

to accomplishe this busines, & not to leaue it in the midde waie. Now it shall doe well that we make hast to proceede forwardes to treat of the rest, and so to bringe this first parte to an ende, which perhappes hath bene longer, than is requisite.



OF SIXE POYN-

TES THAT ARE TO BE

*meditated vpon in the holie Pas-
sion of our Sauour Iesus
Christ.*

THE LAST CHAPTER.



OR SOMUCH as the most holie Passiō of our Sauour Iesus Christe is the principall matter of meditation, it is meete that sithence we haue hitherto treated of meditation in generall, we doe now treat particularly how we ought to meditate vpon the holie passion of our Sauour Christ: to the intent that we maie knowe, how to behaue our selues in this matter.

But here we must first presuppose, that

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emonge all the deuotions in the worlde, there is none more secure, none more profitable, or more vniuersall for all kinde of persons, than the remembrance of the holie passion of our Sauour Christe. Albertus Magnus saiethe, *That it is more profitable for a man to meditate euerie daie a litle vpon the holie passion of our Sauour Christe, than to fast with bread & water all the Fridaies in the yeare and to discipline and scourge him selfe vntill he shed bloude, and to saie all the whole Psalter from one ende thereof to an other.* At the least wise this is verie certaine, that this holie exercise is a passinge great helpe to direct the soule in all vertue, and goodnes. For consideringe that our Sauour Christe is (as he him selfe saiethe,) *The waie, the truth, & the lyfe,* there is none other exercise more fitte and conueniente to directe vs to goe vnto God, to knowe God, and to enioye God, than to fixe alwaies our eies vpon our Sauour Christe. For though Christe be vnto vs the waie, the truth, and the lyfe, in all thinges wheresoeuer we consider him, yet is he most espertially so vnto vs, when we beholde him vpon the Crosse. And therefore S. Bernarde saide verie diuoutly: *Well maie I (ô Lorde) compass about heauen, and earthe, yet shall I not finde thee but vpon the crosse. There thou liest, there thou sleepest at noone daie.*

But leauinge now this matter for an other place, I wil onely treat at this presente after

*Note what
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holie Pas-
sion.*

Ioan. 14. 6

S. Bernard

H h h 2

what sorte we ought to behaue our selues when we meditate vpon the holie passion of our Sauour Christe. For there be some simple persons, that seeke nothinge els in this holie exercise, but onely to shedd a fewe teares, in takinge compassio vpon the bitter paines and sorowes of our Sauour, and so doe staie them selues in this pointe alone, without passinge anie further. And albeit this takinge compassio of our Sauours paines be verie good, and necessarie, (forso-much as it is the foundation of all the rest, as hereafter shalbe declared) yet this is not the onely fruite that maie be gathered of this holie tree, but there be others farre greater than this: forso-much as out of the meditation of the holie passion doth all the profite of the spirituall lyfe proceede.

*Sixe
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to be con-
sidered in
the passion
of our Sa-
uour.*

Wherefore we must vnderstande, that there be sixe thinges (emonge manie others) that maye be considered in the holie Passion of our Sauour: To witt, The greatnes of his paines: The greiuousnes of our sinnes: The excellencie of the benefite: The magnificencie of the goodnes of almightie God: The multitude of the vertues of our Sauour Christe, which doe verie brightlie shine in his holie passion: And the conueniencie of this meane, whereby almightie God vouchsafed to worke our redemption. These sixe pointes ought we to consider for sixe effectes, wherein consisteth all the profite of the spirituall lyfe. For we must consider the great-

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nes of the paines of our Sauour Christe, that we maie take compassion of them. We must consider the greames of our owne sinnes, that we maie abhorre them. We must consider the greames of the benefite of his passion, that we maie geue him thanks for it. We must consider the excellencie of the goodnes of almightie God, which in this holie passion of our Sauour is discovered vnto vs, that we maie verie hartely loue the same passinge great goodnes. We must consider the multitude of the vertues of our Sauour Christe, which doe likewise shine verie brightlie in his passion, that we maie be prouoked thereby to imitate them. And we must consider the conueniencie of the misterie of his holie passion, that we maie be brought thereby in admiration of the wisdom of almightie God, and be the more confirmed in the faith of this holie misterie. Of these sixe pointes we intende now to treat, and of each one of them in his due place, and order.

II.

III.

IIII.

V.

VI.

OF THE PASSINGE

*great paines, and tormentes, which
our Sauour Iesus Christe suffe-
red in his most bitter
Passion.*

§. 1.

H h h 3

*Summa S.
Thom. 3. q.
46. arti. 6.*

FIRST, we must consider the passinge great paines of our Sauour Christe, to prouoke our selues by that consideration to take compassion of them, as reason it is that the members shoulde take compassion of their head. Wherefore it is to be noted, that the paines which our Sauour suffered in his bitter passion, were (as the holie fathers saie) the greatest that euer were suffered in this worlde. This shall appeare manifestlie to be true, if we doe consider fise principalle causes, from whence the passinge greates of these paines proceeded.

I.

The first cause was, the passinge greates of his charitie, which made him desirous to redeeme mankinde most abundantly, & to satisfie most perfectly for the iniuries, and offences, committed against the diuine maiestie. And because the greater paines he shoulde suffer, the more perfectly he shoulde accomlishe both the one, and the other, (and he wanted not the forces of grace to beare as great a burthen as he woulde,) therefore he woulde that his paines shoulde be passinge great, that so likewise the satisfaction which he shoulde make for our dette, and the worke of our redemption might be also passinge great.

The secōde cause (which followeth hereof) was, that he suffered his paynes without

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anie maner of ease, or consolation. For (accordinge to the reason before mentioned) he shutte vp from him selfe all the gates, whereby anie maner of consolation might come vnto him, either from heauen, or frō earthe: insomuche that he was contente to be forsaken not onely of his disciples, and freindes, but also of his owne father, yea, and of him selfe also: to the intent that so beinge destitute of all companie, he might be burninge in the furnace of his most grieuous paines, and tormentes, without all maner of refreshinge of anie ease, or consolatiō whatsoever, that by anie meanes might come vnto him. And therefore he saied in the Psalme: I am become as a man destitute of all helpe, I am left emonge the dead, notwithstandinge that I alone am he that emonge the deade by righte am free from sinne, and from deathe. And in an other Psalme he saithe: I am plunged in the bothome of waters, and of myre, and I finde no place where to staie my feete. This is that forsakinge, which our Sauour signified vpon the crosse, when he saiede: *My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me.* For at that time his holie humanitie was forsaken in the midst of the furious streame of his paines, and tormentes, and was left destitute of all things that might either withstande or mitigate the force and vehemencie of them. This was figured in the lawe, by those two beastes, that were offered for the

Psal. 87.

Psal. 68.

*Math. 27.
46.
Psal. 21.1.*

Leuit. 16.

sinnes of the people, of the which the one was killed, and offered vp in sacrifice, and the other departed away, and was sent into the wilderness, leauinge her companiō alone in the tormentes. The like was done in this heauenlie sacrifice, where God and mā was offered for the sinnes of the worlde, and the one of the two natures, to witt, the humanitie, was sacrificed, and did suffer: but the other nature, to witt, the diuinitie, departed away, leauinge her sister and companion all alone to suffer the tormentes. For albeit that (as concerninge the bonde of vnion) the diuine nature neuer forooke the humane nature which it had once taken, yet as touchinge the consolation and ease of the paines, and tormentes, (in the inferior parte) it did wholly forsake the same. And therefore we see, that the Martirs when they went to suffer death, shewed them selues verie courageous, mearie, and ioyefull, (as we reade of S. Agnes, S. Agatha, S. Laurence, & of many others:) but our Sauour beinge the verie fountaine of grace, and of strengthe (through whose vertue the Martirs had such force, and courage, to be able to doe that which they did,) trembled, and sweared euen verie droppes of bloud, when he went to suffer paynes and tormentes for vs. For in the martirs the vertue of charitie which redouided into the inferior forces of the soule caused them to haue verie great courage, & ioye: But in our Sauour Christ both these

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and al other influēces were by spetial miracle suspended, that so he might drinke the cuppe of his most bitter paines, pure, and without mixture of anie maner of ease, or consolation.

The thirde cause of his so grieuous paynes, was the tēdernes of his complexion. For whereas his holie bodie was formed miraculously by the holie Ghost, and the thinges that are done by myracle be more perfecte than those that be done by nature, (as S. Chrysostome declareth, speakinge of the water, which was turned into wyne at the mariage,) it followeth that our Sauours bodie was the most best complexioned, and most tender of all bodies that euer were, or shalbe: insomuch as a holie father saith: *That if there had bene no externall violence done vnto our Sauours bodie, it woulde haue endured a verie great number of yeares, by reason of the perfection, and tendernes of the composition thereof.*

III.

S. Chrysostome
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S. Iohn. 2.

And not onely the composition of his bodie, but also the matter thereof was very tender: forsomuch as the matter of it was wholly most pure virgins fleshe, taken of the most pure and virginall bowels of our blessed Lady, without anie other kinde of mixture. And for this cause (as S. Bonauenture saith) his bodie was the more tender, and of a more perfecte sense in feelinge.

S. Bonauenture.

IIII.

The fourthe cause of his so grieuouse paynes, was the very kinde of death which

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HOW TO MEDITATE

*Twelue
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passion.*

he suffered, with all the circumstances that happened in all the continuance of his passion: forsomuch as each one of them (if they be well considered) was a kinde of martirdome by it selfe. And that thou mayst more clearly perceiue the same, beginne euen from the first entrie of his passion vntill the ende of it, & thou shalt finde among others twelue most greuous paynes, which our Sauour there suffered: the which I will rehearse here very breiflie, notwithstanding that in euerie one of them there is verie much to be said, and considered.

I. The first was, the agonie in the garden, and that wonderfull bloudie sweate, which trickled downe througheout all the partes of his bodie vnto the earthe, which was the most newe and most straungest thinge of all that euer hath happened in the worlde.

II. The seconde was, to be solde for so base a price of his owne Apostle, and disciple, vnto so cruell enemies.

III. The thirde was, to be so often times carried throughe the common streetes bound, and manicled, as if he had bene a verie theyfe.

IIII. The fourthe was, the punnishment with whippinge, and scourginge, which besides that the lashes were verie crewellie laid on him, and verie manie in number, it is not a punnishment for a man of any credite, or honestie, but for bondeslaues, vagabondes, and men of most vyle and base conditi-
The

Vpon THE PASSION.

V. The fift was, that most cruell intencion of the crowne of thornes, wherein were ioyned together both most greiuous shame, and dishonour, and withall most greiuous paine, and tormente.

VI. The sixte was, those so manifolde blasphemies, and sundrie kindes of most villeynous mockeries, iniuries, and reproches, which were ioyned with the tormentes: as to spette so often times in his face, as though he had bene a blasphemmer: to geue him buffettes, and blowes, as if he had bene a vagabonde: to apparell him some times in white garments, and some times in redde, as if he had bene a foole: to hoodwinke his eies, & to ieste at him, sayeing, *Areede, who hath smitten thee*, as if he had bene a verie dis-
Math. 26.
fard: to clothe him with a purple garment, to set a reide in his hande, to kneele on one knee before him, to smyte him on the head with a reid, as if he had bene a counterfeit kinge: and besides all this, to proclaime him through the common streetes as a malefactor. Who euer sawe so many kindes of reprochefull iniuries heaped together vpon one man?

VII. The seuenthe was, that wonderfull contempe, & despite, which was done vnto him (beinge the sonne of almightie God,) when they compared him with Barrabas, and made lesse accompte of him, than of Barrabas. Infomuch as that Lorde by whom all thinges were created, & in whom all thinges

doe liue, and are preserved, was accounted more vnprofitable, and more vnworthy to lyue, than Barrabas an infamous malefactor.

VIII.

The eight was, in that they enforced him to carie vpon his shoulders, (which were all to rente, and breused,) the verie same instrument of the crosse, whereupon he shoulde suffer death. The tormentors them selues (which are commonlie the ministers of crueltie) doe vse to hyde the eies of them that are to be beheaded, that they maie not see the instrument, that shall bereue them of their lyfe: but here they doe not onely not vse this kinde of humanitie towards our Saniour, but they laie the same instrument of his deathe euen vpon his owne shoulders, to the intente that his hart might first suffer the torment of the crosse inwardlie, before that his bodie shoulde proue it outwardlie.

IX.

The ninthe was, the very martirdome of the crosse: which is a most cruell kinde of tormēt: for it is not a speydie kind of death, (as to be hanged, or beheaded) but very longe, and lingeringe: and the woundes be in the most sensible partes of the bodie: to witt, in the feete, and handes, which are most full of vaines, and sinowes, which be the instrumentes of feeling. Moreouer, his paines were increased with the poyze and weight of his owne bodie, which alwaies tended and swayed downwarde: and so it

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euer rented, and enlarged his woundes, and augmented the greife of his tormentes continually: and this caused his martirdome to become so extremely greiuous, that although he had no deadlie wounde, yet by reason of the passing greatnes of his paines, his most holie soule departed out of his most precious bodie.

X.

The tenth was, that whereas our Saniour was thus tormented vpon the crosse, & there became a verie Sea of paines, and tormentes, yea, whereas he was in such a dolefull case, that if we shoulde see a verie dogge in the streete so pittiefullie tormented it were able to breake our hartes, yet all this notwithstandinge his cruell enemies were so farre of from takinge anie pittie or compassion vpon him, that euen at that verie time, they mocked, and scoffed at him, and wagged their heades, saycing: *Eye on thee, that destroyest the temple of God, and within three daies buildest it againe.* Matth. 27.

XI.

The eleuenth was, to haue his most innocent mother present before his eies at all the se martirdomes, knowinge so well as he did, what a passinge great greife it was vnto her most innocent harte.

XII.

The twelfth was such a crueltie, as the like was neuer seene: to witt, that whereas his most holie bodie was al voide of bloud, and al the fountains of his veines empried, and his bowels dried vp, by reason of the great abundance of bloud which he had

head, when he requested a litle water, they did not onely not graunt it vnto him, but in steede thereof they gaue him to drinke Easell, and Galle.

Luc. 16.

Now what thinge could be more cruelle done than this? True it is, that that rich couetous man, which was tormented in hel had a droppe of water denied him when he required it, but yet he had no galle geuen vnto him. But here they doe not onely denie the sonne of almightie God the thinge that he desired, but besides that, they increase his most greiuouse paines with an other newe kinde of tormente.

Euerie one of these pointes beinge considered seuerally by it selfe, will minister sufficient matter of verie greate greife and sorrowe to anie good Christian harte. And therefore whosoever is desirous to haue an earnest and inwarde compassion of the paines of our Sauour, let him goe throughe euerie one of them, and make a station at eche of them: and (be he neuer so harde harted,) it is not almost possible, but that in some one or other of them he shall finde verie vehement motions to prouoke him vnto greife, and compassion.

Howbeit, the paines of our Sauour Christ are not thus ended: there be yet others without all comparison farre greater than these, to witt, the paines of his blessed sowe. For all these paines aboue-named, doe for the most parte appertaine to the paines of the

croffe,

croffe, wherein his bodie suffered outwardly: but besides this visible Croffe, there was yet an other inuisible croffe, wherein his most holie sowe was crucified within his bodie, hauinge also foure armes, and foure nailes, (which were foure dolorous considerations) and these were a farre greater tormente vnto him, than the verie outward croffe. For first of all, there were represented vnto him all the sinnes of the worlde that were present, past, and to come, (for al which he suffered) and that so distinctlie, as if they had bene the sinnes but of one man alone. Now to him that bare such a pasing great loue and zeale vnto the honour of his father, what an vnspokeable greife was it, to beholde such an infinite number of abominations, and offences, committed against so highe a maiestie? For it is certaine, that the sinnes of one man alone were able to tormente him more, than all the tormentes of the croffe. The which beinge so, what a pasinge greate greife would the sinnes of all men, and of all worldes cause vnto him? Suerly, there is no vnderstandinge able to comprehend the pasinge greatnes of this greife.

Secondly, there was also represented vnto him the vngratitude and damnation of many men, and especially of many wicked Christians, which would neuer acknowledge this singuler benefite, nor endeavour to profit & helpe the selues with this so greate

The inuisible croffe of our Sauour, wherewith his sowe was tormented.

I.

II.

and so costlie a remedie, as he there prepared for them. This was also a farre greater tormente vnto him, than the tormente of the crosse. For it is a greater paine vnto a labourer to be denied his daie wages, and the fruite of his labour, than the very labour it selfe, albeit it were verie great. And for this cause our Sauour complained by his Prophete Esaie of this iniurie vnto his father, sayeing: *I saiede. In vaine haue I trauailed: In vaine, & without cause haue I wasted my strength.* And he complained of this ingratitude not onely to his father, but also euen vnto men them selues by S. Bernarde, sayeing: *O man, consider what cruell tormentes I suffer for thy sake. There is no paine that tormenteth me so extremelie as thy ingratitude dothe: I calle vnto thee that doe suffer deathe for thee: Beholde the paines that doe torment me: Beholde the nailes that doe pearse throughe my handes, and feite: Beholde the shamefull reproches, and despites, wherewith they dishonour me. And although the paine which I suffer outwardly be so passinge great, yet is the paine farre greater which I suffer inwardly, when I see thee so vngratefull and vnkinde towards me for the same.*

Esa. 49.4.

S. Bernard.

III.

In like maner there was represented vnto him the horrible sinne of that miserable people of Iewrie, and the terrible punnishment that was prepared for them within a shorte time after, which vndoutedlie was a greater greife, and tormente vnto him, than the cuppe of his bitter passion. For if the

Prophete

Prophete Ieremie signified, that the sinne which the Iewes committed in goinge about to kille him, greiued him much more than his owne very deathe, what a greife would it be to our Sauour, who had without all comparifon farre greater charitie, & grace, than the Prophete Ieremie.

There were moreouer represented vnto him the greifes, and dolefull sworde of sorrowe, which pearced the harte of his blessed mother, when she sawe him suffer betwene two theiues vpon a crosse, the which vndoutedlie was so great a greife and paine vnto him, as the loue was great which he bare vnto her, which loue was inestimable: for so much as next vnto the loue of God, he loued her most of all creatures.

IIII.

Luc. 2.35.

Nowe these fowre considerations and greifes were as it were fowre armes of an other inwarde crosse, wherewith his blessed sowele was likewise crucified within his holie bodie. So that our Sauour suffered that daie the paines & tormentes of two crosses, th'one visible, and th'other inuisible. Vpon th'one crosse his bodie suffered outwardly, and vpon th'other his sowele suffered much more inwardly. Nowe how passinge greate the greife was, which proceded of these foure considerations, there is no vnderstandinge able to comprehend it: and yet we maie coniecture somewhat thereof, by that outward shewe of his blouddie sweate in the garden.

Whosoever then shall attentively consider all these causes, shall clearly see how passing great the paines and tormentes of our Saviour were, which is the intent of this first manner of meditating vpon his most bitter passion. Howbeit, this must not be the finall ende of this exercise, but rather it must be used as a meane to come to other endes: to witt, to vnderstande hereby what a passinge greate loue he bare vnto thee, that would suffer so much for thee: and what a greate benefite he did vnto thee, in byeing thee with so deare a price: and how much thou art bounde to doe for him, who hath done, and suffered so much for thee: and aboue all this, how greatly thou oughtest to abhorre thy sinnes, and be grieved with them, sith they were the cause of his so longe and painfull martirdome. Nowe for these foure endes, (whereof we will intreat in the chapters followinge) serueth this manner of contemplation. Whereby it appeareth, that this first manner of meditating (by waie of takinge compassion of the bitter paines of our Saviour) is as it were a meane, or a ladder, vnto all the others. And for this verie cause S. Bonaventure made greate accompte of this manner of meditation vpon the passion: because it is sensible scene, that this manner of meditation openeth the waie vnto all the other maners of meditating vpon the same.

And the same holie father saierhe, that

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for this purpose it shalbe a great helpe also for vs to take some discipline, which maie cause some smarte, and doe no hurte to the bodie, that so by feelinge of that so litle paine of whipping, and scourginge our selues, we maie the better lift vp our spirite, to consider somewhat of the passinge greate paines, and tormentes, which the most tender bodie of our sweet Saviour suffered for our sakes.

HOW IN THE PASSION

*of our Saviour Christe, appeareth
verie manifestlie what a greivous
thinge sinne is, in the sighte of
almightie God.*

§. II.

THE seconde point that we haue to consider in the passion of our Saviour, is the greivousnes of our sinnes, whereby to moue our hartes to be sorowfull for them, and to abhorre them. Wherefore we must vnderstande, that (as all the holie learned fathers doe affirme,) our sinnes were the very cause why the sonne of almightie God suffered such greivous paines, tormentes, and crewell death, as he suffered in this worlde. For it is certaine, that if there had

*Summa S.
Thome. 3.
q. 1. artic. 2.
& 3. quæst.
46. artic. 1.
& 2.
If man
had not
sinned,
Christe
had not
suffered
anie paines,
or
death.*

bene no sinne to be the meane and occasion of his sufferinge, it had not bene neidfull for him to haue suffered as he did. It is not agreed among the learned diuines, whether the sonne of God shoulde haue bene incarnate, in case man had not sinned, (for some do affirme it, and some do denie it,) but this is holden for a most certaine truth, that in case man had not sinned, the sonne of God shoulde not haue died. Whereby it appeareth, that our sinnes were the verie 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 nayled him vpon the crosse.

And thinke not, because they were not thy sinnes alone which were the cause hereof, that thou art therefore worthy of the lesse punnishment: for accordinge to the lawes of iustice, he deserueth no lesse punnishment that killeth an innocent being accompanied with manie in committinge the facte, than if he alone had killed him. So that by this rule thou seest, what great reason thou hast to moue thee to abhorre thy sinnes, and to be earnestly sorie for them, by callinge to minde, that they were the tormentours which in verie deede crucified the sonne of almightie God, and caused him to suffer so great paines, and tormentes. This is a greater cause to moue a man to abhorre sinne, and to be sorie for the same, than all other losses and miseries that

enfewe

enfewe of sinne, yea althoughe we shoulde reckon emonge our losses the depriuation of the euerlastinge glorie & felicitie which is lost by a deadlie sinne, and the euerlastinge horrible paynes which be purchased by the same.

Now accordinge vnto this doctrine, when thou shalt be occupied in meditatinge vpon the holie passion, & shalt see how the enemies doe apprehende our Sauour, and how they accuse him, and buffete him, and how they spette vpon him, and whippe him, &c. thinke for certaine, that thou art in verie deede in companie with them, & that thou hast ioyned with them in this conspiracie against our Sauour. So that thou mayst treulie saie, that thy sinnes doe accuse him, that thy dissolute behaueour bindeth him, that thy anger and mallice whippeth him, that thy presumption and rashenes buffeteth him, that thy pride crowneth him with thornes, that thy sonde braueries and vanities doe clothe him with purple, that thy pleasures, & delightes geue him to drincke galle, and vineger, and to be shorte, that thy disobedience nayleth his handes and feete vpon the crosse. Forso much as the paines which thou deseruest by these thy sinnes, he vowchsafed of his infinite charitie to suffer for thee. For it is certaine, that the tormentours shoulde neuer haue had power to tormente him as they did, in case thy sinnes had not geuen them force and strengthe to

doe the same.

This is one verie profitable waie of meditating vpon the holic passion for all kinde of persons: but it is much more requisite for such as doe but newlie beginne to enter into the seruice of almightie God, and doe endeouour to cleanse the sinnes of their former dissolute lyfe with the holic exercises of Penance.

OF THE PASSINGE great benefite of our Redemption.

S. III.

THIRDLY we ought to consider in the holic passion the greatnes of the benefite which our Sauour hath done vnto vs, in redeeming vs by this meane. And althoughe there be infinite thinges to be said in this matter, yet at this presente I will doe no more, but onely note breifly three principal pointes, which are to be considered in this most excellēt benefite of our Redēptiō. Firste, what our Sauour hath bestowed vpon vs by the same redemption. Secōdly, what meane he vsed in geuinge it vnto vs. And thirdly, with what passinge great loue he gaue it vnto vs.

How passinge great that is, which our Sauour hath bestowed vpon vs by this be-

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nefit of our redemption, there is no tonge able to expresse. Howbeit we maie cōceiue somewhat thereof by two waies. The first waye, is by consideringe all the euills and miseries whereinto mankinde incurred through the sinne of the first man Adam: for all these miseries were sufficientlie remedied by our Sauour Iesus Christe, who bestowed vpon vs all such benefites as were contrary vnto these miseries: forsomuch as it is euident, that he was geuen vnto vs to be a vniuersall reparer of all the euilles and miseries of the worlde. Now he that were able to reckon how manie the miseries are, whereinto the worlde hath fallen by the sinne of the first man Adam, might also vnderstande, how many the benefites are, that came vnto vs by the secōde Adam, (to witt, by our Sauour Christe,) which benefites be vndoutedlie innumerable.

The seconde waie, is by consideringe not all the miseries which our first father Adam brought vnto vs, but all the benefites which came vnto vs by our Sauour Christe: Forsomuch as we are made partakers of all those benefites, by meanes of communicatinge his spirite vnto vs. For all such as are made partakers of the spirite of Christe, are made partakers also of the vertues and merites of Christe. Wherefore the Apostle saithe, that all such as haue receiued the Sacramente of Baptisme haue put on Christe. Geuinge vs thereby to

I.

II.

Gal. 3. 27.

Eccl. 36.
14.

vnderstande, that they all are made partakers of Christe, and are adorned with his vertues, & merites, & that so beinge clothed with this liuerey they seeme in the sighte of the heavenly father to be such after a sorte (in their degree,) as his owne verie sonne seemeth before him. And therefore for good cause dothe Ecclesiasticus alleage this wonderfull title of the sonne of God in his praier: sayeing: haue mercie o Lorde vpon thy people Israell, whom thou hast made equal and like to thy firste begotten sonne. What dignitie, what glorie can be greater than this? Now accordinge hereunto he that coulede reckon how many the vertues, and merites of our Sauour Christe haue bene, might likewise vnderstande how manie the benefites haue bene that are come vnto vs by him: For so much as we are made partakers of them all by the meane of his passion.

Note what benefites come vnto vs by our Sauour Christe, in case we be his trewe faithfull members.

To conclude, by him is geuen vnto vs remission of our sinnes, grace, glorie, libertie, peace, saluation, redemption, sanctification, iustice, satisfactiō, sacramētes, merites, doctrine, and all other things, which he had, and were behouefull for our saluation. And by reason of this his so bountiefull communicatinge, he is called in the holie Scriptures, the father, the bridegrome, and the vniuersall head of the Catholike Church: because whatsoeuer the father hath, appertaineth to his children, and whatsoeuer the

bridegrome

bridegrome hath, he imparteth to his spowse, and whatsoeuer the head hath, the members are made partakers of the same.

These are the benefites which our Sauour Christe hath bestowed vpon vs. But by what meane hath he geuen them vnto vs? It is euident that by the meane of his holie incarnation, and passion, whereby he made him selfe partaker of all our debtes, and miseries: and so by takinge vpon him all our miseries, he made vs partakers of all his benefites. This takinge vpon him all our miseries is vndoutedlie a farre greater thinge, than to make vs partakers of al his benefites. For certainlie it is a more wonderfull thinge in God to suffer miseries, than to bestowe benefites: because as there is nothinge more propre and conuenient to his infinite goodnes, than to bestowe benefites, so is there nothinge more straunge & further of frō that infinite felicitie, than to suffer miseries. Whereby it appeareth, that we are much more bounde vnto him for the paines and tormentes which he hath suffered for vs, than for the great benefites which he hath geuen vnto vs: I meane hereby, that we are much more bounde vnto him for the maner whereby he hath remedied our miseries, than for the verie remedie it selfe.

But how passinge great was the loue wherewith our Sauour bestowed all this vpon vs? This is without all comparison

with what a passinge great loue

K k k

our Sau-
our suffe-
red for vs.

farre greater, than all the rest. For certainlie the desire which our Sauour had to suffer paines for vs, was farre greater, than the verie paines which he suffered: & much more paines would he haue suffered, in case it had bene needfull for vs. Three howres he continued sufferinge paines and tormentes vpon the crosse for our sinnes: But what is this in cōparison of that, which the greatnes of his charitie could haue vouchsafed to doe for vs? Verelie, if it had bene needfull for vs, that he shoulde there haue suffered paynes and tormentes vntill the daie of iudgemente, the loue was so passinge great which he bare vnto vs, that he woulde vndoubtedlie haue done it. So that albeir he suffered much for vs, yet was the loue which he bare vnto vs farre greater, than the paines which he suffered for vs. And therefore if we be greatlie bounde vnto him for the great paines which he suffered for vs, much more are we boūde vnto him for that which he desired to suffer for vs. This consideratiō is very profitable to prouoke vs to geue most hūble thākes vnto him, who hath bestowed so great benefites vpon vs: & withal to loue him, who hath loued vs much more, than by his benefites he hath shewed vnto vs. Other infinite things there be to be saide concerninge this matter, but now they shall remaine for an other place, & somewhat. I haue specified alreadie in the meditation of the benefites of almightie God.

OF

OF THE WONDERFVLL
great goodnes of almightie God, which
appeareth verie euidentlie in the holie
passion of our Sauour Christe.

§. III.

FOURTHLIE, we oughte to cōsider the passinge great goodnes, and mercie of almightie God, which shineth more euidentlie and brightlie in the holie passiō of our Sauour, than in any other of his workes. Wherefore thou hast deepe lie to consider therein foure thinges: which are to be cōsidered in all the whole historie of the holie passion, & in euerie parte thereof. The first is, who suffereth: The seconde is, what paynes he suffereth: The thirde is, for whom he suffereth: The fourthe is, for what cause he suffereth. Now if thou wilt staye thy selfe awhile in euerie one of these poyntes, & cōsider first the highnes, & excellencie of him that suffereth, which is almightie God: & in such wise staie in this consideration, that thou art astonied at this so highe, and so wonderfull a thinge: & afterwarde comest to descende from thence vnto the consideration of the basenes, and vylnes of the most greiuous paines, and reprochefull iniuries, which he was contente to suffer: & that not for Angels, or Archangels,

Four
principall
thinges to
be conside-
red in the
passion of
our Sa-
uour.

K k k 3

but euen for men, which are most vile, and abhominable creatures, and in their workes like vnto the deuils them selues: if (as I saye) in each one of these pointes thou make as it were a station, and doe compare th'one poynte with th'other, vndoubtedly thou shalt be greatlie amased, and astonied, to cōsider how much so great & excellent a maiestie woulde abase him selfe, to redeeme so vile, and so base a creature: and then maist thou crie out with the Prophete, & saie: O Lorde I haue hearde thy wordes, & was afraide, I haue considered thy workes, and was astonied.

But if after all this, thou doe consider the cause of his so great abasinge, and comest to vnderstand that it was not for anie manner of commoditie towards himselfe, nor yet prouoked by anie deserte of ours, but was onelie moued thereunto with the bowels of his tender mercie and loue towards vs, by the which he vouchsafed to visite vs from on highe: this point beinge well and dewlie considered, will lyfe vp thy minde into such a great admiration & loue of him, that thou wilt be astonied as Moyses was in the Mounte, when he sawe the figure of this misterie, and beganne to proclaime with a lowde voyce the vnspokeable great mercie of almightie God which was there reuealed vnto him. This was that great languishing and faintnes of spirite, which the spowse felte in the

Abac. 3.

Luc. 1. 78.

Exod. 3.

Canticles, when she saide: *Stai me vp with flowres, & comforte me with apples, for I langwifhe with loue.* Vpon which wordes S. Bernarde saierhe: *The amorous soule seeth here kinge Salomon with the crowne which his mother crowned him withall: She seeth the onely sonne of almightie God cariege a crosse vpō his shoulders: She seeth the Lorde of maiestie whipped and spetted vpon: She seeth the auhor of lyfe and of glorie thrust throughe with nailes, pearced with a speare, and many despitefull reproches and contempts done vnto him: And finallie, she seeth him bestowe his most holie lyfe for his freindes: She seeth all this, and in seinge it she is pearced throughe with a knife of loue, and therefore she saierhe: *Stai me vp with flowres, and comforte me with apples, for I langwifhe with loue.**

S. Bernard

OF THE EXCELLENTE
vertues, that doe shyne verie brightlie
in the holie passion of our
Sauour Christe.

§. v.

TH E fiftie point that we haue to consider in the holie passion of our Sauour is the great nōber of vertues that doe shyne verie clearlie in it: the which cōsideration serueth to encourage vs to ende-

The perfection of a Christian lyfe, consisteth in imitating the vertues of Christ.
1. Pet. 2. 21.

uour our selues to imitate some parte of that which is there represented vnto vs. This is one of the highest maners of meditating that is vpon the holie Passion. For it is manifest, that all the perfection of a Christian lyfe consisteth in the imitation & followinge of the vertues of our Sauour Christe. Whereunto the Apostle S. Peter exhorteth vs, sayeing: *Christe suffered for vs, leaving vnto you an example, that you should follow his foote-steppe, who when he was euil spoken of, did not speake euil againe: and when he was tormeted, did not threaten them, but deliuered him selfe vnto him that did most vniustly cōdemne him.*

And albeit that all vertues shined so brightly and in such excellent wise in all the lyfe of our Sauour Christe, yet did they much more perfectlie shine in his holie passion. And therefore in his passion principally it behoueth vs to beholde the bewtie and excellencie of his vertues: the which doe much more euidentlie shyne there emonge his paines, and tormentes, than doe the flowers emonge the thornes.

Humilitie

Consider therefore first of all that so profounde humilitie, wherewith the most highe and onelie begotten sonne of almighty God vouchsafed to be contemned, and lesse esteemed than Barrabas, and to be crucified vpon a crosse betweene two thieves as though he had bene a Captaine and ringleader of malefactours.

Consider his so wonderfull patience in the

middest

middest of so many reprochfull iniuries, & tormetes: & withall his so passinge great magnanimitie, in that he offered him selfe so willingly into the handes of his enemies, & to suffer the greatest paines, and cōflictēs, that euer were suffered in this worlde.

Magnanimitie.

Consider that so constant perseuerance, which he had from the beginninge to the ende, yea euen to suffer death vpon the crosse, & to descende into hell, & to finishe the worke of our saluation.

Perseuerance.

Consider his most feruent charitie, which passeth all vnderstandinge, by the which onely he was moued to offer him selfe in sacrifice for the sinnes of the worlde, and to suffer deathe, that he might geue life not onely vnto his freindes, but also to his enemies, yea euen to those very persones that shed his most pretious bloude.

Charitie.

Consider his most abundante mercie, which extended it selfe so farre forth, as to take vpon him all the miseries and debtes of the worlde, and to make satisfaction for them, as if they had bene peculiarly his owne debtes.

Mercie.

Consider that so perfecte obedience which he vsed towards his father, who he obeyed vnto deathe, yea euen to the death of the crosse: where finally bowinge downe his head, he offered vp vnto him his most holie soule, geuinge vs thereby to vnderstande, that the worke of his obedience was then perfectly fulfilled.

Obedience.

Meekenes.

Consider that so passing great meekenes which he shewed in all the processe of his passion, sufferinge him selfe to be caried like a sheepe to the bocherie, & like a most meeke lambe, that holdeth his peace when he is sheared.

Sylence.

Consider his so wonderfull silence amongst so manie false accusations, and lyinge witnessess, which was so greate, that it was able to bringe the verie Iudge him selfe that condemned him in a great admiration of him.

*Cōtemple
of the
worlde.*

Now if thou be desyrous to see a most perfecte patterne of the contempte of the world, & of al the honours, riches, pleasures & delightes that be therein, beholde our Sauour vpon the crosse so dishonored, tormented, & naked, that he had none other bedde to lye vpon, but onely a crosse: none other pillowe to rest his head vpon, but onely a crowne of thornes: none other delicates to feede vpon, but onely galle, and vineger: none other persons to comforte him, but onely those cruell scoffinge ministers which wagged their heades at him, and saide: Eye on thee, that destroiest the temple of God, and in three daies buildest it vp againe: &c. I conclude therefore, that the Euangelicall pouertie, abstinence, and austeritie of lyfe, with all other vertues doe no where shyne more euidentlie than in the crosse.

Marc. 15.

But emonge all these vertues, humilitie and patience doe shewe them selues most

notable

notable in the bitter passion of our Sauour. For patience (as the holie fathers affirme) was the weddinge garmente wherewith the sonne of almightie God clothed himselfe when he came to be affyaunced with the Catholike Church, and to be married with her. By which Metaphore they geue vs to vnderstande, that albeit our Sauour Christ shyned most brightly with the garmente of all vertues, when he came to celebrate matrimonie with the Catholike Church vpon the bedde of the crosse, yet did he most principally shyne there with the robe of patience. For by meanes of the acte of this vertue, which is to suffer, he dranke the bitter cuppe of his passion: by the valewe, and merite whereof the Catholike Church was redeemed, bewtifed, and espoused by our Sauour Christe.

Now in these and other the like vertues we ought to fixe our eies when we meditate vpon the holie passion of our Sauour: to the intēt that we maie be 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 worlde, is to haue a semblaunce and likenes vnto our Sauour Christ: Howbeit not such a likenes as prowde Lucifer desired to haue, but such a likenes of life as our Sauour Christe him selfe commaunded vs to haue, when he saide: I haue geuen you

*and pa-
tience of
our Sau-
our vpon
the Crosse.**Esai. 14. 14.**Ioan. 13. 15.*

an example, that as I haue done, so shoulde ye doe likewise.

OF THE CONVENIENCIE
of the mysterie of our
Redemption.

§. VI.

*Summa S.
Thoma. 3.
q. 46 art.
3. & 4.*

THE sixte poynte that we haue to contemplate vpon in the holy passion, is the conueniencie of the mysterie of our Redemption: to witt, howe conueniente a meane this was which almightie God chose whereby to worke the saluation of man, & to heale and cure him of his miseries. This maner of contemplation serueth to illuminate the vnderstanding, to confirme it more firmelie in the faith of this misterie, and to lift vp the harte of man into a greate admiration of the goodnes, and wisdom 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 plentiful a matter to meditate vpon, that certainly if a man shoulde continewe thinkinge vpon it vntill the ende of the worlde he shoulde alwaies finde newe reasons of the conueniencie of this holie misterie, & newe causes to induce

him

him to lifte vp his spirite more and more in admiration of the high wisdom and prouidence of almightie God herein. But because this volume woulde be to greate in case I shoulde treat of this matter at large: I will therefore at this presente onely shewe the order and foundation of this consideration, to the intent that the deuout and religious soule maie hereby haue a waye opened vnto her to prosecute all the rest.

Wherefore it is to be noted, that if we will see what proportion and conueniencie a meane hath with his ende, it is necessarie to make a comparison betwene the same meane, and the ende, and the greater helps that the meane hath towards the attaining of the ende, the more proper & conueniente is the meane for the same end. As for example: If we wil examine whether a medicine be conuenient for a disease, we must consider the accidentes of the disease, and the proprieties and vertues of the medicine: and when we haue seene what proportion there is betwene the one, and the other, we maie then iudge whether the medicine be conueniente for the same disease or not. And euen in like maner is it in this case: for whereas it is euidente vnto vs, that the passion and bloud of our Sauour Iesus Christe is a generall medicine for all the miseries and necessities of man, if we will trye the conueniencie of this medicine, we must make a longe comparison betwene the

*The passion
of Christe
is a generall
medicine for*

LII 2

*all the
miseries
and neces-
sities of
man.*

medicine, and the disease: and in case we be able to searche and examine well both th'one, and th'other, we shall certainlie finde, that this medicine is so fitte and conuenient for the curinge of this disease, and of all the braunches, and accidentes of the same, as if the medicine had bene onelie instituted for the curinge of each defecte in the disease: the which vndoutedlie is a matter able to bringe a man that shoulde consider of it attentiuely into a great astonishment, and admiration. If thou be not fullie perswaded herein, tell me then I praie thee, what satisfaction coulde be offered more sufficient for payment of the common debtes of mankind, than the most pretious bloude which the sonne of almightie God shed for vs vpon the Crosse? To cure also the woundes of our pride, couetousnes, ingratitude, pleasures, delightes, and the loue of our selues, with all other euils which proceed thereof, what thing coulde be more conuenient, than God vpon a Crosse? Likewise to geue vs knowledge of the goodnes, and mercie of almightie God, to enkindle vs more in the loue of him, to strengthen more our confidence, and to awake more our forgetfulnes, and vnthankfulnes, what thing coulde be more conuenient, than God vpon a Crosse? Moreover, to enriche a man with merites, to exalte him vnto greater honour, to enkindle his spirite in deuotion, to comforte him in his tribulations, to

succoure

succoure him in his temptations, to helpe him in his labours, to encourage him vnto great enterprises, and finally to geue a perfect example of all vertues, what thinge coulde be more conueniente, than Iesus Christe vpon the crosse? And to comprehend all in one worde, if the Euangelicall lyfe be well considered, it is nothinge els, but onely a continuall crosse: and so consequentlie, what thinge coulde be more conueniente to directe a kinde of lyfe which is altogether a crosse, than an other crosse?

And if thou be yet desirous to vnderstande this conueniencie more euidentlie, consider attentiuely what thinge a Christian lyfe is, (for the leadinge of a Christian lyfe is the ende of all the traueills and paines of our Sauour Christe,) and the same consideration will declare verie plainlie vnto thee, what conueniencie there is betwene this meane, and this ende. A Christian lyfe (takinge it in his full perfection) is not such a kinde of lyfe as the Christians vse to liue at this daie in the worlde: but such a lyfe as our Sauour Christe liued, and such a lyfe as his disciples liued, whose paines, labours, and miseries were so greate, that one of them saith thus of them: We are become a spectacle vnto God, vnto Angels, and vnto men. For truelie so great are our paines, and miseries, and in such wise are we reuyled and persecuted of the worlde, that (as thoughte we were wilde beastes

*Note well
this pointe.*

*What a
Christian
lyfe is.*

1. Cor. 4. 9.

LII 3

*Catholike
priestes be
in like man-
ner hated
and persec-
uted by
Heretikes,
& Atheistes
in this wic-
ked time,
as Christes
Apostles
were by
the Jewes
& Pagans
in the primi-
tiue
Church.*

baited at a stake) we are specially looked vpon, not onely of men, and of Angels, but also of almightie God him selfe. And afterwards he saith thus: Vntill this presente houre we doe susteine hunger, thirst, nakednes, and blowes, and haue not so much as a denne wherein to hyde our selues. We goe from place to place, and we gaine the bread that we eate with our owne handes. They curse vs, and we blesse them: They persecute vs, and we suffer them: They blaspheme vs, and we praie for them: To conclude, in such wise are we turmoyled and contemned of the worlde, as if we were the very dust, and dirte, that they tread vnderneath their feete: And as though we were most wicked, and abhominable men, the worlde is fullie perswaded, that nothinge can be more acceptable vnto almightie God, than to procure our deathe, and condemnation.

This is (my dear brother) a Christian lyfe. This verie Christian lyfe did the Prophetes liue, and so did also the Martirs, the Confessors, and those blessed holie Mounkes that liued in the primitiue Church in the wilderness. To be shorte, this Christian lyfe did all the Saintes liue. And this Christian lyfe the Apostle describeth verie plainlie in his Epistle to the Hebrewes in these wordes: The saintes were mocked, scourged, apprehended, imprisoned, stoned, sawed in peices, tempted, and put to death with the sword: They went in this worlde apparailled in

sheepes,

sheepes and goates skinned, very poore, needy, and afflicted, of whom the worlde was not worthie: They liued in wilderness, and in solitarie places, aparte from the companie of men, and had none other habitation, but the dennes and cliftes of the earth. This is indeede the perfection of the Christiā lyfe, which the gospell teacheth vs, and which our Sauour Christe came to bringe into the worlde. This Christian lyfe if it be well considered is a continuall crosse, and death of the whole man, to the intent that after he is thus mortified and annihilated he maie be able, and desposed to be transformed into God. For like as there can not be generatiō without corruption, (so much as that thinge which is must perishe, to the ende that that maye be made which is not,) euen so this spirituall regeneration and transformation of man into God can not be made, vnlesse the olde man doe first die, that so by death and corruption of the olde man he maie be transformed into God. Whereupon it plainlie ensueth, that al the Euangelical lyfe is nothinge els (as we haue saide) but death, and a crosse. And therefore what thinge can be more conuenient to directe such a kinde of lyfe as is altogether a continuall crosse, than an other crosse: And if there be nothinge more apte and conuenient to ingender a fier, than an other fier, & if euerie thinge be most apte to ingender a thinge like vnto it selfe, what thinge can be

more proportionable and conueniente to ingender a crosse, than an other crosse? Vndoubtedly so it is: and therefore there is nothing of greater force to encourage and strengthen at this daye all holie Catholike men, and women, to suffer paines, vniustice, wronges, pouertie, subiection, discipline, hunger, thirste, colde, nakednes, and to be short, all the troubles, calamities, afflictions, persecutions, imprisonments, tormentes, and miseries of this worlde, and al the austerite of the Euangelicall lyfe, than to fixe their eies vpon the crosse. Out of this schoole of the crosse came the Martirs. In this schoole learned also the Apostles. And this schoole hath likewise taughte & strengthened the virgins, the Confessors, the holie Mounkes, and to conclude, all the Sainctes, to liue a holie austere kinde of lyfe. And it was the crosse that hath accompanied and comforted them in all their labours, troubles, paynes, afflictions, and persecutions.

Now when the deuout soule findeth so many kindes of fruites in this tree of lyfe for all times, and for all necessities, she can not but wonder at the highe wisdom of that soueraine master, that hath founde out such an excellent meane for our remedie: & she is also prouoked thereby to acknowledge the vnspeakeable goodnes of so mercifull a father, who beinge able to haue holpen and remedied man with his onely will, choserather to put him selfe to so great

paines,

paines, and dishonours, to the intente that man might be more honored and more holpen by this meane, than by anie other.

These be the sixe principalle waies to meditate vpon the holie passion: and the order that maie commonlie be vsed in meditatinge vpon them, is to beginne at the first, to witt, to consider the most grievous paines which our Sauour suffred for vs, (the which consideration is as it were the verie foundation of all th'others) and from that consideration we maye goe forwardes immediatlie vnto all the rest, accordinge as the very cowerse of meditation will open vnto vs the waie, and especiallie the grace of the holie Ghost, who is the principalle teacher of these exercises. For as we haue declared before, when we haue considered the passinge great paines which our Sauour suffered for vs, we maie then immediatly proceide forwardes, and consider the greatnes of our sinnes, which caused him to suffer so manie greiuous paines, & tormentes: and withall the passinge greatnes of this benefite of our redemption, in that almightie God would vouchesafe for the loue of vs to suffer such extreme paines: And we maie likewise consider the highnes of the goodnes, and mercie of almightie God, who for the greate loue he bare vnto vs abased him selfe so farre forthe, as to suffer so manie reprochfull contemptes, villainies, and miseries: And aboue al this we may consider

*The order
that maye
common-
lie be vsed
in medita-
tinge vpon
the Passio.*

how greate examples of vertues our Saviour Christe hath geuen vnto vs herein: to witt, of patience, obedience, charitie, humilitie, meikenes, constancie, and of all other vertues, whereof we haue hitherto treated.

Howbeit, althowghe it be a verie conuenient order of meditating vpon this holie misterie to passe orderlie by degreis through all theise forsaide considerations, takinge our beginnunge at the first consideration, and so to proceide in order from one consideration to an other, euen to the last: yet is it not needful for a man (so often as he meditateth vpon this holie misterie) to goe in this precise maner throughe them all, (for many times he shall not haue sufficient time for the same,) but let him content him selfe in his meditation with that consideration, wherein he shall finde most spirituall taste, and likinge: Forso much as in these exercises we must haue respecte not to the great quantitie of the matter that is meditated vpon, but to the great deuotion wherewith it is done.

*The ende of the first parte
of this booke.*

DEO GRATIAS.



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