

Psal. 144.

Lorde shall raigne for euer, and euer. And in
an other place: Thy raigne is the raigne of
al worldes, & thy dominion endureth from
generation to generation.

Psal. 141.

Wherefore (o father of mercies, and God
of al consolation) I humbly beseech thee by
the bowels of thy mercie, that I maie not be
deprived of this supreme glorie, and felici-
tie. O Lorde my God, that hast vouchsafed
to create me after thyne owne image, and
likenes, and to make me capable of thy selfe,
fill this harte of mine) which thou hast
created,) with thy selfe, sith thou hast crea-
ted it for thy selfe. Let my portion (o my
almightie God) be in the lande of the living.
O Lorde I beseech thee geue me not in this
transitorie lyfe either rest, or riches: but re-
serue al in store for me for the euerlasting
lyfe to come. I desire not to enherite with
the childre of Ruben in the lande of Galaad,
and to lose my right and title of the lande of
promise. One thinge onely (o Lorde) haue I
demaunded of thee, and this will I alwaies require,
that I maie dwell in the house of our Lorde al the
daies of my lyfe.

Num. 32. 6.

Psal. 26.



SONDAIE NIGHTE.

OF THE BENEFITES OF
ALMIGHTIE GOD.

THIS DAIE (WHEN
THOU HAST MADE THE SIGNE
of the Crosse, and prepared thy selfe hereun-
to,) thou hast to meditate vpon the benefites
of almightie God: that in so doinge thou
mayst geue him thanks for them, & enkindle
in thy selfe a more feruente loue of him, who
hath shewed himselfe so bountifull towards
thee, and withal procure thereby more greife
and sorowe for the sinnes and offences that
thou hast committed against such a longinge
benefactor.

AND albeit the benefites of
almightie God towards vs
be innumerable, yet they all
maie be reduced to fve kin-
des: to witt, to the benefites of
creation, conseruation, redemption, vocation,
and to the secrete benefites, that euerie one
hath receyued particularly in him selfe.

I.
The benefite of
creation.

As concerninge the first benefite, which is of creation, Consider first with great attention what thou wast before thou were created, and what almightie God hath done for thee, and bestowed vpon thee, before thou diddest merite or deserue anie thing at al to witt, he gaue thee thy bodie with all thy members, and senses, and thy soule which is of so great excellencie, created after his owne image and likenes for so highe and excellent an ende, as to haue the fruition of almightie God. And withall he gaue thee those three noble powers also of thy soule, which be, Vnderstanding, Memorie, & Will. And consider wel with thy selfe, that to geue thee this soule was to geue thee al thinges. For it is cleare that there is no perfection nor habilitie in any of al the inferior creatures, but that man hath the same in him in a farre more highe and greater perfection, & by meanes of the verue and habilitie of his soule he is able to attaine vnto it. Whereby it appeareth, that by geuinge vnto vs this thinge alone, (to witt, our soule) he gaue vs therewith at once al thinges together.

II.
The benefite of conseruation.

As concerninge the benefite of conseruation, consider how all thy whole beinge dependeth of the prouidence of almightie God: How thou art not able to liue one momente, nor to steppe so much as one steppe, were it not by meanes of him. Consider also, how he hath created al thinges in this worlde for thy vse, and seruice: In-

much

much as he hath appointed euen the verie Angels of heauen for thy garde, & defence. Consider moreover, how he hath geuen thee healt, strengthe, lyfe, sustenance, with al other temporal helpes, & succours. And aboue al this, consider well the manifolde great miseries, and calamities, into which thou seest other me fall euerie daie, & howe thou thy selfe mightest also haue fallen into the same, had it not bene that almightie God of his greare mercie preserued thee.

As concerninge the benefite of redemption thou mayst consider therein two thinges. First, how manie and how great benefites almightie God hath geuen vs by meanes of the benefite of redemption. And secondlie, how manie and how great miseries he hath suffered in his most holie bodie and soule to purchase these benefites vnto vs.

As concerninge the benefite of vocation, consider first of al, what a great benefite it was of almightie God to make thee a Christian, to calle thee to the Catholike faith by meanes of the holie Sacrament of Baptisme, and to make thee also partaker of the other Sacrametes. And then if after this calling of thee thou hast fallen into deadlie synne, & thereby loste thine innocencie, in case now our Lorde haue raised thee vp from synne, and receyued thee againe into his grace, and fauour, and set thee in the state of saluation, how canste thou be able to geue him suffi-

III.

The benefite of redemption.

IIII.

The benefite of vocation.

cient praises and thaakes for this so inestimable a benefite? What a great mercie was it to expecte thee so longe time: to suffer thee to committe so manie synnes? and in the meane time to sende thee so manie diuine inspirations? and not to shorten the daies of thy lyfe, as he hath done to diuerse and sundrie others, that were in the veriesame state: and laste of al, to calle thee with so mightie a grace, that thou mightest rise vp againe from death to lyfe, and open thine eyes to beholde the eternall lighte? What a great mercie was it also (after that thou wast conuerte) to geue thee grace not to retorne vnto deadlie synne againe, but to stande & vanquish the thine enemye, and to perseuer in good lyfe? This is that morninge and eueninge dewe that almightie God promised by the Prophet Ioel, sayeing: And ye sonnes of Sion reioyce, and be glad in our Lorde God: for he hath geuen you a teacher of iustice, and he shall cause the morninge and eueninge dewe to rayne and poure downe vpon you. Meaninge hereby that almightie God geueth vs firste his preuentinge grace, wherewith we beginne to sowe the seede of vertues: and afterwarde he geueth vs his grace subsequent, & final, which bringeth this seede to his full ripenes, and happie ende.

Ioel. 2. 23

1. Grace
preuentinge.2. Grace
subsequente
& final.V.
Of secrete
benefites.

These are the publike & knowen benefites. But besides these there be other secrete benefites, which no man knoweth but he only that hath receiued them. A gayne, there be

other

other benefites also so secrete that euen he himselfe that hath receiued them knoweth not of them: and he onely knoweth them that is the geuer of them. How manie times hast thou deserued in this worlde either through thy pride, negligence, or vnthankfulness, that almightie God shoulde haue withdrawen his grace from thee, and vtterly forsaken thee, as he hath done to manie others for some one of these causes, (for whosoever they be that doe falle from God, they falle by some of these meanes,) and yet hath not almightie God dealt thus with thee? How manie euilles and occasions of euilles hath our Lorde preuented and turned awaie by his prouidence, in ouerthrowinge the snares of the deuill thine enemye, and stoppinge him of his passage, and not permitting him to execute his wylie practises and deceites vpon thee? How oftentimes hath he done for euerie one of vs, as he saide he did for S. Peter? Beholde, (saide our Sauour) how Satan goeth busilie aboute to sift you as corne in the barne, but I haue praied for thee, that thy faith faile not. Now who knoweth these secretes, but only almightie God. The positiue benefites be such as a man maie sometimes vnderstande & knowe them: but those benefites that are called priuatiue, which consist not in doing benefites vnto vs, but in deliuering vs fro hidden & secrete euilles that were coming towarde vs, who is able to vnderstande?

we falle
from God
either
through
our pride,
negligence,
or vnthank-
fulness.

Luc. 22.

Benefites
positiue.Benefites
priuatiue.

Wherefore as wel for these benefites, as for the others, it is reason we shoulde alwaies shewe our selues thankful to our Lorde, and vnderstande how farre in arrearages we be in our reckeninge with him, and how much more we be indetted vnto him, than we are able to paie, consideringe we are not able so much as to vnderstande what they are.

THE SEVENTH TREATISE: OF THE CONSIDERATION of the benefites of almightie God: wherein the former meditation is declared more at large.

Almightie God wil charge vs at the daie of our accompte with our vnthankfulness, & ingratitude, for his manifold benefites.



ONE of the greatest complaints that almightie God maketh against men, and wherewith he will most charge them at the daie of their accompte, is their vnthankfulness and ingratitude for his manifold benefites. With this kinde of complaynte the Prophet Esaie beginneth the first wordes of his prophecie, callinge heauen and earthe to witnes against the ingratitude and vnthankfulness of the wicked. Harken (saith he) o heauen, and thou earthe geue eare vnto my wordes, for our Lorde hath spoken it: I haue nourished children, and exalted

them

them, and they haue despised me: The ox knoweth his owner, and the Asse his masters maunger: but Israel hath not knowne me, neither woulde my people vnderstande me. Now what thinge is more straunge, than that men shoulde not acknowledge that thinge, which the verie brute beastes doe acknowledge. And as S. Ierome saith vpon this place: The Prophete woulde not compare men with other lyuing beastes that are more quicke of sense, as with the dogge, that for a litle peece of bread defendeth his masters howse, but euen with the Oxe, & Asse, which are more dull, and rude: geauinge vs hereby to vnderstande, that ingratefull and vnthankful persons are not to be likened to euerie kinde of beastes, but that they be much more brutishe than the most brutishe beastes that are.

Now what punishment (trowe ye) doth so great beastlines deserue? Almightie God hath prepared many punishments for ingrateful persons: but the most iust and ordinarie punishment is to spoile them of all those benefites they haue receyued, because they woulde not geue thanks to the geuer of them as of due tie: they ought to haue done. For as S. Bernarde saith: *Ingratitude is as it were a burninge winde, that drieth vp the riuer of Gods mercie, the fountain of his clemencie, and the flowing stream of his grace.*

Now as vnthankfulness is the cause of so great euils, euē so contrariwise thankfulness

S. Ierome.

Ingratefull & vnthankfull persons are more brutishe than the most brutishe beastes that are.

The ordinarie punishment of ingrateful persons.

S. Bernard

I.
The consideration

of Gods
benefites
moueth vs
to loue
God.

is the beginning of verie great graces, & especially of three. The first is the loue of God. For (as Aristotle saith) goodnes is amiable of it selfe, and euery man is naturallie most inclined to loue his owne proper weale. Seinge therefore that men be naturallie such louers of them selues, and of their owne proper commoditie, when they see plainlie that al that they haue cometh of the gracious goodnes of that cheifest benefactor, forthewith they be moued to loue, and wishe well vnto him, whom they perceiue and acknowledge to haue bestowed so great benefites vpon them. And hereof it cometh, that emonge the considerations that doe most helpe vs to attayne vnto the loue of God, one of the most principal is the consideration of the benefites of almightie God. For euery one of these benefites is as it were a fyerbrande that quickeneth and enkindleth more and more the flame of this loue: and so consequently, to consider many of these benefites, is to ioyne many fyerbrandes together, whereby the flame of this fyer is enkindled more and more in vs.

II.
The consideration
of Gods
benefites
stirreth up
a desire in
a man to
serue God.

This consideration helpeth also to stirre vp a desire in a mā to serue almightie God whē he considereth the great bownden duetie, that he oweth vnto him, vnto whom he is so much inderted. For if the verie birdes & brute beastes be moued herewith to answer vnto the voice of him that calleth the

and

and doe obeye (as though they were reasonable creatures) vnto al such thinges as are commaunded them: how much greater prouocations haue we to doe the like vnto almightie God, that haue receiued farre more than they, and be able to vnderstande farre better then they, what greate and inestimable benefites we haue receiued of God.

This consideration is also profitable to stirre and prouoke in our sowles a sorrowe and repentance for our synnes. For when a man considereth and weigheth deeply on the one syde the multitude of benefites he hath receyued of almightie God, and on the other syde the great number of offences he hath committed against him, how can he chuse but be ashamed of him selfe? How can it be but that he must needes be confounded, and discerne muche better the blacke by comparing it with the white? I meane hereby, he shal much better discerne the greatnes of his owne wickednes, by comparinge the same with the greatnes of Gods passing great goodnes, who hathe continued so longe time in doinge good vnto him, that contrariwise hath continued euermore for his parte in heapinge synne vpon synne against almightie God.

For these three endes therefore owght a man to consider the benefites of almightie God: and withall in the consideration of them to geue him most humble thanks for the same. So that whē he setteth him selfe to

III.
The consideration
of Gods
benefites
stirreth up
a sorrowe
& repentance in
vs for our
synnes.

*Howe we
must be-
haue our
selues in
medita-
tinge vpon
god his be-
nefittes.*

Osca. 14. 3.

*Fiue prin-
cipal bene-
fittes of
almightie
God.*

*The exer-
cises of
meditatiō
are not to*

to meditate vpon the benefites of almightie God, he must then be carefull to haue his recourses vnto these three poyntes in their due places, applyenge his harte some times to loue him, who hath bene so greatly beneficial vnto him: some times to desire to serue him: some times agayne to be sorrowful and repentant for his sinnes: yea & some times also to offer vnto him sacrifice of praise, and thanks geuinge for his so manifold benefites. These sacrifices are signified by those calues of our lippes, which the Prophet would haue vs to offer vnto almightie God for the benefites that we haue receyued of him.

True it is, that the benefites of almightie God be innumerable, but we wil treat here onely of fve kinde of benefites, which are of al others the most cheife, & principal, & whereunto al the others maie be reduced. These fve are the benefites of creation, conseruation, redemption, vocation, and finally the particuler and secrete benefites that euerie particuler person maie recognise and acknowledge in him selfe.

And it is not required of a man to thinke vpon all these benefites at one time, but it shall suffice to thinke vpon one, or twoe, or three of them, and to consider and ponder them wel and diligentlie in his minde. For the exercises of meditation are not to be taken in lumpes, as a taske, that must be fullie wrought & finished within a certaine time,

but

but as a daily foode, and sustenance, which the more moderatly and temperatlie it is taken, and the better it is digested, the more profitable and holsome it is to a man.

OF THE BENEFITE of Creation.

§. I.



O beginne now with the benefite of creation: that thou mayst the better vnderstande somewhat of the greatnes of this benefite, thou shalt doe well to consider firste verie deeply with thy selfe, what thou wast before thou were created. This is one of the principall aduises, that the masters of the spiritual lyfe doe vse to geue in this behalfe, as well for the vnderstandinge of the greatnes of this benefite, as also for the annihilation (as they terme it,) which is, that a man maie hereby clearlie and palpably perceiue how of him selfe he is no more than verie nothinge. Consider then howe it is not manie yeares sithence, nor a thowfande, nor an hundred yeares, but euen as it were yesterdaie, that is, within a verie smalle time, that thou wast nothinge, (at least wise as concerninge thy fowle) and from the beginning thou wast nothinge, and mightest for euer

A A a

*be used as
a taske,
but to be
taken mo-
deratlie as
a daylie
foode for
the fowle.*

haue bene nothing, that is, lesse thā a clodde of earth, lesse than a puffe of winde, yea lesse than a strawe, & to be short euen nothing.

Consider then how the same nothinge could not make it selfe any thinge, and as little could it deserue that an other should make it any thinge, for that pardy that is not, can neither worcke, nor deserue. Nowe when thou wast in this darckenes, and in this deepe bothomles pitte of the same nothinge, it pleased the infinite goodnes and mercie of almightie God, before anie deserue of thyne, onelie of his mere grace, to shewe vpon thee his power, and omnipotencie, and with his mightie hande to pluck thee out of this darcknes, and out of this deepe bothomles pitte of no beinge, and to bringe thee to a beinge, and to make thee somewhat: and (as S. Augustine saith) not euerie somewhat, not a stone, nor a birde, not a tode, not a serpente, but euen a man, which is one of the most noble creatures in the worlde. He gaue thee this beinge that thou now hast. He compacted and framed this thy bodie, and bewtified it in all partes, both with members & senses, and that with such a wonderfull prouidence, and arte, that euerie one of them (if they be well considered) is of it selfe a great wonder, and a verie great benefite. This is that benefite which the holic man Iob did most humbly acknowledge, when he saiede: *Thy handes (O Lorde) haue made me, they haue geuen me a due*

S. Augustine.

Iob. 10.

proportion

proportion in euerie parte. Remember O Lorde that thou hast made me, as it were of a lumpe of claye, and that thou shalt reduce me againe into dust. Thou hast clothed me with skinne, and fleashe: Thou hast compacted me with bones, and sinowes: Thou hast geuen me lyfe, and mercie, and hast preserved my spirite with thy visitation.

Nowe what shall I saie of the noblenes of thy fowle, and of the excellencie of the ende for which it was created, and of the image & capacitie that it hath. The image thereof is the image of almightie God himselfe. For in verie deede there is nothinge in all the earth that more resembleth almightie God, there is nothinge whereby we maie come to a more eident knowledge of him than by the fowle. And therefore the aunciente Philosophers (and namely Anaxagoras) knewe no meeter name to be geuen vnto God, than Mens, (the Minde,) which is as much to saie, as a reasonable fowle, by reason of the greate similitude and likenes that they perceiued to be betweene God, and it. And this is the cause why the substance of our fowle can not be perfectly vnderstode. For beinge as it is verie like vnto the substance of God, (which can not be knownen in this lyfe) it foloweth that the substance of the fowle is also a thinge not able to be knownen here by vs.

Now the ende for which this noble creature was created, is answerable to this dignitie. For it is manifest that the fowle was

The noblenes and excellencie of our fowle.

For wherfore the fowle of man was created.

created to be partaker of that blessed glorie and felicitie of almightie God, to dwell in his howse, to eate at his table, to enioye those things that almightie God him selfe enioyeth, to be clothed with the same garmente of immortalitie that he him selfe is clothed withall, and to reigne euerlastingly with him.

*The wonderfull
capacitie
of the
soule of
man.*

And hereof it commeth, that the soule hath such a wonderfull capacite: which is so great, that all the creatures and riches of the worlde put together, are no more able to fille her capacite, than a barlie come is able to fille all the whole worlde.

Now therefore, what recompence shall we make vnto our most gracious & bountiefull Lorde for this so passinge great benefite? If we thinke our selues to be so much bound to our carnall parentes, for that they haue bene some parte in the buildinge of this our bodie, how much more are we indebted vnto our heauenlie father, who by meanes of our parentes hath formed our bodies, and without them hath created our sowles, which be without comparison more excellent than the bodie, & without which our bodie were no better than a stinkinge donghill? What are our parentes, but onely an instrumēt whereby almightie God hath made a smalle portion of this worke? Now if thou be so much bound to the instrumēt of the worke, howe much more art thou bounde to the principalle agent, that made

the worke: And if thou be so much bounde vnto him, who was onely a meane in framinge one parte, how much more art thou bounde vnto almightie God that made the whole? If thou esteeme a sworde so much wherewith a cittie was conquered, howe much more owghdest thou to esteime the kinge him selfe that conquered it.

OF THE BENEFITE of Conseruation.

§. II.



ND our Lord hath not onely created thee in such great dignitie, and glorie, but it is he also that maintaineth and conserueth thee after thy creation in the same? As he him selfe witnesseth by the Prophet Esaye, sayeing: *I am thy Lord thy God, that doe teache thee whatsoever is meite for thee to knowe, and doe gouerne thee in the waie that thou walkest.* Manie mothers there be, that thinke it sufficient to susteine onely the trauaile of childe bearing: they will not burthen them selues with nourishing their children, but will seike out some other nurse that maie discharge the of that trouble. But almightie God dealeth not so with vs: for he vouchsafeth to take vpon him selfe the whole charge, & burthe:

Esa 48.17

Osea, 11. 3.

Psal. 144.

insomuch as he is both the mother that bare vs, and the nurse that nourisheth vs with the milke and cherishinges of his prouidence: accordinge as he him selfe witnesseth by one of his Prophetes: saying: *I was as it were the nurse of Ephraem, and caried them in mine armes, and they vnderstode not that I had care of them.* So that our Lorde himselfe is bothe the creator and conseruer of all thinges that be created. And like as without him nothinge is made, euen so were it not for him, all thinges would goe to vtter ruine, and decaie. The Prophet Dauid confesseth plainlie both the one and th'other in these wordes: *The eies of all thinges doe looke vpon thee O Lorde, and thou geuest them their foode in dewe season. And whilest thou geuest it, they receiue it, & when thou stretchest forth the hande of thy bountifull goodnes, they are replenished and satisfied with all such thinges as they stande in neede of.* But if thou (O Lord) turne thy face awaye from them, they shall forthwith be disapointed, and vtterly faile, and returne againe to the same dust whereof they were made. Whereby it appeareth that like as all the mouinge and order of a clocke dependeth of the wheelles that doe drawe it, and make it to goe, insomuche that if they shoulde staie, immediatly all the whole frame and mouinge of the clocke would staie also: euen so all the worckmanshippe of this great frame of the worlde dependeth

wholie

wholie of the prouidence of almightie God, in such sort that if his diuine prouidence shoulde faile, all the rest would faile out of hande withall.

But how manie benefites (trowest thou) are conteyned in this one benefite. Trewlie euerie minute and momente of an howre that thou liuest are partes of this benefite. For thou couldest not liue, nor haue anie beinge so much as one minute if almightie God shoulde withdrawe his prouidence, and turne his eie awaie neuer so litle from thee. All creatures in the worlde are parte of this benefite. For we see that they all doe serue to this ende. Insomuch as the heauen is thyne, the earthe is thyne, yea, the Sonne, the Moone, the starres, the sea, the fishes, the birdes, the trees, the liuinge beastes, and to be short, all thinges in the worlde be thyne: forsomuch as they all are appointed to doe thee seruice. This is that benefite which the Prophet wondered so much at, when he saide: *what is man O Lorde, that thou shouldest be mindful of him: & what is the sonne of mā, that thou doest so visite him?* Thou hast made him not much inferior to the Angels: Thou hast crowned him with glorie, and honour, and hast made him Lorde ouer al the workes of thy handes. Thou hast put all thinges vnder his feite, sheepe, oxen, and all the beastes of the feilde, the birdes of the aier, & the fishes of the sea, that walke ouer the pathes of the Sea. O Lorde our God, how wonderfull is thy name ouer all the earthe.

And almightie God hath vowchsafed

Euerie minute and momente of our lyfe dependeth of the prouidence of almightie God.

Psal 8.

*Almightie
God hath
appointed
all creatu-
res visible
and inuisi-
ble to serue
man.*

Heb. 1. 14.

Mat. 18. 10

*Unto the
Angels is
committed
the defence
and safe-
garde of
men.*

*This world
is a maine
sea of in-
finite trou-
bles, cala-
mities, and
miseries.*

not onely to appointe all visible creatures for the seruice & behoofe of man, but hath also of his great mercie appointed the inuisible creatures, to witt, those most noble and excellent vnderstandings, that be alwaies in his presence, and behold his diuine face. For as S. Paule saith: They be all officers in this great howse and familie of almightie God, vnto whom is committed the defence and safegarde of men. Finally, he hath employed all the whole worlde to do thee seruice, to the intent that thou shouldest in like maner imploie thy selfe in his seruice. And his will is, that there should be no one creature either vnder the heauen or aboue exempted from seruing & helping thee. And this hath he done, that there should be nothinge within thee, that shoulde not likewise be employed in seruing of him.

And althoughe peraduenture thou runnest slightlie ouer al these thinges, yet oughtest thou not so to passe ouer the benefites that almightie God hath done vnto thee in deliueringe thee from infinite mishappes, and calamities, which we see doe daily happen to other men. Thou seest how one is troubled with the palsie, an other is blinde, an other lame, an other broken legged, an other sore vexed with the stone, and others with the strangurie, gowte, fistula, or with other like terrible diseases, and miseries. For to saie the verie trueth, this worlde is nothinge els but a mayne sea of infinite

troubles,

troubles, calamities, and miseries, and scarce thou canst finde anie one howse in all this lande of Egipte free from sighinge, mourninge, greife, and sorowe. And nowe tell me (praye thee) who hath graunted vnto thee this bulle and patente of exemption, to be quitte and free from these so greiuous calamities, and miseries? Who hath geuen thee so great a priuiledge, that among such a number of diseased and wounded persons, thou shouldest be free, and sounde: and amonge such a number that do dailie falle, thou shouldest yet stande vprighte vpon thy feete? Arte not thou a man as all others? a sinner as all others? and the sonne of Adam as all others? If then all these euills and miseries doe come either on the behalfe of nature, or els offynne, & the verie same causes are in thee, how is it, that the verie same effectes are not also in thee? Who hath suspended the effectes from their causes? Who hath staid the streames of the waters, that thou shouldest not perishe with others in this common floude, but onely the verie grace of God? Wherefore if thou cast this accompte aright, thou shalt finde that all the miseries of this world are benefites vnto thee, and that for euerie one of them in particular thou owest a speciall thankfulness and loue vnto almightie God. So that by the benefite before alledged thou mayste perceiue, that all the good thinges in the worlde are benefites bestowed vpon thee,

*All the
miseries of
this world
are bene-
fits vnto
vs.*

(forſomuch as they all do ſerue for thy conſeruation:) and now alſo by this mayſt thou vnderſtande, that all the miſeries and euilles in the worlde are likewise benefites vnto thee, in that our Lorde hath deliuered thee from them all.

OF THE BENEFITE of Redemption.

§. III.

LET vs come nowe vnto the ineſtimable benefite of our redemption: although it ſhoulde be much better to adore this miſterie with an holie ſylence, than to ſpeake of it in ſuch groſſe and baſe wiſe as we muſt doe with our mortall tongue. Thou diddeſt loſe throwghe ſinne that fiſt innocencie and grace wherein thou waſt created, and almighty God might with good equitie and iuſtice haue leſte thee in that miſerable ſtate, (as he leſt the deuill) and non ſhoulde haue bene able to haue reproued him therefore. And yet he woulde not ſo do, but rather contrariwiſe chaunginge his anger into mercie, it pleaſed him of his infinite goodnes to beſtow greateſt benefites at that time, when he was moſt prouoked to wrath with greateſt offences. And whereas

he

he might haue repayed this loſſe of innocence by ſending ſome Angel, or Archangel, or by ſome other meanes, he woulde not ſo do, but vouchſaffed to come euen him ſelfe in perſon. And whereas he might haue come with great maieltie, & glorie, he abaſed him ſelfe ſo farre, as to come in great humilitie, & pouertie. And this he did, to cauſe thee to be the more in loue with him by reaſon of this benefite: & to make thee the more beholding vnto him by this exāple: & to make thy redemption the more aboundāt by reaſon of the great treaſure, that he beſtowed vpon it: & to geue thee more clearlie to vnderſtande how much good will he beareth vnto thee, that thou ſhouldeſt beare towardes him the like agayne: & to ſhew plainlie vnto thee how much intereſt thou haſt in him, that thou ſhouldeſt repoſe thy whole truſt and aſſiſſance in him. This is that benefite, which the Prophet Eſaie extolleth (and that for great good cauſe) in theſe wordes: which after the trāſlation of the Septuagintes ſound thus, *In all the tribulations of men he neuer fainteth, neither was he euer wearie in ſuffering for them.* Neither woulde he ſende anie Embaſſadour or Angel to redeeme them, but vouchſaffed of his great mercie to come him ſelfe in perſon to redeeme them, and to carie them vpon his ſhoulders all the daies of this worlde, notwithstandinge that they did euill acknowledge this benefite, but did greiue & prouoke the holie Ghoſt to anger.

Summa S. Thoma. 3. quaſt. 1. articl. 2. & 3. & quaſt. 46. articl. 1. & 2. Our Lorde came him ſelfe in perſon to redeeme vs, and that in great humilitie & pouertie.

Eſa. 43.

Eph. 4.

MEDITATION FOR

Howe
greatli we
are bounde
to our
Lorde for
the maner
of our re-
demption.

Our Sa-
uiours bo-
die.

His head.

His face.
1. Pet. 1. 12.

His visage

And if thou be so much bounde to our Lorde for that he vouchsafed to come him selfe in person to reedeeme thee, how much more art thou bounde vnto him for the maner of thy redemption, which was by sufferinge so great paines, and tormentes? It were certainly a great benefite, if a kinge woulde pardon a theife that had deserued to be whipped: But if the kinge woulde vouchsafe him selfe to receaue the last hees vpon his owne shoulders for him, this were without comparison a farre greater benefite. Consider therefore how manie benefites are comprehended in this benefite of thy redemption. Lift vp thyne eies vnto that holie roode, and consider all the woundes, and paines, that the Lorde of maiestie suffereth there for thy sake. For euerie one of them is a benefite of it selfe, yea, and a singular great benefite. Beholde that most innocent bodie of thy sweite Sauour and redeemer, all of a gore bloude, with so many woundes and bruses on all partes of him, and the bloude gussing out on euerie side. Behold that most sacred head fallinge downe for verie faintnes, & hanginge vpon his shoulders. Beholde that diuine face (which the Angels are desirous to beholde) howe disfigured it is, and ouerflowed with streames of bloude, in some partes freshe, and redde coloured, in other partes very fowle, and blacke. Beholde that most bewtifull visage of all creatures, and that countenance

that

SONDAIE NIGHTE.

Jeremie.
Thren. 3.

His mou-
the.
His lippes.

His fore-
head.
His eies.

His eares.

His armes

His handes

His

that delighted the eies of al such as behelde it, how it hath now lost al the flower of his former bewtie. Beholde that holie Nazareth, more pure than snowe, more white than milke, better coloured than olde Iuerie, how he is now become blacker than coles, and so much disfigured, and beraied, that scarce-ly his owne friendes are able to knowe him. Beholde that holie mouthe, how wanne & deadly it looketh. Beholde his lippes, how blacke and blewe they seeme: Beholde how they moue, desiringe pardon, and mercie, euen for those that are his verie tormen-ours.

Finally, wheresoeuer thou beholdest him, thou shalt finde that there is no one parte of him free from paine, and greife, but that he is couered al ouer with lasses, & woundes, euen from the toppe of his head to the soles of his feete. That goodly cleare forehead, & those eies more bewtifull than the Sonne, are now dimmed and darkened with the bloude and presence of deathe. Those eares that are wonte to heare the songes of hea-uen, do now heare the horrible blasphemies of synners. Those armes so well fashioned and so large that they embrace al the power of the worlde, are now disioynted, and stretched out vpon the crosse. Those handes that created the heauens, and were neuer iniuri-ous to anie man, are now nayled and clenched fast with harde & sharpe nayles. Those blessed feete that neuer walked in the waies

Our Sau-
ours nar-
rowe and
harde bed-
de vpon
the crosse,
without
anie pillo-
we, or o-
ther thing
wherevnto
to rest his
head.

His syde.

MEDITATION FOR

of sinners, are now deadly wounded, & pear-
ced through. But aboue all this, beholde
the bedde where he lyeth, and where-
vpon that heavenly bridegrome sleepeth at
noone daie, how narrowe and hard it is,
and how he hath nothinge wherevpon to
rest his head. O pretious head of my
sweete sauour! what meaneth this, that
I see thee thus afflicted and tormented for
my sake? O blessed bodie, conceaued by the
holie Ghost! how is it, that I see thee thus
wounded and euil entreated for my sake? O
sweete and louinge syde! what meaneth this
great wounde and open cleft in thee? What
meaneth this so great abundance of bloude?
Alas wretche that I am, what a pitiefull
sight is this, to see thee thus furiously pear-
ced with a speare for my sake? O rigorous
crosse, be not now I beseeche thee so stiffe,
but molifie a litle thy hardnes, bowe downe
vnto me these highe braunches, let downe
to me this most pretious fruite, that I maie
tast thereof. O cruel nayles, leaue I praie
you those innocent handes and feete of
my innocent Sauour, and come and en-
ter into my harte, and pearce it through:
for it is I that haue sinned, and not he. O
good Iesus, what hast thou to doe with so
manie cruel tormentes? What hast thou to
doe with death? With sharpe nayles? and
with the crosse? Vndowbreddie the Prophet
had good reason to saie: That his workes
shalbe verie straunge, and farre vnlike him
selfe.

Ca. 28. 21.

SONDAIE NIGHTE.

selfe. What is more straunge and more con-
trarie to lyfe, than deathe? What is more dis-
agreeable to glorie, than paine? What is fur-
ther of from the nature of most perfect ho-
lines, and innocencie, than the image and
shape of a synner? This title and shape o
Lorde, is certaynlie very straunge for thee.
O true Iacob, that with wearinge the gar-
mentes of others, and with disguisinge thy
selfe in a straunge habite, hast purchased
for vs the blessinge of our heauenlie father!
For by taking vpon thee the image of a sin-
ner, thou hast purchased for vs victorie a-
gainst sinne. O goodnes inspekeable! O mer-
cie vnderferued! O loue exceidinge al vnder-
standing! O charitie incomprehensible! Tell
me (O most mercifull Lorde) what sawest
thou in vs? What seruice haue we done vn-
to thee? With what workes haue we boude
thee to suffer such greiuous and cruell tor-
mentes for our sakes? O wonderful bountie-
fulnes, that without anie merite of our part,
and without anie necessitie of thyne owne
parte, wouldest vouchesafe only of thy mere
grace, and mercie, to purchase our redemp-
tion after this sorte! The benignitie and cle-
mencie of our sauour (saierh the Apostle) hath
appeared, not in respecte of the workes of iustice
that we haue done, but according to his great mer-
cie he hath saued vs. O how woderful desirous
was our most gracious Lord, that we shoul-
de vnderstande his mercie, when by the Pro-
phet Esaie he spake those so notable wordes:

Gen. 26.

Tit. 3. 4.

MEDITATION FOR

Thou hast not called vpon me o Iacob, and thou o Israel hast not trauayled in my service. Thou hast not offered vnto me thy rammes in a whole burnt sacrifice, neither hast thou glorified me with thy sacrifices, &c. And yet for al this, thou hast made me to serue in thy synnes, and hast put me to paines with thyne iniquitie. It is I, It is I, that doe pardon thy synnes for mine owne sake, and that will neuer be mindefull of them. Put me in minde, and let vs enter into iudgemente: and shewe if thou haue any thinge wherewith to iustifie thy selfe.

Wherefore o most merciful and sweete Lorde, what thinge is there in me, wherewith I maie recompence thee for this so great benefite? If I shoulde liue al the daies of the children of Adam, and all the daies and yeares of the worlde, If I were able to sustein al the trauels and paines of all the men that either be, hath bene, or shal be, all this were as nothinge to recompence the verie least greife and paine that thou hast suffered for me. Consideringe therefore that I can by no meanes possible dischardge this inestimable great det, let me paie thee o my almightie God if it be thy blessed wil with the continual remembrance of the same. I beseech thee o Lorde euen by the bowels of thy infinite charitie, that thou wilt wounde my harte with thy woundes, and make my soule dröcke with thy most pretious blood, in such sorte that whither so euer I shall turne my selfe, I maie alwaies see thee crucified, & where soeuer I shall cast mine eyes,

all

SONDAIE NIGHTE.

al thinges maie seeme vnto me to shyn with thy pretious bloude. Let this be all my consolation to be alwaies crucified with thee: & let this be al my affliction to thinke vpon anie other thinge besides thee. Consider o my almightie God the great price wherewith thou hast bowght me, and suffer not so pretious a treasure to be shed in vaine for me. And graunte me o most merciful Lorde, that I be not as a childe that is borne before his time, whom his mother bringeth forth with exceidinge great trauell, and paine, and yet he enioyeth not the commoditie and fruit of lyfe.

OF THE FOVRTHE BENEFITE: TO WITT, OF
Vocation.

§. IIII.



AFTER this, thinke vpon the benefite of Vocation or calling of almightie God, without which al the other benefites tēde to the greater damnation of a man. But here it is to be noted, that there be two kindes of callinges of almightie God: one vnto faith, by meane of the Sacrament of Baptisme: & an other vnto grace, after that a man hath

Two callinges of God: one vnto faith, and an other vnto grace.

BB b

*The first
callinge is
by Baptis-
me.*

lost the first innocencie which he had by baptisme.

Consider now what a great benefite the first callinge of thee was by meanes of the Sacrament of holie Baptisme, whereby thou wast clenfed from original sinne, deliuered from the power of the deucl, made the sonne of almightie God, and an inheritour of his kingedome. There he toke thy sowe to be his spowse, and adorned it with such ornamentes, as were conuenient for such a state: to witt, with grace, and with the vertues, and giftes of the holie Ghost, and also with other iewells, and giftes, that are farr more precious than those that were geuen to Rebecca, when she was taken to be the spowse of Isaac. Now what hast thou done, whereby to deserue so great a benefite as this is? How many thousandes not onely of men, but also of nations and whole countreys are there, that by the iust iudgement of almightie God doe not obtaine this inestimable great benefite? What had become of thee, if thou haddest bene borne amonge those infidels, and wanted this knowledge of the true liuinge God, and worshipped stockes, and stones for God, as the infidels doe? How much art thou bounde to almightie God, that amonge such an infinite number of lost and damned sowles, he pleased him that thou shouldest be one of the number of them that shoulde be saued, yea & be borne in the lappe of the Catholike

Churche

*The secon-
de calling.*

Churche, and be nourished there with the milke of the Apostles, and with the pretious bloude of our sweere Sauour Iesus Christ.

Now if after the grace of this firste callinge thou hast through thyne owne default and synful lyfe lost the innocencie which thou receiuedst in the Sacramente of Baptisme, in case it hath pleased our Lorde al that notwithstandinge to call thee the seconde time, yea and verie manie and often times, how much art thou then bound vnto him for this so passinge great benefite? How manie benefites are conteyned in this benefite? One benefite it was to expecte and tarrie for thy conuersion so longe time, to geue thee space to doe penance, and to suffer thee so longe to continewe in that state of synne, and wickednes, and not to cutte downe the vnfruitful and vnprofitable tree, that occupied such a rowme in the earth and receiued the influencies of heauen altogether in vaine. An other benefite it was to suffer thee to committe so many and so heynous enormous synnes, and not to cast thee downe therefore into the most horrible bothomles pitt of hell fier, where perhappes manie others are now there tormented euen for lesse offences than thyne. An other benefite it was to sende thee so many good inspirations, & holie purposes, euen in the midst of thy verie synnes, and wicked life, & to persiste in callinge thee so longe a time, whereas thou in the meane

I.

II.

III.

IIII.

Ioh. 11.

V.

Luc. 15.

season diddest nothinge els but offende him verie greiuouslye that called thee. An other benefite it was also to bring thy greatesubbornes and longe obstinate resistance at the lengthe to an ende, and to calle thee with such a mightie and lowde voice, that there by thou mightest rise from death to lyfe, & come forth as it were an other Lazarus out of the darcke and obscure graue of thy wicked and synneful lyfe, & not with thy handes and feete bownde, but losed and set at free libertie out of the stinckinge prison and thraldome of the enemye of mankind. But aboue al this, what a benefite was it, to graunt thee then not onelic pardon for thy synnes past, but also grace from that time forwardes not to retourne vnto them againe: geuing thee moreouer al such other ornamentes as were geuen to the penitente prodigal sonne, when he was receiued into grace & fauour againe: by meanes of which ornamentes and graces thou mightest liue as the childe of God, and contemne and laugh at the malice of the deuil, & triumphe ouer the worlde, and take a sweete taste of the thinges appertaininge vnto almighty God, which before seemed verie vnfauourie vnto thee, and withal conceiue a certaine lothsomnes and mislikinge of the thinges of the worlde, which before seemed verie lauerie and delightfull vnto thee.

But now besides this, what if thou dost consider vnto how manie others almighty

God

God hath denied this benefite, which he hath so freely graunted vnto thee. And where as thou beinge a sinner as wel as they, and as vnworthie of this callinge as they, yet it hath pleased almighty God to suffer them to continewe in their wicked state, and to calle thee vnto the state of saluation, and grace? With what thanks, and with what seruices art thou able to recompence him for this inestimable special fauour, & grace? What an exceeding ioye wil it be vnto thee, when by the vertue of this vocation thou shalt see thy selfe to haue the fruition of almighty God for euer & euer in the kingdom of heauen, and shalt see other of thy companions and acquaintance for want of the like grace of God to remaine euerlastinglye tormented in the horrible raginge fier of hel? O good Lorde, what a number of thinges are there included in this grace to be wel weighed, & earnestlie considered vpon! Tel me I praie thee, when the blessed theise (who with one worde purchased lyfe euerlastinge) seeth him selfe in that so great glorie which he now possesseth in the kingdom of heauen, and seeth his companion also in those great horrible tormentes of hel fier, & calleth to minde withal, that he himselfe was a theise also as wel as the other, & suffered for his robberies as the other did, and that a litle before he blasphemed our Sauour Iesus Christ in like maner as his companion did, and that yet for all this it

Luc. 23.

pleased almightie God to caste his merciful eies vpon him, and to geue him so great a light, leauing the other theife in his darkenes, now in consideringe hereupon, what thanckes thinkest thou doth he render to almightie God for this speciall grace? How wonderfullie doth he reioyce at so great a benefite? How doth he meruaile at so great a iudgement? With what a passinge great loue doth he loue him, that would vouchsafe to preuent him with such a singular & wonderful grace? Now if this seeme to great a benefite vnto thee, remember thy selfe, that our sauour Christ hath bestowed the like inestimable benefite vpon thee, when the same louinge Lorde vouchsafed to cast his merciful eies so speciallie vpon thee, & did not with the like maner of calling calle thy neighbour, companion, or freinde, who per- aduenture had lesse offended his diuine maiestie than thou. Consider then how much thou art bownde to our Lorde for this his great benefite, and what a great occasion is here offered vnto thee, to desire euen to suffer deathe for the loue of him.

Besides al this, consider how costlie and chargeable this benefite of our redemption was to our Sauour Christ, which was so freely geuen vnto thee. Vnto thee it was geuen franckly, and of mere grace, and it cost him eue his owne most precious bloude, & lyfe also: for it is manifest that without the same our sinnes could not be pardoned, nor

our

our woundes cured. It is saide of the Pellican that she bringeth forth her yonge-ones dead, and seinge them in that case, she strykerh her selfe vpon the breast with her beake, vntil she cause bludde to issue out, & therewith she batheth her yonge-ones, & so they receiue heate, and lyfe. Now if thou wilt vnderstande how great this benefite is, make accompte with thy selfe, that when thou wast dead in synne, that most louinge and merciful Pellican (our Sauour Christ) moued with most tender pietie and compassion stroke his sacred breast with a speare, and washed the deadly woundes of thy fowle with the precious bludde of his woundes, and so with his owne death he gaue thee lyfe, and with his owne woundes healed thy woundes. Be not thou therefore vnthankful vnto him for this so great and costlie benefite, but as our Lorde admonisheth thee, be mindeful of the daie in which thou camest out of Egypt. This daie was the daie of thy Pasleouer: this was the daie of thy Resurrection: forsomuch as vpon this daie thou hast passed throughe the redde sea of the bludde of Christ vnto the lande of promise, and vpon this daie thou hast risen againe from death to lyfe.

Bbb 4

*Summa S.
Thom. 3. q.
1. arti. 2. &
3. & qua.
46 artic.
1. & 2.*

Exod. 13.

MEDITATION FOR
OF THE PARTICVLAR
 BENEFITES THAT ALMIGHTIE
 God bestoweth vpon vs.

§. V.



THESE benefites afore-
 iede are general. Other be-
 nefites there are more parti-
 cular, that be geue to parti-
 cular persons, the which be-
 nefites none other knoweth
 but onely he that hath receyued them. In
 this accompte are reckened manie kindes of
 benefites, either of fortune, or of nature, or
 of grace, which almightie God hath geuen
 to each one in particuler: and also diuers &
 fundrie miseries, & daungers, both of bodie,
 and soule, from which he of his mere mer-
 cie hath deliuered vs. For which particuler
 benefites we are as wel bounde to geue him
 thanks, as for the former general benefites:
 for so much as they are more certaine signes
 and tokens of the speciall & particular loue,
 and prouidence, that our Lorde beareth to-
 wardes vs. Such benefites as these are can
 not be written in bookes, but euerie one
 ought to write them in his harte, and so to
 ioyne them with the other general benefites,
 and to geue most humble thanks vnto our
 Lorde for them.

Apoc. 22.

There be also other benefites yet more

secrete

secrete and hidden than these, which are
 vnknewen euen to the verie partie himselfe
 that hath receaued them. These are certayne
 priuie daungers, and secrete snares, which
 our Lorde is wont to preuent and disapoynt
 by his diuine prouidence, for that he vnder-
 standeth what great damage and preiudice
 they might doe vnto vs, in case he shoulde
 not cutte them of, and disapoynte their
 cowerse. What man is able to tell from how
 manie temptations almightie God hath
 preserved him? and from how manie occa-
 sions of sinnes he hath deliuered him? and
 how often times he hath stopped the pas-
 sages, and remoued away the deceytfull
 snares of the deuill our enemy, that we
 shoulde not falle into them. The deuill him-
 selfe saith of the holie man Iob: That al-
 mighty God had enuironed him on euerie
 side, that nothing might doe him hurte.
 And euen so is our Lorde wonte to kepe,
 and preserve such as be his, (as it were a
 glasse preserved in his case,) that nothing
 maye hurt them.

It maie also be that a man hath receiued
 of almightie God some secrete giftes, al-
 though he him selfe knoweth not of them:
 as also a man maie, and is wont to haue ma-
 nie secrete synnes, which he him selfe that
 committeth them knoweth not. Wherefore
 like as for these kinde of sinnes we ought
 daile to praie with the Prophet, and saie:
Ab occultis meis munda me Domine. Deliuere me o

C C C

*Our Lorde
 preserveth
 vs manie
 times from
 secrete
 daungers,
 and snares,
 that would
 otherwise
 falle vpon
 vs.*

Iob. 1. 10.

*A man may
 haue ma-
 nie secrete
 giftes, and
 many se-
 crete syn-
 nes, that
 he knoweth
 not.*

Psal. 141.

Lord from my secretes synnes: Euen so ought we also euerie daie to yeelde him most humble and hartie thanks for these kinde of benefites, that by this meane no synne maie remaine without penance, nor benefite without rendring of thanks for the same.

*The ende of the other seuen Meditations
for the seuen daies of the
weeke at nighte.*



OF FIVE PARTES
THAT MAYE BE
EXERCISED IN
Prayer.

CAP. IIIL.

THESSE be the meditations (good Christian reader) wherein thou mayst exercise thy selfe in the seuen daies of the weke, and in so doinge thou shalt not wante matter whereupon to meditate. But here it is to be noted, that (as we haue already saide) there be two thinges that maie goe before meditation, and other two that maie followe after it. So that in al there be fise partes which maie concur in this exercise: to witt, preparation: readinge: meditation: thankes-giuinge: and petition.

For before we enter into praier it is verie requisite that we doe first prepare our harte vnto this holie exercise: followinge therein

*The five
partes of
prayer.*

I.
Preparation.