be appointed by the gover-
nors of the Church to be vsed at anie one speciall
time more than at others. Whereby euerie godlie
Christiā reader maie easlie perceiue, how the deuil
beinge now let lose labourth verie buselie by these
counterfaite pure gospellers vnder a wylie deceitful
colour of aduancinge continewal meditation and
memorie of the holie Mysterie of the Christian
Religion euerie daie in the yeare, to haue no man-
ner of meditation or memorie of them emonge
Christians anie daie at all: that so by their subtle
wicked doctrine a readie open waie maie be prepa-
red in all Christian mens Churches, and mindes,
for Antichristes comminge.

Howe in
all ages
hathe
bene pre-
serued
emonge
Christians
a conti-
newall

But o the wonderfull prouidence and care of our
Saviour Christ to preserue a continewal knowledg,
memorie, and reuerence, of his holie Mysterie
emonge all faithfull Christians in his Catholike
Church, as hath verie manifestlie appeared in
all ages since Christes Ascension vntill this our cor-
rupte age. And surelie it is a matter worthe of
greate & deuoute admiration for anie good Chri-
stian to consider, howe the Apostles, and the aun-
ciente holie Catholike Bishops their successours
beinge by our Saviour Christes owne promisse assu-
redlie inspired, assisted, and directed by the Holie

Ghoste

Ghoste from time to time in gouernemēt of the Ca-
tholike Church in al truthe, haue with suche di-
uine wisdomē disposed the whole yeare into so ma-
nie seuerall holie Festiuall daies, as that thereby
haue bene represented, & preached vnto al Chri-
stian people in al Christian Churches throughout
Christendome a continewal solemn instruction,
memorie, & reuerence of the holie Mysterie of the
Christian Religion. In so muche as the common
Christian people by those holie Festiuall daies
alone (albeit they wated not also diuers other holie
instructions therein in Confessions, and Sermons,)
were in al ages sufficientlie instructed in the holie
Mysterie of their Christian beliefe: I meane, they
were thereby made to vnderstande so muche of the,
as (hauinge withal a deuie religious respecte to pre-
serue a continewal humble reuerēce in them to the
dignitie of suche highe holie Mysterie) was fullie
conueniente for their weake capacities, and for
the comfortinge and strengtheninge of their
faith, and as they were bounde of necessitie to
knowe.

As for example, by the aunciente institution of
the holie feastes of Aduēte: of oure saviour Christes
Natiuitie, and Circumcision: of his Adoration by
the three Kinges: & of the holie solēnitie of Lente,
at which time the Catholike Church teacheth
all Christian people to imitate so neare as they can
our Saviours fastinge of fourtie daies in the de-
serte, and representeth then also with sorowfull
mourninge penance, ad compassion, al the whole
order and historie of our Saviour Christes moste
bitter Passion, and death, for the redemption of

our faith
Matt. 28.
vers. 20.
Iohn. 14
16.
Iohn. 16.
13.
1. Tim. 3.
15.

The prin-
cipal ho-
lie Festi-
ual daies
of the
yeare.

al mankinde: And afterwarde the Church solemnizeth with greete Ioye the holie Feastes of our Saviours Resurrection from death to life: of his Ascension into heauen: and of the Comminge of the Holie Ghoste: And then followe also the holie Feastes of the blessed Trinitie, and of the moste holie Sacrament, commonlie called Corpus Christi daie: And the holie Feastes of the blessed Mother of our Saviour: And of Saint Iohn Baptiste his precurfor: And then the holie Feastes of Sainte Peter, Sainte Paule, and of other of our Saviours holie Apostles, and most famous Martirs, and Confessors: And also the holie Feastes of Sainte Michael the Archangell, and of all the glorious Saintes in heauen: And withall a solempne daie of deuoute memorie, and generall praier, and almesdedes, for all faithfull Christian Soules departed out of this transitorie life, and as yet remayninge in the fier of Purgatorie, to make satisfaction there for all paines dewe and prescribed for their sinnes in the mercifull iuste balance of the diuine Maiestie. All which holie Festiual daies beinge so diuinelie and orderlie disposed into so manie seuerall partes of the yeare, and adorned with the holie reuerente Ceremonies appoynted to be vsed in all Christian Churches throughtout all Christendome, with greate solemnitie and reuerence vpon those Holie daies, haue yearelie from time to time in euerie age since the Ascension of our Saviour Christe into heauen verie liuelie and continewallie preached, represented, and explained vnto the common simple Christian people all the

holie

holie Mysterie of the Christian Religion, which theie had professed at their Baptisme, and were taughte in the Apostles Creede to belieue. And the reuerent solemnitie in euerie yeare of theise holie Festiual daies induced them vnto a continewall memorie, admiration, loue, and reuerence of those holie Mysterie, and greatelie strengthened their faith in them, and caused them to haue a wonderfull feruente pietie, deuotion, and Zeale towards the honor and seruice of Almighty God, whereby they liued verie vertuous lines like the children of lighte, (as the holie scripture teareth them,) and died generallie as holie faithfull Christians in the obedience, loue, and fauour of his diuine Maiestie.

But alas theise golden times be paste, and ended, and the deuill beinge let lose nowe more and more towards the comminge of Antichriste, and the ende of the worlde, we finde by palpable experience, that since the time that suche a free licentious libertie hath been permitted vnto euerie lewde bablinge Minister to raile againste all the holie aunciente diuine ordinaunces, vsed and allowed generallie so manie ages in al Christian Churches, & to terme them in blasphemous manner Antichristian inuentions, & to preach openlie in pulpittes, and publishe in printed booke whatsoeuer newe heretical opinions the enemie of mankinde suggesteth into their fantastical heades, the faith of Christians is thereby generallie become so weakke, and inconstante, and in verie manie or most persons so wholie vndermined, and vnterlie ouerthrowne, and

Luc. 16.
verse. 8.
Iohn. 12.
36.
Ephes. 5.
8.
1. The. 5
vers. 5.

Luc. 18.
verf. 8.

their hope is so transformed into presumption, & their charitie is waxen so colde, and so liile pietie, loue, deuotion, reuerence, and Zeale remaine in the towards the seruice of Almighty God, and so muche Pryde, gluttonie, incontinencie, lyenge, detraction, disobedience, with moste horrible contention, Schisme, Heresie, Infidelitie, Athesme, & al kinde of iniquitie doe generallie abounde more and more throughout Christendome, that we haue good cause to feare, leaste that terrible time approcheth nowe verie neare at hande, which our Saviour forewarned vs in the gospel, to wit: that at his comminge to iudge he shoulde hardelie finde faith in the earthe.

Wherefore we haue nowe verie greate neede of extraordinarie spirituall helpes to strengthen our weake mindes, to withstand so manie deceitfull temptations of the enemye of mankind in this so corrupte and dangerous age. And for this purpose I haue translated out of the Spanishe tongue diuers bookes of a verie holie and famous learned religious father, called Lewis de Granada, whose deuoute manner of writinge hath (in my simple iudgemente) a singular rare grace to pearce the harde harte of a dissolute sinner, and to moue and dispose his minde to the abhorringe of synne, to the contempte of the worlde, and to the feare, loue, and seruice of almighty God. And I vnderstande that his bookes haue wroughte wonderfull muche good, not onelie in Spaine, and Portugall, but also in Italie, Fraunce, and Germanie. And I thinke there bee fewe countries in Christendome but haue his Spanishe woorkes translated into

their

their tongues. And it is nowe about foureteene yeares agoe, since the time that Master Doctor Hardinge (a man for his great vertue, learninge, wisdom, Zeale, & sinceritie in writinge againste Heresies, of verie godlie and famous memorie) perswaded me earnestlie to translate some of those Spanishe bookes into our Englishe tounge: affirminge, that more spiritual profite wolde vndoutedlie ensewe thereby to the gayninge of Christian sowles in our countrie from Schisme, and Heresie, and from all sinne, and iniquitie, than by bookes that treat of controuersies in Religion: which (as experience hath nowe plainelie tried) doe nothinge so well dispose the common peoples myndes to the feare, loue, and seruice of almighty God, as bookes treatinge of deuotion, and howe to leade a vertuous life do. The dewe consideration whereof hath so prouoked, or rather pricked me in conscience, that I haue resolved to publishe (godwillinge) in printe al my translations, in case I shall perceiue that suche as be godlie, wise, and learned, shall like of them. And first (as it were for an assaie) I haue here printed his deuoute Meditations of the principall holie Misteries of the Christian Religion, which booke I finde greatelie commended by diuers godlie learned men.

It maie be, that some readers of this booke beinge not greatelie acquainted with the holse exercises of a spirituall life, will imagin that the Authour dealeth to austerelie in some of theise meditations: as namelie in his Meditations of synnes: of the power of death: of our dreydfull accompte at the terrible daie of Iudgemente: & of the moste

Obiectiō.

Answer

horrible paines of hell. And perhaps some politique wise men will saie, that forso muche as the common people in our countrie haue beene for the most parte of our corrupte age altogether accustomed with hearinge and readinge of diuers other contrarie newe erroneous doctrines, tendinge directlie to a careles dissolute life, thei be therfore now waxen so carnall and negligent of the saluation of their sowles, that theise Meditations be to full of threateninge, and terror, for suche nice and lose consciences. For answer to this obiection, it is to be noted, that the Author beinge (as I am informed) not onelie a greate learned and religious deuout olde father, but also of greate wisdom, grauitie, iudgemente, discretion, and of longe experience, as well in preachinge, and hearinge of Confessions, as in diuers gouernemētes in his religious order, & perceyuinge verie euidentlie that farre more Christian sowles be losse in this our corrupte age with ouermuche presumptuous confidence, and securetie of their saluation, than with ouermuche feare of leeing the same, hathe therfore framed his manner of writinge in theise meditations chieflie againste the infinite number of presumptuous and careles dissolute Christians, that presume most certainlie, and assuredlie to be saued, and yet doe liue verie dissolutelie all their whole lyfe time, without all care of keepinge gods Cōmaundements, and without all feare of their accompte at the dreadefull daie of iudgemente, notwithstandinge that our sauour Christ himselfe who shalbe then our Iudge, hathe by plaine and expresse wordes forewarned vs in the gospell of saint Mathewe,

that

that If we will enter into the Kingdome of heauen, we muste Kepe his commaundementes: which euerie Christian maie be able to kepe, beinge assisted, strengthened, and holpen therein with the grace of God, which is neuer denied to anie that praierh dulie for it: and also that we muste at the daie of iudgemente geue an accompte of euerie idle worde.

And verelie, if we peruse diligentlie the holie scriptures, we shall finde that not onely Enoch in the lawe of Nature, and afterwarde all the Prophets, but also Sainte Ihon Baptiste, and our Sauour Christe himselfe vsed the same manner of preachinge that this religious godlie father dothe here. And they thought it to be the verie best and rediest waie for conuersion of sinners from their sinfull dissolute lifes, to shewe plainelie vnto them the damnable state they liue in, and to put them in mynde of the seuerie iustice of almightie God at the terrible daie of iudgemente against all suche as endeuour not to kepe his cōmaundementes. And Saint Peter protesteth (as it appeareth in the Actes of the Apostles) that our Sauour Christe commaunded likewise him, and the reste of the Apostles, to preache and testifie this poynte especiallly, that Christe is appointed to be the Iudge bothe of the quicke, and the deade. And therefore in an other place he requireth all Christians to liue in feare duringe the time of their conuersion vpon the earth. And Sainte Paule maketh also the like solemne protestation of the terrible daie of iudgemente, & what a strait accōpte euerie one of vs muste make at that dreadefull

Matt. 19.

17.

1. Cor. 3.

vers. 9.

1. Cor. 15

10.

2. Cor. 12

6.

Phil. 2.

13.

Phil. 4.

13.

Matt. 12.

36.

2. Cor. 5.

10.

Epistle

Iude. 14.

A. 10.

vers. 42.

1. Pet. 1.

16.

2. Cor. 5.

10. & 11.

Act. 24.
vers. 25.Apo. 14.
vers. 7.

time, and exhorteth the Corinthians with the knowledge & consideration thereof to perswade all men to live in the feare of God. And disputinge also before the President Felix of the Christian religion, and namelie of the dreadfull daie of Iudgemente, he vttered suche wonderfull terrible thinges thereof, that as the holie scripture mentioneth, he made the verie President himselfe (though he were an insidell) euen to tremble and quake for feare, with the onelie hearinge of them. And saint Ihon likewise in his Reuelations affirmeth, that he sawe an Angell preachinge the euerlastinge gospel vnto all Nations, tribes, tongues, and people, (meaninge thereby, that he preached as wel to the good, as to the wicked, without anie exception therein of the faithfull Christians,) sayenge: Feare oure Lorde, and giue honor vnto him, because the hower of his iudgemente is come. And I am perswaded that al godlie wise & graue men will easelie agree in this opinion with me, that this manner of preachinge of the terror of the daie of Iudgement, and of the moste horrible paines of hell, is muche more needefull now in this our corrupte age in Englande, and Scotlande, than in Italie, Spaine, or other Catholike countries, si the so greate numbers of them are infected with so manie hereticall licentious doctrines, that haue caused them to put quite awaie out of their myndes al feare of God, and of his terrible iudgements, and to presume moste certamelie & assuredlye to be saued by their onelie faith, & so are generallie become vtterlie careles of endeuoringe to woorke their saluation with feare, and tremblinge,

and

and do liue as carnallie, & dissoluelie, both to the fleshe, and the worlde, as anie barbarous Pagans, and Atheistes. In so muche as all godlie annointe wise men doe greatly lamente to see by experience the terrible prophecie of Dauid to be generallie verified at this daie throughout our Realme: which is, that the iudgements of almightie God be taken quite awaie from the face of the vngodlye. And if theise and suche like godlye Meditations and Considerations of the terrible threatenings and iudgements of almightie God againste the wicked, be not a fit remedie for their conuersion from their careles dissolute lyes, what other remedie then can possiblie be deuised for them?

Howbeit I haue verie greate hope, that with the grace of God theise godlie Meditations will woorke muche good effecte for the conuersion of manie of them. For vndoutedlie that man is verie wilfull, and obstinate in his wickednes, that readinge aduisedlie all theise godlie Meditations is not moued inwardelie in his harte in some parte of them to the feare, loue, and seruice of almightie God, and to the abhorringe of synne, and amendment of his life. And suche readers as shalbe inwardelie moued and called thereunto by almightie God, I coniure them in his holie name, and in regarde of their owne saluation, not to make sad the Holie Ghoste, in hardeninge their hartes, and resistinge vngratefullie and wilfullie againste his diuine inspirations, when it shall please his infinite goodnes, and mercie, with suche singuler loue to knocke & calle at the dore of their hartes, but in anie wise to open it out of hand, and

B

Psal. 9.
vers. 26.Ephes. 4.
vers. 30.
Psa. 94. 8.
Heb. 4. 7.
Apo. 1.
Re. 21.
1.
16.
M.
37.

Apoc. 3.
verf. 20.
Pfal. 80.
11.

receiue him most humble into their hartes, with
suche louinge hartie interteynement, submission,
thankfulnes, service, and honor, as deuie requi-
reth they shoulde doe vnto their most highe sove-
raigne lorde, and Creatour, that hath suche a spe-
ciall louinge care of their saluation.

Nowe this booke of Meditations, and what-
soeuer els I haue translated, and shall godwillinge
hereafter publishe in printe, I doe most humble
offer vnto the seruice of almightie God for the
benefite of our countrie. And forsomuche as I am
verie warie and assured that this booke conteineth
not anie thing whereby I maie iustlie incurr anie
penallie prescribed by anie lawes of our Realme,
I am the bolder humble to recomende it by this
my dedicatorie Epistle vnto your Honours, and
woorshippes: partelie for that I haue spent some
parte of my time in the studie of our Common
Lawes in the Middle Temple emonge you, and
am verie moche bounde vnto diuers of you: But
chiefelie for that I knowe right well the greate
capacitie and dexteritie of your spirites, the gra-
uitie of your iudgements, and your wisdomes,
experiences, authoritie, and example, to be of suche
principall estimation, and worthie respecte in our
Realme, that in case ye do zelously employe your
endeuours to the due reuerente consideration of
the holie Mysteries of the Christian Religion, (as
I doute not but verie manie emonge you doe,) your
holie example will generallie allure a greate
number throughout our whole Realme from all
contentious disputinge, and iarringe aboute theise
late new cotrouersies in Religio, to embrace firme-

lie

lie & zelouslye the aunciente Catholike beliefe,
& to imitate the vertuous liues of our holie Chri-
stian forefathers, who had muche more aboundance
of the grace and lighte of the Gospell of our Sa-
uiour Christe, than we haue in this our vngracious
corrupte age, as verie manifestlie appeareth by
their so manifolde good Christian frutes lesse by
them vnto vs, to the glorie of our Saviour Christ,
and of his deare spouse the Catholike Church, &
to the continuall greate admiration, confusion,
enuie, and dispite, of Lucifer, and of all his rebel-
lious wicked spirites, and of all Iewes, Turkes,
Heretiques, and other Infidells his adherentes.

And (requestinge here humbly pardon, and li-
cence, to treat in a familiar maner with the yon-
ger sorte) I desire your Honors and woorshippes
continewallie to remember what greate inclina-
tion ye haue vnto vertue more than others of ob-
scure parentage, and base estate, in regarde of
your noblenes, and magnanimitie, which euer in-
uiteth you to imitate the noble vertuous steppes of
your noble Christian auncesters, and to set vpon
highe & noble vertuous enterprises, & to doe all
your workes noble, and excellentlie, that ye take
in hande. As also to consider, that a vertuous life is
the greatest and mooste noble ornamente of nobili-
tie. And that for this ende cheefelie almightie
God bestoweth vpon noble personages here in
earth, principallitie, rule, gouernemente, and ho-
nor, that thei shoulde giue vertuous and god-
lie example vnto all others that be vnder their
rule, and gouernemente. And by experience we
finde, that ordinarelie no bysshoppe or other prea-

The
light of
the gos-
pell con-
sisteth
not in
readinge
the wor-
des and
chapters
of the
gospell:
but in
belee-
ninge in
our Sa-
uiour
Christ, &
imita-
tinge his
holie
life.

Dan. 6.
vers. 10.

cher is able with suche facilitie to plante vertue
emonge the common people, & cause them sincere-
lie to loue, honor, and embrace it, as Noblemen,
gentlemen, Magistrates, and Gouvernours are able to
doe, in case thei them selues do giue good apparante
example of vertue, religion, and deuotion, and be-
zealous also in procuringe al others to doe the like.
And therefore I beseeche you to determine with an
honorable constāt resolution to employe your time
in the moste noble exercises of vertue, and to feare,
loue, serue, and honor almightie God, who is your
most noble, highe, soueraigne Lorde, and Creator:
and not to suffer either your studie or practise of
the lawes, or other your worldlie offices, and affai-
res to be so greate an impedimente vnto your spiri-
tuall exercises, but that you maie haue euer one
windowe open to wardes the beauenlie Ierusalem,
as Daniel had in his chāber in Babylon, prayinge
there three times in the daie towards the earthelye
Ierusalem. And in case your worldlie impedimen-
tes be ouer greate, then wisdom requireth that for
saluation of your sowles you doe caste them awaie
fro you. And imitate herein the worldlie foresighte
of wise Marchautes when they be in daunger of
drowninge in a stormie tempeste vpon the sea, who
use at suche times for saluation of their liues to
cast into the Sea their ryche merchaundise, and all
their troublesome heauie encombrances, thereby to
cause their shippe to saile more safelye. And I doe
also humblie beseeche all good Christian readers
that shal like well of theise spirituell exercises to
remember me in their deuoute praiers, that I prone
not like vnto those foolish carpenters that made

Noes

Noesarke, who made it to saue others from drow-
ninge in the generall fludde, and yet were drowned
them selues.

Thus with all due humble submission of my self,
and my trauailes herein to your honours, and woor-
ships, I humblie craue pardon for passinge here
somewhat the bowndes of my profession, and trea-
tinge as a diuine of spiriual matters, according as
since my departure from the Middle Temple by
some studie, and readinge of diuers spirituell boo-
kes, and continewall conuersation theise fiftene
yeares with manie vertuous and Learned Catho-
like Priestes in these parties I haue bene instructed.
And I moste humblie beseeche almightie God that
theise Godlie Meditations maie woorke so good ef-
fecte in all your myndes, as I haue often times re-
rie earnestlie requested of his diuine Maiestie. From
Paris, vpon the holie festiual daie of Pentecost.
In the yeare of our Lorde. 1582.

B 3



*AN ADVERTISSE-
mente by the Translatour to
the Learned Reader.*

Forſomuche as the Author of this booke hath published at diuers times ſeueral editions thereof in the Spaniſhe tongue, and in the later editions hath from time to time verie muche and often corrected, altered, and augmented the ſame, not onelie in manifolde wordes, and ſentences, but alſo in diuers chapters, otherwiſe than in the former editions, that were printed either in Toledo, Salamanca, Liſbone, Andwarpe, or in anie other place before the yeare of our Lord. 1567. I thinke it verie cōueniente to giue notice of it to the Reader: and withall that in my Translation I doe folowe the edition in the Spaniſhe tongue, printed at Andwarpe by *Chriſtopher Plantine*, in the yeare of our Lorde. 1572. For I perceauē that the frenche Translation differeth in diuers places from this beſt corrected edition of *Plantins*: & ſo doe likewiſe all the Translations that I haue ſeene in the Italian tongue, printed in diuers yeares at Rome, Naples, & Venice, by *Michaël Tramezzino*, *Horatio Saluiani*, *Iouanni Baptiſta Guerra*, and *Gabriel Lolito*: vntill that nowe of late all the Authors workes haue bene newlie Translated into the Italian tongue, & printed at Venice, by *Georgio Angelieri*, in the yeare of our Lorde. 1581.



AN EXHORTA-
TION TO THE CHRI-

ſtian Reader, made by the Righte Reuerende Father in God, BERNARDE de FRESNEDA, Biſhoppe of CVENCA, one of the priue Councell of Eſtate to the mightie KINGE PHILLIPPE OF SPAINE, &c. And his Ghostly Father, to read this booke with good attention, and with a deſire to profite, and procede forewardes in godlines.



It is the doctrine of the holie fathers, that there be three thinges verie neceſſarie & of ineſtimable importaunce to the iuſt man to preſerue him in his Iuſtice: to wit, Praier, Readinge, and doinge of good workes. In theſe three thiſges ought the iuſt mā to exerciſe himſelfe euerie daye, and deuide his tyme ſo diſcretelie, & ſo like a good Chriſtiā, that he be euer found occupied in ſome of them. Prayer illuminateth, purgeth, comforteth, reioyceth, obteyneth feruour, cauſeth al traueile to ſeeme ſweete, & lighte, breedeth deuotion, engendereth confidence, (in caſe our owne ſpirit doe not reprove

*Three
thinges
neceſſarie
to preſerue
Iuſtice: to
wit, prayer
readinge,
and good
workes.*

vs:) Prayer bannisheth awaie slouth, frayeth the ennemie, and ouercometh temptation. And therefore a certaine wise man saide: *Non te pigeat orare, si vis à vitiis liberari. Be not slacke to praye, if thou wilt be deliuered from vices.*

Prayer is verie necessarie towards the obteyning of the grace of God, without which the spirituall life will vterlie decaye, and perishe. And therefore prayer is preferred before readinge. Terrullian speakinge of prayer saith: That thinge is alwaies to be vsed, which is alwaies good: And he addeth furthermore, and saith: If prayer be necessarie in all places, and at all tymes, then is continencie necessarie also vnto prayer: for so much as praier procedeth of continencie, wherefore if thy continencie hath cause to be ashamed, then shall thy prayer likewise be ashamed. The spirite carryeth our prayer vnto God: and if the spirit finde it self faultie, then our prayer ascendeth with shame vnto him. Againe, Cassiodorus saith, that perseuerance in prayer auaieth much to obtaine firmnes of harte. By meanes of continuall prayer the deuills & their deceytfull snares are overcome, & by the same the iust man weakeneth their forces, and vexations. By meanes of prayer he maketh them become weake, cowardly, and easie to be conquered: and by the same he maketh himselfe also become stronge, and a conquerour ouer the. If thou praye with perseuerance thou shalt obteyne sweetnesse, and withall a more fer-

Conti-
nencie
necessa-
rie vnto
prayer.

uent

uent desire to praie. And then doe we praie in trueth, when we haue none other thinge in our mynde, but doe applie all our intention vnto heauenlie thinges and haue our harte wholie enflamed with the fyer of the Holy Ghoste.

1. There be three effectes of prayer. The first effecte is comon vnto all workes done in charitie: which is, to be meritorious. And for this effecte actuall attention is not of necessitie required in prayer, but it is sufficient to haue an habituall attention, as in all other meritorious actes.

2. The second effecte, is proper vnto prayer alone, which is to obteyne of almightie God the thinge we desire. And for this effecte it is sufficient also to haue the first intencion, which is the thinge that God respecteth in our workes. For if this first intencion faile, we shall not obteyne the thinge we require: because almightie God will not heare his praier, that seeketh not the thinge he asketh of him in such sorte as he ought, and for such end as he ought.

3. The thirde effect of praier, is a spirituall refection of the soule. And for this effect it is necessarilie required to haue an attention in praier: & not onely such an attention as is attent to the materiall wordes, or as the secōde attētiō, that marketh the sence and meaninge of the wordes, but moche more that attētiō, that marketh & is attent to the end of prayer, which is almightie God,

C

Three ef-
fectes of
prayer.
S. Thomas
2.2. quæ. 83
artic. 13.

Our firste
intention
when we
beginne our
prayers
muste be
to attende
to the ser-
uice of
God by
them: and
yf we doe
nothinge
willinglye
whilest
we praye
contrarie
to this our
firste in-
tention, we
shall ob-
taine our
lawfull
and neces-
sarie re-
questes.

*The readinge of
holy booke.*

and vnto the thinge for which we praye.

The readinge of holie bookes containing fruitfull and profitable matters, not onely lighteneth our ignorance, but it also dischargeeth our dutie in well spendinge our tyme therein: it correcteth our faultes, teacheth good and holie maners, discovereth vices, exhorteth vnto vertues, stirreth vp seruour, causeth a feare of God, recollecteth the mynde, recreateth and comforteth the heauie, sorowfull, and discomforted soule. Vndoubtedly it procureth great profite and fruite to reade bookes of holie matters: of such matters I meane, as doe recollecte the soule that is distracted, and wanderinge abroad amonge so manie diuers and sondrie thinges. Readinge teacheth and cheweth vs the waye how to leade a good life: Examples doe induce and prouoke vs to imitate and followe the same: And prayer obteyneth vs grace to accomplish it fullie, and perfectlie. Readinge (saie the holie fathers) is good: Praier vnto God is better: but the doinge of good woorkes for Gods sake is aboue all. Out of holie readinge the good deuout persons doe gather howe to meditate vpon God: And out of godlie meditation procedeth an earnest affection, and a verie prompte and readie eleuation of the spirit vnto God, out of which issueth that inwarde prayer, that pearceth the heauens, passeth aboue the highest places, and hath a desire to vnite it selfe vnto almightie

God

God, in whom are all good thinges that maye be desired.

But because our weaknesse is not able to continewe and perseuere alwayes in prayer, and readinge, it is therefore verie profitable, yea and necessarie to worke also, and to doe some thinge that is good, and profitable: which cannot chuse but so it wilbe, in case praier goe before the worke: and yet it shalbe moche better, if praier doe accompanie it: but best of all if the worke doe also end in prayer, and then is the worke most perfecte. To doe some kinde of worke with our owne handes, besides that it is verie profitable and holosome for the bodie, it helpeth our spirite also, our neighbour is thereby edified, and our senses are comforted, and refreshed. And in case thou finde thy selfe slouthfull, heauie, and unwilling to worke, and labour with thy handes, yet perseuere therein, and thou shalt overcome it. O that we might once come to haue such a perseuerance, and costancie, as the Sainctes had, who praied without intermission. And yet notwithstandinge their continuance in prayer, good Lorde, it is merueilous to consider, howe studious and continuall they were in readinge, howe seruente and laborious in bodelie exercises, and in doinge of good woorkes: in somuch as no kinde of labours, paynes, nor trauayles, coulde euer overcome them. Now what other thinge is the life of the Sainctes

Besides readinge, and prayer, it is necessarie to doe some good and profitable worke.

To worke with our owne handes is profitable bothe for our soule and bodie.

Note howe the Sainctes continued in prayer, readinge, and workinge with their handes.

who so
enforce the
him selfe
to labour
for gods
sake, shall
obtaine
greater
grace of
God.

1. Thess. 5.

2. Cor. 7.

1. Tim. 2.

vnto vs, but onely a holic readinge, which we ought to imitate without cealunge. That man that shall enforce himself to take paynes and labours for Godes sake, shall obtaine the greater grace of his diuine goodnesse, & shall out of hande feelee the profite and commoditie of his traueile. An euill custome is ouercome by a good: the which good custome if it be conuerted as it were into nature, it waxeth so stronge, that it tourneth the thinges that were harde, and difficulte, and causeth the to become easie, and lighte. And all this (as Saint Paule saith) cometh to the iust man by meanes of continuall prayer. And therefore he saith, *Sine intermissione orate*: praye ye without intermission. Saint Paule knewe right well, that whilest we walke here in this life, we are compassed all aboute with enemyes, temptations, tribulations, and with infinite deceitfull ginnes, with warres without, and feares within, and therefore he aduisech vs to praye without intermission. For whereas almightie God permiteth so manie vexations and troubles to come for the finnes of the worlde, his intent thereby is to stirre vp his electe, and to awake them, that they shoulde lifte vp their spirite vnto heauenly thinges. For he that praiech not, fighteth not, and he that fighteth not manfully, and maketh resistance, is forthwith overcome, and leesech his crowne, and rewarde. And if thou demaunde of me who

is able to praye and fighte continually: I saie, that euerie one can doe it, that in trueth & humilitie of harte calleth vpon almightie God for succoure, and putteth his full trust in him in verie deede. For (as the prophete Dauid saith) Our Lorde is mightie vnto the, that calle vpon him, if so be they calle vpon him in trueth. And if thou canst not praye continuallie with thy mouthe, yet praye with thy spirite, and with a godly intention. For it is a very continuall sacrifice vnto almightie God in the soule of our hart to haue a desire to doe good workes, and to serue him with all our harte. And trulie that man doth alwayes praie, that doth alwayes good workes. And whosoever is hartelic sorie for his offences he hath comitted, and sigheth, moumeth, and longeth for the good thinges that are to come, praiech alwayes, and saith with the prophet Dauid. O Lorde before thee is all my deser, and my mourninge is not hid from thee.

These three pointes nowe good Christian Reader, which serue (as we haue declared) to preserue the righteous man in his righteousness, are so well taught, and so wonderfullie set forth in these notable bookes of the Reuerend religious Learned Father, F. LEWIS de GRANADA, that he must needes be verie harde harted, who readinge them with attention, deuotion, and with a Christian desire to take

who maie
be able to
praye and
fighte co-
tinewally.

Psal. 144.

we maie
praie al-
waies
with our
spirite, and
with a
godly in-
tention,

Psal. 17.

profite by them, doth not merueilonlie enriche him selfe with these three treasures: to witte, with prayer, readinge, & doeing of good workes. Wherefore whosoever is desirous to profit in these three things, hath here verie Catholike, sounde, and profitable doctrine, and in all pointes agreable with the vniuersall doctrine of the holie auncient Fathers, and of the diuine Scriptures. In these singular deuout holie bookes he shall not finde any thinge that may either offend him, or bringe him into any error, or scruple. Here shall he finde manie things that may edifie, delighte, teache, and prouoke him to the loue of God, and withall to the abhorringe of sinne, and contempe of the worlde. From receauinge which fruites no man is here excluded: for so much as the Awthor hath with a rare wisdom in such wise tempered the doctrine, & accommodated him selfe vnto all states, and conditions of persons, that neither the verie highe and learned haue anie cause to leaue it, as ouer base for them: nor the verie lowe and vnlearned to refuse it, as ouer highe for their capacities. For here is made a conuenient prouision of competent meates both for the one sort, and for the other. And because the Awthor vnderstode right well howe farre the mouthes of men now a-dayes are owt of tast, and how much they are more affectionate vnto the flesheporters of Egypt, than to the breade of An-

gels,

gels, I meane hereby, rather to the readinge of prophane bookes, by reason of the pleasant style wherewith they thinke they are written, than to the bookes of spiritual doctrine, which are commonly written with more simplicitie, he hath therefore dressed this meate in suche wise, and hath written this doctrine in such a sweete and pleasant style, that it maie prouoke an appetite vnto this booke, euen in such persons as doe otherwise lothe good and holesome foode: besides, that the verie matters themselves are exceedingly well chosen, and of greate profite. And because it were the parte of rude and rusticall persons to geue thanks to the bees that make the honie-combes, and not vnto almightie God who created the flowers from whence the bees gather the honie, which they worke in their hyues: I exhort all persons to geue thanks to the deuoute and Learned Author of these workes, for these so sweete and saurie honie combes which he hath here geuen vs, in such sorte that they omit not to procede further, and to geue thanks to almightie God also, who hath sent the flowers, wherewith this honie is made. And withall I make humble request vnto all men, that I may be partaker of the prayers they shall make by meanes of the good disposition, which (I trust) with the grace of God the readinge of

theise holie and excellent deuoute wor-
kes shall cause in all godly
and deuoute Chri-
stian Rea-
ders.



Bernard de Fresneda
Bis hoppe of Cuenca.



TO THE VERIE
REVEREND AND RIGHT
honorable personages: DON ANTO-
NIO DE CORDOVA: and Father
LORENÇO DE FIGVEROA.

The Epistle of the Awthor.

L Can not finde anie other pla-
ce, whither I maie better di-
rect this my smalle present
then to your Reuerende han-
des. For (settinge a-part diuers
and sundrie reasons of great
importance, that bynde me so to do) certein-
lie the wonderfull change of life, which
your Reuerences haue made, and the holie
example which you haue geue to the world
in this our corrupte age, are sufficient causes
to moue all such as doe anie thinge desire
the glorie of Christ, to serue you in this
your spirituall iourney, that haue in such
wise amplefied his glorie. I might well
speake of this matter more largelie in this
place, (& surelie without lyenge, or flatterie.

*Note rea-
der, that
these to
whom the
awthor
directeth
this booke
are two
noble per-
sonages, of
the most
noble and
ancient
houses of
Spayne:
whiche
haue for-
saaken all
their world-
lie pos-
sessions,
and entred
into rel-
igion.*

and to speake herein, were not to emplease the time in the praises of men, but in the praise of almightie god. For so much as it is manifest, that this your wonderfull change of life, hath not proceeded of flesh, & blood, but of the right had of the highest. But because it behoueth all men of our cote, and profession, to be free not onelie from all flatterie, but also euen from all suspition of the same: I will therefore content my selfe at this present, onelie with geuing thanckes to our lord for this notable vertuous acte of yours: and I will cofesse, that we haue seene that wonder in our daies, which the holie auncient father S. Ierome declareth to haue chaunced in his tyme. He writeth it in a certain Epistle to Ruffinus in these wordes.

S. Ierom.
ad Ruffinum.

Bonosus thy frynd and myne, is now gone vp by that mysticall ladder, which the Patriarck Iacob sawe: and according to the misterie of Moses hath now sacrificed the brasen serpent in the desert. Where at this present he soweth with teares, that hereafter he maie reape with ioye. Lett the truth of this worthie act put to sylence all the lyenge wonders which the Greikes and Lattins haue written in their histories. Behold here a young man brought vp in our companie, and instructed in all good artes, and learning, who had no want neither of landes, nor riches, nor honor, nor dignitie, emonge his equales, who forsakinge his mother, and his sisters, and aboue all, his most deerlie beloved brother, went to liue in an Island, which is verie solitarie, and fearfull, and enui-

roned,

roned with diuers seas, there to dwell like a new inhabitant of paradise. And being alone in this place (howbeit not alone, for so much as he is in the companie of Christ,) hee seeth now the glorie of almightie God, which the Apostles them selues neuer sawe, but when they were alone in the mownt.

Thus farre be S. Ieromes wordes. This holy example of Bonosus is treulie a thinge wherein almightie God is to be praised, as in a singuler worke of his grace. And fuerlie no lesse is he to be praised in your Reuered & most honorable personages, who hauing much more to forsake in the world, than Bonosus had, & being now in the verie flowers of your youth, haue forsaken the world, & all the vayne pōpe, & pryde thereof: & withall your great landes, & possessions, the dignitie of your highe noble estates, & the hope of so great honorable promotiōs, that were due vnto your nobilitie, & vertue, & to the renowned desertes of your verie aunciet & most noble families. And all this yow haue done to embrace euē the pouertie, nakednes, and obediēce of Christ. You haue not done like that yong mā in the gospell, who remēbring how great possessions he had, refused to followe the waie of perfectiō, which our Sauour Christ taught him. But ye haue done like that wise & prudent merchāt, who after he had found the pretious pearle, sold all he had in the world to bye the same. And if vnto this wonderfull change of yours, we ioyne also the notable vertuous chāge of life

Matth. 19.

Matth. 13.

This Duke of Gandia forsooke his greate Dukedome in Spayne, and became a religious man of the holie Societie of Iesus: commonly called Iesuites. Cantic. 8.

which the most noble & renowned Duke of Gandia hath made in our daies, and the merueylous changes of sundrie other right honorable personages which might here be rehersed, it will verie euidentlie appeare, that there is more sweetenes in the waie of Christ, than the world thinketh there is: sithence euen those, that haue had so long and so greate experience both of the one kinde of life, & of the other, do verie hartlie and willinglie renounce all that euer the world geueth & prometh vnto them, for the least crumme that falleth from Christes table: sayinge with the spowle in the Canticles. *If a man geue all his substance for charitie, he will contemne it as nothing.*

For so much therefore, as verie reason would, that euerie one should serue them, that serue our most mercifull and louinge lord, it seemeth vnto me, that it is my bounden deutie also, to do you some seruice in this your spirituall iourney, at the least with this little volume: which treateth of prayer and meditation, &c. that the holie & deuout exercises of your Reuerences maie be holpen somewhat by the same: the which (I trust in our lord) shalbe alwaies furthered, & procede prosperously, both with it, and without it. And althowghe this be a dette which I owe vnto you: yet do I for this dette craue of you a grace, and this is, that your Reuerences will most humble beseech our lord, that it maie please him of his infi-

nite

nite mercie, and goodnes, to graunt his fauour & assistance to this booke: that the profit of them that shall reade it, maie be answerable to the paines of him that made it, and to the good hart wherewith he offereth it vnto them.

THE PROLOGVE AND ARGVMENT of this booke.

PRAIER (to define it properly) is a petitio we make vnto almightie God, for such thinges as are apperteyning to our saluation. Howbeit praier is also taken in an other more large sence: to wit, for euerie lifting vp of our hart vnto god. And according to this definition, both Meditation, & Contemplation, & euerie other good thought maie be also called a praier. And in this sence we do now vse this worde, because the principalle matter of this booke, is of Meditation, & Consideration of thinges apperteyning to Almightie God, and of the principall mysteries of the Catholike faith.

The verie thinge that moued me to treat of this matter, was for that I vnderstode that one of the principall causes of all the euilles that be in the world, is the want of consideration: According as the Prophet

what prayer is.

An other definition of prayer.

The want of Consideration is one of the principall causes of

*all the
euilles in
the world.
Jeremie 12.*

*The en-
sideratiō of
the mister-
ies of our
faith is a
greate bri-
dle to with-
hold vs
from syn-
ne.*

Jeremie signified, when he saide. *All the earth is destroyed with desolation, because there is none that thinketh with attention vpon the thinges apperteyninge vnto God.* Whereby it appeareth, that the verie cause of our euilles is not somuch the want of faith, as the want of due consideration of the misteries of our faith. For trewlie if there were no want in this behalfe, the misteries of our faith be of so great vertue, and efficacie, that if the verie least misterie of them were considered with attention, and deuotion, euen the same would be a great brydle, and redresse of our life. For who would euer goe about to committ anie sinne, if he considered that almightie God died for sinne: and that he punnysheth sinne, with perpetual bannisment out of the kingdome of heauen, and with euerlasting paines, and tormentes in the horrible fyer of hell?

Whereby ye maie see, that although the misteries of our faith be of verie great force to encline our hartes vnto goodnes: yet because there be verie manie Christians that haue no due consideration of the thinges they beleue, therefore they worke not such effecte in there hartes, as such misteries being well weighed, considered, were able to worke. For like as the phisitions as- helpe a sicke man, it is necessarie it be first wrought and digested in the stomake with naturall hear, (because otherwise it shall not

be anie profit to him at all:) eue so also, if we will haue the misteries of our faith to be profitable & healthfull vnto our soules, it is requisite they be first wrought and digested in our hartes, with the heate of deuotiō, and meditation: because otherwise they shall profit vs verie littell. And for want hereof, we see that manie Christians, which are verie whole and sound in matters of faith, be yet in there liues verie licentious, and dissolute. And the reason is, because they do not consider, and weigh the holie misteries which they beleue: and so they keepe there faith, as it were fast locked in a corner of a chest, or as a sword in the scabarde, or as a medecine in the apotticaries shoppe, and vse not the benefit thereof for such purposes as it serueth. They beleue generallie, and as it were in a fardel, or grosse some, all such thinges as the Catholike Church beleueth. They beleue that there shalbe a iudgment, that there shalbe paines for the wicked, & glorie for the good: but how manie Christians shal ye finde, that do consider after what sort this iudgment, these paines, and this glorie shalbe, with other the like circumstances?

Now this is the cause, why the holie Scripture so earnestlie comendeth vnto vs the continuall consideration, and meditation of the lawe of God, and of the misteries thereof: which is indeede the studie of true wisdom. Consider I pray you, how instantlie Moses that great prophet, and

*The cause
whie ma-
nie Chri-
stianes
that are
sounde in
matters of
faith, be
yet verie
dissolute
in there
liues.*

*Verie few
Christians
do seeth-
selues to
consider the
misteries
of our
faith.*

Deutero. 5.

frynde of God commendeth this vnto vs: saying: *Prynte these my wordes in your hartes, and carie the bound as it were for a signe in your handes, and teach them to your children, that they may thinke vpon them. When thou shalt be sitting in thy howse, or trauaylinge in the waie, when thou shalt lie doune to sleepe, or rise vp in the morning, thinke and meditate vpon them, and write them on the thresholdes, and gates of thy howse, that thou maiest alwaies haue them before thine eies.* With what more effectuell wordes could he commend vnto vs the continuall meditation, and consideration of heauenlie things, than with these? And no lesse doth Salomon commend the same holie exercise vnto vs in his Prouerbes: where he exhorteth vs, to carie the lawe of God alwaies as it were a chayne of gold about our neckes, and at night to goe to bed with it, & in the morninge so sone as we awake, to beginne immediatlie to exercise our selues in the same. Blessed is that man, that is so occupied. And so doth Ecclesiasticus tearme him, when he saith: *Blessed is the man, that dwelleth in the house of wisdom, and meditateth vpon the lawe and commaundementes of God, and exerciseth him selfe in iustice, and reasoneth of holie thinges by his vnderstanding. Blessed is he that considereth her wayes in his hart, and vnderstandeth her secretes. He shall looke in at her windowes, and hearken at her doores. He shall abide beside her howse, and fasten a stake in her walles. He shall pryche his tent besides her.*

Prouerb.
1. 3.Ecclesiast.
14.

Now

Now what other thinge maie we inferre of all this, but that the holie Ghost intended by all these metaphors to expresse vnto vs the continuall exercise, and consideration, wherewith the iust man is alwaies occupied, in searching the worckes, & wōders of almightie God. And for this verie cause, emōge the praises of the iust mā, this is put for one of the most principall: that his exercise is to meditate vpon the lawe of our lord daie, and night: and that he is alwaies conuersant in the secrecie of parables: geuiing vs hereby to vnderstand, that all his trade and cōuersation must be in searching, and meditating vpon the secrettes, and wonderfull worckes of almightie God. And eue for this verie cause also, were those misticall beastes of Ezechiel representēd vnto vs with so manie eies: to signifie vnto vs, that the iust man stādeth in greater neede of the continuall consideration, and sight of spirituall thinges, than of a nōber of other exercises.

Psalms. 1.
Ecclef. 31.

Ezech. 1.

By this therefore we see plainlie, what great neede we haue of this holie exercise: & consequentlie how blyndelie and fowlie they are deceyued, that either despise or make little accompt of the holie exercise of praier, and meditation: not considering that this is openlie to gaynesaie, & cōtemne that thing, which the holie Ghost hath with so great instancie cōmended vnto vs. I wishe that such persons would reade those five

D

S. Bernarde.

bookes of consideration, which S. Bernard wrote vnto EVGENIVS the Pope. And there shall they perceave, of how great importance this holie exercise is, towards the obteyninge of all vertues.

Two difficulties
in the
exercise
of praier,
and meditation.

The ordre
& divisiō
of the contents
of this booke.

The first
parte of
this booke

Now for this cause manie Catholike and religious persons, vnderstanding what great and inestimable fruit ensueth of this godlie meditation, haue gone about to exercise them selues ordinarilie therein, & haue appointed euerie daie certain speciall times & howers for the same. Howbeit of tentymes they waxe colde, and geue ouer this holie exercise, by reason of two difficulties they finde in it. The one is the want of matter, & of considerations, wherein they maie occupie there cogitation at that time. And the other is the want of seruēcie, and deuotion, which is verie requisite to accompanie this holie exercise, in case we mind to haue anie fruit & commoditie thereby. In steed whereof they find manie times great drynes of hart, and withall a great combate of diuers & sondriethoughtes. For remedie of which two inconueniences, I haue ordeined this present booke, which is deuided into two principall partes.

The first part, for remedie of the first inconuenience, treateth of the matter of praier, or meditation: wherein are contained fowertene meditations, seruing for all the euen daies of the weke, both in the mornings, & eueninges. And these meditatioōs do

containe

containe the principall places and misteries of our faith, and especially the consideration of those misteries, that are of most force, & power, to brydle our hartes, & to encline the to the loue, and feare of God, and to the abhorring of sinne. In like maner there are set out the fve partes of this exercise, which be, Preparation: readinge: meditation: thanks geuing: and petition: which is done to this end, that a man maie haue great varietie of matters, wherein to occupie his hart, wherewith to procure and stirre vp the rast of deuotion, and withall wherewith to illuminate and instruct his vnderstanding with diuers considerations, and instructions: Besides this, there is also treated therein, of fixe kindes of thinges that are to be considered in euerie one of the pointes of the Passion of our Sauour: that both they, and all the rest, maie minister vnto vs more plentifull matter for meditation. These three thinges are sett forth in the first part of this worcke, for remedie of the first inconuenience.

The second part, for remedie of the second inconuenience, treateth of those thinges, that do helpe vs vnto deuotion, and likewise of those, that doe hinder vs from the same. It treateth also of the most common temptations, that are wont to molest deuour persons. Moreouer, there are geuen certein aduices to be a direction vnto vs that we erre not in this waie. These fowre articles are sette out in the seconde part of this booke.

The seconde
parte of
this booke.

*The thirde
parte of
this boke.*

After these I haue added the third parte, in which is treated of the vertue of praier, and of her two companiōs, Fasting, and Almes deedes: to the intent, that when a man seeth that in all the boke there is treated of praier, and of the paines he owght to take for the same: he maie vnderstand, how well his labour is employed, which is bestowed in obtaining of a thinge of so great & wonderfull profit.

Peraduenture the Christian reader wilbe offended with the length of the meditatiōs, which we haue here set fourth for the seuen daies of the weke. Howbeit for this I haue manie answeres. The first is, considering that in these meditations is treated of the principall places and misteries of our faith, (the consideration whereof is of so great importance, for the due ordering and reforming of our life) it behoueth me therefore to enlarge my style (in these matters especiallie) by reason of the great fruit, and commoditie, that maie ensue vnto vs by the same. For in this booke our meaning is not onelie to geue matter of meditation, but much more to shewe the ende of meditation, which is the feare of God, and amendment of our liue. For the procuring whereof, one of the thinges that most helpeth vs, is the profound and long consideration of the misteries, that are treated in these meditations. For certainlie these fourtiene meditacions, be as it were so manie Sermons,

in

*The ende
of medita-
tion is the
feare of
God, and
amendment
of
liue.*

in which is laide as it were a certein barre to mans hart, to cause it to yeeld, (so much as is possible,) & to surrender it selfe vp into the handes of his rightfull & true soueraigne Lorde.

This was the cheifest cause that moued me to make the meditacions so longe. Besides this, I see not why the ghest that is inuited, should complaine that the table is to full furnished with manie dishes, sith we bynd him not (as by waie of constraint) to make an ende of them all, but onely emōge so manie sundrie thinges to make his choice of that, which serueth best for his purpose. Moreouer, (that there might be the lesse occasion of complaint) I haue put the somme of eche meditaciō at the beginninge thereof, to the intent that such as minde not to passe anie further, might there haue such thinges breiflie abridged, as be necessarie for the time, they intend to bestowe in this holie exercise.

THE ENDE OF THE
PROLOGVE.

D 3