The BOOKE of the happines of a religious state. -- [S.l.] : [S.n.], [s.a.]

[10], 613 [i.e. 611], [4] p., []1, a4, A-Z4, 2a-2d4, 2A-2Z4, 3A-3Z4, 4A-4F4 ; 4°

Apostillas marginales. -- Error de pág., de p. 312 pasa a 315. -- Fecha probable de imp. S. XVII

1. Vida cristiana 2. Kristau-bizitza

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R-5389

THE FIRST BOOKE,

OF THE HAPPINES OF A RELIGIOVS STATE.

THE PREFACE.

Of the beautie of a Religious State; and how it hath been euer oppoſed by the Diuel.

IF the nature of man had alwaies remained vpright and intire, as it was creat by God, the courſe towards immortal life and glorie, for which he was created, would haue been vnto him both eaſie and pleaſant, without anie other help then the grace of God, which in his firſt beginning he ſhould haue receiued, and al his life-time after abundantly encreaſed through his owne deſerts. But now ſince it hath been ſo much enfeebled, ſtayned, and broken, firſt, by Original ſinne (which from one hath paſſed through al mankinde) then by the ſinnes, which are proper to euerie man; and ſeing moreouer he is in a perpetual combat and ſtrife with the world, in which he liues, and with the Princes and powers of this darknes, by whom he is moſt fiercely and maliciouſly oppoſed; nothing can be more hard vnto him or more laborious, then to raiſe his lumpish thoughts and decayed nature to that happie State, for which he was ordained; nothing more eaſie and readie then to fayle thereof, and to runne headlong downe to euerlaſting ruine both of bodie and ſoule.

The Creatour therefore and gouernour of mankinde, whoſe nature is goodneſſe, whoſe work is mercie (as S. Leo ſpeaketh) hath euer been carefull, and doth neuer ceaſe to ſupport and fortifie this weakenes of ours, with moſt conuenient remedies: and makes offer vnto al of his Diuine help, whereby they may ſecurely, if they wil, and alſo with facilitie, compaſſe the great work of their ſoule's ſaluation. Out of which heauenlie fountaine do iſſue al ſpiritual counſels, aduiſes, and reaſons, and al that varietie of holie Inuentions, as I may tearme thē, which we ſee in the Catholick Church propoſed by our ſweet Lord and Sauiour IESVS; partly, to vphold man, that he fal not, being of himſelf ſo weake & prone to euil; partly, to raiſe him, if he haue chanced to fal; & partly againe to ſtrengthen and confirme him in the continual purſuite of al Chriſtian dutie and perfection.

Among which Diuine Inuentions and helps, a Religious State is worthily to be reckoned; yea it is the chiefeſt and the greateſt of them al: and the benefit and ſpiritual commodities thereof are euerie way ſo rare and excellent, that, without al doubt, among al the heauenlie addreſſes, and remedies, and rules of wel-liuing, which before I mentioned, nothing can be, I doe not ſay of greater, but of equal eſteeme and value with this. For it doth not direct vs in one thing alone, at one time, or in one buſines and exerciſe, as do moſt of other ſpiritual graces and guifts; but it ſtretcheth itſelf to our whole life, and embraceth euerie part and parcel thereof, leading vs by the hand, to the performance of al perfe-

with that safenes and dexteritie, as that remouing al lets and impediments, it
leth as much help, succour, and defence, as can be wished; and doth in verie deed bring
o passe, that, freed from the hand of our enemies, we serue him, Who is our onlie
ord and God, in sanctitie and iustice in his sight, al the dayes of our life.

therefore, it taketh away and keepeth from vs al occasions and allurements of sinne,
gs vs out of the world, and wordlie traffick, into a most calme and quiet hauen, or
into a strong fortifyed Castle, where we may easily withstand the Diuel, and pur-
e a glorious conquest ouer him, though to his strength, no power vpon earth can be com-
. And hauing layd this ground, and cleared the earth of our soules, of the thornes and
s which choake the corne, it soweth in them the good seed of al spiritual vertues;
h, though manie may and ought to be practised by al Christians, yet we find by ex-
nce, that few men endeauour in them. But the verie trade of life, which the Reli-
do professe, doth put them in a way of gayning them in a more assured, more plenti-
and more permanent manner. For it ministreth frequent and daylie occasion of the exer-
cyse of al vertue; and, by continual practise, it engrafteth by little and little good habits
in the mind, and good customes in our outward actions; In brief, it teacheth no other
thing, then to bend al our care, thoughts, and desires, towards the seruice and
feare of God, and the obtayning of a most inward coniunction with that infinit Sanc-
titie.

But besides the vertues, which as I sayd, may be practised by al, there be others, so
proper to a Religious State, that they are not to be found in anie other Course; such is the
Pouertie and absolute Renunciation of al things, which they professe; their Obedience
in and entire denyal of their owne wils; their despising and setting at naught al things
us which are in this world, and of which the world doth vsually vant itself and glorie;
which Religion doth so absolutly, and of set purpose, neglect and tread vnder foot, that
among other most excellent dispositions of the mind, it doth worke and settle this contempt
of al inferiour things most, of al in them; then which there can not be a more profitable or more
noble resolution.

ene- And ouer and aboue the benefit, which euerie one by himself and by his privat endea-
fer- uour doth reap, there is yet a farre greater, arising out of that bond and connexion,
od. which passeth more straightly betwixt so manie soules liuing together, by which the
mpa- whole multitude of them is so inwardly linked and knit al vnder one, that of manie mem-
with bers they become one bodie. For among those that serue God one by one, though
es, they serue him with al care and diligence, euerie one is put to trie his strength by him-
selfe, and to wrastle against his enemies with his owne single forces: But in a Re-
ligious companie, the abilitie of one, is so mingled and tempered with the abilitie of al
the rest, and the good deeds of al, are so common to euerie one and particular, that
they are rich and enabled, not onely by their owne, but with each others wealth and sub-
stance; and certainly innumerable commodities do accrue vnto euerie one, from this common
link and affinitie.

Now, in the framing of al natural things, we see, that God hath had particular re-
gard, to couple beautie and sightlines with vsefull commoditie, as in Man, the frame
of whose bodie, and the fashion of euerie part thereof, is not onely fitted for conuenient
motion and seruice, but made comelie and goodlie to see to; which is easily discouered by the
il fauourdnesse, which appeareth, if anie one of his members be wrested aside, or
set awry. Seing therefore the Al-creating Wisedome hath so carefully obserued this course
in the inferiour ranke of natural things; much more ought we to think, that in Religious

Institutes

Institutes, which are of a more eminent degree and straine, he hath so handled the matter, that besides the exceeding profit and commoditie, which they bring, they should haue a certaine beautie and seemelines, wonderfully graceful without al doubt, in the eyes of God and his Angels.

For as, when we behold a Brooch or Coronet, or other curious workemanship, enchased of manie gemmes and precious stones, we admire not alone the beautie, which euerie gemme doth bring seuerally by itself, but this verie beautie and lustre greatly augmented and encreased by the multitude of them, and the comelie order, in which they are ranked. And as the sound of voices and Instruments doth take a man very much, though they be sole and single, yet a Consort of Musick, tempered with choice variete of diuerse Notes together, doth much more fil and please the eare, the Bases and Trebles, with proportionable disproportion, agreeing and answering one to the other, so euerie particular vertue seuerally by itself, and standing as it were alone, cannot choose but be pleasing and louelie, yet in Religion; by reason that there be manie, in whom the elegancie of this one vertue is very apparent, the selfsame must needs be in euerie man's eye much more beautiful and glorious.

We may therefore with ful consent of euerie bodie, deseruedly apply to this State and forme of life, the saying of the Queene of Saba, *who being caled out of her owne countrie with the noise and fame, that rang of the greatnesse of King* Salomon, *hauing now heard with her owne eares the wisedome of his answers, and beheld neere-hand the abundance of his wealth, his stately buildings, his sumptuous boordes and table-seruices, the mansions of his seruants, the order of his attendance, their gorgeous attire, and comelie rayments; finally, the incredible plentie of his Victimes and Sacrifices, she is sayd, to haue stood amazed, and to haue cryed out:* Blessed are the men, and blessed are thy seruants, who heer stand in thy sight, and heare thy wisedome. *For who is more truly* King Salomon, *then our Sauiour Christ, a king not onely* peaceable, *but* appeasing the things, which are in heauen, and which are on earth?

This Salomon *therefore, in whom be* al the treasures of the wisedome and knowledge of God, *and who is King and Lord ouer al, though he haue other subiects, yet they most of al, and most truly are to be stiled his seruants, who dwel in his house, and alwaies waite vpon his person, such are the Companies of Religious people, who for this reason alone haue forsaken their parents, their brethren, their friends, and kinsfolkes, and their dwelling-houses, to remoue and transplant themselues into his household and retinue. And they be also distributed into diuers orders, different in their manner of life, and in their habit, and cloathing: Heer they tast of princelie dainties and delicacies of spiritual comforts, I say, and inward ioy, and that peace and* securitie of Conscience, *which* is a continual banket, *Heer is great plentie of Sacrifices and whole offerings, because euerie Religious man is a Sacrifice, yea euerie worke they do, may be called a Sacrifice, because it is entirely offered to God, and wholy deuoted to his seruice. Finally, their peculiar office and onlie busines, is to hearken to the wisedome of this diuine* Salomon, *that is, of their Lord God, neither in verie deed do they anie other thing, but abide perpetually in that heauenlie light, praying and meditating, and picking out of good bookes such wholesome instructions, as may better their soules, and manie other wayes deriuing vnto themselues, light, strength, grace, and all good things from him, who is the fountaine of goodnes.* Blessed therefore are they also, who stand heer in the sight *of their Lord God, and much more that pie, then the seruants of that* Salomon *of old, in regard they serue a Maister, who is infinitly more worthie, more noble, more able, and readie to do wel for them.*

ow, in my opinion, the excellencie of a Religious life, is not only to be valued by the fa-
, which it hath with God, but by reaſo it is extremely hated by the Diuel. If therefore
bſerue things right, we shal finde this courſe ſo violētly oppoſed, and aſſaulted with ſuch
diuiſes and craftie fetches of the ſworne enemie of mankinde, that it is very ap-
ent, that among al the guifts and graces, which haue deſcended vpon Man from aboue,
's moſt of al hath angred him, and abidden the flaming rage of his malice. I ſay nothing of
uate temptations and ſecret battails, which inceſſantly he bids euerie one in particular; I
ke only of that vniuerſal warre, which he hath alwaies moſt fiercely maintayned
ainſt Religion in general. For Monaſtical diſcipline, if we take it at the root, began pre-
ſently vpon the publishing and ſpreading of the Chriſtian Faith, and together with it, to
ſpreade and dilate itſelf, chiefly in that golden Age of Conſtantin, *when out of the ſoli-*
tarie places and waſte deſerts, in which it lay hid for three hundred yeares and vpwards,
it came forth to the view and eye of the world. In which times we may obſerue, that
whomſoeuer the Enemie got to plot or act anie miſchief againſt the whole Church, the ſame
he armed and incenſed moſt of al against this fortreſſe of the Church. And we may beholde
them diuided into two ranks. For ſome haue gone about by might and authoritie, and by
open warre to oppreſſe the followers of a Religious life; Others, who had not that power, haue
ſtriuen by wiles and deceipts, by ſlaunders and reproachful ſpeaches, and by ſowing Here-
tical doctrine, to vndermine them. For firſt of al Iulian *the Renegate (the more bitter and*
heauier enemie vnto vs, in regard he was priuie to al things which belong to Chriſtian pro-
feſſion) did not with fire and ſword afflict the Religious; for, as Gregorie Nazianzen *ſpea-*
keth of him, he did enuie the Chriſtians this glorie of Martyrdome: *But whatſoeuer he*
could inuent, without ſhedding of bloud, that might moleſt, or diſgrace, or quite roote them
out, to that he bent al the ſtrength of his wit, which, as men report of him, was not meane.
Which thing is ſet forth by *S.* Gregorie Nazianzen *in his Oration to the ſame Apoſtate,*
in concluſion wherof, making himſelf an humble ſuppliant in behalf of al Religious Compa-
nies, he preſenteth vnto him the whole multitude of Philoſophers (*as he tearmeth*
them) who are wholy free and exempt from al earthlie band and tye; who to their
owne vſe, haue their owne bodies only, and them not wholy and intirely to them-
ſelues; who owe Ceſar nothing, but al to God, their Hymnes, prayers, watchings,
and teares; with theſe men, *ſayth he*, if thou wilt deale more mildly, and vſe them
like themſelues, *that is*, as the ſeruants of God, the Diſciples of Chriſt, the Contem-
plers of heauenlie things, the firſt frūits of our Sauiour's flock, the Pillars and
Crownes of Faith, pretious Margarites, the prime Materials of that Temple, whoſe
foundation and corner-ſtone is Chriſt, thou ſhalt do wel, for thy ſelf, and for them
and vs.

The furie and rage of Valens *was not much leſſe, who is famous for his vngodlie*
behauiour, chiefly againſt S. Baſil. *He by a general Edict or Proclamation commanded that*
al Monks ſhould beare armes, and follow the warre; threatning to lay moſt grieuous punish-
mēts vpon thē that ſhould refuſe it; which was a great vexation to the ſeruants of God, while
thoſe that ſayd Nay, were moſt cruelly handled, others were by force haled to the camp,
manie were withdrawne from giuing themſelues to the ſeruice of God, and thoſe that had
already put themſelues into it, might not enioy the ſpiritual quiet which they profeſſed.

But this cruelties, not long after, coſt both theſe Emperours very deare. For Iulian, *when*
he had raigned about one yeare and a half, was ſtruck with a lance brandisht from hea-
uen, and ſo killed in the midſt of his armie. Valens, *hauing gouerned the ſtearne not much*
longer, his armie being moſt ſhamefully put to rout, and himſelf flying to a farme-houſe not
farre of, was there burnt to death by the enemie.

Con-

Constantinus Copronymus *followed the like straine ; a man cruel and outr*
against the whole Church of God , but chiefly against Religious families , which he
red to bring in disgrace, by most infamous slanders, and reproachful language, and to op
them also with greeuous afflictions and torments , being resolued within himself to
them all downe, not by way of dispute , or cauil , or course of law , but by imprisonm
torture , and death ; and he brought them to great distresse, and Sathan began to glorie in
triumphs , but that God , who neuer forsaketh his owne cause , by particular prouiden
taking him out of this world, gaue the raynes first to his sonne Leo *(who yet was a man m*
of like temper with his father) then to Irene *the Empereſſe , who with exceeding p*
employed herself in the cure of the wounds both of the whole Church , and particularly
Religious Orders, which (as we read in the Annals) were vnder her wing and protectio
greatly aduanced and propagated. Nicephorus *was Emperour after her , who was also a*
great louer and fauourer of Religious people. But this calme was not long ; for soone after,
the Diuel inflamed the rage and furie of Leo *the* Armenian, *who is reported to haue been*
the cruellest bent of all the rest against such as gaue themselues to a Monastical life , and to
haue punished them with famin , exil , imprisonment , and all kinds of euil. But the heauie
hand of God fel vpon him within a short time; for he was slayne by his souldiers at the verie
Altar, to which he had fled for refuge, and so abid in the manner of his death the like barba-
rous crueltie , which in his life-time he had practised, after the example of others.

But these things were done of old , and are taken out of ancient Records; we want not
practises of the same stamp acted before our eyes . For in England when Henry *the Eight*
falling from the Church , made a league with Hel (a league pernicious to himself and his)
the first onset he gaue, was vpon the Charterhouse- Monks , and other Religious families,
afflicting them with diuers kinds of punishments; which bitter proceedings haue not been in
later times alayed, but brought downe to our dayes in more greeuous measure, as appeareth by
the sharp lawes , and fearful Executions , which are dayly heer reported from those parts:
wherin al Religious persons through-out the Realme, but chiefly those of our Societie , are
threatned with imprisonment, torture, and death; and whosoeuer shal entertayne them , or
afford them anie releef , is subiect to the like penalties. And in like manner they haue
shewed rigour , principally ouer Religious people , not in that Iland alone, but where soeuer
the flame of this Heresie hath been spread abroad, in France, in Germanie , and in the Low-
Countryes. For they haue ruined their houses , profaned their Monasteries , entred vpon
their lands and possessions , and taken them away by open violence ; they haue tormented
their bodies consecrated to God, with so manie seueral kinds of punishmẽts and diuers indig-
nities offered , that it is not possible, that man to man should be so cruel , but that the Diuel
did vse them as actours of his hatred and malice. These tooke the sword in hand , and went
about by might and violence, to ouercharge and crush that feeble and vnarmed Companie.
Others vndertooke a warre, in shew more soft and gentle , but perhaps more dangerous , by
argument, disputation , and written books , that nothing might be left vnattempted and es-
sayed. So we read, that manie Ages past, while S. Hierome liued, there sprang vp two, that
were equal in time and in wickednes, Iouinian *at Rome, and* Vigilantius *in France. Both of*
them aymed at the hart-bloud of Religion, the one by teaching that Virginitie *is of no higher*
esteeme then Marriage, *the other by equalizing* Riches *with* voluntarie Pouertie. *In later*
times Wicleff *the Heretick, resembling them both , and without doubt more pernicious then*
they , began to make head , and speake bitterly against diuers positions of the Church , but
chiefly against Religious Orders, tearming them humane inuentions, idle conceits *and*
newly deuised, *& auerring that there is no more perfection in thẽ, then the ordinarie manner*

Thefecond sorte of those that opposed Religious Courses.

Heretics old and newe.

Iouinian
Vigilantius
VVicklef.

liuing of al Christians doth contayne, being equally instituted by Christ our Sauiour; and that they take away the honour due by the commandment of God to Parents, as if children, that entred, were released of their duties. This man's fictions haue been excellently wel confuted by Waldensis, a famous Writer, who hath so quashed his currish malipertnes (for so he stileth it) that nothing can be penned more learnedly or more fully; and among other things he sayth: That he cannot but wonder at him, why, hauing stolen his argument against Religion from the penne of a Manichee, he did not take an answer vnto the same, from the penne of S. Austin. The self same Heretick hath been in a higher Court condemned by two seueral Councels, first by a Councel at Rome, vnder Iohn the two and twentieth, afterwards by the Councel of Constance; in which himself, and the memorie of him, there dead, was accursed, and his bodie commanded to be taken out of the graue, and cast forth from Christian burial. But we shal not need to rippe-vp Heresies of elder times; we haue had experience in our owne dayes, that al broachers of wicked Doctrines haue no part of the Church in greater hatred, nor oppose anie more stifly, then the Religious. Luther among manie other villanous taunts and reproches, doth fondly and foolishly, yet withal most vngratiously, iest at them, as if they Sacrificed their bodies to the Idol Molock. Caluin calleth the Vowes of Religion, the nets of Sathan. Melancton, stileth them foolish obseruations, and Mahometical traditions. Finally, al those that by word or writing haue banded against the Catholick truth, haue had it also chiefly in their head, how they might make Religious people hateful and odious.

But, which is worse, besides Hereticks, the Diuel hath often stirred-vp and incensed, the Domestical of Faith against Religious Orders; endeauouring by the malicious speeches of some such kind of people, to cast most greeuous aspersions and heauie displeasure vpon their manner of liuing, or at least, to lessen the esteeme therof, when he can compasse nothing els; which is so common and ordinarie a thing, that it is booteles to enlarge my self vpon the matter, or confirme it by examples. And it hath been alwayes obserued, that neuer anie Religious Order was raysed by God, against which the Diuel hath not presently armed al his troupes, and bent al his forces and skil, to oppresse it at the first, to slander it, and destroy it. Which wicked endeauour of his, seemeth to haue been clearly prefigured of old, in that King Pharao, who commanded al the male-children of the Iewes should be made away, and the femals reserued to liue; as of whom he should not need to stand in awe: so the Prince of this world taketh no great heed to the weaker sort; but whose vertue and strength he thinks he may in time feele to his cost, these he laboureth early to ouerthrow. S. Benedict and his tender flock found it by experience: for as S. Gregorie relateth) when the Diuel perceaued the number of them which the Saint had gathered together, dayly to encrease, he made vse of the malice of one Florentius a Priest, and attempted by him, first to poison S. Benedict, and afterwards, when this did not succeed, to corrupt the minds of his disciples with a more poisoned and most shameful sight set before their eyes. But he receiued soone after the deserued punishment of his wicked intention: for the house, where he was, falling downe suddainly vpon him, he had much adoe to escape. The like hapned to the two most famous and holie Orders of S. Dominick and S. Francis. For when they began happily to encrease and spread themselues about fiftie yeares after their beginning, the Diuel stirred against them one William a Canon of Mascon, and Gyraldus a Doctour of Paris, both equal in malice and madnes. These two endeauoured what they could, both by word of mouth, in common assemblies, and in the pulpit, and by whole volumes set forth against them in writing, to disgrace and stop the course of their Institute: and sticked not to say, that it was not lawful for them neither to beg, nor to

ICKS

uelho.

estical ders.

xod. 1. 15.

. Dial. 8.

S. Benedict opposed.

And S. Dominick and S. Francis.

ſtudie, nor to preach, nor to heare Confeſsions. By which meanes there was, as we reade, a great commotion rayſed againſt theſe ſeruants of God, not only among the vnlearned ſort of people, but among moſt of the better ſort, whom by opinion of learning, and by their ſutle manner of arguing, they had inueigled. S. Thomas of Aquin, and S. Bonauenture (two glorious lights of theſe Orders) withſtood the malice of the two opponents. S. Bonauenture writ a booke which he intitled, The Apologie of the Poore. S. Thomas ſet forth a little treatiſe againſt the oppoſers of Religion, which he beginneth fitly with theſe words of the Pſalme: Behold thy enemies haue made a noyſe, and thoſe that hate thee, haue lift vp their head: Vpon thy people they haue maliciouſly turned their counſels, & bent their thoughts againſt thy ſeruants: And among other things hath this excellent aduertiſment, that, though God, as he is almightie, could eaſily by himſelf bring al mankind to that euerlaſting happines for which it is created; yet becauſe in this buſines of our ſaluation, which is the greateſt of al other buſineſſes, he wil hold the ſame ſweet courſe and order, with which his Diuine Prouidence is delighted in al other things, he is pleaſed to vſe the endeauours of his Miniſters, who (as S. Paul ſayth) are the Coadiutours, and Aſſiſtants of God. Therefore on the contrarie ſide, it is the proiect of the Prince of darknes, oppoſing himſelf againſt the glorie of God, and the good of ſoules, to hinder theſe ſeruants of God, in ſo great and wholeſome a worke which they haue vndertaken. Which S. Gregorie confirmeth when he ſayth, that the wicked doe chiefly perſecute that part of holie Church which they ſee is likelie to doe good to manie. Thus farre S. Thomas. Who with his learned pen did ſtop the mouth of theſe wicked teachers: but much more God with his iuſt and ſeuere iudgement ouer them. Wiliam by Pope Alexander the Fourth, was called to Rome; where in open Conſiſtorie, being conuict and condēned, at the ſuite of both theſe Religious Families, pleading their owne and God Almightie's cauſe, beſides that his booke was burnt in ſight of the whole aſſemblie, he, as author therof, was depriued of his Eccleſiaſtical functions and Liuing, and banished al the Frēch dominions by Lewis then King. Gyraldus was sharply punished in another kind; for being not long after taken with a palſey, he dyed a leapre, to the end the loathſomnes of his vnwonted death might make knowne to al, the loathſomnes of his offence. And as the Diuel did thus perſecute theſe two Orders in their firſt beginnings, the like he hath done to al the reſt, and laſtly to our Societie, which he hath not only laboured to extinguish by peece-meale, in ſeueral places and countries, rayſing ſeueral combats againſt it, but did at Rome goe about with might and mayne to diſſolue the verie firſt foundation therof, when it was newly layd in the ground, by certain inſtruments which there he had, ſpreading moſt ſlanderous reports of S. Ignatius our Founder, and of his Cōpanions, charging them with Hereſie, & diuers other enormous crimes. But heer alſo God ſhewed himſelf our God, & wrought ſo by his ſingular and moſt euident prouidēce, that S. Ignatius and his followers were acquitted of al ſuſpition, by a ſolemne and honourable Iudgemēt pronounced for them, and the authours of that infamous calumniation were punished in ſeueral kinds. One of thē was banished; an other, pining away with ſicknes, dyed with great demonſtration of ſorrow for this his fact, a third, being himſelf guiltie of Hereſie, & therefore ſtolen away priuatly, his image was burnt in the face of the cittie; the fourth of them likewiſe for Hereſie was committed to the Goale during life; the fift and laſt, fel to be a Lutheran, which of al the reſt was the heanieſt punishment. Thus if we compare togeather theſe and the like euents, we may iuſtly think, that the goodnes of our God hath ſtrouen and as it were proued his ſtregth againſt the malice of the Diuel, in behalf of Religious courſes, God labouring to erect, eſtablish, and honour them; the Diuel oppoſing them continually, and playing vpon them with al ſorts of weapons and deuiſes; yet ſo as the goodnes and powerful hand of God, who without compariſon is more high and

1. Cor. 7.

13. Mor. c. 5.

The oppoſers of Religion puniſhed.

S. Ignatius perſecuted by diuers.

mightie, hath had the Maistrie, and with the shield of his good wil and fauour stil protected and vpheld this his so worthie and great a work.

These are the reasons, why of long time I haue been of opinion, that to declare (according to my abilitie) the Excellence of a Religious State, and the vnspeakable profit therof, would proue an employment wel deseruing my paynes and labour, and be vsefull both to set forth the great wisdome of God in so eminent a work as is a Religious life, and to abate and suppresse the malicious practises of the Diuel against the same. For to this the Prophet Esay doth seeme to exhort vs, saying: Make knowne his inuentions among the people. For certainly, as I sayd in the beginning, among al those things which haue been by God most aduisedly and most louingly inuented and accomplished for the help and saluation of mankind, this manner of liuing vnder Rule and Order, is to be accounted the cheefest. And I haue been the rather induced to vndertake this labour, hoping that besids other commodities arising therof, the Religious themselues wil be benefited, and enabled the better to vnderstand the good which they possesse, and to embrace it the more ardently. For it may happen that their mind may be sometimes as it were glutted with the riches and greatnes of this benefit, or carried aside with attention to other matters, or dulled by daylie handling the same things, so that themselues shal be strangers to their owne happines, and in a manner hunger-starued at a ful board of dainties; as it falleth out with country-people that haue gardens and vineyards in occupation, and dwelling al their life-time in that delicious sweetnes of ayre, with which others are so vehemently taken, that they come from places farre distant, only to haue a view of them, and cannot satisfie themselues with recording the prayses, and feeding themselues as it were with the shaddow and remembrance of the pleasure, these poore snakes contrariewise take no heed ther vnto, as if they had euen lost the sense of their eyes; which fault were the more fowle in a Religious man, because he hath no other busines to attend to but this, or at the least wise he ought to leuel and direct al his other thoughts and employments to this alone; for otherwise he debarres himself not only of the pleasure of the place, as those countrey-clownes I spake of, but of very manie rich commodities, and cannot possibly beare towards God so mindful, so thankful, and so louing a hart as becomes him to do. These men therefore, as I sayd, are al to be rowsed vp so much as we may, and encouraged to hold their eyes open vpon the great benefit, which they haue receaued; that beholding it, they may frame their life and behauiour sutable to the great worck therof.

THE FIRST BOOKE OF THE HAPPINES OF A RELIGIOVS ESTATE.

TESTIMONIES OF THE ANCIENT Fathers in commendation of a Religious Eſtate.

CHAP. I.

TWO things among men are of great force in perſwading, to wit, *Reaſon* and *Auctoritie*. *Reaſon* is grounded in the light which it hath within it ſelf. *Auctoritie*, in the light which is in others: Which is ſo farre from diminishing the credit it ought to carrie; that it doth rather ſtrengthen & aſſure it. For if we thinke it fit to giue aſſent to things which we haue found out by ourſelues, and which ourſelues haue throughly examined; becauſe we dare truſt our owne wit and iudgement; much more truſt and aſſurance ought we to repoſe vpon the cunning & abilities of ſuch men, as we know haue had excellent guifts of vnderſtanding and wiſedome, and whom we acknowledge to be farre aboue vs. Wherefore thoſe verie ſciẽces, which canuaſſe truth vpon the point of Reaſon, do not lay *Auctoritie* aſide, but each of them haue their authours, and ſoueraigne teachers whoſe poſitions they defend with tooth and nayle: which in ſciences which ayme at the direction of manners, ought much rather to be practiſed; becauſe to make a right eſtimate of theſe things, beſids ſharpnes of wit, we muſt haue a will good and vpright, which by vertue alone is engendred; oftimes alſo we ſtand in need of experience in that which we are to reſolue on; wherefore as euery one doth think it reaſonable in whatſoeuer art, or ſcience, he doth meane

The force of Auctoritie.

men, who by their mortification are become immortall; by hanging off from all things are vnited with God; are cold in loue, and burne with the loue of diuine things. These to whom the fountaine of light doth belong, who send forth their rayes, and resplendent beames of lustre; who sing psalmes like Angells; stand Centinell by night; whose soules departe vnto God before their death, their minds being rauished into heauen. These to whom it doth belong to purge others from imperfection, and themselues are dayly purged, because they do not stint themselues, in their progresse towards heauen, and in their endeauours to be like to God. They are disdayned among men and troaden vnder foote, and withall are seated vpon Celestiall thrones. They are naked, and clad with an incorruptible rayment, in the wildernesse of this world, they inioye the honorable Compagnies of the world to come; they despise all pleasures, and haue continuall and vnspeakable pleasure of the mind; their tears are the deluge of synne; the worlds satisfaction, and purging; the stretching forth of their armes doth quench flames of fire.

3. Finally the same Saint in that most excellent Apologie in which he giueth account why he forsooke his Bishoprick & fled into Pontus: placeth this reason in the first ranke, because of the goods without nomber which a Religious life doth cõtayne; stiling it a quiet life, voyde of trouble; a Sanctuary; And nothing (sayth he moreouer) could seeme vnto me more happie then a man, that hath his corporall senses in custodie, and at comaund; who placed beyond the world, and the flesh, and retired within himself, vndertaketh no humane affaire, vnlesse he be driuen there vnto by extreame necessitie, & conuersing with himself, and with God leadeth a life aboue all visible things, his mind filled with diuine representations, and with thoughts allwayes pure, without mixture of terrene and wandering phancies: A Seeing-glasse vnspotted, representing God, and things diuine, & dayly becometh more pure then other; his trafficke is with the Angells, and though he liue heere vpon earth, he abandoneth the earth, and in spirit is seated in heauen. *Idem in Apologia.* And of their quiet.

4. *S. Iohn Chrisostome* doth handle this matter much more at large, in many homelies, in which he doth heap very many great prayses vpon this holy Institution; but especially in three whole books which he wrot against the dispraysers of a Monasticall life: in which bookes he maketh account, that he hath made it a cleere case, not only to a Christian Parent, but (which is more to be admired) to any Heathen: that if his sonne, swimming in worldly wealth, should leaue all, and betake himself to the pouertie, and abiectnes of a Religious life, it were farre better for him. And this he performed, first, by force of considerations drawne from the state of this present life, not medling with the life to come, of which the heathen hath little knowledge; for he proueth that the riches of a Religious man are greater, more reall, and of a higher value: his pleasures more solid, himself better fortified, both for defence of himself, and offence of his enemies, & which is more hard to be beleeued, that in this world he shall be more renowned. This hee confirmeth by exãple of heathen Philosophers: & sheweth that their pouertie, & want was, & is, more famous, after so many ages, then the greate wealth, and preeminence of kings. Then turning his discourse to Christians, and hauing so much the easier task in hand, he doth reason so profoundly of the paynes of Hell, of the ioyes of heauen, of the latter day of iudgement, of the snares and wiles of this world, & of the fowlenes of synne: bringing proofe of all, out of the ghospells, and

S. Iohn Chrysostome contra vituperatores vitæ Monasticæ. That a rich man is the happier by leauing all, and entring into Religion, euen for temporall consideration. Much more, for reasons eternall.

and other bookes of Scripture, that he giueth no man leaue to doubt of the matter.

5. *Climachus* also, an ancient, & substantiall writer, hath many things to like purpose, through his whole booke, but I haue made choyce of this one saying, short in words, but in substance pithy; That a Monasterie is a kind of heauen vpon earth, and therfore with what affection, and reuerence, we beleeue that the Angells wayt vpon God, with the like we must minister vnto our Brethren.

Gradu 4.

Religion a Heauen vpon earth.

6. To which saying *S. Ephrem* hath another not vnlike (who is an auctour of the same age, and antiquitie. *When I consider*, sayth he, this Angelicall kind of liuing, I hold, that all the wholesome orders of the same, are very blessed; for can we reckon him otherwise then blessed, who liueth piously, and vprightly in perpetuall chastitie, in regard of the infinite riches without measure which are reserued for him? wherfore let vs do our endeauour, in this short stint of time, to liue in the feare of God in this monasticall, Religious, Angelicall kind of life, & with all our strength, cleaue to the holy Commaundements of our Lord and Sauiour, with all Humilitie.

S. Ephrem Syr. de virt. & vit.

Religió an Angelicall life.

7. *S. Iohn Damascen* also speaketh passing well, in commendation of Religious people. Assuredly, sayth he, they are happy & thrice happy; for being inflamed with the loue of God, they did set all things at naught for his sake: they powred forth teares, and continued in sorrow night and day to purchasse eternall comfort; they voluntarily debased themselues, that in heauen they might be exalted; they afflicted their bodies with hunger, and thirst, and watching, that they might be interrayned with the delights of Paradise through cleannes of hart; they were Temples of the holy Ghost, that they might stand at the right hand of our Sauiour. They girded their loynes with truth, and had their lampes allwayes in a readynes, attending the coming of the Immortall bridegroome: for hauing their eyes open, they did at all times foresee that terrible daye, and had the contemplation of their future good, & of the punishments of the other life, so ingrauen in a māner, in their very body, that they could neuer be with-drawne from it. They were ready to take paynes heere, that they might inioye eternall glorie; and were free from all turbulent passion, like the Angells of heauen, they are happy, and thrice happy, because they discouered with the cleere, & steddy eye-sight of their mind, the vanitie of all things present, and the variablenes, and vnconstancy of humane prosperitie, and despising it, they layd vp in store for themselues euerlasting riches, and tooke hold of that life which neuer sets, and is neuer cutt off by death.

S. Iohn Damascen. De Barlaam & Ioasaphat

The blessing of a Religious life.

8. *Eusebius Cæsariensis* shall shut vp the ranke of the Greeke fathers, who sayth that in the Church of God there be two manners of life ordayned. The one, doth stepp beyond nature, and the common strayne of the life of man. It looketh not after mariage, nor issue, nor goods, nor abundance of wealth: but is vowed to the sole seruice of God, through excessiue loue of heauenly things, such as haue imbraced this kind of liuing, looke downe vpon the life of the rest of men, as if themselues were seuered from this mortalitie, and carying their body only heare vpon earth, dwell in heauen with their mind and cogitation, as being consecrate to our great God, in lieu of all mankind. And certainly among Christians there is such a kind of perfect life; there is also another kind more slack and which hath more of the man; this is intangled in sober wedlock, and breeding of children, it groaneth vnder the care of howsehold busines, and setteth downe lawes for those that follow a iust warre: it alloweth also of trading in marchandise, and husbandrie, so that

Eusebius Cæsariensis. l. 1. dem. Euang. c. 8.

Two states in the Church of God.

Vnmaried, more perfect.

Maried inferiour degree.

the seruice of God go with it. These men belong to an inferiour degree of pietie.

9. Now to come to the latin Fathers, that which *S. Cyprian* sayth of vowed virgins, is a notable commendation, and is quoted by *S. Augustin* in his treatise of Christian doctrin, for a singular speach. It is sayth he, the floure of the Ecclesiasticall branch; the glorie and grace of spirituall graces; The very lustre of honour and prayse; a worke perfect, and vnattainted; the image of God answearable to his sanctitie; the nobler part of the flock of Christ; the glorious fruitfullnes of our holy mother the Church is filled with ioye, by reason of these virgins, and in them she doth abundantly blossome; And by how much the number is greater of this glorious virginitie, the more is the ioye of the mother increased. *S. Cyp. de habit. Virg. l. 4. c. 21.* Virgins the flower of the church.

10. To him we may adde the worthy testimonie of *S. Ambrose*, who in his booke of widdows, vpon that document of our Sauiour, when you haue done all things that are commanded you say, we are vnprofitable seruants, what we ought to haue done, we haue done, discourseth thus: The virgin sayth not so: he that hath sold all his substance, sayth not so; but doth looke to haue some recompence layd vp for him; as the holy Apostle sayth, behold we haue left all things, and followed thee, what therfore shall we haue; He sayth not, as an vnprofitable seruant I haue done what I ought, but as profitable to his Maister, and as one that hath multiplyed the talents which were committed to his charge, by putting his money to profitt, doth wayte for the reward of his trust, and vertue, knowing he hath done and deserued wel And in one of his Epistles the same S. Ambroise sayth, This is an Angelicall trade of life, to be allwayes praysing God, by frequent prayer they endeauour to appease our Lord, and craue his fauour: they keepe their mind busied with reading, and with continuall labour, and liuing a part from the Compagny of woemen, they are Mothers and Nurses to one another; O what a life is this; in which there is nothing which wee need to feare, and very much which we ought to Imitate! *S. Ambrose l. de virgin.* *Luc 17. 10.* A Religious man a profitable seruāt. *Matth. 19. 27.* *Idem Ep. 25.* Religion an Angelicall life.

11. Saint Hierome hath many things to the same purpose in diuers places of his works, and some whole Epistles of this matter, as to *Heliodorus*, and *Iulian*. In that which he writ to *Marcella* he speaketh thus; Certainly the assemblies of Virgins and Monks, are the flowre of the church, and amidst the Ecclesiasticall ornaments a most pretious gemme. And writing to Demetrias; It is the height of an Apostolicall life, and of perfect vertue, to sel al and deale it among the poore, & thus lightned, and disburdned to flie vp to heauen with Christ; though in this, euery one be left to his free will and choyce. He sayth if thou wilt be perfect; I do not force you, I doe not comand you, I propose vnto you the prize, I shew you the rewards, It is yours to choose whether you will bee crowned in the lists, and combat In the Acts of the Apostles while the blood of our Lord and Sauiour was yet warme, and the faith of the new beleeuers did yet boyle within them, they sold their possessions and layed the price therof at the feete of the Apostles, to shew that money was to be troden vnder foote; & they dealt to euery one as they had need. *S. Hierome. Ep. 1. & 34.* *Ep 17.* *Ep 8.* An Apostolicall life. *Matth. 19. 21.*

12. S. *Augustine* in the booke which he writ of the manners of the Church doth record the like prayses, with an equall current of eloquence, who can choose but admire, sayth he and prayse those, who forsaking and contemning the allurements of this world, dwel al their life time in common togeather, in a most chaste & most holy manner of liuing: occupied in prayer, in reading & in profitable discourses; not swollen with pride; not turbulent with contention; not pale with enuie; but *S. Augustin de moribus Eccles. c. 33.*

„ ſober, modeſt and quiet, they offer vp a life peaceable among themſelues; and moſt
„ earneſtly fixed in God; an offering moſt gratefull to him, by whom they haue de-
„ ſerued to be able to performe theſe things, no man poſſeſſeth any thing as his owne;
„ no man is burthenſome to the reſt; The fathers excelling, not only in ſanctitie of
„ life, but in heauenly doctrine, voyde of all hautineſſe, prouide for them whom they
The ſweetneſſe of a Religious life. „ cal their Children, with a greate deale of auctoritie on their parte, in commanding,
„ and a great deale of Willingneſſe of their ſubjects in obeying. And after many other
„ prayſes he concludeth thus. If I ſhould goe about to extol this trade, this life, this
„ Order, this Inſtitution, I ſhould not be able to performe it as it deſerues, and may
„ iuſtly feare that men will thinke me to be of opinion, that it is not pleaſing enough
S. Bernard ſer. ad Frat. de Monte Dei. „ of it ſelf at the firſt ſight.

13. To theſe let vs add S. *Bernard*, who though he be generally more carefull to put fire into the Religious, then curious in ſetting forth their prayſes, in many places of his workes hath left many things written to their Commendation, and this among the reſt; I know not by what name I ſhal more deſeruedly cal them, Men of heauen, or Angells vpon earth; liuing on earth, but hauing their Conuerſation in Heauen. And elſ-where he calleth Religion, The caſtle, or fortreſſe of God; A caſtle ſtrongly defended, his Territorie, or peculier poſſeſſion; out of which he gathereth great ſtore of reuenues: for ſo he ſpeaketh of his Monaſterie at Cler-uaux; (which may be fitly applyed to all other ſuch places:) Thou takeſt from Chriſt a ſpeciall Caſtle, and place of defence, if thou deliuer Cleruaux vp to his enemyes, out of it he receaueth euery yeare a very good incomme, and reuennues very pretious in his ſight; Into this his place of defence he is wont to driue the prey which he taketh from the Contrarie partie in great plentie, and he repoſeth great confidence in the ſtrength thereof; For behold heere thoſe whome he hath redeemed out of the hand of the enemie, and from ſeueral countreys hath gathered them togeather; from the Eaſt, and from the Weſt, from the North, & from the South: But more at large and more copiouſly in another place the ſame S. *Bernard* doth with a ſpecial grace apply to Religious people that which in the canticles is ſpoken by the holy Ghoſt to his ſpouſe the Church. Thy Teeth are like vnto a flock of thoſe that are shoren. The Teeth are white, ſayth he, and ſtrong: they are not wrapped in flesh, they haue no skin about them, they can abide nothing to come betwixt them, there is no payne to be compared with the payne of the teeth: they are couered with the lipps that they may not be ſeen, it is a ſhame to shew them, but when we laugh: they chew meate for the whole body, and retayne no ſauour of the meate, they are not eaſyly waſted: they ſtand in order: ſome are aboue, ſome beneath, the lower rank ſtirreth, the vpper rew neuer ſtirreth. I think that theſe Teeth are men that profeſſe a Monaſticall life, who hauing made choice of the gainer way, and of the ſafer manner of liuing, in the body of the church which is all white, doe yet appeare more white, for what can be more white, then they, who auoyding all manner contagion of filth, doe bewayle the ſynnes of their thoughts, as the ſynnes of their actions: what is more ſtrong then they who eſteeme tribulation their comfort, reprocah their glorie, and want, as if it were abundance: They are not intangled in flesh becauſe liuing in flesh and being careleſſe of it, that of the Apoſtle agreeth fitly vnto them, *But you are not in the flesh but in the ſpirit.* They haue no skin about them, becauſe not regarding the gay trimneſſe of the world, & voyd of the racking cares therof, they ſleep & reſt in

Ps. 106. 2. Idem in Cant. c. 4. Religious men are as the teeth in the body of the Church Rom. 8.

peace

peace togeather. They can abide nothing to ſtick betwixt them, becauſe the leaſt offence that may be is to them intollerable, when it is giuen either to one an other, or to the Cõſcience of any one amongſt them, there is no paine to be compared with the payne of the teeth, becauſe nothing is more hideous and diſtaſtfull, then murmuring and contention among Religious. They are couered with the lipps that they be not ſeen; ſo are we alſo compaſſed with materiall walls, that we may not ly open to the eyes and vntimely viſits of ſecular people. It is vnſeemly to ſhew ones teeth: vnleſſe it be perhaps ſometimes when we laugh: becauſe it is an vggly thing to ſee a Monk running about, from towne to towne, vnleſſe Charitie do inforce, *which couereth multitudes of ſinnes*: for Charitie is laughter, becauſe it is cheerfull, but not wanton and diſſolute. The teeth chew meat, for the whole body: ſo the religious are appointed to pray for the whole body of the Church: to wit, for the liuing and for the dead. They muſt not taſt of the meate, that is, they muſt not attribute any part of the glorie to themſelues, but ſay with the Prophet, *not to vs, O Lord, not to vs, but to thy name giue glorie*; They are not eaſily waſted; becauſe the elder they be, the more feruent they grow: and the neerer they approach to the prize, they runne the ſwifter. They ſtand in order: for where is any thing in good Order, if heere it bee not: where meat and drink, ſleeping and waking, labour and reſt, walking and ſitting, and euery thing els is appointed in number, weight, and meaſure? There be ſome aboue and ſome below: becauſe among vs there bee Superiours & ſubiects: and thoſe that command are ſo vnited with thoſe that are to obey, that the higher do not diſagree in any thing with the lower: The vpper rank doth neuer ſtirre though the lower moue vp and downe: becauſe though the ſubiects be ſometimes troubled, the Prelats ought alwayes to haue a quiet mind. *Like a flock of thoſe that are ſhoren*: How fitly are Monks reſembled to a flock of ſheep, that are newly ſhorne? Becauſe in very deed they are ſhoren, not hauing any worldly thing left them, not their bodies, not their harts as their owne, *which are come vp from the lauer or Bath*: The bath is baptiſme: from which he may be ſayd to aſcend, that aymeth at the height of true perfection; he deſcẽdeth that giues himſelf to diſhoneſt life. Al bring forth twinnes, becauſe they al edifie their neighbour, by word and example: There is not a barren one among them, becauſe there is not one that is vnfruitfull. Thus farre S. *Barnard*.

Pſal. 4. 9. *1. Pet.* 4. 8. *Pſ.* 113. *Cant.* 4.

14. All which is ſeconded by *Hugo* the Cardinal, a learned and ancient Authour; diſcourſing vpon that place of the Pſalme *Be vnto me a God-protectour, and fortified place*, for by this place of defence he vnderſtandeth Religion, as hauing walls of Pouertie; ſuperiours, as watchmen; towers of eminent doctrine, the trumpet of preaching, the ſhield of prayer, ſtones alſo and bullets, to wit, auſteritie of life, and wanteth not the water of teares, and expounding the paſſage out of an other Pſalme. *All my bones ſhall ſay, Lord, who is like vnto thee*; he maketh account that Religious people are theſe bones of our Sauiour, and of his Church, and that this is their language to God. Both becauſe they are ſtrong, and able to vndergoe whatſoeuer burthen and labour; and will rather breake, then bend from that which is right and reaſon: and becauſe they vphold and beare the fleſh, that is, the infirmitie of the weaker ſort: alſo becauſe as the bone, ſo the Religious be voyde of the ſenſe of feeling, as being dead, and their *life hidden with Chriſt*. Moreouer they are white, both within, by purenes of Conſcience, and without, by example of good life; They be full of morrow, to wit, with the fatneſſe of Charitie and

Hugo Cardinalis in Pſal. 10 3. Religion a Caſtel.

Pſal 34. 10. Religious men the bones in the body of the church.

Coloſſ. 3. 3.

deuotion: finally as the bones lye hid within the flesh, and are knit one to another by the sinews of mans body, so the Religious are hidden from the trouble of men, and linked togeather with mutuall obligations, in *vnitie of spirit and in the bonde of peace*.

Eph. 4. 3.

S. Antonie p. 3 tit. 23. c. 10. §. 11. Religion the ladder of Iacob. *Genesis 28. 12.*

15. Let vs not leaue out *S. Antonine*, who besids many other commendations of a Religious state, doth learnedly declare how the happinesse thereof was prefigured in that famous *ladder of Iacob*; in which the stepps are no other then the exercises of reading, of meditation, of mortification, and other such like, of which Religion doth consist; vpon this ladder the Angells do ascend, offering vp these holy workes to our Lord God; and do descend, to bring downe in exchange, vnto the Religious soules diuers guifts and benefits from their spowse. God doth leane vpon the toppe of the ladder, because al our indeauours do rely vpon his grace and assistance, and while he vpholdeth them they cannot fail; He is a stay to them that ascend, and a reward to them that come happily to the end of their iourney; so that the same may be sayd of this spirituall ladder, which was sayd of the ladder of Iacob: *Heere is no other, then the howse of God and the gate of Heauen.* To the same purpose he applieth the signification of the *mount Tabor* in which our Sauiour Christ was transfigured; in regard that Religion is also a mount, by reason of the dignitie of the state itself, but a *mountaine fatt*; *and curded*; *a mountaine on which God is wel pleased to inhabit*; vpon this mountayne is *Peeter*, whose name signifieth *obedience*; *Iames*, supplanting the world, through *pouertie*; and *Iohn* the virgin, by *Chastitie*; All which vertues are so pleasing to God, as that in this kind of life he doth giue vs a triall, and tast of the eternall glorie and happinesse to come, and who soeuer shall haue tasted of it, will confesse in words, but much more expresse in deeds that it *is good for vs to be heere*.

The Mount Thabor. *Matth. 17.*

Psal. 67.

S. Laurentius Iustinia tract de Monast. Conuers. The Prayse of Religious Pouertie. *Idem de Obedientia. c. 18.* Religious houses armies of spirituall souldiars.

16. The testimonie of *S. Laurence Iustinian* is worthy to be ranked in the number, in regard of his learning & holinesse; he spend's himselfe very much in the prayse of Religion euery where in his writings; & in his litle treatise of monasticall conuersation he sayth in this māner. O how blessed is that voluntarie Pouertie, which hath nothing in this world, and feareth nothing; because it hath layd vp in heauen the treasure it had; it is alwayes cheerful, alwayes in plentie: and whereas it ownes nothing, it hath part of all things, and turneth euery incommoditie to profit, no man certainly but he that hath had the trial therof, is able to cōceaue how louely, how sweet, and how pretious the things bee, which God bestoweth vpon them, who for his loue renownce thēselues & all that they haue. And much more he sayth in the same place, but yet more fully in his booke of obedience he discourseth thus. What shall I say that monasteries of Religious people, and the dwellings of the seruants of God be, other then militarie stations, and spirituall armies of figthing men: for there in the body, and through the body, warre is waged in spirit, in those dwellings I say, not visible, but inuisible weapons are menaged, teares of deuotion, groanes of compunction, sighs of pittie and compassion, and of the loue of God are dayly powred forth, there you haue incessant prayers, as so many fiery darts against our spirituall enemies: by which their strength is beaten downe to the grownd: their boldnesse quailed, their deceits discouered, and their temptations ouercome; certaine it is that the deuotion of those seruants of God, their sanctitie, their concord, and vnitie, and whatsoeuer is done among them prayse worthy, doth glorifie God, reioyce the Angells, is beneficiall to the iust, and terrible to the diuells;

diuells: it is a safegard to the world, and doth moue sinners to penance. And doubtlesse with great reason, for all things which are done among them, breath sanctitie, through the presence of our Lord & Sauiour. Who *sayth, were there be two or three gathered togeather in my name, there I am in the midst of them.* Voluntary pouertie hath there the first seate, and expresseth a resemblance of that perfection which the church did practise at the firft begining: this verily is the natiue shape of true pouertie, yea rather, a very great increase of treasures which cannot be taken from vs, belonging assuredly to them that renounce the world, and giue away their owne, that they may serue Christ our Sauiour more freely. What can be more rich and plentiful, I beseech you, then to haue nothing, and to possesse al things, to haue nothing that is superfluous, and to haue al things necessarie for vse; to contemne their owne patrimonie, and to be Heyres of Christ. For the reuenues of Monasteries are the treasures of our Sauiour, and the deuout offerings of the almes of the faithfull, which cannot be taken away by pillage, nor wasted with ruft, nor consumed by moaths: these treasures are common to all that liue in common, and are not distributed, after euerie ones fancy, but as necessitie requireth. The rich man hath not more because he was rich, nor the greate man more, by reason of his former state, but euerie one receaueth what is conuenient for him, which is a worke diuine, a greate commendation of grace, a deed of charitie, and agreable to nature. The body of man doth take nourishment of meate, which is diuided into euery member, without debate or contention, as nature it self doth think fitting. This kind of voluntarie Pouertie, doth free the mind from wordly cares, & make it more apt to know it self, and to dwel at home, prepared for prayer, ioyful in sparing, cheerful in imparting to others, secure from danger, and wel disposed for increase of al manner vertue. And this it doth so much the rather, because it doth acquit the possessour therof from the world, it doth seuer him from the turmoiles of secular busines, and burie him in the tombe of holy Religion. There it easeth him of the heat of carnal desires, it preserueth him from the boisterous stormes of temptation, from the allurements of al sensual pleasures, from the noyse of the world, from the snares of the diuel, and from falling into many most enormous synnes; no man certainly can declare, with what gladnes that man is repleniished, what peace he inioyeth, what spiritual dayntie he feeds on, with how many diuine illustrations he is inlightned, who vpon good aduice, and inspired from heauen, doth willingly renownce the world, betake himself to a Cloistre, and serue God; ayming at no earthly thing, possessing nothing that is temporal, and reseruing nothing at al to himself, that may clayme any part of his loue. For a Cloistre is a garden inclosed, a paradise of delights; the bed-chamber of the bride; an vnspotted couch; a schoole of vertue; the tabernacle of the couenant; the resting place of the bridegrome; the courte of guard of the Armie, a howse of sanctitie; a preseruer of Chastitie; the establishment of honestie; the maistership of Religion: and an excellent mirrour of holy Obedience.

Commendation of Pouertie.

Prerogatiues of Religious Inclosure.

17. *Thomas Kempis* is not to be forgotten, who was a man of knowne sanctitie; and if we regard antiquitie, he liued about two hundred yeares since; He sayth in this manner, It is a great honour, and a very great glorie to serue thee, and to despise al things for thee; for great grace shal be giuen to them, that shal willingly subiect themselues vnto thy most holy seruice; They shal receaue most sweet comfort of the Holy Ghost, that for thy loue shal renoūce al carnal delights; They shal attaine great

Th. a kemp. l. 3. de imit. c. 10. It is glorious, and sweete, and

Beneficial to ſerue God in Religion.

freedome of mind, that for thy name-ſake ſhal enter into the narrow way, and ſhal haue left off al care of this world. O ſweete & delightful ſeruitude of God, by which man is truly made free and holy! O ſacred ſtate of religious bondage, which maketh man equal with Angels, pleaſing to God, terrible to the diuel, and grateful & of great eſteeme to al the faithful! O ſeruice to be imbraced, & alwayes wiſhed for, by which we obtayne the greateſt good, & attayne to that ioy which neuer ſhal haue end! And in a ſermō which he made to his brethren, he ſpeaketh much of the benefit of liuing in a Religious Cōgregation. Whoſoeuer (ſayth he) hath a good wil, & ſeeketh God, ſhal profit much more among thoſe that ſeek God, and ſhal abide more ſtedfaſt, for there a man is more tried and exerciſed in vertue, there he is often rebuked for his negligence, and drawne to more perfection by word, and example. There he is inforced to behold and bewayle his owne imperfection; there he is ſtirred vp by the vertue of others, & inſtructed by the humilitie of others, this mans Obedience; the other mans Patience doth incourage him. There he is aſhamed to be found more ſlow then the reſt. There he hath ſome whom he feareth, there he hath others whom he loueth, and ſo profiteth by al. There he hath warning by an other that is blamed, there an others danger is an example for him to take heed by. There one is a ſafeguard to an other. There a man doth beare, and is borne with all, there he ſeeth & heareth many things by which he learneth. There thoſe that are good, are cōmended, to the end they may become better. There they that are negligent are reprehended, that they may get feruour againe. There a man is not ſuffered to be idle and dul, nor to do as he hath a mind. There be diuers offices, and many duties of charitie performed: There euerie thing hath his time, and euery one goeth about his buſines, as he is commanded. There the weake is ſupported by the ſtronger. There he that is in health is glad to ſerue our Sauiour by viſiting the ſick. There when one fayleth another ſupplieth his roome; There the members which are whole, take care for them that are feeble. There he that is in action, laboureth for him that is at his prayers, & he that attendeth to his prayers, beggeth earneſtly for him that is at his labour. There a man hath many praying for him, and protecting him at his laſt end againſt the diuel. There he hath as many helps as he hath compagnions. Thus farre this Authour, and much more he ſayth, which whoſoeuer liſteth may read in the booke it ſelf.

Id. 1. par. ſer. 2.

Commodities of liuing many Religious in a houſe togeather.

18. *S. Baſil the great* ſhal ſhut vp theſe two ranks of Greeke and Latin Fathers; whom I haue reſerued for the laſt place; becauſe both his Auctoritie is moſt weighty, and his Commendation moſt copious and eloquent, which alone might be ſufficient to proue what we intend, though we ſhould ſay nothing els. He therfore treating of the cōmodities of a Monaſticall life hath this diſcourſe. Firſt thoſe that imbrace this fellowſhipp and this manner of liuing in common, returne to the happines to which we were bred by nature; for I do eſteeme, ſayth he, this liuing in common to be a moſt perfect thing; from which al proprietie is debarred, and the poſſeſſion of any thing in priuate. It is free from all diſſention, trouble and debate; and on the other ſide al things are common in it: their minds, their wills, their bodies, al things neceſſarie, meate, and drinke, and cloathing. They ſerue one God in common, their Exerciſes of pietie are in common; their ſaluation, their conflict, their labours, their rewards, and crownes are common. In it many are one, and one is not alone, but in many. What can rightly be thought of equall value with this Inſtitution? What can be ſayd to be more bleſſed, or imagined more feate then this concord, vnitie, & knot of frendship. What can be deuiſed more trimme and dayntie then this mutual temper of minds and fashions among themſelues. That men picked out of diuers

S. Baſil Conſtit. Mon. c. 19.

The Commendation of a Religious life. in regard of vnitie and Concord.

nations

nations and countreys should so grow as it were togeather in one, through the perfect similitude of their manners and trade of life, that they seeme but one soule in many bodies, or contrariewise many bodies made instruments of one soule and mind. Among these people, he that is of a weake constitution of bodie, hath the harts of many that feele part with him of his infirmitie. And he that is sick in mind, finds many at hand by whom he may be cured, and by whose help he is continually comforted. By equal right and power ouer one an other, they are each others seruants, and maisters, and inioying an inuincible freedome, they serue one an other with great subiection, which neither necessitie hath violently brought vpon them to their greefe, nor vnexpected Chance; but through their owne free will they haue vndergone it with ioy; for Charitie, hath made them of freemen subiect to one an other, and preserueth them notwithstanding in their intire libertie. Certainly God, when he made vs in the beginning, would haue vs such; and for this end he created vs. And doutlesse whosoeuer do liue after this manner, do restore that ancient happinesse to the former lustre, couering the fault of our first father. For if the vnion of our Nature had not been dissolued by sinne, there had been no debate, nor disagreement, nor warre among men. These are the true followers of our Sauiour, and do truly expresse the life which he led among vs. For as he when he had assembled the number of his disciples, had al things in common, and made himself common and familiar vnto them: so they (if they obserue iustly the rules of their Institute) obeying their superiour, do imitate the manner of liuing of Christ and his Apostles. And preseruing peace & quiet of mind; they resemble the life of Angels. For among the Angels there is no strife, no contention, no debate, but euery one in particular inioyeth al things which the rest haue, and haue notwithstanding their owne riches wholy to themselues. For the riches of the Angels are not such as can be bounded with limit, or being deuided among many, must necessarily fal lesse to euery ones share; but their riches are spiritual, and consist in the mind; and therfore al are equally inriched with the goods, which euery one hath whole and intire to himselfe; because al do possesse them with out grudge, or contradiction. For the Contemplation of the soueraigne Good, and the assured Comprehention of al vertue, is the Angels treasure, and is of that nature that though euery one haue perfect possession therof to himself, al of them may neuertheless perfectly inioy it. So with out doubt the louers of true deuotion, hauing their mind fixed not vpon earthly, but vpon heauenly things, with a kind of Indiuisible diuision of those heauenly riches among thēselues, al & euerie one are partakers of them. Moreouer resembling the forme & fashion of a heauenly life & state, through the commendable māner of liuing which they lead in cōmō, they foretast the future happinesse of the kingdome which is prouided for vs. They obserue Pouertie most strictly, accounting nothing their owne, but al things cōmō to al. They giue vs playnly to vnderstād how many & how great benefits our Sauiour Christ hath obtayned for vs, through the flesh which he tooke vpon him; in that they recōcile to God & restore to the former integritie, as much as lieth in them, humane nature mangled by sinne, & torne into a thousand pieces. For the chiefe businesse which our Sauiour did in flesh, was to renew the nature of man, & bring it home to God, and to the state it had at first; & curing the wounds therof, to make it sound & perfect as it was before; & as a most skilful phisitian, to knit vp againe with wholesome plasters, & other remedies, the body dismēbred & broken.

It is an imitation of our Sauiour and his disciples.

And of the Angels.

They bring corrupted nature to the former Integritie.

19. I do not speake these things to the end, to amplifie in words the vertues &

priuiledges of thoſe that haue imbraced this manner of liuing in common, or to make them greater then they are, for my Eloquence is not ſo rare, as to adluſtre to things which of themſelues are noble & excellent. But rather I may iuſtly feare leaſt the brightneſſe which they haue, be obſcured by my ſlender ſtyle; my Intention is only to ſhew the worth of this noble trade of life, and the eſteeme which we ought to haue of it: for what is there in compariſon of this, which ought not iuſtly ſeeme farre inferiour vnto it. They haue one father amõg them, imitating the heauenly father. And they are many ſonnes, ſtriuing to ſurpaſſe one another in al kind of louing dutie towards their Maiſter and Teacher. They are many ſonnes liuing peaceably together, and by their honeſt and vertuous behauiour they giue their father great contentment, neither do they ground this loue and frendſhip vpon any band of Nature; but Reaſon (a tye more ſtrong then nature) is the beginner and foſterer of this Coniunction, and the band of the holy Ghoſt doth hold thẽ togeather. What likneſſe can there be found vpon earth ſufficient to expreſſe the greatneſſe of this noble Inſtitution? Vpon earth there is none. We muſt mount vp to heauen. The Heauenly Father is impaſſible, not moued with any perturbation of mind. This father reſembling that vnmoueablenes, doth winne al vnto him by the ſtrength of Reaſon. The birth of that Heauenly Sonne is void of al corruption; Heere alſo the ſtudy of Incorruption hath bred theſe adoptiue Children, al things in heauen are linked togeather by Charitie: Charitie alſo hath coupled theſe togeather. Certainly the diuell dares neuer come againſt this fowr-ſquare Armie, knowing that he ſhall neuer be able to make his partie good againſt ſo many Champions: in regard they are al ſo wel prouided againſt him and fight ſo cloſe; fencing themſelues round with abundance of ſpirit, & fighting ſo thick vnder their Targatts of mutual Charitie, that they eaſily reſiſt al his attẽpts. Of theſe Dauid doth ſing in his Pſalmes; *Behold how good and how pleaſant it is for Brethren to dwel togeather*; Where by the word (Good) he expreſſeth the vprightneſſe of their life, by the word (Pleaſant) he declareth the ioye and gladneſſe which the concord and vnion of their minds doth breed: wherfore they that follow this kind of life, do ſeeme to me to expreſſe in themſelues al heauenly and perfect vertue. Thus farre *S. Baſile*, with whom I wil conclude the ſayings of the Ancient Fathers concerning a Religious life in general; For in the Courſe of this treatiſe, I shal haue occaſion to bring many other ſentences of theirs in commendation of euery part and fruit of Religion in their proper places.

They reſemble that vnion and communication which is betwixt God the Father, and God the Sonne.

They are terrible to the diuels.

Pſal. 131.

What Religion is; and how many kinds of Happineſſe it doth contayne.

CHAP. II.

IN the examining and diſcuſſing of any thing by way of argument and diſpute, it is vſual and neceſſarie, firſt of al to define and determine, what the thing is, about which we are to reaſon. Which I wil alſo obſerue in this treatiſe of Religion, to the end we may not miſtake the matter. And becauſe this very thing wil turne to the Commendation of this holy courſe of life. Many therfore not vnfitly, are wont to declare the nature of

ture of Religion by the name which it beareth. And some deriue it from the Latin word (*Religo*) which signifieth to read, or to gather againe. Meaning that those were first called *Religious*, who did often and carefully handle the things which pertaine to the seruice of God, and as it were gather them vp together, and often repeate and read them. Others, and among them cheefly *S. Austin*, deriue it from the word (*Religo*) which signifieth to tye againe, or to bind fast; which *S. Thomas* declaring more at large in the beginning of the booke which he writ against the Oppofers of Religiō, discourseth in this manner. We are sayd to bind a thing, when we tye it to an other, so that it hath not libertie to budge a way from it: but when we bind it againe and againe to the same thing, to which it was bound before, and from which it began to shrinke, then we say we haue bound it fast againe. Now euery Creature was first in God, before it was any thing in it selfe, and when it proceeded from God by Creation, it was in a manner set a looffe from him. Wherefore they that are able, and haue capacitie thereunto, must returne and conioyne themselues to God againe. And the first bond wherwith man is ioyned and fastned to God, is Faith, which faith expresseth the dutie it owes to God by externall Action. Whence it is, that the prime and head-signification of this word (*Religion*) betokneth al seruice, & Ceremonie by which in the true worshiip of God, we outwardly testifie our faith. But because God is not worshiped by Faith alone, nor by the external Acts of Faith only, but by other vertues, as by Hope: and Charitie; therfore the Actions of these vertues also are sometimes termed Acts of Religion, as to *visit the fatherlesse and widdowes in tribulation*, as S. Iames speaketh. The first signification therfore of Religion is common to all Christians; for al of them in that profession which they make at the very first in baptisme, doe bind themselues to God and vow to performe their dutie towards him. The later signification, expressing a tye, or obligation to some particular works of Charitie, is proper and peculiar to certaine people, obliged to some certaine actions of vertue belonging to the Contemplatiue, or to the Actiue life. And looke how many seuerall kinds there be of these *vertuous* works, so many seueral Religions there may be erected for the performance of them. Thus sayth *S. Thomas* in that place. But you wil better conceaue his meaning, if first you vnderstand, that the word (*Religion*) signifieth two things. Sometimes it is taken for one particular kind of vertue, which wee cal Religion, and is a brāch of *Iustice*: sometimes it is taken, for a state of life, grounded in this vertue. Wherfore if we once know the nature, and qualitie of the vertue it self, we shal the easier come to vnderstand what the *state of Religion is*.

The derivation of the word Religion.

Cic. de na. Deor. l. 2. Isid. 10. Elymo. c. 17.

S. Aug. de vera Relig. cir. fi finem.

S. Thomas 5. impugnāsis Relig.

The word Religion signifieth two things.

2. It is therfore a general doctrine among Diuines, that the peculier office of *Religion*, as a particular vertue, *is to worshiip God duly, and as his infinite Maiestie doth deserue, in regard of his Excellencie and preheminency aboue all things, and for the great benefits which we haue receaued and dayly receaue at his hands.* Which worship being partly inward in the mind, and partly consisting of outward duties, as Ceremonies, Rites, Sacrifices and the like. The vertue of Religion comprehends them both, and performeth both the inward and the outward Actions. And they that imploy themselues in these kinds of seruices towards God, & bestow themselues wholy in them, are called *Religious*. But to the *End* that a Man may be sayd to be in a *Religious Estate*, it is moreouer necessarie, that he giue himself so wholy to the workes of diuine worship, that he rid himself of al things that may hinder him in the performance of them. For as *S. Thomas* sayth wel in the same place, as in

The office of Religiō as it is a particular vertue.

Baptisme we die to sinne, so by taking vpon vs a *Religious state*, we die moreouer to the world, as much as concerneth that particular worke which euery one doth professe. And as the life of the soule is taken from it by sinne; so the seruice of God is hindred by worldly busines. Which the Apostle doth giue to vnderstand, when he sayth: *No man liuing a souldier to God, intangleth himself in seculer busines.* 2. Tim. 2.4.

Three things hinder vs in the seruice of God.

3. Now if we rightly consider, three things especially in this world, hinder vs in the seruice of God. *Riches*; *Bodily pleasures*; (not only those which are vnlawful, and forbidden by the Commaundements of God, for they are sinfull) but those pleasures also which are bounded with wedlock: and lastly our *Owne will*; which (if we giue it the reyns) growe's vnruly and carrie's vs to al ambitious pretences of superiorite and commaund. Wherfore they that wil truly and wholy dedicate themselues to God, must barre themselues of these three things: to wit, of *Riches*, by *Pouerty*; of *pleasure*, by *Chastity*; and curbe the vnrulynesse of their will, by *Obedience*. And thus we come to haue the description of *Religion*, which we fought for al this while. For, *Religion is a state, which endeauoureth in Christian perfection, by the three vowes of Pouerty, Chastity, and Obedience.* The Christian perfection of which heere we speake, without al doubt consisteth in the loue of God, casting aside the loue of our selues, and of all Creatures. It is sayd therfore that this *state endeauoureth* to this perfection, and not, that it hath already got it, or that it is already perfect; because it is not required that a Religious man should be already perfect, or haue attained absolute perfection; neither doth he make profession of that but he satisfieth his obligation, if he aspire and endeauour to it. Finally it is called a *State*, because it is necessarie, that this kind of life be constant, firme, perpetuall, immoueable. For it is one thing to be *perfect*, and another thing to be in *State of perfection*. Al may be perfect through vertue, & Innocencie, & holynesse of life. To be in a State, somthing els is required. As if one man serue an other man, and doe it of his owne good wil, how much, and how long he pleaseth, (as one friend is wont to wayte vpon an other,) this doth not alter his state, and condition. But if a man giue himself wholy ouer for euer, and bind himself vnto another; this alter's his estate; because of a freeman, he mak's himself a bond-man: so the workes of pietie and Religion of themselues, do not make a Religious man; but it is moreouer required, first, that by promise and expresse vow he oblige himself to those workes, so that from thence forth he is not free to leaue them, nor so much as to haue a mind to leaue them when he wil. Secondly this obligation must be vndertaken, not for some certaine determinate time; but for ones whole life time: and when these two things meete together, it is called a State, *by reason of the firmenesse and stablenesse of it.* Which firmenesse and stablenesse is made much more strong, and of greater weight by the *Authority and Approbation of the Pope*; who as in al other things so in confirming and establishing Religious Institutions, beareth that sway, which becometh the person of him, who is Christ's vicar vpon earth, with power to bind in heauen whatsoeuer he shal bind on earth. His *approbation* therfore is so necessarie, that without it, the very vowes which we make haue not that force, and strength which otherwise they haue; and the Religion it self is not truly a Religion, not that the *Popes Approbation* doth pertayne to the essential nature of Religion. (For that is grounded vpon the *Institution* of our Sauiour Christ, and the Euangelicall doctrine) but because, as in seuerall manners of liuing, which are diuerslie brought in, as men are seuerally disposed, there may be many errours and faults; So to preuent and auoid these errours, it hath beene profitably prouided, that

It endeauoureth vp perfection.

And is a State.

Two things put a man in Religious Vowe,

and Perpetuitie.

In a course approued by the Pope.

Religions are not to be founded without the Popes Approbation.

that no man should build a Religious order without cõsent & *Approbation* of the See Apostolick. And for any thing we find recorded, *S. Dominick*, & *S. Francis* (each of them severally for their own order) were the first that presented a draught of their Institute, to *Pope Innocent* the third, to be approved by him: & this they did rather voluntarily & of their owne accord then cõpelled by law or Cãnon. And it happening about the time of the *Councell of Lateran* it was decreed in that *Councel*, that ever after it should be generally practised; which decree not many yeares after was revived by *Gregorie* the tenth, in the *Councel of Lions*, & so brought in use in the whole Church.

4. By this therefore which hath been sayd, we may discover somewhat, not only what a Religious life is, but the beautie & excellẽcie thereof, it being the prime of so great a vertue, as is Religion. For Religion though it be reckned amõg those which we cal Moral vertues, yet of Moral vertues, it is the greatest, and though the immediate obiect of it, be not God, but the inward, or outward actions of man, which it undertaketh to direct, fashion, and traine vp in the seruice of God; it hath notwithstãding so neere relation to that infinite Maiestie, that it is the very next of al others to the three Theological vertues, which by beleeuing, hoping, and louing, do as it were plunge and fixe themselues immediatly in God. Now the *proper* of Religion, is *Sanctitas*. The Office of which vertue, as Diuines deliuer, is to present our soules to God, pure, innocent, vnspotted, and to consecrate the same, with al the powers and forces thereof vnto him. And it is of that extent and command, that al other vertues, are as it were subiects and seruants to wayte, and attend vpon it. Some by purifying our wils, some by inlightning our vnderstanding, some by refraining our lustfull desires. The effects also, & daughters of it, (as *S. Thomas* cals thẽ,) are most noble, to wit, *prayer* & *deuotiõ*. *Prayer* brings vs into familiaritie with God & into his bosome; *deuotiõ* makes vs readie, and cheerful in al things belonging to his seruice; which cheerfulnesse & feruour, is of so great cõsequence, that when it is wãting, our duetie is lesse graceful to him, and whensoeuer it doth attend our workes, they are farre more commẽdable, & more accepted. This vertue of Religion therfore, which is so noble, together with the goodly attendance, which it hath, as we haue sayd, is the very soule and life of a Religious Estate; and enricheth with it so great a port & estimation, that in cõparison of it, the very Religion & pietie of other States doth not seeme Religion; not that in very deed it is not, but because it is so farre beneath the other, and so dimmed with the brightnesse of it, that it is hardly seene. And the very name doth testifie as much, for commonly when we name *Religion*, no man thinks we speake of the particular vertue, but of a *Religious Estate*: and none els are vulgarly called *Religious*, but such as haue forsaken the world, and bound themselues by vow to the perpetual seruice of God.

Religiõ the greatest of Moral vertues.

S. Thomas 2. 2. q. 81. Sanctitie the flowre of Religiõ, & Queene of Moral vertues.

Ibidem.

5. Whereas therefore *Aristotle* doth teach (and it is certaine) that there be three things which we cal *Good*, wherwith men are taken, and thereon themselues happy; to wit, that which is *Profitable*, that which is *Honest* and worthy, and thirdly that which is *Pleasant* and delightfull. It is my intent in this treatise to shew that these three kinds of Happinesse do louingly meete in *Religious Estate*; whereas it is very seldome seen that in any other thing of this world they should be found al three. For commonly wholesome things are bitter and difficult; things pleasant and delicious, are not vsually so worthy and honest: but al spirituall things haue al *Happinesse* in them, as being euery way *good*. Yet, as it is well obserued by *Aristotle*, great heed is to be taken, whether that which we cal *Good* and happy, be so indeed, or only seeme to be so: for oftimes a thing seemes good to many, because thereof-

Aristot. Eth. 8. Three things which al men seeke in this life.

Spirituall things per se are *Good*

ues be il diſpoſed. As for example; to be lanced, is really good and profitable for one that hath a diſeaſe, but it is not good for one that is in health: contrariewiſe a cupp of cold water is pleaſing to a feuerish body, and ſeemes good; but if he be ſound of his wits, he wil not take it. The ſame we may obſerue in our inward behauiour. For if we aske a Heathen, or an Infidel; nay if we aske a Chriſtian Man that is Couetous or Ambitious, what he thinks profitable, or honourable, or delightful, each of them wil anſwere according as they are affected; one wil name Riches and Wealth, an other wil reckon Honour and Preferment. Wherfore as Artificers and buylders of houſes, ſo we muſt meaſure and iudge of theſe things by rule and ſquare, that we fal not into great errours in abuſing of ſo mayne conſequence: And certainely the *End* of euery thing is that, which muſt be the *Rule* of al other things that haue relation vnto it; and by it we muſt make an eſtimate of them. What is therefore the *End* why al men haue receaued their ſoules, their bodies, and whatſoeuer els, and to which they are caried, by ſecret inſtinct of nature, and apparent motions of grace? Without al doubt this *End* is *Bliſſe*, and *Eternal bliſſe*. For there is no true bliſſe, or happineſſe but that which is Eternal, al things therfore which offer themſelues vnto vs vnder the title of being good or happy, muſt be ſquared by this *End*. And thoſe that conduce to the compaſſing of *Eternal Happineſſe*, are truly and ſolidly *profitable*. Thoſe againe which preſent vnto vs a taſt of thoſe high delights and vnſpeakable ioyes, are truly *pleaſant* and delitious. Finally thoſe are truly *Honourable* and glorious, which come neereſt to that only true and euerlaſting glorie, and be in a manner coupled with it. So that whoſoeuer beleeueth aſſuredly, as al Chriſtians do, that there is an other life, in which *Eternal Happineſſe* is to be injoyed by man, and that this *Happineſſe* is the *End* for which he was created, muſt needs make it the vtmoſt bound of his deſires and thoughts, as the only profitable, only delightfull, only glorious, and conſequently the only good and happy thing. Therfore in this enſuing treatiſe, I shal make it playne that al this, is largely and abundantly contayned in a Religious Eſtate.

Id. 3. Eph. 2.

Seeming Happineſſe deceitfull.

By our End we muſt meaſure our Happineſſe in this life.

THAT MAN IS NOT HIS owne but Gods, and this for ſeauen Cauſes.

CHAP. III.

IF the three kinds of Happines, contayned in a Religious Eſtate, of which I am to treate, the vtilitie, or Profitablenes thereof cometh firſt to hand. For though there be commonly leſſe doubt made of it, then of the other two, and all doe willingly grant that Religion is full of all Spirituall commodities: yet it wil not be amiſſe to intreate particularly of this very thing, as being in it ſelf very great and ſingular: and which alone may be ſufficient to moue any liuing ſoule. For we ſee that in earthly things the regard of temporal profit is ſo ſtrong and forcible, that it makes a man aduenture vpon buſineſſes very paineful and laborious, and ſtoop many times very low; of

low of much greater force therfore muſt all ſpirituall profit be, which as I ſayd, is the only true and ſolid profit, not short and temporall, but eternal; yet not withſtanding to make it more certaine, and cleere we muſt eſtablish one thing, as the ground-worke, not only of this preſent diſcourſe, but of all Chriſtian perfection; to wit, that all men are bred, and borne by nature vaſſals, and ſeruants of our greate God, and as ſuch, muſt in all things, greate and litle, obſerue his will, and be wholy at his Commaund. For it is a generall errour, which hath poſſeſſed the harts of moſt men, not only of them that be wicked and debaushed, but of many that liue not ill, to think, that it is enough to abſtayne from ſynne; that for the reſt, they may chooſe what courſe of life they liſt, and in the courſe they are, liue as they liſt, and take their pleaſure, and eaſe: contrarie to which errour, we muſt lay this ſtrong foundation, as I ſayd before, that it is the very nature of man to be vnder one true, and Liege-lord; to wit, the infinite, and ſoueraigne power of God. Whoſe will and appointment muſt be the rule and modell of our life, of all our Actions, & of whatſoeuer is in vs; and if we will liue as we ought, we muſt not ſtirre neither hand nor foote but at his direction. For as *S. Auguſtin* ſayth in a certayne place fitly to this purpoſe; *What is more thine owne, then thy ſelf; yet what is leſſe thyne owne then thy ſelf, if that which thou art, be anothers*? And as a labouring beaſt, belonge's wholy to the man that owes it; ſo man, much more belonge's to God, and is all and wholy his. Wherfore as we ſay it is a good beaſt, which runne's not reſtily of his owne head, but moue's as his Maſter guide's him; ſo man behaue's himſelf like himſelf, when he attend's vpon God with will and worke, and refere's himſelf wholy vnto him. Contrariewiſe, when forgetting God, he think's to be his owne Maiſter, and will diſpoſe of himſelf, and his actions as he pleaſeth, turning ſayle to euery wind of his owne will; it is a farre greater deformitie in him, then for a reſtie Iade to kick and runne away from his Maiſter. Which holy Scripture doth fitly expreſſe, ſaying: *That the vayne man is lifted vp with pride, and thinks himſelf borne as free, as the colt of a wild aſſe.* Vpon which paſſage *S. Gregorie* doth diſcourſe in this maanuer, it is neceſſarie that man ſhould be reſtrayned in all his courſes by order of diſcipline, and as a labouring beaſt, ſerue vnder the collar, held in by the decrees eternall. He therfore that couetts to do whatſoeuer his vnbridled licentiouſnes lead's him vnto, what other thing doth he deſire, then to be like the colt of a wild Aſſe, shaking off the collar of diſcipline, that he may wildly roue through the woods of his luſt. And a litle beneath. Therfore if we wil not be like the colt of a wild Aſſe, we muſt firſt of al ſearch out the ſignes of that which is ſecretly appointed by God, that what ſoeuer we haue a mind vnto, we keepe our ſelues vnder the collar of ſupernall gouernment; & fulfill our deſires ſo much the more profitably for to liue, by how much we tread downe the deſires of this life, againſt our owne inclination. This ſeruitude and bondage of man, which is ſo naturall and ſo profitable, *S. Auguſtin* did well vnderſtand; and doth learnedly expreſſe it, shewing that this was the very cauſe why God did lay a command vpon our firſt Fathers in Paradiſe, and ſuch a command as we read he did: to wit, to put in vre his iuſt and lawfull authoritie ouer him & ouer vs all who were then contayned in his loynes. For, ſayth he, if Adam ſhould haue reaſoned thus with himſelf; if this tree be good, why may I not touch it? if it be naught, what doth it in Paradiſe? God would haue anſwered, the tree is good, I will not haue thee touch it, why? Becauſe I am Lord, thou art a ſeruant. This is

All men by nature are bownd to ſerue God.

S. Auguſt. tract. 29. in Io.

Iob 11. 12.

S. Greg. l. 10. mor. c. 10.

S. Auguſtin in Pſal. 70. Cant. 2.

all the reason; if it seeme litle reason to thee, thou scorneſt to be a ſeruant, and enlarging himſelf elſwhere vpon the ſame ſubiect, he ſaith. It was neceſſarie that man being vnder God, should in ſome thing be reſtrayned, that his ſubiection and obedience, might be the vertue by which he should deſerue the good wil of his Lord and Maiſter; which Obedience I may iuſtly cal the only vertue in bred in euery reaſonable Creature, liuing vnder the command of God. And that the firſt and greateſt of al vices, bringing vs by ſwelling pride to ruine, is to couet to do as we liſt, which vice is called diſobedience: man therfore, vnleſſe he had been commaunded ſomething, would not haue knowne that he had a Lord and Maiſter; wherfore to conclude to our purpoſe, it is certaine that if men wil do that which is their dutie, they muſt order their life wholy dependent of God, and tye themſelues to his conduct and gouernment, and be as attentiue to obſerue his pleaſure, as the *eyes of ſeruants be in the hands of their Maſters, and the eyes of the handmayde in the hands of her miſtreſſe*, as the Pſalmiſt ſpeaketh. Which is the ſame which *S. Gregorie* ſayth in his morals, as dutiful ſeruants haue their eye alwayes vpon their maiſters countenance, to vnderſtand readily and performe that which is commanded; ſo do the thoughts of the iuſt wayte diligently vpon Allmightie God. Neither is it any wonder that *S. Gregorie* and others of the holy Fathers should ſpeake in this manner, ſeeing *Plato*, a heathen Philoſopher, writeth that man is one of the freeholds of God; whence he concludeth that if a man should kil himſelf, he should wrong God, for thou alſo ſayth he if one of thy bondſlaues should make away himſelf without thy priuitie and conſent, wouldſt thou not be angrie at it? Wherfore ſeeing it doth ſo highly import vs to vnderſtand that God is truly our Lord, of whom the Prophet ſayth, *our Lord is his name*, and that we are his ſeruants, it wil be neceſſarie for vs to conſider the cauſes of this ſubiection, which doth lay vs, and al that we haue ſo low at his feete. And of many cauſes which might perhaps be found out, we wil breefly touch ſeauen, which at this preſent do occurre.

Idem de Gen. ad litteram. lib. 8. c. 6.

Pſ 122. 2

S. Greg. mor. 16. c. 16.

Plato in phædo.

Amos 9. 6.

God hath command ouer vs by reaſon of the excellencie of his nature. Ariſtot 1. Pol. 3.

2. The firſt cauſe is, the Noblenes and excellencie of the diuine nature; ſpecially cōpared with ours which is ſo infirme, abiect, and almoſt nothing, the ſtrength of which reaſon I wil ſhew out of Ariſtotle, becauſe the light of nature wil giue the more light vnto it. He therfore proueth that one man may be iuſtly ſubiect to an other man by nature; becauſe in al things which haue their being by concourſe of many togeather, and make as it were a communitie, ſome of them muſt neceſſarily and by nature commaund, and others be ſubiect; which he ſheweth through all kind of things. For among thoſe which haue no life; in mixtures, ſome one element doth ſtil preuayle, as fire, in things which are light; earth, in things which are heauy, and ſo in others; in liuing things; the ſoule hath naturaly commaund ouer the body, and doth gouerne and moue it, as it wil; And in the ſoule it ſelf, if beſids the natural inclination, it haue alſo reaſon, as it is in man, without doubt reaſon, as more noble, doth by right commaund, and ſo by conſequence man, among al other liuing things, and among men the maſculin ſexe, as being the better and the worthyer of the two. From which diſcourſe he concludeth, that ſoueraigntie is naturally due to whoſoeuer among the reſt is moſt excellent. As when we ſee a man that is wel made, and of an excellent feature, we ſay he is worthy to cōmand, which if it be true in regard of the body, much more in regard of the mind, though the beautie of the mind be not ſo eaſyly diſcouered, as that of the

Soueraigntie is naturaly due to that which is moſt excellent.

of the bodie: Thus farre is the discourse of *Aristotle*, where moreouer he declareth, what he meaneth by seruile condition and subiection, for he sayth that a Seruant, or Slaue, is to his Maister, as a parte of any thing, is to the whole, or as a thing that is in possession, is to the possessour, for as a parte is not properly for it self, but for the whole of which it is parte, and that which is in possession, is not for it self, but for the possessour; so is a seruāt his Maisters, al that he is: seeing therfore as we find by the discourse of this Philosopher, there may be so great a distance betwixt creatures themselues, that some by nature, may iustly be subiect to other some among them; how farre true shal this be found to be, betwixt God and man? For a man, though he excel another man neuer so much, yet the difference can be but in wit, or learning, or wisdome, or some such accidental qualitie, and though it be neuer so great, yet it is limited, and not so very greate neither: for in nature there is no difference, euery one of vs hauing a body of the same earth, and a soule of like substance to an others soule: But if we compare man with God, wisdome with wisdome, goodnes with goodnes, power with power, essence with essence: The distance is not only infinite, but whatsoeuer man hath, he hath it from God, and of himself he hath nothing: and therfore we may truly say of him that in very deed he hath nothing, or rather, is nothing. Wich is the reason, why *Saint Paul* saith, that God is *only Powerfull*, and our Sauiour himself, that *he is only good*; and *Iob*, that *he only Is*. And if the whole globe of the earth, as is taught in the *Mathematicks*, compared with the circumference of the heauens, be, but as it were a point, notwithstanding that the earth of itself, is of so great a bulk, and the heaueos haue their limits; what shal we think that one man can be, being compared with that Infinitie, and that Endlesse Bottom, in which so many perfections without number, and measure, do concurre, which the Prophet *Dauid* with great reason admiring sayth: *Great is our Lord, and exceedingly to be prayfed, and of his greatnes there is no end.*

God infinitely more Excellent then man.

1. *Tim.* 6 15.

Matth. 19. 17.

Iob 23.

Ps. 144. 3.

3. The second Cause why we are not our owne, but Gods, is because we are *made and created* by him. For among men, though there be many reasons, and grounds, wher-vpon we pretend right to the things of this world; as by purchase, or deed of guift, and the like; yet no Title can be greater, or more iust, then when our selues haue made a thing, or begot it. *Who doth plant a vineyard*; sayth S. Paul, *and doth not eate of the fruite thereof*; so whoeuer buyldeth a house, or maketh a cheste or any other worke, with his owne hands, by all right, and law, is Lord of that worke, which is of much greater force in God: for by arte no man can do more, then giue an outward shape to a thing, he cannot produce the nature it self, or substance of iron, or wood, or any thing els, nor so much as come neere vnto it; but God, as *S. Augustin* speaketh, toucheth the very bottom of all things, that is, the very vtmost, & farthest degree of their Essence by his strength & power; and so we find that vpon this title cheefly, holy Scripture doth grounde the soueraigntie of God; *The earth is our Lords* sayth the Psalme, *& the fulnes therof, the sea is his, &* as it were yealding the reason therof, he addeth, *& he made it, & his hands haue founded the dry land*, And againe, *The heauens are thine, and the earth is thine, thou hast founded the circle of the earth, and the fulnes therof. Thyne is the day, and thine is the night, thou hast made the dawning of the day, and the Sunne.* And in an other place, *Myne are al the wild beasts of the woods, the beasts vpon the hills, and the oxen; myne is gold, and mine is syluer.*: finally in the booke of *Iob*, God doth challeng to himself

God created vs which is a 2. cause of our subiection.

1. *Cor.* 9. 7.

Conf. 6.

Ps. 23.

Ps. 94. 5.

Ps 88. 12.

Ps 73. 16.

Ps 49 10.

Agg. 2. 9.

himself all things togeather, all things vnder heauen are myne. And *Saint Paul* in his learned sermon preached at Athens. *God who made the world, and all things that are in it, he being Lord of heauen and earth*, &c. wherfore seeing he hath soueraignty ouer all other things because he hath made them all, why should he not also haue it ouer men? Of whom he speaketh in this manner, by his Prophet *Ezechiel*. *Behold all the soules are mine, as the soule of the Father, so the soule of the sonne is mine*: *S. Bernard* therfore in one of his sermons doth with great reason conclude from this ground among the rest, that wee are wholy gods who made vs, as a worke is the workemans. Behold he is at hand who made heauen and earth. He is thy Creatour, thou art his creature; he thy Lord, thou his seruant; he the potter, thou the vessell; Thou art debtour therfore to him of all that thou art, from whom thou hast all. To that Lord I say, who hath made thee, and hath done well for thee, and doth serue thee with the course of the starres, and with seazon of the ayre, and the fruitfulnes of the earth, and the plentifulnes of fruites. Him certainly thou must serue with all thy force, and hartyest strength, least he behold thee with an angrie eye, and despise thee, and consume thee for euer. And to like purpose S. *Laurence Iustinian* writeth thus. Reason bred in the very bowels of our soules, doth call vpon euery one to subiect himself to him, from whom he hath his being: for the nature of man being created by God, and persisting actually in being through him, by necessarie course of equitie and Iustice, stands obliged to the commands of his Creatour. For though man haue receaued benefites without number, for which he is bound to serue God, yet this only thing of it self doth oblige him to obedience euen vnto death, that from him he hath his being. Finally *Lactantius* sayth also well to the matter which we haue in hand. It is apparent that there is no hope of life left to man, vnlesse he acknowledge God, casting off all former vanities, and wretched errour, and serue him, renouncing this transitory life, & informe himself in the practise of Religion by the principles of Iustice. For this is the condition with which we are borne, that we performe our Iust & bounden dutie to God that made vs. That we acknowledge him alone and follow him. This is the bond of pietie with which we are obliged, and bound to God, and from which Religion it selfe hath the name which it beareth.

Exod. 41. 2. *Act.* 17. 24.

Ezechiel 18. 4.

S Bernard de quad. plici debito.

S Laurence Iustin lib. de Obed. c. 5.

Lactantius 4 *Instit c.* 27.

The 3. Reason of subiection is because God is our end.

4. The third cause of this subiection, is taken from the *End of man*; for when soeuer any thing is made for an other thing, it must necessarily be subiect to that for which it was made, and be in a kind of seruitude and bondage vnto it, and as I may say, alwayes Eying it. Now certainly nothing is, or can be the End of man, but God himself. For which reason it is sayd of him in the Apocalips, *That he is the Beginning and the End, the first and the last*; for as the couer is made for the target or shield, the scabberd for the sword, and a howse is made for dwelling, so man is made for God only; for as *S. Thomas* sayth, the cause efficient and the effect, must of necessity haue one & the same end proposed vnto them, as the end of the house which is built; and the end which the buylder had in buylding it are all one; seeing therfore God (who through the excellence of his nature standeth not in need of any good which is not himself) cannot be moued to any work for any other cause but for himself, it doth necessarily follow, that man also can haue no other end but God, which may be gathered euen out of the naturall order which we see in all things: for all are so connexed, and hang so one vpon an other, that the inferiour & lesse perfect, are made for the vse & seruice of those that are more noble and perfect.

Apoc. 8. 17.

S Thomas 1. & q. 44. ar. 4.

fect. And ſo *Ariſtotle* vnderſtood that the plants and all things that haue life, but not ſence, were made for thoſe that haue life and ſenſe; and theſe againe for man. And among theſe ſuch as are tame and domeſtick, were made for food, and other vſes; the wild and ſauage: partly for food, partly for the help of man in other things, as for cloathing and other neceſſaries. But *S. Bernard* doth much better declare this matter; for he ſayth that all theſe things were giuen vs by God for ſome cõmoditie of ours; ſome for ſuſtenance, ſome for Inſtruction, & ſome for dilight & pleaſure; many of them for our correction: *By the example* therfore and ſubiection of theſe things we may learne (and ſo we muſt,) how obedient & ſubiect we ought to be to God; for we ſee that oxen plough the grownd for vs, with xceſſiue labour, and reape no profit by it; horſes ſerue vs for carriages, for iourneyes, for races; doggs hunt carefully for vs, and guard our howſes and perſons; and are ſo ready at command, that with a word they make after the game, and with a word they are checked, and hollowed off, as no ſeruant can be more ready and obſeruant. And the ſame may be ſayd of many more in their ſeuerall kinds.

Arist. 1. Pol. c. 5.

S. Bernard in Pſ. qui habitat ſerm. 13.

5. Neither ſhall we need to think our ſelues leſſe happy and fortunate, or leſſe noble, becauſe we are not borne for our ſelues but for an other. For indeed it were ſomething to be ſtood vpon, if we muſt haue had this relation to ſome other Creature like our ſelues ſtinted and limited in perfection: but ſeeing it is God vpon whom we depend, who is perfection ſo high and ſo Infinite, it is ſo farre from diminiſhing our honour and dignitie, that it doth greatly innoble it. For, as we ſayd a little before, God hauing no other End but himſelf, man by this meanes is aduanced to the participation of this End, which is a thing exceeding Honourable; neither can there happen to man any thing more glorious then it. And it is the more to be prized, in regard that the noblenes of this End doth bring with it many great helps for the attayning of it. To which purpoſe *S. Auguſtin* diſcourſeth moſt excellently: for hauing diſtinguished all things into two ranks, and placed one ranke of ſuch things as we may inioy, and reſt in, as in our End; and an other ranke of thoſe which we muſt vſe as meanes, he aduanceth this queſtion, whether a man ought to enioy, or vſe himſelf. And anſweres it truly and ſolidly, that it is no way lawfull for a man to loue himſelf for himſelf; *For*, ſayth he, *if he loue himſelf for himſelf, he doth not place himſelf in God.* But looking back vpon himſelf, is returned to a thing that is variable; and therfore if he inioy himſelf, it is with ſome defect and imperfection; for he is farre better when he cleaueth wholy, to that vnchangeable good. Then when he relents from it towards himſelf.

To be Created for God and not for our ſelues is more noble.

S. Auguſtin de doct. Chriſt l. 1. c. 21.

6. The fourth cauſe of our ſubiection to God, is the *Command* which he hath layd vpon vs, not of ſeruing, or fearing or obeying him, but of *Louing* him, which one thing comprehendeth all the reſt. And as it is a thing more proper and naturall to Goodnes and loue, to deſire to be loued, rather then ſerued: ſo it maketh a ſoule more perfectly ſubiect to God; the wedge and ſtrength of this ſubiection being loue; and it is a kind of ſeruitude farre more pleaſant and more noble. That it doth more perfectly ſubiect a man to God, is apparent, becauſe by loue, the parties do not only mutually dwell one within an other, according to that ſayng of *S. Iohn*; *He that remayneth in Charitie, remayneth in God and God in him*; But they paſſe out of themſelues into the partie whom they loue, and are in that rauiſhment or exſtaſis, of which *S. Denys* ſpeaketh; and of which the common ſayng is, that the ſoule is rather where it loueth, then where it liueth; Now if the

The 4 cauſe of ſubiection is the Commandment of loue.

1. Ioh. 4. 16.

S. Dionyſe l. de diu. nom. c. 4.

Matth. 22. 37.

loue of an inferiour good, be of this force and ſtrength, what ſhall the loue of that Infinite and ſoueraigne good, be able to worke in our ſoules? eſpecially a loue ſo perfect, as God requireth of vs, to wit, that we loue him, with *our whole hart, our whole ſoule, and our whole ſtrength.* For as *S. Baſill* ſayth, when he requireth the whole loue, he allowerh no diuiſion tobe made among other things; for how much loue thou ſpendeſt in theſe inferiour things, ſo much thou muſt needs take away from the whole. And *S. Auguſtin* ſayth in like manner, that the loue of God, which in this precept is ſo ſtrictly commanded, cannot indure that the leaſt ſtreame therof, ſhould be deriued any other way, or the current towards him diminished. *S. Gregorie* alſo doth ſay very wel. You muſt obſerue that when holy ſcripture commaundeth that God ſhould be loued, it doth not only ſet downe wherewith, but inſtructeth vs alſo, how much wee ſhould loue him, adding frō thy whole hart &c. To the end certainly that whoſoeuer deſireth perfectly to performe his pleaſure, leaue nothing of himſelf to himelf; Wherby it is playne that to the end our loue may be ſuch as it ought, and as is required by expreſſe commaund, it muſt deliuer vs wholy and perfectly to God, and put him in full and abſolute poſſeſſion of vs, or rather transfuſe; and as it were emptie vs wholy into him. All which is done by loue.

S. Baſile in Pſ. 12.

S Auguſt. l. 1. de diu. Chriſt. c. 22.

S. Greg 10 mor. c. 4.

The fifth cauſe is our Redemption. 1. Cor. 19. 20.

7. A fifth cauſe moſt iuſt and weighty, why we ow our ſelues to God, may be, becauſe we are *bound* vnto him as *ſlaues bought by the penny*; ſo *S. Paul* ſayth of vs: *You are not your owne, for you are bought with a greate price.* This great price is Chriſt himſelf, giuen wholy for vs, as *S. Bernard* ſayth, and wholy layd out for our vſes. And certainly neuer was man in ſeruice of another man, ſo properly his; as the Eternal Word of God, and Image of his Father, is properly ours, giuen, granted, and deliuered to al men in general, and ſeuerally to euery one. At which *Eſay* the Prophet reioycing in ſpirit, ſayth. *A little one is borne vnto vs*; and *S. Paul. He ſpared not his owne Sonne, but deliured him vp for vs al*, and in an other place, *who gaue himſelf for vs.* And our Lord and Sauiour ſayth of himſelf, *God hath ſo loued the world, that he gaue his only begotten Sonne.* Wherfore if God may iuſtly challenge vs al & wholy for his owne, in regard he hath created vs; becauſe he doth but demand that ſoule, and that body of vs, which he beſtowed on vs. Certainly with much greater reaſon he may now challenge vs by title of purchaſe, ſince Chriſt himſelf hath payed downe for vs no leſſe priee, then his own life and ſoule, ſo incomparably worthy and pretious; and withal, his body, and his diuine perſon. Worthyly therfore doth *S. Chryſoſtome* ſay in one of his homilies, ſeeing we liue by the death of Chriſt, we muſt certaynly liue to him by whom we liue. Where we may thinke, that this holy man repeateth twice, one and the ſelf ſame thing, in diuers words; but if we weigh them well, we ſhal find that he means two ſeueral things: firſt that we liue by Chriſt. Secondly that he died for our ſakes; either of them ſeuerally conſidered, is ſufficient to oblige vs wholy vnto him. But put them both togeather, and euery one may eaſyly ſe how the reckoning is inflamed. *S. Bernard* in his ſermon of the fourefold debt, reckoneth this obligation to be the firſt. Firſt thou art debtour to God of thy whole life, becauſe he hath giuen his life for thyne, and indured moſt bitter torments, that thou mightſt not indure the eternall. And hauing ſpoken many things to the ſame effect, he concludeth thus, when therfore I ſhal haue giuen him al that I am, and al that I can do, is not al this, like a little ſtarre in compariſon of the Sun, like a droppe of water in compariſon

S. Iohn Chryſ. hom. 11 in 2. Cor.

S. Bernard de quatr. deb.

par iſon of a mayne riuer; as a pibble ſtone, to a huge montaine; as one grayne to a heape of corne? And in an other place ſpeaking of the ſame thing he ſayth. To omit al other things; for this reaſon alone he may iuſtly lay clayme to our life; becauſe he gaue his owne life for it; let not man therfore liue to himſelf, but to him who died for him, for to whoſe vſe ſhould I with greater reaſon liue, then to his without whoſe death I had not liued? And for whom can I liue with greater commoditie to my ſelf, then for him who hath promiſed euerlaſting life? For whom had I more need to liue, then for him that threatneth eternal fire? Finally we may eaſily diſcouer how fully this Saint was perſwaded of this truth, & how deeply he had it printed in him, by an other diſcourſe of his more large to the ſame effect, where he ſayth moſt excellently. If I be debtour of my ſelf wholy in regard he hath made me, what shal I giue him for repayring me, and repayring me after ſo ſtrange a manner? For I was not ſo eaſily mended, as I was eaſily made. For he that made me with one only word, once ſpoken, in repayring me againe ſpake many things, and wrought wonderous things, and indured moſt paynful things, and not only painfull things, but things moſt vnworthy. By his firſt work he gaue me my ſelf. In his ſecond worke, he beſtowed himſelf vpon me; and beſtowing himſelf, he reſtored me to my ſelf. Being giuen therefore and reſtored, I ow my ſelf for myſelf, and am twice debtour of my ſelf. What shal I render vnto God now for him ſelf? For though I could a thouſand times lay downe my ſelf, what am I to God?

Idem tr. 8. in Ioan.

Idem de diligendo deo.

8. The ſixt Cauſe, and none of the leaſt, is the *infinit reward* which is prepared for vs, to wit, the eternall and immortall glory of Heauen: In which as *S. Auguſtin* ſpeaketh, *God will poſſeſſe vs and be poſſeſſed by vs, and all for vs.* Seing therefore he is there to poſſeſſe vs, and this is one part of our eternal happines, let vs now begin to inioy this happines, and ſuffer our ſelues to be poſſeſſed by him; yea ſeeing we are there to poſſeſſe him, let it not ſeeme heauy vnto vs to purchaſe the poſſeſſion of ſo great a good, and ſo ineſtimable, at ſo ſmale and ſo eaſy a rate, as is the guift of our ſelues, for this in effect is the price which God hath ſet vpon that glory and felicitie, and vpon thoſe eternal ioyes, that we giue our ſelues in purchaſe of them. Which argument is expresly handled by *S. Auguſtine* in theſe words. How much doth a man ſtriue when death aproacheth, flying, hiding himſelf, giuing al that he hath to redeeme himſelf; taking thought, enduring torment and trouble, puting himſelf vnder the hands of phyſitians, and doing al that is in the power of man to do? If therfore we indeauour with ſo great paynes, ſo great labour, coſt, diligence, watchfulnes, and care, that we may liue but a litle longer, how great ſhould our endeauours be that we may liue eternally? And if we eſteeme them wiſe, who labour by al poſſible meanes, to differre their death to liue a few dayes, that they may not looſe a few dayes; what fooles are they that liue ſo that they looſe the euerlaſting day? giue me therfore a man that liues in perfect health, and hath nothing to ſuffer, if any body ſhould aſſure him that he might be alwayes ſo, and that this happy ſtate might neuer decay; how would he reioyce and briſle vp himſelf, and be as it were out of himſelf for ioy, to be, without payne, without griefe, without end of liuing? And if God ſhould promiſe vs this only which I haue now ſayd, and which I haue expreſſed

The ſixth cauſe of our ſeruitude is that eternal reward. S. *Auguſt. in Pſal. 32.*

S. *Auguſt. ſer. 6. de verbis dom.*

How men ſtriue to ſhunne temporal death, and are careleſſe of eternal.

" in such words as I am able, what would we not giue for it, if it were to be sold? What would we not giue, that it were to be bought? Would it be enough to " giue all that thou hast, if thou hadst the world in possession? Yet it is put to sale; " buy it if thou wilt, trouble not thy self ouer much to find some greate matter to " giue for it, in regard of that at which it is valued; it is valued at what thou hast; " be not follicitous what thou hast, but what thou arte. The thing is worth as " much as thou art; gi ue thy self and thou shalt haue it. But thou wilt say, I am " naught, he will not take me. By giuing thy self to him, thou becomest good: " This is to be good, to put thy self vpon his assurance and promise: Thus farre *S. Augustine*. And by it we may conclude, that the heauenly kingdome is not to be purchased but by giuing our selues wholy & sincerly to our Lord God, and what soeuer we are, or can do. And it stands with great reason, because infinite reward deserueth infinite labour and paynes; which is not in our powre to take; it is reason therefore we should lay downe for it as much as we haue; which will be in a manner infinite; if we bestow it willingly with out end or limit.

Howe the guift of our selues to God is in a māner infinite.

9. But all the obligations of which I haue hitherto spoken; are partly naturall, and partly put vpon vs by the will and commandment of God, without our consent or agreement: There remayneth yet one obligation more, which of our owne accord, and willingly we haue vndergone. For as kings take an oath of alleageance from their vassals, which otherwise be their lawfull and dutifull subiects, to bind them moreouer by their owne promise and couenant; so God though by right of Creation and purchasse, and by so many other titles as I haue reckoned, he do hold vs bound and subiect vnto him; hath obliged vs not withstanding by our *owne sworne-promise*, to the end our fidelitie may be more constant by so greate a tye. This Oath is taken when by baptisme we are regenerate; in which we are not only inrolled among the soldiars of Christ, but as the Apostle speaketh, *we receaue the Adoption of sonnes*. And it hath two parts: In the one we protest and vow to forsake & renownce the world, and the allurements therof: In the other, we yeald and consecrate our selues to God alone, not to be his souldiars only, or his sonnes, as I sayd before, but to be true and liuely members in the body of Christ, and as such, to liue noe more for our selues, and for our owne ends and occasions, but for that body of his, and for the rest of the members therof.

The 7. cause of subiection is our promise in Baptisme.

Gal. 4. 5.

Two parts of this promise.

10. Of the first part of this obligation *S. Cyprian*, *S. Gregory*, *S. Ambrose*, and others of the holy Fathers, doe make often mention. *S. Ambrose*, hath this Excellent sayng. When he did aske thee; doest thou renounce the diuell and his works? What didst thou answer? I doe renounce them; doest thou renounce the world and the pleasures therof? I do renounce them: Be mindfull what thou sayedst, and forget not at any time the tenure of thy obligation. If thou giuest a bill of thy hand to an other man, thou art bound to take his money: thou standest obliged, and the lender will hold thee to it if thou flye back, and there thou art held by thy owne obligation; consider where thou didst make thy promise, and to whom. Thou dist see the Church-man, but he was the minister of Christ. Thy bill therfore is registred in heauen, & not in earth. Thou hast renoūced the world, thou hast renounced these present things, be therfore carefull, & alwayes remēber thy promise. And *S. August.* you haue openly promised to renounce the enemie. When you sayd, I doe renounce: This promise was taken & inrolled by God & his

S. Cypr. l. 1. epist. 5.
S. Greg. Ho. 29. in Euang.
S. Ambr. l. de Sacra.
S. Aug. de symbo. and Catech. l. 6. c. 4.

Angells,

Angels, not by men. Renounce him, not by word only, but in behauiour; not with the ſound of your mouth, but with the deeds of your life; not with the voyce of your lips, but with words of your works.

11. Of the ſecond part of this obligation *Saint Paul* doth often ſpeake in his Epiſtles; as to the Galathians. *As many of you as haue been baptized, haue put on Chriſt.* And farther to the Coloſſians. *You are dead, and your life is hiden with Chriſt in God.* To which purpoſe alſo *S. Gregory Nazianzen* ſayth, To ſpeake in one word; the force and power of baptiſme is nothing els, but a certaine couenant made with God of a ſecond and better life, of a more pure and more noble trade of liuing. Wherfore we muſt alwayes ſtand in great awe, and keepe a watchful guard ouer our ſoules, that wee be not found to haue made a deceitful promiſe, for ſeeing we cal God to witnes to eſtablish the couenants made between man and man, much more ought wee to take heed that we breake not the couenant, which we make with God himſelf, as it is a thing in it ſelf of more danger and dommage. *S. Bernard* alſo applyeth that place of the pſalme: *neither hath he ſworne deceitfully to his Neighbour*, to the promiſe which we make in Baptiſme, and ſayth. This is the profeſſion of Chriſtian Faith, that whoſoeuer liueth, liue not for himſelf, but for him firſt who died for al; then for his Neighbour, for whom he alſo died.

Gal. 3. 27. Col 3. 3. S. Greg. Naz. or. 40. S. Bernard ſ. quis aſcendit in mont. D.

12. Wherfore (to come to ſome concluſion vpon ſo many and ſo forcible reaſons,) if wee will ſhew our ſelues men of reaſon and iudgment, in the buſines of our ſaluation, we muſt neceſſarily acknowledge a great and weighty obligation towards God lying vpon vs. And I do not ſee in what words the force and efficacy thereof can be better impreſſed, then with that affectionate ſpeech of the Prophet Dauid: *And my ſowle shal liue to him.* For euery man muſt make this account, and throughly perſwade himſelf, that he is not his owne, but Gods; and whatſoeuer he hath, whatſoeuer he is worth, whatſoeuer he is; he is not to ſerue himſelfe with it, and his owne ends, but to ſerue God alone, with continual relation vnto him. And muſt be content alwayes to be at his command; and be glad of it. And with all the forces and inclinations of his mind and wil, continualy labour that his thoughts, actions, endeauours, and himſelf wholy, be conformable to the wil and pleaſure of almighty God. Finally he muſt alwayes beare in mind, and expreſſe in behauiour that which the holy Prophet conceaued when he ſayd, *I am made like a labouring beaſt before thee, and I am alwayes with thee. Thou haſt held my right hand, and haſt lead me in thy wil.* Neither muſt we think much to be as obedient and ſeruiceable to God, as beaſts are to man. For if man require ſeruice of beaſts which he made not; and ouer which he hath no title and right of cõmaund, but by preheminence of Nature: how greatly muſt we be ſubiect and obedient to God, ſeeing by nature we are ſo farre beneath him, and moreouer were created by him, and ſtand obliged by ſo many other titles? And ſeeing our caſe is thus, let vs alſo conſider how greeuous a fault it muſt needs be (nay how many faults there would be in one) if a man ſhould couet to be his owne Maiſter, and diſpoſe of his life and actions as he liſt himſelf, not according to the wil of God; but liue in manner, as if he had no dependance at al of him, and were wholy of himſelf, and at his owne diſpoſe. For what can be more vnſeemly, or more diſordered, then a ſeruant that wil be ſtil flinging out of doores, and ſhunning his Maiſters howſe;

Pſ. 21. 31. Pſ. 72. 23.

It is not much that we ſhould be as obedient to God as beaſts are to man.

Chap. 4.

or when he is within doores, regards not his Maisters pleasure? Of wich kind of people, that saying, or rather check of the Prophet, may be fitly spoken: *Thou hast broken the yoake, thou hast burst a sunder the band, thou hast sayd, I will not serue.* And what torment & punishment doth attēd vpon these crimes? Certaynly that which *S. Bernard* hath left written in a certaine treatise, saying: He is manifestly worthy to die, who refuseth to liue to thee ô Lord Iesu; & he is dead: & whosoeuer is not wise to thee, is a foole: and he that taketh care to be for any other end, but for thee, is to no end, & is nothing. Thou ô God hast made al things for thy self, & he that wil be for himself and not for thee among al things beginneth to be nothing. And *S. Cyprian.* Thou requirest seruice from thy seruant, and being thy self a man, thou forcest another man to obey thee; and though both he, and thou be borne into this world after one māner, & both of necessitie be to die, your bodies be framed of the self same matter, your soules be of like substance; vnlesse thy seruice be done to thy mind, vnlesse thou be obeyed out of hand, thou art sterne, & seuerely vrgest thy seruice; thou beatest thy seruāt, ofttimes thou dost punish & torment him with hunger, & thirst; & wretch that thou art, dost not acknowledge thy Lord, thy God; and yet wil exercise thy auctority thus ouer men?

Hier. 2. 20.

S. Bern. ser. 20. in Cant.

He that liue's not for God, liue's for nothing.

S. Cyprian cont. demetr.

We serue not God, & are angrie if men serue not vs.

THAT A MAN DOTH DISCHARGE THIS debt by giuing himself wholy to God in a Religious Estate.

CHAP. IIII.

IF this which we haue sayd be true (as it is most certainly true) concerning so great a debt, & a debt of so many titles, which man doth owe to God, doubtles there lyeth vpō euery one of vs a heauy charge and care; and our case is somewhat feareful. For we haue not to do with a creditour that is a man like our selues, whose hands we may escape, but with one from whom we can no wayes hide our selues, but that he is able at al times to lay vs vp in prison, *Til we haue payed the very vtmost farthing.* Neither is it a slender offence, or one single errour, if we denie our selues to God, whose we are al, and wholy: but it contayneth as many errours in it, as there be titles for which God may iustly clayme vs. Wherfore if our Lord God would take the extremitie of the law against vs, & cal vs in a seuere Audit to giue a streight account of our whole receipt, no man at al would be found sufficient. For though we lay downe al before him (which some man would thinke to be very much) we can lay it downe but once; & yet al that which we haue, is not once only due vnto him: so that when in this manner we should parte with our selues wholy, & with our whole substance, it would perhaps discharge some one single bil, and scarce that, but al the rest would remayne vnanswered. Whervpon *S. Bernard* hath this witty saying Wilt thou haue two sonnes in law by one daughter? as the prouerbe gee's: Though heere thou lookst to haue many more then two. And yet the goodnes of God doth beare it, and not only beare it, but is glad of it, and doth hold himself not only satisfied, but wel dealt with al, if we once offer our selues wholy vnto him: which is performed in a Religious Estate. For in it al Religious wholy, togeather with their whole endeauours, are perfectly giuen and consecrate

Mat. 5. 26.

No man is able, to paye God so much as he owe's him.

S. Bernard ser. de quadrup. debito.

erate to the eternal Maiestie, no part or parcel reserued. It presenteth to God their bodies, & mouldeth them so by Chastitie, and perpetual Continence, that they are apt for whatsoeuer good Impression, and ready for al the Commands of God, as hauing their *loynes girt*, according to the wil of our Sauiour (which *S. Gregory* applyeth to *Chastitie*, & being *like to men Wayting the coming of their Maister*, it offereth vp their soules, which is a guift of farre greater value. Their life is wholy deuoted to the seruice of God, al their works, al their endeauours, their watchings, labours & paynes, their whole practise; finally, that which of al the rest is the cheefest, their wil (the Ladie & Mistresse ouer al that is in man) is dedicated vnto him: & by it consequently the whole man deliuered into his possession, and this by vertue of *Obedience*, of which they make a *vowe*, binding themselues therby not to desire any thing contrarie to the wil of God. Wherfore as it is the greatest happines and benefit that can fal to man, to be wholy subiect to God and wholy his, our whole saluation consisting in it; so this very thing is best and most assuredly performed in Religion: in which euery one resigning his owne wil & choyce, doth deliuer it into the hands of God, in presence of an other man, that the resignation therof may be the more certayne and euident: And it is the common doctrine of al Diuines concerning the nature and force of *Religion*, that it doth contayne a true and perfect deliuery of our selues to God, by solemne vow, so *S. Thomas* among the rest doth learnedly teach, and declare's it by this Example. As when a man hath promised a peece of land, and afterwards makes deliuerie of seizing in; or hauing promised to be an others seruant, and putt's himselfe presently into his seruice: The same doth he that giueth himself in this life to God, deliuering also possession of himself into his seruice. And *S. Augustine* vpon those words of the Psalme. *As he hath sworne to our Lord, hath vowed to the God of Iacob*: doth discourse to the same purpose. What do we vow, sayth he, but to be the Tẽples of God. For we can offer nothing to God, more acceptable, then if we say vnto him, with the Prophet Esay, *Possesse vs.* S. Chrisostome also in that eloquẽt epistle to *Theodore* the *Mõke*, hath this excellẽt saying: Now then hast nothing in thee at all, at thine owne dispose; since thou hast begunne to serue vnder so great a Cõmander: For if the wife hath not power ouer her owne body, but the Husbãd, much more those that liue rather to Christ our Sauiour, then to themselues, cãnot haue the dispos al of their owne bodies. And *Cassian* sayth, that this was one of the cheefe documents in which the ancient monks did instruct, and most carefully practise their followers. That they should not only renounce their external goods, and possessions, but withal acknowledge that they were noe more Maisters of themselues, but had giuen ouer, & lost al power & commaund in that kinde with whom *S. Basil* agreeth, saying: that euery Religious body must fully perswade himself that he is no more his owne man, but bound by God a slaue to his brethrẽ, & must make no other account, but behaue himself accordingly. *S. Bern.* is of the same opinion, and confirmes it out of the rule of *S. Benet.* that a Religious mã hath not power ouer his owne body. And explicating that passage of the Psal. *yet with thy eyes thou shalt see*, he sayth that this hath relatiõ to the time to come, to wit, when we shal come to the sight of God, in which God wil restore vs to our selues againe, & wil moreouer giue himself vnto vs: for here euery Religious man must acknowledg, & think with himself that his eyes be not his owne, but Gods; since by the vowes of Religion, renouncing his owne wil, he hath ingaged in his seruice

Luc 12. 35.
S. Gregory. Hom. 13. in Euang.

To be subiect to God is our greater happines.

S. Thomas 4. sent. d. 37. q. 2. p. 3.

S. August. in Ps. 131.

Es. 26 iuxta 70.
S. Ih. Chrysost ep ad Theod.

C. 2. c. 3.

S Basile Ep. ad Canon.
S. Bernard de præcep. & disp.
Idem in Ps. qui hab. s. 8.

The eyes of Religious persons are not their owne.

euery limme he hath: & cõsequently that it is a most greeuous sacriledge to vsurpe to himself, and his owne pleasure, the members which he hath thus dedicated to God, to bestow them vpon occasions of vanitie, curiositie, and worldy busines.

God doth perfectly possesse vs, by the vowes of Religion.

3. It is therfore certayne, that by a Religious course, and cheefly by the vowes of Religion, we haue this benefit, that God doth fully and perfectly possesse vs, because we giue our selues so wholy ouer vnto him, that he may without contradiction or resistance serue himselfe of vs, where, and when, and in what he wil, as we may serue our selues of any thing which we hold in our hand, to send vs, or to cal vs back; or to stay vs; to set vs high or lowe; to weaid & turne vs euery way, to alter; and place, and fashion vs as his owne. And to declare these spiritual, and hidden things by knowne examples and humane practise, as among men the dominion and proprietie of things is often by course of law made ouer from one to another, so it faleth out betwixt vs, and God: for by our owne voluntarie consent and act, we forgo the right which we had ouer our selues, and make it ouer to God. And as in worldly businesses there be certaine vsual formes of bargaining, established by statute or custume, which when they are once passed, they cannot be recalled, or broken off againe: as a deed of guift, or bargaine of sale, or exchange, so if we wel consider, we shal find al this in the contract between God & vs. For

First by way of Trust. 2. *Tim.* 1. 12

S. *Paul* cals it a *depositum*, or thing committed to an others keeping and trust, for thus he glories. *I know whom I haue beleeued, and am certaine, that he is able to keepe that which I haue cõmitted vnto him vntil that day, a iust Iudge.* For as in such a bargaine of trust, we commit a thing to an other to keepe for a time, and then to restore it, so we depriue our selues of our owne wil and freedome for a short time, to wit, til we enter into the ioy of our Lord: and then we receaue our wil & freedome againe, wholy and with large increase, and God doth restore vs to our selues as S. *Bernard* speaketh. Yet because in such a bargaine of trust, where we commit a thing to an others keeping, the right is still wholy in our selues, & in a Religious course we giue our selues so to God, as we reserue nothing at all of our selues. It may perhaps be more properly tearmed a *deed of guift*; because willingly, and of our owne accord we resigne our selues wholy to God: or a *bargaine of sale*; because we do not giue our selues away altogeather without present, or future gaine & profit, but we take for our guift a great recõpense & reward, to wit, euerlasting blisse. Or finally it may be called a bargaine by way *of exchange*: because at the very time of the bargaine, as we giue our selues to God, so God giue's himself to vs, though in a farre vnequall proportion. For God is exchanged for man, mortal for immortall, a wretched and poore thing, for him that is infinite & most glorious! But it suit's most with my conceit, that that which passeth betwixt a Religious man and God should be called *Restitution*, and me thinks it hath the nature and necessitie of it. For we restore to God that which is his: and whereas in all equitie and Iustice we must make Restitution to another man, of any thing that we haue of his: and if we do it not, we are guiltie of theft. Farre more necessarie is it, and more according to Iustice, that we should not keepe backe from God, what we haue of his, not one minute of time, for it would not be bare theft, but most enormous sacriledge. Wherevpon S. *Hylary* sayth, our Sauiour biddeth vs *restore to Cæsar, that which is Cæsars, and to God, the things which are his*: our bodie, our soule, our wil; for these things we haue originally frõ him, & haue them improued by him, therfore it is iust and reasonable, that euery one should restore themselues wholy

S. *Bern. in qui hab. ser.* 8.

Secondly by deed of Guift.

Or bargaine of sale.

Or by Exchange.

Or by way of Restitution.

S. *Hilarie in Matth.* 23.

wholy to him. From whom they must needs remember they haue receaued their beginning & their increase. *S. Augustine* speaketh to the same effect, & moreouer sayth, that this Restitution is most perfectly acted in the Religious vowes, which thing falleth fit for our purpose. In very deed, sayth he, if one do marke wel what he voweth to God, what vowes he rẽdreth, let him vow himself, let him rẽder himself to God. This is that which is exacted; this we owe, looking vpon the Coine, our Lord sayth: *Render to Cæsar, that which is Cæsars, & to God, that which is Gods.* The Image of Cæsar must be restored to Cæsar, the Image of God must be restored to God. Since therfore all Religious people haue so perfectly performed this obligatiõ, there can be no doubt but the promise of almightie God doth belong vnto them, which we find in the Prophet *Esaye*. *And now our Lord sayth these things, who hath created thee Iacob, and framed thee Israel; do not feare, because I haue redeemed thee, and haue called thee by thy name. Thou art mine.* A sweete and pleasant name, (*Thou art mine*) A name more glorious and more loftie, then all the titles of honour, and state, and descent, which this world can boast of. Which the same Prophet considering in an other place, weighing the Honour of those that glorie in that they belong to God, sayth: *This man wil say I am our Lords, and another wil call in the name of Iacob, and this man wil write with his hand, to our Lord; and in name wilbe I kened to Israel.* For they who take their oath, or vow, to Christ, may be sayd to writ with their hand; and they do most truly take vpon them the names of *Iacob* or *Israel*, who on the one side by their wisdome haue supplanted the wicked enemies, and on the other side haue made God himself stoop vnto them by their Humilitie.

S. Aug. in Ps. 115.

Es. 43. 1.

God may say that Religious people are properly his.

Es. 44. 5.

4. This is therfore, among the large commodities of a Religious Estate, as it were the ground and foundation: that it doth deliuer ouer to God the perfect possession of vs, which for two reasons is very profitable vnto vs. First because, by one and the same Act; and as it were with one peece of money, we discharge al those debts, which I formerly mentioned. Secondly because this very thing, to wit, that we belong to God, and are written as it were in the Inuentorie of his personall estate, doth bring vs profit without measure, and furnisheth our soules with all kind of commodities. Which *S. Augustine* doth expresly teach, saying. Let him possesse thee, that thou mayst possesse him. Thou shalt be his farme, thou shalt be his house: He possesseth thee, to benefit thee; He is possessed by thee, to improue thee; is it for any benefit he expects from thee? For I haue sayd to our Lord; *Thou art my God, because thou hast not need of my goods.* Neither must we wonder at this which I haue sayd; since *Aristotle* himself teacheth, and very truly, that whersoeuer things are so composed by nature, that there be some higher then others, and some lower, nothing can be more beneficial to the Inferiour, then to be perfectly subiect to them which are of a higher degree. For the body must needs suffer very much, if it be not gouerned by the soule; and much more, if the soule do leaue it. And in the soule it self, the Wil or naturall Inclination must needs be out of order, vnlesse Reason direct it. It is better also for al other liuing creatures, and beasts, to be subiect to man, then otherwise, because by him they are preserued, and haue sustenance and breeding from him. Seeing therefore a creature which by Nature is subiect to an other creature, is perfected by that subiection, and by the contrarie receaueth dommage; the same must necessarily fall out by farre greater reason betwixt a creature and God, & by perfect

Two commodities of deliuering ourselues to God.

S. Aug. in Ps. 34.

Ps. 15. 2.

Aristotle 1. Pol. 3.

The Inferiour is perfected by subiection to the superiour.

subiection vnto him, it must needs be aduanced. Contrariwise, when it shal, like the prodigal child, couet to haue in priuate possession the goods and substance belonging vnto it, and the state or portion seuered from God, our common Father and Lord of al, it cannot but suffer great dommage and losse, by want, famine, shame, dishonour and al other infortunate accidents.

OF THE SNARES AND OCCASIONS of sinne which are in the world.

CHAP. V.

LET vs cal to remembrance the ground and foundation of which we spake before, to wit, the general obligatiō in which al men stand bound to serue God, & to giue themselues wholy vnto him. And hauing now found out how fully this obligation is discharged by a Religious course of life, let vs consider in a worldly course, how farre it is from being fulfilled. That reflecting vpon the miserable and dangerous state of a secular life, we may better vnderstand the happines of Religion. For a man that hath been in the goale, shut vp closse prisonner, the more miserie he hath indured, doth value the benefit of his deliuerie at a truer rate; so though there be very many things in Religion, which do highly commend it, yet the wretched calamities of this world being wel considered, from which Religion doth free vs, wil make it the more desired. And these calamities and miseries be not hard to be discouered; they are no hidden and secret thing, but palpable, and open to the eye of euerie one that hath any eyes to see with. Yet because it vsually hapneth, that the greater the spirituall euil is, the lesse it is knowne and felt, because the nature of it is to dul the mind, and inueigle it with many errours. We wil propound some considerations, which touching vpon our very senses, may make vs the more capable of the truth.

The world a steepe and slipperie place.

2. Let vs therefore frame somewhat to our Imagination, a place very steepe and slipperie, where a man that is strong, and able, can hardly hold his feete. And in this place, one that is euen eaten-out with long and greeuous sicknes, and wholy decayed, and round about him, not one, but very many strong, and able men pressing vpon him to make him fall: such an one therefore, standing in such a place, how is it possible he should saue himself? This steepe and slippery place is the world; al men, are those that be so sick and feeble, the diuels, beare vs this great malice, and are thus diligent to worke vs mischief. The world without doubt is steepe and slipperie, and there is nothing more hard in it, then to keepe our selues from falling, and from falling so dangerously, that if once our footing begin to fayle, we can hardly recouer our selues, but shal runne downe headlong, and bruise our selues vpon al the Rocks of vices. The steepnes and slipperines of this world, be the occasions which are in it, and allurements to sinne, which are not to be reckoned. Yet if we wil summe them vp in briefe, they may be drawne to these three heads. First the corrupt & wicked lawes which it hath, quite contrarie to al order and goodnes. Secondly the examples of al lewd & naughty life, which are so familiar in it. And lastly the infinite occasions of sinne, like so many snares and ginnes to intrappe the poore soules of men.

3. The

3. The world hath his lawes and fashions, which he will haue kept by his followers; of the wickednes & malice wherof, it is enough to say, that they are quite contrarie to the holy and wholesome lawes of our Sauiour Christ. The lawes of Christ are these. *Blessed be the poore: Blessed be those that mourne, if one stricke thee on the one cheeke, turne him the other; our wil is to be denied; our Crosse taken vp*; and many such like. Now what be the decrees, and Axiomes of the world? They are not farre to seeke? Nothing is more miserable, and more base then Pouertie, nothing happier then to be Rich. We must cherish and pāper our body. We must giue our selues to al kinds of pleasure. It is a braue thing to beare sway amōg others, to rule & commād; to be cōmēded, & spoken-of by euery body. If any body giue me an ill word, I must beate him. If he strike me, I must kil him. These lawes are euery where in force. These are the rules of euery bodies actiōs, thoughts, and life. This is the talke at home & abroad, in publick & in priuate meetings, in euery ones mouth & at the end of euerie busines. No sooner are childrē put to schoole, but vnder their Parēts, & their Maisters elbow they learne these principles, & are seazoned betimes with al wicked and erroneous perswasions of this nature, in those tender yeares when their minds are most pliable, & most apt to take impression. But much more when they come abroad into the world, and begin to conuerse with others; for then the cōmō voice of euerie bodie, praysing & practising that which is vitious, doth carrie thē into al corruption. For when a man see's tēporal & earthly things so extolled; riches & honour, & al kind of vanitie so violētly sought after; who is there so wise or stout, as to be able to withstand the current of al mens iudgemēts, speeches and persuasiōs, and not to suffer himself to be borne downe with the streame? For as a man that is in a narrow passage, if he meete a throng of people & striue against it, is more likely to be caried away in the croude, then to breake thorough: so when the minds, & opiniōs, & behauiour of a great many do Side al one way, it is farre easier, and more vsual to be caried away with the most, then to be able to beare the brūt, and ouercome them. For first our vnderstāding is ouerruled by the iudgemēt of so many that thinke, & speake, & do otherwise; that we can hardly conceaue how we can do amisse in taking the way, which is so common, and so troaden by euery body. Or if a man be so wise, & so happy, as to conceaue his errour, yet he hath à greater combat in hand, to bring himself to do that which he knowes to be better for him. For presently he shal be set vpon by whole troops of the contrarie partie, labouring with al might & maine to put him off from it, either by persuasion, and intreatie, or by scoffs & taunts, or by il language behind his back. And man (alas) at such an exigent, is so weake & poore, that he cannot tell how to make light of what men thinke & say of him; which hath beene the raine of many, who at first haue entred courāgiously vpon a course of vertue, but haue beene most miserably & shamefully driuen back from it, by the speech of the vulgar, and sometimes by their friends, sometimes by their enemies tongues. These therefore, be the lawes of the world, which hee doth striue to maintayne with al his strength and power.

The lawes of the world.

It is hard to striue against the streame.

3 The second point of danger in the world is euill Exāple; For when the disorders of other men, their wāton behauiour, & dishonestie, their vanities, & Ambitiōs, & other sinnes, are continually before our eyes, though we know them to be sinnes, yet they haue a speciall kind of force to peruerte vs. Either because we begin to thinke it lesse euill, in regard it is so general, and so familiarly practised by most men: or because it is natural to euery man, to do that willingly

Euil Example. And the dāger of it.

and with eaſe, which he ſee's an other do before him that is like himſelf. But
Eccl. 13. 1. whatſoeuer the reaſon be, it is certaine that there is ſcarce to be found a quicker
ſpurre to ſinne, then euill example, which the wiſe man ſheweth by this ſimili-
S. Hierome Ep. 7. tude: *He that toucheth pitch shalbee defiled by it, and he that commoneth with the proude, wil put on pride.* And *S. Hierome* confirmeth it ſaying: It is an eaſy thing to imitate
S. Cypr. de Spect. that which is euill, and whoſe vertues thou canſt not follow, thou wilt quickly expreſſe their vices. And *S. Cyprian* ſayth: Our eyes and our eares are to be carefully guarded, for we are quickly inured in the vice to which we hearken. For the nature of man is of it ſelf vitiouſly enough inclined, what then wil become of it, when it ſhalbe prouoked by example? And he that fals of his owne accord, what wil he do when he is thruſt along? For as in corporall things fire is bred by fire, and euery thing is ingendred by another like vnto it: ſo in our ſoules, pride breeds pride, and anger breeds anger, and euery vice is apt to breed the like vice in an others mind, euen though the partie know not, or think not of it; oftentimes alſo though he ſtriue againſt it: for ſtealing into our mind by our eares and eyes by litle and litle, they cleaue ſo faſt, that they cannot chooſe but make ſome impreſſion in it, and alter it for the worſe. By which we may ſee how dangerous a thing it is to liue in the world, where ill examples are ſo rife, and do ſo continually beate vpon our ſoules, and prouoke them to ſinne. And for this cauſe *S. Auguſtine* doth ſo violently bewayle his youth ſpent in the ſtreets of Babylon, (as he call's it) where hearing his equalls and compagnions, and thoſe that were of the ſame age, and ſtanding with him, boaſting their wickednes, and glorying
S. Aug. 2. Con. 6. 3. & 9. the more, the greater villanies they did commit; he was prouoked not only to do the like, but to feine things which he had not done, that he might not be accounted the more abiect, becauſe he was the more innocent, and held to be more baſe, becauſe he was more chaſt: for euill compagnie is too too contagious a thing, when we heare people ſay, let vs go; let vs do it; and it is a ſhame not to be quite ſhameleſſe.

Occaſions of ſinne and the multitude of them. 3. The third Rock with which we meete in this world, be the *Occaſions of ſinne*, which hedge a man in on euery ſide, and it is not poſſible to auoyd them, becauſe they are in euery thing which we handle, and in euery buſines we deale in. To
S. Leo. ſer. 5. in quadrag. which purpoſe *S. Leo* ſayth very well, that all things are full of danger, all things full of ſnares. Luſtfull deſires do egge vs on; pleaſures way-laye vs. Gaine ſpeakes vs fayre. Loſſe affrights vs. A ſlaundering tongue is bitter. And thoſe that
" prayſe vs, ſay not alwayes true. And in an other place: There is treacherie in the
" open field of Riches, and treacherie in the ſtrayts of Pouertie. Thoſe fill vs with
" pride, theſe fill vs with complaints. Health is a temptation, ſicknes is a tempta-
" tion. That makes vs careleſſe, this makes vs ſad, and penſiue. There is a ſnare
" in ſecuritie, there is a ſnare in feare; and the matter is not great, whether the mind
Idem ſ. 11. that is earthly giuen, be ouertaken with ioy or with care: for the diſeaſe is alike, whether a man reioyce in vaine pleaſure, or groane vnder heauy vexation. And this ſhall ſuffice concerning the danger of the place. Now let vs ſee the weaknes and infirmitie of man, that dwelleth in a place ſo full of danger and perill: which though euery one do ſufficiently feele in himſelf by experience, yet holy Scripture doth put vs often in mind of it, and lay it before our eyes very plainly. As when
Gen. 8. 21. Rom. 7. 13. it ſayth: *the ſenſe and thought of mans hart are prone to euill from his youth*: & *S. Paul*.

The weakneſſe of man.

1 ſee

I see an other law in my members, fighting against the law of my mind, and bringing it into captiuitie vnder the lawe of synne. This lawe of the members is no other then the force of concupiscence, which taking the bit in her mouth, wil not only not be gouerned by reason, as it ought, but doth often times bring it into captiuitie and thraldome, and lay it at the foote of her lust: which corruption and disorder is so much the more greeuous, and more ful of danger, because it is not bred in vs of late dayes, and by easy and slight means, but it is an euil which we haue contracted from the beginning, by the disobedience of our first father, and is soe inbred in our nature, that togeather with nature we receaue the corruption therof, and are forced whether we wil, or no, to carie it about vs, and do moreouer increase it dayly by our owne offences and wickednes. *Rom. 7. 23.*

4. *S. Thomas* doth teach that by that one synne which originally in *Adam* we al committed, we receaued in out soule and body foure most greeuous wounds, which by euery synne which afterwards we commit, waxe green againe, and become farre more fowle and worse. The first wound is *Ignorance*, which extinguishing the light of *Prudence and wisdome*, doth almost put out the eye of *Reason*: The second wound is *Malice*, which bereauing the wil of the guift of *Iustice*, doth thrust it allwayes vpon that which is euil: The third and fourth are *Infirmitie* and *Concupiscence* which with ioynt forces setting vpon al the inclinations of our mind, do on the one side disarme it of *Fortitude* and make vs shrink away from euery thing that is hard; and strippe vs on the other syde of the vertue of *Temperance*, leading vs as beasts into al kind of sensual pleasures, without shame or moderation. Therfore *S. Augustin* sayth wel that the state of our soules, (euen after they haue been washed by baptisme) is fitly expressed in the parable of him that falling into the hands of theeues, was wounded with many wounds, and left half dead. For though he were caried into the Stable, or Inne (by which, he sayth, is meant the Church) though wine and oyle, as present and powerful remedies, were powred into his wounds, yet stil he is faint and feeble, and wil allwayes be soe, til as *S. Paul* desired, *he be deliuered from this body of death.* What therfore wil become of this man that is so weake, and but half aliue, if in a place so disaduantagious, he be set vpon by his enemie; and an enemie so strong, *that no power on earth can be compared with him*, an enemie *that rangeth like a roaring Lion*, and is so; not only in fiercenes and crueltie, but in strength and abilitie? Who can be able to withstand his shock, and rage, & defend himself from his poysoned weapons? Especially seeing, as *Cassian*, sayth, it is not one enemie which we haue to do with; but there be troopes without number armed against euery one of vs, & al of them mercyleſſe, and sauage, and thirsting nothing but our hart blood and ruine. Besids that they are inuisible and cannot be discouered before hand, or auoyded, which make's the euent of this spiritual battaile the more disastrous to euery body; the enemies charge being so hot, and the incounter so secret; besids that he is very expert in al kinds of stratagemes; *and sometimes* as *S. Bernard* speaketh, he setts vpon vs and pursue's vs with open warre, and hotly: sometimes with secret sallies, and deceitfully, but allwayes most maliciously and cruelly; and who is able (sayth he) I do no say to ouercome; but to withstand these things?

Foure wounds receaued by Original synne. *S. Tho. 1. 2. q. 85. & 2.* *S. Aug. de reb Ap 5. 3.* *Rom. 7. 24.* *Iob 41. 24. 1. Pet. 5. 8.* *Cassian. col. 2. c. 11.* *S. Bernard s. de 7. frag.*

5. Such is therfore the miserable state of this world, which *S. Iohn* the Apostle expresseth in few words, but diuinely saying, *The World is al placed in Naughtines,* *1. Io. 5. 19.*

as if he had sayd, it is so ful of vice and corruption, so desperately naught and perished, that it hath not one patch whole & sound in it. But now if we wil not only imagin what it is, but see it with our very eyes; and take a thorough view of it, to the end we be not deceaued with the outward face it beareth; we must mount vp into that high watch towre of which *S. Cyprian* maketh mention, & from thence behold it from end to end; & consider with attention the seueral imployments of men in this world; their cares, their thoughts, their busines, their curiosities, their labours, their speeches, their traffick and al their doings; for thus certainly we shal discouer, so much vanitie in al their idle toyes, so much filth in al their synne & wickednes, such villanie & vncleanesse among them, that the man must be a very stock and stone, without sense or feeling, that doth not tremble at it: & shal proue himself to haue very litle or no care at al of his owne saluation, if presently he resolue not to withdraw himself, out of so miserable, and stinking, and abominable receite of beasts & Monsters, into some place of more safti & quiet. *Which deluge of* euills (for so I may cal it) couering the face of the whole earth, though it be elegantly and copiously described by *S. Cyprian*, yet I wil rather take the description therof out of holy scripture; the auctoritie of it being of farre greater weight. This is therfore the thing which the Prophet *Dauid* in the psalmes doth set forth with great Maiestie of words, saying. *Our lord hath looked downe frō heauen to see, if there be any that vnderstand and seeke after God.* And addeth what that diuine eye beheld among men: *They haue al declined, they are altogeather made vnprofitable, there is none that doth good, no not so much as one.* Who would beleeue it that in so great a number, in a world so packt togeather with men, there should not one be found that did wel, but that God himself by the mouth of the Prophet hath deliuered it? But his meaning is that though there be some good among many euil, they are so few, that he chose to say, there was not so much as one: Then he rehearseth and detesteth their wickednes. *Their threate is an open sepulcher; they haue dealt deceitfully with their tongues: The venome of the Aspis is vnder their lipps; their mouths are ful of cursing and bitternes!* And thus they offend with their tongue. What are their works? *Their feete are swift to sheed blood, contrition, and infelicitie in their wayes, and they haue not knowne the wayes of peace.* Finally he concludeth with that which is as it were the Total of al euills. *The feare of God is not before their eyes*: The Prophet *Osee* speaketh also to the same effect. *There is no truth, there is no mercy. There is not the knowledge of God on earth. Cursing, and lying, & theft and adulterie haue ouerflowne, and blood hath touched blood.* The like hath *Hieremie* the Prophet, who bringeth God speaking in this manner. *Goe round the wayes of Hierusalem, locke and consider, and seeke in the streetes therof, whether you can finde a man doing Iustice, and seeking after fidelitie, and I wil be merciful vnto him.* And least a man might think that one only kind, or race of men, stood thus guiltie of al wickednes, he passeth further. *But I sayd, perhaps the poore, are fooles, and know not the way of our Lord, the iudgment of their God. I wil goe therfore to the better sorte, and speake to them. For they haue knowne the way of our Lord; and behold these haue more broken of the yoake, they haue burst the bonds in sunder, I haue filled them, and they haue committed adulterie; they are made like horses that locke after the mare, and stalions; they haue neyghed euerie one after the wife of his neighbour;* Thus spake the holy Prophets, or rather God by their mouth. Wherby we may moreouer vnderstand how ancient this disease of the world is, and how farre it must needs haue spread, and rooted it self in the extent of so many yeares: and we may wel

The wickednes of this world. *S. Cyprian l. 2. ep. 2.*

Psal. 13. 2.

Osee 4. 1.

Hier. 5. 1.

wel think that as it hapneth in the bodies of euery liuing thing, ſo the world growing old and decrepit, in this laſt howre therof, as we may ſay, al the ſuyce of pietie and deuotion, being dried vp, and the vital vigour of diuine loue eaten away and extinguiſhed, it hath no more ſtrength and force in a manner left, but dayly decaye's and growe's worſe and worſe. For that which truth it ſelf hath foretold muſt needs come to paſſe, *The Charitie of many wil waxe cold, and iniquitie wil abound*; & in an other place; *when the Sonne of man shal come doſt thou think he shal find faith on earth*? Which being ſo, what muſt neceſſarily follow therof, but, which is to be bewayled with a whole world of teares, that an infinite multitude of men created al for eternal bliſſe, & the ioyes of heauen, careleſſe of this hope, careleſſe of the diuine promiſſes, & blinded with the fayre outſide of theſe temporal things, *leading their dayes in good things*, and al kind of pleaſure, as holy *Iob* ſpeaketh, *shal in a point of time, in a moment deſcend into Hel fire*. Which the Prophet *Eſaye* doth alſo moſt ſeuerely denounce. *Therfore hath Hel dilated his ſoule, & opened his mouth without any bound, & his ſtronge ones shal deſcēd vnto him, & his high ones, & thoſe that are glorious*: And this hath not only been foretold vs by the holy Prophets, but God hath ſhewed it in diuers viſions at ſeueral times, & in particular in that which we read in the Hiſtorie of *S. Francis* his order, not long after the beginning of the ſame order. For when *Bertholdus* a famous man of that holy Religion, was one day preaching in Germanie, and had earneſtly inueighed againſt a certayne vice: a woman there preſent, & guiltie of that ſynne, fel inſtantly dead in the midſt of the people, by force of her ſorrow & contrition: & while euery bodie betooke himſelf to prayer, ſhe came to life againe, & related the cauſe of her ſuddayne death, & how she was commanded to returne to her body, that shee might confeſſe her ſynne and be abſolued. Then shee ſpake of many things, which she had ſeen, but one thing cheefly which is moſt feareful & wonderous. That when she ſtood before the iudgment ſeate of God, there were at that inſtant brought thither threeſcore thouſand ſoules, which by ſundry chances, in ſeueral quarters of the world, among Chriſtians & Infidels, had thē newly departed this life, & of al this huge number, three only were ſent to Purgatorie, al the reſt were condemned to hel fire one only man of *S. Francis* his order dying alſo at that very time, paſſed through Purgatorie, but ſtayed not long there & tooke with him to heauen, the ſoules of two that had been his intire friends in this world. Many other ſuch kind of viſions & Reuelatiōs we may read, but I wil content my ſelf with this one, it hauing ſo many witneſſes vnto it, as there were people at the ſermon; and expreſſing both the things which heere we treat of, to wit, the dangers of this world, out of which ſo few do eſcape with ſafetie; & the ſecuritie of a Religious eſtate which relieueth others alſo.

Mat.24.12, Luc 18.8.

Iob 21.13. Eſaye 5.14.

In the Hiſtorie of S. Francis his order.

A memorable Example.

Three euills of this world, of which S. Iohn doth aduertiſe vs.

CHAP. VI.

HItherto we haue ſpoken of the miſeries & dangers of the world in general; though too compendiouſly, in regard of the number & greatnes of them; for to expreſſe them, as they deſerue, we had need of a volume as big as the world it ſelf, which is ſo ful of miſerie; wherfore ſince it is fitting we ſhould yet ſpeake ſomething more amply, and more particularly of them, what can we ſay

that can be better ſpoken, or be of greater weight and moment, then that which we find in *S. Iohn* the Apoſtle, who giue's vs this aduiſe; *Loue not the world, neither the things which are in the world, if any loue the world, the charitie of the father is not in him;* 1. Io 2.15. *becauſe al that is in the world, is concupiſcence of the flesh; and concupiſcence of the eyes, and pride of life.* How foule and abominable a body is it, which is compoſed of three ſo foule, and ſo abominable members? And that the whole kingdome of this world, is fitly diuided into theſe three parts, and as it were prouinces, and countryes; is a thing which may be eaſyly vnderſtood, becauſe whenſoeuer a man begin's to caſt aſide the thought of Heauenly things, and to beſtow himſelf wholy vpon things preſent & temporal; Three things offer themſelues vnto him, vpon which he may ſet his affection: Firſt al external things; and to theſe doth belong the *Concupiſcence of the eyes*, that is, the vnquenchable thirſt of Auarice. Secondly his own body, inuiting him to pamper, and feed it with euery thing, that is delightful & pleaſing; which is *concupiſcence of the flesh*: Thirdly he meets with other men; ouer whom to haue command, or at leaſt to be renowned & prayſed among them, or to ouer-top them in any kind, is held to be a great thing; and is that which the Apoſtle doth cal *Pride of life*. Wherfore al thoſe that ſerue this world & ſubiect themſelues to temperal things, are ſlaues to one, or more of theſe three: And theſe are as it were, three nets, which the craftie poacher of mens ſoules, doth lay ſo thick, that whoſoeuer eſcape's one, is catched in an other. Theſe are three kinds of darts, which the enemie of mankind doth inceſſantly brandish againſt vs, or rather three warlike engines wherby he doth continually labour to shake, weaken, & beate downe the very foundation of a Chriſtian life. Therfore let vs conſider with attention, in what manner euerie one of theſe do hinder and ſtop our paſſage to heauen.

Three things which tēpt our Affection.

The danger of wordly wealth. *Luc 5. 24. Matt. 19. 23. 24.*

2. And concerning the *Concupiſcence of the Eyes*, we read that Oracle of our Sauiour; *Woe be to you that be rich*, In which one ſyllable (*Woe*) he comprehendeth al euills, calamities & miſeries. And in an other place more playnly, & more ſignificantly, he ſayth: *Amen I ſay vnto you, that a rich mā shal hardly enter into the kingdome of heauen*, and againe, *I ſay vnto you, it is eaſyer for a Camel to paſſe through a needles eye, then for a rich man to enter into the kingdome of heauen*; what can we deſire more? Is it not proofe enough to euery Chriſtian man, that our Lord & Sauiour, Truth it ſelf, hath ſayd it, & ſayd it ſo playnly, and ſo expreſly as we ſee? For if we beleeue al other Myſteries of our faith, as the Miſterie of the Bleſſed Trinitie, of the Real Preſence, and ſuch like, for this reaſon only, becauſe our Sauiour who cannot ly, hath taught them; and notwithſtanding natural reaſon falls short of them, and humane capacitie cannot diue ſo farre as to conceaue the depth of them; yet we beleeue them ſtrongly, and with that aſſurednes that we are ready to lay downe our liues, rather then to forgo them; why should not the ſame Auctoritie, ſway vs alſo in this point concerning riches; though the caſe ſtood ſo that it were not poſſible for vs, to behold with our eyes, the harme that is in them? But it is not a thing ſo hard to conceaue, nor ſo hidden or remoued from our ſenſe and vnderſtanding, as be thoſe other Miſteries; For if we wil diue into the cauſes and reaſons why Riches are ſo dangerous, we shal find them to be foure. The firſt is becauſe in the purchaſing, and increaſing of wealth, many ſynnes are eaſyly committed: of which *Saint Paul* giues vs notice ſaying: *They that wil become rich fal into temptation; and into the snare of the Diuel, and into many vayne and*

Fowre cauſes why Riches are dangerous. 1. *Tim. 6. 9.*

vnprofitable

vnprofitable desires, which cast a man headlong into destruction and perdition. Wherefore *S. Gregorie* in his moralls sayth wel, that it is very seldome seen that those that haue store of gold, should come to eternal rest; seeing, Truth it self hath sayd: It is hard for those that haue money, to enter into the kingdome of heauen; for they that heere gape after the increase of riches, what ioy can they hope for in the life to come? And yet more effectually in his Pastoral, he sayth: They that are hot vpon suddaine increase of wealth, let them hearken to that which is written, *He that maketh hast to be rich, shal not be innocent*; for certainly the man that is ambitious to increase his riches, is careless in auoyding sinne; and (as a sylly bird,) whilst he greedily looketh after the bayte of earthly substance, he heeds not the snare of sinne, that doth strangle him. They that couet after whatsoeuer gayne this present world can affoard them, and heed not the future dommage which they may suffer, let them heare what is written: *The inheritance which we make hast vnto in the beginning, at last wil want a blessing*; for this present life is the beginning, which leadeth vs in the end, to the portion of blessednes: therefore they that make hast to haue their inheritance in the beginning, cut themselues off from the blessed portion which they should haue in the end: because whil'st heere they desire increase through wicked auarice, they are there dis-inherited from the euerlasting pattimonie; and those that couet to haue al; or are able to compasse al that they couet after; let them giue eare to what is vritten: *What doth it auayle a man, if he gayne the whole world, and suffer losse of his owne soule*; as if Truth it self had sayd, what doth it avayle a man to rake to himself al that is without him, if he damne this one thing, which is himself. &c.

S. Greg. 4. mor. c. 3. *Idem in Pastor. 3. p. adm. 21.* *Prou. 28. 20* *Prou 20. 21* *Matth. 16. 26.*

3. Thus it fare's with vs in the purchase of Riches; how is it in the possession and vse of them? For this is another great incommoditie of being rich, because it is not credible, how it doth dead, and extinguish the practice of vertue, and al affection, and thought of heauenly things, razing the very memorie of them out of our mind, and carying it quite an other way; to wit, vpon the care and sollicitude how to keepe that which we haue gotten vpon earth. For al kind of worldly wealth and riches, being of their owne nature perishable, and subiect allwayes to wast and decay; and moreouer lying open to the wrongs, and rapine of other folke, and al vnfortunate mischances, and yeilding continual matter of debate, and strife, and suites in law; no forecast or prouision can be great enough to preserue them; Whereby the mind of a rich man distracted with many cares, and diuided within it self, is euery day duller, and duller, for any busines that concernes the seruice of God, and hauing nothing day by day but earth in his thought, and earth in his hand, by litle and litle he becometh wholy earthly. Whereupon *S. Ambrose* is of opinion that our Sauiour for this reason chiefly, began his sermon, from the Commendation of Pouertie. Because, sayth he, Pouertie is the first in the rank of vertues, and as it were a mother and breeder of them; for he that shal haue set worldly things at naught, may wel deserue the things eternal; but no man can be worthy of the kingdome of heauen, that being possessed with affection of this world, hath not power so much as to lift vp his head out of it. *S. Hierome* thought, and wrot the same thing; to wit, that vertue, and riches, cannot dwel togither in one mans breast; and he confirmeth it by the example of a Heathen philosopher; for *Crates*, sayth he, the *Thebæan*, a man in his time very wealthy, when he went to *Athens*, to betake himself to philosophie, cast away a great

The 2. Incõueniẽce of being Rich.

S. Ambrose l. 5. in Luc. *S. Hierome p. 13.*

» a great masse of gold & siluer; making account with himself, that it was not pos-
» sible for him to be Maister of vertue and riches both at once. And we, stuffed
» vp to the very eyes, think we can follow the pouertie of our Sauiour Christ:
S. Bernard Ep. 103. And S. Bernard, sayth in few words most pithyly. Blessed is he that hunteth not after those things, which when we possesse them, they ouer-load vs; when we
» loue them, they defile vs, when we leese them, they torment vs. For such bee the fruits of riches, that though we do not set our hart to them; yet the care & administration of them is toylesome. But if we loue them also, then they defile our soule; and do as it were cast durt vpon the face and beautie of it. If moreouer we chance to leese them all, or in part, as in the midst of so many seueral chances, nothing is more easy; then they vexe and torment vs; and not only when we come in good earnest to leese them, but long before, and in very deed alwayes, because there is alwayes a possibilitie of leesing them.

The 3. mischeef of being rich. 4. The third mischeef of Riches be certaine vices which vsually accompayny them. For Riches and vices though in name they some-what agree, yet much more in qualitie. And first S. Bernard sayth the fulnes and abundance of temporal things, begets want and forget fulnes of the eternal. For a man that is ful fed and in a manner glutted with the things of this life, not only, doth not hunger after things of the life to come, but can hardly cal them to mind, or once think of them: yea you cannot put him in mind of a thing that is more distastful. Wherfore the Wise man sayth truly. *O death, how bitter is the memorie of thee, to a man that hath peace in his substance?* And this obliuion is not alone. For commonly, or rather I may say, there necessarily followe's pride, disdaynefulnes, and insolencie. For as S. Augustine sayth very wel, Riches breed nothing more naturally, them Pride: Euery fruite, euery graine, euery corne, euery tree, hath his wormes. The worme of riches is Pride. Moreouer by this worldly happines, and abundance of wealth, men grow to a kind of boldnes, and too much confidence of themselues and their owne strength, which some may perhaps think to be a smal fault. But our Sauiour Christ esteemed it a matter of so great moment, that for this very cause he sayd, it was *not possible for a rich man to enter into the kingdome of heauen.* And it is written in the Prouerbs. *He that confideth in his riches, shal fal.* And in the Psalmes: *They that confide in their strength, and glorie in the multitude of their riches.* And to the same purpose is that which we read in *Ecclesiasticus*, of not placing our trust in *money hoarded vp*; which the holy Ghost reckoneth to be of so great weight, that as if it were aboue the power of man to do it, he addeth with admiration. *Who is he, and we wil prayse him?* And thus much we may say truly of them, that Riches are Instruments to al euil, both in regard of the power which is in them, for as the *Ecclesiastes* sayth *Al things obey money*; and by reason that most cõmonly those that haue them in great abundance, stand not in awe of any thing; which is a great spurr to sinne; Wherfore our Sauiour Christ doth with great reason likẽ al earthly riches to *Thornes*; not only because they choake the Corne of vertue, and good Counsel, but because they rend the mind in peeces; and as S. Gregorie sayth dragging it euen to synne, they leaue it al goare blood by the wound
» which they giue it.

Diuitijs & vitijs magna est Affinitas.

S. Bernard serm. 2 de Aduent.

Eccl. 41. 1.

S. Aug. de verb. D. s. 5

Mat. 19.

Prou 11 28.

Ps. 48. 7.

Eccl. 31. 9.

Eccl. 10. 19.

Mat 13. 22.

S. Gr. Hom. 15. in Euāg.

The 4. mischeef of Riches. 5. A fourth euill which comes by riches, is, that very thing which makes them so much desired by most men, & esteemed so great a happinesse; to wit, sumptuous furnitures, gorgeous apparel, dayntie fare, a galant life lead in ease and plentie
» and

and al corporal pleasure. Wherefore we shal do wel to bethink our selues how preiudicial these delights do proue, and learne what come's of them, by that Rich man of old, *who was buried in Hell*; not becausse he had robbed others of that which belonged vnto them (for we read no such thing of him) but becausse *he was clad in purple, and silks, and fared euery day magnifically*; And that which *S. Gregorie* sayth is wel to be noted, that those whom God hath once cast off, haue al things at wil in this life; as it is a custome amongst vs to denie the sicke nothing, when they are giuen ouer by the physitian; and so they are lead to the dungeon of hell and eternal death; through the pleasant fields and meadowes of this world. But whom would it not affright to heare that which the Prophet threatneth; *woe be to you that sleepe in beds of yuorie, and are wanton in your Couches; you that eate the calfe from the heard; and drink wines taken from the lees; and are annoynted with the best oyntments.* *S. August.* writes an Epistle to one *Proba* a noble and wealthy woeman; wherein among many other good Instructions, he aduiseth her that in the middest of her dayntie, she set them not to her hart, least sucking the corruption of them, they be her death. And moreouer that to auoyd this poyson, many haue forsaken the world, and they that haue not done so, wil haue much a do, to set their accounts streight. These delights, sayth he, in which if a widdow liue, that is, if she dwel vpon them, and be intangled in pleasures of the flesh, liuing, she is dead, many holy men and holy woemen shunning by al possible meanes, haue cast away the very Mothers of them, that is *Riches*; and haue dealt them among the poore, and so layd them vp more safe in the heauenly Treasurie: which course if thou also do not runne, as being withheld by some office of deuotion, thou knowst what account thou canst giue to God of them. And thus farre shal be sufficient that we haue spoken of riches; of the dangers wherof, what can be sayd more mouing and feareful, then that which the holy Ghost hath penned by the hand of *S. Iames*, with so heauy threats. *Go to now you rich men, lament, houling in your miseries, which shal come vpon you. Your Riches are corrupted and your garments are eaten by the moths. Your gold and your syluer hath taken rust, and the rust of them shal be a testimonie against you, and shal eate your flesh like fire; you haue hoarded vp a treasure of wrath for your selues in the latter dayes, you haue fared wel vpon earth, and haue nursed vp your harts in luxuries, against the day of slaughter.* This is spoken, not by an *Ambrose* or a *Chrysostome*, or by some other wise and learned man, but by the *Eternal wisdome* it selfe, by the *holy Ghost* in Scripture, whereof not one sentence, not one title can fall to the ground without effect. What man therfore is there whom these threats wil not terrifie, and so plaine a declaration of the euils which lurk in riches? Certainly if a Physitian should giue vs warning that in such a dish of meate were poyson or that it were hurtful for vs, we should easily forbeare it, though it were otherwise dayntie and delicious, and we would not so much as touch it for feare of our liues. And yet the Physitian is but a man, who may deceaue vs and be deceaued. God doth so often, & so assuredly, and in such weightie tearmes forewarne vs, and giue vs notice that Riches are hurtful, and very poyson to our soules; and what madnes is it to hazard, not our temporal, but our eternal life, and euerlasting glorie, vpon so base and so brickle a thing; and set it vpon the dice of riches? *For what doth it auayle a man if he gayne*, I say not one kingdome, but I say, as our Sauiour sayd, *if he gaine the whole world, and suffer losse of his owne soule?*

Luc. 16. 19.

S. Greg. 11. mor. 4.

Amos 6. 4.

S. August. Epist. 121.

Iacob 5. 1.

Matth. 16. 26.

The vnworthynes and mischeefe of Carnall pleasure.

6. Let vs now speake of the *Concupiscence of the flesh*; and we shal not need to speake much to conuince and condemne it for wicked and dangerous. Nature it self, and the light which is bred in euery mans mind from his cradle, doth sufficiently condemne it. For we shal neuer meete with a man that is so vtterly shameless and impudent, and hath lost so much of the face of a man, but that he wil conceale and dissemble, not only his acts, but his inclinations in this kind, and blush if at any time they suddainly shew themselues. Whereby we may see how vnworthy this kind of pleasure is, and how vnsuitable to the Noblenes of mankind. And in very deed there is no one thing which makes vs more like to beasts, or rather very beasts, then this one beastly vice. For it doth take from vs al reasonable discourse, by which alone we are and shew our selues to be men; it barre's al kind of Councel, it dasle's, and dull's, and blind's the mind, and drowne's our thoughts in durt and filth. And there is not that good thing which this corruption doth not chase vtterly out of our mind, nor any mischeefe, which it doth not bring into it. Wherefore *S. Greg.* as he turneth al things to a moral sense, doth apply to this vice, that with which in the booke of kings the Prophet *Samuël* doth vpbraid king *Agag*, that his sword had *made mothers without Children.* For by that king who was very fat and pursey, he vnderstandeth luxurie, the pleasure whereof if it be suffered to be like a sword vnsheathed, it presently murtherer hal good thoughts, al vertue, and al good deeds. And moreouer whereas it is related in the same booke, that the people of Israel were deliuered from the *hand of the destroyers*; he doth interpret these *destroyers* to be the violent motions of Concupiscence, of which it is sayd besids in the booke of *Iob*; *that it is a fire vnto perdition, rooting out al generations. The destroyer*, sayth he, *is the spirit of fornication, for Whosoeuer it doth enter vpon, it leaues him not one sole gurst of vertue. The tender plants in gardens are also sayd to be destroyed: for, Which are the Gardens of the heauenly Bride-groome, but the harts of the Saints, fenced by their owne watchful care, and set al with flowers through the sweete odour of Chastitie? For while they intertayne no dishonest motion, The white flowre of their shamefastnes is an honour vnto them. Therefore the vncleane spirits are the destroyers, because if they chance to deceaue those honest harts, the harts deceaued lese the tender flowers of so great a vertue.*

S. Gregorie Moral. l. 4. c. 27.

1. Reg. 15. 33.

1. Reg. 14. 48

Iob. 31. 12.

7. And in this manner to bereaue a soule of al her honour & ornament, is not the sole mayme and mis-fortune which dishonestie bringeth, but as I sayd before, it leadeth after it al manner of vices, as so many souldiars of the contrarie partie into a Cittie surprised by the enemie; and those vices especially which *S. Gregorie* sometimes cals the Armie, sometime the daughters of luxurie, as being neuer from her, but stil hanging at her elbow. Luxurie, sayth he, breeds blindnes of hart, inconsideration, vnconstancie, headlong resolutions, the loue of our selues, the hatred of God, affection to this present world, and a horrour of the world to come, or desperation. *S. Bernard* also among the other Chariots of king *Pharao*, pursuing the seruants of God when thy fled from him, doth make a pleasant description of the Chariot of luxurie, running vpon foure vices, as vpon foure wheeles, to wit, riotous feeding, soft and nice cloathing, excesse of ease & sleepe, and the stinking heate of Concupiscence: The Horses are two that draw it, the Prosperitie of this life, and Abundance of al things; One also sitts vpon each horse, to wit, slothful lithernes, and blind securitie. Neither of these haue any spurres, because in the iolitie of this pleasure there must be nothing that may

S. Gregorie Moral. l. 30. c. 17.

The Chariot of luxurie.

S. Bernard ser. 55. in Cant.

bring

bring any disquiet, or vexation: but they hold a Canopee in their hands, to make shaddow vnto them, which is dissimulation, and careleſſenes of any future thing which they should prouide. For it is proper, sayth he, to an effeminate and nice disposition, to waiue euen necessarie care, and to liue vnder the couert of dissimulation, that it may not feele the scalding heate of anxietie.

8. There remayneth Pride of life among the three Euils we were to speake of; which vice how forcibly it doth not only hinder, but ouerthrow the health of our soules, that one saying of our Sauiour Christ, which we find in *S. Iohn* spoken to the Iewes, doth sufficiently demonstrate; *How can you beleeue, who receaue glorie from one another?* So great is the darknes, and obscuritie it bringeth vpon a soule, which it hath once possessed. *S. Basil* calleth this desire of glorie, the whet-stone of wickednes: because it is not only euil in itself, but it whetteth a man on to al other euil. And *S. Bernard* sayth more fully: Ambition is a subtil euil, a hidden poyson, a secret plague, a contriuer of deceit, the mother of Hypocrisie, the breeder of enuie, the of-spring of al vice, the fewel of wickednes, the rust of vertue, the moath of sanctitie, the blinder of mens harts, turning remedies into diseases, and breeding sicknes by the helps of physick. Manie things we may reade in *S. Gregorie* concerning this vice, or rather this forge of al vices, and easily vnderstand by what he sayth, that whosoeuer shal giue himself vnto it, can haue no commerce with anie vertue. And among other things he sayth in his Morals wondrous wel: That other vices make warre vpon those vertues only, by which themselues are destroyed, as Anger opposeth itself against Patience, Gluttonie against Abstinence, Lust against Continencie. But Pride, which we cal the roote of al vices, not satisfyed with the death of one vertue, bandeth itself against al the parts of the Soule, and, as a general and contagious disease, infecteth the whole bodie. For as if a Tyrant should surprise a cittie which he hath besieged, so when Pride doth breake-in vpon the mind, the richer it finds a man, the more cruel it is against him. But besides the robbing of a man, and the depriuing him of al spiritual ornaments, and the defacing and razing of al vertue to the verie ground; it doth also bring with it al manner of euil and corruption; which *S. Gregorie* also teacheth in these words: Pride is the roote of al euil, and of it the holie Scripture doth testifye saying: *The beginning of al sinne is Pride*; And the frut brood that is hatched out of this poysoned root, are seauen principal vices, to wit, Vaine-glorie, Enuie, Wrath, Sadnes, Auarice, Gluttonie, Luxurie. Wherefore by al this which hath been hitherto sayd, we may discouer playnly the great miserie of this wicked and desperate world, and how wretched they are that liue continually amidst so manie euils, and serue vnder such a yoake and such a Prince; the Prince of this world being no other, according to our Sauiour's owne verdict, but he that is Prince of hel; and the world itself being al of it interlaced with so manie and so great mischiefs and corruptions as we haue mentioned.

The harmes which come of Pride and Ambition. *Io. 5. 44.*

S. *Basil.*

S. *Bernard. in Qui habit.* 5. 6.

S. *Greg. 34. Mor. c. 18.*

S. *Greg. 31. mor. c. 17.*

Of flying the world by a Religious life.

CHAP. VII.

SInce the earth doth thus flow and ouerflow with ſo manie dangerous euils, euerie one may with great reaſon lament and cry with a lowd voice to heauen: *Who wil giue me wings like a doue, and I wil flye, and take my reſt?* For he that shal enter truly into conſideration of ſo great calamities, and ſuch imminēt hazards of his eternal welfare, as in the former Chapters I haue layd open, cannot doubtleſſe chooſe but wiſh from his verie hart ſpeedily to eſcape by flight, and to place himſelf as farre-of from them as poſſibly he may; for which flight, the wings of no other bird are vſeful, but *the wings of a doue*, which is properly and naturally both ſimple, and feareful. For in the warre and conflict with Sinne, our ſtrongeſt defence is Feare; and the beſt way to ouercome, is by Flight. Which he, that wished for theſe wings, doth giue vs to vnderſtand, when he ſayth: *I haue remoued myſelf farre-of by flying, and remayned in the deſert.* This is that which Religious people do moſt of al. For they remoue themſelues farre from the multitude and throng of people, and remayne in the deſert, ſeuered from the eyes of men, ſeuered from earthlie buſineſſes, ſeuered from al noyſe and worldlie trouble. The neceſſitie of which flight, and the exceſſiue danger to which they expoſe themſelues who wil not flye, hath been, in my opinion, liuely expreſſed in the ſubuerſion of thoſe fiue Cities, of which we reade in *Geneſis*, when only *Loth* and his ſmal houſe-hold were ſaued. His two ſonnes-in-law, ſcorning his counſel and admonition, perished with the reſt by fire. His wife went out with him; yet becauſe she looked back, she was turned into a pillar of ſalt. For what doth that wicked place better ſignifye then this preſent world, burning with luſt and vntemperate deſires; blind, and walking in moſt hideous darknes, with deſerued puniſhment of enormous offences hanging continually ouer it? A wonderful great benefit therefore it is to them (and doubtleſſe the greateſt that can happen to man in this life) to whom God hath shewed how to fly from the wrath that is to follow, and ſent his holie Angels from heauen to moue vs to take this flight, & oftimes to vrge and compel vs, as they did *Loth*, when we hang-of and prolong the time. But vpon thoſe, who either contemne the ſecret inſpirations of Almightie God that doth cal them, as did the two ſonnes-in-law, or doe entertayne them as the wife did, but through inconſtancie and ficklenes looke back with deſire & affection to that which they haue forſaken, God doth lay moſt heauie puniſhmēts.

Pſ. 54 7. Sinne is beſt ouercome by flight. *Ibid. v.* 8. *Gen.* 19. This is declared by example of the fiue Cities.

2. But to what place muſt we direct our flight? For *Loth*, frighted perhaps with the roughnes of the Mountain to which he was firſt cōmanded to repaire, deſired that he might rather shelter himſelf in *Segor*, which was a cittie vpon the playne; but when he ſaw the fearful flames rāging on euerie ſide, then of his owne accord he betook himſelf with al ſpeed to the mount, and could not think himſelf ſafe til he was ſeated there. This Mountain is the top of Euangelical Perfection, the difficulties whereof be ſo dreadful to manie men, that they chooſe rather to walk

Relgion is the Mount on which we muſt ſaue ourſelues.

walk the easie and spacious wayes of this world, then venter vpon this, which in their conceit is so hard and narrow; yet if they once begin to discouer in a clearer light, & behold with open eyes the fowlenes of sinne, the ficklenes and miserie of this poasting world, & the euerlasting flames & torments, which are without measure; presently they cast aside al delayes, & make haste away to higher places, and nothing comes in their way so hard, which they do not willingly embrace to attaine to eternal Happines, and escape the euils which haue no end.

3. And wheras in al combats or encounters of man with man, it is euer held a base and shameful thing to fly; becausse he that shrinketh from his aduersarie, & betaketh himself to his heeles, doth acknowledge himself to be the weaker, and giues himself for vanquished, which among men is euer accounted a great disgrace. In the conflict, which we haue with Vice, it is quite contrarie. For to fly, is to ouercome; not only becausse we put ourselues in safetie by keeping aloof from the Enemie, but becausse we discomfit and ouerthrow him by our verie flight. For euerie vice hath some subiect, which is as the bayte or fewel of it; which bayte he that doth eschew, must needs vanquish his enemies. For he doth not only treade vnder foot the thing itself, which he doth contemne, but goeth away with a farre greater victorie ouer himself and his owne crooked inclinatiō; and is so farre from shewing anie basenes or cowardise in this manner of flight, or any one jot of feare, or want of courage, as that rather he giues euident testimonie of his resolution and stoutnes, becausse it is a work of great courage and strength to fly; as S. *Ambrose* witnesseth saying: Let vs not be ashamed to fly; for it is a glorious flight, to fly from the face of sinne. And as for the dangers which concerne our bodie and life, in euerie man's iudgement it is wisdome to prouide betimes for our owne safetie, and to fore-think the dangers which may happen, and deliuer ourselues from al peril before-hand, if we can. Why therfore should we not think & do the self-same thing in the hazards which touch vpon our soules, and do it so much the more effectually, in regard that the calamities, which they threaten, are not only farre greater, but eternal? For certainly the man were both mad & blind, and a stranger to his owne nature, and the state of things, that should hope neuer to be ouercome in so many battails, and neuer to be hurt amidst so manie snares and ginnes; *as if a man would hide fire in his bosome* (as the Holie-Ghost speaketh in the Prouerbs) and not haue his garments set on fire; or walke vpon the coales, and that the soales of his feet should not be burned. And to this purpose S. *Gregorie Nyssen* bringeth a fit similitude in his Treatise of Virginitie. As a swift riuer, that is subiect to swel beyond the bancks, doth annoy those that dwel neare it, but reacheth not them that dwel farre-of; So the world, and a secular life, tumbles them downe that are in the streame, and haue voluntarily cast themselues into the troubles therof; but those that haue withdrawne themselues from it, remaine quiet and secure as dwelling farre within the land. Wherefore, sayth he, though there be a great nūber of euils in this life, heaped one vpon an other, there is but one meanes to free ourselues from them; to wit, vtterly to abandon it. For neither he that shal dwel in Sodome, can escape the showers of fire; nor free himself from the seruitude of Ægypt, whosoeuer wil not forsake Ægypt, and passe ouer, not that Red Sea, but this sea, that is so black and truly filled with darknes. S. *Hierome* also doth exhort vs not only to fly, but to fly naked. For if we keep possession of anie thing pertayning to this world, we do not fly

To flye, is to ouercome.

S. *Ambr de fuga sec. c. 4.*

Prou. 6. 27.

S. *Gregorie Nyssen. de Virgin.*

S. *Hierome Ep. 34.*

the world, but shifting from place to place, we carrie the world with vs whither soeuer we goe: *Ioseph*, sayth he, but that he left his garment, could not haue escaped the Ægyptian Ladie. The yong-man, that followed IESVS, couered with a Syndon, because the ministers layd hãds on him, cast away that earthlie couering, and fled naked. Elias being taken-vp into heauen in a firie Chariot, left his weed vpon earth. The Wisest man that euer was sayth: *He that toucheth pitch, shal be defiled by it.* So long as we handle secular affayres, and our soule is intangled in administration of reuennues and possessions, we cannot think vpon God freely. And *S. Ambrose* writ a whole Book of this verie subiect, intitling it, *Of the flight of the world*; wherin among manie other things he declareth, how in the Old Law we are instructed to flye by the six Citties ordayned for refuge & Sanctuarie; which Citties were seated in the portion of the Leuits; because the Leuits, sayth he, are those that fly from this world, to the end they may please God. They forsake their countrie, their parents, their children, and their kindred, to cleaue to God alone; Wherefore he that hath God for his portion, must not busie his thoughts with anie thing but God; to the end he be not hindred by other necessarie functions. For what we spend vpon other things, we take from the seruice of Religion, and the office of a Leuit. For this is the flight which is indeed required of a Priest, that he forsake his domesticals, and become a stranger to his deerest-beloued, that he that is desirous to serue God deny himself to those things which are his owne. *S. Cyprian* in one of his Epistles doth also aduise vs: That we giue not occasion to the Diuel to worke vs mischief; for he lyes in wayte, and is greedie to exercise his crueltie against vs; the Apostle saying: *Giue not place to the Diuel.* Our ship therfore must be carefully guided out of places of danger, that it be not split vpon the rocks and shelfes; we must speedily withdraw this earthie bundle out of the fire, that it be not burnt in the flames which bend towards it. He that borders vpon dãger, cannot be long safe. And in another place he sayth: The confidence, which setteth our life vpon the point of danger, is most vnfortunate; and the hope deceitful, which looketh for saluation amidst the allurements of sinne; when we fight in the throng of our enemies, our victorie is vncertain; & it is not possible to escape from being scorched, when we are hemmed-in with flames of fire. It may wel be feared, that he that sleepeth on the bank-side, wil fal into the riuer; and it is better in this case wisely to be afrayd, then to be ouer-boldly cõfident; & more profitable for a man to acknowledge himself to be infirme, then by desiring to make a shew of his strength, to proue himself but weake; which kind of presumptious people the Apostle checketh saying: *If anie man think himself to be something, whereas he is nothing, he seduceth himself.* For certainly he seduceth himself, & deceaueth his owne soule, that bewareth not the things which are contrarie vnto him, but medleth with those that are hurtful. And on the other side, he that is alwayes iealous of those that are wicked, and shye of euerie thing that hath but the apparence of naughtines, taketh the safer course for himself. Thus farre *S. Cyprian.*

Eccl. 13. 1.

S. Ambrose.

Deut. 19.

S. Cyprian. l. 1. *ep.* 11.

Eph. 4. 27.

Id. de singul. Cleri.

Gal. 6. 3.

4. And thus we haue sufficiently demonstrated vpon the point of Reason, and Authoritie of holie Fathers, that nothing is more profitable for saluation, or more necessarie, then to fly from the dangers of this world; and from the snares & ambushes which are in it; because, as the Scripture speaketh: *He that loueth danger, shal perish therin.* Now it remaineth further, that we consider, to what place we are to fly, that we may be safe; to wit, to the Mountaine, as we sayd before; that is, to a

Gal. 3. 27.

Religious

Religious ſtate, which we may truly cal a *Mountaine*; becauſe it is high in perfection, and aboue the earth, and al earthlie things. It is alſo hard to climbe, but yet neere to heauen. Vpon this *Mountaine*, that is, in a *Religious ſtate*, the euils of this world which are ſo manie, haue no place at al; both becauſe it is ſeuered from ſecular affayres; and much more becauſe it is compoſed of things quite contrarie to the world; & of moſt wholeſome preſeruatiues of health and ſaluation. Which *S. Bonauenture* doth excellently ſet-forth in his Apologie for the Poore, ſaying: that al ſinne is bred by inordinate conuerſion to one of theſe three perishable goods: Riches, Honour, and bodilie Pleaſure; & conſequently that the whole accomplishment of our ſaluation doth conſiſt in that we auoyde offending in any thing concerning theſe three; which may be done two wayes: Firſt in act only and conſent; which is performed by vertues oppoſit to ſuch vices, as are occaſioned by any of theſe three things. A ſecond way is by pulling-vp by the very roote al manner occaſion of falling; poſſeſſing the vertues aforeſayd, not in act only, but in habit, and in a conſtant forme of our whole life; a thing doutleſſe farre more firme & durable, & in it ſelf more excellent. And to this end were the three Euangelical Counſels published vpon earth, by our Lord and Sauiour. For againſt the deſire of Riches, he oppoſed the profeſſion of *Pouertie*, by which we giue away the poſſeſſion of al external things. Againſt the motions of Luſt, he perſwaded *Chaſtitie*, to cut-of the vſe of that power, which is giuen for generation. And finally to roote out Pride and Ambition, he propoſed vnto vs the perfect abnegation of our wil, which is *Obedience*. What therfore could be beſtowed vpon mankind more effectual for ſaluation? For this is that prudent Counſel & Diuine ordination, which S. *Gregorie* noted, that as in the art of Phyſick hot diſeaſes are cured with cold medecines, and cold affections with remedies, that are hot; ſo our Sauiour Chriſt hath applied to our ſinnes remedies of contrarie operation. *S. Baſil* alſo doth handle this argument very ſolidly, prouing it at large, and ſayth, that it is neceſſarie (for that is the tearme he vſeth) that whoſoeuer deſireth to liue vertuouſly, forſake the world, and leade a life ſeuered from others; and bringeth to his purpoſe that ſaying of the Wiſe-man: *Be not a friend to an angrie man, nor dwel not with a man that is furious, leaſt perhaps thou learne his wayes, and get a ſnare to thy ſoule*; and that of the prophet *Eſay*: *Go out from the midſt of them, and be ſeparated from them*; and giues this reaſon, becauſe it is not poſſible, but in the world we muſt continually heare and ſee many things, which prouoke vs to ſinne, and enter into a kind of familiaritie with it euen vnawares, and carrie away manie peſtilent imaginations and ſhameful impreſſions in our mind. And among other things he ſayth thus: It is no ſmal matter, that a man, when he ſeeth ſuch a multitude of thoſe that offend God, cannot come to know his owne ſinnes, and be penitent for them as he ought; but rather comparing himſelf with others that are worſe then himſelf, he pleaſeth himſelf, thinking himſelf vertuous; and his mind being withdrawne from God by the diuerſitie of buſineſſes and turmoiles, which a ſecular life doth furniſh, he doth not only ſuffer loſſe (becauſe he can take no pleaſure in God, nor taſte anie ſpiritual ſweetenes) but growes to a cuſtome of forgetting and vtterly contemning his iudgements; then which there cannot happen to man a greater or more deadlie miſchief. Thus ſayth *S. Baſil*, and much more to the ſame effect. *S. Bernard* following the ſame ſtrayne, ſetteth downe three degrees, by which we arriue to Saluation, and Perfection: The

Religion a Mountaine, free from the miſcheefs which are in the world.

S. Bonauenture.

Two wayes of auoyding ſinne.

S. *Gregorie. Hom. 32. in Euang.*

S. *Baſil. in reg. fuſ. diſp. c. 6.*

Prou. 22. 24.

Eſay. 52. 11.

S. Bernard ſer. 3. de Circumc. Domini.

firſt is to abandon the world; the ſecond, to ioyne ourſelues in companie with ſome that are of the ſame mind and purpoſe; the third, to put ourſelues in obedience vnder a Superiour, by whome we may be gouerned and directed. Which degrees he maketh to haue relation to three dayes of Vertue, as he calleth them; to wit, of Prudence, of Fortitude, and of Temperance.

5. It is a hazardous thing, *ſayth he*, for a man to go about to do pennance amidſt the turmoiles of the world; where doubtles ſome by their poyſoned perſwaſions, ſome by their wickeder example on euerie ſide allure vs to ſinne; others by flatterie moue vs to vayne-glorie, others by detraction caſt vs back into impatience. The light of Prudence therefore muſt neceſſarily go before, and shew how manie, and how preſſing occaſions and opportunities of ſinne the World doth vrge vpon vs, eſpecially in theſe wicked times; and how weak the ſoule of man is to reſiſt them; chiefly when it hath been nouſled in the cuſtome of ſinning. In this day therefore of Prudence, let him make choice to fly frō this preſent wicked World, ſaying with the Prophet: *I haue hated the congregation of the malignant; and wil not ſit with the wicked.* But this is not ſufficient; for perhaps heervpon he wil make choice of a ſolitarie life, not weighing throughly his owne weakenes, and the danger of combating with the Diuel; and therefore he muſt neceſſarily take with him the day of Fortitude, that he may vnderſtand, that his ſtrength is to be kept for our Lord, and ſeeke to place himſelf with an Armie of manie fighting togeather. And when he hath choſen to be in companie of others; ſhal he chooſe to be Maiſter, before he haue been a Scholler, and teach that which he neuer learned? Let the day therefore of Temperance ſhine vpon him, ſeeking to alay and bridle the looſe motions of voluptuouſnes, the beaſtlie motions of curioſitie, the head-ſtrong motions of pride and haughtines; let him chooſe to be abiect in the houſe of God, vnder a Maiſter, by whom his wil may be broken, and his inordinate deſires tamed by the curbe of Obedience. Thus farre S. *Bernard*. Wherefore certainly a Religious ſtate can neuer be ſufficiently loued or prayſed, in regard it bringeth vs out of the dangerous ſeas of this world, to a quiet hauen, and diſarmeth the Diuel of the three weapons, with which he aſſaulteth euerie bodie. It entrencheth vs within a triple defence and rampire, and blocketh-vp al the wayes, wherby the Enemie may haue anie hope of paſſage. For in what thing can this outragious Lion or Dragon hurt a Religious ſoule? He cannot hooke him in with deſire of gold & ſiluer, or lands & poſſeſſions; nor catch him by vnlawful bargains, nor put him vpon anie other kind of vniuſt dealing; becauſe he hath forſaken al his owne, that he might not couet that which belongeth to an other. He cannot moue him by beautie to intemperancie, becauſe his mind is bound from it by the bonds of his Vow; and his eyes (which are the conduits of luſt) and his whole body is fenced by the verie walles within which he liueth. Neither is there anie danger, that through ambition he wil flatter, or lye, or enuie, and vndermine others for preferment ſake; becauſe he hath cut from himſelf al theſe things, and is ſo farre from deſiring to be aboue, that his whole contentment is placed in being vnder others.

Pſal. 25. 5.

Pſal. 58. 10.

Pſal. 83. 11.

6. This State therefore is euerie way ſafe, ſtrongly fenced and impregnable, and guarded from the enemie on euery ſide, and conſequently there can be no doubt made, but as (al things conſidered) the beſt meanes to attaine to Saluation is to forſake the world, ſo the world cannot be more

effectually

effectually and perfectly forsaken, then by betaking ourselues to Religious Inclosure; which whosoeuer shal vnderstand and sink into, what bands or chaynes wil be able to with-hold him from taking his flight into this Castle of Saluation, into this Fortification of Angels, into this Heauen vpon earth? For if a trauellet should be certainly told, that there were a wood pestered with theeues lying vpon his way, he would do his best endeauour not to passe that way, & be glad to choose anie other, though it were farther about, and more troublesome; Now since we know for certain, that this world is so ful of Diuels, and of their snares and ambushes; how is it possible there should be found a Soule, who had rather runne the hazard of eternal perdition amidst al these treacheries & deceits, then walke the way of a Religious life? specially seing a Religious life is not so ful of difficulties, but much more pleasant and easie.

Of the benefit of a Religious life, in regard it strippeth vs of al things created.

CHAP. VIII.

THe benefit and commoditie of a Religious State doth not shew itself only in keeping vs from sinne, & frō things connexed with sinne, as from scraping-vp worldlie wealth, frō places of honour, and preferment, and such like; but in debarring vs of al things created, euen of these which may perhaps be had without sinne. And the benefit is the greater, in regard it is a thing of so high value and perfection. For by it we shake-of al impediments, and become more nimble & actiue to performe whatsoeuer spiritual worke. The Apostle declareth it by the exāple of those that runne a race. For *if we cōsider with ourselues the life of man frō the beginning to the end, it is a continual race and course to life euerlasting, and the eternal rewards which are prepared for vs.* This is the onlie End, for which we were created; to this End al our actions, al our endeauours, al our labours must be directed; and he that at last arriueth not hither, hath *receaued his soule in vaine*; because he fayleth of the end, for which he did receaue it; and doth on the other side fal into euerlasting and infinit mischief. Wherfore if we wil be wise, and loue ourselues truly; our chiefest or rather our onlie care and thought must be, to seeke al possible meanes to runne this race more nimbly, and with more speed and alacritie; which meanes the Apostle hath not concealed; for he sayth: *Euerie one that contendeth for the maistrie, refraineth himself from al things.* He sayth: *from al things*, not from some only; because it would little auayle a man to lighten himself of a weight of gold, & take the same weight in siluer, or some other thing; for in regard of hindring his course, it were al one. And *Cassian* applying this passage of the Apostle to a spiritual contention and strife, writeth, that the lawes of refrayning from al things were so seuere among those that did runne in the race, that they did not meerly forbeare to ouercharge themselues with meat and drink, but vsed no other diet but such as was prescribed them in that art, and did for that time lay aside the care of al other busines, and were so farre

1. *Cor.* 9. 24.

The lawes of those that runne a race.

farre from vsing the act of marriage, that they had a fashion to wrap about their loynes plates of lead, to drye vp those lustful humours; which *Cassian* alleadgeth as an incitement to Chastitie. And these men, as *S. Paul* sayth, did this, *that they might receaue a corruptible crowne*. Much more ought we to abstayne from al things, or rather voluntarily cast them away, that *we may receaue a Crowne incorruptible*; and not be clogd and held back in so necessarie and so noble a course.

Cassian. lib. 6. c. 7.

1. Cor. 9. 25.

Hom. 23. in Euang.

2. *S. Gregorie* speaketh to the same effect in one of his Homilies, and sayth: That a man in this world is perpetually wrastling with the Diuel, whose strength is incomparable; and that these earthlie things are like the clothes which are about vs; and certainly if one wrastle in his clothes he shal be sooner cast, because he hath something wherof his aduersarie may catch hold; one hath a wife, another hath children, an other hath goods and possessions. Wherefore whosoeuer comes-in to wrastle (as certainly al must wrastle, and no man can auoyd it) if he wil not be throwne by the Diuel, he must lay aside al his apparrel, and enter naked into the lists. And in an other place he compareth this our life amidst so manie suggestions of the Diuel, and so manie waues of temptation, to a ship tossed with tempest. For at such a time euerie bodie doth willingly cast al things ouerboard to saue the ship from danger; when the billowes swel so high, that they hang like hils ouer their heads, and threaten present death, those that are in the ship haue no thought of temporal goods; carnal delight comes not then in their mind; then they cast those things out of the ship, for which before they went on ship-board; and set al things at naught through the desire of liuing. He therefore is sayd to feare God as the waues which hang swelling ouer his head, who despiseth al things which here he carrieth in possessiō through the desire of true life. For when we cast away these earthlie desires from our mind which they oppresse, we do as it were vnloade our ship ouertaken with tempest, and the ship thus eased wil come to hauen, which the burthen would haue sunck: because the cares, which in this life do hang vpon our soule, doe driue it downe to the bottome. *S. Basil* also vseth the same Similitude of those that sayle at sea, & addeth that we haue much more reason then they, to doe as they doe. For they that sayle these material seas, leese al that they cast ouer-board, and must be fayne to liue euer after in want and miserie; But we, the more we disburden ourselues of this heauie lading, become the richer, and haue greater plentie of solid wealth; to wit, of Iustice and Sanctitie, which are riches of an other nature, and are not subiect to the mercie of the waues, or ship-wrack. Wherefore when we forsake these earthlie things, they do not perish to them that forsake them, but as it were laded out of a weaker vessel into a stronger and safer bottome, they are put in greater safetie, and doe surge at a securer port.

Idem. 21. mor. c. vlt.

S. Basil hom. de non adh. reb. sec.

3. *S. Chrysostome* doth to this purpose discourse excellently wel vpon that sentence of the Wise-man: *Acknowledge that thou walkest in the midst of snares*; and pondereth, that not without great reason man is bid in this place to *acknowledge*, rather then to see, because these snares cannot be seen with our corporal eyes, but must be vnderstood and discouered by the light of our mind, in regard they are hidden, and (as he speaketh) ouer-shaddowed with the bayte of lucre, or pleasure, or other commodities; and that there is a mysterie also in saying (*in the midst of snares*) because these gulfs and dangers doe lye on euerie side of vs. A man walketh, *sayth he*, into the market-place, and seeth his enemie; the verie sight of him

S. Chrysost. Hom. 15. ad pop. Eccl. 9. 20.

him puts him into a rage. He ſpyes his friend aduanced, and it ſpites him. He ſets his eye vpon a poore ſnake, and he contemnes him. He beholds a rich man, and enuieth him. He meeteth with ſome-bodie that hath done him a diſpleaſure, and he ſtormes at him. He ſeeth a beautiful woman, and is catched by her. The wife is oftimes a ſnare to them that foreſee it not; oftimes our children, friends, and neighbours. Which, when *S. Chryſoſtome* had ſpoken concerning the multitude of theſe hidden ſnares, he giueth vs a very pertinent aduiſe to auoyd them, by example of the birds. For as birds, while they fly aloft, cannot be taken; but when they ſtoop towards the ground, they are eaſily catched in the fowler's net; ſo the ſoule of man is ſafe enough from al deceits of the Diuel, if it ſoare aloft in high and celeſtial things, and keepe itſelf there vpon the wing; but if it ſtoop downe to inferiour obiects, it falleth into his ſnares. And *S. Gregorie Nyſſen* doth declare this vnto vs by diuers examples drawne from that which hapneth dayly among men. For as we cannot (*ſayth he*) follow two ſeueral trades of life at once, as huſbandrie and ſea-faring, or exerciſe the handicraft of a black-ſmith and a carpenter at one and the ſame time, but if a bodie handle one, he muſt neceſſarily lay aſide the other: So whereas there be two ſeueral marriages propoſed vnto vs, one conſummate in flesh, the other conſiſting in ſpirit, the endeauour which we apply to the one, muſt needs alter vs from the other. For no man can behold with his eye two things at once, ſeated in two contrarie poſtures; nor with tongue, expreſſe two ſeueral ſounds at once, as to ſpeake Hebrew and Greek with one breath; nor with our eares can we heare two ſeueral tales togeather; ſo our Wil is of that nature that it cannot enioy corporal and ſpiritual pleaſures both at one time; for the exerciſes of them both, doe leade to very different ends. The exerciſes of the one extinguish the paſſions of the bodie, and lay aſide al things which come of fleſh, or belong vnto it; the exerciſes of the other follow al theſe things very hotly. Finally we cannot ſerue two maiſters; becauſe it is not poſſible that the commands of them both ſhould be at once fulfilled. Thus much ſayth S. *Gregorie*.

S. Gregorie Nyſſen. de vefl. c. 20.

Matth. 6.

3. Though what need we ſtand heaping authorities of the holie Fathers? Let vs heare a Philoſopher ſpeake from-out of that blind Antiquitie; for if ſuch an one could vnderſtand it, and write ſo wel of it, by the onlie light of Nature, which was yet but ſlender; it muſt needs be a great ſhame for vs not to know and feele it, in this abundant light of Grace, in which we dwel. *Plato* therefore in his Treatiſe which he intitleth *Phædon*, diſputing the Felicitie of man, reſolueth that it conſiſteth in Wiſdome alone, that is, in the contemplation and loue of the Soueraigne Good, and conſequently that it cannot be attayned in this life, becauſe the bulk of this bodie is a great hindrance vnto it, both by the natural lumpiſhnes of it, and by reaſon of the deceauablenes of our Senſes, and infinit other incommodities, which depend of the bodie; as ſicknes, inordinate affections, feares, and (to vſe his phraſe) a multitude of fancies and toyes, wherwith it filleth the mind; as alſo the adminiſtration of outward things; trading in money, and handling buſineſſes of like nature. Whence he concludeth, that either a man ſhal neuer attayne to Wiſdome and Happines, or he ſhal attayne vnto it only after he is dead; but not poſſibly in this life, vnleſſe a man approach as neere as poſſibly he may to

Plato in Phædon.

death, to wit, by withdrawing his mind from houſehold-affayres, and from al manner of worldlie buſines, and from the world it ſelf, finally from al pleaſure and care of the bodie, and ſo turne himſelf into himſelf, and dwel at home within himſelf. For this is a kind of death, at which al true Philoſophers did alwayes ayme, ſpending al their labours and thoughts in ſtriuing to perſwade themſelues, that they were dead, and dayly endeauouring to dye more perfectly. Al this is *Plato* his diſcourſe.

4. Which kind of death and the neceſſitie thereof, was not hidden from our Philoſophers, but much more exactly vnderſtood by them, as appeareth by that which *S. Gregorie* hath left written in his Morals: We liue yet to this world, while our mind is ſtil wandring abroad in it; but when being outwardly mortifyed, we conceale ourſelues in the ſepulcher of Contemplation, we are hidden in our graue as dead men; which though heerafter it shal be done more perfectly, yet in great meaſure it is now performed by them that with inward delight are drawne from the turmoils of temporal deſires, and while their ſoules are wholy intent to the loue of God, they are not with any vnprofitable perturbation torne in pieces and diſtracted. In which place he hath much more to the ſame effect, and this one thing beſides worth obſeruation, that in regard that Wiſdome is not found in the out-ſide of things, but lyeth hidden in things inuiſible, it cannot be apprehended, vnleſſe we forſake theſe viſible things, and hide ourſelues alſo in thoſe that are not to be ſeene.

S. Gregorie l. 5. mor. c. 5.

5. Wherefore finding it ſo ſolidly proued and ſo often repeated by the holie Fathers, that it is moſt profitable and moſt perfect to withdraw ourſelues from al things created, and the more we withdraw ourſelues, the more ſafe and perfect we shal be: we may eaſily conclude, that nothing can be more profitable then a Religious ſtate, by which we compaſſe this thing moſt perfectly and moſt compleatly. For certainly there can be no greater renunciation of al things then that, which is practiſed in Religion, where not only Pouertie is profeſſed, but a man is ſo wholy bereft of the dominion and poſſeſſion of euerie thing, that he cannot ſay, that this peece of land, or this houſe, or (as *Caſſian* expreſſeth it) not ſo much as this garment, or this pen-knife, or quil is his owne. And it taketh away moreouer al other things, by which men are wont to bolſter-vp their life, or ſolace their mind; as the vſe of friends, the fauour of Princes, the alliance of wife and children, finally al earthlie things, and whatſoeuer is of anie eſteeme or price in the world. Wherfore *S. Bernard* doth extol the greatnes of this benefit, as it deſerueth, ſo highly, as he is not afraid to intitle al Religious people to compleate Happines; for this reaſon only, becauſe they haue found-out a more compendious way to Heauen, by abandoning abſolutly al things of this world.

Caſſian. l. 4. c. 15.

S. Bernard ſ. de quadr. deb.

" It is true, *ſayth he*, the aſcent to Hieruſalem is ſteep and difficult, in regard it " is cut ſtrayte out from the verie top of the mountaine; but the compendiouſ- " nes of the way doth temper, or rather wholy take away, the greatnes of the " paynes; and with happy facilitie, and eaſie felicitie, you do not only go, but " runne; becauſe you are both vnloaded and gyrt, and carrie no kind of weight " vpon your back. It is not ſo with ſome others; it is not ſo with thoſe, that " loaded with carts and cart-loads, haue taken their courſe by the winding of

the

the hil; and vſually tumble downe headlong by the ſides of the mountaine, ſo » that they ſcarce find how to bring their life to an end. Thrice happie therefore » are you, that haue forſaken yourſelues, and al that belonged vnto you, with- » out al exception. Which onlie ſentence of *S. Bernard* wel conſidered is ſufficient » to perſwade vs to preferre a Religious ſtate, before al Princelie treaſures and command. For what ſtupiditie can be greater, then, ſeing we muſt not only al of vs runne (as the Apoſtle teacheth) but (as *S. Bernard* ſayth) we muſt runne vp-wards againſt the hil, which of itſelf is wonderful difficult, voluntarily to charge ourſelues with diuers weights, and moreouer with continual care and ſollicitude to encreaſe and multiplie thoſe weights, which, if we did right, we ſhould rather wholy caſt-of from vs?

Of the benefit of Religious Pouertie.

CHAP. IX.

HItherto we haue ſpoken of the commodities of a Religious State in general; now we are to treate of the particular vtilities which are found in it; & firſt of the benefit which ariſeth from the three Vowes proper & eſſential to Religion. And we wil beginne with Pouertie, becauſe it is the firſt ſtep to Perfection, conſiſting in abandoning the things which are without vs; the commodities whereof are in few words excellently wel ſet-forth by *Climacus*: Pouertie is a riddance of worldlie cares; a paſſage to God without ſtop or hindrance; an expelling of grief; a foundation of peace, and cleannes of life; it freeth vs from the ſorrowes of this tranſitorie world, and enableth vs to performe the Commandments of God with perfection. *S. Bonauenture* writ a whole Treatiſe, of this ſubiect only in a manner, intitled an Apologie for the Poore; in which he handleth manie things deuoutly as a Saint, and learnedly as a Diuine; and among the reſt, he layeth a certain ground, which doth greatly declare not only the profit of Pouertie, but a kind of neceſſitie of profeſſing it. And thus he diſcourſeth: *Couetouſnes* (as the Apoſtle ſayth) *is the roote of al euil*; for from it and from Pride (which alwayes goeth hand in hand with it) al ſinnes haue their beginning, their nourishment, and encreaſe. Whervpon *S. Auguſtin* calles it the foundation of the cittie of *Babylon*. This couetouſnes is ſeated in the affection of our mind, as the proper ſeate therof, but feedeth itſelf vpon the things which outwardly we poſſeſſe; and conſequently the vter abolishing of this vice muſt needs comprehend both the internal and the external; that not only the inward thirſt be quenched, but the outward poſſeſſion alſo of things of this world be forſaken; the one is performed in wil and ſpirit, the other in fact and outward work; whervpon he concludeth, that as Couetouſnes is the foundation of *Babylon* (as we ſayd before) ſo contrariwiſe Pouertie is to be eſteemed in verie deed the ground-work of al Euangelical perfection, we being thereby conformed to our Sauiour Chriſt our Lord and Law-giuer, who, when he drew the platforme of the new Ieruſalem deſcending from heauen, began with

Commendation of Pouertie. *Climacus.*

S. *Bonauen. in Apol. pauper.*

1. *Tim.* 6. 10.

this vertue, as the foundation of al the reſt, ſaying: *Bleſſed are the poore in ſpirit.* *Matth. 5.* This is the diſcourſe of *S. Bonauenture.* And that which he ſayth, is very true; for if we conſider wel, we shal find ſeauen wonderful great commodities of Religious Pouertie.

The firſt commoditie of Religous Pouertie.

2. The firſt is, that it taketh away the weapons and furniture from al kind of ſinnes and vices; the importance wherof hath been ſufficiently declared before, when we ſpake of the great dammages which come by riches; for it doth not only pul-downe Pride, Arrogancie and haughtines, and manie other miſchiefs, growing from abundance and plentie, as ſmoak doth from fire; but it taketh from vs that verie power of committing diuers ſinnes, becauſe manie ſinneful things are wrought by occaſion of money and of that ſtrength which money puts into mens hands. Wherefore if no other commoditie did accrue vnto vs, but only that it enforceth vpon vs a kind of neceſſitie of liuing wel, it were highly to be eſteemed; and voluntarily to put our ſelues vpon this neceſſitie, cannot chooſe but be exceeding profitable for Saluation. But it doth not only hinder vs from ſinne, but bringeth with it manie excellent Vertues, as Temperance, Modeſtie, and chiefly Humilitie; which vertue hath a particular kind of affinitie with Pouertie, and is as it were couſin-german vnto it. Which *S. Chryſoſtom* giueth vs to vnderſtand in a certain Homilie, ſaying: A Chriſtian is more glorious in Pouertie then in Riches. How can that be? becauſe it keepeth a man from ſwelling Pride; he that is poore, cannot be loftie, but rather obedient, modeſt, meeke, wiſe; but he that hath much wealth, hath manie things which hinder him from wel-doing. For let vs ſee, what a rich man doth: He ſeaſeth vpon that which is not his owne; he burnes with vntemperat deſire; he giueth the reynes to his luſt; he leaueth no miſchief vnatchieued; Is it not playne that theſe things are bred by riches? And you may alſo perceaue, that by Pouertie al vertue is more eaſily gotten. And do not tel me, that rich men in this life are vnder no man's correction; for it is very true, that among al other euils, Riches haue alſo this, that they defend and guard thoſe that liue wickedly, that they may commit ſinne more boldly, and ſtand in awe of nothing, nor be controuled by anie bodie. So ſayth *S. Iohn Chryſoſtom.*

S Chryſoſt Hom. 2. in ep. ad Hebr.

» Chriſtian is more glorious in Pouertie then in Riches.
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» nor be controuled by anie bodie.

The ſecond commoditie of Pouertie.

3. A ſecond commoditie of Religious Pouertie is, that it is a great meanes to blot-out the ſinnes of our former life, and to ſatisfie for them; and to this purpoſe it ſeemeth the Holie-Ghoſt ſpake by Eſay the Prophet, ſaying: *Behold I haue boyled thee throughly, but not as ſiluer; I haue choſen thee in the fornace of Pouertie*; for where he ſayth: *I haue choſen thee*; it is as much as to ſay: I haue purged, or refined thee, and made thee ſo perfectly good, that thou deſerueſt to be choſen and loued. Wherefore as al kinds of mettal are feuered in the fornace from droſſe and refuſe, and from whatſoeuer is baſe and of no eſteeme and value, and come forth farre more clear and pure then they were before; ſo Pouertie giuing matter of exerciſe both to bodie and mind, doth expel al vice from them both. Whervpon *S. Gregorie* hath this excellent ſaying: The fire of want purged Lazarus his offences; and the proſperitie of this life rewarded the good deeds of the Rich man; Pouertie afflicted him, and cleanſed him; this man was requited with plentie, and reiected; whoſoeuer

Eſay. 48. 10.

S. Gregorie Hom. 40. in Euang.

» ſperitie of this life rewarded the good deeds of the Rich man; Pouertie affli-
» cted him, and cleanſed him; this man was requited with plentie, and reiected;

whosoeuer therfore you be that in this life haue wel to liue, when you cal to mind anie good deed that you haue done, it behoueth you greatly to be afraid by occasion of it, least the prosperitie, which is bestowed vpon you, be a recompence for those good deeds of yours; and when you see those, that are poore, to do a thing that is blame-worthie, do not contemne them, do not despayre of them; for perhaps those that the superfluitie of a smal offence doth defile, the fornace of Pouertie doth refine.

4. The third fruit of Pouertie is, that it freeth a man from vnprofitable trading in these perishable goods. For our soule being immortal, and giuen vs by God, to the end that in the short tearme of this life, we may gayne Immortalitie; it is great follie to employ so excellent a nature, and our time also, which is so pretious, vpon that which is alwayes decaying, alwayes fading and perishing. Pouertie therefore, which we professe in Religion giueth vs leaue to employ ourselues wholy, vpon the loue and pursuit of Eternitie, taking no thought for earthlie things: for we are not busied neither with husbanding of grounds, nor gathering of rents, nor putting-forth of money, nor following of suits, nor with anie other worldlie matter; which vacancie from al care & thought, must needs be of great vse in this our heauenlie Philosophie, seing the ancient Heathens in their earthlie Philosophie did esteeme it so absolutly needful. For *Zeno* as *S. Gregorie Nazianzen* relateth, when he had cast al ouerboard in a tempest by sea, sayd: *O Fortune, I thank thee for returning me to my Philosophical Mantle.* But *Crates* farre better; for, as *S. Hierome* writeth, he was very rich, and did not by constraint but of his owne good wil and choyce, cast a great summe of money into the sea; because he was perswaded that he could not wel giue himself to Philosophie, and keepe his wealth. And al the whole pack of them were of the same mind; and chiefly *Seneca*, that great commender of the Stoicks; for no man euer spake more largely, or better to the purpose, cõcerning a spare kind of liuing; and amõg other things, he sayth thus: If thou wilt haue thy mind free from trouble, thou must either be poore, or like to the poore. Studie doth not profit, without care of frugalitie.

The third fruit of Pouertie.

Zeno.

Crates.

Seneca. Ep. 17.

5. A fourth commoditie of Pouertie is, that it suffereth not our mind to cleaue to these base and abiect things; the affection to them, being the source of al mischief. To which effect *S. Gregorie* hath a prettie passage; for he sayth, that trauellers, as they passe on their way, meete oftentimes with pleasant meadowes, and willingly entertayne themselues in them; sometimes they step out of the beaten path into them, and so the delight which they take in the pleasantnes of the way, doth hinder them from making haste on their iourney; therefore God is wont to make the wayes of this world rough and vnsauourie to the Elect, that seeke after him, least delighting themselues with the ease of this life, as with pleasant fields, they couet rather long to trauel, then quickly to come to their iourneys end; and pleasing themselues in their trauels, they forget what they desired in their country. This thing therfore which the wisdome of God doth work in his Elect (according as S. *Gregorie* teacheth) euerie Religious man doth performe in himself, when bereauing himself of worldlie commodities, he vndergoeth the incommodities of penurie and want, that nothing of this life may delight him, and hinder his iourney; but that rather he may haue as manie spurres in his course to Heauen, as

The fourth commoditie of Pouertie.

S. *Greg.* 23. *mor. c.* 14.

he endureth troubles and vexations in this world. And being thus weaned from the loue of al temporal things, that holie and holesome affection, which the Apostle acknowledgeth to haue been in himself, is bred in them al, esteeming that *they haue not heer a permanent cittie*, or dwelling, *but are alwayes seeking after that which is to come.* Heb. 13. 14.

The fift commoditie of Powertie.

6. The fift vtilitie, which Powertie doth bring vnto vs, is, that as itself is greatly in the loue and fauour of God, so it causeth al those, that espouse themselues vnto it, to be highly loued and fauoured by him; by reason wherof he bestoweth vpon them daily great benefits and spiritual graces. We need no other testimonie that God doth loue Powertie, then to see that his Infinit Maiestie coming downe from heauen, was pleased to associate himself so neare vnto it, taking flesh of parents that were poore (though of a Royal stock) and making choice of the poorest place on earth for his birth, not so much as a little house, or cottage, or shepheard's cabin, but a stable of beasts, belonging to others, in the cold of winter, and the night-season; what should we stand to speake of the rest of his life, seing he had no place where to put his head, and was relieued by the almes of other folke? That Eternal Word, I say, was relieued, *in whom are al treasures, and by whom al things are made.* And can anie man doubt but that he wil loue in others that, which he loued in himself & made choice of, and powre-out abundāce of very special blessings vpon those in whom he shal find it? We shal not need to stand coniecturing about the matter; for we see what he hath done already, so long as he liued and cōuersed on earth; those with whom he liued most, and were his most familiar acquaintāce, were not rich & wealthie people, but the poorer & vulgar sort; for foure of them were fisher-men, one was a gatherer of Toule & Custome, and the rest were much of the like stamp. No man can be ignorāt, how at the self-same instant when he was borne, he made himself presently knowne to poore people, with great demonstration of loue and honour towards them; sending from heauen a companie of blessed Angels to tel them, that he was come into the world, & inuiting them to himself by word, & by an extraordinarie light, and a most sweet consort of musick, as if he had lōged for their presence & acquaintance. How manie noble persons according to the flesh (sayth *S. Bernard*) how manie great men, how manie wise men of this world, were taking their rest at that houre in their soft beds? & none of them was esteemed worthie to behold that light, to taste of that great ioy, to heare the Angels singing. From whence the Saint draweth this argument: If our Lord and Sauiour did beare so great loue to those poore people, that were poore by necessitie, certainly he wil beare farre greater loue to those that are voluntarily poore, and haue forsaken al that they had, meerly for his loue. This is a benefit of al benefits, because they, whō God doth loue, can want no kind of thing that is good; no grace, no light, no benefit, nothing at al can be desired by man, which he wil not most liberally bestow vpon them.

The loue which our Sauiour bore to Powertie.

S. Bernard. ser. 1 de Natiuit.

The sixt cōmoditie of Powertie.

7. The sixt commoditie of Religious Powertie is very great, and worthie to be considered. For as among the euils which are bred by riches, we declared before, that the excesse of delight and pleasure arising of them, is very poyson and death to our soules, so contrariwise in powertie, the spare diet, and meane fashion

fashion of liuing, is very profitable for saluation. For as we season dead flesh with salt, to dry-vp the abundance of moysture, and preserue it from corruption; so our liuing flesh, vnlesse it be dryed and preserued by abstinence and austeritie, wil certainly perish with delicacie and wanton lust; and no wonder, because the affinitie and nearnes of our soule and bodie is so great, that they must needs infect one an other with their vicious inclinations, and, as *S. Basil* speaketh, while our flesh is lustie and fresh, our spirit becomes dul and carnal. And *S. Iohn Chrysostome* sayth, that sobrietie is as it were the wings of our soule, wherewith it beareth itself aboue the earth, and is enabled to soare on-high by Contemplation.

S. Basil. orat. 1. de ieiunio.

S. Io. Chrysost. Hom. 1. in Gen.

8. Finally, to comprehend in one word al the commodities of Religious Pouertie, what can be spoken more ful and effectual then that which our Sauiour sayth of it: *Blessed are the poore in spirit, for theirs is the kingdome of heauen*; in few words expressing the present and future happines of it? And it is not without special cause, that for the most part he promiseth a reward for other vertues after this life; but for Pouertie he appointeth presently the Kingdome of heauen: either because the hope therof is so assured and so free from hazard, as if it were in our owne present power and command; or because it is so free from al worldlie care, that in this verie life it giueth a taste and earnest of the felicitie which we shal heerafter enioy. Wherefore Religious people may worthily make account, that in this one vertue of Pouertie they haue a very great and rich treasure, to which the infinit reward of that Infinit Good is due, *which neither eye hath seen, nor eare hath heard, neither hath it ascended into the hart of man.* And euerie one may esteeme it as a thing proper to himself, which S. *Augustin* sayth of al; that the happines of Christians is exceeding great, in regard they may make Pouertie the price of the kingdome of heauen; let not thy Pouertie be distastful to thee; there can be nothing found more rich; wilt thou know how rich it is? it buyeth Heauen. "What masse of treasure can be compared with the worth which we see granted to Pouertie? A rich man cannot finde meanes to come to heauen by enioying lands and possessions, but by contemning them he finds meanes to compasse it. And much more he speaketh in commendation of Pouertie; but that is remarkable that he sayth: that God did vs a very great good turn, when he comprized the summe and total of al felicitie, in Hauing nothing. For if he had placed it in riches, few men could haue had the meanes and abilitie to attayne vnto it, and not without great labour and trauail; but hauing placed it in the contempt of riches, euerie man that wil, hath power and meanes to get it.

The seauenth commoditie of Pouertie. *Matth. 5.*

S *Aug ser. 1. de Verbis Apostoli.*

" Pouertie buyes Heauen.

8. For these and the like reasons the Saints of God ful of heauenlie light, haue been as affectionately addicted to Pouertie as anie worldlie man can be to riches, and laboured as hotly to preserue themselues in poore estate, as others to encrease their wealth. Among whome *S. Francis* is most eminent; of whom *S. Bonauenture* (an Authour renowned for sanctitie and learning) doth write: that he was so deare a friend of Pouertie, & loued it so intirely, that a man would think, he searched al the corners of the world for it to espouse it to himself with perpetual loue; and for the loue of it, he forsook

S *Bonauent. in the life of S. Francis.*

sook father and mother, and al things which he might haue enioyed. And his brethren often asking him, what vertue makes a man most acceptable to our Sauiour Christ, he was wont to answer with very particular and extraordinarie affection, that it is Pouertie, and that Pouertie is the way to Saluation, the nurse of humilitie, the root of perfection, and hath manie hidden fruits and commodities, knowne to very few.

Of the benefit of Religious Chastitie.

CHAP. X.

NExt vnto Pouertie, of which we haue hitherto discourſed, we wil speak of Chastitie; the commodities wherof are so much the richer then those of Pouertie; by how much our bodie is nearer vnto vs, then our wealth and outward substance; and the affections therof more violēt and pernicious, if they be not restrayned. These affections, Chastitie doth temper; and the office of it is, that euerie man may know, as the Apostle speaketh, *how to possesse his vessel in sanctification*; that is, his bodie (as *Cassian* doth interpret) which is as a vessel and receptacle of the soule. To vnderstand the greatnes of the benefit of Chastitie, it might be sufficient to weigh duly that which we haue sayd before, of the beastlines of carnal pleasure, and the exceeding harme it doth vs. But wheras there be two kinds of these pleasures, to wit, some that are vtterly vnlawful and forbidden; and some againe that are lawful, but confined within the limits of Marriage: we shal not need to say any more of the first, then that which we find deliuered by the Apostle, that *they who doe such things, shal not possesse the kingdome of heauen; but their part*, (as it is sayd in the Apocalyps) *shal be in the burning lake of fire and brimstone, which is the second death.* We wil only consider what helps Religion doth afford towards the extinguishing of the flames of lustful desires, which that *Leuiathan* is wont to rayse, *whose breath doth make coales of fire to burne.*

1. *Thes.* 4. 4.

Cassian. lib. 6. *c.* 15.

Gal. 5. 21.

Apoc. 21 8.

Iob. 41. 12.

The helps which Religiō giues against carnal concupiscence.

2. The first help is, that it taketh away the matter which is wont to kindle this fire, to wit, the sight, and speech of things that are dangerous; dangerous companies and familiarities, and most of al the occasion and cōmoditie, which is alwayes one of the greatest incitements to sinne. These are the engines, wherby manie an able man hath been often ouerthrowne and subdued, and (as *Hieremie* the Prophet speaketh) *those that were brought-vp in scarlet, haue embraced dung.* Against which there is no better defēce, then to betake ourselues to some place farre distant out of the reach of such allurements. For as it is wel obserued by *S. Augustin*, where *S. Paul* bids vs resist and striue against al other vices, he bids vs *fly from fornication*: and the flight is very honourable; which he sheweth at large both by example of chast *Ioseph*, who let go his cloak and ranne away from this kind of fire; and by that which the *Wise-man* aduiseth saying:

Thren. 4. *v.* 5.

S. Aug. 5. *tō.* 10. *de tēp.*

1. *Cor.* 6. 18.

saying: *Behold not the face of a virgin, least her countenance stumble thee.* And among manie other things he brings the lamentable fal of King *Dauid*; who though he were so great a man, and so great a Propher, with one glance of his eye was catched; and may iustly be a perpetual warning for euerie bodie euer since. Therefore, sayth he, let no man deceaue himself with ouermuch confidence; let no man presume dangerously of his owne forces, but giue eare to the Apostle saying: *Fly from fornication.* Now by entring into Religion we vtterly fly from it; in regard that it separateth vs from companie, and conuersation; and is vnto vs, as a castle and strong fortification. And conformably to this doctrine, *S. Augustin* himself (as *Possidonius* Bishop of *Calame* writeth of him) would not only not dwel in house with other women, or haue anie familiaritie with them: but not with his owne sister and brother's daughter; not so much in regard of themselues, as of other women that would be coming vnto them. *Eccl. 9.* *Possidon. in the life of S. August.*

3. Besides this flight and precaution, Obedience is a special defence of Chastitie; which S. *Bernard* in particular doth teach, saying, that *the earth*, which our Lord doth promise *in possession to the meeke*, is our bodie, which if our soule be desirous to possesse, and to raigne ouer the members thereof, it must be meeke, and obedient to superiour powers; and doth not stick to say, that when the flesh rebelleth against the spirit, it is a signe, that the soule is not so subiect to Superiours as it ought: and contrariwise if the soule be subiect, it wil find the bodie also obedient and in subiection. Obedience a special defence of Chastitie. S. *Bernard s. 1. de omn. sanctis.*

4. The third help to Chastitie, is the practise of al kind of vertue, as of Prayer and Meditation, and such other exercises, which of their owne nature encrease spirit and deuotion; for what we adde to our mind, we take away from our bodie; and as our mind is strengthned, our bodie must needs be weakned. To which purpose *S. Iohn Chrysostom* sayth, that Chastitie when it is left alone to itself, is weak and infirme, and hath not strength enough to stand by itself; and to take away the continual practise of other vertues from it, is as it were to cut the sinnewes of it; but togeather with other vertues it is able and strong: For as trees, that are planted in a fat soyle, bring forth fruit; so the soyle in which Chastitie wil alwayes flourish, is the concurrence of other vertues. Finally the root of Chastitie, is a life conformable to the Crosse of Christ, that is, a life which is not giuen to ease and daintines, but hardned with labour and patience. Wherefore it is certain that a Religious life, is a most strong defence against al dishonestie, preseruing them, that liue in it, pure, intire, and incorrupt, without anie great labour or paynes to be taken on their part. *S. Iohn Chrysostome.* Chastitie is weake without practise of other vertues.

5. Let vs now speake of the other kind of pleasure, which wedlock (as I sayd before) doth make honest, and acquit of al imputation of sinne. And certain it is, though the duties of Marriage may be performed without offence to God; yet to cut-of al pleasure in this kind also is not only more beneficial, but an easier and a more readie way to saue our soules. Which truth is grounded vpon the authoritie of S. *Paul*, who in his first Epistle to the Corinthians hauing rehearsed manie commodities of being chaste, sayth: *It is good for a man to be so.* Whervpon *S. Hierome* addeth: *If it be good for a man to be so, it is il for a man not to be so.* And the euils belonging to Marriage are also To vow Chastitie is an easier way to saluation, and most forcible remedie against concupiscence. 1. *Cor.* 7. 8. S. *Hier. l. 1. cont. Iouin.*

Three incōmodities of wedlock

there set downe at large by the same Apostle, and may be reduced to three heads, to wit, Seruitude, Tribulation, and Diuision of mind; as he tearmeth the. The Seruitude of Marriage is described by him in these words: *The woman hath not power ouer her owne bodie, but the man; in like manner also the man hath not power ouer his owne bodie, but the woman.* This is no smal kind of seruitude, that the command of ones bodie should be in the power of an other; which *S. Iohn Chrysostome* doth set forth very liuely, saying: Doest thou not see the necessitie which is in this busines, a slauerie which can not be auoyded? doest thou not see two tyed in ropes togeather? For the bond of wedlock is like fetters, not only in regard of the daylie troubles and cares, but because it keepeth them that are married in such a seruitude, as no slaue is more at command of his maister, then they are in each other's power. *The Husband*, sayth our Lord, *shal be lord ouer the wife.* But what auayleth it the husband to be lord, seing he is lyable to the like seruitude vnder her, that is subiect to him? Where moreouer he compareth man and wife to two fugitiue slaues, that are so coupled togeather, that though they runne from their maister, they must notwithstanding needs follow one an other, and cannot get asunder. Which S. *Paul* also doth insinuate in those words: *Art thou tyed to a wife?* And to shew that this bond cannot be broken, he presently addeth: *Do not seeke to be loosened.* But this seruitude (which of itself is very hard (specially being perpetual) is made much more hard and heauie, when the parties chance to light vpon a stearne and peeuish maister, as it doth often, or rather most commonly, fal out; or vpon a maister that hath but litle wit to gouerne, which is yet much more intollerable. The Holie-Ghost expresseth the miserie therof in the Prouerbs in these words: *It is better to dwel in a land that is desert, then with an angrie and contentious woman.* And againe: *A wrangling woman is like a house, where it alwayes raynes through.* By which familiar examples we are giuen to vnderstand the excessiue trouble and miserie, which they vndergo that once put their neck vnder this yoake. Wherefore me thinks, when our Sauiour abrogated the custome of diuorce, which for some time was permitted in the Old Law, the Apostles had great reason to say with common consent: *If the case of a man be thus with his wife, it is not expedient to marrie.* And indeed it is not expedient; for though the bond might be broken vpon occasion, yet it were not expedient to put ourselues into such fetters, though it were but for a time; much lesse, seing this bondage is perpetual, and neuer after to be auoyded. Religious people therefore are free from these impediments; and as married people doe hinder one another, so they are free from being hindred; and are at al times at libertie, not only to runne, but to fly in the way of the Commandments of God.

S. *Iohn Chrysost. de Virg. c. 41.*

Gen. 2.

1. Cor. 7.

Prou. 11. 19

Prou. 19. 13.

Mat. 19. 10.

The secōd incommoditie of wedlok.

6. The second incommoditie of marriage, is that which the Apostle calleth *Tribulation of the flesh.* For the discouerie whereof, we shal not neede much to busie our wits; for we may see it with our verie eyes; We cannot put our head into anie house or familie, but we shal find it ful of infinit care and trouble: If it be rich, there is trouble in menaging their riches; if it be poore and in want, what a doe is there to find releef? If they haue manie children, they are troubled in bringing them vp; if they haue daughters, they know not how to bestow them; and to stand to reckon the calamities, which besides are

incident

incident to euerie bodie, by the imparing of their eſtates, or the miſcarriage of their children, and other troubles and vexations of mind, were an endleſſe buſines; for they are continual, and ruſh-in vpon them on euerie ſide. But there is one thing heauier then al the reſt, which the Apoſtle doth point at, when he doth not barely cal it Tribulation, but *Tribulation of the flesh*; For when we take paynes for things that are ſpiritual, and for the ſauing of our ſoules, and the ſeruice of God, it bringeth great comfort with it, and hath a great reward prepared; but to toyle in earth, and in carnal buſineſſes, if we ayme no higher, hath no comfortable ſauour at al, nor hope of recompence. Wherefore *S. Chryſoſtome* his obſeruation vpon that verſe of the Pſalme (*Virgins shal be brought to the King after her; they shal be brought in ioy and exultation*) is very true and pertinent to our purpoſe. Behold, ſayth he, how the ſaying of the Apoſtle is heer made manifeſt; They that marrie, shal haue tribulation of the flesh; and as they shal haue tribulation, ſo theſe shal haue ioy and exultation; for they muſt of neceſſitie bewaile their children, their husbands, their houſes, their ſeruants, their kinsfolk, their ſonnes and fathers-in-law, and their nephewes; the abundance, or want, or loſſe of children. But a Virgin crucifyed, and exempt from things preſent, walking aboue the cares of this life, hauing her eyes daily fixed in heauen, and now paſt this dangerous paſſage of the ſea, is fed with gladnes of ſpirit, and reioyceth with exultation. S. *Iohn Chryſoſtom in Pſ.* 44.

7. The next incommoditie is *Diuiſion*; wherof *S. Paul* ſayth in the ſame place: *He that is with a wife, is careful of the things of this world, how he may pleaſe his wife, and is diuided; she that is married, thinketh of the things of this world, how she may pleaſe her husband.* Religious people therefore haue this benefit aboue others, by meanes of their Continencie and Chaſtitie; that they may offer their harts whole and intire to God, nothing impaired by this kind of diuiſion. Which difference betwixt the two ſtates, *S. Gregorie* doth very wel expreſſe in theſe words: Thoſe that are married, though they liue wel, and deſire to ſee God, are troubled notwithſtanding with houſ-hold-affaires; and their mind of neceſſitie is diuided betwixt both: But thoſe that liue chaſte, being ſeuered from the employments of this world, and abſtaying from that pleaſure of the flesh, which they might haue in lawful wedlock, are not intangled with care of wife and children, nor in hurtful and troubleſome thoughts of houſehold-buſines. This which *S. Gregorie* ſpeaketh of, is the firſt diuiſion belonging to wedlock; and contayneth in itſelf as manie diuiſions and diſtractions, as there be ſeueral things in this world to care for. But there is an other diuiſion farre worſe then this, to wit, the diuiſion of our loue. For when we muſt giue part therof to our wife, and part to our children, and part to others of the ſame flesh and bloud; a ſmal parcel, God knowes, or none at al, wil be left for God. Which though it be true of al things vpon which we ſet our affection, yet it is much more ſenſible in the loue of thoſe that are neare in bloud; becauſe our affection is by nature more violently bent towards them. *Ariſtotle* ſayth, that no loue can be greater then that which parents haue towards their children, becauſe they loue them as part of themſelues, and as a parcel cut of from them, yea as another ſelf. And the like he affirmeth of the loue which is betwixt man and wife, that it is The third incommoditie of wedlock. S. *Greg. Hom.* 16. *in Ezech.* A twofold diuiſion in wedlock. *Ariſtotle* 8. & 15.

most natural vnto vs, and taketh place before al other bonds of friendship, as one house-hold is before a Cittie, which is cõpounded of manie house-holds; finally that the affection of brethren among themselues is much of like natũre and force, because they issue al from one stock, and are al one with their parẽts and consequently one among themselues. Seing therefore the natural affection to our kindred is so forcible, it must needs follow that our loue wil be so diuided and distracted among them, that none of it can come to God; or if he also haue part of it, it wil be so litle and so cold, that it cannot but be a great wrong to that Infinit Goodnes, whose wil is (and certainly he doth deserue it) that we loue him with our whole hart, our whole soule, & our whole strength.

S. Augustin l. 10. conf. c. 29.

8 These euils are auoyded by Chastitie, and they that embrace it, haue none of these hindrances, but may powre-out their whole loue vpon God. To which purpose *S. Augustin* sayth, that by Continencie we are gathered in, and
» brought home againe to that One from which we were distracted and fal-
» len-of into manie things; which One thing is God, the onlie Soueraigne Good,

S. Gregorie Nazianz. Or. 36.

» by whose loue we are good, and by enioying him, eternally blessed. And *S. Gregorie Nazianzen* in commendation of Chastitie sayth, that as the water,
» which is conueyed close in conduits of lead, spouteth higher then the weight
» therof doth naturally allow, because it is much prest and driuen thick togea-
» ther; so if a soule do gather al her loue togeather, and do not suffer it to runne
» out vpon creatures, but powre it forth vpon God, it wil stil rise vp-wards, and
» neuer fal downe vpon earth. Wherefore *S. Basil* was not much awry, when ha-

S. Basil. Consti. Monast. c. 1.

» uing reckned-vp the incommodities and infinit cares (for so he speaketh) of a coniugal life, at last he addeth concerning the happines of Religious people,
» to whom he wrote, that whosoeuer desireth to be freed from the bonds of this
» world, must auoide wedlock as playne fetters, and consecrate his life to God,
» professing Chastitie. For he that so doth hauing resolued with himself to loue
» God alone, and longing to taste of that puritie and trãquillitie of his (which is
» voyd of al trouble) and of the ioy and gladnes which riseth therof, seeketh no-
» thing but how he may perfectly withdraw his mind from al affinitie with anie
» material thing, and from al alteration rising from the bodie; and contemplate
» things Diuine with a clear eye, free from obscuritie, receauing light from hea-
» uen vnsatiably.

9. But there is yet an other thing in this busines wel to be considered. For of al Christian vertues, which our Lord and Sauiour hath specially commended vnto vs, two are of greatest note, to wit, *Euangelical Pouertie* (of the commodities wherof I haue already spoken) and *Fraternal Charitie*; of which I shal speake heerafter at large. These two, as great and as beneficial as they are, are not to be found in a Coniugal state; but in a Religious state they are in-bred and essential. For how can Pouertie be, where wife, and children, and familie, and al things els, do put vs vpon a necessitie of hoarding? to vse the word of *S. Paul*. And I find that *S. Iohn Chrysostom* doth reckon Pouertie for a special cõmoditie of a single life. For in the Booke which he wrote of Virginitie, hauing brought the exãples of *Helias*, *Helizæus*, & *S. Iohn Baptist*, he sayth

Euãgelical Pouertie, & fraternal Charitie, are vertues not to be found in wedlock. 2. Cor. 12.

S. Io. Chrys. de Virg. c. 70

» If these men had had wife & children, they could not haue en-
» dured to liue in the desert, & forsaken their families, & not prouided things ne-
» cessarie for life & sustenãce; but now free frõ al these tyes, dwelling on earth as

if they

if they had been in heauen, they wanted neither houſe, nor bed, nor ſhed, nor table, nor anie ſuch kind of things, but heauen was their couering, the earth was their couch, the wide wildernes was their board; and the verie barrennes of the deſert, which famisheth other folk, did furnish thoſe holie men with plentie of al kind of things; they ſtood not in need of vines, or wine-preſſes, or corne, or harueſt; but the fountaines and riuers yealded them abundance of ſweet drink; and for one of them, an Angel furnished a table with wonderful prouiſion farre beyond that which men do vſe. Thus ſayth *S. Iohn Chryſoſtom* concluding, that Pouertie is very eaſie, when we are not bound to wayte vpon a wife, and haue no charge of children.

10. The like we may ſay of Fraternal Charitie, and mutual conuerſation; for where women are, there is no liuing. To which purpoſe *S. Auguſtin* relateth of himſelf a thing worthie obſeruation, that when he was yet a Manichee, he and diuers other friends of his, being wearie of the turmoils of this world plotted togeather a kind of life reſembling ſomewhat a Religious courſe; for they reſolued to withdraw themſelues from companie and to meddle with nothing; and whatſoeuer anie of them had, they should bring it forth, and put it in common, that no bodie might ſay, this was *his*, or the other an other's, but that which came from al, should belong wholy to euerie one of them; and al of it, to euerie bodie. Now when this proiect was very much applauded by euerie one, and al of them did think themſelues happie in ſuch a kind of life, the buſines was inſtantly dashed by occaſion of the women, which ſome of them had already, and ſome of them were deſirous to haue; and ſo breaking-of they turned themſelues (as *S. Auguſtin* ſpeaketh) to groanes and ſighs, and bent their courſe to the broad and troden paths of the world. Therefore they that enter vpon marriage, depriue themſelues of this and much more; wheras in Religion, nothing is more in force, or more common.

S Auguſt. l. 6. Conf. c. 14.

How women hinder mutual conuerſation.

11. But Chaſtitie hath yet an other commoditie, which may be worthily eſteemed one of the greateſt. For there is no queſtiō, but al pleaſure belonging to the bodie, and moſt of al that which is ordayned for generation, doth much abate the edge of the mind, and pul it downe from the conſtant, vpright, & manlie ſtate which doth become it; and the reaſon is, becauſe for as much as concerneth the bodie, and ſpecially that action of the bodie, we do not greatly differ from beaſts; ſo that whenſoeuer the mind doth ſtoope to that action, it becometh in a manner flesh, and of ſo baſe and brutish a diſpoſition, as the action itſelf is vile, abiect, and earthlie; and by often vſe, it groweth ſo dul and lumpish, that it cannot think of anie higher matter, or rayſe itſelf to things more generous and Diuine, becauſe it hath abaſed itſelf to a thing ſo abiect and contemptible; which dulnes and obſcuritie groweth vpon the mind, not only by vſe of vnlawful pleaſure, but alſo by that which is lawful; and in this kind, they are alike hurtful. Whervpon S. *Auguſtin* ſayth: I do not find anie thing that doth ſo much pul downe the courage of man from the top of Vertue, as the dallying with women, and that nearnes of bodies, without which a wife cannot be had; ſo that nothing can be more to the commendation of Chaſtitie, or more glorious then that, as the functions of Matrimonie do proſtrate the mind and abaſe it, ſo Continencie and puritie,

As the act of marriage doth abaſe a man's mind, ſo doth Continence purifye and ennoble it.

S. Auguſt. c. 1. ſoliloq.

doth rayse and perfect it; and the lesse communication it hath with flesh, the more liuelie it is, the spirit of man remayning fully spiritual, and in good disposition to receaue diuine impressions, to conuerse in heauen, and that the *vncertaine and hidden things of that heauenlie wisdome may be made manifest vnto it*; for al which, we haue need of light; which light is stopped by the darke clowdes that rise from such grosse exhalations as those of the bodie are. Wherfore as *Cassian* sayth wel, that euerie motion of anger (whether it be iust or vniust) doth blind the eyes of our hart; and when they are blinded, it skils not whether they be blinded with a plate of lead, or of gold: so we may say of this kind of delight, that for asmuch as concerneth the dulling of our mind, it is much one, whether the cause be lawful or not lawful; as *Ægidius* (one of the first companions of *S. Francis*) answered once a secular man very wittily, who bragging that he liued chaste, and was faithful to his wife: *Why* (sayth he) *may not a man as wel be drunk of his owne vessel*? For if a man be drunk, that is, if his reason be confounded, and as it were drowned in lickour, the matter is not great from whence he had his wine, so it were wine. Where we may learne by the way, the nature of this remedie, which is allowed to humane infirmitie in matrimoine; for it doth not take away the disease, but rather it giues matter for the disease to feed-on without offending God. For as if a man haue a Fistula, or a canker there be two degrees of healing it; the one perfect and compleat, so that the flesh becomes fully sound and solid; the other imperfect, which leaues a sore, but takes away somewhat of the fowlenes of it, and couereth it with cloathes and swathing bands: So in the state of Continencie, the disease of Concupiscence is perfectly cured and taken-of, but in the state of Marriage it is not quite taken away, but only qualifyed by the holines of the Sacrament; so that the difference is very great; for if we go about to cure our sensual inclinations, it is most certain, that it is a great deale more effectual to cut thē quite of, then to restraine them in part, hoping that they wil be lesse violent if we yeald somewhat vnto them. For (as *Aristole* obserued) the desire of pleasure is vnsatiable; & when we think to satisfye it, it is the more inflamed by the exercise of Concupiscence; & when it is in the heate, it taketh away a man's reason from him, which a bodie would think were mischief enough, though we go not beyond the bounds of Wedlock. But the mischief is, that the lustful desires, so long as they are fed in whatsoeuer manner, grow so violent, that most commonly they fal from things lawful to that, which is not lawful; of which we cannot haue a more famous example then that which hath been shewed vs in king *Dauid*, and in his sonne king *Salomon*. The one of them being so holie a man, and the other so wise a man, and hauing each of them not one wife alone (as now adayes) but a multitude of wiues, their lust was notwithstanding so farre from being satisfyed, as it was rather greatly incensed and inflamed; so that at last it did most shamefully and most miserably foyle the wisdome of the one, and the sanctitie of the other; wheras on the other side, of *Elias* and *Helizeus*, who liued chaste, there is no such thing recorded; neither haue we any reason at al to suspect anie such matter of them. To be brief, me thinks that Secular people that are married, doe keepe this fierce and cruel beast (like a lion) in a cage, dayly feeding it, and consequently making it daily stronger

Psal. 52.

Cassian l. 8. c. 6.

A wittie saying and true of Ægidius.

Concupiscence not cured by marriage.

Aristole 3. Eth. c. vlt.

Concupiscence falles from things lawful to vnlawful, as in Dauid and Salomon.

ſtronger and ſtronger. And who can be ſure that it wil not at ſome time or other breake-out of the cage, and doe ſome great miſchief according to the wonted cuſtome and nature therof? Therefore thoſe that liue chaſte, take the better and the wiſer courſe, not contented to hamper and tye it vp in chaynes and fetters, but they labour by famine, and by often blowes to take away the life of it, and to kil it.

11. *Caſsian* in one of his Collations doth handle this matter excellently wel, comparing Concupiſcence to a flame of fire, which being kindled ſome time vpon neceſſarie occaſion in ſtubble or ſome other like matter, can hardly afterwards be withheld, but that it wil flame-out beyond that which is deſired, and not only burne the ſtubble, but catch vpon ſome other thing that is next it, and ſo range farther and farther; for ſo (ſayth he) doth carnal » pleaſure, reſtrayned within the bounds of wedlock, ſet other things on » fire alſo, and the vſe of it draweth a man on to forbidden exceſſe; but thoſe » whom the grace of our Sauiour hath inflamed with holie loue of Incorrup- » tion, do ſo perfectly conſume al the thornes of carnal deſires with the fire of » Diuine Charitie, that not ſo much as the embers of vice can any wayes » impaire the coolenes of their integritie. Finally *S. Iohn Chryſoſtom* was alſo of this mind, as we may reade in that rare Apologie which he wrote in in behalf of a Monaſtical eſtate; and among manie other proofes he confirmeth it by the verdict euen of ſecular people themſelues, acknowledging that a Religious courſe is the ſafer and more aſſured courſe of life. And that wheras Secular people think and ſay, that we haue a more hard task and warrefare in hand, then they haue, to wit, the preſeruing of Chaſtitie, in regard that they haue wherewithal to ſatisfye their luſt; he anſwereth, that they are very much deceaued; and proueth it, becauſe you shal « ſee (ſayth he) manie more married folk then Monks, that haue fallen; and « that there be not ſo manie by farre that out of their Monaſteries haue betaken « themſelues to marriage, as there be of thoſe, that from marriage-bed haue « gone after common ſtrumpets. Much more might be ſayd of the excellencie and pleaſure which is in Chaſtitie; but becauſe in this place we treate only of the vtilitie therof; we wil referre the reſt to the Bookes that follow.

Caſsian. col. 21. c. 34.

S. Iohn Chryſoſtom.

Lib. 3.

Of the benefit of Religious Obedience.

CHAP. XI.

OF the three Vowes, of which we purpoſed to treate, Obedience remayneth to be ſpoken of; which doubtles is greater then either Pouertie or Chaſtitie, whether we conſider the excellencie or the merit therof, or the manifold fruits which come of it. The excellencie of Obedience may be gathered out of holie Scripture, preferring it before Sacrifices and Holocauſts, that is, before al good works what ſoeuer. For ſo *Samuel* from the mouth of God,

profeſſeth, ſaying: *Obedience is better then Sacrifice; and to hearken, is better then to offer the fat of rammes.* Whervpon S. *Gregorie* diſcourſeth thus: Obedience is worthily preferred before Sacrifice, becauſe in Sacrifices the flesh of an other thing, by Obedience our wil is killed. Euerie one therefore doth appeaſe God ſo much the ſooner, by how much in his ſight curbing the pride of his owne free wil, he ſlayeth himſelf with the ſword of his commandment. Wherby we may ſee how farre a Religious life doth ſurpaſſe, not only a ſecular life that is vitious and debaushed, but an honeſt and commendable life. For the beſt that can be ſayd of a ſecular man, is that he giueth himſelf to good works; which is not to be compared with the perfect and intire oblation of ourſelues by perpetual Obedience. And this excellencie of Obedience is that which makes it to be ſo meritorious as it is; for they that order the good which they do, according to their owne wil and pleaſure, doe merit no more then the price and worth of the action itſelf can giue them; but Obedience addeth a great deale more; for it doth not only make thoſe actions better which are good in themſelues, but ennobleth thoſe that otherwiſe of themſelues are nothing worth; and maketh them exceeding grateful in the ſight of God. For what is in itſelf more ordinarie and meane, then to eate and drink, to haue care of bodilie health, to walke for recreation ſake, and ſuch like natural or neceſſarie actions? which notwithſtanding are highly eſteemed of God, if they be performed vpon intent of doing that which we are bid to doe, by thoſe that haue lawful command ouer vs. Wherefore they are in the right, who compare Obedience to a wand, that hath vertue to turne that which it toucheth, into gold; for ſuch a wand would not only make ſiluer and ſuch pretious mettals, more pretious then they are in themſelues, but put an incomparable value vpon wood, ſtones, and verie earth, which of themſelues are little or nothing worth.

1. *Reg.* 15. S. *Greg. mor.* 35. *c.* 10.

Obedience ennobleth the actions which of themſelues are but meane and ordinare.

2. And if we wil know what fruit comes of Obedience, S. *Gregorie* hath comprized an ineſtimable prayſe therof in few words, ſaying: *Obedience is the onlie Vertue, which planteth al other vertues in the mind, and preſerueth them after they are onceplanted.* It planteth them two ſeueral wayes: Firſt becauſe the liberal offer of himſelf, which man makes to God, prouoketh God to be bountiful and liberal againe towards him; for God is of that diſpoſition and goodnes, that he wil neuer ſuffer himſelf to be ouercome in bountie, and ſoue, and ſeruices done vnto him; and conſequently whoſoeuer shal giue himſelf and al that he hath, freely vnto him, shal be ſure to receaue from him againe al ſpiritual graces, and finally God himſelf. Secondly it planteth other vertues in the mind, becauſe in the practiſe of Obedience, we muſt neceſſarily practiſe them al; for when we ſubiect ourſelues to an other man for God, we practiſe Humilitie in a high degree, putting ourſelues vnder one, to whome in nature we are equal, and in other things perhaps better then he; we practiſe Patience, vndergoing things that are hard & contrarie to our wil and inclination; we practiſe Fayth, reuerencing God, whom we ſee not, in man whom we doe behold; and acknowledging that the care & prouidence of Almightie God doth watch ouer vs in him, we practiſe Hope, contemning things preſent; but Charitie moſt of al, and in an action which of itſelf is very difficult, to wit, preferring the wil of God before our owne wil and pleaſure; ſo that

S. *Gregorie* 35. *Mor. c.* 19.

It planteth other vertues two wayes.

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we see that the exercise of al the rarest Vertues of Christian life is contayned in this one vertue of Obedience, and consequently that (as *S. Gregorie* teacheth) *it doth plant al other vertues in the mind*; and while it prospereth, al the rest doe prosper and encrease. It also conserueth them; which is an other benefit and glorie of this vertue; for al other vertues in a manner are subiect to be wronged, and shaken, and stolen from vs by the Diuels; who lye like theeues in wayte for such pretious iewels; and the more they are worth, the more those hellish Fiends doe whet their teeth against them; yea the vertues themselues may in some sort be sayd to destroy themselues, not that there is anie fault in them, but through the pride and arrogance of those that possesse them; as it hapned to *Lucifer*, who (as *Esay* the prophet sayth) was adorned with al kind of pretious stones; but those verie ornaments threw him downe headlong from the heauenlie habitation. But Obedience preserueth itself & the other vertues, which it bringeth with it; because it trusteth not to itself, nor attributeth anie thing to itself, nor indeed reserueth anie thing for itself; but taking no thought of itself, it casts itself wholy into the *hands* of God, out of whose hands no bodie can take vs, as our Sauiour sayth. For either the Enemie dares not approach, or, if he attempt vpon vs, it doth now belong to God, in whose hands we are, to fight for vs, or to giue vs so much strength, that we shal easily withstand his furie. And so *S. Gregorie* sayth in another place: The exercises of those that doe obey, are Sacrifices; for while we are obedient to men for God, we ouercome the proude Spirit. With other vertues we fight against the Diuels; by Obedience we vanquish them. Wherefore they that are obedient, are conquerours; because while of their owne accord they subiect their wil to others, by Obedience they command ouer the Angels that are fallen. These are the fruits of Obedience alone; for so *S. Gregorie* speaketh: *Obedience is the onlie vertue which planteth al other vertues in the mind.* Whereby it appeareth, how great a good is wanting to al Secular people; and on the other side, how strayte, and solid, and short a way Religious people walke to Perfection, their life being nothing else but Obedience, and so finding meanes by the practise of one onlie Vertue, to compasse al the rest with great ease and expedition. Wherefore *Climacus* sayth, that Obedience is a perfect abnegation of our soule and bodie; a voluntarie death; a life voyde of care; a iourney by water without dammage; the burial of our wil; a life of humilitie; and as if a man should trauel sleeping; that to liue in Obedience, is to lay our burthen vpon an other's shoulders, to swimme vpon an other's arme, & to be held-vp by the chin, that we sink not, but passe the huge gulf of this life without dāger, & at a short cut. What could be spoken more pithily in commendation of this Vertue? But where he sayth, *We trauel sleeping*, me thinks is specially to be noted, and pondered; for he giueth vs to vnderstand, that by Obedience we are carried like litle children in an other's armes, so that al the care & trouble belongs to them that carrie vs; and where this spiritual iourney is toylesome & laborious to some, and dangerous to others, and ful of hazard; Religious people haue so easie a time of it, by means of this Vertue, that they do not so much as feele their iourney.

It also conserueth them.

Esay 14.

Ion. 10.

S. Gregorie in 4. *reg. c.* 4.

Climacus Grad. 4.

3. There is an other commoditie of Obedience, in which we may truly say al other commodities are contayned; to wit, that it doth subiect vs, and al our

Obedience puts vs into the immediate and certain direction of God.

actions, to the wil & pleasure of God so perfectly, that they are wholy dependant of him, and altogeather directed by him. But before we declare, how this is performed by Obedience, we wil shew the necessitie of it. And certainly there is no bodie but doth find within himself, that in the gouernment of ourselues, and setling the course of our life, there hangs a great mist and obscuritie before our eyes, which makes vs subiect to manie errours & faults; whereof holie Scripture doth put vs in mind, saying: *The thoughts of mortal wights are*

Sap. 9. *feareful, and foresight vncertain.* For what darknes can be greater, then where we haue no notice at al of things to come, and very little of those, which are present? and as for the minds and intentions of other men, with whom we must necessarily conuerse & traffick, we are so farre from vnderstanding thē, that most commonly we know not what lurketh in our owne breast. Sometimes we think we can do more then indeed we are able to doe; sometimes that we cannot doe so much; the one thrusting vs vpon aduentures aboue our strength, the other discouraging vs in things that are good for vs, and necessarie to be vndertaken. It is therefore one of the greatest benefits that can befal vs, to haue some bodie in so great a night of darknes, to lead vs as blind men by the hand, and that we may as it were leane vpon their shoulders; much more to haue God for our leader, whose wisdome is so infinite, that nothing can be hidden from him, nothing deceaue him, and his power and goodnes is so great

S. August. 3. Conf. 11. that (as *S. Augustin* telleth vs) he hath as much care of euerie man in particular, as if he had that one man only to care for. Whosoeuer therfore shal light vpon so good a fortune, must needs esteeme himself wonderfully happie in it, in regard he may confidently say with the Psalmist: *Our Lord doth gouerne me, and*

Psal. 22. *nothing shal be wanting vnto me*; For the one doth follow of the other; and while God doth gouerne vs, we shal not only want nothing, but he wil place vs in *a place of pasture vpon the waters of true refection*, that we may haue abundant plentie of euerie kind of thing.

The Prouidence of God teacheth to euerie thing.

4. Now let vs see how God doth most truly and most certainly gouerne vs by Obedience; and to make it the more playne and euident, we wil search the ground of it to the verie roote. For though among the ancient Philosophers (as they stiled thēselues) there were some so shamefully vnlearned, as to think that God hath care of no kind of thing without himself, or only of things eternal; yet Fayth and Nature doth conuince and compel vs to belieue and

Sap. 14 3. professe, as it is in the booke of Wisdome; *Thy prouidence, ô Father, doth gouerne al things from the beginning*; al things without exception, little and greate; he excepteth not the greater, as if he were vnable to menage them; nor the lesser, as if he did contemne them, or thought it vnworthie of his Greatnes and Maiestie, to looke downe vpon them. The manner also which the Diuine wisdome doth hold in the gouernment of this world, is worthie to be obserued, & is set downe by the Holie-Ghost in an other place of the same Booke in these

Sap. 8. words: *He doth reach from end to end strongly, and dispoſeth al things sweetly.* Heer likewise his strength and power is declared, which nothing can withstand, as we sayd before, nothing hinder his counsel and prouidence, nothing escape his hands. The sweetnes of his Prouidence, which is the chiefest part of Wis-

The sweetnes of the prouidence of God. dome, consisteth in two things: first, in gouerning euerie thing as the nature of that thing doth require; things that are necessarie, necessarily; things contingent,

tingent, contingently; thoſe that are free, ſo as their freedome be preſerued; Secondly to gouerne them orderly in their due rank and proportion, the higheſt agreing with thoſe that ſtand in the middle, the middlemoſt with thoſe that are below, effects with their cauſes, precedents with thoſe that are next and conſequent, and that this order be neuer broken or confounded. Wherefore as we ſee that corne, and other fruits of the earth, do not ſuddenly put-forth al at once, and come to ful growth and ripenes, but firſt are ſmal and tender, & by little & little waxe ripe by the warmth of the Sunne; & the Sunne itſelf, that it may not ſcorch and burne them vp, is tempered with timelie showers. & the showers which fal vpon the ground to moiſten it, fal not ſuddenly from aboue, but grow of the vapours which are ſuckt-vp from the earth; and the like courſe is conſtantly obſerued in al works of nature, euerie thing being produced by an other which is next it, and by ſome immediate cauſe; ſo it was fitting, the ſame order ſhould be much more obſerued in actiõs that are voluntarie; they being of a higher ſtrayne then the other. For firſt, it could not haue ſtood with reaſon, that the wils of al men ſhould haue been, as it were, ſeuered and diſtracted aſunder, euerie one taking a courſe by himſelf alone; for what could be more confuſed? But it was certainly beſt, that they ſhould be lincked one with an other, and ordered dependent of one an other, to that end, which God in his infinit wiſdome hath ordayned. Secondly it being fitting, that ſuch an order ſhould be eſtabliſhed among the wils and intentions of men, it was alſo neceſſarie, that among them there ſhould be that connexion, which is betwixt a cauſe, & the effect therof; that is, that there ſhould be ſome who moue others, and ſome againe that are moued by others. But, as *S. Thomas* ſayth, in the order of natural things, thoſe that are of a higher degree, moue thoſe that are lower, by a certain force and efficacie, and abundance of vertue inſerted in them by God, through which they preuayle ouer thoſe things which they moue; but in humane actions no other power doth moue, but the Wil, which is likewiſe ordayned by God, and doth moue by command and precept. For the firſt and principal rule of al reaſonable Wils, being the Wil of God, al other Wils are ordered vnder that Diuinie Wil, ſome neerer vnto it, & ſome farther of, as it hath pleaſed him, who appointeth euerie thing his place, and as it were his turne and ward. *S. Th. 2. 2. q. 104.*

5. Thus ſayth *S. Thomas*. And it is the ground of an other diſcourſe, which he ſetteth downe more at large in a Booke intitled *The Regiment of Princes*; where he ſheweth that al power, which one mã hath ouer an other man, is deriued frõ God; & proueth it by manie natural reaſons, applyed to moral gouernment, & drawne from the nature of euerie Entitie, & Motion, & End. For as the foundation of al power and dominion is firſt to haue a being; & euerie thing *that is* created, hath his being from one which is not created; So it hath alſo power & motion; which if it be ſo neceſſarie in corporal motion, that from the inferiour we muſt paſſe to thoſe that are higher and higher, til we come to the higheſt of al motions, which (according to Philoſophie) is the motion of the Heauens; much more muſt this order be kept in ſpiritual things, in regard they haue a neere reſemblance with him that is the firſt Mouer of al things, whoſe nature is ſpiritual. And this Motion is nothing els but the Light of our mind deriued from the fountaine of al light, which is God.

The groũd of the connexion and dependãce one of another which is among al things of this world.

6. But the argument which is drawne from the consideration of the End of euerie thing, is much more conuincing and euident. For if God, through his diuine prouidence, do order euerie man in particular, and euerie thing that man doth, to some end by himself fore-thought on; much more doth he order the communitie of men to some end, because the communitie is more noble; as the whole is more noble then euerie part by itself; and hath a higher end. And further, it being necessarie that euerie communitie be gouerned by some bodie, the gouernours likewise must necessarily be ruled by God, and directed to some end by him; which holie Scripture doth plainly teach vs, where the Diuine Wisdome is made to speake in this manner: *Mine is counsel and equitie; mine is prudence; and mine is fortitude. By me Kings doe raigne, and Law-makers decree iust things; by me Princes doe command, and those that are powerful determine iustice.* In which words two things are giuen vs to vnderstand; first, that those that are in authoritie, come not to their place by chance, or humane policie, but are chosen vnto it, and picked-out by God; wherof we haue in *Saul*, and *Dauid*, and *Iehu*, and manie others, most euident presidents; secondly that for the gouernment of their place, they receaue *strength* from God, that is, power; and likewise *counsel* and *prudence*, that is, light and vnderstanding; whereby oftimes against their wil, and when they little think of it, they are brought to doe that, which God is pleased should be done. And this thing is so certain, that *S. Paul* saying, that *they who resist power, resist the ordination of God*, giueth this verie reason, because *there is no power is not from God*. And in an other place vpon the same ground he exhorteth seruants *to obey their carnal maisters, not seruing to the eye only*, that is, with external work, *but from their hart, and willingly*; in regard they do the wil of God. And *S. Peter* sayth to the same effect: *Be subiect to euerie humane creature for our Lord's sake, whether to the king as excelling, or to the leaders as sent from God.* Out of al which we may draw a forcible argument, and certain conclusion; that in Religious Orders those that gouerne, are selected thervnto by the particular prouidence of Almightie God, and are as his Vice-gerents, gouerning and directing vs by the power and light, which they haue receaued to that end from him. For the argument which *S. Basil* bringeth, must needs be heer in ful force. If *S. Paul*, sayth he, doe command Christians and the sonnes of God, to be subiect, not only to them that by law of man haue receaued power of commanding, but euen to those that are Infidels and wicked, such as al of them were at that time: what obedience shal be due to him, who is constituted Superiour by God himself, and hath receaued power by the Diuine law. In which because we should be no wayes doubtful, we haue the verdict of our Sauiour Christ saying: *He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me.* Which law, as the same *S. Basil* noteth, was not deliuered and spoken of the Apostles only, who were there present at the proclaming of it, but is common to al, and comprehendeth al after-comers, that at anie time euer after shal be appointed Gouernours of other men. For a Prelat, sayth he, is no other then one that beareth the person of Christ, a Mediatour betwixt God and man, sacrificing to God their safetie, who are vnder his charge. Whervpon *S. Bernard* was not afrayd plainly to auerre, that whether God, or man who is God's Vice-gerent, com-

Prouer. 8. 14.

Authoritie and abilitie to performe it, doe both come from God.

Rom. 13.

Eph. 6. 5.
1. Pet. 2. 13.

S. Basil. Ca. 3. Monast. c. 2. 3.

Luc 10.

S. Bernard de præcepto and dispo.

command anie thing, it is to be performed with the self-same care and respect; with this only caution, vnlesse man command that which is contrarie to God.

7. Wherefore hauing proued so many wayes, that God doth gouerne and direct euerie Religious man by those, whom he hath placed ouer them in lawful authoritie, the benefit which they reape, and their continual happines, must needs be exceeding great, both in regard that in this mist of darknes, they haue fallen vpon so sure a guide, and met with such an excellet maister, in the ignorance of supernatural and diuine things; and in their weaknes receaued so great a stay and defence. Insomuch that we may say with the Royal Prophet, that euerie Religious man is as a trauelling beast, guided with reynes and bridle, by him that sits him; And he that sits vs, is our God: our Gouernours are as it were the bridle; for they likewise are in the hands of God, and doe not moue, but as they are moued. But commonly we mistake the busines, in regard that feeling the bridle, because it is neerer vnto vs, we heed not him that sits vs, because he is farther of; that is, we perceaue the voice and command of our Superiours, because we heare them and see them; but because God is beyond the reach of sense, we consider not that euerie order which they make, comes from him; which very thing, in my opinion, doth most of al, and most plainly shew the benefit and necessitie of hauing some bodie, whom we may see with our eyes, and heare with our eares, to deliuer God Almightie's wil vnto vs. And it may be declared by that which passeth in the Sacraments instituted by him in his Church for the saluation of mankind; For though we might haue had Grace & Iustification giuen vs by Faith only, by Pennance, & Charitie, and other internal actions of our owne; yet he thought it better, that we should haue certain Sacraments, as conduits of his grace, some consisting in the formes of Bread and Wine, some in Oyle, some in the sensible Pronunciation of certain words; And this for two reasons: first because the nature of man consisteth of bodie and soule, and consequently it was fitting he should vse corporal instruments. To which purpose S. *Iohn Chrysostom* sayth: If thou hadst not a bodie, he would haue giuen thee naked & incorporeal guifts; but because thy soule is inuested in thy bodie, he presenteth vnto thee things intelligible in those, which are sensible. The other reason is, because if the busines should haue been dealt between God and vs inwardly only in our mind, euerie bodie would haue been ful of scruples and doubts, whether he had sorrow enough, or loue enough, or done his dutie in euerie other respect, and neuer haue been at quiet; and our life would haue been tedious vnto vs amidst so manie difficulties. Wherefore the Diuine Wisdome did prouidently ordaine such helps for our Saluation, which we might partly touch with our hands, and see with our eyes, and perceaue with other senses. Both which reasons may be applyed to our case concerning Religious people. For in regard that our bodie is one part of vs, it was fitting we should be gouerned and directed by men, that haue a bodie as we haue, not by God only, or by his holie Angels, who are meerly Spirits; and it belonged to the sweetnes of his Prouidence, of which we spake before, so to ordaine it. Besides that, in this life (and no man must maruel that I often cal it darknes) where nothing is more hard and difficult, then to vnderstand what in verie deed is the wil of

Euerie Religious man is gouerned by God.

The necessitie of hauing spiritual gouernours, declared by that which passeth in the Sacraments.

S. *Iohn Chrysostome Hom* 83 *in Matth.*

God, there could not haue been contriued a better thing, and a thing more beneficial for our ſoules ſaluation, then this; being thereby put into a readie way, not only to conceaue, but to heare, and ſee his wil; a way ſo plaine and euident that we can neither miſtake it, nor doubt of it, nor haue any cauſe to make anie ſtand in the buſines.

8. Theſe are the commodities and fruits of Obedience, from which al Secular people are wholy excluded; and I do not ſpeake of them that giue themſelues ouer to this world, and take no thought for their ſoule and ſpirit, but of thoſe who pretend to be ſpiritual, but yet order their vertuous practiſes, as they think good themſelues; for they muſt needs go on with more labour and payne, and more ſlowly, and be alwayes doubtful and vncertain in their reſolutions and proceedings; and ful of rubbes and demurres, and ſo much the more, the better they are diſpoſed; becauſe on the one ſide they are deſirous to follow punctually the wil of God, and on the other ſide, they haue ſo manie miſts before their eyes, that it is very hard for them to vnderſtand what his wil is, and muſt needs often miſtake it; and though they do not miſtake it, yet they haue cauſe to be troubled as much as if they did, becauſe they know not when they hit vpon it.

Secular people doe want this benefit of direction.

That al Chriſtians are bound to Perfection, and not only Religious people.

CHAP. XII.

HAuing ſpoken of the profit in general, both of Religion and of euerie Religious Vow, we shal heerafter declare manie particular commodities and ſpecial fruits of this ſtate of life. But before we begin, it wil be neceſſarie to take in hand, and root-out a common errour, which is among men, eſteeming the caſe of Religious people to be much heauier then it is, and that they ſtand in much harder tearmes then others, in regard that their Profeſſion binds them to al perfectiō and ſanctitie, wheras ſecular people (ſay they) haue no ſuch obligation, but may freely be imperfect; which certainly is moſt falſe: for abſolutly al men, in regard meerly that they are Chriſtians, and haue ſubiected themſelues to the lawes of the Ghoſpel, haue put themſelues vpon a very great obligation to be perfect. And whoſoeuer shal think this ſtrange, may reflect, and perceaue thereby, how much Chriſtianitie is decayed from that which was firſt inſtituted by Chriſt our Sauiour, and degenerated from the feruour of their forefathers. Wherefore I wil bring nothing of mine owne to proue this point, but what I ſhal ſay, shal be wholy out of holie Scripture, and the ancient Fathers; and ſpecially out of two of them, who haue cleerly and at large, &, which is the principal, of ſet purpoſe handled this ſubiect, that they that oppoſe it, muſt either abſolutly reiect their authoritie, or admit of their Concluſion.

It is a great errour to think that al Chriſtiās are not bound to be perfect.

S. *Baſil.* 2. Firſt therefore, S. *Baſil* in that learned and eloquent Homilie which he wrote of Relinquishing al things, diſcourſeth, how God, to condeſcend to the weaknes

weaknes of mankind, hath distributed the life of man into two ranks & states: the one of Wedlock, the other of Cõtinencie; that whosoeuer should not find himself with strength sufficient to vndergoe the one, might betake himself to the other; yet so as in the state of Marriage they must make account to liue as the holie men did liue, of whõ we reade in the Old Testamẽt, specially *Abraham*: who though he heard not the Ghospel preached, nor could learne out of it, to sel what he had & giue it to the poore; yet his deuotion & feruour was so great, that his house & purse was euer open to pilgrims & strãgers; & he refused not to lay hands on his owne onlie sonne at the verie first word of God commanding it. And hauing disputed these and the like things to and fro, he sayth further thus: Dost thou not think that the Euangelical law was made for maried people also? Dost thou not perceaue that an account wil be taken, not only of Monks, but of those that haue wedded wiues, whether they order their liues according as is prescribed in the Ghospel? For he that is married, sinneth not in that he vseth his wife: but al other cõmandments being set downe equally for al, they that doe against them, are in equal dãger, whosoeuer they be. For Christ when he proclaymed the Precept of his Father, spake to those that were in the world, and followed an ordinarie course of life. And if sometimes, vpon a question moued by his disciples, he deliuered anie thing in priuate, he plainly told them: *That which I say to you, I say to al.* Thou therefore that hast chosen a wife, hast no ground to giue thyself to idlenes, as if thou mightst freely follow the world; but rather hast need to labour, & watch, and striue the more, to saue thy soule, because thou hast seated thy self in the midst of al the snares, and in the hart of thy Enemie's kingdome, where the allurements of sinne are cõtinually before thy eyes, to the desire wherof the whole inclination of thy Sense is perpetually & violently carried. Thou must therefore vnderstand that thou canst not possibly auoyd wrastling with the Diuel, nor go away with the victorie without much labour. For how is it possible to shunne this fight with thy Aduersarie, being already shut-vp togeather with him in the pit ordayned for it? This pit is the earth cõpassed round with the circle of the heauẽs, which (as we reade in the Historie of Iob) he doth *walk round and passe through and through* like a mad dog seeking whõ he may deuoure. Wherfore if thou wilt not ioyne battail with this Enemie, thou must get thy self into an other world, where he is not; for so thou mayst scape without fighting, and bid the precepts of the Ghospel Farewel without danger. But if this be impossible, it remayneth that thou learne the art to fight cũningly with him. This is the discourse of *S. Basil.*

Abraham an example of perfectiõ in a secular life, and manie others.

Mar. 13. 37.

Secular people obliged to more diligence and care.

Iob. 1.

3. Let vs see what *S. Chrysostom* sayth, who in the Booke which he wrote against the dispraysers of Monastical life disputing this matter very cleerly, hath these words: Thou beguilest thyself certainly, and art mightily deceaued, if thou think that one thing is required of Secular people, and another thing of Monks. For there is almost no other difference betwixt these two liues, but that they are intangled in the bonds of wedlock, and these are free from it; for the rest, one rule of life is required of them both, one and the self same punishment due to both their faults. For he that is angrie with his brother without cause, offendeth God alike, whether he be Secular or a Monk; and he that beholdeth a woman with lustful desire, of which soeuer state he be, shal be punished with like punishment of adulterie; againe he

S. Iohn Chrysostom.

The lawes of the Ghospel speak equally to al.

» that sweareth, whether he be this, or that, is alliable to the same sentence. For
» Christ, when he gaue instructions in these things, & made these lawes, did not
» make such distinction, as to say: if he that sweareth be a Monk, the oath is
» naught; if he be not a Monk, it is not naught; but he sayd absolutely: *I say*
Matth. 5. 34. *vnto you that you sweare not at al.* And againe when he sayd: *Woe be to those*
that laugh; he did not adde Monks, but he passed this definitiue sentence vpon
Luc. 6. 25. al; and the same he doth in his greatest commandments, and those at which
men do most wonder. For when he sayth: *Blessed are the poore in spirit*; *Blessed*
Matth. 5. *are they that mourne*; *Blessed are the meeke*, and so forth; he puts not the name of a
» Monk to them, or of a Secular; but this distinction is brought-in by mens mi-
» staking. For the holie Scriptures acknowledge no such thing, but rather com-
» mand euerie bodie to leade a life like Monks, though they be married. Fi-
» nally harken what *S. Paul* sayth, whom when I name, I name Christ. He
» therefore writing to men that were married, & had children, requires as much
» care of them, as is in a Monastical life; for barring altogeather al delicacie of
1. Tim. 5. 6. apparel or diet, he vseth this speech: *She that is in delights, liuing is dead*; and
1. Tim. 6. 8. againe: *Hauing meate, and apparel, let vs content ourselues therewith.* What could
» he require more of Monks? In another place giuing directiõs, how we should
» refraine our tongue, he setteth downe most holie rules, and such rules as
» Monks themselues haue much adoe to keepe them. For he doth not only
» condemne filthines and foolish talk, but he reprehendeth seuerely al scurrilitie
Eph. 5. 4. or immoderate ieasting; & doth bãnish it vtterly from a Christian life. Some-
» times also he exhorteth vs vehemently, to the imitation of Christ himself.
» For when he admonisheth vs to loue our Neighbour, he chiefly setteth be-
» fore our eyes the example of Christ; and in like manner, when he exhorteth to
» patience, or humilitie. Seing therfore he doth not only bid vs imitate Monks
» or the Apostles, but Christ; and threatneth them with most grieuous punish-
» ments, that do not imitate him; how canst thou say, that more perfection is
» required of Monks, seing the like perfection proposed to euerie bodie, and
» exacted of euery one? But this it is most certainly, that turnes the world vp-
» side downe, that we perswade ourselues that Monks must be exceeding careful
» to liue wel; but others may liue carelesly: But it is not so, in very deed it is not so;
» for the same Philosophical mãner of liuing, is required of euerie one. And this
» I say without al questiõ; yea it is not I, that say it, but it is Christ, who is Iudge
Mat. 11. 28. of vs al. For where he sayth: *Come to me al*; *Take my yoake vpon you, and learne of*
me, because I am meeke and humble of hart, he speaketh not only to Monks, but to
Matth. 7. 13 al mankind. Againe where he cõmandeth vs to *walke the narrow way*, he con-
» uenteth not Monks alone, but al men; and when he bids vs hate our owne
» life in this world, and the like, he excepteth no sort of men. And when he
» deliuered anie decree which was not to comprehend al, he declared himself
» accordingly; as where he spake of Virgins, he added: *He that can take, let him*
Matth. 19. *take.* Wherefore that a Secular man, and a Monk, are by the lawes of God
» equally bound to haue care of their wel-liuing, and to the same height of Per-
» fection, and that both of them, if they fal, shal receaue wounds alike, I think
» no bodie wil denye, howsoeuer he may otherwise be of a wrangling and im-
» pudent disposition. Al this and much more doth *S. Iohn Chrysostom* say. And
could anie thing be expressed more plainly, or more significantly, and in more

weightie

weightie tearmes? Though what need we ſtand vpon the teſtimonies of men, ſeing we haue our Sauiour's owne verdict for it, *Be yee perfect?* and becauſe we should not be ignorant what meaſure of Perfection he requireth, and of whom, he ſayth further: *As your heauenlie father is perfect.* So that the top of al ſanctitie is to be imitated, and imitated by al them that glorie in that they haue God their Father, which certainly is the chiefeſt glorie of al ſuch as beare the name of Chriſtians, to whome (as S. *Iohn* ſpeaketh) *God hath giuen ſuch charitie, that they be named the ſonnes of God, and be ſo*; and who (as S. *Paul* ſayth) *in right of ſonnes, shal be the heyres of God, and co-heyres of Chriſt.* Wherefore either we muſt yeeld-vp the hope of euer enioying that inheritãce, or if we wil maintayne the Adoption of Sonnes, we muſt maintayne it by imitation of our heauenly Father; becauſe (as S. *Cyprian* ſayth) *it is vnſeemlie that children should degenerate from their parents, and ſpecially from ſuch a parent and ſo worthie a Father.*

Mat. 5. 48

If we wil be true ſõnes of God our Father, we muſt ſeeke to be perfect.

1. *Io.* 3. 1.

Rom. 8. 17.

4. And for the ſame reaſon S. *Iames* the Apoſtle, writing to the vulgar ſort, and not to ſome great *Hilarions* or *Macaries* of the deſert, exhorteth, that *we be perfect and intire, faylingin nothing*; and S. Peter: *That yee be holie in al your Conuerſation; becauſe it is written: You shal be holie, for that I am holie.* And God himſelf ſpeaking to *Abraham* amidſt al that wealth, and the gouernment of ſo great à familie and ſtock, ſayth: *Walke before me, and be perfect*; Which ſeing it was ſpoken, when the law of Nature only was in force, no man can make any doubt but that now it doth much more oblige, ſince the Word of God coming downe from heauen, hath to this end *viſited, and made redemption of his people* (*as Zacharie* ful of the Holie-Ghoſt did feele within himſelf) *that we may ſerue him in ſanctitie and iuſtice.* And the law itſelf (which that Eternal Word opening his mouth diuulged to the whole world) doth giue vs to vnderſtand as much; for it being ſo diuided, that ſome things are to be obſerued towards God, ſome things towards our Neighbour, and others towards ourſelues, in al theſe things it requireth great perfection of vs. For we ſee what feare, what confidence, what faith, what loue it preſcribeth towards God, *from al our hart, al our ſoule, al our ſtrength and force.* And directing vs in the loue of our Neighbour, it cõmandeth vs to *loue him as ourſelues*, it requireth great compaſſion of his miſeries, and ſo great patience if an iniurie be offered, that if he take *our cloak from vs, we muſt let him haue our coat alſo*; and if *he ſtrike vs on the one cheeke, we muſt turne the other.* And as concerning ourſelues, what heauier or more perfect commandment could be layd vpon vs, then *alwayes to watch*, to *hate our owne life*, to *take vp our Croſſe*, to *denye ourſelues*, to *leeſe our life*, to *renounce al things*, to *ſel that which we haue, and giue it to the poore*, to *enter at the narrow gate*, and in a word to *offer violence to the kingdome of heauen*? Al which and manie more things being promulgated by God himſelf without exception, diſtinction, or difference of men or callings, and commanded euery bodie indifferently and in general, what blindnes is it of Secular people to exempt themſelues of their owne head, and perſwade themſelues, that theſe things belong only to Monks and Religious men? And by their manner of life they ſhew indeed that they are of this opinion; for they are ſo farre from practiſing the abnegation, or renunciation, or taking-vp of their Croſſe, which our Sauiour commandeth, that they abhorre it, and ſhunne nothing more; and contrariwiſe they follow libertie, and pleaſures, and licentiouſnes ſo wholy, as if

S. Cypr. ſer. de Con. par.

Iacob. 1. 4. 1. *Pet.* 1. 16.

Gen. 17. 1.

Luc. 1.

The law requires ſanctitie.

Secular people liue as if our Sauiour had made lawes quite contrarie to thoſe which he made.

our Saviour had made quite contrarie lawes, and sayd: Blessed are the rich; Blessed are those that live in pleasure; Blessed are they that are in greatest honour and reputation with the world. Wherefore let vs conclude, and stick to this Text, which is so cleere in the light of the Ghospel, that absolutely al that have believed the Ghospel, and subiected themselues to the lawes therof, whether they be Religious or Secular, are bound to frame their life & actions, according to that high rule of Perfection, which is generally proposed to al, in the life & holesome doctrine of Christ our Saviour. Wherof two things must necessarily follow: First, that Religious people take not any new obligation or burthen vpon them, or at least that the obligation which is added, is but smal; but on the other side, the helps, which they receaue, are very great, and ease them very much in the carriage of that burthen, which is imposed vpon al; and make them beare it farre more chearfully. Secondly, that the condition of them that live in the world, is farre worse then it seemes to be; in regard they are in a manner as fully obliged to the self-same things, and yet have so few and so smal helps thereunto, and so manie important hindrances. Wherefore the case of them both in truth is, as if two were to trauel a long and hard iourney; the one on foot, slowly, and with much payne & labour; the other, in a good and easie coach, with this obligation, that he must not leave his coach, nor go on foote. For as much as concerneth the perfection of the Euangelical Law, both are equally obliged to obserue it of necessitie. The obligation which lyeth particularly vpon Religious people more then others, is in the manner, and meanes of attayning to this Perfection, which is a great commoditie vnto them; for if it be profitable to vse a certain kind of instrument for such a work, it must needs be much more profitable, that it be not in my power, not to vse it; al which wil be farre more euident, when we shal have declared in particular al the special benefits of a Religious life.

Two Conclusions out of the premises.

The point of difference betwixt the Religious and the Secular.

The first fruit of a Religious life, to wit, perfect Remission of al sinnes committed.

CHAP. XIII.

Cant. 7. 8.

S. Greg. 15. mor. c. 1.

THe Wise-man sayd: *I will ascend into the Palme-tree, & gather the fruits thereof.* Being to treate more fully of the particular cõmodities of a Religious life, this saying of the Wise-man in the Canticles commeth in to my purpose, for the figure of the Palme-tree doth agree with a Religious state in manie things. *S. Gregorie* compares the life of spiritual men to this tree. For as the Palme-tree (*saith he*) is rugged below, and hidden vnder a coorse barke, & aboue is beautiful to the eye, embellished with delicate fruits; below is penn with the foldings of the rind, aboue spread-out in breadth with fayre green boughs; so the life of the seruants of God, in the exteriour doth seeme despicable and poore, but on high in soule, which is the cheefest part in man, it is dilated in hope of large recompence. Which is most of al verifyed in Religion; in which that which is first in sight, is the difficulties, and rigour of Pouertie, and an outward aspect, contemptible, kaenie, & rough, ful of labour and toile; but when we cast our eye vpon the inward

inward riches, there is not vpon earth a ſweeter life, nor fuller of al ſpiritual cómodities, Wherefore let vs aſcéd into this Palme-tree, or if by the mercie of God we be already mounted-vp into it, let vs gather the fruits therof, & enioy them, not only in daylie vſe and practiſe, but by ruminating & recording them.

1. The firſt fruit is a ful and perfect Remiſſion and pardon of al manner of ſinnes cómitted in a ſecular life. But no man can value the greatnes of this benefit, vnleſſe he conceaue & reflect vpon the greatnes of the puniſhmẽt, which is due after this life, euen for thoſe ſinnes, which haue been forgiuen vs, and blotted-out by vertue of the Sacramẽts. The vnſufferablenes of which puniſhment ariſeth of three things: Firſt, by the torment of fire, which is ſo bitter, & ſo pearcing, & burning our verie ſoule, that S. *Auguſtin* affirmeth it is a ſharper puniſhment then whatſoeuer torment anie man euer ſaw, or felt, or can imagin in this world; Secondly it is infinitly augmented, by the exceſſiue deſire which a ſoule, that is free frõ the bodie, hath of ſeing that Infinit Good, for which we were al created; this deſire being in a manner infinit. And thirdly, the verie ſight of the ſpots, & vglie ſcarres which are left by ſinne, before they be purged away by fire, doth greatly encreaſe the grief; and withal the multitude of them, in regard, that not only enormous ſinnes, but the verie leaſt that can be thought of, are there puniſhed; of which it is infinit to recount the number, wherevnto we are dayly ſubiect. S. *Auguſtin* reckoneth-vp manie of them, as, to eate or drink more then needs; to ſpeake or to hold one's peace more then is fitting; to neglect a poore bodie that preſſeth vpon vs; to riſe late; to be ſlow in viſiting priſons, or the ſick; to cõplement with our neighbour, or ſpeake harſhly to him; to flatter thoſe that are in authoritie; raſhly to ſuſpect; to be too ſparing in giuing almes; finally idle ſpeeches; al which ſinnes, he ſayth, if heer they be not redeemed, muſt be purged in that fire. Whereby we may ſee, what a heape of puniſhmẽts is layd-vp for ſo great a heape of ſinnes, & ſuch ſinnes as a Secular life is ful of. But at the inſtant that we profeſſe a Religious life, we are in one momēt deliuered of al the paines & tormēts ſo perfectly, that if our ſoule ſhould then depart this life, it would go directly to heauen. Which certainly is a very great benefit, & greatly to be eſteemed, for if we were to redeeme but one ſinne by our owne labour and endeauour, how manie teares, how manie faſtings, how manie diſciplines, what pẽnance would it coſt vs: What then will be neceſſarie for ſuch a maſſe of imperfectiõs, as an idle & careleſſe life is wõt to gather?

The punishments of the other life exceeding sharp for 3. reasons.

S. *Aug. ſer.* 11. *de* SS.

S. *Aug. ſer.* 41.

Sinnes punishable after this life in Purgatorie.

And forgiuen by profeſſion of a Religious life.

3. It is very true, that there be diuers other meanes, to get remiſſion of puniſhment due to ſinne, and chiefly by Indulgences granted by His Holines, to whome God hath giuen power to that effect; but there is a great deale of difference betwixt theſe two wayes. For though the power, which the Pope hath in this kind, be great, yet it is limited; For firſt there muſt be ſome iuſt cauſe to grant an Indulgence, and a cauſe which may carrie ſome proportion to the Indulgence which is granted; Secondly there muſt be ſome work performed, whereby to ſatisfye for our ſinnes, in ſome meaſure alſo proportionable to the ſinnes which are remitted. If either of theſe be wanting, the Indulgence is not auayleable, or at leaſtwiſe it reacheth no further, then the weight of the cauſe, or of the work will carrie it; and the valuation of theſe things depending of the iudgement of man, and the matter being obſcure and hard to iudge of, the Indulgence may quickly come to litle or nothing, ſpecially ſe-

The difference betwixt geuing remiſſion of our ſinnes by Indulgences and by entrance into Religion.

ing manie faults may be also committed in performing negligently the works which are enioyned. It is not so in the pardon which a Religious life doth bring vs; for it doth not depend of anie grant of man, but proceedeth from the nature of the fact itself; so that there can be no doubt, but that it is alwayes auaylable to al, after one and the self-same manner; and that God, as the Prophet *Micheas* speaketh, *hath mercie vpon vs, and putteth away al our iniquities, and casteth al our sinnes into the deapth of the sea.* Wherefore al Diuines (who are wont to examin these things very narrowly) with common consent do number this among the greatest priuiledges of Religion. And among them *S. Antonine* (a man renowned for learning and sanctitie) proueth it very solidly, and bringeth also *Paludanus* for his opinion. And manie others haue deliuered the same, and chiefly *S. Thomas* giuing this reason: For if Almes-giuing do redeeme sinnes, as we find deliuered by the Prophet Daniel, how much more shal the Entrance into Religion worke the same effect? which kind of voluntarie pennance, is not only of equal force with almes-giuing, but doth farre excel it; And there is good reason to think so, because he that giues an almes to a poore bodie, giues his external substance, and part only of that wherof he hath plentie; but a Religious man giueth al, and himself withal; so that no almes or guift can be equal with it. Of which also *S. Thomas* in an other place giueth this reason: Because when we enter into Religion our sinnes are forgiuen vs, but yet so as we on our part lay downe a real and very great satisfaction for them. For when we deliuer-vp our wil wholy to God, & bequeath our selues to his seruice, we giue him that which is more deare vnto vs then al things else in the world, and consequently do fully satisfye for al our sinnes past; because we giue him the greatest guift that man can giue. Thus sayth *S. Thomas*. *Waldensis*, a learned Authour, is of the same opinion, and confirmeth it by the testimonie of a holie man, who in a Vision saw the like Grace descend vpon a Monk, when he tooke the habit of Religion, which he had seen giuen in Baptisme. And *S. Anselme* in the latter end of his Booke of Similitudes sheweth it by example of one *Osborne* a Monk, who not long after he was deceased, appeared in the night to *S. Anselme* himself, & told him, that he had been three times most cruelly assaulted by the Diuel in his last agonie, & defended by one that stood by him, and pleaded hard for him. For first, the Diuel obiected vnto him the sinnes which he had committed before Baptisme (for he was baptized when he was in yeares) but when it was answered, that al those sinnes had been washed away by Baptisme, the Diuel was mute. Anone he obiected the sinnes which the man had committed in the world before he entred into Religion; to which answer was made, that these also were forgiuen by the profession of a Religious life; Finally he layd against him al his faults and negligences committed during the time he liued in Religion; but when it was replyed that he had satisfyed for them by often Cõfession, and other vertuous exercises, the Diuel hauing no more to say, went away vanquisht and confounded.

Micheæ. 7.19

Anto. p. 3. t. 16. c. 3. § 3
Pal. 4. d. 28
q. 3. Syl. 2.
Relig. 3. d. 23
Ang. n. 47.
S. Th. 2. 2.
q. vlt. ar 3.
and 3.

S. Th. 4. d 4. q. 3 ar. 3. ad 3.

Wald. de Sacramentalibus. ti 9. c. 80.

S. Anselme.

Refertur etiam ab Ant. p. 3. ti. 16. c. 16. § 7

Entrance into Religion is a second Baptisme.

4. *S. Athanasius* recounteth the like example of *S. Antonie* the Great, that aboue the Ninth Houre he was once in spirit carried vp towards heauen by the Angels; and when the Diuels flocking about him laboured with al might to hinder him, the Angels asked them what interest they had in him?

S. Athanas. of S Antonie the Great.

and they began to rip vp the ſinnes of his youth; but the bleſſed Angels preſently ſtopped their mouths, and told them, that they were not to looke back vpon thoſe things which he had cõmitted in the world before he was a Monk; but if from that time forward they had any thing, they should lay it open; but finding nothing to ſay, they were fayne to yeald againſt their wils, and leaue him free paſſage to Heauen.

5. In the chronicle of *S. Francis* his Order we reade alſo, that a certain Religious Prieſt of that Order, *Chriſtopher* by name, was wonderfully troubled in mind about the ſinnes which he had committed in the world; and deſired one of his Brethren, that did often ſee and ſpeake with his Good Angel, that he would aske him concerning it. The Good Angel made anſwer, that foraſmuch as concerned thoſe ſinnes, he should not be diſmayd, nor take any thought, but from thence forward labour diligently to perſeuer to the end, that he might be ſaued. Chronicle of S. Francis.

6. And that which *Leontius* Bishop of *Cyprus*, an ancient Authour, doth relate in the Life of *Simeon* the Abbot, is a pleaſant narration, and worthie to be recorded, as ſuting to our preſent purpoſe. This *Simeon* then a yong man, and of noble extraction, togeather with one *Iohn*, of equal nobilitie, and in the flower alſo of his youth, coming to a Monaſterie, and being both of them to be cloathed the next day in their Monaſtical weed, ſome of the Brethren of the houſe began to ſpeake thus vnto them (for I wil put downe the Authour's owne words, becauſe they are plaine, and ful of ancient ſimplicitie) You are happie, becauſe to morrow you shal be regenerate, and cleanſed from al ſinne, as when you were firſt borne, no otherwiſe then as if you were Baptized the ſame day. Which when they heard, they were both of thẽ aſtonished, & ranne to the godlie *Abbot* of the Monaſterie, called *Nico*, & caſting themſelues at his feete ſayd: We beſeech thee, Father, that thou wilt not baptize vs; for we are Chriſtians, and borne of Chriſtian parents. The Abbot not knowing what had been ſpoken by the Fathers of the Monaſterie, ſayd vnto them: Why, Children, who goes about to baptize you? And they anſwered: our Maiſters, the Fathers of the Monaſterie, tel vs that to morrow we shal be Baptized againe. Then the Abbot vnderſtood how they had ſpoken of the holie Habit, and ſayd: They ſayd wel, my Children; for, if it pleaſe God, to morrow we wil cloath you with the holie and Angelical habit. *Leontius.*

7. We haue *S. Hierom's* opinion alſo in this behalf (which is of no ſmal weight) who for this only reaſon dareth almoſt compare a Religious ſtate with Baptiſme. For writing to *Paula*, he comforteth her vpon the death of *Bleſilla* her daughter in this manner: It it very true, that if vntimelie death had ſeazed her (which God forbid should happen to thoſe that are his) in the heat of worldlie deſires, and in thoughts of the pleaſures of this life, she were to be lamented: But now that by the mercie of Chriſt, ſome foure moneths ſince, she had as it were washed herſelf with the ſecond Baptiſme of her holie purpoſe, and liued afterward ſo, as treading the world vnder her feete, she was reſolued to abide in the Monaſterie; are you not afraid leaſt our Sauiour ſay vnto you: *O Paula, art thou angrie that thy daughter is become my child?* And to the ſame purpoſe he exhorteth *Demetrias*, ſaying: Now that thou haſt forſaken the world, and in the *Second Step after Baptiſme* conditioned with thy Ad- S. *Hierome ep.* 25. *Idem Ep.* 8.

uerſarie ſaying vnto him: *Thou Diuel, I renounce thee, and the World, and thy pompe, and thy works*; keep the conditions, which thou haſt made. But *S. Bernard* teacheth the ſame thing more playnly then any of the reſt; and hauing been asked the queſtion by ſome, giueth two reaſons for it, in theſe words:

S. Bernard de Precep. and diſp.

"You deſire to know of me, how it comes to paſſe, that among al the courſes of "pennance, a Monaſtical life hath deſerued the prerogatiue to be ſtyled a Second "Baptiſme; I think the reaſon is in regard of the perfect renouncing of the "world, and the ſingular preheminence of a ſpiritual life; the conuerſation "therof excelling al the courſes which man is wont to take, and making the "louers therof like the Angels of heauen, and farre vnlike to earthlie men; it "reformeth the Image of God in man, configuring vs to Chriſt, as Baptiſme "doth; finally we are in a manner Baptized the ſecond time, in regard that "mortifying our members which are vpon earth, we put on Chriſt againe, once "more ingrafted to the ſimilitude of his death. And moreouer as in Baptiſme "we are deliuered from the power of darknes, and tranſlated into the kingdome "of eternal glorie; ſo in the ſecond kind of regeneration of this holie purpoſe, "in like manner from the darknes, not only of one Original ſinne, but of manie "Actual ſinnes, we paſſe to the light of vertue; accommodating that ſaying of "the Apoſtle to ourſelues; *The night is paſſed, and the day is at hand.* Thus farre *S. Bernard.*

Rom. 13. 12.

In Religiõ we dye to the world, as in Baptiſme we dye to ſinne. *Rom.* 6. *Eph.* 2. *Coloſſ.* 3.

8. Al which may be confirmed with this one argument, wherwith I wil conclude this Chapter, as containing the ſubſtance of what hath been hitherto ſayd. For the reaſon why Baptiſme blotteth-out al former offences, is becauſe in it we dye to our *old life*, and are borne againe into a *new life*; which is that which *S. Paul* doth euerie where teach, when ſometimes he ſayth *we are dead*, ſometimes *buried with Chriſt*, and *reuiued againe with him*, and that *our life is hidden in him*; ſo that, to ſpeake properly, in the Lauer of Baptiſme the ſame man that entred, doth not come forth, but quite an other man; for he that entred, is dead, and another riſen in his place; ſo that the ſinnes of that man that is dead, cannot be layd to the charge of the man that is new-borne; no more then my ſinnes can be layd to another man, or another man's to me; & the ſelf-ſame happeneth in Religion. For we dye to the world & to the works therof, & moreouer to ourſelues, and our owne wil; in ſomuch that we cannot enioy the world, nor make vſe of the offers therof, nor of our owne wil, no more then if we were indeed buried. Wherefore ſeing Religious people, as in Baptiſme, leaue to be what they were before, and begin to be new men in a new life, and quite other thoughts and endeauours, placing their contentment in other manner of pleaſures, and ends, and intentions; it is no wonder that the punishment of the offences, to which the old man was lyable, be blotted out, and lye dead; and that this other man cannot be charged with them.

The contentment which the priuiledge of this remiſſion bringeth.

9. Which benefit, if it be duly weighed, breedeth ineſtimable contentment and eaſe of mind, burying thoſe ſcruples and vexations, which the remembrance and remorſe of our former offences is wont to bring. Manie trauel into farre countries, and vow long pilgrimages to *Ieruſalem*, *Rome*, and *Compoſtella*; and put their liues in manie hazards by ſea and land, to gayne Pardon and remiſſion of their ſinnes, of which I ſpake before; and they doe wel and deuoutly: But yet their deuotion is mingled with manie inconueniences;

among

among which it is none of the leaſt, that generally they do not encreaſe their feruour and deuotion, but rather leeſe it, through the toyle and trouble of iourneying; and oftimes fal vpon occaſions of offending God more. But this Indulgence giueth great encreaſe of ſanctitie, and moreouer (as I ſayd before) doth not proceed from the power and authoritie of man, which is limited and confined, but from the meere wil and bountie of God, and the excellencie of the work itſelf. So that euerie Religious man may with great reaſon make account, that our Sauiour ſpeaketh thoſe comfortable words vnto him, which are in the Ghoſpel: *Thy ſinnes are forgiuen thee; goe in peace.*

The ſecond fruit of Religion, that it is a ſtate of Pennance.

CHAP. XIV.

AS Religion at the firſt entrance preſenteth euerie one of vs with the bountiful & welcome guift of Remiſſion of al our ſinnes and debts, as our Sauiour calles them: ſo it yealds manie ſoueraigne remedies to purge our ſoules, and blot out the ſame offences; and al the exerciſes therof are in a manner directed to no other end. For it is a State of Pennance, and ſo commonly called; in regard the greateſt part therof is ſpent in bewayling the ſinnes of our life paſt, and repayring the faults and negligences of former yeares, as *S. Thomas* proueth at large in the Booke he writ againſt the *Oppoſers of Religion.* Which though ſome may think a needles labour, and time idely ſpent, ſpecially after that ful and perfect Remiſſion, of which euen now I ſpake; yet it is not ſo, but a very great and ſpecial benefit; which we shal eaſily vnderſtand, if we giue eare to that ſaying of the Holie-Ghoſt in Scripture: *Of the ſinne which is forgiuen, be not without feare.* For a man might ſay: If it be truly forgiuen, what need I feare? or if I haue cauſe ſtil to feare, certainly it is not perfectly forgiuen me. But doubtles both our eternal weale is a buſines of ſo great weight and moment, that men haue great reaſon neuer to think themſelues ſafe enough; and ſinne itſelf is ſo fowle a thing, that we cannot ſufficiently expreſſe our hatred againſt it, vnleſſe we voluntarily reuenge ourſelues vpon it, and punish thoſe enemies of our owne accord, which haue wrought vs ſo much miſchief. For that is very true and wel to be conſidered, which *S. Gregorie* ſayth, that our Lord doth remit no ſinne without ſome punishment or other; for either we muſt purſue it with teares, or he wil reſerue it to his iudgement. And the ſame he proueth in an other place, by that which *Iob* ſayth to God: *Knowing that thou ſpareſt not him that offendeth*; God ſpareth not the offender, becauſe he letteth not the ſinne paſſe without punishment. For either man himſelf doth punish it in himſelf by pennance, or God doth punish it, taking reuenge vpon man.

S. Tho. con. Impug. Rel. c. 1.

Eccl. 5. 5.

Our eternal weale neuer safe enough

S. Greg. 4. mor. c. 17.

Idem 9. in c. 17.

Sine neuer too much hated and punished. *S. August.*

Therefore he spareth not the offence, because it is neuer remitted without reuenge. To which purpose *S. Augustin* was wont to say (as *Possidonius* writeth of him with a great deale of prayse) that no Priest, liue he neuer so worthily, should euer think of departing this life without iust & conuenient pennance. And seing it must be done, where can it be better and more fully done then in Religion, which is a course in great part erected for no other end, but to satisfye for the offences of our life past? And if we wil know what meanes Religion hath to this effect, we shal find that it is very powerful in this, as in al other things, and hath manie wayes to bring it to passe; which may be reduced to some that concerne the bodie, and some that concerne the mind. The bodie giueth continual matter of suffering, and enduring very much; and the verie renouncing of the pleasures of this world, is pennance enough of itself; for it cannot choose but be hard to flesh and bloud, to be debarred from the vse of things which are delightful, and to which it is naturally inclined, as from marriage and daintie fare, from companie-keeping, hunting and hawking, gaming, meeting at playes, and such other sports and pastimes, wherewith men are so much carried away. So that if there were nothing els, Religious people might with good reason be sayd to liue in continual pennance, because to be depriued of that, which naturally doth content vs, is very bitter.

Many waies of doing pennance in Religion

Religious people are men Crucifyed. S. *Io. Chrys. Hom. 5. ad pop.*

2. But there be manie other things in a Religious life which are so harsh & distastful to flesh and bloud, and so ordinarie withal among Religious people, that *S. Iohn Chrysostome* knew not how to expresse their manner of painful liuing, better, then by calling thē *Crucifyed men*; signifying that they liue perpetually as if they were nayled vpon a Crosse. For first their Pouertie bringeth manie daylie troubles and inconueniences with it, in their diet, and cloathing, and habitation, and furniture, and in al things else, which greatly helpeth towards the satisfaction of which I speake; because they willingly endure it for the loue of God, besids other exercises more heauie and irksome, which Religious discipline doth require, as fasting, and watching, and other austerities of the bodie, which the feruour and deuotion of euerie one doth inuent, or euerie one's particular Institute doth put vpon them. To which we may adde the labour and toyle which oftimes they vndergoe for God, and the good of their Neighbour, day and night; refusing no place, nor time, nor season to do them good. And these things belong vnto the bodie.

The mortifications of the mind

3. The functions of the mind are more noble, and more apt for satisfaction; specially the continual exercise of al kind of Vertue, as Humilitie, Obedience, Charitie towards God, and men of al conditions; of which vertues Religion is ful; not only encreasing our reward by the practise of them, but greatly helping to the perfect blotting-out of al sinnes, and chiefly by the denyal of our owne wil; which euerie one doth partly practise within himself, breaking and curbing the violent motions of Sensualitie, mortifying his eyes, and tast, and other senses, and inclinations, and is partly layd vpon him by his Superiours and gouernours. For by depending wholy vpon their wil, he cannot choose but liue in continual restraint of his owne wil, which is the hardest & the most profitable act of pennance that can be; because in euerie act of sinne, the wil of man reiects and contemnes the wil of God, and wilfully followes his owne courses, and consequently we cannot make God better nor more

Obedience the hardest and most profitable act of Pennance.

ful

ful satisfaction, then by deliuering the same wil of ours, as the partie that is guiltie, to God, whom it hath offended, bound as it were hand and foot in the chaynes of our Vowes, specially of Obedience; that as it hath ouerlashed by taking ouermuch delight in pleasures and pastimes, it may make recompence againe, by performing and enduring those things which are vnpleasant and distastful.

Pennance rather to be done vpon the mind then vpon the bodie.

4. And certainly, if we consider the nature and intention of pennance, it is rather to be exercised in the mind, then vpon the bodie; for it is the mind that sinneth. The mind commandeth the bodie and euerie part therof, and studieth the seueral wayes of working mischief, and consequently it deserueth al the punishment, specially seing most sinnes are committed only in mind, without anie act at al of the bodie; as the sinnes of Pride, which are manie, and of Enuie, and the like, and al those which passe only in thought, & inward consent to euil; whereby we may see that pennance doth chiefly consist in punishing the mind and wil; and that Religion is the fittest, if not the only fit place for it. Wherefore *S. Thomas* in the Treatise, which he wrote of Spiritual Perfection, sayth wel, that in Religion there is not only perfect Charitie, but perfect Pennance, and that no Satisfaction can be compared to the pennance of Religious people that consecrate themselues to God; and giueth a good reason, because no man can be cõpelled to take vpon him a Religious course, though he haue committed neuer so manie enormous offences; in regard that the works of Religion exceede whatsoeuer priuate or publick satisfaction and punishment which may be due, or euer was at anie time, or can be enioyned for any offence.

S. Th. c. 10. & quodli. 3. ar. 13. & 2. 2. q. 189. a. 3 ad 3.

No man can be cõpelled to take vpon him a Religious course.

Two things in the pennance of Religion, which are not elsewhere.

5. And moreouer, two things concurre in this kind of Pennance, which are not in anie other; and it is a thing worthie to be considered. For other works of pennance, the sharper they are, are also the more effectual and fit to purge our soules; and if they be mild and easie, they are the lesse auaylable; But Religious discipline (which, if we belieue *S. Thomas*, is the greatest kind of pennance that can be) is not sharp and terrible, but easie and pleasant; for it doth not require that we should punish ourselues with much fasting, long disciplining, watching whole nights togeather, and such like austerities, which euerie man's bodie or yeares is not able to beare, but rather it consisteth in a firme resolution of the mind, despising al things of this world, denying our owne wil, and in Obedience; of the easines and pleasantnes wherof we shal heerafter speake at large.

33. q. 2. c. Adm.

6. And the holie Canons giue vs to vnderstand as much: For wheras one *Astulphus* had murthered his wife, Pope *Pius* exhorted him first to betake himself to a Religious course; that being (as he speaketh) humbled vnder the command of his Prelate, and holpen by the prayers of manie Brethren, he might obtaine mercy of God; but if he refused to take that course, he enioyned him diuers grieuous pennances which he was to do continually; as, to drinke no wine, to eate no flesh, not to marrie, nor vse the bath, and manie other things, which would affright a man to heare them; whereby we may gueesse how much easier it is to satisfye God in Religion then in the world; and that it is done more fully, in regard of the obedience and humilitie which we professe vnder our Superiours; and the help which we

haue by the prayers of our ſpiritual Brethren; which be the two cauſes which the *Pope* doth touch vpon.

7. Finally, that which *S. Gregorie* the *Great* (being ſo famous a Doctour of the Church) doth teach, is much to be noted, as prouing euidently, that the abandoning of the world, is not only the beſt and moſt holeſome kind of ſatisfaction, but in a manner neceſſarie ſometimes; ſpecially if we be deſirous to offer a perfect and intire ſatisfaction for our ſinnes. For in a certain Homilie diſcourſing vpon the words of *S. Iohn Baptiſt*, that it is not ſufficient to doe workes of pennance, but *worthie Works of pennance*, he declares himſelf in this manner: If we will ſpeake of worthie workes of pennance, we muſt vnderſtand, that if there be anie bodie that hath not done anie thing that is vnlawful, he deſerues to vſe lawful things, and follow workes of vertue; ſo that, if he will, he need not leaue the world. But if one haue fallen into fornication, or adulterie, which is worſe, he muſt debarre himſelf the more from things which are otherwiſe lawful; in regard he cannot but remember he hath done that which is vnlawful.

S. Greg. Hom. 20. in Euang.

8. *S. Bernard* is of the ſame opinion; for among other reaſons which he giues, why a Religious man muſt make account, that he owes himſelf and his life wholy to God, he reckoneth this as one of the chiefeſt: My ſinnes paſt (*ſayth he*) doe require of me my life to come, that I do worthie works of pennance, and bethink myſelf of al the dayes of my life in the bitternes of my ſoule. I haue ſinned aboue the number of the ſands of the ſea, and my ſinnes are multiplyed; and am not worthie to behold the heauen on high. How therefore ſhal I number that which is without number? how ſhal I ſatisfye, where I ſhal be conſtrayned to make ſatisfaction to the laſt farthing? and who vnderſtands his ſinnes? That heauenlie Flute *S. Ambroſe* ſayth: I haue found it eaſier to meete with thoſe that haue preſerued themſelues innocent, then that haue done worthie pennance. When therefore thou ſhalt haue conſecrated al thy life, al thy thoughts, whatſoeuer thou haſt, or canſt do, to this one thing, can it be anie thing? or reputed anie thing worth? A litle before thou hadſt giuen thy life, for the life which Chriſt gaue for thee; and now the memorie of thy former offences demands it al againe.

S. Bernard. ſ. de quadr. deb.

9. He confirmeth the ſame thing an other way els where, ſaying, that when a man hath once cleft to the world by ſinne, he muſt quite forſake his owne wil wherewith he ſinned, and the world for whoſe ſake he ſinned, if he wil perfectly ſatisfye for his ſinne; and that this is a ſecond Baptiſme. His words are theſe: We haue made our firſt couenant voyde; we haue ſinned againſt thee, ô Lord, obliging ourſelues againe to Satan & his works, putting our necks willingly vnder the yoake of iniquitie; and ſubiecting ourſelues to a moſt miſerable ſlauerie. And therefore, my Brethren, it is fitting we ſhould be baptized againe; we muſt neceſſarily make a ſecond couenant, a ſecond profeſſion; and it is not enough for vs to renounce the Diuel and his works, we muſt alſo renounce the world and our owne wil. The world beguiled vs, our wil betrayed vs. In our firſt Baptiſme, when our owne wil had done vs no harme, it was enough to renounce the Diuel; but now that we haue apparently ſmarted for the allurements of the deceitful world, and

Id. ſer. de dup. bapt.

the

the vnfaithfulnes of our own ewil, in this ſecond Baptiſme of our conuerſion (as I may cal it) we ſhal do worthily, and not vnwiſely, if we be eareful, not only to renew the former couenant, but to ſtrengthen it, renouncing alſo and denying our affections. Thus farre *S. Bernard*; and I find that other holie men haue been al of the ſame mind; inuiting men to a Religious life, to the end they may eaſe themſelues of the heauie weight of their ſinnes; as *S. Romualdus*, who perſwaded *Peter Vrſeolus*, King of *Dalmatia*, to leaue his kingdome, and forſake the world, to the aſtoniſhment of al men, for a murther which he had committed. He perſwaded alſo *Thamnus* to do the like, who was ſo great a fauorit of *Otho* the Emperour, that they ſate at one table, and wore one an other's garments; but *Thamnus* had put *Creſcentius* a Senatour to death, againſt his faith and promiſe giuen him; which was the cauſe he forſooke the world. The ſame he perſwaded with Count *Olibanus* a great man in *France*; who after manie heynous offences committed, being touched with remorſe, came to *S. Romualdus* his Celle with a great trayne, and layd open his whole life vnto him. When the *Saint* had heard him, he told him there was no way for him to be ſaued, but by forſaking the world, and entring into Religion. The Count hauing quite other thoughts in his head, was much troubled; and calling to him the Biſhops & Abbots, which were in his companie, he aduiſed with them, whether it were ſo indeed; and they anſwered with one voice, that *S. Romualdus* had told him the verie truth, and that feare only had hindred them from telling him the ſame thing before. Then *Olibanus* in priuate conference agreed with the holie man, to forſake the world, and in effect did it not long after, to the great admiration of al that knew him. Whervpon we may conclude, that if any bodie find himſelf loaden with ſinnes, and deſire to be cleared of them, as euerie one ought to deſire, and labour for it, no way can be compared to a Religious courſe, either in regard of the certaintie, or of the ſweetnes of the meanes of obtayning pardon, and of manie other prerogatiues, in which it doth excel.

S. Romualdus perſwaded diuers great men and great ſinners to enter into Religion.

The third fruit of Religion: Auſteritie of life.

CHAP. XV.

REligion hath a third commoditie, for which though moſt men ſhunne it, yet it contaynes manie great commodities in it, to wit, that Religious people haue ſo much occaſion, and ſome kind of neceſſitie, of dealing harſhly with themſelues, and afflicting their bodies: partly becauſe the pouertie which they profeſſe, doth in a manner enforce it vpon them, and partly becauſe al functions of Religion are ſomewhat harſh, and diſtaſtful to Senſe. For that which *Eccleſiaſtes* ſayth (*Frequent meditation, is an affliction of the flesh*) hath a further meaning, then of the Contemplation of heauenlie things, which we commonly cal Meditation. For whatſoeuer the mind is buſied in, if it be a reſtraint to Senſe, and to the natural incli-

Eccl. 12. 12. The commodities of Auſteritie of life.

nation which we find in ourselues continually craving, is an affliction to the flesh, and doth much quayle and abate the liuelie vigour of the bodie. And yet this seueritie brings much profit with it; and first, by vse of hard and
Deut. 32. 15. paineful things, our nature is mortifyed and kept from flying out; if we pamper and deale gently with it, the crookednes and corruption therof is so great, that, as *Moses* speaketh in his Canticle, *it kicketh and spurneth, when it is fatted vp*, and vtterly refuseth the obedience which it owes to reason & the law of God. We may see it more plainly in beasts, because the force of nature doth more liuely shew itself in them, in regard they are led in al things meerly by natural inclinations; let vs therefore consider what hapneth in in them, and take example by it. If we keep a horse in stable, and giue him his fil of oates, and rest; and keep an other at day-labour, with allowance litle enough to liue and be able to do the work, we shal quickly find the difference; For a horse that is wel kept and high fed, wil be alwayes playing and curuetting, and a man shal haue much adoe to hold him in with a double bit; he wil be running away when the rider would haue him stand, and stop and giue-back when he should go on, and cannot be for much vse, without a great deale of paynes and danger to the rider: But the horse that is kept at rack and manger, is gentle enough, and wil not greatly stirre: he wil sooner sink, then offer to resist, whatsoeuer load you put vpon him; you shal not need to tye him to make him stand, and be quiet; but you may lay the reynes on his neck, and stay him, or put him on, or turne him with a word. Now certainly this inferiour nature of ours, which consists of flesh and bloud, and of that which we cal Life, and Sense, and Appetite, is the same with beasts; and so much the more headie in vs, then it is in them, in regard it is infected and corrupt by sinne, from which beasts are free; so that if we pamper it, and giue ourselues to ease, and a ful diet, and feed it with daynties, and al manner of
S. Bernard. Ep. 152. pleasure, it must needs grow stubborn and vnrulie in vs, as it doth in beasts, and somewhat more, in regard of our corruption; but if we feed sparingly, and liue sober and continent, it wil be alwayes gentle and at command. Whervpon *S. Bernard* sayth, *that the mind that is accustomed to daynties, and not broken with the mattock of discipline, gathereth much filth*; where he daintily compareth the Soule to a plot of ground, Austeritie to a spade or mattock; for the ground cannot beare fruit, not only if we doe not sow it, but though it be
S. Leo ser 4. de ieiun. fruitful of itself, and be sowed, yet it must be sometimes digged and cast vp, or els it wil grow ful of weeds and brambles; so our flesh (sayth *S. Leo*) vnlesse it be broken with continual labour, wil quickly with ease and slouth bring-forth thornes and brambles, and yeald fruit for the fire, and not for the barne. And, to go no farther, as the ground, if it had sense of feeling, would suffer in the breaking vp, and yet must beare it,
Iob. 6. 11. for the good of itself, as wel as of the husbandman; for the cultiuating of it, is better for the ground itself; so though we feele payne and difficultie (for *our flesh is not of brasse*, as we read in *Iob*) yet we must not leauc-of for that, but think that we shal haue an eternal and vnspeakable reward, for the smal labour and payne we heer endure.

2. To be short, we must beare in mind, that we are cõposed of two seueral substances very different & contrarie one to the other; the one is of earth, and

conse-

consequently beares continually downe-wards, towards the earth, dreaming of nothing but earthlie things: the other, as it begun in vs by the breathing of God into our face, so it is in substance light and actiue, resembling God, and in nature spiritual, as he is; so that, as in a balance when one scale weigheth downe, the other riseth, of these two parts as one thriueth, the other pareth and falleth away; which holie Scripture doth teach vs saying: *The bodie which is corrupt, doth aggrauate and weigh downe the soule*; and certainly it must needs sink the more, the more weight wegiue it. Wherefore that which *S. Gregorie* sayth is much to be noted, that the ioy of the eternal reward is not reaped in heauen, vnlesse first in earth we sow in bitter teares and sighs, according as it is written: *Going, they went and wept, casting their seed; but coming, they shal come with ioy, bearing their bundles.* For as when the flesh rests, the spirit faints; so when the flesh taketh paynes, the spirit groweth strong and able. And as the flesh burnisheth with things that are dayntie, so the soule is raysed with that which is hard and rude. The flesh is bred-vp with delight; the soule groweth with that which is distasteful. Easie things refresh the flesh; harsh things exercise the soule. And againe, as hard things wound the flesh, so soft things kil the soule; & as paynful things consume the flesh, so things delightful pinch the soule. Neither shal I need to say anie more to this purpose; because no man's authoritie is greater then *S. Gregorie's*; nor could *S. Gregorie* speake more plainly or more effectually in anie thing, then he hath done in this.

Gen. 1. *Sap. 9. 15.* *S. Gregorie 2. 3. pœnit.*

3. But by this, which hath been sayd, it is euident, how happie a thing it is to be in *Religion*; where we may performe that which *S. Paul* sayd of himself: *I chastise my bodie, and bring it into subiection*; which is farre from them, that haue placed their contentment in a life ful of ease and dayntie; of which *S. Bernard* spake truly, when he sayd: A delicious life, is death, and the shaddow of death; for certainly it bordereth as neere vpon hel, as the shaddow is neere the bodie wherof it is a shaddow. When a soule therefore hath once shaken-of this clog, and maistered the insolencie of the flesh, which is the hand-maide, there ariseth another comoditie; to wit, that the mind, which is by nature mistris, is enabled the more nimbly and chearfully to runne the way of spirit, and in a short time to aduance itself greatly in the perfection of Humilitie, and Charitie, and al other Vertues. For our soule being a spiritual nature and substance, darke without vertue, as the ayre is without light, but bright and ligchtsome when it is adorned with vertue; certainly in al reason, it must needs loue vertue more then anie earthlie thing; in regard vertue is spiritual, and consequently more like vnto it, and more beautiful, were not this desire and inclination hindred by the lumpishnes of the bodie; which lumpishnes being greatly diminished (for it cannot be altogeather shaken-of til we come to heauen) and the burden of this bodie folded into a smal roome, and easie to carrie, our soule must needs be, not only more light to runne, but able to flye in pursuite of whatsoeuer is vertuous and prayse-worthie.

1. Cor. 9. 27. *S. Bernard f. 48. in Cant.*

4. To which purpose *S. Leo* sayth excellently wel, that Abstinence breedeth chast thoughts, reasonable desires, holesome counsels; and by voluntarie afflictions, the flesh dyeth to inordinate lust; and the spirit is renewed by vertue. It is recorded, that our Sauiour reuealed the like thing to *S. Francis*,

S. Leo f. 2. de ieiunio. 10. men.

when he first entred vpon a spiritual life, saying to him: *Francis, take to thyself hard things, instead of those that are pleasing; and contemne and vilifie thyself as much as thou canst.* And we reade of *S. Catharine* of *Siena*, that our Sauiour sayd the same to her almost in the same words, to wit, that she should seeke after *bitter* things, as if they were *sweet*; and refuse *sweet* things, as if they were *bitter*. Which *Truth* itself spake indeed to these two Saints; but we may take it as spoken to euerie bodie.

5. A third commoditie of Austeritie is, that it is the best disposition a Soule can put itself into, to gaine spiritual comfort, and plentie of inward ioy. *Giue sider to those that sorrow, and wine to those that haue a bitter hart*, sayth the Holie-Ghost in the Booke of Wisdome. What is this sider, or this wine, but the sweet lickour of heauenlie comforts, wherof the wine-celler is ful, into which the Spouse in the Canticles reioyced to see herself admitted? Those therefore only, that be sad and sorrowful, haue part of this wine; because (as holie *Iob* giueth vs to vnderstand) it is not found in the land of those that liue at ease. And our Sauiour confirmeth it, when he sayth: *Blessed are they that mourne, because they shal be comforted.* This is to be sad and to mourne, to cut-of from our selues whatsoeuer is pleasing to flesh and bloud, and may giue contentment to our senses; and on the other side, to embrace that which is irksome to them, and doth restrayne them of their desires and inclinations. *S. Bernard* expounding those words of our Sauiour which are written in *S. Iohn* (*Vnlesse I go, the Paraclet shal not come vnto you*) sayth very wel, that the comfort which his disciples took in his corporal presence, was a barre vnto them, that they could not receaue the fulnes of spiritual graces. Vpon which ground he discourseth thus very pertinently to our purpose: The man that giues himself to worldlie pleasures, and followes the allurements of the flesh, of sinful flesh, flesh borne and bred in sinne, in which there is no good; how dares he expect the Paraclet? He, I say, who is alwayes nayled vnto this dunghil, pampers his bodie, soweth in flesh, & sauours nought else but flesh; dares he notwithstanding hope for cõfort of the heauenlie visitation, that torrent of pleasures, the grace of that vehemẽt Spirit, which (as Truth itself doth witnes) the Apostles could not receaue togeather with the flesh of the Word Incarnate? No no; he is farre wide, who soeuer thinks that such heauenlie sweetnes can dwel with this durt and ashes, or that Diuine Balsame be tempered with such wicked poyson, or the grace of the Holie-Ghost with these flattering pleasures. By which large testimonie of *S. Bernard*, and manie others which might be brought to the same effect, it is playne, that *carnal pleasure* is a mayne impediment to al spiritual delights; and contrariwise the strictnes of *Religious Parsimonie*, a great entrance thervnto.

Prou. 31. 6.

Religious do truly mourne.

Iob 28. 13.

Math. 5.

S. Bernard ser. 6. de Ascens.

6. Lastly I may reckon among the commodities of an austere life that, which is the chief and total of al other commodities, to wit, Eternal Life, and blisse euerlasting. There is no other way thervnto, but the way of the Crosse. This way Christ himself our King, his Apostles and disciples, and al Saints haue walked, in labour, and patience, and continual mortification of their bodies; denying heer their owne soules, that they might possesse them eternally. That life, and that glorie, is the *Euangelical pennie*, which is not giuen but to such as *labour in the vineyard*; it is the *Crowne*, which

Eternal life particularly due to those, that in Religion liue an austere life.

which is not bestowed but vpon those *that fight* lawfully; it is the *Prize*, which those only gaine, that doe *runne*; we cannot *raigne* togeather with Christ and his Saints, vnlesse we *suffer* with them; we cannot *reape*, but what we haue *sowen*. Few words are abundantly sufficient to conclude this point: Since it behoued Christ to *suffer*, and so to *enter* into the glorie which was before-hand his owne by so manie titles; how much more must we expect to suffer, that we may enter into an other's glorie, a glorie which by right we haue as often lost, as we haue sinned? But I know not what blindnes hath possessed mankind, that, as *S. Bernard* speaketh, *so few wil go after Christ; and yet al would come vnto him; they care not to seeke, whom they desire to find; they would fayne ouertake, whom they wil not follow.*

7. Let vs rather harken to *S. Hierome*, who hauing taken vpon him to perswade one *Iulian* (a noble and wealthie man) to forsake the world, and embrace a Religious life, insisteth chiefly vpon this argument: It is hard, yea it is impossible to enioy the goods that are present, and also those that are to come; heer to fil the bellie, and there to fil the mind; to passe from pleasure, to pleasure; to be first in this world, and in the next; to be in heauen and earth renowned. *S. Hierom. Ep 34.* "

8. But why do we stand rehearsing the testimonies of men, hauing the Oracle of our Sauiour directly for this purpose? *Woe be to you that laugh, because you shal mourne and weep.* And againe: *Woe be vnto you that haue your comfort in this world.* And he explayneth his meaning by the example of the *rich Glutton*, expressing no other cause obiected vnto him by *Abraham* but this: *Remember that thou receauedst good things in thy life-time, and Lazarus in like manner, euil; but now he is comforted, and thou tormented.* *Luc. 6.* *Luc. 16.*

9. The self-same he declared to *S. Catherine of Siena* in a Vision. For he appeared vnto her, holding in each hand a Crowne, the one of thornes, the other of gold and pretious stone; and made offer of them both vnto her: but vpon this condition, that which soeuer she made choice of in this life, she should be sure to haue the contrarie in the life to come; if heer she chose the crowne of gold, there she should haue the crowne of thornes; if heer she made choyce of the thornie crowne, there she should be crowned with the other of gold. The Virgin, being truly wise, preferred the crowne of thornes so farre before the other, that taking it greedily with both her hands, she pressed it so hard vpon her head, that she felt the payne and marks therof some time after. This which *S. Catherine* then did, al Religious persons do al their life-time long, while they preferre pouertie before riches, hard things before those which are easie and commodious, manie corporal incommodities before the delights belonging to the bodie, before pleasure & secular libertie; vpon this general and certain perswasion, that since no man can looke to enioy both kinds of pleasure, it is farre better to want the present, then those that are to come; the temporal, then the eternal. Among whom we may reckon that *Theodore*, who was disciple to great *Pachomius*. He being borne of parents that were noble and rich, at a certain feast in his father's house, when he was himself but foureteen yeares of age, began amidst those festiual ioyes, to cast in his mind, the honour, and wealth, and pleasures, The vision of *S. Catherin of Siena*, acted in a Religious life. *Theodorus.*

and commodities in which he had been bred and borne; and the Diuine inſpiration concurring with his thoughts, he ſayd within himſelf: Miſerable wretch that I am! what wil theſe ſhort and fading pleaſures auayle me, if I muſt leeſe the eternal? for this is the rule of God's ordination, that no man can enioy them both. And fetching a great ſigh, penſiue concerning the point of his ſaluation, he withdrew himſelf from companie, to the farther part of the houſe; and proſtrate vpon the ground, with manie teares beſought God to teach him his bleſſed wil; and from thence forward, laying aſide al commodities belonging to the bodie, he liued in his father's houſe the life of a Monk, til not long after he betooke himſelf to the conduct of *S. Pachomius*; vnder whom he arriued in ſhort time to that height of ſanctitie, which theſe rare beginnings did promiſe.

The fourth fruit of Religion, that it taketh away al occaſion of ſinne.

CHAP. XVI.

Prou. 4.23. THE Diuine Wiſdome by the mouth of King *Salomon* doth giue vs warning, to *guarde our hart with al ſafetie, and diligence; becauſe life doth proceede from it*; giuing vs to vnderſtand, that whoſoeuer hath not this cuſtodie ouer his hart, ſhal certainly looſe his life, ſeing life doth proceed from the hart. Nothing is dearer to man then life; and the truer the life is, the more deare it ought to be vnto vs; and conſequently the ſpiritual life which our ſoule doth liue (a life eternal, like to the life of God and his holie Angels) ought to be much deater vnto vs, then this corporal life, which is periſhable and vncertain, and which the verie flyes and beaſts haue. And if we belieue *S. Bernard*, there is a ſpecial neceſſitie of ſetting a guard ouer our hart and ſoule; in reſpect that the caſtle of our Soule is ſeated in an enemie-countrie, and aſſaulted on euerie ſide; and therefore on euerie ſide we muſt alſo place our guard, that is, ſtand perpetual Sentinel, and maintaine a continual and diligent watch ouer it. *S. Gregorie* reflecting more particularly vpon this ſentence of the Wiſe-man, ſayth, that he aduiſeth vs to keepe our hart with al diligence; becauſe, if a cittie be fenced with a mightie rampire, and walled about with a ſtrong wal, and watchful Sentinel ſtand on euerie ſide of it, and one onlie paſſage be left through negligence without a guard; doubtleſſe the enemie wil make his entrance there, though euerie where els he be excluded. In vaine therefore do we guard the reſt, if one place be left vnguarded, whereby we lye open to the enemie.

S. Bernard ſer. 46. inter par.

S. Greg. in moſ. c. 12.

Al creatures of this world are gaps for the enemie to enter vpon our hart.

2. Wherefore it behoueth vs to conſider carefully, which be the gaps and paſſages, through which our ſpiritual Enemie may either by open violence and aſſault enter vpon our ſoule, or by craftie vndermining creep into it. Theſe gaps are al creatures of this world: they are the weapons, with which he doth

make

make warre againſt vs; if he be diſarmed of theſe, he hath ſcarce anie thing left him, wherewith to giue vs an aſſault. For the Diuel of himſelf is ſo vglie and wicked, that there is hardly a man to be found ſo deſperately naught, that doth not hate and deteſt him; ſpecially ſeing no man doubts, but that they that ſerue him, muſt looke for nothing but euerlaſting miſerie in the life to come; wherefore finding himſelf to be ſo much abhorred by euerie bodie, he hath no other means to enueigle the harts of men, and winde them into his ſnares, but by offering them ſuch things as he knoweth are pleaſing to nature. Whervpon *S. Auguſtin* likeneth al viſible things (which, as the Apoſtle ſpeaketh, *are temporal*) to a fiſher's hooke; for as the fiſh is glad while it ſwalloweth the bayte, and ſpieth not the hooke; but when the fiſher drawes his line, it is firſt tormented within, and ſoone after, from the ioy which it had, it comes to deſtruction by the verie bayte, of which before it did ſo much reioyce: ſo it fareth with al thoſe that eſteeme themſelues happie by the temporal goods which they poſſeſſe. They haue ſwallowed a hooke, and go away with it in their bellies; but a time wil come, when they wil feele how great torment they haue ſwallowed in their greedines. What remedie therefore is there, and what courſe to auoide theſe hookes, of which *S. Auguſtin* ſpeaketh? The remedie is not farre to ſeeke: we muſt ſhunne the bayte, which hangs vpon the hooke, and we ſhal eſcape the danger. If we be greedie of the bayte, we cannot auoyde the hooke that is hidden vnder it; that is, eternal death and perdition. Al things of this world be the Diuel's bayte: Honour, power, preferment, wealth, and trading, wife and children, and not to ſtand reckoning vp euerie particular, whatſoeuer is created, whatſoeuer is vnder God, or not directly tending to God, ſerueth him for a bayte to catch vs; God alone, and thoſe things which are immediatly for him, are the only good things, which cā not be euil, nor vſed by the Diuel to our deſtruction. Al other things, becauſe they may be good, and may be euil, may alſo be eaſily wreſted by him to ouerthrow vs, and in them he doth lay his ſnares; ſo that we cannot take a ſafer, nor a readier courſe to ſaue ourſelues, then if we ſhunne them al. And this aduantage the Diuel hath in the world. He is fearful and ful of deceit, and doth willingly lay wayt in cloſe and ſhadowiſh places; in the playne and open field, he can do nothing; ſuch as Religion is; the chief glorie wherof is, that it hath nothing of this world.

S. Auguſt. de agone Chriſtian. c. 7.

Shunne the bayte, and yee shal ſcape the hooke.

3. The things themſelues of this world breed no leſſe danger vnto vs; for naturally they are of that temper & cōpoſition, that if a man once meddle with them, he can hardly ſhake them of againe. For, as the ſame *S. Auguſtin* ſayth, the loue of earthlie things is birdlime to our ſpiritual wings; thou coueteſt to haue them, and thou cleaueſt to them. *Who wil giue me wings of a doue?* when wilt thou flie where thou mayſt truly reſt; ſeing thou haſt wickedly taken vp thy reſt heer, where thou ſinfully cleaueſt?

The loue of earthly things is like birdlime.

S. Auguſt. ſer. 33. de verb. Dom.

4. Some wil ſay, this is true of the loue of earthlie things; but if a man poſſeſſe them and do not loue them, he may eſcape. *S. Bernard* (a man experienced in this and al other ſpiritual things) ſhal make anſwer: The chief reaſon, why men ſhould fly riches, is, becauſe they can hardly yea neuer be poſſeſſed of them, but they muſt loue thē. Not only our external but our internal ſubſtance is too too ſlimie & like glue, and the hart of man doth eaſily cling to that which

S. Bernard ſer. Eccemus rel.

it often vseth. He sayth, the hart of man doth easily cleaue and stick to euerie thing which it vseth; & we finde it so by daylie experience. For the verie house which we vse to dwel in, the cittie or towne where we haue made our abode for anie time, the companie with whom we vse to conuerse, the trade or course of life which we haue been wont to hold, doe worke mightily vpon our affection, and we cannot choose but loue them; we doe not perhaps find it, til we haue occasion to parte and leaue them, but then we feele the trouble, & grieue. Seing therefore these ordinarie things, which of themselues haue no great inticing vertue, do notwithstanding worke so forcibly in vs by vse and custome, and breed a kind of tye & linck of friendship betweene vs and them, as there is betweene friend & friend; how much more forcible wil the operation of those things be, which carrie with them the face of necessitie and delight, as wealth, honour, and the like? Two euils therefore doe spring out of the vse and loue of these things, loue necessarily following the vse of them: First, by occasion of them, manie great sinnes are committed; as robberies, vsurie, deceitful bargains through the thirst of auarice, dissembling, flatterie, slanders, and manie other vnworthie acts, through ambition and desire of honour; secondly, though in the pursuit of wealth, or honour, and the like, we do not sinne; yet while we are hot in the chase, or quiet in the ioyful possession of such things, they stop the course of our mind to God-ward, and either we runne not at al, or so heauily and slowly, that it is follye to say, we runne.

S. Greg. 3. mor. c. 1. and 18. mor. c. 8.

5. Wherefore *S. Gregorie* sayth wel, that the commodities of this life are irksome to al Spiritual men, because they know that they are a clog to their inward desires. And else-where he giues this reason: Our soule can neuer be
„ without some delight; for either it pleaseth itself in base and vnworthie things,
„ or in things high and worthie; and the more earnest it is in the prosecution of
„ high things, the more it loatheth the inferiour; and the hoter it is vpon the
„ desire of the inferiour, the more damnable is the cold tepiditie, with which it
„ goeth about the higher. These two loues can not dwel in one hart: the corne
„ of supernal Charitie can not grow, where the thornes of base delight do choak it. For confirmation of which saying of *S. Gregorie*, we may adde, that the mind spending itself vpon outward things, doth as it were wander abroad out of itself; and the farther it wandereth from itself, the farther also it goeth

S. Aug. 10. conf. 27.

out from God; because the kingdome of God is within vs. Which *S. Augustin* bewayled in himself in these words: Behold, thou wert within, and I with-
„ out; and there I was seeking thee, and fel fowle vpon these beautiful things,
„ which thou hadst made. Thou wert with me, and I was not with thee; those
„ things withheld me farre from thee, which could not be, if they were not in
„ thee. *S. Augustin* knew not this, nor felt it, while he was in it; but vnder-stood it then, when inspired by God, he withdrew himself from al creatures into God. And the like hapneth to euerie bodie that is plunged in the loue of earthlie things.

6. Religious people therefore haue this commoditie, that they do, as it were, with one blow of the axe cut-of al these rubs and dangers, when they absolutly abandon al things; and this makes it easie for them to guard their hart with al manner of custodie and diligence, as the Wise-man aduiseth. And we shal discouer the greatnes of this commoditie much more plainly, if

we

we consider how weak and feeble our nature is, when it is to encounter Sense, and fight against those affections, which are alwayes more violently inflamed by the presence of the sensible obiect; of which weaknes we may easily find the reason to be, because while our soule is enclosed within our bodie, and so lincked vnto it that they make one man, the things which our Senses as messengers do bring vnto it, must needs make great impression in it. We find it in the passion of grief, and ioy, and feare, and the rest; which are most violent, when the cause is present. A mother is more violently transported with grief, when she sees the dead corps of her sonne lye before her feet, then when she heares of his death. And they that go about to comfort them that are in sorrow, are careful that nothing come in sight, which may refresh the memorie of the thing for which they grieue. Wherefore as grief, and anger, and other passions are sooner and more violently stirred by the presence of their proper obiects; why should not the same also happen in loue? doubtlesse vpon the sight of a thing that is beautiful, it is also much more inflamed. Religious people therefore take a holesome and profitable course, to hide and sequester themselues from al earthlie things, of which the continual sight cannot choose but stirre men vp to loue them, and nourish the same loue in them. For if to preserue ourselues chaste and honest, it is not only profitable, but a necessarie means, *to enter couenant with our eyes*, as holie *Iob* speaketh of himself; tel me, I pray, why the same should not also be of force in euerie other passion of the mind or bodie? For that which hapneth in that loue, which Chastitie doth withstand and vanquish, hapneth in al other kinds of loue; whether it be of money, or honour, or pleasure, to which auarice, or ambition, or intemperance doth incite vs. These kinds of loue must in like manner of necessitie be much more inflamed by the sight of gold, and the glittering of a purple robe, and the touch of pleasure, which Sense doth affect; and contrariwise, if none of these things euer approach before our eyes, the loue of them must needs grow dayly lesse and lesse, and at last be wholy extinguished.

Our nature is weak, when it is to encounter Sense.

Iob. 31. 1.

7. To which purpose S. *Cyprian* (or whosoeuer is the Authour of that Treatise of the Single life of the Clergie) sayth wel, that the farther a man is from aduersitie, the lesse he feeles it; and he that comes not where there is much pleasure, is lesse stirred to pleasure; and he that sees not riches, is lesse tempted with auarice. To me it seemes too violent a thing for a man alwayes to haue his eye vpon that which is delightful and pleasing, and stil to striue and ouercome himself in abstayning from it; and it cannot last long; for it is an old Saying receaued euen among Philosophers, that *No violent thing is euerlasting*. We see it with our eyes, and experience it dayly within our selues in the combat which we suffer in ouercoming our appetite and delight in meate. For if we be at a ful board, set-forth with varietie of dayntie dishes curiously dressed, they set such an edge vpon our stomack, that we haue great difficultie to temper ourselues, & find it very hard to eate with that moderation, that we exceed not the limits of temperance & sobrietie: But if a man come not to board, then it is easie to abstayne; because the thought of the selfsame things doth not so whet our appetite, as doth the sight of them; & the same may be sayd of al other things; for the nature of our desire & passion is the same, & the force of Sense is alike in al.

S. *Cyprian de sing. clerc.*

S. Aug. l. 6. Confes. 8. Alipius.

8. *S. Augustin* in his Confessions relates of *Alipius* a passage expressing liuely that now we speake of. This *Alipius* in former times was much taken with an itching desire of seing the sword-fights or fencing-games, and such like sports; and being reclaymed from that madnes by *S. Augustin*, continued his good resolution a long time; til once falling vpon some of his companions, he was lead by them with a friendlie kind of violēce to the fencing-game; yet he went with purpose to keep his eyes shut al the time, and not to behold anie thing that passed. He did so for a while; but vpon some accident or other of the game, the people gaue a great shout, and he could hold no longer, but lifted-vp his eyes to see what it was, thinking within himself to contemne it, whatsoeuer it should be. But it hapned farre otherwise; for as *S. Augustin* speaketh, he beheld it, and gaue a shout; and was transported; and from thence carried away that madnes with him, which netled him to returne, not only with those by whom he had been drawne thither, but more eagerly then they; himself drawing others also after him.

9. This which deceaued *Alipius* at the swordplayes, hath deceaued and doth deceaue manie others dayly in farre worse things. It is more then the weaknes of man can wel away with, to abide the shock of the allurements which do confront vs, specially if the fight continue any thing long; for though we abide the brunt for a while, yet either we grow negligent and lay aside our armour, or we grow wearie of the battail and cast al quite away, and so are easily ouercome. Wherefore the aduise of *S. Basil* is none of the worst; to wit, not only to bridle our inward passions and desires, but to auoyd the meeting with those external things which may rubbe vpon our desires, and darken our iudgement and vnderstanding, and so rayse trouble and warre within vs. For it is il, but pardonable, to be ouercome in a warre, which an other rayseth against our wil: but to bring trouble voluntarily vpon ourselues, and to thrust ourselues vpon mischief when we need not, scarce deserues either pardon or pittie.

S. Basil. const. monast. c. 4.

10. By al which as we may euidently discouer the danger of a Secular life, so we plainly see the happines of a Religious state, in that it is sequestred from possession, vse, and traffick with anie earthlie thing, and consequently neither the creatures themselues which they haue casheered, nor the Diuel who workes vpon vs by meanes of creatures, can haue accesse to defile their harts. Wherefore *S. Macarius* sayd wel, that this general renunciation of al things, doth not only inuite, but constrayne vs to seeke heauenlie things; and that this is the chief reason, why Christ aduiseth vs to forsake our kindred, and to sel al, and giue it to the poore; because knowing that the Diuel doth vse these things as instruments to withdraw our thoughts to earthlie things, he bids vs leaue them al, to the end we may perforce seeke heauenlie things, and keepe our harts fixed vpon God.

S. Macarius

The

The Fift fruit of Religion: Commoditie of ſeruing God.

CHAP. XVII.

ANother great benefit of a Religious ſtate, much importing vs towards the eternal welfare of our ſoules, is the commoditie of attending to the knowledge and due conſideration of al that which may concerne the wel-ordering of our life, and attayning of Saluation. There be thoſe that liue in the world as if they had no ſoule to ſaue; ſo wedded to things preſent, that they do not ſo much as dreame of what is to come heerafter, nor take anie care of future things; they neuer conſider, who they are, and from whence, or what wil be their end; they think not of the way they walk, and whither at laſt it wil bring them, if they continue to liue after the manner they haue begun; though it import them more to conſider it, then anie other buſines they haue in hand. And liuing thus in perpetual ignorance of Spiritual things, and of whatſoeuer belongeth to the ſeruice of God and the good of their owne ſoules, they runne headlong into moſt grieuous ſinnes, and ſee it not (poore ſoules) nor feele it not; Inſomuch that the Prophet *Hieremie* doth with great reaſon make this the ſole cauſe of al the miſchief, which is in the world: *The whole earth is vtterly deſolate, becauſe no bodie doth bethink himſelf in his hart*; the frame and building of our Saluation depending in a manner vpon the attentiue and diligent conſideration of thoſe grounds of our life, which I mentioned. For conſideration breeds knowledge, knowledge loue, loue a deſire and endeauour to proſecute thoſe things which we know and loue, and to ſhunne the contrarie. And if we be deſirous to vnderſtand the manifold fruits of Conſideration, *S. Bernard* doth ſet them downe at large in the Bookes which he wrote of that ſubiect to Pope *Eugenius*; where among manie other things, he ſayth thus: Conſideration purifyeth the fountaine, that is, the mind, from which it ſpringeth; it moderateth our affections; it guideth our actions, it reformeth exceſſes; it giueth ſtayednes to our behauiour; credit and order to our life; and encreaſeth knowledge of Diuine and humane things; It diſtinguiſheth things which are confuſed, vniteth them that are diſtracted; gathereth them togeather that are diſperſed; diueth into ſecrets; ſearcheth-out truths; diſcuſſeth that which is probable; diſcouereth that which is fayned and counterfet; It fore-caſteth what is to be done; it examineth that which is done; that nothing may remayne vncorrect in the mind, or wanting reformation. In proſperitie, it fore-taſteth what aduerſe thing may happen; in aduerſitie it ſcarce feeleth that which hapneth; in the one practiſing Fortitude, in the other Prudence. Thus ſayth *S. Bernard*.

Inconſideration the roote of al miſchief.

Ierem. 12. 11

S. Bernard. l. 2. de Conſid.

2. It is not therefore hard to vnderſtand, how great benefit Religion bringeth to our ſoules, by continual conſideration & practiſe of heauenlie things. For as in al other things there be ſeueral arts and methods, whereby to come to the perfection of that which we apply ourſelues vnto, as, the ſeueral ſtudies of the

Religion, the Art to know God.

of the Law, of Phyſick, of Philoſophie, and the like; ſo we may truly and worthily cal Religion the art and method of knowing God, and vnderſtanding thoſe things which belong to his ſeruice, not by bare ſpeculation (for manie certainly that haue had much profound ſpeculation, doe burne in helfire) but with the affections of feare and loue, in which the mayne buſines doth conſiſt. Wherefore let vs weigh a litle, what helps Religion affordeth to attaine to this knowledge, and with eaſe and facilitie to compaſſe it. And firſt it freeth vs from external occupations, and worldlie buſineſſes, which are euer a great hindrance to the ſtudie of heauenlie Philoſophie; and, as *S. Gregorie* fayth wel, *The multiplicitie of care of earthlie things blindeth, becauſe it holdeth occupyed.* For the Nature of God (though we were al created to behold and contemplate it) is ſo free and ſeparate from al connexion with material things, and withal ſo difficult to vnderſtand, and farre exceeding our capacitie (*dwelling*, as the Apoſtle ſpeaketh, *in a light inacceßible*) that vnleſſe our mind be by much labour cultiuated and purifyed, it cannot poſſibly arriue to conceaue what it is. To which puritie al earthlie things are contrarie. For being of themſelues corporal, heauie, and lumpiſh, the more one buſieth his mind with them, the more heauie and earthie it groweth: ſo that on the one ſide it cannot rayſe itſelf and aſcend towards God, in regard of the weight of earthlie things lying heauie vpon it, and becomes on the other ſide more vnworthie, and leſſe deſeruing, that ſuch Infinite Puritie, as GOD is, ſhould ſtoope and deſcend to it; for, as *S. Gregorie* noteth, the mind cannot rayſe itſelf on high, if it be continually buſied in tumultuous cares below.

S. Gregorie 22. Mor. c. 21.

1. Tim. 6. 1-6

S. Gregorie 1. Moral. 8.

» For what can it be able to attayne vnto concerning God, being occupyed,
» which, when it is moſt at eaſe and quiet, doth labour to conceaue a ſmal
» portion of him; ſo that the *Pſalmiſt* ſayth wel; *Take leaſure, and ſee that I am*
» *God*. For he that neglecteth to attend at leaſure vpon God, hideth from himſelf the light of his countenance and ſight, by his owne verdict and opinion.

Pſ. 45. 11.

3. Moreouer, the care of earthlie things is intricate and mingled with ſo manie buſineſſes, that it drinketh vp al our time, and giues vs no reſpit to think of heauenlie things; the Diuel dealing with the ſeruants of this world, as King *Pharao* dealt with the *Iewes* in *Ægypt*. For when they ſpake of going into the Deſert to offer Sacrifice to God, and told him that God had ſo commanded, he doubled their day-labour in loome and ſtraw, and ouercharged them with work, that they might not haue leaſure ſo much as to think or proiect anie ſuch thing; ſo the Diuel ſtil vrgeth and thruſteth people of the world vpon ſome new buſines or other, that he may the eaſyer diuert their minds from the holeſome thoughts of their Saluation; and, which is moſt pittiful, they themſelues heape vpon their owne ſhoulders new burdens and toylſome labour; and it is not time only that is loſt in them, but their mind is ſo torne in pieces with ſeueral occurrences, and thoſe worldlie and temporal, that it looſeth the ſtrength and vigour for ſpiritual things, which is a farre greater loſſe. *S. Gregorie* handleth this point excellently wel in his Paſtoral, declaring how man's hart is oftimes ſo beaten and toſſed with ſollicitous care of ſeueral things, that being confuſedly diuided into manie, it is not able to attend to euerie one in particular. Wherefore a certain wiſe

Exod. 5.

S. Greg. 1. Paſt. c. 4.

man

man (sayth he) doth prouidently admonish saying: *My sonne, let not thy actions be in manie*; to wit, because the mind that is diuided into manie things, cannot wel collect itself to attend to particulars; and being drawne abroad by immoderate care, it leeseth the soliditie of holie feare within; careful in ordering external things, but ignorant of itself; knowing only how to think of manie things, not knowing itself; and entangling itself more then needs in external things (as it were busied in other things vpon the way) it forgetteth at what it was ayming; and not caring to search into itself, doth not weigh the losse itself sustayneth, nor know how manie wayes it fayleth. Wherefore seing external businesses do bring so manie hindrances to a spiritual life, as *S: Gregorie* hath rehearsed, and manie more; a Religious state being free from them must needs enioy perpetual quiet, neuer interrupted with worldlie care; that we may giue ourselues wholy to the contemplation, loue, and fruition of God, as much as in this mortal life can be attayned vnto.

4. *S. Bernard* in one of his Sermons to his Brethren, extolleth this commoditie of a Religious state, as contayning manie other commodities in it, in these words: Heer the charge of bringing-vp children doth not lye vpon you, nor the care how to please a wife. Heer you think not of fayres and markets, nor of Secular businesses; you need take no thought neither for diet, nor apparrel; you are free in great part from the malice of the day, and sollicitude of this life; so hath God hidden vs in the hidden place of his Tabernacle. *S. Thomas* his discourse vpon this subiect is more ful, shewing how a secular life is troubled with three sorts of vnquietnes: First, in getting, keeping, and disposing of external goods, which cannot but be alwayes accompanied with infinit care and toyle. From this most toylesome and heauie burthen, the profession of Religious Pouertie doth free vs. The second kind of trouble is in the gouernment of wife and children, that must be maintayned, and bred vp, and kept from running-out into such vices, as green yeares are apt to fal into. And the present care is not enough, but the future must be prouided for, that they want not when their parents be dead, but may liue, and maintayne themselues according to their degree; which makes there is no end in worldlie people of heaping-vp wealth, and encreasing their estate. This endles trouble and molestation, the Vow of Chastitie doth cut off. Finally, the third, and most troublesome care of al, is, how to gouerne our owne life and actions; wherin we stand in need of daylie counsel, in regard of infinit difficulties which doe occurre, and the hazard of running into most dangerous errours; from al which anxietie and danger Obedience doth free vs, transferring this care to another, who, as the Apostle speaketh, *is to giue an account for vs*; and no doubt, but whatsoeuer he ordayneth concerning vs, is the ordination of God himself by his meanes. This is the effect of *S. Thomas* his discourse.

S. Bern ser. de Obed.

S. Tho. 2. 2. q 186. a. 6.

Three distractions incident to a secular life.

Hebr. 13. 17

5. Wherefore we shal do wel to weigh and ponder, and with al hartie affection to embrace this most delightful and happie quiet and vacation from al things, which Religion bringeth; in regard of the particular kind of

force and efficacie it hath to rayſe our thoughts to the contemplation and knowledge of heauenlie things. For as no man can attentiuely think of anie thing in the midſt of a great hurrie and noiſe, but in the dead of the night, or in a ſolitarie place, that verie ſilence and ſolitude doth inuite a man to contemplation; ſo it is very hard to recollect one's ſelf in the world, where there be ſuch endles diſtractions; but the quiet of a Religious life doth of its owne nature cal vs, and hold vs without difficultie in the ſtudie of heauenlie knowledge free from al kind of trouble. Wherof *S. Bernard* is witneſſe, ſaying in a certain Epiſtle, that *Long ſilence, and continual freedome from worldlie noiſe, doth compel vs to meditate heauenlie things.* He ſayth, it doth *compel vs*, in regard of the ſtrange force it hath to hold the powers of our ſoule from wandring after idle fancies; to reclayme them, when they chance to ſtray; and wholy to fixe them vpon God, and things Diuine. This difference between a Religious life and a Secular, is excellently wel expreſſed by *S. Gregorie*, expounding (as he is wont) in a Moral ſenſe, that which in the Booke of *Iob* is ſpoken of wiſdome: *And the ſea pronounceth, it is not with me.* What other thing is ſignifyed by the Sea, then the bitter vnquietnes of ſecular minds, which, while they are „ at variance with themſelues, reſemble the beating of contrarie waues one „ vpon another? A ſecular life therefore is rightly called a Sea, becauſe being „ toſſed with the tempeſtuous motions of outward actions, it is depriued of the „ quiet and ſtabilitie of inward wiſdome. Whervpon on the contrarie ſide the „ Prophet ſayth wel: *Vpon whom shal my ſpirit reſt, but vpon the humble, and quiet, and fearing my words*? But from earthlie minds the ſpirit doth fly the farther, „ the leſſe quiet it doth find in them. For he that doth diuide himſelf into endles „ thoughts of earthlie deſires, cannot retire himſelf to the conſideration of him- „ ſelf. And ſo holie *Iob* vnderſtanding, that wiſdome cannot dwel amidſt theſe „ waues of vnquietnes, ſayth: *And the Sea pronounceth, it is not with me.* For no „ man doth fully receaue it, but he that endeauoureth to withdraw himſelf from „ the billowes of carnal cogitations; as it is ſayd in another place: *Write wiſdome in the time of quiet; and he that hath litle buſines, shal attaine vnto it.* Thus farre *S. Gregorie*.

It is hard to think of good things in the world.

S. Bernard Ep. 78.

S. Greg. mor. 18. c. 2.

Iſ. 66. 2.

Eccl. 38. 25.

All buſineſſes in Religion, are Spiritual.

6. But ſome bodie perhaps wil obiect, that Religious people alſo do manie things, and are cumbred with manie toyſome buſineſſes, about neceſſarie occaſions of their owne, or for the good of their neighbour. The anſwer is at hand: that the buſines which they vndertake for the help of their neighbour, is ſpiritual, and not worldlie or temporal; and conſequently draweth them not from God, but rather knitteth them faſter vnto him, becauſe they help God, and God helpeth them, in ſo great a buſines. And though that, which they do for their owne domeſtical occaſions and neceſſaries, be in ſome kind temporal, yet their end is not temporal and ſecular, as be the ends of ſecular people; but in al things they ayme at Spirit and Eternitie; and beſides there is another mayne and important difference, to wit, that Secular people in following their tēporal buſineſſes, haue alwayes their eye vpon their owne priuate intereſt, ſeeking how they may purchaſe wealth or honour to themſelues; But when Religious people handle the ſelf-ſame buſineſſes, they ſeeke not greatnes, but that which is neceſſarie; they intend not anie priuate commoditie to themſelues, but their thoughts are for the common, their labours

are for

are for the Common (as *S. Hierome* ſpeaketh in the life of *Malchus* the Monk) which is ſo farre from couetiſe or priuate intereſt, that it is a great act of Charitie; yea theſe verie employments do giue a double value and benefit to a Religious life; conioyning the holie and holeſome labours of *Martha*, with the quiet of *Marie*; and calling vs ſo to ſpiritual reſt and vacancie, from toylſome care and work, that, if notwithſtanding anie ſuch work do come in our way, directing it to a ſpiritual end, and giuing it a ſpiritual forme and eſſence, it turnes to our greater benefit; as we cannot ſay but worldlie ſeruants do their Maiſters ſeruice, not only when they wayte in their preſence, attending their pleaſure, but when they go to and fro about their Maiſters buſineſſes; yea then oftimes they ſerue them better, and more to their owne and their Maiſters benefit. *S. Hierome.*

The ſixt fruit: Religious people alwayes do the wil of God.

CHAP. XVIII.

IF men were truly wiſe, and vnderſtood indeed, what is good for them, they ſhould ayme at nothing more, then perfectly to conforme their wils with the wil of God, in great and litle, and abſolutly in al buſineſſes concerning themſelues and others. Manie reaſons might be giuen of this truth, but one ſhal ſuffice for al, to wit, that among creatures themſelues, the inferiour are euer ſubiect to thoſe that are more excellent and higher in nature; which muſt needs be of more force in God, he being ſole Soueraigne ouer al, King of Kings, Lord of Lords; to whom al mankind is by right and equitie ſubiect, for thoſe ſeauen cauſes, which I declared in the beginning. But in God there is yet an other conſideration of more weight and importance. For the Diuine Nature, being Goodnes itſelf and equitie, and the cauſe of al things; his Wil alſo is the rule and leuel of al that is iuſt and vpright; ſo that, as a written coppie, or a houſe, or anie other work, is ſayd to be right and perfect, if it be according to rule, and agree with the platforme or ſampler, after which it was drawne; and how much it ſwarueth from the model and coppie, ſo manie faults and errours there be in it: So the wil of God being the onlie rule, whereby our wil is to be ruled, our wil is good and honeſt, or contrariwiſe faultie & vitious, as it agreeth or diſagreeth with his wil. Wherefore *Climacus* ſayth, that the ſeruants of God ſhould alwayes as ardently deſire to know and performe the wil of God, as a Deere, that is euen dead with thirſt, thirſteth after a fountaine of running water. *S. Bernard* in a Sermon, which he wrote of this ſubiect, hauing ſpoken ſomething of Humilitie, ſayth: The ſubſtance of al Humilitie doth ſeeme to be this, that our wil be ſubiect, as it ought, to the wil of God; as the Prophet ſpeaketh: *Shal not my ſoule be ſubiect to God?* I know that euerie creature is ſubiect to God, whether it wil or no; but voluntarie ſubiection is required of creatures that are reaſonable, that they *ſacrifice voluntarily* vnto

Al muſt conforme their wils to God.

Climacus grad. 25.

S. Bern. ſer. Quòd Vol. noſtra Vol. Dei. ſub.

God, and confeſſe his Name, not becauſe it is Terrible, but Holie; not becauſe he is Omnipotent, but becauſe he is infinitly Good. Much more might be ſayd for proofe heerof out of the holie Fathers, who do euer highly commend, and often inculcate this point; but one paſſage of *S. Auguſtin* ſhal ſuffiſe, who is bold to auerre, that *the Mother of God was not ſo happie in that the Word was made Flesh in her, as that she did the wil of God*; and he proueth it by the teſtimonie of the Word himſelf, when to the woman that cryed: *Bleſſed is the womb that bare thee*; he preſently anſwered; *yea rather bleſſed are they that heare the word of God, and keepe it*; which being ſo, can there be a thing more profitable, then that which is better then to be the Mother of God? a function, then which there cannot a greater befal Man or Angels. And this is the work of Religion; binding vs ſo to the wil of God, that we wholy depend on it in al things, great ant litle, and are gouerned by it (as I haue ſayd before) not only in buſineſſes of greater moment, but in euerie ordinarie and daylie action. Whervpon *Caſſian* in his laſt Collation, hauing ſayd manie things of the neceſſitie and greatnes of this conformitie and dependance, and ſhewed how our Sauiour left vs a platforme and model therof, coming not to doe his owne wil, but the wil of his Father; and profeſſing, that that was his food and ſuſtenance, addeth, that this vertue is ſpecially practiſed by thoſe that liuing in Religious houſes, are gouerned by direction of a Superiour, and do nothing of their owne head, but their wil dependeth of the wil of their Abbot.

S. *Auguſtin* t. 10. *in Io.*

Luc. 11. 28.

Caſſian.

2. This benefit of Religion wil be euerie way more euident, if we conſider the māner, in which it bringeth this, which we haue ſayd, to paſſe. For as in a piece of ground the thornes and thiſtles are firſt to be voyded, before the ſeed be ſowen; ſo Religion firſt doth root-out al impediments of vertue, to the end to prepare the mind the better; of which impediments the chiefeſt is our owne wil; the peſtilent diſpoſition wherof can not be more ſignally expreſſed, then in the words of *S. Bernard*: Our owne wil, ſayth he, *is a great euil*; by it, thy good is not good to thee. And in an other place: Let the ſeruants of their owne wil heare and tremble to vnderſtand, with what furie ſelf-wil doth oppoſe the Maieſtie of our Lord God; firſt, while it wil be, as it is, ſelf-wil, it with-draweth and ſtealeth itſelf from vnder his gouernment, whom it ought to ſerue, as Authour and Maker of it. And doth it content itſelf with this iniurie? It preſumeth farther; as much as lyeth in it, it taketh al from God. Thus ſpeaketh that holie man, and much more, alwayes a deadlie enemie of ſelf-wil, which there alſo he calleth a leproſie.

Our owne wil the chief hindrance of vertue.

S. Bern. ſer. 7. in Cant. & ſer. 5. de Reſurrect.

3. Other things there be beſides, which hinder a man from vniting his wil with the wil of God; which the ſame *S. Bernard* doth particularly ſet downe in another place. For hauing ſhewed that the greateſt felicitie the Angels haue, is, that their wil is wholy conformable to the wil of God, he addeth, that we alſo muſt deſire the like conformitie, and labour for it. But we haue foure mayne obſtacles in the buſines; to wit, *Malice*, that is, a natural kind of inclination to vice; *Infirmitie*, in regard this corruptible bodie, which we carrie about vs, doth oftimes hinder our wil from ſubiecting itſelf to God, as it ſhould; *Concupiſcence*, tearing vs in pieces with infinit and vnſpeakable deſires; and finally *Ignorance*; for how ſhal I follow (*ſayth he*) the wil of God, which I know not? For I know it but in part only; and not yet, as I am knowne

Conformitie with the wil of God, our greateſt happines.

and Foure enemies therof.

S. Bern. ſ. 6. in quadr.

knowne to God. Let vs therefore see, what helps Religion affords against so manie, and so dangerous enemies, which the Wil of God hath within vs; and how it vtterly defeates them. And first, it laboureth nothing more then absolutly to stubbe-vp this root of al euil, which is self-wil; curbing and beating downe the verie first motions therof, as much as may be; and accustoming a Religious person so much to do nothing of his owne head, but to gouerne himself wholy by an other's wil and command, that euerie one doth exactly obserue that, which S. *Hierome* (a man wel skilled in what belongeth to a Religious Institute) writeth to *Rusticus*, a Monk of his time: That thou mayst not do thy owne wil, eate that which thou art commanded to eate, weare that which is giuen thee, worke-out the taske which is set thee, be subiect to one whom thou hast no mind to, go to bed wearie, and sleep as thou goest, and be fayne to rise againe before thou hast slept thy sleep. Wherefore as self-wil doth dayly grow stronger and stronger in a Secular man by practise and custome therof, that a man may sooner break it, then bend it, as an old crooked tree ful of knots: So the wil of a good Religious man by contrarie custome being continually beaten downe, there remaynes not at last so much as one bough or twig therof intire. S. *Hieromē. Ep.* 4. " " " "

4. To this we may adde the concurrence of the subiect with the Superiour, and the particular diligence and care of them both; on the one side to subdue and mortifye, on the other side to resist and withstand, the desires of self-wil. And as for the Superiours; as those, that vndertake to breake a horse, sometimes spurre him vp to make him runne, sometime hold him in to his pace, sometimes turne him round, sometimes when he is vpon his speed they suddainly check him, or put him on when he is giuen to stand, teaching him to go or stand, as he is guided, and not of his owne braine: So they endeauour with al diligence, by contrarie exercises to breake the wils of their subiects, euen in things which of themselues are trifles, but that of smal things, greater do depend. For when S. *Antonie* the Great commanded S. *Paul* (surnamed the *Simple*) to sow his cloathes, and presently to vnrip them againe; to make a basket, and to vndoe it againe; when others of those ancient Heremits and Monks were wont to bid their Disciples fetch water, and powre it forth againe; or water a drie stake for a whole yeare togeather; or when S. *Francis* (as we reade of him) bad Friar *Massens* turne round in the high way, til he was gyddie, and fel downe diuers times; finally when other holie men commāded the like things, to those whom they had vndertaken to instruct in Spirit and Vertue, what did they, but root-out of their minds the verie relicks of self-wil and self-conceit? And that which anciently these Fathers did, that is now also practised in Religion; where discipline is in force. The ancient practise of breaking our wil in smal things.

5. Now let vs consider a Secular man, what he is in this point; and take not an ordinarie man, much lesse anie of those that the Apostle describeth to be *filled with al iniquitie, malice, auarice, murmurers, detractours, inuentours of euil*, such men neuer think of vertue; but let vs take a man that is vertuous and vpright, that cometh often to the Sacraments, that is (as *Iob* sayd of himself) *a father to the poore, an eye to the blind, a foot to the lame*, and, in a word, keepeth exactly al the Commandements of God; yet A secular life farre inferiour to a Religious life in this point. *Rom.* 1. 29. *Iob.* 29. 15.

yet liues at his owne wil, and the good works which he doth, he doth them as he thinks good himself, what, and how much, and how long he pleaseth; this man is no il man, yea he is highly to be commended; yet if we talke of perfection, he is farre inferiour to a Religious man. For his owne wil may beare great sway in al the good deeds he doth, vndertaking them or continuing them, because he finds a sweetnes in them, and the exercise of them is pleasing to his wil, which oftimes (while we think not, or reflect not on it) seeketh itself; and when it falles-out to be so, our owne wil is to be taken for the source and fountaine of al those actions, howsoeuer they may carrie a faire shew; and (be he what he wil) he is not farre from that deceit, which *S. Gregorie* attributes to vayne-glorie; that, whether it be taken in earthlie things, or in heauenlie vertues, the vice is the same, but that it puts-on an other hue, that it may not be discouered. So it hapneth oftimes in good works; we think we serue God, and we serue ourselues; for it may be that though the works be good, and in others to be commended; yet God, who is Soueraigne ouer al, doth not perhaps desire that kind of work at thy hands, but some other; or if he would haue thee bestow thy time in that which thou doest, yet it was a chance that thou didst fal vpon it; not weighing so much what might be pleasing to God, as suffering thyself to be driuen vpon it by thine owne inclination and desire.

S. *Greg. 34. mor. c. vlt.*

6. Now if things, which of themselues are good and spiritual, do lye open to so much deceit; what shal we think of other things which are indifferent, and may be made good or euil, according to the circumstances with which we do them? such as are most part of humane actions; as, to go, to stay, to bargain, to do this or that, or not to do it; these things are to be done according to the wil and pleasure of God, as I sayd before. And how shal our soules haue light concerning them, vnlesse we haue meanes to deriue it into vs, and a rule to instruct and enlighten vs in these particulars? Therefore no doubt, but as the state and course of life, wherin we retayne our owne wil, and suffer ourselues to be carryed by the inclinations therof, is subiect to al the inconueniences that grow from our owne wil, as I haue heertofore declared; On the other side, Religious people, who giue away their owne wils, and by daylie purpose and endeauour, and moreouer by Vow, depriue themselues wholy of it, are free from these dangers and dāmages. And thus Religion hauing once digged-vp the foundation of self-wil, it doth easily ouercome and put to flight al the other opponents of the Diuine wil, which I rehearsed before out of *S. Bernard.* It ouercometh *Malice*, instilling Pietie and vnfayned Charitie. It strengthneth our *Infirmitie* by holesome counsel, & practise of Fortitude and Patience. With the sithe of Mortification, it cutteth downe al manner of *Concupiscence*, engrafting in lieu therof an earnest desire and thirst of the true and Soueraigne Good. Finally it instructeth our *Ignorance* with that fulnes, that no man can doubt what God requireth at our hands. For in Religion there be manie most certain wayes to know the wil of God; of which wayes, because it is to our purpose, we wil heer say somethīg.

How the 4. enemies of the wil of God are ouercome in Religiō.

How we come to know the wil of God.

7. *Climacus*, in the place aboue alleaged, hauing spoken of the necessitie, and difficultie of this busines; setteth downe the meanes by which we may

Climacus grad. 25.

ouer-

ouercome it. Whosoeuer, sayth he, wil know the wil of God must lay aside their owne fancies and opinions, and first put themselues in an indifferencie, inclining to neither side, but be prompt and readie at euerie signe which God shal giue them of his wil; Secondly, with sincere confidence they must beseech their Fathers and spiritual Brethren, to tel them what they are to doe, and receaue the aduice, which they shal giue them, without anie doubt or demurre, as if it came from the mouth of God; though they, whom they aske, be not themselues very perfect or spiritual. For God is not vniust, that he wil deceaue those soules, which with confidence and humilitie submit themselues to an other's direction. For if God at the sound of a Cythern did declare to the *Prophet Elizeus*, what he desired to know; much more wil he doe it by the voyce of a reasonable man, as being an Instrument more apt to receaue influence from him. Thus sayth *Climacus*; whose argument if it hold in anie priuate man, in regard of the humilitie wherewith we subiect ourselues to an other man; much more must it hold in one that is our lawful Superiour, and God's Vice-gerent ouer vs; and we may be very confident, that when we obey such a Ruler of our life and actions in anie thing that is not expresly contrarie to the Law of God, we do the wil of God himself saying: *He that heareth you, heareth me.* *Luc. 10. 16.*

8. This is the great happines which a Religious man hath; a happines, then which there can not in this life be a greater, resembling the happines which the Angels in heauen enioy; of whom (as noble and blessed as they are) the Prophet *Dauid* could not giue a greater commendation, then to stile them, as he doth in a certain Psalme, *powerful in vertue; doing his word; to heare the voyce of his speech; al you his ministers, who doe his wil.* And our Lord and Sauiour himself did not think, we could aske of God a better or more holesome thing, then that which he taught vs in that Diuine forme of prayer; *Thy wil be done, in earth as it is in heauen.* And if there be a place on earth, where the wil of God is alwayes fulfilled, though not equally as it is in heauen, yet in a manner very neere vnto it, Religion is it; where euerie one is most readie and free to obey God at euerie little signe of his wil; and God doth gouerne and direct euerie one, in what manner, and in what things he is best pleased, by the hand and conduct of the Rectours and Superiours. And the happines therof. *Psal. 102. 20.* *Mat. 6. 10.*

9. The *Iewes* of-old had recourse to the *Arke*; and in presence therof consulted God, when anie matter of difficultie did arise; and we read that *Dauid* specially, among the rest, by answer receaued from thence, was deliuered from manie dangers, and foretold manie things which he was to acte; as touching the assault which he made vpon *Ceila*, and the treacherie of the men of that towne; that he should go into *Iudea*, to take possession of the Crowne, and the like: yet this help was not general to al, nor continual, but only for people of worth, and matters of weight. How great a benefit therefore ought we worthily esteeme it to haue such a domestical Oracle, as I may cal it, by which we are directed what to do, euen in the least things that can be; and eschue infinit dangers which might come vpon our soules. Wherefore, whether it be spiritual profit we aym at, or tranquillitie and content of mind, if we were to studie, we could not inuent a more conuenient way, then this is. For, as *S. Bernard* writeth, we leese nothing, when we leaue our owne wil; but are great gainers by it, in regard we change it for the better; for we change it *1. Reg. 23.* *S. Bern. s. 3. de resurr.*

into the wil of God, which is no ſmal profit. Our wil moſt commonly is idle and vnprofitable, oftimes vnreaſonable and hurtful; his wil is alwayes holie, alwayes iuſt, and beſt for vs to follow. We of ourſelues may fal into manie errours, & are often deceaued, not knowing what we would haue ourſelues, coueting things that are hurtful, and thinking perhaps that they are profitable for vs; but God cannot deſire, but what is beſt and moſt profitable for his Elect; ſo that without al doubt, it is beſt for vs to commit ourſelues and al that belongeth to vs, wholy to his wil.

A rare example of S. Francis.

10. The life of *S. Francis* wil furniſh vs with a rare example in this kind, to confirme what hath been ſayd. He being in a great doubt, and hauing long diſputed within himſelf, whether he ſhould giue himſelf wholy to a ſolitarie life and contemplation, or rather withal attend to the help and ſaluation of his neighbour, reaſons on both ſides beating in his mind, and hauing no reuelation from God concerning this point, as in others he was wont to receaue; he reſolued to take this courſe. He ſent to *S. Clare* and the Nunnes of her Monaſterie, and to his Brother *Syluester* (who was at that time retired to a ſolitarie place in a certain mount) that they ſhould by prayer inquire, which of the two courſes were moſt conformable to the wil of God, and ſend him word. Now when the meſſenger returned from thē both, he receaued him as if, coming from God, he had brought anſwer immediatly from him. He waſhed his feet, he ſet him downe and ſerued him himſelf at board; then he drew him aſide into a mountaine hard by, and there barehead, vpon his knees, with his armes on-croſſe, he ſpake thus vnto him: *what doth my Lord Iesus Christ bid me doe?* And when the Meſſenger told him, that he was to help his neighbour alſo; preſently without delay, from the place where he ſtood, he returned not home, but went about that new buſines ſo feruently, that he did not ſo much as mind the way he tooke, but croſſed ouer fields and woods, where otherwiſe there was no way.

Inſtructiōs gathered out of it.

11. Thus *S. Francis* behaued himſelf; and out of this his fact we may gather manie good documents to the purpoſe we are ſpeaking of. Firſt, with what earneſt endeauour we ought to ſearch-out the wil of God euen in good and laudable things; with what reuerence and deuotion we ought to heare it; with what feruour to accompliſh it; how ſecret the wil of God is, and hidden from vs in the darknes in which we liue, ſeing ſo rare a man, a man ſo deare and familiar with God, was ſo long in ſuſpence and doubtful in a matter of ſo great weight and conſequence, and withal ſo pious; finally we may ſee the way how to come to know the wil of God, plainly and without deceit. *S. Francis*, becauſe in his Order he had no Superiour, was faine to take aduiſe of his Inferiours; but we receaue more certain light from our Superiours, to whom God hath promiſed his certain aſſiſtance. He in a matter of great moment was fayne to ſend farre-of; we haue them at home, by whom we may vnderſtand al things, great and little; ſo that, vnleſſe we wil, we need not fayle in the leaſt, but rather in the verie leaſt worke ourſelues great meaſure of Grace and Glorie.

The seauenth fruit, that the Commandments are more easily kept in Religion.

CHAP. XIX.

REligion bringeth vs another benefit, which is not to be passed-ouer in silence; to wit, that it maketh the precepts of the Decalogue, and al others, so easie and light, that they may be fulfilled without anie difficultie. It may seeme strange, that Religion adding to the Precepts manie things in shew hard and tedious, as voluntarie pouertie, mortification of our wil and senses, watching, praying, and much corporal affliction; yet these things should be so farre from encreasing the difficultie of the obseruance of them, as to make them more easie to be obserued. The like heerof we see in diuers works of art and human industrie: The ballast in a ship, though it be heauie and weightie, helpeth the ship to brooke the seas; and without it, it could not put forth. A cart or wayne is lighter, if you take away the wheeles, yet it goeth heauier; and with them it beares great carriages with ease. *S. Bernard* vseth this example of a wayne or chariot; as also of the feathers of a bird, which, as he sayth, doe after a strange manner make them more corpulent, and more light; a wonderful work of Nature. The bulk is greater, and the burthen lighter; and by how much the bodie is bigger, the weight is lesse. Which he applieth to the Euangelical Counsels, styling them properly the burden of Christ; which doth not only not load a man, but carrie him that is laden with them, and maketh the burden of the Precepts farre more easie to be vndergone. *S. Bernard Ep. 72.*

2. The difficultie and necessitie of keeping the Precepts wil giue vs better to vnderstand, how beneficial and commodious this other is. Our Lord expresseth the necessitie of keeping the Commandments in these words: *If thou wilt enter into life, keepe the Commandments*; as who should say; he that doth not keepe them, walketh streight to death, and death euerlasting. The difficultie of keeping them, is set-forth by the Royal Prophet, when he calles them *hard wayes*; and the experience which euerie one hath of the corruption of his owne nature and propension to sinne, the wicked life and euil example of others, the lawes and principles of the world, with which liuing in the world it is hard to breake, the verie sinnes and daylye falles of men in the world, do sufficiently shew how hard they are to keepe. How few are there in the world that keepe themselues from rash oathes, from coueting an other's goods, from wantonnes of the flesh, as the Precepts require? And the few that by God's grace doe maintayne themselues vnspotted, what labour, and care, and contention are they put-to? That therefore, wherin Secular people doe most commonly fayle and perish, and wherin others, The Commandments, are hard to be kept in the world. *Math. 19. 17. Ps. 16. 4.*

that doe not periſh, muſt take ſuch exceſſiue paynes, and, as I may ſay, ſweat it out; Religious people find great eaſe, and performe it with little or no difficultie. The reaſons therof are manie; and firſt, becauſe (as we ſayd elswhere, ſpeaking of it, as of the fourte and head of manie other commodities) Religion doth take away the matter almoſt of al ſinnes; and the matter being taken away, the obſeruance of the Commandments of itſelf is eaſie. For our wil is as it were a kind of flame or fire; the fuel of this fire, is the preſence of a pleaſing obiect; put this fuel to it, and preſently it wil flame vp; take away the fuel, and either it wil not kindle at al, or much more ſlowly and remiſſely. And this is that which Religion doth, taking vs out of the world, and the allurements therof. And ſo *S. Baſil* euen for this reaſon ſayth, that Religion is highly to be eſteemed, tearming it a quiet life; voyd of multiplicitie of buſineſſes, and a help to the wel-obſeruing of the doctrine of the Ghoſpel.

S. Baſil in prooemio Reg. fus.

Other cauſes, why it is eaſie to keepe the Commandments in Religion.

3. A ſecond cauſe, why Religious people find ſo much eaſe in keeping the Commandments, is the ſtrength and vigour which a ſoule gets by litle and litle by the practiſe of Religious diſcipline, growing into great hatred of al vice and vncleannes, and great loue of vertue and honeſtie, abhorring nothing more then ſinne; not only becauſe God is offended therewith, but becauſe it is in itſelf moſt vglie and deformed.

4. A third reaſon is, becauſe, wheras al men moſt commonly are induced to ſinne, out of couetouſnes, or ambition, or incontinencie, either directly offending in theſe things, or to compaſſe their pretences in them, none of theſe poyſoned roots are found in Religion, but the practiſe of quite contrarie vertues; in lieu of the deſire of temporal things, profeſſing Pouertie; humble Obedience, in ſteed of ambition and deſire of rule; the flower of Chaſtitie, in ſteed of filthie luſt.

He that performes the greater is more apt to performe the leſſer.

5. Beſides, Religious people are alwayes employed in things of a higher nature; and therefore doe more eaſily performe thoſe which are of leſſer moment. For as to a man that hath vſed himſelf euerie day to carrie a hundred weight, it is nothing to carrie twentie; ſo when a Religious man hath forſaken al his owne land and liuing, what hard matter wil it be for him to withhold himſelf from taking-away or coueting that which is another's? And being accuſtomed to carrie the yoake of Obedience, how can it be hard to reſiſt the temptation of ambition and deſire of honour? And the like may be ſayd of al other things which are either commanded or forbidden by the Law of God.

The example of *Euſebius.*

6. This is that which *Euſebius*, a man of great ſanctitie, taught vs by his owne example, as *Theodoret* writeth in his Hiſtorie. For hauing on a time ouer-curiouſly beheld certain huſbandmen that were ploughing, for puniſhment of this ſmal fault, he put an iron collar about his owne neck, and faſtned it with a chayne about his middle; ſo that of force he muſt alwayes hold his head downewards; and this pennance he endured fourtie yeares togeather, neuer being able to reare himſelf and looke vp to heauen. And being asked why he did ſo, and what benefit he hoped thereby; his anſwer was, that he drew Satan from greater combats, and from tempting him with pride or wantones, to theſe ſmaller conflicts, in which if he ſhould be ouercome, there were no great harme done; if he did ouercome, the greater ſhame was

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the Diuel's, that could not be maister in such smal trifles. A memorable saying, and worthie of so spiritual and holie a man; and by it we may vnderstand to our purpose, that it is true, that Religious men are the farther from transgressing the Commandments of God, in regard they take so much care to performe manie smaller things pertayning to his seruice.

6. A fourth reason of this facilitie in keeping the Precepts drawne from the nature of the state itself, is, that this course of life is aboue the Law, and consequently doth lift a man aboue that which the Law requireth. And as in a Schoole, where there be manie formes, according to the seueral capacitie of the schollars, and the progresse which they haue made in learning, they that be in the higher forme, doe the exercises with great ease, which they of the lower forme cannot at al, or very hardly, performe; so they that walk this higher way of perfection, doe not so much as feele the burden of the Precepts, they are so light vnto them; because, as I sayd before, their abilitie is greater, & the state itself doth enable them the more. Wherefore if there were no other thing but this to be found in Religion, that it enableth vs to keepe the Commandments of God constantly, with great ease and pleasure, and with very litle danger of euer sinning against them; we should not need to seeke anie other benefit by it. For the more it enableth vs in this kind, the more certain and easie it doth make our passage to eternal glorie, to which we must come by keeping the Commandments.

The eighth fruit of Religion, proceeding from the humble lowlines of the State.

CHAP. XX.

ANother great commoditie of Religion, is that it is voyd of al worldlie pompe, ostentation, and glorie; and in outward shew, low and humble; that euerie Religions man may truly say with the Prophet Dauid: *I haue chosen to be an abiect in the house of God, rather then to dwel in the tabernacles of sinners.* *Ps. 83. 11.* For Religion (as I haue shewed els-where) is truly the *house* and household *of God*; and the Religious certainly doe choose this abiection, because neither meannes of birth, nor necessitie, doth enforce it vpon them; but they vndertake it voluntarily of their owne accord. *S. Bernard* doth so highly esteeme this benefit, that he thinks, it is a direct signe of Predestination. For in one of his Sermons turning his speech to his Brethren, thus he speaketh: Who knoweth whether al your names, who be heer present, be written in Heauen, and signed in the Booke of Predestination? Me thinks, I see in the conuersation of so great humilitie, some signes of your Vocation and Iustification. Wherefore, dearly beloued, perseuer in the course you haue vndertaken, that by humilitie you may ascend to sublimitie. This is the way; and there is no other way but it; he that goeth otherwise, doth rather

S. Ber. ser. 2. de Ascens. Humilitie a signe of Predestination.

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ful; for Humilitie alone exalteth; humilitie alone leades to life. If therefore we be of *S. Bernard*'s mind, there is no cause, why we should enuie Secular people their preferments, or purple robes, or external pompe; rather we ought to esteeme it very beneficial and highly glorious, that we liue without glorie, because this Humilitie is not only an assured way, but (as he sayth) the onlie way to eternal Saluation; and is particularly rich in three commodities, or, as I may cal them, priuiledges, which heer I shal set downe.

Three priuiledges of the humble state of Religion.

2. First, God doth particularly affect this kind of humble state, and communicate himself and his heauenlie treasures with it more plentifully, more familiarly, and with greater sweetnes. A strange thing; yet such as the Prophet *Dauid* doth also point at, when he sayth: *Our Lord is high, and regardeth humble things; and knoweth high things afarre-of.* For likenes doth most cõmonly breed friendship and loue; yet God being so infinitly great, as he is, doth take most delight in the loue and conuersation of such as are little and lowlie; and contrariwise doth stand aloof and looke afarre-of vpon those that are high and loftie. *Ps. 112. 6.*

3. Secondly, this kind of Humilitie, is the fittest coyne, we can lay-out vpon the purchase of eternal glorie. For though we are al created for that Euerlasting Happines, as the onlie End of vs al; yet God, as a most vnderstanding and vpright prizer of such things, hath most iustly ordayned, that we should not come *gratis* by so great rewards, but buy them at a price; and the price is to suffer in this life things contrarie to that, which there we shal enioy; as, because there we shal haue most perfect satietie, we must purchase it heer, with hunger and thirst; the infinit comfort which there we shal haue, is promised only to those that mourne; and to that abundance of al kind of wealth, we must come by pouertie; and as al other happines, which is to be had in that Heauenlie Kingdome, is to be bought in this fashion, so the infinit honour and glorie which is there, is to be bought with humilitie and contempt of ourselues. And because we should not doubt therof, our Sauiour gaue this general rule, that *euerie one, that exalteth himself, shal be humbled; and euerie one that humbleth himself, shal be exalted.* *Mat. 5.* *Luc. 14. 11.*

4. Thirdly, by this Humilitie we auoide manie dangers of our soule, and impediments to vertue, which are incident to a life led in glorie and pompe; and in steede of them, we haue in it manie helps to saluation. For it is in the life of man, as it is with them, that clime vp to the tops of trees, or houses; if they fal, they crush themselues most miserably; and how easie is it for them to fal, if their hand or their foot doe but slip? and what care must they haue that they doe not slip? Those that keep themselues below on the ground, fal not so soone, nor so dangerously: So they, that are in honour, runne great hazard, not only while they are climing, and pretend, and labour for it, but euen when they are seated in the chayre; for we are by nature apt to slide, and tumble downewards, and shal meet with manie that wil striue to thrust vs along. They that keepe themselues below on the ground, and walke not in great and wonderful things aboue their reach, are secure.

Honour, the cause of ruine.

5. We might bring manie examples to this purpose, but that which hapned to *Saul*, the first King among the Iewes, is so notorious, that it

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that ſerue for al. While he was but a priuate man, he was litle alſo in his owne conceit; the meannes of his eſtate helping him to be humble in mind; But when he was ſeated in the Throne, as King, he became ſo proude and inſolent, that he may wel be ranked with the wickedeſt Kings that euer were. Before, he ſaued the life of his enemies whom the people would haue killed; afterwards he laboured to kil his friend and ſonne-in-law.

6. Whereby we may ſee, how much we are beholding to Religion, for keeping vs out of the eyes of men, and from worldlie preferments, in a holie and holeſome place of refuge; where we may abide vnknowne to the world, and it vnknowne to vs. For this is that great and important Counſel, which *S. Bernard* gathereth out of the life of our Sauiour, comprized in a word or two, but large in effect and ſubſtance: *Loue to be vnknowne*; an obſcuritie ſo glorious, that it is farre more deſireful thus to lye hidden, then to be renowned, and walke in the mouths of men. For the more a man is forgotten by men, the more mindful God is of him; and the more he is deſpiſed by men, the more graceful he is in the ſight of God and his Angels. Both which holie *Iob* doth expreſſe in theſe wordes: *The ſimplicitie of the iuſt man, is laughed at; a Lamp contemptible in the thoughts of rich men, prepared for the time to come.* Vpon which place *S. Gregorie* diſcourſeth in this manner: The ſimplicitie of the iuſt man is deſeruedly called a lamp, and contemptible; a lamp, becauſe inwardly it ſhineth; contemptible, becauſe outwardly it doth not ſhine; within, it burneth with the flame of charitie; without, it glittereth not with anie glorious aſpect. He therefore is lightſome, and is contemned, that ſhines in vertue, and is eſteemed abiect. Who is there therefore, that conſidering ſo great rewards, had not rather ranck himſelf with thoſe that are contemned, that he may be glorious with God, then with thoſe that make a fayre ſhew without, and within haue no worth in them? In which regard me thinks Religious men may be likened to the Tabernacle, which God commanded to be made by the Children of *Iſrael*, and gaue directions, in what faſhion they ſhould make it; to wit, within of ſweet wood, guilded, and hung with ſilk curtins of violet and purple colours, running vpon rings of gold; without, it ſhould be couered with hear-cloath, and ſheep-ſkins, which made the outward ſhew therof but homelie; ſo a Soule, dedicated and conſecrated to God, aboundeth with manie rare ſpiritual guifts and ornaments, as Chaſtitie, Patience, Obedience, and other Vertues; but they lye hidden from the eyes of men vnder the poore and abiect habit which they weare, which notwithſtanding keepeth vertue in them the longer; becauſe vertue is beſt preſerued, when it is hidden; if once it come to be ſpyed by men, theeues wil haue about with it; Theſe theeues are the eyes and toungs of men themſelues, bereauing vs either wholy or in great part of the glorie, which we expect for our good works, by eying and prayſing them; that we may worthily feare that ſaying: *Thou haſt receaued thy reward.* Wherefore *S. Bernard*, among the reaſons, which ſhould moue vs to embrace a Religious courſe reckoneth the benefit of concealing our good deeds to be one of the chiefeſt; his words are theſe: In the meane time if we haue anie good thing, we muſt needs hide it; becauſe the man that found the treaſure

S. Ber ſer. 3. de natiuit. Howhappie it is, to be vnknowne.

Iob. 12. 4.

S. Greg. 10. mor. 17.

Exod. 26.

Mat. 6. 16.

S. Bernard. qui habit. ſer. 4.

Mat. 13. 44.

„ of the kingdome of heauen, hid it; for which reason we also hide our selues in „ Cloisters and Woods; and if you wil know, how much we gayne by hiding „ our selues, I beleeue, that if anie one heer among vs should in the world doe „ the fourth part of that which heer he doth, he would be adored as a Saint, „ esteemed of as an Angel from heauen; heer he is dayly reprehended and „ chidden, as if he did neglect his dutie. Doe you think it a smal benefit that you „ are not held Saints, before you be so indeed? or doe you not feare, least re- „ ceauing heer so smal a reward, you fayle of your reward in the world to come? „ Therefore it is very necessarie to be concealed, not only from the eyes of other „ folk, but much more from thy self. Thus farre *S. Bernard.*

How Religious men are honoured, and without compasse of danger.

7. Some wil say, that euen in Cloisters and Religious houses, manie are so conspicuous in learning, or eloquence, or in vertue and sanctitie of life, that they are admired, and spoken-of through the whole world; and manie times people get more renowne and glorie liuing in Religion, then if they had liued in the world, and gaped after honour and preferment. And this is very true; wherof I shal speake more at large in processe of this Treatise; for the present it is enough to know, that honour, which like a shaddow followeth those that fly from it, is not so dangerous; because as God doth send it, so it belongeth to his Diuine prouidence to giue strength to them, vpon whom he layeth such a burden, to beare it without losse, yea with encrease of vertue; and it is one of the most assured effects of Obedience, like an Antidot, to preserue those that liue vnder it, from the danger they might fal into by the poyson of Honour.

The example of S. *Thomas* of *Aquin.*

8. This was manifest in *S. Thomas* of *Aquin*; whose example may conforte with al Religious people, their case being the same. When he read Diuinitie at *Paris* with great applause, and his Superiours thought fit he should be made Doctour; at the first, out of modestie, he would by no meanes heare of the promotion, pretending want of sufficiencie (if they would haue beleiued himself) and want of age, being then scarce twentie yeares old. His mind being busied in these thoughts, and weeping bitterly, in the night-time he thought he saw a man of venerable and graue aspect standing by him; and asking why he was so sad, bad him confidently and without feare obey his Superiours; for such was the wil of God; and that he should take for the Text of the Speach he was to make at his Commencement, these words of the Psalme: *Watering the hils frō the higher places of thē.* With which Vision he was so animated, that afterwards he tooke his Degree without anie feare or trouble.

Psal. 103. 13.

9. Besides, it helpeth much to the preseruation of Religious Humilitie in the midst of honour, that the glorie, which followeth a Religious man, doth not so much accrue to his particular, as to God, & to the Religious Order, of which he is a member; as if a man doe anie thing with his hand, we doe not say, the hand did it, but the man; or if in an armie the day be wonne by the valour of a few men, the fame of the victorie rests not in those few, but redounds to the whole armie, & the armie is called victorious; so in Religious Families, when anie thing is exquisitly performed by one man among them, the man himself is as he was, neither higher nor lower, but the honour spreadeth itself to the whole house, wherof he is part; by which meanes, though he be employed abroad in the eyes of the world, he stil remaynes hidden; & euerie one

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taking notice of him, he is yet vnknowne; and forsaketh not humilitie in the top of Honour. And truly, that Religious people should be thus humble and honoured, is both profitable and necessarie; for if they should alwayes remaine in obscuritie, what could their labours profit the Church? and if on the other side they should be puffed vp with glorie and applause, this also would nip the fruit, which they might bring forth, and make them like a tinckling Cymbal, which carries but an emptie and vnprofitable sound in one's eare.

The ninth fruit; that Religion is the Schoole of Vertue.

CHAP. XXI.

AS among men there be seueral arts and sciences; and to deliuer and teach them, seueral Maisters and schooles appointed; one for the exercises of al kind of Learning, an other for Chiualrie and feates of armes, others for other kinds of discipline and knowledge: So the method of gayning Vertue is deliuered in Religion; in so much that if we would define Religion, we may iustly cal it the Schoole of Vertue; which propertie and benefit that it may be the more conspicuous to al, we must suppose some few things; and first how bare our soule is of al kind of vertue, if we consider it as it is in itself alone. *Aristotle* (whom *S. Thomas* in these Moral matters doth punctually follow, almost as if he did but translate him out of one language into another) doth teach expressly, that naturally we haue no Vertue in vs; and proueth it by manie reasons. Whervnto by the light of Faith (which he wanted) we may adde, that we are not only not borne with Vertue, but with much corruption, and depravation, and with great propension and forwardnes to al kind of vice; but only that togeather with these euils, two things remaine in vs which are good, to wit, some inclination to Vertue, giuen vs by the Authour of Nature, who first made vs good and vpright; and certain seeds therof, which may easily be brought to ripenes, if we wil suffer them to grow, and by care and diligence further them. *Aristotle. 2. Eth. c. 1.* Vertue is not naturally in vs.

2. Out of which we may gather two things to our present purpose. First, how fowle a thing a Soule naked of Vertue is. For as our bodie, if it want diuers limmes, or in manie yeares grow no bigger then when it was first borne, is vglie to see to, and vnprofitable: so if our soule want the ornament of vertues, which are as it were the parts therof, it is lame & imperfect, and consequently vglie and deformed. Secondly, what may be the best or only necessarie way, to get these vertues, of which our soule is destitute. *Aristotle* sayth there is no other way, then by exercising acts of Vertue, and performing in work that which Vertue doth require; otherwise (sayth he) then is the fashion of most men, who, if they discourse of Vertue, think they haue it sure enough; which is a great errour in them; and they resemble some sick people, that giue diligent eare to that which the Physicians say, but wil not obserue their prescriptions; and as these shal neuer recouer the health of their *Aristotle. 2. Eth. c. 6.* To exercise the acts of Vertue, is the way to get Vertue.

their bodie, ſo the others wil neuer be ſound in ſoule. This is the true and ſolid diſcourſe of this prime Philoſopher. For Vertue is a Habit, as Philoſophers cal it; and ſeing a habit is not gotten but by often acts, Vertue alſo cannot be gotten but by vſe and often practiſe therof. And ſpeaking of Moral Vertues, there can be no doubt made, but this doctrine is true; and the ſame doth hold alſo in the Theological Vertues. For though they be at firſt infuſed into our ſoules by the ſole guift of God, yet (if we ſet infants aſide that are new baptized) they require before-hand ſome preparation of mind, which conſiſts in the exerciſe of ſome acts; and after they are infuſed, they are encreaſed and ſtrengthned by the ſame acts. Wherefore that which *S. Bernard* ſpeaketh of Humilitie, may be ſayd of al other Vertues, the reaſon being the ſame in al. The humbling of ourſelues is the way to get humilitie; as patience is the way to haue peace; and reading, to get knowledge. If thou deſire the vertue of Humilitie, ſpare not to humble thy ſelf; for if thou canſt not endure to be humbled, thou canſt not attayne to Humilitie.

S. Bernard.

In Religiõ Vertue is in cõtinual practiſe.

3. Seing therefore it is ſo certain and euident, that Vertue cannot be gotten but by labour and practiſe; it doth euidently follow, that the courſe of life which miniſters more often and better occaſion to practiſe the ſame, is more beneficial to our ſoules, & more vſeful towards Saluation. This (I dare boldly ſay) among al other courſes, is Religion, where Vertue is in the prime and continual practiſe. For as for the Loue of God and our Neighbour, we may ſpare a labour to ſpeake of it; becauſe it is apparent that in Religion people doe nothing els but ſeeke how they may dayly encreaſe in the loue of God; & there cannot be among men more loue and friendſhip towards one another, then there is among Religious people; who as they are indeed, ſo are called Brethren, as it were proceeding from one bellie. The like may be ſayd of Obedience, the practiſe wherof runnes through euerie thing that is done in Religion. Humilitie is ſo frequent in this kind of life, that it may ſeeme to be compoſed of no other thing; and is therefore deſeruedly tearmed by *S. Bernard*, the Schoole of Humilitie. For, according to the account which worldlie people vſe to make, nothing can be more abiect and contemptible then Religion, in outward ſhew, poore, hard, and obſcure; performing accordingly baſe and ſeruil offices, and ſauouring of nothing but Humilitie, in their apparel, lodging, office, and functions; of which *S. Chryſoſtome* doth diſcourſe excellently wel in one of his Sermõs to the people of Antioch, where among other praiſes of a Religious courſe he ſayth thus: There we may behold the height of Humilitie; for their dwelling, their apparrel, their employments, beare Humilitie as it were written vpon them in Capital letters; and the things which nouriſh pride, as rich attire, ſtatelie buildings, a great trayne of followers, which puffe a man vp almoſt againſt his wil, are farre from them; they make their owne fires, they cut their wood, they dreſſe their owne meate, they waite at board. No man is great among them, no man is litle; yet there is no confuſion, but order moſt exactly kept; for if anie one of them be litle, he that is great, regards not that, but rather eſteemes himſelf lower then the leaſt; and thereby becomes greater. And that which *S. Chryſoſtome* ſayth of Humilitie, may be ſayd of other Vertues, al of them being in Religion continually practiſed; which declares not only how beneficial this courſe of life is,

S. Bernard Hom. 4. Miſſus.

S. Io. Chryſ. Hom. 18. ad pop. Ant.

but

but withal an admirable ſweetnes of the proceedings therof, not by precepts alone (which yet are not wanting) but by daylie practiſe, inuring vs to Vertue; and by frequent acts and exerciſe therof, introducing vs to perfection without trouble to ourſelues, but with infinit profit.

4. An other commoditie of Religion, common to al Arts and Sciences in their ſeueral kinds, Liberal and Mechanical, is this: that as in the verie meaneſt of them, it is eſteemed a rare thing to excel, and to be able to doe a thing better then anie of the ſame trade can doe it; & ſuch ſmiths, and carpenters, & other tradeſ-men are moſt ſought after, as are skilfulleſt in their occupation; and though the trade in itſelf be baſe, yet to be rare in it, is eſteemed a great matter: ſo it falleth out in Religious diſcipline; and with greater reaſon, becauſe in itſelf it is a more noble employment, trading wholy in the purſuit and purchaſe of Vertue. Thoſe that employ themſelues with more earneſtnes in it, and profit more, are more commended and admired; as in a race (ſuch as Religion is to perfection) he that maketh greateſt ſpeed, hath al the applauſe, which is no ſmal encouragement to runne apace. Secular people find it to be true; for it is one of the greateſt rubs they haue, that others among them doe not approue of their endeauours in Vertue, but they are fayne to ſaile againſt the wind, meeting oftimes with hard cenſures, ſcoffes, & taunts of other men; and our nature is ſo weake, that it can hardly withſtand them, or contemne them. Manie for feare of ſuch things are hindred from vndertaking that which otherwiſe they know is good, manie after they haue begũne a good courſe, grow weatie of it, finding that they muſt row ſo much againſt the ſtreame; and while they eaſe their armes, they are borne quite downe againe by the current. Among Religious people it is quite contrarie; for (as I began to ſay) becauſe it is their profeſſion to liue vertuouſly, they that giue themſelues moſt vnto it, and become rare in it, are moſt applauded, eſteemed, and ſet by; And ſo when anie of them is employed in anie meane office, or ſeruil buſines, there is no feare that others wil contemne him for it, or laugh at him (as *Michol* ſcorned *Dauid*) but rather the more diligently and cheerfully he goeth about it, the more he is eſteemed and loued of al.

To excel in Vertue, is much eſteemed in Religion, & thereby a great encouragement.

2. *Reg.* 6. 20

5. *S. Iohn Damaſcen*, a man both noble and wealthie, and one that had borne office with credit in the Common-wealth, became a Monk, and being cõmitted to the inſtruction of one of the Seniours, the good old man thought it neceſſarie firſt to ground him wel in Humilitie; to which purpoſe he put him to doe al the inferiour offices of the houſe, to ſweepe, to ſcoure, to make cleane the houſes-of-office, and diſpatch al other drudgerie that was to be done; and moreouer, as if nothing which he did were wel done, he was continually finding-fault with him and reprehending him; and following this courſe ſome moneths togeather, brought him to that perfection in Vertue, which euer after ſhewed itſelf in the holines of his life. But to our purpoſe; thoſe houſehold-offices, which in themſelues are very meane and baſe, were notwithſtanding ſo farre from bringing the Saint in diſgrace with the reſt of the Monks, as rather they bred him greater reſpect; euerie one admiring and extolling ſo great contempt of the world and of himſelf, in a man that in the eyes of the world had been ſo great. And the good old man that had been ſo ſtearne vnto him, when he ſaw his time, embraced

Religious men the more eſteemed, the more cheerful they are in humble offices.

him with cheerful countenance, & congratulating with him the benefit which he had made of this exercise in so short a time, dismissed him with large commendation from vnder his charge, as an old soldier, and one that could now menage his armes without a teacher.

6. And we may giue ourselues to these exercises of humilitie, mortification, and prayer, with such general approbation, as I haue sayd, not only within the compasse of our owne walles, but before anie secular people. For when they see a Religious man doe anie humble office, they admire him, and are edified with it; though if they should see anie of themselues doe the like, they would think it a base thing in him; so much freedome doth Religion giue vs in the practise of euerie good thing.

Maisters in Religion, two.

7. And thus farre we haue spoken of the Schoole itself, and of the Schollars. The Maisters of this Schoole are two; the one visible, to wit, our Superiour or Prelat, of whom we shal haue occasion to speake heerafter; the other is inuisible, whom we believe only, and vnderstand to be so, and yet he is truly and in a manner our onlie Maister. So Truth itself speaketh: *Be not called maisters, because one is your maister, Christ*, who is not wanting in anie dutie belonging to a diligent & skilful Maister. He taketh paynes to instruct the ignorant, aduanceth those that haue profited, and bestoweth greater light vpon the perfect; He reprehendeth those that doe amisse, he putteth them forward that are backward and remisse, he comforteth those that are heauie and sad, and refresheth and strengthneth them that are ouer-wearie; finally, (as *Thomas a Kempis*, a good spiritual Authour, bringeth him in, speaking of himself) he readeth two lessons euerie day to his disciples; correcting those that doe not follow his directions; and encouraging and hartning them that doe follow them, to goe forward dayly with greater alacritie. What then can anie Religious man want, hauing such a Maister, and withal such commoditie of hearing and practising the precepts which he giues? The onlie thing which he needs to feare, is that he be not wanting to himself, and neglect his owne dutie, and this verie thing belongs to his Maister's prouident care to preuent, that it may not happen. One man may bestow his labour in teaching an other man, but cannot giue his schollar either wil or wit to conceaue that which he goeth about to teach him; Our Maister can easily giue both wil and power, to make benefit of that which he proposeth.

Matth. 23. 10.

Th. a Kempis l. 3. de imit. Christi. c. 3.

The tenth fruit: Plentie of Grace.

CHAP. XXII.

THe way of profiting in Spirit, and aduancing ourselues in Vertue, of which I haue lately spoken, bringeth great commoditie to our soules, yet requireth industrie, labour, and paynes; and thervpon is called a Schoole, in which no man reapes benefit without earnest endeauour and attention. The benefit therefore, of which now I am to speake, is farre greater, in regard that manie good things accrue vnto vs, and

are as

are as it were caſt into our boſome by the State itſelf, without anie labour or endeauour on our part; al which, though they be manie in number and of diuers kinds, we ſhal comprehend vnder one general name of Grace. For by the name of Grace we vnderſtand al ſupernatural guifts, working, aduancing, or anie way helping to our eternal welfare; among which the chiefeſt is that heauenlie inherent qualitie, which giues a new life, & as it were a new nature to our ſoule like vnto God: then the habits of Faith, Hope, and others, euen moral vertues; finally al inward inſpirations of the Holie-Ghoſt, enlightning our vnderſtanding, or mouing and ſtrengthning our wil; which two latter kinds of Grace, though they be farre inferiour, both in worth and efficacie, to that qualitie which makes our ſoule grateful to God, and worthie of his loue, they haue notwithſtanding a ſupernatural force and vertue, whereby they concurre and help towards the effecting or encreaſing of that Diuine habit, in which (as I haue ſayd) the life of our ſoule doth conſiſt. And ſeing al theſe Graces be ſo neceſſarie, and ſo precious, nothing can redound more to the commendation of a State for worth and commoditie, then if we ſhew that it hath manie wayes to purchaſe abundance of theſe Graces; which of a Religious ſtate euerie one muſt acknowledge & confeſſe. For if we marke it wel, there be in it foure Heads, from which this Grace doth flow.

What is vnderſtood by Grace.

Foure fountaines of Grace in Religion.

2. The firſt is the verie natural Conſtitution of the ſtate itſelf; for being in the rank of ſupernatural things one of the higheſt, it is, as it were, compounded of manie graces, and great plentie of them: which a Religious man muſt needs receaue togeather with the ſtate. For a Religious courſe, and the verie reſolution of entring into it, contayning ſo manie things, as it doth, to wit, the contempt of al earthlie things, hatred of riches, of honour, & worldlie pompe, the loue of continencie, and moſt perfect chaſtitie, the denial of our owne wil, the practiſe of humilitie, a reſolution to goe through a great deale of hardnes and difficultie, to take vp our Croſſe and carrie it, finally a perpetual reſignation and perfect yealding-vp of ourſelues, and of our whole life, to an other's diſpoſe, which is no ſmal maiſtrie; A Religious courſe, I ſay, being as it were compounded of theſe and manie more ſuch like graces and vertues, when God doth cal a man to be Religious, he muſt withal needs inſpire and giue him al theſe things. What therefore can be more worthie or more deſireful then this ſtate, wherin ſo manie holeſome and neceſſarie guifts are ſo eaſily and liberally caſt vpon vs, as that we need to take no paynes at al for anie of them, but hold the boſome of our ſoule wide open to receaue and enioy them? And me thinks it doth ſomewhat reſemble the caſting of an image in braſſe; for that is done al wholy at once, armes, & legs, and al other parts togeather; and there remaynes nothing to be done to it, but to poliſh it, or perhaps to ſupply ſome litle peeces heer and there, which might remayne imperfect, which is but a ſmal labour, when the whole bulk is once caſt; ſo when the Holie-Ghoſt calles vs to Religion, he frameth this his ſupernatural and exquiſit work in vs; and contayning, as I ſayd, al things belonging to a Religious ſtate, he worketh al in vs; ſo that we haue no more to doe al our life-time, but only to poliſh, and perfect, and encreaſe theſe heauenlie guifts, for which the grace of our vocation doth alſo giue vs meanes and courage; for bringing al theſe benefits with it, it euer after conſerueth them, as a fountain of liuing

Religion wholy compounded of Grace.

water, which alwayes floweth. Wherefore we may truly and iustly say, that a Religious soule, is the *tree planted by the riuers of water*, that is, of this plentiful & manifold grace, running in that abundance, that it is like a riuer which neuer stayes (for it is the *riuer of liuing water which proceedeth from the seate of God and of the Lamb*) but as one streame ouertaketh another, so grace followeth after grace without intermission, whereby our soule comes to yeald *plentie of fruit in due season, and a leafe falleth not, but al things prosper which it doth.*

Apoc. 22.

2. The presence of God. *Matth. 18.*

3. An other fountaine of this Grace, is that which Truth itself giueth vs to vnderstand in these words: *Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them.* For though our Lord God be ful of mercie, and richly liberal towards al that cal vpon him, yet he powres forth his mercies more plentifully vpon those, that liue & are linked togeather in one communitie, by the bond of Charitie. *S. Iohn Damascen* doth acknowledge, that this Diuine sentence is properly and truly fulfilled in a Religious course, and that, when our Saviour named two or three, he did not barre a greater number, but by that certain number, vnderstood whatsoeuer other number though neuer so great. *S. Basil* argueth further: If our Lord (sayth he) promiseth this where two or three are gathered togeather, it is much more likelie he wil doe the same, where there shal be a farre greater assemblie; And concluderh therevpon very truly, that if Christ be with vs, we can want nothing; as the *Israelites* in the Desert neuer wanted anie thing, because God was present with them. Therefore when our Saviour promiseth that he wil be in the midst of a Religious Congregation, and alwayes with them, in one word he promiseth al that can be wished, light in darknes, strength in infirmitie, comfort in sadnes, ease in payne, victorie in combats with the Diuel, courage and constancie of resolution, encrease of vertue; finally what good thing can they want, that haue him in whom al good things are?

S. Iohn Damascen in vita Iosaphat.

S. Basil.

Charitie being the ground of Religious assemblies, is also a great cause of grace.

4. But the greatnes of this promise wil appeare the more, if we consider the reason of it. The reason is, because Religious people assemble themselues togeather, vpon no other ground but Charitie. It is not nature, nor affinitie, nor the fellowship of trade or occupation (as among marchants, & souldiers) which hath drawne them togeather, but Charitie only. Now *God* himself, as *S. Iohn* telleth vs, *is* nothing but *Charitie*; so that, as the same Apostle speaketh, *he that remayneth in Charitie, remayneth in God, & God in him*; and where the linck of Charitie runneth, there God is betwixt them; so that God is not only present in euerie companie of Religious people, but more inwardly present, then they are neere one to another among themselues; as when two stones are layd in morter togeather, the morter must needs be neerer them both, then the stones are one to another. Certainly if this promise of our Saviour extend itself to al Christians, as it doth, who notwithstanding haue now in a manner nothing common one with another, but their Faith, & that which followeth of Faith, or belongeth to it; if we believe, that Christ is in the midst of them, how much more ought we to believe, he is in al Religious Families, where al things are common, spiritual & temporal, their lodging, apparrel, diet & exercises, nothing is priuate and particular? Neither yet did our Lord IESVS make this promise to whatsoeuer communitie or meeting, but to such as were *gathered in his name*, as al Religious Orders are, being al of them erected for his seruice only. But though al be partakers of this vnspeakeable benefit, this one

1. Ioh. 4. 16.

word doth make me think, that our Societie of IESVS (which in al other things is the leaſt and loweſt) hath a peculiar right and intereſt in this Grace, by reaſon of the Name it beareth, the name, I ſay, of IESVS, by which it is knowne among al other Orders, as by the proper mark and deuiſe. And we may the rather hope ſo, and be confident of it, in regard that this name was not taken vpon human aduiſe, but by particular inſtinct of God, and by his wil, made knowne in a Viſion to *S. Ignatius* our Head & Founder, when he was in an Extaſie at his prayers. The holines therefore of this Name cannot but be a great comfort to vs, that fight as it were vnder this banner, cõſidering the particular aſſiſtance & moſt certain protection of God, which is promiſed vs in al things. For that which the Wiſe-man ſayth, is agreable to this purpoſe. *The name of our Lord is a moſt ſtrong tower; the iuſt man runneth to it, and ſhal be ſaued.* Pro. 18. 10.

The prerogatiue of the Societie of IESVS.

5. A third cauſe of abundãce of Grace in Religious companies, is an influence from the whole communitie of ſpirit and inward help to euerie particular man of the ſame cõmunitie. For euerie Order of Religion is (as it were) one bodie conſiſting of ſo manie members and parts, as there be men in it. Euerie one of theſe bodies haue their ſpirit, which giues them life and motion; which ſpirit is partly common and like to the ſpirit of other Orders, ſpecially in ſuch things as are eſſẽtial to al Orders, as the three Vowes, & al kind of vertues; & partly it is proper & peculiar, as different rites and different offices and employments, which euerie Order doth practiſe according to the particular inſtitute it hath. Wherefore as if a man could ſet a new hand or an arme to a bodie, in which it was not before, the ſoule that giueth life and motion to the reſt of the bodie, would giue influence into that new member alſo, and make it liue and moue; ſo when anie bodie vpon mature aduiſe of his owne, and by lawful authoritie of thoſe to whom it doth belong, is receaued into anie Religious Order, the ſpirit, with giueth life and vigour to the whole Order, is deriued into this new part therof, & cauſeth it to work the ſame works which the whole Order doth.

3. Influence from the Communitie into euerie particular.

6. *Dauid* was in companie with the Prophets that were foretelling things to come, and ſinging prayſes to God, when *Saul* ſent certain men to kil him. So ſoone as they came, the ſpirit of God was vpon them alſo, and they began to ſing and prophecie. *Saul* hearing therof, ſent the ſecond and the third time others ſtil better prouided to execute the miſchief that was intended; but it hapned to them al alike, for vpon their arriual in ſteed of their wicked furie, they were inueſted with Prophetical pietie. Then the wicked King minding himſelf to doe the deed, ranne to the place ful of fire and rage: but when he came, he could no more then the others reſiſt the ſpirit of God, which lighting vpon him, did ſo tame him, that preſently caſting off his Princelie robes, and himſelf vpon the ground, he ſpent that whole day and the night following continually praying God. An euident argument and moſt certain proofe of the point we haue in hand, to wit, how aſſured and efficacious a meanes it is to get abundance of grace, to be adopted in thoſe companies, which of themſelues are ful of grace: for if theſe wicked men, euen while they were acting their tragedie, could be ſo ſuddenly inflamed with Prophetical ſpirit, being preſent in bodie & not in mind, what ſhal we conceaue wil be done by thoſe that haue ſorted themſelues with ſuch holie companie, vpon ful deliberation, and deliuered themſelues vnto it wholy and intirely, not for a day or two, but for euer. For if grace was giuen to thoſe that deſired it not, but rather 1. Reg. 19. 20.

withstood it, much more certainly and more abundantly shal they doubtles be replenished, that desire it, and with al their hart endeauour for it.

Al graces bestowed vpon the whole Church, specially vpon Religious people.

7. The fourth reason of abundance of Grace, is because the infinit benefits & guifts which our Sauiour Christ hath most bountifully powred-forth vpon the whole Church, which he purchased with his owne most pretious bloud, are in a manner fallen within compasse of the walles of Religion, & vpon Religious people alone. For though they be giuen for al Christians, manie scarce make vse of them, manie not at al; howsoeuer, Religious people certainly may best enioy them, and with greatest ease. Among these guifts we reckon the Sacraments of the Church, and chiefly those two which are so ful of grace, and so much the more beneficial, because they alone amõg the rest may be dayly vsed; to wit, the Sacrament of Confession, and of the holie Eucharist, wherin after Cõfession we feed vpon the verie Bodie & Bloud of our Sauiour; from whence vnspeakable ioy & happines is deriued to our soules. Now therefore, though this infinit treasure be layd open for al the Faithful to partake of it, yet who seeth not that Religious people doe make farre better vse of it, & haue greater commoditie for it? Secular people most commonly are hindred either wholy from receauing these Sacraments, or from receauing them so worthily as the maiestie of them doth require, by the daylie cares, and troubles, passions and affections, to which that course of life is continually subiect; the state of Religion being free from secular busines and vexation, and wholy composed to the end to taste of God, doth help the subiects therof in the vse of these Sacraments, as in al other things. The like may be sayd of al other spiritual riches, & chiefly of holie Scripture, which, as it is profitable for al occasions, & withal most delightful to reade & studie, so we finde by experiẽce, that very few others besides Religious men doe employ themselues in the studie therof, with that feeling & that spirit, with which it is fitting so holie a thing should be handled.

Th. à Kempis l. 4. de imit. Christi. c. 12.

8. A certain spiritual Authour sayth truly and wel, that as for the life of our bodie we neede meate to refresh it, & light to direct it; so to maintaine the life of our soule, we must haue meate and light. Our meate, is the blessed Bodie of our Lord; our light, is the Word of God, *a lanterne to our feete*, as the Prophet speaketh. Therefore, as I began to say, though these heauenlie guifts be infinitly profitable and necessarie, and indifferently proposed to euerie one; yet they are not knowne to al, neither wil al, that know them, vse them; Religious people in a manner doe nothing else, and consequently euerie bodie must needs confesse, that they are in ful and perfect possession of al the riches and iewels, which Christ our Sauiour hath most bountifully bestowed vpon his Spouse the Church, and of whatsoeuer is therin holie, beneficial, and pretious, descended from heauen vpon mankind. I might say, that Religious people only haue them; because few others haue the wil or leasure to make vse of them; howsoeuer, it is sufficient that Religious people haue them in that abundãce which I haue declared. These are the ornaments of a Religious state, whereby a soule is so much enriched and embellished; these we may liken to the foure Riuers issuing out of Paradise; for the foure fountains of Grace, of which I haue discoursed, doe flow from the Paradise of Religion, washing our soules, to make them brighter, and watering them that they may become more fruitful.

Psl. 118.

Gen. 2.

The

The eleuenth fruit of Religion: Greater merit by vertue of the State.

CHAP. XXIII.

AS the ſunne, which giues light vnto the earth, hath light within itſelf, and borroweth it not abroad, as the reſt of the ſtarres doe from the ſunne: ſo God only hath Being and Bleſſednes of himſelf; al other things receaue their being and bleſſednes by his bountiful guift and participation; they receaue, I ſay, life and being, without anie cooperation of their owne thervnto; for before they were, they could conferre nothing to their being; but to the attayning of happines, God hath ordayned, they ſhould concurre with their owne works, and ſuch works as may haue ſome proportion and congruence with the final End, for which they were made. *Al things receaue their being & happines from God.*

2. The Iuſtice of God, which he alwayes regardeth, required this proceeding; and it was alſo for our honour, that ſo great a good ſhould not be giuen vs ſleeping; but that we ſhould employ our induſtrie and proweſſe in purchaſſe therof. This is the reaſon why we were put into this courſe of pilgrimage vpon earth, and to this end al our life is directed; whervpon holie *Iob* doth fitly tearme himſelf, and al vs, *day-labourers*; who haue nothing but what they earne day by day, by ſtrength of their armes, and ſweat of their brow. Our Sauiour in like manner, reſembleth al men to Marchants, in the Parable, where the Maiſter of the houſe diſtributing his Talents among his ſeruants, ſpeakes thus vnto them: *Trade til I come*; giuing vs to vnderſtand, that this life is no other, but a kind of trading or trafficking, not in earthlie but in heauenlie marchandiſe. Wherefore as marchants employ their whole induſtrie, and labour, to become rich and wealthie; and therefore doe withdraw themſelues from al other exerciſes, as hunting, riding, or following the camp; they ſeeke al occaſions of gayne, let nothing ſlip, whereby they may hope for anie lucre; and eſteeme al care and labour ſweet, ſo that they thriue by it; much more ought we to do the like in this ſpiritual trade of ours, the benefit therof being euerlaſting. And hence we may gather two things: *Firſt*, the miſerie of this world, wherin people liue in great barrennes and dearth of al ſpiritual commodities, their harts being altogeather ſet vpon earthlie pelfe; ſecondly, the happines of a Religious ſtate, wherin we may euerie moment of time encreaſe our heauenlie ſtock with great eaſe and facilitie. *Much might be ſayd of the blindnes, and indeed madnes, of Secular people, who ſo vnprofitably lauiſh away this ſhort moment of time (which was giuen to purchaſe Eternitie) in temporal things ſubiect to corruption; But I wil content myſelf with one place of S. Gregorie, who diſcourſing vpon thoſe words of Iob: They ſhal walk in vayne, and perish*; doth wel expreſſe their fooliſhnes (for why may *Iob. c. 7. and c. 14.* *This life is a continual trade and labour.* *Luc. 19. 13.* *The miſerie and foolishnes of worldie people* *Iob. 6. 18.*

» I not cal them fooles, that voluntarily draw vpon themselues so infinit a losse? *S. Gregorie* therefore sayth thus: They walke in vayne, who carrie nothing » hence with them of the fruit of their labour; one striues to rise to honour; » another employeth his whole endeauour to encrease his wealth; a third runnes » himself out of breath after humane prayse; but because euerie bodie must leaue » these things behind him, when he dyes, he that hath nothing to carrie with » him before the Iudge, spends his labours in vayne. The Law aduiseth vs to
Deu. 16. 16. » the contrarie: *Thou shalt not appeare in my sight, emptie.* He that goeth not pro-» uided of merit of good works to deserue eternal life, appeareth emptie in
Psal. 125. 6. » the sight of God; but of the Iust the Psalmist sayth: *Coming they shal come* » *with ioy, bearing their bundles.* They who shew good works within them-» selues, whereby they may deserue life, come to account in Iudgement, » bearing their bundles. Hence the Psalmist sayth againe of euerie one of » the Elect: *Who hath not receaued his soule in vayne.* For he receaueth his
Psal. 23. 4. » soule in vayne, who thinking only of things present, mindes not those that » follow for euer. He receaueth his soule in vayne, who neglecting the life » therof, doth preferre the care of the bodie before it. But the Iust receaue » not their soules in vayne, who with continual attention referre al that they » doe in their bodies, to the profit of their soule; that when the work is » past, the cause of the work may not passe away; which purchaseth the re-» wards of life after this life.

3. Among these iust men, whom *S. Gregorie* commendeth, Religious people are chiefly to be reckoned; but we are to shew that the State itself doth giue them great aduantage aboue others in it. Two things therefore are required to merit: the thing which we doe, and the end for which we doe it. This *S. Bernard* calleth the two *cheekes* of the Spouse; he that wanteth either of them, must needs be exceedingly deformed; much more if he want them both. He that handles temporal things for temporal respects, wanteth both; he that doth a spiritual thing, for a temporal end, is deformed in one of them. Now that in which Religious people bestow themselues, is God's owne busines, wherin it is vnspeakable, and in a manner vncredible, what aduantage they haue of secular people. For there be vsually two things in secular people which doe lessen their merit, or depriue them wholy of it: First, that they must of necessitie busie themselues in earthlie and temporal things; as to maintaine their children and familie, to place their daughters, to furnish al other charges of house-keeping; Secondly, that whatsoeuer they doe, it is for themselues, and for their owne priuate commoditie; their thoughts runne vpon nothing els, but how they and theirs may liue in plentie and ease. Now he that taketh paynes only for himself and for his owne benefit, serueth himself and no bodie els, and therefore cannot without impudencie and iniustice demand reward or hire of an other. Hence it cometh, that the workes of most men, when they come to be weighed in the balance of equitie of God himself, are found faultie, and not current; the truth wherof was on a time shewed in a strange Vision to the great *Arsenius*, a famous Heremit. First he thought he saw a man very busie in cutting downe wood; and when he had bound it vp in a bundle, he was taking it vpon his shoulders, and could

The two Cheeks of the Spouse. *S. Bern. s. 40. in Cant.*

Two things hinder the merit of secular people.

The Vision of S. *Arsenius.*

not:

not, it was so big & heauie; & to help himself, he stil cut downe more wood & made his burthen bigger and bigger. Againe he saw another labouring al day to draw water; and when he had it, he powred it into a vessel without a bottome, & it ranne al away. This Vision an Angel interpreted vnto him, & sayd, that the first were they, that heape sinne vpon sinne; the second are they, that doe their works for humane ends; by which meanes the works presently perish, and auayle them nothing towards life euerlasting. And if there be anie (as certainly there be some few in the world) so wise and warie as to direct their actions carefully to God; yet the actions themselues being of their owne nature earthlie, they must be continually labouring and toyling to rayse them, and keepe them vp from the earth; which endeauour of theirs being somewhat violent, cannot last long, and so they quickly shrinck downewards to the earth againe, as their nature drawes them. It hapneth quite otherwise with Religious people; for first forsaking their owne house and goods, they are taken into the house of God and his Familie; and consequently whatsoeuer busines they haue there, it is properly God's; and so long as they are employed in it, they labour for God, and not for themselues; so that if we compare the state of a Secular man, that liues wel and vpright, with the state of a man that liues in Religion, there is this difference betwixt them, that the one serueth as a friend, the other as a seruant; a friend by entreatie or of his owne accord, may do his friend some seruice, but yet he is to liue of himself, and must prouide for his owne occasions; a seruant that dwelleth with his maister, al that he doth, must be for his Maister's seruice: so when a Religious man hath left al that he had, and put himself into the seruice of God, he must of force, and in a manner whether he wil or no, attend God Almightie's busines, and day and night wayte vpon him; and he can doe no other, because he hath withdrawne himself from his owne priuate affayres; not only in wil and purpose, but by distance of place, and absence from the things themselues.

Religious men, God's household seruants.

4. Moreouer, that which we handle in Religion is not properly earthlie, but for the most part Spiritual, or mingled with some Spiritual thing. For al that a Religious man doth, may be reduced to three heads: First are the actions which are immediatly directed to God, as Prayer, Contemplation, the vse of the Sacraments, the practise of the vertues of Humilitie, Charitie, Pennance, internal by contrition of hart, and external by punishing the bodie; in which actions a Religious man spends the greater part of his life, and no bodie can make anie doubt, but they tend directly of their owne nature, without anie labour of ours, to God, and deserue a reward at his hands. There be other works that are external, yet proceede from the verie bowels of Religion; as to preach, to heare Confessions, to encourage others to deuotion, to giue good aduise to those that aske it, and oftimes to those that doe not aske it, as the Apostle wisheth, *opportunely and importunely*, finally whatsoeuer is done for the spiritual help of our Neighbour; to which we may adde the employments which are as it were preparations to the former, to wit, to studie priuately, or in publick Schoole, to dispute, to write; that thereby they may benefit themselues or others, and such like. These things though they be not so immediatly set vpon God, as the former

Three sorts of employments of Religious people, and al spiritual.

2. Tim. 4. 2.

yet of their owne nature they tend to the ſame end; and conſequently, vnleſſe they be wreſted and corrupted by a different end and intention from without, they are of themſelues good and grateful to God; ſo that there is great difference betwixt the employments of a Secular and a Religious man; becauſe theſe be of their owne nature Spiritual and meritorious, vnleſſe they be marred by ſome extrinſecal accident; Secular peoples buſines is of itſelf earthlie and temporal, and alwayes cleaues to the earth, and dyes with it, vnleſſe it be ſayſed by ſome other meanes. And who is ſo ſtrong and able, amidſt ſo much weaknes as is in a Secular life, as to ſtand perpetual Sentinel watching ouer his works, and alwayes to keep his bow at that ful bent, that his arrowes (his actions I meane) may flye aloft.

Natural actions ſpiritualized.

5. The third kind of works be thoſe that are meerly natural, as to eate and drink; to ſleepe, to tend ourſelues when we are ſick or that we may not fal into ſicknes, to prouide neceſſaries for diet and apparrel; wherin is much buſines, and manie occurrences; theſe things of them ſelues, if we go no higher, are nothing; but may be eaſily ſo handled by a Religious man, as they wil be of great worth, and beautie, and deſert in the ſight of God. For, hauing giuen them their bodie togeather with their ſoule, al the ſeruice and care they beſtow vpon it (as ſuch) is pleaſing to God, and ſhal not fayle of a reward. The matter therefore reſteth in the intention, which is the other cheek of the Spouſe, as I ſayd out of *S. Bernard*; wherin it is ſo apparently eaſie for a Religious man to walke vprightly, and pleaſe our Lord God, that I ſhal not need to ſpend manie words in declaring it. For Secular people, though they haue manie times no il intention in their actions, yet moſt commonly their intention is earthlie and temporal, ayming at the maintenance or ſetting-vp of their Houſe and Familie. But what ſhould a Religious man haue anie ſuch thing in his head? Though ſometimes that which he handleth be temporal, yet his end is ſpiritual, not ordayned to his owne priuate intereſt, but to the common benefit of his Brethren; which alſo is wholy directed to the honour and glorie of God.

S. Ber. ſ. de Ingratitud.

6. *S. Bernard* deliuereth this doctrine eloquently, and excellently to the purpoſe, comparing Secular people with Religious, and ſayth, that the labour and paynes which Secular people take, is twofold; to wit, partly peremptorie, as he tearmeth it, becauſe labouring in ſinful actions, it brings euerlaſting death with it; and partly, though not peremptorie, yet periſhable; becauſe though they keepe themſelues from ſinnes, they are toſſed with manie cares, and embroyled in much buſines, though not in much offence, toyling themſelues in the figure of this world which paſſeth away, to maintayne themſelues and thoſe that depend vpon them; which toyle though it worke not damnation, yet it worketh not ſaluation neither; ſo that though they keepe the foundation, yet they ſhal ſuffer detriment by the loſſe of that which they haue builded vpon it, and themſelues be ſaued, *yet ſo as by fire*. But harken what is ſayd to vs: *Ioh. 6. 27.* *Worke not the food which periſheth, but which remayneth to life euerlaſting*. Neither doe we leaue working this food, though we be ſometimes enployed in earthlie occupation by obedience, or out of fraternal charitie, becauſe our intention is different from theirs, whoſe labour ſhal periſh; the ſelf-ſame labour, growing from a farre different root, ſhal not periſh alike, becauſe

bec auſe it is grounded vpon that Charitie which neuer periſheth.

7. This, which *S. Bernard* ſayth, agreeth with the Similitude which *S. Anſelme* bringeth, in which kind of expreſſion he is held to be rare; thus we reade of him in his life. A certain Religious man coming vnto him for aduiſe, and making his complaint, that he was employed by his Superiours in temporal buſineſſes, hauing betaken himſelf to Religion of purpoſe to auoyde them; he made him anſwer and encouraged him in this manner: The life of man is like a mil, which is euer moued and neuer reſteth; but there is great difference among the men that tend it; ſome looke not after their meale, and it al runnes downe into the riuer, and is vtterly loſt; others ſaue part of it, and part they leeſe through negligence; others put their ſackes vnderneath, and ſaue it al. The firſt kind are thoſe Secular people, who neuer think of anie eternal thing, but their thoughts are wholy buried in earth and earthlie things; The ſecond kind is of thoſe, who liuing in the world doe ſome good works; they giue almes, they goe to church duly, they viſit the ſick; theſe ſhal receaue a reward according to the meaſure of their workes; The laſt kind, are Religious people, who being employed by their Superiours vpon obedience, leeſe not their labour, though the buſines be temporal, which they are ſet about; yea though by occaſion of their buſines, they be forced ſometimes to doe ſomething otherwiſe then Religious diſcipline requires, or to ſlack in ſomewhat which is commonly obſerued by others, the vertue of Obedience recompenſeth al, and gathereth-vp the meale ſo cleane, and layeth it vp ſo ſafe, that it ſuffiſeth to maintayne them for al eternitie.

S. Anſelme.

The life of man like a mil.

8. Finally we ſhal doe wel to conſider and beare in mind that which *S. Bonauenture* writeth touching this matter, and the rather becauſe the doctrine is his, who was ſo profound a Diuine, and is deriued by him out of the verie principles of Diuinitie. His diſcourſe is this: For a man to merit, it is not required that al his works be actually referred to God, but it is enough, that they haue an habitual relation to him. This habitual relation ariſeth not by reaſon a ſoule is in Charitie; that is not enough; but becauſe this particular work in the beginning therof, or in the beginning of ſome other work, from which this doth flow, was duly offered and dedicated to God; as for example: If a man purpoſe to giue in almes for God's ſake a hundred peeces of ſiluer; though he doe not thinke of God afterwards when he diſtributeth them ſeuerally one by one, it doth not follow, that thoſe peeces of ſiluer are not profitably and vertuouſly beſtowed; as it would follow, if he ſhould begin anie other new worke of an other kind; for then he muſt haue a new purpoſe to doe that work for the ſeruice of God. Whence this holie Doctour doth inferre, that the ſame muſt hold in al the actions of Religious people, who at their firſt entrance into Religion, being reſolued to goe-through with the burthen therof, whatſoeuer afterwards they doe, that is contayned within the bounds of their obſeruances, is meritorious, by the force and efficacie of the firſt wil and purpoſe which they had, vnleſſe that purpoſe be contradicted by ſome contrarie reſolution; which no man, that hath anie care of his ſoule, wil doe. This is *S. Bonauenture's* diſcourſe almoſt word for word; concluding thervpon that it is infinitly profitable, and withal moſt ſecure, to liue a Religious life.

S. *Bonauenture 2. ſent. d. 41. a. 1. q. 3.*

What intention is required, that our actions may be meritorious.

9. But as touching merit, wherof we now treate, we may adde one thing

farther; that it doth not reach only to the works which before I mentioned, but to our verie passions and inward affections, though they be in a manner but natural. For in truth when Religious people leaue al that they haue, and become, as I haue sayd, of the *house and household of God*, they are so wholy at God's seruice, that whatsoeuer busines God hath, they account it theirs; and whatsoeuer busines they haue, God accounts it his; and whatsoeuer is profitable and conuenient for one, is profitable and conuenient for the other; so that when they reioyce, or are sad for their owne occasions, or desire, or feare anie thing concerning thē, God esteeming their occasions his, their feare and desire, sadnes and ioy, proceeding from such a root, is meritorious; and yet our life is in a manner spent in these affections; so that if we ground ourselues vpon reason, and cast-vp our accounts duly, as marchants doe, we shal find at euening, that in one dayes reckoning the actions of a Religious man wil arise to an infinit summe of merit; and if one day be so ful of merit, what wil it arise vnto in a moneth, or a yeare, which hath so manie dayes, and so much profit euerie day? And if a man continue in Religion manie yeares, what masse of merit must he needs heape to himself by so much industrie, and so manie vertuous actions so often repeated?

Merit by vse of our Passions.

10. This therefore being very true, and grounded in the principles of our Fayth, certainly the course which encreaseth a man's crowne and reward so much, and his labour so litle & in short time rayseth him to so great wealth, and loadeth him with those treasures, which neither *rust nor moth doe demolish, nor theeues dig-vp and steale away*, must needs be of high esteeme and worth; which wil be more apparent, if we compare the happines which Religious people haue heerin, with the miserie of Secular people that loue this world. For though they moyle themselues neuer so much, and put themselues to a great deale of trouble and incommoditie for the world, the fruit of al this labour perisheth heer in earth; because when they must leaue the world, their works doe not follow them; and they shal be forced, with the slouthful man in the Prouerbs, that would not till his ground, to beg in sommer, when others feed vpon the labours of their hands.

Mat. 6. 19.

Prou. 20. 4.

11. *S. Bernard* reprehends this follie of Secular people, and accounts them little better then beasts, thinking only of the present, and taking no thought for what is to come, as if they had neither reason nor vnderstanding, but sense only as beasts. For writing to *Gualterus*, who was a yong man of a good wit, and wel grounded in matter of learning, he doth vrge him very much vpon this verie point, to leaue the world, and enter into Religion, being sorie he should waste so great talents in so vnprofitable a course, as he calleth it; and with such rare guifts, not serue the Authour of them, but spend them in transitorie things. To which purpose he goeth-on in this manner: Looke what you wil answer at the terrible tribunal-seate of God, for receauing your soule in vayne, and such a soule as yours is, if so be, you be found to haue done no more with your immortal and reasonable spirit and soule, then a beast doth with his; the spirit of a beast liuing no longer then it giueth life to the bodie, and at the same moment of time, in which it ceaseth to giue life, it ceaseth also to liue, and be. What can you imagin that you may worthily deserue, if being made as you are, to the image of your Maker, you maintayne not the dignitie

S. Bernard ep. 104.

of

of so great a Maiestie within yourself; but being a man placed in honour, doe forte yourself with beasts, and become like to them, spending your endeauours in no spiritual and eternal things, but contenting yourself with corporal and temporal goods, as the spirit of a beast, which as it receaueth beginning from the bodie, so it endeth with it? Your eare is deaf to that Euangelical counsel: *Worke not the food, which perisheth, but which remayneth to life euerlasting.* But it is written, that *none ascendeth to the mountain of our Lord, but he that hath not receaued his soule in vayne*; nor he neither, vnlesse he be *harmelesse of his hands, and cleane of hart.* Consider therefore what iniquitie may deserue, if vnprofitablenes alone be sufficient to damne a man: certainly the thorne and the bramble cannot think themselues safe, when the axe shal lye at the foot of the vnfruitful tree. He that threatneth the barren tree, wil not spare the bush that pricketh; woe therefore is to him, & woe againe, of whom it shal be sayd: *I haue tarried that it should bring sweet grapes, and it hath brought forth wild.* Thus spake *S. Bernard*; whose sharp censure may in reason terrifie al Secular people, in regard of the danger and the shame, that in works they become not beasts; and greatly encourage al Religious, and confirme them in their holie purpose and resolution.

Io. 6. 27.

Ps. 23. 3.

Esay. 5. 4.

The twelfth fruit of Religion: Direction of Superiours.

CHAP. XXIV.

IT followeth that we speake of another great commoditie which is in Religion, arising from the care and gouerment of spiritual Superiours; a benefit containing manie great benefits in it. And first we must consider, that the way of vertue being ful of darknes and obscuritie, nothing can be more needful then a good guide and light, that we stray not out of it. For if neither the Law, nor Philosophie, nor so much as anie one handicraft or Mechanical art can be learned without a teacher, though they be but natural sciences, inuented and perfected by men, out of their natural capacitie and vnderstanding of them; in this holie exercise, which is aboue nature, and continually most stiffly opposed by manie enemies, we must needs lye open to infinit errours, vnlesse we take a guide to conduct vs, and we shal neuer be able otherwise to goe-through with it. To which purpose *S. Hierome* speaketh home, saying: No art is learned without a maister. Brute beasts and wild heards follow their guide; among bees there is a chief; cranes follow one, as letters in a row; there is one Soueraigne, one Iudge in a countrie; One Bishop in a Church, one Arch-priest; and the whole order of the Church dependeth of the Rectours therof; one Admiral at sea; one maister in a house; and in a great armie, one man must giue the signe of the battaile; and that I may not be tedious in reckoning-vp euerie thing, my intent is this, to shew thee by these examples, that thou must not be left to thine

A guide & directour needful in al things.

S. Hierome Ep 4.

» owne diſpoſe, but liue in a Monaſterie vnder the care of one Father, and in » companie of manie.

S. Gregorie Nyſſen de Virg. c. 25.

2. *S. Gregorie Nyſſen* diſcourſeth thus: Though there be manie things written for direction of a ſpiritual life, yet written precepts moue not ſo much by farre, as thoſe that are deliuered by word of mouth and example; both which in Religion are frequent, it being (as he tearmeth it) the ſhop of vertue, in which this ſpiritual life, of which we treate, is ſcowred from al droſſe and ordure, and brought to great perfection of innocencie. And as a man, that deſires to learne a ſtrange language, ſhal neuer come to anie perfection in it, vnleſſe he learne of thoſe that are skilful in the tongue; ſo (ſayth he) we ſhal neuer compaſſe the intent of this life, vnleſſe we take a guide, but runne great hazard in attempting at our owne peril the trial of things vnknowne vnto vs. For as Phyſick was firſt inuented by long practiſe of ſome particular men, and yet now it were an abſurd & fooliſh thing to goe to trie the force and qualitie of al medicines firſt, before we reſolue to make vſe of anie of thē; for we ought rather truſt vpon thoſe, that are already knowne and approued by others; ſo he that wil follow his owne head in the ſtudie of vertue, muſt needs runne into manie errours and inconueniences; on the other ſide, if we follow the aduiſe and counſel of others, and receaue light from them, we ſhal finde much eaſe; as we ſee by one lamp, we light manie; for in like manner grauitie and ſanctitie is deriued from one to manie, that are in wil and practiſe linked to that one. Thus farre *S. Gregorie Nyſſen.*

Climacus grad. 25.

3. *Climacus* is bold to ſay, that as a ſhip, that hath a skilful pilot, is eaſily brought ſafe into the hauen; ſo a ſoule that hath made choice of a good Paſ- » tour, wil eaſily reach the hauen of heauenlie glorie, though of itſelf it be rude » and ignorant, or alſo ouer-laden with ſinne and euil cuſtome; And contrarie- » wiſe, ſayth he, as one that traueleth without a guide, doth often miſſe his way, » though he may be in other reſpects a wiſe man; ſo he that wil needs follow his » owne wil and iudgement in this ſpiritual way, though he haue alone al the » wiſedome that euer was, wil eaſily notwithſtanding bring his ſoule to vtter » deſtruction.

S. Ber. ſ. 77. in Cant.

4. *S. Bernard*, a man expert in ſpiritual things, ſayth thus: How manie haue been found to haue ſtrayed moſt dangerouſly from the right path, by » meanes that they haue been ignorant of the wiles of the Diuel & of his tricks? » Hence they that began with ſpirit, haue ended with fleſh, moſt ſhame- » fully lead away, and fallen moſt damnably. He that is loth to giue his hand to » his directour, doth giue it to his ſeductour; and he that leaueth ſheepe at paſ- » ture without a watch, is Paſtour not of ſheepe, but of wolues. Wherefore if the danger of them that wil be their owne guides, be ſo euidently great; the ſecuritie of a Religious courſe muſt needs be as great, in regard we haue ſo manie to giue vs light in darknes, and to inſtruct our ignorance with moſt holeſome precepts.

Victorie ouer temptations, an effect of direction.

5. An other great commoditie, which we reape by direction of Superiours, is victorie ouer the temptations and moleſtations of the Diuel. For whereas ſometimes they aſſault vs openly, ſometimes they ſteale cloſely vpon vs, and ſeeke to vndermine vs, and we need great ſtrength and courage to reſiſt the former, and wiſedome and art to ouercome the latter; the aſſiſtance and con-

conduct of Superiours furnisheth vs abundantly with both these weapons. This benefit *Cassian* doth often speake of, and often inculcate it; but particularly in a certain Exhortation, where he bringeth Abbot *Ioseph* speaking thus: Satan transfigureth himself into an Angel of light, to the end he may fraudulently thrust vpon vs the dark and foggye mist of sense, in steed of the true light of knowledge; which suggestions of his, vnlesse falling into a meeke and humble hart they be reserued for the discussion of some sober-harted Brother, or approued Seniour, and being by their discretion diligently sifted, be either reiected, or entertayned by vs, without al doubt we shal be brought to a most mischeeuous end, worshipping in our thoughts the Angel of darknes, in steed of the Angel of light; which mischief it is impossible for anie man to auoyd, that trusteth to his owne iudgement. *Cassian. Coll. 6. c. 12.*

6. And this, which *Cassian* sayth, is generally deliuered by al Authours that treate of spiritual matters; wherefore it is most certain that there is no better defence against the continual, hot, & dangerous impugnations of the Diuel, then to choose some bodie, who may be vnto vs a Father and a gouernour, to whose bosome we may betake ourselues, and vnder whose wing we may find protection, like chickens vnder a hen, when the kite houereth ouer them; daylie experience teaching vs, that diuers most grieuous temptations, which could not be put out of our minds by anie industrie or paynes which we tooke, haue been ouercome, and vtterly blotted out by communication once had with a Superiour. And (that which doth more highly commend the efficacie of this medicine) it is not their counsel or exhortation only, which freeth vs, but most commonly the verie reuealing of the disease vnto them, & laying it before their eyes; a farre better and more easeful cure, then anie corporal medicine can bring to our bodie; where when we haue opened our grief to the Physician, much labour & art is required before we can be cured; but in the diseases of the mind, it is a constant course, as *Cassian* sayth in an other place, that euil thoughts dye so soone as they are layd open; and before the remedie be applied to the disease, the wicked serpent runneth away ful of confusion and shame, as it were drawne out of his dark denne vnder ground, into the open ayre, by vertue of Confession. And he confirmeth it by a memorable example of the Abbot *Serapion*; who, he sayth, was wont to tel of himself, that when he was a yong man, yealding to gluttonous intemperance, he had got a custome to eate a loaf of bread priuatly in a corner; and often bewayling, and yet dayly falling into the same offence, at last being touched with remorse of conscience, he stepped out into the middle of the roome where diuers of the ancient Fathers were met, and before them al confessed this his fault. His maister, being a discreet spiritual man, presently bad him be of good courage, because by this resolute confession he had euidently giuen his aduersarie the foyle, who before had the better of him by meanes of his silence. These words were scarce spoken, when behold as it were a flame of brimstone issued out of the yong man's bosome, where he was wont to hide the loaf, & filled the roome with such a stench, that a bodie could hardly abide in it, euerie one vnderstanding thereby, that the Diuel was beaten out of the field; and *Serapion* did afterwards often auerre, that from that verie moment he neuer felt in al his life-time the least touch of anie such itching desire. *Cassian. Coll. 1. c. 16.* *Serapion* deliuered from the temptation of gluttonie by opening it to his Superiours.

Direction necessarie at al times.

7. And thus much of temptations, the ouercoming wherof is a mayne point of our saluation. But it is not the time of temptation only wherin we stād in need of help from Superiours, but al other times; for we carrie alwayes about vs the common infirmitie of mankind, in which we were conceaued and borne; & it followeth vs til our dying-day, when this corruptible bodie shal be clad with incorruption. Through this weaknes so inclinable to euil, we often fayle, euen before we can wel think of it. Oftentimes a kind of lazines creeps vpon vs, and so benummes vs, that we haue no list in a manner but to sleepe; wherefore it doth much importe vs to haue such Remembrancers and counsellours as know vs to a hayre, and wil without flatterie shew vs what we are, and sometimes with holesome counsel, sometimes also with reprehension, put life into vs; they that haue not this help, must needs fal into manie errours, through want of knowledge of themselues, and of the things they goe about. *S. Basil* speaking of the commoditie which Religion affordeth in this kind, sayth: It is most certain that it is one of the hardest things that can be, to know, and cure onesself, because naturally euerie one doth loue himself; and in regard he is apt to fauour himself, he easily mistakes the truth; but it is easie to be knowne and cured by another, because self-loue doth not hinder him, that is to cure another, from discouering the truth. From whence *S. Basil* inferres, that Superiours in Religion may easily find-out the humours and dispositions of euerie bodie, and apply conuenient remedies to euerie one.

S. *Basil. Consti. Monast. c. 21.*

Direction necessarie for those that are perfect.

8. And let no man think, that beginners only, and such as are imperfect and slack in the loue of God, stand in need of gouernment; for it is equally necessarie for those that are feruent and perfect; vnlesse a bodie wil think, that a ship at sea needs a Pilot only in rough weather, and not when it sayles with a prosperous gale; rather prosperous winds, if they be strong, are the more dangerous; it may meet with rocks and shelues; and though it doe not, the gale itself may be so strong, as to sinck it; besides there must be some bodie to rule the sterne; otherwise the ship may flote hither & thither vpon the mayne, and neuer come to hauen. And as a horse is in greatest danger of taking harme, when he runnes his heates, vnlesse he haue one that knowes how to ride him: so these spiritual feruours are of their owne nature headlong and rash, and breed manie inconueniences, if they be not tempered by the iudgement and discretion of others. *S. Bernard* thinks that the Apostle did harp vpon this point, when he required, that our *seruice should be reasonable*; because zeale is easily carried away by the spirit of errour, if we take not with vs the light of knowledge. Neither hath our subtil Enemie a more forcible engine to lift Charitie out of our hart, then if he can make vs walk vndiscreetly in it, and not according to reason. *S. Hierome* also findeth the same commoditie in a Religious vocation; for thus he writeth to Rusticus: I like wel, that thou liue in companie with holie men, and be not thine owne teacher, nor trauel in a way without a guide, where thou neuer wentst before; least coming to a turning, thou goe astray, or goe farther, or not so farre as thou needest, or runne til thou be wearie, or lag til thou fal asleepe.

Rom. 12. 1.

S. *Bernard Ser. 19. in Cāt.*

S. *Hierome.*

9. Finally, in al this busines that which most importeth, is, that this is the course which God doth perpetually and constantly hold with al. For it is in his

in his power, for to giue vs light immediatly by himself, or by his holie Angels; but he hath ordayned, that men should be taught and instructed by other men, either because he would linck them the faster togeather in the bonds of Charitie, as members of the same bodie, or exercise them in humilitie, by subiection to one an other. *Cassian* to this purpose bringeth the example of *Samuel*, whom God would not instruct by himself, when he was yong, but suffered him to haue recourse the second time to old *Heli*; and intending to bring him to the speech with himself, made him notwithstanding take instructions from another; who though elder in yeares, was inferiour vnto him in sanctitie. When the Angel appeared to *Cornelius* the Centurion, could he not al vnder one haue reuealed to him al the mysteries of our Faith? an easier and a shorter way for them both; yet he sends him to *Peter*, saying: *Cal for Simon; he shal tel thee, what thou oughtest to doe.* That which we reade in the same Acts of *S. Paul*, is yet more strange. For Christ our Lord hauing done him so much honour, as not to send an Angel to inuite him, but himself in person to speake vnto him from heauen, and vouchsafed him his presence, when he was yet a blasphemer and a persecutour, though he could in a moment of time haue endued him with al heauenlie knowledge from aboue, yet he sent him to *Ananias* almost with the same arrant which *Cornelius* had before: *Rise, and go into the Cittie, and it shal be told thee, what thou oughtest to doe.* Which *S. Bernard* doth wonderfully admire; and speaking to Religious people he sayth, that Religiō is the cittie to which they are sent. Thus he speaketh: O wisdome, in verie deed disposing al things sweetely! Thou sendest the man, to whom thyself dost speake, to be taught thy wil by an other man, to commend the benefit of a sociable life; and that being taught by man, he may learne to help other men, according to the grace which he hath receaued. *Go into the Cittie*; You see, my Brethren, that it was not without the prouidence of God, that you entred this Cittie of the Lord of Vertues, therin to learne the wil of God. *S. Augustin* writeth to the same purpose, and bringeth the same examples of *Cornelius*, & *S. Paul*; adding farther in these words: Al might haue been performed by the Angel, but the nature of man would haue seemed to haue been neglected, if God had not chosen man to minister his word to other men. Besides, Charitie, which bindeth men togeather in the bonds of loue, would not haue that meanes of vnitie and coniunction of minds, if men did not learne of other men. From al which examples and reasons we must necessarily conclude, that no man is so wise, as he may safely relye vpon his owne wisdome; no man so holie, as it may be thought, that God wil illuminate him by himself, but by other men; the sweetnes of the Diuine prouidence requiring it, as I haue touched in an other place; and farther, that either we must not giue ourselues to the studie of vertue (which is notwithstanding so necessarie for al) nor bestow our time and care in spiritual exercises, or we must take some Maister and gouernour to direct vs therin, wherof Religion affordeth best commoditie, by meanes of those *whom God hath placed ouer his Familie, to giue them measure of corne in due season*; in regard they doe not only point vs out the way with their finger,

Direction the vsual meanes by which God doth gouerne vs.

Cassian. Coll. 2. c. 14.

Act. 10. 6.

Act 9. 7.

S *Bernard s. de Conu. S. Paul.*

S. *Aug. Prolo. de Doctr. Christian.*

Luc. 12. 42. The fatherlie loue of Superiours towards their subiects.

but they walk along with vs, and leade vs on our way, and sometimes carrie vs, yea they often carrie vs on by comfort, counsel, admonition, & exhortation: perswading themselues, as the truth is, that they haue not vassals to gouerne, but their fellow-seruants and brethren, and that al are the sonnes of God, committed to their charge and trust by God himself, and consequently that they owe them not only loue, but honour and seruice; insomuch that no nurse can be more careful of her nurseling, nor no mother of her onlie child, then they are of those whom God hath commended vnto them with so much loue and affection, continually instructing, and teaching, and directing them, how they may rid themselues of sinne and imperfection, purchase vertue, and withstand al the assaults of the Diuel; they leade them along by the hand, they carrie them in their armes through al their exercises, and bring them vp by litle and lide to al perfection, safely, without danger of erring, and in a most sweet and easie manner.

God directeth vs by Superiours euen in ordinarie and daylie occasions.

10 The last commoditie in this kind, is, that besides the exercises of vertue and perfection, al other occurrences of our life and actions are likewise guided by direction of Superiours, or rather by God in them. Manie doubtful passages certainly do happen in this life, as when there is question, where we shal fixe our dwelling, what we shal take to doe, in what kind of busines we shal employ our time, and after what manner; in these things we meete with manie difficulties, and are subiect to manie errours; Howsoeuer, can we desire it should be better with vs then if God be our guide in them? for so long as he guides vs, we cannot go amisse. Now I haue proued before, that whatsoeuer our Superiours ordayne of vs, is the wil and appointment of God himself, so long as they order not anie thing expresly contrarie to his Diuine Law, which God forbid they should. For what skilleth it, sayth *S. Bernard*, whether God declare his pleasure vnto vs by himself, or by his ministers, either men or Angels? You wil say, that men may be easily mistaken in manie doubtful occurrences, concerning the wil of God. But what is that to thee, that art not guiltie therof? specially the Scripture teaching thee, that *the lips of the Priest keepe knowledge, and they shal require the law from his mouth, because he is the Angel of the Lord of hoasts.* Finally whom should we aske what God determines of vs, but him to whom the dispensation of the Mysteries of God is committed? Therefore we must heare him as God, whom we haue in place of God, in al such things, as are not apparently contrarie to God. Thus sayth *S. Bernard.* Wherefore, if it be profit and commoditie which we seeke, what can be more profitable or commodious in this life, then to haue God for gouernour of al our actions, and be ruled, not by our owne iudgement, but by his wisdome, and succoured by his ayde and assistance?

S. Bernard de præc. & disp.

Malach. 2.

THE

The thirteenth fruit: written Rules.

CHAP. XXV.

NExt to the liuelie voice of Superiours, is the written word of the Rules, as it were the bones and sinewes of Religion, without which it is impossible it should subsist; and as by the counsel & direction of Superiours we reape al the commodities, of which I haue lately spoken, so by the Rules we receaue no lesse benefit. First, by that general reason, which, as *Aristotle* writeth, is found in euerie Law; to wit, that they are without passion and particular affectiõs, and speake to al alike, neuer varying from themselues, neither for loue nor hatred. Whervpon he concludeth, that where the Law takes place, there God doth gouerne, who is neither subiect to passion, nor euer changed. Besides, the Rules haue somewhat more then Superiours and gouernours; because al gouernours must follow the intention of the Law, and rule themselues by it, to gouerne wel. Wherefore the same Philosopher sayth, that a good Common-wealth ought to be so ordered, that the Law be stil in force, & gouerne in a manner alone by itself; & that the Prince and Magistrates are only ministers and guardians of the Law; yet so, as they haue power and authoritie to interpret and supply the Law, if in that general fashion of speech, which it vseth, there be anie thing wanting or doubtful; which forme of best gouernment doth most certainly flourish in Religion.

Aristotle. 1. Pol. 11.

Where Law takes place, God gouernes.

2. Moreouer, in setting downe lawes, people take more deliberation and aduise, then when they deliuer a thing by word of mouth; and the Law itself speakes not to one man alone, nor rests vpon one man's approbation, but speakes to the whole communitie, and is receaued by them al; and consequently it carries great authoritie with it, & people beare it great reuerence; because no man is so impudent, as to preferre his owne priuate opinion before the iudgement of so manie others.

The commendation of Rule & Law.

3. Againe, Law doth in a manner compel vs to liue vprightly, which is another great benefit of it; so that that, which *Aristotle* writeth of lawes in an other place, is very true, that Law is so necessarie, that men cannot liue honestly and vprightly without it. His reason is this, because Vertue (sayth he) is hard and difficult, neither groweth it with vs, nor is in-bred in our nature, but must be purchased by labour and industrie, and with the sweat of our browes; and therefore, because men for the most part are loath to take paynes, and care not for the profit that must cost them so deare; we must haue somthing that may egg vs forwards, and in a manner constrayne vs, which constraynt is put vpon vs by Law; and yet we haue this solace by it, that whereas we began to liue orderly vpon a kind of necessitie, custome & practise and a kind of taste of the sweetnes, which is in Vertue, doth make vs loue it, and euer after voluntarily to embrace it.

Aristotle. 10. Eth. 1. vlt.

4. *Plato* doth iumpe in opinion with *Aristotle*, affirming that there must of necessitie be lawes among men, that they may liue according to law; because

Plato. Eal. 9 de legibus

no man by the ſtrength of his owne wit, can know ſufficiently, what is fitting in al reſpects for man; or if he come to know and conceaue it, he hath not power or wil, alwayes to put it in execution. Wherefore no man can doubt but Religion is the moſt holeſome courſe a man can take, and the moſt effectual to aduance vs in ſpirit, in regard it puts a kind of neceſſitie vpon vs to liue wel, and in time makes this neceſſitie voluntarie; wherof S. *Hierome* writeth to *Ruſticus* in theſe words: When thou art in the Monaſterie, thou wilt not be permitted to doe this; but growing to a cuſtome, by litle and litle thou wilt begin to loue that, to which at firſt thou wert compelled, and thy paynes wil be delightful to thee, and forgetting that which is paſt, thou wilt ſearch after that which is before thee.

S. Hierom. Ep. 4.

5. Two things therefore are performed by the Rules & Inſtitute of Religion: They teach vs what we ought to doe, and how we are to order our life; and they require performance of what they teach. For they carrie ſuch an authoritie, or rather maieſtie, with them, that they that are ſubiect vnto them, cannot but obey them, nor goe a hayres breadth from them; & they are written in that particular manner, that they giue vs direction in al things, inward & outward, concerning our bodie and our ſoule, for priuate and publick occaſions, at home & abroad; and may be likened to the Aphoriſmes, which Phyſicians write for preſeruation of health; or as if a man in a long iournie, when the wayes are hard to hit, ſhould carrie a mappe with him, or a regiſter of the places, by which he is to trauel. For as ſuch Aphoriſmes doe help vs for our health, and ſuch a regiſter or mappe would help vs vpon our iournie, the one to preuent ſicknes, the other that we goe not out of our way: So it is incredible how much this methode and rule which we find in Religion, doth preſerue vs from falling into farre greater errours and ſicknes; beholding in it, as in a looking-glaſſe, how we are to order and compoſe ourſelues, and what we are to put off and auoyde, and what againe to make choice of and embrace; ſo that if we truly loue our owne benefit, we ſhal neuer need to feare, leaſt we be ouer-charged with too manie rules. To which purpoſe there is a wittie ſaying reported of *Solon*, who was one of the Seauen wiſe men. While he was making lawes for the people of Athens, *Anacharſis* a Philoſopher and friend of his came in, and finding what he was writing, laughed at him, ſaying, that lawes were like cob-webs, which take litle flies, but are eaſily broken by the bigger ſort of vermin. *Solon* anſwered, that as bargains and couenants are beſt kept, when they are beneficial for both parties, becauſe neither part deſires they ſhould be voyd; ſo he was making ſuch lawes, as were better for euerie bodie to keepe them, then to breake them. Which is farre truer in the Rules and orders of holie Religion; for they ayme at nothing but the euerlaſting good of al, and of euerie particular; and conſequently euerie one muſt needs loue and tender them, as much as he loues and tenders his owne eternal welfare; ſpecially ſeing not only the greater Rules, and ſuch as concerne the whole cõmunitie, or the eſſence and ſubſtance of Religion, are thus profitable, but the leſſer alſo, if anie of them can be called litle, conducing ſo much as they doe to eternal ſaluation; yet thoſe which in a vulgar eye are eſteemed litle, haue no ſmal profit in them. For as a man may perhaps think, that ſo manie leaues are not neceſſarie in a vine, or other tree that beares fruit, & yet they are very needful;

Our Rule a looking-glaſſe.

Solon.

The benefit of ſmaller Rules.

either in regard they are an ornament to the tree, or rather becauſe they doe much preſerue the fruit therof: ſo in this abundance of ſpiritual fruits, by which our ſoules health is maintayned, there be manie litle things in ſhew, & yet our ſoule is preſerued by them, and brought to perfection.

6. But the chief benefit which we reape by our Rules, is that which I ſayd before belonged alſo to the direction of Superiours, to wit, that they are the verie wil and direction of God. And to the end no man may doubt therof, you muſt vnderſtand, that this propertie is not peculiar to the Rules of Religion, but extends itſelf to al prophane lawes, enacted by Prince or People, ſo they be iuſt and reaſonable. So al Diuines, and particularly *S. Thomas*, the head of Diuines, doth deliuer; to wit, that euerie law, ſo it be (as I ſayd) iuſt and reaſonable, is nothing els but a branch, or parcel of the Eternal Law, which is in God; and this two manner of wayes: by participation of power and authoritie, from which al lawes muſt proceede; wherof *S. Paul* ſpeaketh when he ſayth: *Al power is from God*; Secondly, by reaſon that whatſoeuer is ordayned by a lawful Superiour, conſorteth with that which from al eternitie was decreed in the intent of God. For it is certain, that God doth gouerne al things, and direct them euerie one to their ſeueral ends; & moreouer that he hath in his mind & intention a certain comprehenſion, how he meanes to gouerne them, & conſequently muſt needs communicate this his intention with whom he doth employ as miniſters to execute his gouernment, ſo much as is neceſſarie for euerie one; to the end, that by their decrees & commands, his wil alſo & decrees, which lay hid in his mind & intention, may be made knowne and manifeſt. This is common to al Law-makers, but hath force chiefly in Religion, becauſe al things are wel ordered in it; neither is there anie reaſon, why it ſhould be otherwiſe, in regard neither wealth, nor rich preferments, nor anie thing elſe doth prouoke ambition, which in Common-wealths is wont to be the corruption of the lawes.

Rule, the written wil of God.

S. *Thomas.* 1.2. q. 93. a. 3.

Rom. 13.

7. Theſe be grounds of reaſon for this point; but God moreouer hath oft declared by miracle, that he is the authour of euerie Religious Inſtitute; as when we reade, that an Angel brought the whole Rule readie written to *S. Pachomius*, as it was to be obſerued by him & his Brethren; wherin euerie particular thing was expreſſed, what apparrel they ſhould weare, what offices there ſhould be among them, how they ſhould gouerne themſelues in their diet and lodging.

God the Authour of euerie Religious Inſtitute.

S. *Pachomius.*

8. That which we reade of *S. Francis*, is neerer our times, whom God did encourage to frame his Rule by this Viſion. He ſeemed to ſee himſelf & his Brethren in great diſtreſſe for want of ſuſtenāce; & that he had nothing to refreſh them withal, but a great manie crummes of bread, which, in regard they were very ſmal, he feared would moulter away betwixt his fingers, while he were diſtributing thē. Being in this thought, he heard a voice bidding him make one hoſte or wafer of al thoſe crummes togeather; & reaching it to his Brethren, he perceaued, that they that did refuſe & cōtemne it, were preſently couered with an vglie leproſie. The next night one declared vnto him what this Viſiō meāt, to wit, that the crummes were the Euāgelical Counſels; the hoſte the Rule he was about; the leproſie, malice. Afterwards retiring himſelf, as an other *Moyſes*, for 40. dayes, to a certain mount, to draw this Rule, diuers of his Order coming

S. *Francis.*

The particular direction he had in framing his Rule.

vnto him made their complaint, that they feared his Rule would be too ſtrict; and behold a voice from heauen ſpake thrice in this manner: *Francis*, nothing „ is thine in this Rule; it is wholy mine; and it is my wil to haue it intirely „ kept, as the letter foundeth; I know what men are able to beare, and what „ help and aſſiſtance I intend to beſtow vpon them. Finally hauing finiſhed his Rule, he brought it to the Pope, where againe there was much difficultie made, touching that new kind of rigid and ſtrict pouertie; but *S. Francis* ſtil moſt conſtantly and religiouſly affirmed, that there was not in it one word of his owne, but euerie thing as Chriſt our Lord himſelf had indited and deliuered it.

9. And it is reaſon to think, that as *S. Francis* penned his Rule by inſtinct & inſpiration of God, and according to his Diuine intent; ſo al other Founders of Religious Orders haue in their particular Inſtitutes been lead the ſame way, as *S. Baſil*, *S. Auguſtin*, *S. Benedict*, and others. For the thing is the ſame, and the light and other heauenlie guifts, which they had, were giuen them in regard of the Religions which they founded, and not giuen to the Religious in regard of them. Thus much I can teſtifie of our Father & Founder *S. Ignatius*, that in a note-booke, which I haue ſeen, written with his owne hand, it was found recorded, that when he was penning the Conſtitutions, he hung manie dayes doubtful in one point, for manie difficulties which did occurre concerning it. And in that Booke he noted day by day, the lights, rapts, & viſions which had hapned vnto him, of our B. Ladie, the B. Trinitie, and others. Whence we may conclude, that not that point alone, of which we find this written, but al the reſt of the Conſtitutions were penned by Diuine inſtinct, and not by humane wit & inuention; and the ſame we vnderſtand of al other Religions with ſo much the greater reaſon, by how much ours is inferiour vnto them in worth and ſanctitie.

S. Ignatius.

S. Greg. 2. dial. c. 37.

10. *S. Gregorie* writeth, that the ſame day *S. Benedict* dyed, two of his Monks did ſeeme to ſee a large and ſtrayt way, ſtrowed with mens garments, and ful of lights; and an ancient man ſtood by, ſaying: This is the way by which the beloued of our Lord, *Benedict*, aſcended to heauen. *S. Bernard* interpreteth that this way is no other, but the Rule which he left written; by obſeruance whereof, as himſelf went to heauen, ſo might others doe, that would follow it.

S. Bernard. hom. Ecce nos.

For it can no wayes be doubted, *ſayth he*, but that this manner of conuerſation is altogeather holie, & ordered rather by diuine inſpiration and inſtinct, then „ by human prudence and inuention, whereby *S. Benedict* came to ſo great „ grace of ſanctitie in this life, and ſo much glorious happines after his departure. And this which *S. Bernard* ſpeaketh of that Rule, euerie Religious perſon ought to believe and pronounce of his; and if he walk the way it leades him, he ſhal without fayle (in regard of the great light which is in it) & with continual pleaſure and delight, arriue at his heauenlie Countrey, which is ful of al delight and pleaſure.

THE

The fourteenth fruit: Good example.

CHAP. XXVI.

THere is no man but finds by experience the force, which Example hath to incline vs to vertue, or to vice; insomuch that the Holie-Ghost in the Prouerbs writeth, that *he that walketh with a wise man, shal be wise; a friend of fooles, shal be made like vnto them.* Religion therefore must needs be in this respect also wonderfully beneficial; barring, as it doth, euil example, wherof a worldlie life is so very ful; and furnishing such store of good examples, which are worthily esteemed one of the greatest incitements to vertue, that a Soule can haue, that desireth heauenlie perfection. *S. Antonie* the *Great* is witnes heerof; of whom *S. Athanasius* (a special good authour) writeth, that he chose of purpose, rather to liue in companie of others, then to leade a solitarie life, that he might haue occasion to draw some good thing out of euerie one of those, with whom he liued, and expresse in himself al their prerogatiues, being as it were watered from the spouts of vertue, deriued from euerie one of them; which as he practised, so he alwayes wished others to doe the like. And *Cassian* doth relate it of him more at large in these words: It is an ancient and wonderful good saying of *S. Antonie*, that a Monk that hath chosen to liue in a Monasterie with others, and aymeth at the heighth of great Perfection, must not think to learne al kind of vertue of one man. For one man is decked with the flower of knowledge, another more strongly prouided of the vertue of discretion, another is grounded in constant patience, another excelleth in humilitie, another in continencie, another hath a special grace in simplicitie; one is renowned for magnanimitie, another for charitie and compassion; one for watching, another for silence, another for labour and paynes-taking; and therefore a Monk must, like a prouident bee, gather the spiritual honie which he desires, from the partie, in whom he sees that vertue most naturally grow, & hiue it vp carefully in his breast. Thus speakes *Cassian* from *S. Antonie's* mouth.

Pro. 13. 20

The force of example.

S. Antonie.

Cassian. lib. 5. c. 4.

2. Let vs therefore see, how and in what manner Religion doth teach vs al kind of vertue by example of others. First wheras the way of Vertue is dark and obscure, both in regard that Spiritual things are of their owne nature hidden from Sense, and the Prince of darknes doth continually endeauour to obscure them more and more, casting mists before our eyes; Religion doth guide vs by the light of example, in the way of Vertue. Wherefore, as we vse to say, that pictures are the books of vnlearned people, so are examples also books written with great Roman letters, which a bodie cannot choose but see and reade, be he neuer so negligent and careless.

How Religion teacheth vertue by example.

Seneca. ep. 6.

3. *Seneca* in few words pithily expresseth two other fruits of Example. One word of a man's mouth (sayth he) and daylie conuersation, wil benefit thee more, then a whole Oration penned; first, because men belieue their eyes be-

» fore their eares; secondly, becauſe it is a long buſines to goe by precepts;
» example is a ſhorter way, and more effectual. He calles it a ſhorter way, becauſe
Example a short way to learne by. we vnderſtand the nature of vertue, not by definition and diuiſion, and a long circumſtance of words, ſuch as people vſe in Sermons and diſputations, but beholding it in natiue colours acted and repreſented before vs; as if a bodie ſhould goe about to tel vs what kind of man *Cæſar* was, he muſt vſe manie words and tel a long ſtorie, and yet not be able to expreſſe him as he deſerues; but if he ſhew you the man, you inſtantly conceaue more certainly and cleerly, what he was. So when *S. Francis* waſhed the ſick man that was ful of leproſie, and *S. Catherine* of *Siena* did ſo diligently tend a froward il-toungued woman, that was half mad, they gaue farre better and more compendious documents, how we ought to loue our neighbour, and hate ourſelues, and exerciſe humilitie and patience, then if they had vndertaken to declare the ſame with long circumſtance of words.

And more effectual. 4. It is alſo more effectual, as *Seneca* ſayth; firſt, becauſe, whatſoeuer the matter is, when we ſee a thing done by an other, we learne that it is not ſo hard, but we likewiſe may doe the ſame. That which we reade in bookes, or is preached vnto vs, inſtructeth our mind; yet moſt commonly it bringeth with it ſuch a ſhew of hardnes, that they that haue not experienced it, think it harſh & vnpleaſing; and when they ſee it ordinarily practiſed by other men like themſelues, they think otherwiſe of it; as if there ſhould be queſtiō, whether ther be anie paſſage ouer a high hil, there could not be a more certain proofe of it, then to ſhew that manie haue paſſed already, and to ſee them ſtand on the top of it.

Iob. 10. 17. *S. Greg.* 9. *moor. c.* 35. *S. Gregorie* confirmes this doctrine, writing vpon thoſe words of *Iob*: *Thou reneweſt thy witneſſes againſt me.* Theſe witneſſes, as he ſayth, are iuſt men, who giue teſtimonie to the commandments of God, and to the rewards layd-vp for the keepers of them, that, if precepts doe not moue vs, examples may moue vs; and that we may not think anie thing hard in the deſire of righteouſnes, which we behold perfectly performed by others.

5. Now in Religion theſe examples are the more forcible, becauſe they doe not only put vs out of feare of difficulties, but moreouer they doe ſecretly egg vs forward with a burning kind of deſire of vertue, whereof *S. Leo* ſpeaketh in theſe words: Reaſon may be good to exhort, and effectual in perſwading;

S. Leo ſer. de S. Laurent.

» but examples are more forcible, then words; and it is a fuller manner to teach
» by deed, then by ſpeech. Manie haue found this true by experience, encouraged by example of others to come out of the filth of ſinful pleaſure and other vices; of which number were the two Gentlemen of the Emperour *Theodoſius* his Court; of whom *S. Auguſtin* writeth, that falling by chance vpon the Life of *S. Antonie*, & reading it, they firſt began to wonder, & were ſomewhat nettled; but at laſt they grew ſo hot vpon it, that frō thence where they ſtood, both of them forſooke the ſecular courſe they were in, and began a new kind of warfare in the ſeruice of God. Which paſſage *Politianus* relating to *S. Auguſtin*, as he was familiarly talking with him; & with al entring into diſcourſe of the life of *S. Antonie* (whoſe name *S. Auguſtin* had then ſcarce heard of) & of the multitude of Monaſteries that were in *Aegypt*, & declaring at large their manner of life, ful of the ſweet-ſmelling odours of God, as *S. Auguſtin* himſelf ſpeaketh, put ſuch a fire into his breaſt, that he was neuer after quiet in mind, til he

S. Aug. lib. 8. conf. c. 6. Diuers conuerted by Example.

reſolued

reſolued to leaue the world, and betake himſelf to the like heauenlie courſe of life; ſo that the example of *S. Antonie* drew-on the two gentlemen, and their example againe moued *S. Auguſtin*, who hath in like manner drawne infinit numbers after him.

6. The like hath hapned to diuers others, whom it were long to rehearſe; but the example of two of later times is memorable. *Iohn Columbinus* Founder of the Order of *Apoſtolical Clarcks*, was conuerted by reading the Life of *S. Marie* of *Aegypt*; and *Ignatius* Founder of the Societie of IESVS in like manner by reading the liues of the ancient Fathers; and both of them hapning vpon theſe liues by chance rather then ſetting themſelues of purpoſe to pervſe them, were ſo ſuddenly changed, and arriued afterwards to that eminent ſanctitie, which is knowne to the whole world. S. *Iohn Columbinus.* S. *Ignatius.*

7. If therefore al kind of written examples, euen thoſe which make relatiõ of things done in ancient times beyond the memorie of man, be ſo very powerful, much more powerful muſt theſe needs be, which are freſh, & liuelie, & domeſtical, acted dayly before our eyes; for it is euident, that that which we ſee and behold, makes a farre greater impreſſion in vs, then that which we haue by relation of others; in regard our verie ſenſe of ſeing is quicker then our hearing; & a written diſcourſe, let it be neuer ſo eloquent, cannot expreſſe a thing ſo very liuely, with al the circumſtances, wherin the chief effect of motion doth conſiſt. And farther, if they could be of ſuch force in the world, as to cauſe people to forſake the world, that were ſo wedded to it, & intangled in ſo manie bonds, with ſo litle & ſo weake a light, as then they had, & ſo manie things to ſtay them, and coole their reſolutions; ſhal they not be of farre greater force in Religion, where al things are more eaſie, their light clearer, their ſtrength greater to aduance themſelues in the practiſe of Humilitie, Obedience, & other vertues? Without doubt they are ſo, and doe draw people on with vnſpeakable ſweetnes and facilitie; for the impreſſion which example makes, is not harſh and violent, but gentle, delightful, and very natural.

8. Finally it is no ſmal benefit, that by this meanes we come more truly to know ourſelues, & preſerue ourſelues in profound humilitie, liuing in daylie companie with ſuch perſons, as if we compare ourſelues with them, we cannot but diſcouer our owne exceſſiue wants, and their abundant riches. Of which kind we reade in *S. Bernard* a notable preſident of a Lay-Brother, that caſting himſelf at his feete, accuſed himſelf with great confuſion in theſe words: *Woe is to me; becauſe this night I haue marked one Brother, and reckoned in him thirtie vertues, wherof I find not ſo much as one in my ſelf.* How came this profound humilitie (which alone perhaps was more to be eſteemed then the thirtie vertues, which he had marked in an other) into this man's ſoule, but by beholding others; and comparing himſelf with thẽ? Which is the aduiſe of *S. Gregorie* in theſe words: *Whoſoeuer deſires fully to know what he is, muſt behold ſuch perſons as are not like himſelf; and by the beautie of the good, meaſure how deformed he is, in forſaking that which is good. For by them that are ful of good things, he may iuſtly know how much he wants of weight, and by their beautie diſcouer his owne fowlenes, which he ſuffers, but cannot ſee in himſelf. We muſt therefore behold the life of that Iuſt, the we may preciſely vnderſtand our owne; for their behauiour, is a ſampler for vs to imitate; and their life, a liuelie leſſon.* Which document of *S. Gregorie's* cannot be practiſed anie where

Humilitie preſerued by example of others. S. *Bernard ſer. de altitud. & Baſil. Cor.* A memorable example of humilitie. S *Greg. mor. l. 24. c. 6.* S. *Bernard ſ. 54. in cant.*

more commodiously, then in Religion, where there be so manie good men. Let vs therefore see, how *S. Bernard* did practise it, and teach his people to obserue it. Thus he speaketh: I behold one of singular abstinence, another of wonderful patience, another of most profound humilitie and meeknes, another of great pittie and compassion; this man I see with often Extases in contemplation, another beating the heauens with incessant prayer, and others excelling in other vertues; these I behold, al of them feruent, al of them deuout, al of them flowing with heauenlie guifts and graces, in verie deed as so manie spiritual mountaines visited by our Lord. But I, that find nothing of al this in myself, what can I conceaue of myself, but that I am one of the mountaines of *Gelboe*, whom this most merciful Visitour of al the rest doth passe-by in his wrath and indignation? My Children, this thought makes me, that I dare not hold-vp my eyes; it causeth grace, and prepares a soule for the leaps of the Bride-groome. Thus farre *S. Bernard.*

Good exãple a continual spurre to vertue.

9. Which fruit of Religion, is of no smal price and value. For besides that the contempt and hatred of ourselues in comparison of others is the verie flower of humilitie, a flower most acceptable and pretious in the sight of God, it is a continual spurre, vrging vs to labour for those things which we see we want; and to labour so much the more earnestly, because we see plentie in others of that which we want ourselues, wherof ariseth a most honourable and holie emulation among the Brethren of Religion in purchase of vertue; such as we see among fellowes of the same Schoole for learning, among souldiers for the victorie, among racers for the prize. And this eagernes, I dare say, is one of the chiefest meanes to Perfection; for as a man may best see his owne heauines, when he runnes in companie of others, that leaue him a great way behinde; and to be so left, doth egg him on to make more speed; so in this spiritual race we shal hardly find anie thing, that doth more playnly shew and vpbraide vs with our owne tepiditie and slouth, then to see others so feruent, that if we be not as heauie as stones and lead, it alone must needs suffise to spurre vs on. Wherefore it cannot be denyed, but that there is a daylie great benefit coming-in vnto vs by the example of our Brethren, with whom we liue; which suffers vs not to be quiet, but is continually admonishing, and instructing, and egging vs forward. A solitarie life, such as the ancient Anachorets did leade, was certainly ful of vertuous practises; yet because it wanted this benefit of example, *S. Hierome* doth exhort *Rusticus* rather to liue in a Monasterie, in the companie of manie; that, as he speaketh, he may learne humilitie of one, patience of another; one may teach him silence, another meekenes.

S. Hierome Epist. 4.

Theodoret in relig. hist. Publius.

To which purpose *Theodoret*, also an ancient Authour (who liued in time of those Fathers, and had seen manie of them) relateth of a holie man named *Publius*; who being of noble descent, in the degree of a Senatour, borne in a cittie of *Greece* called *Zeugma*, tooke his dwelling vpon a hil not farre from the cittie; and manie resorting to him, at first he built for euerie one of them a seueral cottage; but afterwards, vpon better aduise, he pulled al those cottages downe, & built one house for them al togeather; that liuing vnder one roofe, they might encourage one another in vertue and deuotion. In consequence wherof, he was wont euer after often to exhort them, that they shoud endeauour continually to profit by one another, imitating the meeknes of one, and

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ſtrengthning their owne meeknes by the zeale of an other; and learning watchfulnes of one, they ſhould mutually teach him auſteritie in faſting; finally that among themſelues they ſhould be to each other both maiſter and ſchollar; for taking of another what themſelues wanted, they ſhould, as he ſayd, arriue to great perfection in vertue. Which excellent document he confirmed with this fit Similitude: For as ſeueral trades-men bring al kind of commodities to the market, one ſelles bread, another hearbs, another apparrel, or ſhoes; and no one man can ſufficiently prouide the market of al neceſſaries, but imparting to others that wherof himſelf hath plentie, as bread, or apparrel, receaueth of others what he wanteth, as oyle, wine, ſhoes, and the like: ſo the ſeruants of God among themſelues, ſeing no one man can poſſibly compaſſe al things, muſt meete as it were in one market, and changing one with another the ſeueral commodities and parcels of vertue, receaue of one an other, what they finde they want.

The fifteeneth fruit: Concord and vnitie of Religious men among themſelues.

CHAP. XXVII.

IT is wel knowne, that in al the Law of Chriſt our Sauiour no one precept is more earneſtly or more often commended vnto vs, then the Loue of one another. And as for the meaſure and proportion of this inward coniunction and charitie, how great and faſt he deſired it ſhould be, himſelf euidently ſhewed, when in his laſt ſpeech to his diſciples, as it were in his laſt wil and teſtament, he ſo ardently beſought his Father, that al his Elect *might be one* among themſelues, *as he and his Father was one*. What greater thing could be required, or more ſignificantly expreſſed? ſeing as He and his Father haue one & the ſelf-ſame nature, ſo their wil and intentions muſt needs be one and vndiuided. This concord and vnitie did long flouriſh among Chriſtians, ſpecially in thoſe firſt, and, as we may cal them, golden times, while the precepts of our Lord were yet freſh in their memories, and firie in their harts, and, as we reade in the Acts of the Apoſtles, *the beleeuers had one hart, and one ſoule*; yea al their earthlie ſubſtance and poſſeſſions were one common thing to al and euerie one of them. *Tertullian* (a learned authour) for this reaſon doth not ſtick to ſay, that the whole Euangelical Law doth conſiſt in performing charitable offices towards one another, and recordeth that it was a common thing among the Gentils in his time, to ſay: Behold, what loue is among them; in ſo much that they are readie to dye for one another! Moreouer he ſayth, that the Chriſtians of thoſe times did vſually cal *Brothers*, and were ſo, not in word only, but in verie deed; becauſe al things but their wiues, were comon among them; and none of them had anie thing ſo priuate to himſelf, that he had not rather his Neighbour had it, then himſelf.

The precept of loue.

Iob. 17. 11.

And the practiſe therof.

Act. 4. 32.

Tertullian Apol. c. 3.

2. An example of this mutual charitie, and charitable beneficence and liberalitie towards one another, & of the force and efficacie therof, remaynes

The conuersion of S. Pachomius.

vpon record in the Life of *S. Pachomius*. He, while he was a Heathen, bare armes vnder *Constantine* the *Great*, at which time the armie being almost famished for want of victuals, it came before a certain Cittie, where presently al things they could desire were brought them, with such expression of good wil, care, & sollicitude, that *Pachomius* beholding it, was very much strucken and amazed; and being very inquisitiue, what people they might be that were so readie to doe them that good turn, he was told they were Christians, a people whose profession was to loue euerie bodie, and to be readie to doe them anie seruice. Whervpon presently lifting vp his hands to heauen, & calling God to witnes, he vowed to be of that Religion, though he neuer had heard anie thing of it before. Such was the impression, loue made in him. This Euangelical concord and amitie therefore, a vertue so noble in itself and so acceptable to our Sauiour Christ, in former times so much esteemed, and now in this corrupted Age of ours so much neglected & impayred, as there is scarce anie remaynder of it, a Religious State doth perfectly reuiue & bring to life againe. And it is to be reckoned among the best cõmodities of the State, that it doth so solidly renew and set on foot againe this Christian societie & charitie, laying al things common; which charitie our Sauiour gaue for the mark and Deuise, by which his people should be knowne to be truly his Disciples. But this wil appeare more clearly, if we compare the bonds of this Religious societie, with the bonds of other companies, and consider the great difference that is betwixt them.

The bond of Religiousvnitie streighter then anie other.

3. There be two kind of bonds, whereby men among themselues are bound to one another: One is voluntarie, entred by consent and wil, as among friends, marchants, and souldiers of a companie; the other is natural, as among brethren and others of our kindred. The first kind of societie & bond voluntarily entred, is not certainly to be compared with the bond of Religion; for first it is confined within certain limits and conditions, extending no farther then to the point of trading, or warfare, or familiar conuersation; al things that concerne not these particulars, are priuate to euerie one, the rest of the companie haue nothing to doe with thẽ. But among the seruants of God, nothing is their owne, nothing priuate or particular, nothing different or diuided from the rest, but al manner of businesses & endeauours, and absolutly al things whatsoeuer, are cõmon among them. Besides those other bonds, as they are entred by consent and wil, so by consent and wil they may be taken-in againe, & are vsually taken-in, either because the dispositions of the parties sort not wel togeather, or their fortunes alter, or the times are different, or there ariseth some controuersie about the gayne and commoditie, as not rich enough to content al parties; insomuch that it is very hard to keepe anie such societie or combination long on foot: Religious men remayne bound not only by purpose & firme deliberation, but by Vow; so that they can no more departe from one another, then they can from the seruice of the Diuine Maiestie.

4. But what wonder is it, that Religious charitie should so farre surpasse al voluntarie obligations, seing doubtles it is stronger then anie natural coniunction? Can there be anie more neer togeather then brethren among themselues, who are deriued from one stock, and once lay in one bellie, and seeme to be (as holie scripture speaketh) *the same flesh and the same bone*? yet they seldome agree, difficulties happning betwixt them very often; and in their fashions and proceedings

Gen. 29. 14.

dings they are very different, and you shal hardly find anie that put their stocks in common togeather, or can long maintayne them so. In Religion it is otherwise; for (as I sayd euen now) al things are common; in so much that comparing both the bonds togeather, we may truly say with *S. Augustin*: The brotherhood of Christ is better then brotherhood in bloud; for this is often at variance with itself, the brotherhood of Christ is incessantly peaceable; That with emulation diuideth among themselues things that were common; this impart-eth them with ioy; That often despiseth brethren in companie of others; this often giues friendlie entertaynment to a stranger. S. *Aug. ser. 18. de verb. Apo.*

5. Yea some of the Heathen Philosophers deliuering their opinion in this kind, haue written, that no societie or friendship can be more noble, or more fast, then if good men of like condition enter league and familiaritie togeather. To which purpose a saying of *Antisthenes* is much cõmended, that a iust and vpright man, is more to be valued and loued, then a kinsman; and that the obligations of vertue are stronger, then the obligations of consanguinitie; in regard the dispositions of their mind suite better. Which *S. Ambrose* expresseth more solidly, & also in better tearmes, saying: *I loue you neuer a whit the lesse, whom I haue begotten in the Ghospel, then if I had begot you in marriage; neither is Nature more hot in loue, then Grace; certainly we ought to loue them farre more, with whom we make account we shal be for euer, then those with whom we shal liue only in this world.* *Cic. 1. off.* S. *Ambros. 1. off. c. 7.*

6. *Cassian* in one of his Collations bringeth in the Abbot *Abraham* expressing more at large this wherof we now speake, & preferring by farre the coniunction which is among Religious, before anie coniunction, which nature can enforce. For it is certain, sayth he, that the coniunction, in which either by societie of wedlock, or the knot of consanguinitie, parents & children, & cosen-germans, and man & wife, and other kindred, are knit togeather, is short and brickle; the best and most obedient children, when they come to yeares, are often shut-out from their father's house and possessions; the communication which is betwixt man and wife, may be barred sometimes vpon iust occasions; the loue which should be betwixt brethren, is broken-of by contentious diuision; Only Monks maintayne a perpetual vnitie and coniunction, possessing al things without difference, and esteeming that to be theirs, which is their Brethrens, and that their Brethrens, which anie way belongeth to themselues. Whervnto we may adde, for further proof of the strength of this loue and concord, that, which the same *Cassian* relateth of a speech of Abbot *Ioseph*; where he discourseth thus: To the end concord and vnitie may long endure, al desire of wealth, or other earthlie things must of necessitie be vtterly rooted out; and moreouer, euerie one must barre himself of his owne wil; & be more readie to yeald to another's iudgement, then to stand to his owne. Which if it be true, as certainly it is, we may easily see, that it is very hard for men in the world, to hold manie of them truly & sincerely togeather; & contrariwise, that in Religion the same is very easie, and, I may say, almost necessarie, where voluntarie Pouertie doth cut-of al cause of strife, & voluntarie Obedience al passions of self-wil, & in verie deed al vse therof. Whervpon *S. Chrysostome* sayth wondrous wel, speaking of this benefit of Religion: What maruel is it, that they should al of thẽ vse one kind of habit & diet, seing they haue al of thẽ but one soule, not only by nature (for so al men haue) but by loue and charitie? for how can anie *Cassian Coll. vlt. cap. vlt. & Coll. 1. 6. c. 6.* S. *Iohn Chrysost. Hom. 58. ad pop. Antioch.*

„ man be at variance againſt himſelf? So that in *S. Chriſoſtome's* opinion it is as
„ hard for one Religious man to fal-out with another, as it is for a man to fal-out
„ with himſelf. For as in one and the ſame man, manie members are held in
vnitie by one and the ſame ſoule, ſo in Religion manie men are vnited togea-
ther by one onlie ſoule of Charitie and conſent. It is therefore certainly a
great matter, and ful of great profit and pleaſure, and, if we think wel of it,
half a miracle, that in ſuch diuerſitie of nations, and natures, and age, and
diſpoſitions, the Grace of God ſhould haue ſo much force as to knit togeather
ſo manie companies of Religious people in ſo inward a coniunction of loue &
vnion of minds, as if they had been borne of one mother, and bred-vp with
the ſame milk, there could not be more, nor ſo much loue betwixt them.
S. Baſil. Conſt. mon. c. 19. Which *S. Baſil* doth worthily commend, admiring that men, as he ſpeaketh,
of diuers nations and countries, ſhould ſo grow togeather in one, by perfect
ſimilitude of behauiour and diſcipline, that a man may iuſtly think, that in
„ manie bodies there is but one ſoule, or that they are of one ſoule but ſo manie
„ inſtruments. Which inward coniunction and concord among Religious peo-
ple, though it chiefly concerne the mind, that they be (as the Apoſtle ſpea-
keth) of *the ſame meaning and wil*, it extendeth itſelf to outward things alſo,
and is not a litle ſtrengthned by them. They dwel togeather; their apparrel is
alike; their employments, and their ends, and their meanes be the ſame; and
conſequently for commoditie or incommoditie, proſperitie or aduerſitie, they
fare alike; and that which falles vpon one, falles vpon another; which things
though they be ſmal in themſelues and meane, as al temporal things are, yet
they teſtifie great vnitie among them, and doe alſo greatly preſerue it.

Communication in outward things very profitable. *Philip. 2.*

S. Laurence Iuſtinian. de Obed. c. 28. Plato. dial. 4. de rep.

7. Wherefore *S. Laurence Iuſtinian* extolling this commoning in outward
things, which we find among Religious people, ſayth it is a perfect ſampler
of that which is in Nature. For as the ſuſtenance, which we take by meate and
drink, is equally diuided to al the parts of the bodie, as euerie member or part
hath need, and Nature itſelf, as a diſcreet houſeholder, is iudge and diſtributer
therof, without anie ſtrife or contention among the members, ſo al things
neceſſarie are equally diuided in Religion to the contentment of euerie one.
Wherefore there can not be anie thing in the world more beneficial, or more
delightful to behold, then this perfect vnitie and communication of al things
which is in Religion. And to ſay no more, the verie Heathen Philoſophers
going about to frame in their imagination a Cittie or Common-wealth ſo ab-
ſolutely perfect and compleate in al reſpects, that a man may rather wiſh ſuch
a thing, then euer hope to find it, could not inuent a more excellent, nor more
quainte forme therof, then that of which I haue ſpoken. *Plato*, as we ſee, fra-
med his imaginarie Common-wealth after this mould, wiſhing that, according
to the old Prouerb, *among friends al things might be common*; and accounting it the
greateſt vertue and happines which could be in a cittie, that there be nothing
priuate, neither money, nor houſe, nor poſſeſſions, but euerie thing in cõmon,
euen thoſe things which naturally are ſo proper to priuate perſons, that they
cannot be cõmon; as that our eyes, & eares, & hands ſhould ſee, & heare, & la-
bour for the common, our verie *Dictamens* and opinions ſhould be common, &
euerie one think wel or il, & reioyce or be ſorie for the ſame things that an-
„ other is. If in ſuch a Cittie, ſayth he, or Cõmon-wealth, the Gods or the ſonnes

of the

of the Gods doe chance to dwel togeather, certainly they muſt needs be bleſſed & ful of al ioy and happines. This is *Plato* his diſcourſe; & he addeth farther that there neuer was, neither euer wil be ſuch a Common-wealth vpon earth.

8. How great therefore is the excellencie and happines of a Religious companie, where this is ſo perfectly performed, which *Plato* thought could not poſſibly be compaſſed; or if it were cõpaſſed, he was of opinion that they were Gods, or the ſonnes of the Gods, that liued in that ioy and felicitie? Now though euerie one of vs may better find by his owne experience, then by anie man's relation, that this is ſo perfectly accompliſhed in Religion, it wil not be amiſſe for proofe therof, to bring two ſuch witneſſes, as are without al exception, and expreſſe it beſides in words, which come very neere to thoſe which *Plato* vſeth. *S. Baſil* ſayth thus: In it al things are common, their minds, their wils, their bodies, and al things neceſſarie for meate, drink, & apparrel; They ſerue one God in common, their exerciſes of pietie are in common, their ſaluation, their conflicts, their labours, their rewards and crownes are common; In it manie are one, and one is not alone, but in manie. But *S. Iohn Chryſoſtom* is farre more copious, powring-forth on euerie ſide the golden ſtreames of his eloquence, but chiefly whenſoeuer he hath had occaſion to pleade for Religion, as he doth in his Apologie for Monaſtical life; where hauing reckoned-vp manie incommodities & dangers of a Secular life, at length he ſayth thus: You ſhal find none of theſe euils at al in Monaſteries; but when others are toſſed with the waues and ſurges of the ſea, they alone lying quiet and ſafe in the hauen, behold as it were from heauen the ſhipwrack which others ſuffer. For they haue choſen a heauenlie conuerſation, not inferiour to the Angels. For as among the Angels there is no doubtful change, ſo that ſome of them glorie in proſperitie, and others lament their hard fortune; but al are ioyful and quiet, vniformly reioycing togeather in that heauenlie glorie; the like you ſhal ſee in Monaſteries: No bodie is vpbrayded with pouertie, no bodie is more honoured for his riches; ſo that Mine and Thine (two things which turne al things vpſide-downe) are quite ſhut-out of their doore; al things among them are common, their board, their dwelling, their apparrel, and, which is more to be admired, they are of one and the ſame mind. They are al equally noble and honourable; equally rich, which is to be truly rich; and equally glorious, which is the only true glorie. Their pleaſures, and paſtimes, and delights, and deſires, and hopes, are the ſame. Al things are among them moſt carefully ordered, as it were ballanced by weight and meaſure; there is no vneuen dealing, but exceeding great order, and moderation, and conuenience, and vnſpeakable care of concord & continual matter of ioy. There and no where els you ſhal find, that they doe not only contemne things preſent, and ſhut-out al occaſions of quarrel and debate, and that they are happie in the aſſured hope of eternal life, but alſo that they make account that al things which happen, be they ioyful, be they ſad, be common to euerie one among them; whereby their grief is more eaſily aſſwaged, in regard that euerie one doth endeauour to his power to beare part of the burthen, and they haue infinit occaſions of gladnes; euerie one reioycing, not in his owne alone, but in others behalf.

S. Baſil. Conſt. Mon. c. 9.

S. Iohn. Chryſ. lib. 3.

Compariſon of a Religious life with that of the Angels.

The sixteenth fruit: Mutual assistance in al things.

CHAP. XXVIII.

THE vnitie and concord, wherof I spake in the last Chapter, is certainly a great benefit, and very pleasing to Almightie God, and includeth two other excellent commodities, wherof I shal treate seuerally in the Chapter following. The one, is the mutual help and assistance, which Religious people haue one of another in al things. That manie meete togeather, and ioyne their forces and abilities in one, must needs be exceeding profitable for euerie one in particular, and absolutly for al occasions. For by this meanes (as *Aristotle* wel obserueth) though euerie one by himself be not so good, yet al togeather are better, then anie one among them, be he neuer so good. As (sayth he) a bancket, to the setting-out wherof manie concurre, and lay their purses togeather, is much more sumptuous, then if it be prouided at one man's charges: So euerie one in common hath some measure of vertue & wisdome, which being put in common, doth make one perfect thing; which is also the reason, why manie iudge better of Musick or Poëtrie, then one; because some obserue one thing, others another.

Aristotle 2. Pol. c. 7.

2. This is *Aristotle's* discourse; and it holdeth in his opinion, though euerie one by himself be not perfect; much more then, if the number be of choice persons, and euerie one among them very eminent, or at least endeauour to be so: and consequently Religious people must needs reape in euerie kind great benefit by the communitie in which they liue; which secular people cannot, liuing as they do; euerie one, as I may say, at his owne charges. For as a plank of a ship, if it be taken seuerally by itself, is for smal purpose; but manie put togeather are very seruiceable at sea, to transport commodities, and brooke the waues and billowes. And stones vpon a heap by themselues, serue for litle; but layd handsomly in morter togeather, make a glorious shew of princelie Pallaces and buyldings; and in towers, and castles, and towne-walles, are able to abide the Canon; and seuer them againe, they are but a heap of stones as they were before; So one man alone by himself, either is not for so much, or for no more, then by his owne single strength he is able to performe; but manie togeather fortifye one another, as we see dayly before our eyes in works, that require corporal strength and labour. If one man take vpon him to carrie or draw a great weight, with al his strēgth he is not perhaps able to stirre it; manie togeather goe away smoothly with it; which as it is true absolutly in al things, which are done by concurrence of manie, so I shal shew how it agreeth with our particular case; both in respect of the benefit and perfection of our owne soules, and for whatsoeuer els is to be done for the good and perfection of our Neighbour.

3. And first, as concerning ourselues, we reade in holie Scripture, that *It is better to be two togeather, then one; for they haue the benefit of their societie; if*

one

one fal, he may be ſtayed by another. Woe to him that is alone; becauſe when he is fallen, he hath none to lift him vp. If two ſleepe togeather, they wil cherish one another. How shal one be warme? And if one prevayle, two wil reſiſt him. A triple cord is hardly broken. In which words we may find three commodities expreſſed, without which a ſpiritual life cannot ſubſiſt. For firſt conſidering we are ſo weake, and the place, where we ſtand, ſo very ſlipperie, that we cannot but often fal, is it not a great benefit to haue one alwayes with vs to giue vs his hand, and lift vs vp? Which in the falles which the Soule doth come by, is much more neceſſarie, then when our bodie falles. For in theſe, we may fore-ſee, when and where we are like to fal; but our ſoule is often blinded, and falles in the dark, and lyeth ſtil a great while, thinking not of it, or perhaps thinking that it ſtands wel enough. Beſides when our ſoule once gets a fal, it bruſeth itſelf ſo ſorely, that vnleſſe it haue help from without, it cannot riſe againe; which help comes chiefly from God, but yet by the hands and aſſiſtance of men. And put the caſe, there were a man ſo fortunate, as neuer to fal (which is impoſſible) he is in danger notwithſtanding of a certain ſpiritual coldnes, which eaſily creepes vpon vs, in the dead winter of this world, where we walk in ſo great a diſtance from that Sunne of Iuſtice, which one day wil ſhew his face, and warme vs. To put away this cold, and bring heate into our ſoules, nothing can be better, then, as the Wiſe-man ſpeaketh, that *one cherish another*; and if there be more togeather, the heate muſt needs be the greater. For, as we ſee a peece of great timber wil not burne of itſelf in the fire, but if you put ſome brands ends vnto it, it preſently kindleth; ſo our ſoules, if they be left alone, waxe cold; but in companie of others that be feruent, they are eaſily inflamed, both by counſel and example, wherof I haue already ſpoken. But *how shal one alone be warmed?* as the Wiſe-man ſpeaketh.

Companie beneficial againſt miſchief, which a ſoule may come by.

4. The third commoditie is, that *if one be too ſtrong, two wil reſiſt him*; pointing at the continual ſtrife and combat which we haue (as the Apoſtle ſpeaketh) *againſt the powers and rulers of this darknes*; in which fight it cannot be imagined, how much more ſafe it is to haue companie. For, as *S. Leo* (who is excellent at al hands) ſayth very wel: Though a ſpiritual warrier may come-of valiantly, if he fight alone; it is ſafer and eaſier for him, to fight ſtanding in battail-array openly againſt the enemie; fighting and bringing the battail to an end, not with his owne ſtrength alone, but aſſiſted with troupes of his brethren, vnder command of an inuincible King. For manie togeather fight with leſſe danger, then euerie one can doe by himſelf; neither can a man be eaſily wounded, if oppoſing the buckler of Faith he be defended, not by his owne only, but by others ſtrength; that, as the cauſe is the ſame, the victorie may be common among them. *S. Bernard* ſayth moreouer, that there cannot be a more dangerous thing, then for a man to ſtand to contend alone with the Diuel, whom he cannot ſee, and yet is ſeen by him; & therefore whoſoeuer doth think of ſeruing God, muſt himſelf haue the vertue of Fortitude, and ſeeke beſides to fight in array with others, where (as he ſayth) he hath as manie ſuccours, as companions; and ſuch companions, as may ſay with the Apoſtle: *We are not ignorant of the wiles of the enemie.* For

Eph. 6. 12.

S. Leo ſer. de ieiun. ſept mens.

S. Bernard ſ. 4. de Circumciſ.

» a Congregation, in regard of the ſtrength it hath, is terrible, as a battail wel » ordered; but *woe to him that is alone; becauſe when he is fallen, he hath no bodie to* » *lift him vp.* Thus ſayth *S. Bernard.*

5. Finally the Wiſe-man, beſides the diuine authoritie which his ſpeech doth carrie, doth confirme what he ſayth, by a verie fit example: *A triple cord is hardly broken*; as who ſhould ſay, a cord is made of ſeueral litle threds twiſted togeather; the threds, while they are ſeueral, are ſmal and weake; when they are wouen one within another, they are able to hold a huge weight, and beare a great ſtreſſe: ſo by ourſelues we are weake and feeble, but if we ioyne and agree with others, if we be wel vnited and linked togeather, we ſhal be able to abide, and goe-through with anie thing.

How liuing in common doth conduce for the help of our Neighbour.

6. And thus much of the help which Religious men afford one another, for the ouercoming of the common Enemie, and to encreaſe in vertue and feruour of charitie; The ſame doth extend itſelf alſo to external things, and the benefit of their neighbour, of which I am next to ſpeake; wherin that which *S. Gregorie* writeth in one of his Homilies vpon *Ezechiel*, is much to be conſidered. Almightie God, ſayth he, dealeth with the harts of men, as he dealeth with the climats of the earth. He could haue ſtored euerie countrie with al ſorts of fruit; but if one countrie ſtood not in need of the fruit of another countrie, there would haue been no cõmerce betwixt them; where- » fore to one he hath giuen plentie of wine, to another oyle; vpon one he » hath beſtowed abundance of cattle, fruits of the earth vpon another; that the » one tranſporting that which another hath not, and the other returning » that which the former brought not, the countries themſelues might be » ioyned togeather, by communication of the fruits therof. As therefore the » climats of the earth, ſo the minds of Saints, conferring mutually one vpon » another that, which they haue receaued, doe as it were tranſport their fruits from countrie to countrie, that they may be al vnited togeather in charitie. And this which *S. Gregorie* expreſſeth by example of ſeueral countries, the Apoſtle long before taught vs by the knowne example of a man's bodie; which *S. Gregorie* againe expounding in his Morals ſayth thus: What is holie Church but the bodie of her Soueraigne Head? wherin one is the eye, diſcouering profound myſteries; another is the hand, working good things; another the foot, going about that which is commanded; another the eare, vnderſtanding the voice of the precepts; another the noſe, diſtinguiſhing the » il ſauour of the bad, from the ſweet odour of the good; who while they aſ- » ſiſt one another by the ſeueral functions they haue receaued, as the members » of man's bodie, doe make one bodie among themſelues; and performing in » charitie ſeueral offices, the bodie in which they are, can by no meanes be » ſeuered.

Hom. 10. in Ezech.

Rom. 12. 5. 1. Cor. 12. 12.

S. Greg. in 28. c. 6.

A ſpecial prouidence of God that euerie one hath not al things.

7. And *S. Gregorie* in manie places doth take it for a ſpecial point of God's prouidence, that euerie one is not endued with al kind of graces, to the end that he, that might perhaps haue been proude by the grace he hath receaued, ſhould be kept in humilitie by the vertue which he wanted; and againe by charitie euerie one haue al, poſſeſſing in another that, which he hath not in himſelf, and reciprocally beſtowing that, which he hath, vpon another. Wherefore (as *S. Gregorie* diſcourſeth further) one is endued with the word of

wiſdome

wisdome, and not seconded with the speech of knowledge, that is of teaching; another conspicuous for teaching, and yet is not strong in the word of wisdome, beeing able enough to deliuer what soeuer he hath learned, but not arriuing to discerne anie profound thing of himself. This man by discretion of spirit doth subtily diue into other mens minds; but hath not the skil of seueral languages. Another in that one tongue which he knoweth, doth by prudent interpretatio examin the weight of euerie sentence and word, and patiently wanteth other good things, which he hath not.

8. This being granted and auerred, that which followeth is euident; to wit, that no one man can be of himself so pregnant or wel prouided in this life, as to be able by himself alone without help of others to do anie great matter; but of necessitie he must ioyne himself with others, and supply from others what is wanting in himself. Wherefore a Secular state, must needs come farre short of a Religious state in this point; in regard that Secular people stand alone, and follow their owne priuate dictamens; ayming at that which is most profitable, or commodious, or honourable, or glorious for themselues; or if they attempt anie thing of a higher strayne, for aduancement of the seruice of God, or of his Church, they haue not abilitie enough of themselues to go through with it: so that euen the strength which they haue, serues at last to litle purpose; as if one man alone should set his shoulder to remoue a huge stone, to what purpose were it? but if he set hard to it with manie others, they may doe something. & whatsoeuer is done, his labour hath a part in it. Moreouer we may be bold to say that which is very true; that oftimes Secular people ouervalue their owne abilities, and trusting too much vpon themselues, vndertake things beyond their force, specially the desire of fame and excellencie, which possesseth al mankind, egging them forward to great matters, chiefly where honour & applause may be gotten; and so leauing that which they were able to doe, they leese their time and labour in things which they wil neuer be able to compasse. Which *S. Gregorie* expresseth very neatly and elegantly a litle after that, which before I cited out of him. Our Creatour & Gouernour (sayth he) by wonderful prouidence hauing bestowed some things vpon one, & denyed them to an other, and againe denyed one that which he hath giuen an other, whosoeuer attempteth to doe more then he hath receaued, endeauoureth to goe beyõd the bounds or measures which are set him; now he that marketh not the limits which are measured-out vnto him, sets his foot in a downefal, & boldly making hast to catch that which he cannot reach, doth most cõmonly leese that which he might haue reached. We vse the help of our members best, when we keepe them to their seueral functions; beholding light with our eyes, and hearing sounds with our eares: But if a man change this order, and wil heare with his eyes, and so with his eares, he holds them both open in vayne; If a bodie wil smel with his mouth, and taste with his nose, he takes from himself the vse of both these senses; for not being put to their proper vses, they forgoe their owne functions, and reach not to doe anothers.

How the endeauours of Secular people come of times to be frustrate.

S. Greg. 28. mor. c. 6.

9. This errour therefore, and confusion, and disorder, of which the world (if we marke it) is very ful, hath no place in Religious congregations; euerie one betakes himself to the station, place, and office, which is appointed him by his Superiours, as by the General of an armie; and followes not his

Mutual help makes euerie thing easie.

his owne fancie therin; and his Superiours appoint him that which God hath decreed and determined; for we haue sufficiently proued before, that God doth gouerne and dispose al Religious people by the hart of their Superiours. Wherefore being gouerned and directed by God, who framed euerie one's nature, and knoweth euerie one's capacitie and abilitie, no man need to feare, least he be not placed, where it is fittest for him. And neerer to our purpose; seing in Religion al haue the same end, and direct their actions and endeauours to one common intention and purpose, they are as readie and quick to help one another, and doe it as cheerfully, as the hand is readie to help the eye; or the eye, the hand; or the feete, the head; or rather as the hand, or the eye, or anie other part is readie to help itself; because that which is a benefit to the common, profits euerie particular man; and that which euerie particular man doth for anie of the rest, he doth it certainly for himself; by which meanes that which one wanteth, is most easily and perfectly supplyed with an other's plentie; a thing so beneficial in itself, and so much desired of euerie bodie. For wheras some haue learning and haue not wisdome to dispatch businesses; others haue wisdome, and not much learning; some conceaue a thing wel, but cannot vtter that which is in their mind; and in al kind of knowledge one is more skilful then another, because no man can be perfect in al things; these perfections and talents, are in this Brotherlie communitie so tempered, that what may fayle in one, is vpheld by another's help, and in fine (as I sayd out of *Aristotle* in the beginning of this Chapter) euerie one hath something, and al haue al.

19. And this I take to be the reason, why there be alwayes so manie eminent men in Religion in al kinds, & so manie rare works haue been atchieued by them, both for the help of their neighbour (of which I shal haue occasion to speake heerafter) & in matter of Learning, wherin they haue mightily flourished, and deriued a great esteeme therof to al posteritie, and in al kind of vertue and sanctitie; to wit, by reason of this concord and connexion, which enableth and enricheth euerie particular man with the abilities and talents of the rest; and what they could not doe by themselues alone, they performe by the hand and help of others; wherof we haue a plaine example out of holie Scripture in the Tower of *Babel*, which by consent of manie work-men ayming at one thing, & labouring in one busines, grew to an excessiue height; and was suddenly dashed, and brought to confusion, by no other engine, then by disturbance of the same consent, through the multiplicitie of seueral languages; being vtterly disabled thereby from assisting one another; and the like hapneth in al things which men goe about.

Gen. 11.

THE

The seauenteenth fruit: Communication of good works.

CHAP. XXIX.

THE other effect of Religious vnitie, is the Communication of good works, among al thoſe that are of the ſame Order and Familie; and that we may the better diſcouer the greatnes of this benefit, we muſt conſider what is communicated, and how. Firſt therefore it is certain, that in al good works there be three things to be conſidered: The encreaſe of grace which euerie good work doth merit, togeather with the proportion of glorie and reward in heauen, correſponding to the meaſure and value of the work. And this is euer proper and peculiar to him that doth the work; for it is the priuiledge of Chriſt our head and mediatour only, by his paynes and paſſion to haue merited grace & glorie for others. The ſecond cõmoditie of a good work is, that it ſatisfyeth for our ſinnes paſt; & this may be communicated with others, & wholy applyed vnto them, if we wil. The third is Impetration, a great help towards the ſauing of our ſoules; for whatſoeuer we doe that is pleaſing in the eyes of God, doth not only deſerue a reward for that which is paſt, but deſerueth help for the time to come, to wit, that we may perſeuer to the end, and goe forward in vertue, and withſtand our ghoſtlie enemies, ouercome our paſſions, abide that which is hard & difficult, in fine to obtaine whatſoeuer may conduce to our ſaluation. And this Impetration may be alſo conferred vpon another by the wil of him, in whom it is; which is no ſmal benefit, ſeing it is in the next degree to that grace, wherin the life of our ſoule doth conſiſt; for though no man can merit Iuſtifying-grace for another, he may merit notwithſtãding thoſe helps whereby Iuſtifying-grace is eaſily encreaſed.

Three things in euerie good work.

2. Now there be two wayes, whereby theſe things may be communicated: the one, by wil, as it were beſtowing my wealth vpon another, by my owne guift; the other without anie expreſſe act of the wil, but as it were by natural conſequence. For ſuppoſing that ſome ioyne in a communitie togeather, it followeth naturally of itſelf, though none of them think therof, that al their works & merits are cõmon among them, ſo that the immediat ground of this cõmunication is the bond or tye which is betwixt them; inſomuch that where that is, & the ſtreighter & firmer it is, the communion alſo of merits & works muſt needs be more ample & ful. And we may declare it by that which paſſeth in a natural & outward ſocietie or companie, wherof there be diuers degrees: The firſt is grounded in likenes of nature, which comprehendeth al mankind; and by occaſion therof manie things are common among al men, as the ſeas, and ſea-ſhores, and manie things of that nature. Againe thoſe of the ſame countrie are more neerly lincked, & haue manie things cõmon among them; as their language, and manie rights and duties. A neerer degree then this, is to be of the ſame towne and cittie, wherin manie more things are common, as the ſtreets, the Courts, the Lawes, Churches, Cuſtomes. The neerenes of affinitie & kindred is yet a ſtreighter tye; & the neereſt of al is of thoſe that be of the ſame

Two wayes of communicating good works.

houſehold and familie, wherin al things are common, poſſeſſions, monie, houſehold-ſtuffe, nobilitie alſo and honour. In like manner in the ſpiritual coniunction we ſpeake off, the greateſt ſocietie comprehendeth al that are in the ſtate of Grace and Charitie; and as among them doubtles manie things are common, ſo euerie particular man among them hath ſome ſhare of the good deeds, which are done by al the reſt. Which *Dauid* reflecting-on did much reioyce ſaying: *I am partaker with al that feare thee, and that keepe thy Commandments;* *Pſ.* 118. 63. For in this ſenſe *S. Ambroſe* and diuers others interpret this place. Beſides this general coniunction of al good and godlie men, al Religious people, of whatſoeuer Order or Inſtitute they be, haue a neerer tye, grounded in the profeſſion of the ſame Euangelical perfection in the ſame Vowes, & abrenuntiation of al earthlie things. Neerer then this, is to be of one and the ſame Religious Familie, where al haue the ſame Superiours, and Rules, and rites, the ſelf-ſame end, commodities and incommodities, and al things common among them. Wherefore as in a wel-ordered Familie, whatſoeuer one brother acquireth, he acquireth it not to himſelf alone, but to al the reſt of his brethren; & in a companie of marchants, the gayne of euerie particular man, redounds to the benefit of the whole Companie; & the encreaſe, which ariſeth, is equally diuided amõg them al; much more the ſpiritual lucre muſt needs extend itſelf to al ſuch Brethren and Fellowes as are linked togeather by a ſpiritual knot and tye, which is yet more euident in the example of a man's bodie, the coniunction of the members wherof doe expreſſe the coniunction of Religious people more naturally, then anie thing els. For we ſee, that the bodie receaueth ſuſtenance ſo, as though one member take paynes in getting it, an other in chewing, another in diſgeſting it, yet the iuyce and nouriſhment is equally deriued into al the members; al are refreſhed, al are ſtrengthned by it, without anie contention or difference. And ſeing it hapneth thus in Nature, ſhal not Grace haue the like effect? yes doubtles; and the more perfectly, by how much the power of Grace is greater, and more effectual. To which purpoſe *S. Leo* ſayth: Though euerie member be not alike beautiful, and in ſo great varietie of parts, al cannot deſerue alike; yet the connexion of Charitie maketh that there is a communication of comelines. For they that be vnited in holie loue, though al of them be not rich in grace alike, yet they are glad of one an other's good; and ſo that which they affect, cannot be anie wayes ſtrange vnto them; becauſe they that reioyce at an other's profit, encreaſe their owne riches.

S. Leo ſ. 10. *de Quadr.*

3. *S. Auguſtin* encumbred with Paſtoral care, writing to the Monks that had ſeated themſelues in the ſolitude & quiet of the Iland *Capraria*, expreſſeth in himſelf this, which we haue ſayd, and ſpeaketh thus: When we think of the quiet which you haue in Chriſt, though we be in continual labour, yet in your charitie we alſo doe repoſe. For we are but one bodie vnder one head; ſo that you in vs are ful of buſines, and we in you are ful of quiet; becauſe if one member ſuffer, al the members ſuffer with it. And els-where he ſayth thus: Reioyce with him, vpon whom God hath beſtowed grace; and in him thou art able, for what thou art not able in thyſelf; Perhaps he is a Virgin; loue him, and his virginitie is thine; Againe thou haſt more patience; let him loue thee, and it is his. He can watch long; if thou doſt not enuie him, his labour is thine; Perhaps thou

S. Auguſtin Ep. 81.

Lib. 50. Homil. Hom. 15.

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canst fast longer; if he loue thee, thy fasting is his, because thou art in him; properly thou and he are not al one, by charitie you are. This therefore is the effect of charitie; for tying mens harts inwardly togeather, and interlacing them one within another, consequently their works are mingled and common among them. And if the meere habit of charitie be so powerful, what wil not the State of Religion founded in charitie be able to doe? For the tye of charitie may be broken, the state cannot be forsaken; and it hath not only naturally in itself al the force and strength of charitie, but addeth a permanencie and an euerlasting obligation, from which we cannot goe back. Wherefore if we take things right, we may be iustly thought in Religion to loue God with so manie soules, to worke with so manie hands, to runne about good things with so manie feete, to beare hardnes with so manie shoulders, as we haue companions; because they doe al these things for our benefit, and not for themselues only.

How Religious people partake of one an other's merit.

4. *Dauid* was leading his Armie against the enemie; part therof being wearie stayd behind; the other part pursued on, and became maister both of the field, and of a great bootie; whervpon some stood stifly, that they that remayned behind, should not share with the others in the prey; and at the first sight they seemed to haue reason. For why should they that had taken no paynes, nor runne anie hazard, taste the fruits of others labours? Againe, why should they that had bought the victorie with the price of their bloud, and hazard of their life, giue part of the reward to others? Yet let vs see, how holie Scripture condemneth the opinion of these men, and what *Dauid's* iudgement was in the busines, who certainly was a very wise man. Holie Scripture doth so farre dislike their doings, that it calleth them wicked and vniust dealers. And *Dauid* pronounced this sentence vpon them: *you deale vniustly; for certainly the part must be equal, of him that goeth to the combat, and of him that remayneth with the baggage.* Could there be a cleerer testimonie of Religious cõmunion? For if it hold among souldiers, and be, as the Scripture sayth, euer since a constant law in militarie discipline, by reason of the connexion of fellowship which is in an armie; why should not the same law be in force in Religion, and euerie one be partaker of that which anie one among them hath laboured? For Religion is a spiritual armie; and of these spiritual troupes the true *Dauid* CHRIST our Sauiour is General and Leader; heer be none that contend, that their works be not diuided with others; rather they desire it for their brethrens good (which is charitie) and for their owne: for euerie one spending himself in common, employeth but one man's labour, but enioyeth on the other side the labours of as manie as are of that Religious Order. Whervpon *S. Macarius* sayth excellently wel: The Brethren must conuerse togeather in loue and ioy; and he that worketh, must say thus of him that prayeth: I am partaker of the treasure which my brother getteth, because it is common; And he that prayeth, must think with himself of him that readeth: The fruit which he reapeth by reading is my gayne. He that wayteth, must think thus: My seruice redounds to the benefit of al; for as the parts of a man's bodie are manie, and yet it is but one bodie, and they help one another, euerie one performing his seueral office; as for example: the eye seeth for the whole bodie; the hand worketh for the rest of the members; the foot, when it goeth, carrieth

1. Reg. 30.

S. *Macarius Hom.* 3.

al the other limmes; so the Brethren must yeald seruice to one another, and he that readeth, loue him that prayeth, reioycing in it, and thinking with himself: He prayeth for me. Thus sayth *S. Macarius.*

The rich treasure communicated by participation.

5. Now to what a masse of infinit treasure must it needs amount, if al the riches of so great an armie, as almost al Religious Orders are, be brought into one heape? Prayer, Contemplation, Mortification of our passions, strife and victorie ouer temptations, and an infinit number of good thoughts, some inflamed with charitie, some adorned with humilitie, and other vertues, al which are internal; the punishing of the bodie by fasting, watching, and other austerities; the suffering of diuers incommodities, the performing of humble offices, paynes-taking for the good of our neighbour, heat and cold, iourneys to and fro, hazard oftimes of our verie life; what can a man wish for more, then sitting stil (if he be so commanded) in his chamber, to be partaker of al the labours, which those of the same Order in so manie parts and prouinces of the world as they are spred, doe vndergoe, in preaching, and praying, and helping of soules, finally in performing deuoutly so manie good deeds, or suffering patiently and couragiously so manie euils? Neither can a man easily guesse or declare, in how manie occasions the merits of others in Religion do afford vs help; for if temptation rush-in vpon vs, they procure armour to defend vs; if through infirmitie we begin to wauer, by their meanes strength and constancie is afforded vs; if we be to ask anie thing of God, or to appeare before his Infinit Maiestie vpon other occasions, we shal not need to feare to appeare emptie in his sight; because we are put in fauour with him, not only by our owne good deeds, but by the deserts of others; their influence into our prayers adding grace and weight vnto ours. What need I say more? Our coldnes, our faults, and sinnes are so recompensed on the other side with the good offices of them with whom we liue, that he is more pleased with their dutie, then prouoked with our offences. To which purpose it is recorded of *Didacus Guia* (who was one almost of the first Fathers of this our Societie, & a very holie man) that he was wont to say, that as euerie bodie refuseth a crackt groat, if it come alone; but if it be told-out among two or three thousand other peeces, it passeth current; so men that are imperfect, and haue litle in themselues, that can be pleasing to God, yet because in Religion they come with others that are perfect, the riches of the perfect supplye their penurie and want. This was giuen vs plainly to vnderstand, when *Abraham* praying for the fiue Cities, God shewed himself readie to spare them, if fiftie, or thirtie, or ten iust men could haue been found in them. For if by reason of the neernes which is betwixt men of the same towne, the vertue of so few would haue been so beneficial to so manie wicked people, much more by reason of the vnion which is farre greater and neerer in Religion, the vertue and holines of manie wil counteruayle, I do not say the haynous offences, but the infirmitie of a few. We see that God hath often punished a whole Familie, or cittie, or armie, for one man's fault; and particularly when for *Achan* his couetousnes in stealing something out of the enemie's camp, the spoyles wherof were wholy vowed to God, he suffered the whole house of the Children of *Israel* to be put to flight and to the sword by the enemie. Wherfore if one man's fault was preiudicial to so manie, shal not the vertue and goodnes of manie

A pretie saying of F. *Didacus Guia.*

Gen. 18.

Ios. 7.

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be able to benefit one man? ſpecially conſidering the goodnes of God is infinitly more inclinable to mercie then to rigour, and doth more willingly take occaſion to ſhew his bountie, then to puniſh.

The eighteenth fruit: the bond of Vow.

CHAP. XXX.

ANother commoditie is the bond of Vow. A Vow, as the learned define it, is a Religious promiſe made to God freely of our owne accord, of ſome better and more excellent good. Which verie definition being common to euerie Vow, ſheweth that a Vow is very beneficial, both in regard the matter of it muſt be no ordinarie thing, but ſome thing more then ordinarie; and becauſe it contayneth a kind of contract betwixt a ſoule and God, with whoſe Infinit Maieſtie to enter couenant, muſt needs be both profitable and glorious. Now amongſt al Vowes, the Vowes of Religion without al queſtion haue the chiefeſt place, and conſequently bring great profit to our ſoules. And firſt (as *S. Thomas* ſayth) whatſoeuer we doe by Vow, is much more meritorious in itſelf, and more grateful to God, then if we did the ſame thing without anie ſuch tye or obligation. For if we doe an act of an inferiour Vertue vpon a higher motiue, or commanded by a higher Vertue, that act muſt needs be higher, and more noble; as an act of Iuſtice or Fortitude, done vpon motiue of Charitie, or commanded by Charitie; and conſequently the Vertue of Religion being higher then anie Moral Vertue, and a Vow being an act of Religion, whatſoeuer Moral Vertue we exerciſe by obligation of Vow, it muſt needs be higher and of greater value, then if we did the ſame out of the proper motiue of the Moral Vertue. *S. Auguſtin* deliuereth the ſelf-ſame doctrine in his Treatiſe of Virginitie, where he ſpeaketh thus: Virginitie itſelf is not reſpected, becauſe it is Virginitie, but becauſe it is dedicated to God; it is kept in the fleſh, yet it is the ſpirit of Religion and deuotion which keeps it; by which meanes the Virginitie alſo of the bodie is ſpiritual, which pious Continencie doth vowe and keepe. And a litle after: That Continencie is to be reckoned among the goods of the mind in a more honourable place, wherin the integritie of the bodie is kept, vowed and conſecrated to God the Creatour of ſoule and bodie. And this which *S. Auguſtin* ſayth of Continencie, may be ſayd of al other Vertues; as that the works of Obedience, Humilitie, Temperance, and others ennobled by Religion, and done by obligation of Vow, are much more rich and pretious.

What a Vowe is.

S. Thomas 2. 2. *q* 88. 2. 6. *& Op.* 17. *c.* 12.

The benefit of a Vow.

S. Aug. de Virg c. 8.

2. An other reaſon is, becauſe euerie good thing is alwayes better, by putting an other good thing to it. Now the verie promiſe of a good thing, is good; as we may ſee by that which hapneth dayly among men. For vnleſſe a bodie be a verie clowne, he muſt needs loue and thank a man not only for doing, but for promiſing a good turn; and conſequently it is better

and more grateful to God to vowe a thing and doe it, then to doe it only. Besides a work offered by Vow, is incredibly much better then the same work offered by itself; because by Vow we doe not only offer the work or act, but the power, which is our wil and freedome, renouncing it wholy and disabling ourselues from not willing, or not doing it euer after. To which purpose S. *Anselme* brings a knowne Similitude of one that giues away not only the fruit, but the tree itself. And S. *Bonauenture* sayth thus: Acts of Vertue may be done either out of our meere free wil, and so they haue only the perfection which is in the vertues themselues; or besides our wil, we may adde the obligation of Vow, & this bringeth with it the perfectiō of a State; because no man can be in state of perfection, that retayneth freedome of doing, or not doing. Now the necessitie which a State doth bring, is so farre from diminishing Perfection, that it doth wonderfully encrease and perfect it; because of a temporal thing, it maketh it to be eternal, & of ours, Diuine, dedicating not only the action, but the wil to God, and offering it fully and wholy vnto him, slayne in a most noble Sacrifice; which Wil being a good inestimable, so neere to man and so deere, that in regard of it he contemneth al other things, the guift therof must needs be most acceptable, and most pleasing to God. Wherefore as he that hath both vse and possession of anie thing, doth possesse that thing more perfectly, then he that hath the bare vse of it; so he that offereth to God not his work only, but his free wil, doth giue himself more perfectly vnto him. Thus sayth S. *Bonauenture*.

S. *Anselme Lib. Simil.*
S. *Bonauenture in Apo. cap.*

3. An other thing of great consideration is, that whereas the chiefest commendation of our works dependeth of our wil, as of the root from whence they spring, the better our wil is, the better also are our works, and the more commendable. And doubtles among manie qualities of a good wil, it is none of the least, that it be firme, setled, constant, and perpetual, and farre from that which holie Scripture finds fault with, saying; *The slouthful man wil, and wil not.* Insomuch that *Aristotle* was also of opinion, that Vertue must worke firmely, and immouably, as he speaketh; and we may gather it to be so, by the contrarie. For as it is il, to doe euil out of frayltie, or out of weaknes of iudgement; but much worse, to do it out of a peruerse obstinate wil of committing sinne, and persisting in it: so al acts of Vertue are good and laudable, but certainly they are without comparison better, which are done with a more deliberate and setled resolution; and as they that are so maliciously euil, are like to the Diuel, and the damned with him, who can not be wonne from their peruersenes: so the others are like the Blessed in heauen, whose wil is so tyed to that which is good, that it can neuer departe from it.

Prou. 13. 4. *Aristotle, 2. Eth. 4.*

They that vowe, are like the Blessed in heauen.

4. And what meanes is there to settle and tye our wil, but by a firme and solemne promise, which may last for euer? For there be bonds to bind the bodie; and bonds to bind the soule; but with this difference, that our bodies may be bound whether we wil or no, and by the like violence the bonds may be knocke of againe; our mind and soule cannot be bound, vnlesse it bind itself; and hauing bound itself, it is neither in our owne, nor in anie humane power to vnbind it.

5. And the greatnes of this benefit wil be the more euident, if we consider on the one side, our owne infirmitie, & on the other side the bold obstinacie of

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the Diuel in oppugning vs, both in their kind being very great. Wherefore ther can not possibly be a more necessarie defence then a Vow and promise; in regard our fraylie is thereby strengthned, and his attempts barred. For as suiters, when they see that the mayde, whom they made loue to, is married to an other, turne their thoughts another way; so when our ghostlie enemies see vs espoused to God, they leese their hope of intangling vs againe in earthlie things; and therefore leaue to sollicite vs, least to their owne greater torment they encrease our crowne. And what could be more fit to hold our wil fast and steadie (it being naturally so frayle and slipperie) then the obligation of Vow? For it doth not perswade or moue vs only, but it forceth vs; as *S. Bernard* doth insinuate in these words: A happie necessitie, which, as a holie man sayth, forceth to the better. The holie man, whose name *S. Bernard* concealeth, is *S. Augustin*. For in his Epistle to *Armentarius* he speaketh thus: Doe not repent thee that thou hast vowed; rather be glad that now thou canst not doe that, which before thou couldst to thy losse. Set vpon it therefore with vndaunted courage; and by thy deeds make thy words good. He will assist, who desireth our vowes. It is a happie necessitie; which forceth to the better. Wherefore as we tye vines and tender sprigs to strong stakes in the ground, to hold them vpright; so if men did know, how weak and vnconstant they are by nature, they would easily see, that nothing can be more for their soules saluation, then to fasten to God this wil of theirs so frayle and pliable, and settle it by promise of Vow perpetually in his seruice. We reade in Genesis, that *Isaac* was bound when he was to be sacrificed; and doubtles he was willing to it; otherwise it could not haue been done, his father being an old man, and *Isaac* in the prime of his youth and strength. Wherefore seing he was so willing, as his consenting thervnto doth testifye; what was the reason, why the father thought it fit to bind the sonne, or the sonne would haue himself bound? Doubtles to the end his good will being bound in the same bonds his hands were, it might not afterward withdraw itself vpon anie trouble or chance that might happen. Wherefore it was not out of feare, but out of courage; neither was his wil therefore the colder, but the more constant, and so very resolute, as to prouide, that he might euer haue the same wil, and neuer be able to contrarie it.

The power of a Vow, to defend.

S. Bernard de præcep. & disp. S. Augustin. Ep. 48.

Gen. 22.

6. In like manner in euerie Common-wealth there be lawes to keepe men in order, and in some special cases of greater consequence they exact an oath: as when they leauie souldiers, make Officers, marrie, or treate among themselues almost of anie other busines of moment, for buying and selling, and the like, it is the practise of al nations to conclude it by some forme of oath; making account that by this meanes they prouide sufficiently for their owne and others constancie and assurance; yet these are but natural and humane things, which Nature itself hath strength enough to compasse, and the Diuel doth not much busie himself in opposing them. Much more necessarie therefore and behoofful are the bonds we speake of, as in matters so farre aboue our natural abilitie, that it is wonderful hard to goe forward with them, wonderful easie to fayle and giue back; so that we haue great reason to say with the Prophet *Dauid*: *I haue sworne and resolued*

Ps. 118. 116. *to keepe the iudgements of thy Iuſtice.*

Vowes, a meanes to encreaſe grace.

7. Moreouer by this chanel, as I may cal it, of the Vowes, Grace doth flow more plentiful into our ſoules: both becauſe our ſo liberal offer doth ſtirre vp God to be more liberal towards vs, and becauſe, as a veſſel that is plunged ouerhead and eares in water, ſo our ſoule thus plunged, as I may ſay, in that infinite Goodnes, and ſo neerely linked to it, muſt needs be repleniſhed with al kinds of heauenlie guifts; and finally becauſe, being by Vow regiſtred and inrolled among the goods and poſſeſſions of God, what he beſtoweth vpon vs, he beſtoweth in a manner vpon himſelf, which doubtles makes him the freer in his guifts.

A vow doth make the act more voluntarie;

8. But to eſtabliſh this doctrine of the benefit of Vowes vncontroulably, we muſt take away the errour of ſome ignorant people, who think that a Vow taketh from the dignitie and worth of a good deed; becauſe if a thing be done without Vow, it is voluntarily done; if by Vow, it is neceſarie. But they miſtake the name of neceſſitie; and doe not reflect, that there is a natural neceſſitie, and a voluntarie neceſſitie: natural neceſſitie barreth freedome and power to chooſe, ſuch as is in a ſtone, or in a beaſt; and nothing which is done after this manner, can deſerue reward or commendation; the ſame is, when by outward violence a man is compelled to doe anie thing. But the neceſſitie which ariſeth of an obligation voluntarily vndergone, doth not leſſen the merit of the work, but encreaſe it; for both the work is voluntarie, and alſo the obligation, being entred and continued vpon a ſet wil and purpoſe. What ſhal we ſay then, if a man repent him of his Vow; and be vnwilling to performe it? In this caſe, the diſtinction which *S. Thomas* giueth, muſt take place; to wit, that the matter of the Vow may be diſtaſteful to vs, and yet the Vow pleaſe vs; as if a man haue made a vow that he wil faſt; and faſting begins to be troubleſome and irkſome vnto him, and conſequently he faſts vnwillingly and with trouble of mind; and yet becauſe his vow binds him, he wil faſt; this is enough not only to make that he doe not ſinne; but merit more then if he faſted without vow. Which *S. Anſelme* doth illuſtrate with this example: Oftimes (ſayth he) we ſee, that if a man be to be cut, he wil haue himſelf firſt bound, and proteſts beſids, that he wil not be vnbound, though he ſhould deſire it; wherefore if it happen afterwards, that ouercome with payne he crye out to be vnbound, the Chyrurgian goeth on, til the cure be done, and then the Patient himſelf is glad, that they did not giue eare vnto him; and his cutting cures him, though he was then vnwilling to abide it; but indeed, when he cryed out, he repined not at the cure, but at the ſharpnes therof. In like manner, when a man in the beginning doth willingly put his neck vnder the yoak of Religion, and wil be vnder another to be cured by him, if afterwards he meete with anie thing from which his wil hath auerſion, he abides it, becauſe he is bound; and that verie medicine doth him good, though it be taken with not ſo good a wil; and it giues him health, which he would haue refuſed, if he had been free; and when his ſicknes is gone, he is glad he could doe no other. Thus ſayth *S. Anſelme.*

And more meritorious.

S. *Thomas. Op.* 18. *c.* 12.

S. Anſelme l. 1. *Simil.*

9. Where-

9. Wherefore ſeing (as I haue ſhewed) there cannot be a ſtreighter bond to tye vs to God, then the bond of Vow, we may eaſily diſcouer, how manie commodities doe accrue vnto vs out of it, both in regard it binds vs to be conſtant, and neuer at no time, nor for no temptation, to flinch away from him; and becauſe it cannot be, but that we ſhould receaue from God manie other vnſpeakable benefits, by reaſon of ſo neere connexion with him. For, as if a man be bound to a poſte, the poſte is alſo bound to him, ſo he that binds himſelf to God, obligeth in a manner God to himſelf, and (as I ſayd) al his goods and heauenlie treaſures, with him. So that we may iuſtly make account, that this is one of the ſpecial fountaines of Grace, which we haue in Religion, whereby manie other ſpiritual guifts are deriued vnto vs; light to vnderſtand, feruour to embrace, ſtrength to execute that which is good, and finally abilitie to runne in the way of God with ioy and gladnes of hart, which muſt needs redound vnto vs from the *Father of lights*, *the Father of al conſolation*, being bound to him, and he to vs, with that *triple corde*, *which is not eaſily broken.* God particularly bound to them that bind themſelues to him by Vow.

10. Wherefore with great reaſon doth the Holie-Ghoſt exhort and inuite vs, willingly to put ourſelues into theſe bonds of wiſedome in theſe words: *Put thy foot into the ſhackles therof, and thy neck into the collar; ſtoope thy ſhoulder and carrie it, and be not wearie in the bonds therof.* Happie chaynes, and bonds to be wiſhed, which therefore holie Scripture tearmeth, not chaynes, but collars or necklaces, adorning rather then binding the neck; for they are not of iron, hard, and ſeruil, but of gold, noble, and pleaſing; not burthening, but honouring him that beareth them; not barring, but rather enlarging and eſtabliſhing our freedome. *Eccl.* 6. 25.

The nineteenth fruit: A ſafe and quiet death.

CHAP. XXXI.

THE benefits, of which we haue hitherto ſpoken, are very great; yet what would they al auayle vs, if our life ful fraught with vertue and heauenlie guifts, as a ſhip laden with rich marchandiſe, ſhould at the howre of death, as it were, in the mouth of the hauen, ſuffer ſhipwrack? Wherfore to make al things ſure and euerlaſting, Religious people haue this priuiledge among the reſt, that they are armed for death, with manie ſpecial helps and comforts, which is worthily to be reckoned among the greateſt commodities it hath.

2. Three things are dreadful at the howre of death. For firſt, death itſelf is mightily diſtaſtful, and (as the Wiſe-man ſayth) *bitter*; yea,

Three things dreadful at the howre of death. *Eccl. 4. 24. moral. c. 28.*

the onlie memorie therof is very greeuous; secondly it is dangerous, in regard the Diuel is then most busie and violent in tempting vs, and foundeth a man on euerie side; thirdly it is the more terrible, in regard of the dreadful doome that followes; which (as *S. Gregorie* speaketh) *the neerer we doe in a manner touch it, the more we feare it.* Religion takes away al these things, and giues vs pleasure, in steed of bitternes; securitie, in steed of danger; assured hope, in steed of excessiue feare. And if we doe but consider what passeth ordinarily among men, we shal see it euidently to be so. For that which is wont to greeue men most at that time, is to leaue their wealth, honour, pleasures, commodities, their wife and children, their brethren and kinsfolk, and their dearest friends; finally soule and bodie must parte, hauing liued so long and so louingly togeather. In Religion almost none of al this is to be found. For when they forsooke the world, they left al outward things, wealth, and honour, and al carnal propinquitie; so that they are in a manner the onlie men that are wholy free from this manifold vexation, which doth so trouble wordlie people. They grieue not for losse of riches; the loathnes of leauing their children vnder age, doth not lie heauie vpon them, nor the care of their future welfare; they are not troubled how to make their wil, or dispose of their families, or preuent losses, which oftimes befal house-keepers. Which happines of Religious people, *S. Iohn Chrysostom* doth curiously set forth in a certain Homilie, wherin he writeth manie other things also in commendation of this course: It is very true (sayth he) that they dye among them, for their bodies are not immortal; but they doe not make account, that death is death. They sing Hymnes when anie doe departe; and they cal it not a buryal, but a pompe, or procession, and a sending of one of their companie before them; yea they dare not say, the man is dead, but consummate. Therefore they giue thanks, and glorie, and reioyce, euerie one desiring the like passage, to leaue the field in the same manner, to rest from their labour and toile, to see Christ. And when they are sick, their wife doth not stand by, with her hayre in her eyes; nor their litle children lamenting the want which they shal shortly find of their parents; nor their seruants wearying them at the last gasp with their vntimelie requests, to leaue them commended to some bodie after death; but free from al these rubbes, their soule is wholy bent vpon this one thought, how it may giue-vp the last breath to God, in greater grace.

Religion free from al three.

S. Iohn Chrysostom. Hom. 14. in 1. Tim.

2. This therefore, if we wil beleeue *S. Chrysostome*, is to be reckoned among the fruits of leauing al in time with ioy and merit, that at the last howre they may not torment and vexe vs, when els of necessitie we must leaue them, to our great grief and no merit. Wherefore if anie thing can trouble Religious people at that howre, it is the losse of their life. But of this losse also, they haue but litle feeling; for Religion doth so accustome the mind to leaue the bodie, that euen while it is in the bodie, it is for the most part out of it, busie in the loue of God, & the desire of heauenlie things. For as those that giue themselues ouer to carnal pleasure, or the care of anie wordlie busines, haue their minds so carried away vpon them, that they seeme to be set fast in the same dirt, as I may tearme it, of which those things are made: so

The parting of soule and bodie greeueth not Religious people.

contrariwise, they that liue chast and intire, and curbe the flesh, and bring it vnder, and withal busie their mind in holie exercises, and settle it vpon spiritual things, are not much molested by the corruption of the bodie, but rather, as *S. Paul* speaketh, *their conuersation is in heauen*; And consequently death being nothing but a separation of the bodie from the soule (which Religious people doe practise al their life) they are not to begin to dye, when the soule is departing, but they went about it long before, and were alwayes dying; by which meanes they are not troubled at the time of death, as if they were to abide some hard and vnwonted thing. It helpeth also, that they parte not with a life, that hath manie things to hold them with delight in it (which is one of the chiefest causes, why people loue this life) but rather a life, wherin they suffer manie incommodities by pouertie, watching, and paynes-taking, much mortification of their senses and wil, which are as so manie spurres quickning our soules to desire more ardently eternal rest, and more cheerfully to embrace it, when it is at hand. Besides, they come not suddenly and vnprouided to that houre; but they both foresaw dayly, that it might happen, by reason of the common frayltie of our nature, and wished dayly for it, because they desire to appeare in the sight of God, and their whole life is but one good preparation for death, as a certain Franciscan-Friar sayd truly of late yeares in the Indies. For after he had long laboured in those countries very paynefully, sickning, and being aduised by the Physicians to prepare himself for death, he spake thus: I haue done nothing else al the while, I haue worne this Habit, but prepared myself for this passage. The same al Religious people doe; for the State itself doth direct them to doe no other, but, as our Lord commãded, *expect his coming with their loynes gyrt, and burning lights in their hands*; which *S. Gregorie* interpreteth to be *Chastitie*, and continual practise of *good works*, both which are principally found in Religion.

Phil. 3. 20.

A Religious man's life is a continual preparatiõ for death.

Luc. 12. 35. S *Greg. hom.* 13. *in Euãg.*

3. Now as for the assaults and temptations of the Diuel, wherewith euerie bodie is troubled at his death, thus much we may truly say, that if there be anie man that is not troubled at al or very litle with them, anie man that doth resist them and ouercome them, it is a Religious man. For first it belongeth to the goodnes of God, not to leaue him at his death, vpon whom in his life-time he heaped so manie great guifts and graces; somewhat also it belongeth to his Iustice, to defend and protect him, that, during life, serued him, and fought for his honour. Wherefore we ought not to doubt, but that he that is our strength and stabilitie, wil assist vs most of al in that dangerous and feareful combat, and in time of need enlighten our vnderstanding, and giue vs courage, wipe away al feare, and teach our hands and fingars to wage warre, compasse vs round, and couer vs with the shield of his good pleasure, and with inward comforts strengthen our mind, and fil it with assured hope of eternal saluation; which being so, what crownes and kingdomes can be compared with this benefit? And no man can think, but that it must needs be wel bestowed, not only that he forsook this one world, but if there were infinit worlds to leaue, that he alone had left them al, to the end that in such a feareful passage, he might haue such assured comfort and defence.

Religious people free from temptation at the houre of death.

The comfortable assistance of our Brethren at the houre of death.

4. To this we may adde the comfort which euerie one receaueth by the assistance of his Bretheren, their exhortations, counsel, and continual prayers; which alwayes, but chiefly at the point of death, are very powerful to encourage vs, and to abate the fierce assaults of the enemie. We learne this by example of a yong man, called *Theodore*, of whom *S. Gregorie* relateth, that hauing liued in his Monasterie somewhat wantonly, like a boy, he fel sick, and was brought to the last cast; and while diuers of the Monks stood by, praying for him, he began to crye out, as if he were desperate, to get them gone. For he was (as he sayd) deliuered to a dragon, to be deuoured by him; and their being present hindred him. Whervpon they fel presently vpon their knees, and prayed more earnestly for him; and soone after the sick man now quiet, and chearful, affirmed that the Diuel was gone, vanquished and put to flight by their prayers.

S. Greg. 4. dial. c. 37. & Hom. 38. in Euang.

Two memorable examples.

5. The like passage, though somewhat more feareful, is recorded of *Cuno* Lord of *Malburch*; who after he had spent in the world almost fourtie yeares, liuing for the most part after a worldlie fashion, betook himself to Religion; where when he had liued some three yeares, he made a happie end. At which time the Diuel, by the mouth of a woman, whom he had possessed, told that he and fifteen thousand more of his crue (for so manie he sayd they were) came to this *Cuno's* Celle, when he lay a-dying; but could not hurt him, nor so much as come neer him, by reason of the lowde cryes of those bald-crowned fellowes, that stood by his bed-side (for so the enemie of God tearmed God's seruants and their prayers in scorne) And he complayned further, that God had done him great iniurie, in regard that wheras *Cuno* had serued the Diuels fourtie yeares, and God but three, yet he spared him from the paynes of hel, and carried him to Heauen. Whereby we may plainly see the force of Religion.

Hope of Saluation more assured.

6. It remayneth that we speake of the hope of saluation, which I sayd was in Religion very assured. Two things cause this assurance in a Religious man: first, not to be guiltie in his conscience of anie grieuous sinne; secondly, the memorie of the abundance of good deeds of his former life; both which cannot fayle in a Religious course. For we are not heer troubled with marchants accounts, nor with obscure and ambiguous formes of conueyances, nor with worldlie ambition, nor such like occasions of sinning: On the other side, we haue much matter of patience, and continual occasion of practising other vertues, wherof I haue spoken at large before. Wherefore *S. Hierome* sayth excellently wel to this purpose, writing to *Iulian*, and exhorting him to Religion in these words:

S. Hierome Ep. 34.

"Happie is the man and worthie of al blessednes, whom old age doth ouertake seruing Christ, whom the last day shal find fighting vnder our Sauiour, who *shal not be confounded when he shal speake to his enemies in the gate*, to whom in the entrance of Paradise it shal be sayd: *Thou hast receaued il things in thy life, but now reioyce heer.* *S. Bernard* also pressing *Romanus* to breake with the world, followeth the same strayne. The iust man also (sayth he) dyeth, yet securely; his death being a passage from

S. Bernard Ep. 103.

this

this preſent life, and an entrance into a better life. It is a good death, to dye to ſinne, that thou mayſt liue to Iuſtice. This death muſt neceſſarily goe before, that a ſecure death may follow. While thou liueſt in fleſh, dye to the world; that after the death of the fleſh, thou mayſt begin to liue to God. And againe in another place: O ſecure life, where there is a pure conſcience! O ſecure life, I ſay, whete we may abide death without feare, yea deſire it with pleaſure, and welcome it with deuotion! *ad mil. tẽpli.*

7. Wherefore me thinks, we may with reaſon vnderſtand that voyce, which S. *Iohn* heard in the Apocalyps, chiefly of Religious people: *Bleſſed are the dead, who dye in our Lord*; becauſe (as S. *Bernard* diſcourſeth) *Martyrs dye for our Lord, Confeſſours dye in our Lord.* For as he that was neuer at Rome, cannot dye at Rome; ſo he that liued not in God, cannot dye in God; and on the other ſide, he that while he liued was friends with God, ſhal alſo dye in God. And who liueth more in God, then he that hath nothing elſe on earth to liue in? And it followeth conſequently, that *their works follow them*, and remayne not behind them in earth, as the works of Secular people, that haue ſpent their life in earthlie labour. And doubtles it muſt needs be an vnſpeakable benefit, to be able at a time, when euerie bodie els is in ſuch feareful danger, and with feare and trembling expecteth his Iudge and doome, to looke death in the face, not only without feare, but with ioyful eyes, and a mind chearful and confident, as if they heard a voyce inuiting them as work-men *to receaue their hire*, or as good and faithful ſeruants, to *enter into the ioy of their Lord*, or as a Bride inuited to the bed of the Bridegroome in theſe words: *Riſe, make haſte (my beloued) come from Libanus; thou ſhalt be crowned.* For thus they are called from *Libanus*, that is, from the Mountain of perfection, in which they liued, to a crowne anſwerable to ſo great perfection. *Apoc. 14. 13. S. Bernard Ep. 212.* *Cant. 4. 8.*

8. This is the cauſe, why a certain Franciſcan-Friar, burning with exceſſiue payne of his whole bodie, found no better eaſe of his payne, then himſelf to ſing Diuine prayſes, and to heare others ſing them; and being reprehended therefore by Friar *Helias* ſaying: that it might beſeeme him better to beſtow that laſt houre in teares and pennance; anſwered, that he could not doe otherwiſe, becauſe he knew he was ſhortly to be with God. Memorable exãples of happie deaths.

9. S. *Gregorie* in his Dialogues relateth manie examples of this nature; but that which he telleth of one *Antonie*, a Monk of his owne Monaſterie, is pleaſant to heare. This *Antonie* had warning in his ſleepe to prepare himſelf to dye; but out of his humilitie anſwering, that he was not prouided for the iourney, it was told him againe, that if it were his ſinnes that he miſdoubted, he ſhould not need to feare, becauſe they were forgiuen. But yet he ſtil fearing and quaking, the next night he heard the ſame voice, and the ſame warning was giuen him. Fiue dayes after, he fel into a feauer; and dying in the midſt of his Brethren, with aſſured hope of eternal ſaluation, went ioyfully to receaue it. *S. Greg. 4. dial. c. 47.*

10. He writeth of another called *Merulus*, a man very feruent and deuout; who on a time ſaw, as if a white crow had come from heauen, and reſted vpon his head. Preſently after he ſickned, and with great chearfulnes

gaue vp his ſoule to God. Some fourteen yeares after, they chanced to dig neere his graue, and there came forth ſuch a fragrant ſmel out of it, as if it had been ful of ſweet ſpices and flowers. This and much more we haue by relation of *S. Gregorie.*

S. Nicolas Tolentin. 11. It is recounted of *S. Nicolas Tolentinas*, that ſix whole moneths before his death, he heard euerie night a litle before Matins, a moſt delicate conſort of Angels ſinging, and giuing him as it were a taſte of the life to come. How ardently then may we think he did deſire that life, to the pleaſures wherof he was ſo pleaſantly inuited? He himſelf can tel vs; for he had often in his mouth that ſaying of the Apoſtle: *I couet to* *Phil. 1. 23.* *be diſſolued, and to be with Chriſt.* And at the inſtant of his death, he began to expreſſe in his voice and ſpeech, great ioy and gladnes; and his Brethren, that were preſent, asking him the cauſe of that vnwonted ioy, he anſwered, as if he were amazed and ſcarce preſent to himſelf: My Lord IESVS CHRIST leaning vpon his bleſſed Mother, and our Father *S. Auguſtin* ſayth vnto me: *Welfare thee, good and faithful ſeruant, enter into the ioy of thy Lord*; with which words he gaue vp the ghoſt.

Reginaldus. 12. *Reginaldus*, one of *S. Dominick's* ſcholars, hauing warning to prepare himſelf to the laſt combat with the Diuel by *Extreme-Vnction*, as it is the vſe among Chriſtians, anſwered thus: I feare not this combat; rather I wayte for it with ioy; for long agoe did the *Mother of mercie* anoint me, in whom I haue great confidence, and to whom I deſire to goe. Now that he ſayth, he was anointed before by our Bleſſed Ladie, it hapned thus: Manie yeares before being very ſick, the Queene of heauen appeared one night vnto him, while he was awake, with two other Virgins in her companie; and coming to him, annoynted his eyes, his eares, his lips, and his hands, with an ointment which ſhe brought, and with her owne hand as he lay, and alſo his feete in preparation of the Ghoſpel, as ſhe ſayd, praying as it were out of a book.

Adulphus. 13. The like fauour ſhe ſhewed to *Adulphus* a Franciſcan-Friar, who forgoing the Princedome of *Alſatia*, lead an humble life in that holie Familie; and coming to dye, this vniuerſal Patroneſſe and Mother of al Religious people, came vnto him, accompanied with infinit troupes of Angels; and finding him fearful, encouraged him in this manner: Sonne, what doſt thou feare? or why art thou troubled at the coming of death? Come boldly; becauſe my Sonne, whom thou haſt ſerued faythfully, wil giue thee a crowne of glorie.

S. Bernard. ſer. 26. in Cãt. 14. We ſee alſo what *S. Bernard* ſayth of his brother *Gerard*, who at midnight, and almoſt at his laſt breath, brake forth in theſe words of the Pſalme: Prayſe God from heauen, prayſe God on high. It was then, ô Brother (ſayth *S. Bernard*) day with thee, at midnight; and night was lightned as the day. I was called to this miracle, to behold a dying man reioycing, and bragging ouer death: Death where is thy victorie? Death where is thy ſting? It is now no ſting, but a gladnes, now a man dyeth ſinging, and ſingeth dying.

15. And

15. And the like examples of such as dye most quiet and sweet deaths, and with much expression of excessiue ioy, euen in the flower of their youth, when life is sweetest, happen dayly without number in al Religious Orders. Truly in ours, though it be the last, and the least, partly I myself haue seen manie, and partly haue had by relation of others, that haue seen them; as of one, who being told that he was to looke shortly for death, did for verie ioy embrace him thrice that told him of it. Another hauing had the like message, did what he could to sing the Hymne *Te Deum*, with great signes of ioy, though his voice and strength were almost quite spent. Another, when he was giuing vp the ghost, began to sing that verse of the Psalme: *I haue reioyced in the things that haue been sayd vnto me; we shal goe into the house of our Lord.* I might relate manie more, but because I wil not be tedious, I wil content my self with one. Examples of chearful dying, in our Societie.

16. *William Elfinston*, borne in Scotland, of good extraction, rare for vertue and wit, was admitted into our Societie, a verie youth. Not a ful moneth after, he fel into a burning feauer, which brought death into his face, but yet was alwayes wonderful chearful, and shewed it in his speaches and countenance, and in whatsoeuer he did, thinking he could neuer thank God enough, that he dyed in Religion. When he began to draw on, his Brethren flocked into the roome where he lay, and seing them he cryed out: O glorious death attended by so manie Angels! And expressing exceeding ioy, he sayd further; Doe you not see, doe you not see the Angels? And calling vpon his good Angel, he spake with him for a while, as if he had beheld him with his eyes; and related, that he told him, he should passe through Purgatorie, but not stay long there. Whervpon one asked him, in what shape he saw his Angel, and he pointed at a youth that stood by, and sayd: He was like him. Soone after, his soule was so ouerioyed, that his bodie did as it were leape vpon the bed, as he lay, weakned, as he was, with a deadlie sickness, to the great admiration of the standers by, who had neuer seen the like; and turning his eyes back to the beds head, with chearful countenance, and muttering something which could not be vnderstood, he shewed, that he saw something that did giue him great contentment; amidst wherof suddenly stopping, he gaue vp the ghost, as if he had layd himself downe to sleepe. What can be more happie, or more desireful, then such a death? Or who is there, that, were he to choose, had not rather dye such a death, then as Princes are wont to dye in their Royal pallaces, in their Beds-of-state, in their silks and purple garments, amidst their seruants and retinue? And certainly, this yong man being but a Nouice, came not to so sweet an end, and so easie a combat with the enemie, and so happie a passage out of this life, by long exercise of vertue, and strong habits therof; but if anie cause can be giuen therof, it must needs be the force of Religion itself, and the grace of God chiefly bestowed vpon him in that plentie, in regard of Religion; so that by this one example we may euidently see, how farre more securely and more sweetly this last act of warfare (as *Iob* doth cal it) is shut-vp in a Religious state. *William Elfinston.*

The twentieth fruit: that it is a ſigne of Predeſtination.

CHAP. XXXII.

THE Kingdome of Heauen is ſo infinit a happines, and the paynes of hel ſo infinit a miſchief, that whoſoeuer beleiues them, ſhould in reaſon haue no other care, nor feare, then leaſt he leeſe the one, and fal into the other; ſpecially ſeing they ſo neceſſarily follow one vpon the other. Inſomuch that if God had reuealed, that among al the men that are, or euer were, and ſhal be, one among them al ſhould be damned to hel-fire, euerie one might iuſtly liue in continual feare and trembling, leaſt he might be that vnhappie and vnfortunate man, vpon whom that dreadful lot ſhould fal. But now ſeing God hath ſo often, and ſo certainly, and ſo plainly told vs, that *manie walke the broad way of perdition, few find-out the way of ſaluation*, what care, and circumſpection, and feare, ought euerie one to ſtand in?

Math. 7. 13.

Without hope of predeſtination there is no comfort.

2. In which ſo iuſt occaſion of feare, we cannot in this life haue a greater comfort, then to light vpon ſome ſignes of our eternal ſaluation and predeſtination. For *S. Bernard* ſayth truly: When doth God leaue his Elect without ſome ſigne? or what comfort could they haue, ſtanding doubtful, betwixt hope and feare, if they were not worthie of ſome teſtimonie of their Election? God knoweth who are his; and he alone knoweth whom he hath choſen from the beginning; but among men who is there that knoweth, whether he be worthie of loue or hatred? Wherefore ſeing it is certain, that we can haue no certaintie in this kind; if we may at leaſt meet with ſome ſignes of our Election, wil not al things be more delightful to vs? For what reſt can our ſpirit haue, ſo long as it hath no hope of predeſtination?

S. Bernard in oct. paſch. ſer. 2.

Signes of Predeſtination in Religion.

3. This then is the fruit of a Religious ſtate; and truly none of the leaſt, that it giues vs ſo certain a hope, and ſo cleere a ſigne of our predeſtination, that, without expreſſe reuelation, we cannot haue a greater. For firſt we haue the ſigne, which our Sauiour himſelf giueth, when he ſayth: *He that is of God, heareth the words of God.* Whervpon *S. Bernard* els-where ſpeaking to the Monks of his Order, biddeth them be of good cheere, hauing reaſon to beleiue they are of the number of the Elect, becauſe they heare the word of God ſo willingly, and with ſo great fruit. And this is natural to the ſtate of Religion. For their chief and continual food is *whatſoeuer proceedeth from the mouth of God*; receauing it by prayer, meditation, and reading of good books, and principally by giuing eare to that word of God, which called them out of *Aegypt* to his Diuine ſeruice. For the hearing and obeying of this word alone, is a great ſigne of their

Io. 8. 47.

S. Bernard ſ. 1. Septuag.

their predeſtination, by that reaſon of our Sauiour: *My sheep heare my voice;* *Io. 10. 16.*
though indeed they did not then only giue eare vnto it, and follow it, when they forſooke the world, but doe continually hearken vnto it, remayning in Religion vpon command of that voice, and ſpending al their life in doing according to his voice deliuered vnto them by obedience; ſo that none can haue more right, then they, to that ſaying of our Sauiour: *Bleſſed are they that heare the word of God, and keepe it.* *Luc. 11. 28.*

4. There be other ſignes of Predeſtination, wherof *S. Bernard* diſcourſeth at large ſpeaking to his Brethren, and draweth them at laſt to theſe three heads: If (ſayth he) thou refrayne from ſinne; if thou doe worthie fruits of pennance; if thou work works of life. Al which three can they be better, more perfectly, or more plentifully performed, then in Religion? or where are they to be found, if not in Religion? And of euerie one of them I haue ſpoken ſufficiently heertofore. *S. Bernard ſ. 2. in oct. Paſch.*

5. Another ſpecial token and ful of comfort is giuen vs by our Sauiour, as an euident ſigne of eternal ſaluation, or damnation, in theſe words: *The way which leades to perdition, is broad and ſpatious; and contrariwiſe how narrow is the gate, and the way ſtreight, which leades to life?* *S. Gregorie* doth tel vs in plaine tearmes, that this narrow gate and way, is Religion. What is more narrow to a man's mind, then to breake his owne wil? Of which breaking, Truth itſelf ſayth: *Enter by the narrow gate.* And what can be more broad and wide then neuer to ſtriue againſt his owne wil, but to ſuffer himſelf to be carried without reſtraint, whither-ſoeuer the motion of his wil doth leade him? For theſe and the like cauſes, Religion is a very certain ſigne of predeſtination; inſomuch that *S. Laurence Iuſtinian* ſayth: Whoſoeuer hath been called to the Congregation of the Iuſt, let him aſſuredly hope to enter that heauenlie Hieruſalem after the end of this pilgrimage. For it is a great ſigne of Election, to haue the companie of ſuch a Brotherhood: and he that is ſeuered from this, wil be eaſily ſhut out of that. *Matth. 7. 13.* *S. Greg. l. 32. mor. c. 17.* *S. Laurence Iuſtin. de perf. mon. con. 7.*

6. But why ſhould we ſtand vpon coniectures, or vpon reaſons in this matter, ſeing we haue a plaine promiſe of our Sauiour? *Euerie one*, ſayth he, *that shal leaue father, or mother, or brethren, or houſe, or lands for me, shal receaue a hundred-fold, and poſſeſſe life euerlaſting.* This *S. Matthew*, *S. Mark*, & *S. Luke* doe deliuer almoſt in the ſelf-ſame words; which may be an argumẽt, that the Holie Ghoſt would haue it particularly knowne for a moſt certain truth. Of the hundred-fold, which pertaynes to this life, I wil treate els-where, when I ſhal ſpeake of the pleaſantnes of a Religious ſtate; now I wil only ſpeake of the promiſe of euerlaſting life, as an euident token of Predeſtination. And we may conſider, who it is that maketh this promiſe, what it is that is promiſed, and in what words. He that maketh the promiſe, is God, Truth itſelf, who cannot miſtake, nor be changed, nor forget, nor be hindred from performing what he wil and hath ſayd. Wherefore to ſpeake in tearmes vſed commonly among men, Religious people hauing our Sauiour's owne hand to ſhew at the Barre and tribunal-ſeate of God, whervpon they may argue their Caſe with God, as *Iob* ſpeaketh, and demand eternal glorie by vertue therof, they cannot deſire anie better aſſurance. But they wil not be brought to ſuch an exigent; for the ſame infinit goodnes, which moued him to paſſe the

Eternal life promiſed to Religious. *Matt. 19. 29.* *Mar 10. 31.* *Luc. 18. 29.*

promiſe, wil moue him to performe and accompliſh it more fully, then he promiſed.

7. The tearmes wherin the promiſe is couched, are large and pregnant; *Euerie one that shal leaue these things.* This word of itſelf is ſo expreſſe and general, that it comprehendeth al, no man excepted; that the Diuel may not haue anie ground to cauil, nor anie Religious man to miſtruſt. And yet *S. Luke* ſpeaketh more ſignally: *There is no man that hath left houſe, or parents, or brethren, for the kingdome of God, and doth not receaue much more in this life, and in the world to come, life euerlaſting.* Wherefore certainly no man is excluded from the promiſe, neither poore, nor rich, nor noble, nor meane; neither he that hath left much, nor he that hath left little, ſo he leaue al he had; finally he is not excluded, that being called but at the Ninth howre, had but a ſhort time to labour in the Vinyard. *Luc. 18.29.*

8. It is true, that Life euerlaſting is promiſed to manie Vertues, as to Meekenes, Pouertie of ſpirit, Humilitie, and aboue al to Charitie, *which neuer fayleth*, as the Apoſtle ſpeaketh; yet al this is vncertain and doubtful. For who knoweth, whether he loue as he ought, and vpon the right ground of charitie, which is alſo neceſſarie? And the like may be ſayd almoſt of al vertues, which lying hidden within our ſoules, can hardly be perceaued; and a man can hardly think he hath them, without danger of flattering himſelf, and of preſumption; ſo that al our hopes are doubtful. But it is otherwiſe in this one act of a Religious man, which hath the promiſe of ſo great a reward annexed vnto it. For this act is not doubtful, obſcure, or hidden, but plaine and manifeſt to be ſeen with our verie corporal eyes, that poſſibly the fact cannot be queſtioned, nor the reward, if we fayle not in our intention, and perſeuer therin to the end. *1. Cor. 13. 8.*

9. That which is promiſed, is Life Euerlaſting, that is to ſay, a moſt compleat happines, ful of bliſſe, and of al good things that can be deſired, immortal, euerlaſting; which our Sauiour calleth Life, becauſe indeed, that is the onlie true life, which the ſoule ſhal then liue, when free from this lump of fleſh, or the fleſh itſelf being made ſpiritual, pure, and intire, it ſhal ſee God face to face, as he is; and ſhal be itſelf transformed into his brightnes. That is promiſed, which contayneth al things that can be deſired, & in truth more is promiſed then thought of man can conceaue, or wiſh for, or vnderſtand. How high therefore ought we in reaſon to value this hope ſo aſſured, and this promiſe of Chriſt, who is Lord of this life and glorie, and a promiſe confirmed with a kind of oath?

S. *Antonie of Padua.* The eſteeme that ought to be made of Predeſtination.

10. We reade of *S. Antonie of Padua*, that it was reuealed vnto him, that a certain Lay man (who at that time was of no great good life) was one of the Elect. Whervpon the Saint did carrie himſelf towards him with ſo much reſpect and reuerence, that euerie one did wonder at it; and the Lay man himſelf was angrie, and did in a manner threaten him. But the Saint anſwered, he could doe no other then worſhip him on earth, whom he knew to be predeſtinated to ſo great glorie.

S. *Francis.*

11. And *S. Francis* once in a trance being aſſured of his predeſtination, when he came to himſelf, cryed out: *My Lord God be prayſed; glorie and honour to*

him

him without end And for eight dayes he could not speake of anie other thing, nor so much as say his Breuiarie, but was stil repeating these words: *My Lord God be praysed.* For his soule was ouer-ioyed with so happie tidings; and not without great reason. Wherefore seing *S. Francis* did so infinitly reioyce at this kind of promise, and al others in like manner, to whom it hath been made; what account shal a Religious man make of the same? For betwixt the two promises, there is but this one difference, that the one is made to particular men, the other to the State. And what matter is it, so we leaue not the State, and liue according vnto it? The like we see hapneth among men. For Kings and Princes grant certain priuiledges and liberties to particular men, and certain to places; which comes al to one, because the men enioy them so long as they liue in those places, as freely, as if they had been granted particularly to themselues, & they are put to no other care or trouble for it, but that they remaine in those places. What greater comfort therefore can we haue, or desire in this our pilgrimage, or rather banishment?

12. The Apostles came on a time to our Sauiour, reioycing that in his name the Diuels did obey them. Our Sauiour made answer: *Reioyce not in this, but reioyce, because your names be written in heauen.* In my opinion, the same may be sayd of Religious men; let others reioyce in their wealth, or in the fauour they are in with men, or in the preferments which they hope for, or haue already gotten; we haue a farre greater and better ground of reioycing, that we haue so certain a signe & token to perswade vs, & make vs verily beleeue, as indeed we ought, that our names are written in the Booke of Life, drawne in the breast of Almightie God, with the bloud of the Lamb; which benefit is not reserued meerly for the world to come, but is the verie fountaine and offspring of al other benefits, which in this life are bestowed vpon vs. For, as the Apostle writeth, *whom God hath predestinated, these he hath called*; and hauing called them, he confirmeth and strengthneth them, and multiplieth his guifts vpon them; he defends them from the assaults of the Enemie, either keeping him quite off, or giuing grace that they may make benefit of the temptation; finally, he ordereth al things that concerne them either inwardly or outwardly, in that manner, that they turne al to their good; and it falleth out, as our Sauiour a little before his passion sayd to his Father: *Whom thou hast giuen me, I haue not lost one of them*; because (as another Scripture sayth) *the soules of the Iust are in the hand of God*; and no power vnder God can wrest them from him. Wherefore seing Predestination doth comprehend al these things, looke how much assurance Religion doth giue vs of our predestination, so much also it giueth vs of al the rest.

Luc. 10. 20

The grace of Predestination a fountain of benefits. *Rom. 8. 30.*

Io. 17. 12.

Sap. 3.

13. And as it worketh these things with God, so on our part it maketh vs to loue God the more, in regard he hath loued vs with so great and so ancient loue, before the Creation of the world, and from al Eternitie; it maketh vs also contemne and loath al earthlie things, as being fully possessed, that the heauenlie glorie, and those infinit treasures, through the goodnes of God, are due vnto vs, and layd vp for vs. For, as a yong Prince, that is bred vp to a Kingdome, takes great pleasure in that hope, to which he is borne, and it breeds a kind of Maiestie in him, and greatnes of spirit, that he disdaynes al inferiour things: so we also considering, that we are ordained for that heauen-

What Predestination worketh in vs.

lie kingdome, muſt needs with a generous and noble hart diſdayne al the fayre offers of the world, as not beſeeming our worth; and ſo much the rather, becauſe a yong Prince may be cut-of from his hopes by manie chances; but they that are choſen by God, cannot be put by it by anie force or misfortune.

The one and twentieth fruit: God's ſpecial care and protection.

CHAP. XXXIII.

A memorable example of S. *Francis.*

WE reade that *S. Francis*, when he had founded his Order, and that it began to ſpread, being very careful to aduance it in al ſanctitie of life and Regular diſcipline, if anie thing hapned contrarie, or that God did reueale vnto him anie ſiniſter accident, that was to fal out heerafter, was wont to giue himſelf ſo to weeping and greef, that it was like to coſt him his life. Wherefore being once at his prayers, commending this his Familie with great earneſtnes to God, our Sauiour is ſayd to haue ſpoken to him theſe comfortable words: *Francis*, why doſt thou trouble and vexe thyſelf, when anie of thy Friars doe leaue their Order, or commit anie ſcandalous thing in it? Doſt thou take thyſelf to be ſole gouernour of this flock; and that I am not alſo gouernour of it, higher then thou? Who planted it but I? or who calles men to pennance, or giues them ſtrength to perſeuer when they are called, but I? I brought them hither; I wil ſtay them, and keepe them; If they fal, I wil rayſe others in their place. Wherefore I directly command thee, that heerafter thou torment not thyſelf ſo much, but know that I loue this Familie; and if one returne to his vomit, I wil rayſe another in his place, that ſhal haue his crowne; and if he be not yet borne, I wil cauſe that he ſhal be borne; and if there remayne but three in it, I wil not therefore euer leaue it, but it ſhal be alwayes my Familie. Thus ſpake our Sauiour to *S. Francis*; and the like we may imagin, and indeed ought to beleeue of al other Religious Orders, their cauſe being the ſame. Wherefore it muſt needs be a ſpecial commoditie of Religion; that it is thus particularly guarded and protected by Almightie God, from whoſe wiſdome and knowledge nothing can be hidden, whoſe infinit power nothing can withſtand; ſo that thoſe whom he doth vndertake to protect, muſt needs do wel.

Reaſons, why God hath particular care of Religious Families.

2. Now there be manie reaſons, which may moue God to vndertake the protection of Religious Families; and firſt of al that which himſelf gaue to *S. Francis*, that he is the Authour of them. He layd the grounds of theſe Inſtitutes; he calleth euerie one that entreth into them; he alone giues them their good deſires, and grace, and aſſiſtance to perſeuer. Wherefore as a father doth

loue

loue and take care of his ſonne, and a workman of his work; ſo God doth loue and take care of this ſo faire a fruit, as I may cal it, of his womb.

3. Another cauſe may be the encreaſe of his glorie, which by euerie Religious Order is greatly laboured and effected. For as a gardener takes care of his vines and fruit-trees; and a ſhepheard of his flock, and ſhrinketh not for heate or cold, or anie toyleſome labour, in regard of the commoditie he reapes therof: ſo God hath a prouident care of theſe his flocks, not only out of his infinit goodnes and meere mercie, but (if a bodie may be ſo bold to ſay ſo) for reſpect of ſome commoditie; and why may we not ſay ſo, ſeing *S. Paul* tearmeth ſuch ſeruants of God, *veſſels ſanctifyed for honour, and profitable to our Lord*? 2. *Tim.* 2. 21.

4. A third reaſon is Vertue itſelf and Deuotion, which is ſo very powerful with God, that putting vs highly into his fauour, it wil neuer ſuffer vs to be neglected by him. Inſomuch that the Royal Prophet ſayth: *Thou haſt receaued me for my innocencie, and confirmed me in thy ſight for euer.* And in another Pſalme: *The eyes of our Lord vpon the iuſt, and his eares in their prayers. Manie are the tribulations of the iuſt, and out of al them our Lord wil deliuer them.* And Eccleſiaſticus: *The eyes of our Lord vpon thoſe that feare him.* But that which Zacharie the Prophet ſayth, is moſt remarkable: *He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of my eye.* What could be ſayd more? He thought it little to ſay, *he toucheth me*; but nameth that part of man which is deareſt to euerie one, and moſt ſenſible; which though it be ſpoken of euerie bodie that ſerues God ſincerely, yet particularly it ſutes beſt with Religious people; in regard they are more diligent and more exact in his ſeruice, and employ themſelues and their whole ſtrength and power in that alone. *Pſ.* 40. 13. *Pſ.* 33. 16. *Pſ.* 33. 20. *Eccl.* 15. 20. *Zach.* 2. 8.

5. A fourth reaſon is in a manner proper only to Religious people. For we find euerie-where, that God is wont to take particular charge and care of thoſe, that are moſt deſtitute of humane help. So the Pſalmiſt ſpeaketh of him: *The poore man is left to thee; thou wilt be a helper to the orphan*; and againe: *A Lord preſeruing little-ones*; and in another Pſalme: *Our Lord protecteth ſtrangers; the pupil, and widdow he wil receaue*; for theſe kind of people haue no humane aſſiſtance, to relye vpon. God therefore owes protection to Religious people vpon the ſame title; for they are truly *poore*, in regard they haue nothing, and haue giuen away al power of hauing anie thing; they are truly *orphans* and *pupils*, hauing forſaken father and mother, and al other things, the friendſhip of men, the fauour of Princes, the countenance and power of riches; they are moſt truly *orphans*, bereft of al human help; and *little-ones*, hauing humbled and abaſed themſelues ſo low; finally they are truly *ſtrangers*, and, as gueſts and *pilgrims* in this world, *haue heer no permanent cittie.* Wherefore to them moſt of al doth that ſaying of the Prophet *Dauid* agree: *He that dwelleth in the help of the Higheſt, ſhal remaine in the protection of the God of Heauen.* For they do not (as Secular people) flye ſometimes to the help of the Higheſt; but dwelling in his houſe and familie, they liue alwayes in his help, and remaine euer in his protection; and conſequently that which there is ſet downe more at large, muſt neceſſarily follow, that he wil *Pſ.* 9. 35. *Pſ.* 145. 9. *Pſ.* 90. 1.

shaddow them with his shoulders, and protect them with his shield, that they dread not the night-feare, that is, the secret deuises of the enemie, *nor the arrow flying in the day*; that is, his open assaults.

Foure commodities of the particular protection of God ouer Religious Orders.

6. Now the commodities which arise of this protection of God, are innumerable, but may be reduced to foure heads: wherof some concerne our soule, some our bodie, some the conseruation of the whole Order, some are for defence of the same against their enemies. First therefore God hath care of the soules of his seruants, aduancing them in Vertue, and not suffering them to be tempted aboue their strength, but euen when he doth permit them to be tempted, giuing them grace, that they may haue the vpper hand to their greater glorie, finally, as a diligent maister labours by al meanes to aduance the schollar, whom he loues, in matter of learning: so God seeketh with al diligence and care to put his disciples forward in spirit; that we may truly say of them, as it is in the Psalme: *Blessed is the man, whom thou, O Lord, dost instruct, and teach him thy law.* Psal. 93. 12.

7. And that he hath such care ouer our soules, wil appeare the more, by the care which he hath ouer our bodies. For if he doe so diligently and louingly prouide for our bodies, which are of so base a substance, we may easily vnderstand, how careful he wil be of our soule and spirit. And certainly so it is, that no father euer bestowed so much care in bringing-vp the children begotten of his bodie, and in maintayning them, as God doth in maintayning Religious people. Our Sauiour hath giuen vs testimonie heerof in the care which he had of the multitude, that followed him in the Desert; for beholding them he sayd: *I haue compassion vpon the multitude, because, loe, three dayes they now endure with me, neither haue what to eate.* Marc. 8 2. For how much rather wil he say so now from heauen, and take compassion vpon Religious people? For the multitude had not endured more then three dayes, and yet had not left al they had, but were soone after to returne home againe; but they that giue themselues to God in a Religious course, endure with him, not for three dayes only, but their whole life-time, and leaue themselues nothing at al for his sake, not so much as power to returne to that, which vpon good aduise they haue once forsaken, and bound themselues thervnto by Vow. Wherefore it belongeth properly to God Almightie his prouidence, to prouide them necessaries for life and maintenance; which truly he doth so carefully, and continually, that a man may say, he taketh pleasure in it. But as he doth not vpon the suddain create of nothing the graine, or the wine, which is necessarie for mens vses, or send it downe miraculously from heauen, but produce it out of the ground, and out of the vine: so also he prouides for the necessities of Religious people by secondarie causes, to wit, by other mens hands, mouing first their minds thervnto. So we see that God found *Helias* in the time of dearth, not by himself, but by the woman, to whom he sent him with these words: *I haue commanded the widow-woman to feed thee.* 3. reg. 17 9. Wherefore *S. Francis*, as we reade, did not vnfitly apply that verse of the Psalme (*Man did eate the bread of Angels*) to the bread which he gathered of almes, because the Angels did moue people to giue that bread. Psal. 77. 25.

The miraculous prouidence of God ouer his seruants.

8. And to the end no man might doubt of this care, which God hath ordinarily ouer al Religious people, he hath often testifyed the same with wonderful

derful extraordinarie examples. In which kind *Palladius* doth record, that the Abbot *Appollo* liuing in the Desert with his disciples, and being vnprouided of necessaries towards Easter-time, our Lord was not wanting of his care and liberalitie towards them. For vpon the suddain certain men vnknowne to euerie bodie, came and offered themselues saying, that they came a long iourney, and brought store of prouision, great loaues of bread, a vessel of new milk, honie, diuers kinds of fruit, pomegranats, figs, grapes, and such like as grow not in *Ægypt*, nor had euer been seen there by anie of them; and they brought such plentie, as they lasted til Whitsontide. What can a man desire more of the goodnes of God, then to prouide for his seruants in time, and withal so plentifully, such dainties, at such a time?

9. *S. Gregorie* doth relate another, not vnlike to this, of *S. Benedict*, that in a deare yeare, when his Monasterie was wholy vnprouided of corne, there were found at the gate two hundred bushels of meale, and no bodie knew from whence, or by whom, they were brought thither. The same hapned to *S. Columbanus*; who hauing seated himself in a solitarie place vpon the rock, he and his Brethren had little or nothing to eate manie dayes togeather, and vpon the suddain they discouer a man coming towards them, with diuers beasts laden with bread and other victuals; and the man, when he came, told them that he was moued suddainly in his mind to bring them that prouision. Another time when their prouision fayled them, and they had a long time lingred on with wild hearbs, and barkes of trees, in quiet of the night, it was put in the Abbot of *Salice* his mind, to releeue God's seruants, that were readie to starue; and when their carts were laden and knew not which way to goe, they layd the raynes vpon the horses necks, and (doubtles guided by an Angel) they came directly to the place, where *Columbannus* lay hid with his companions. *S. Gregorius.* *S. Columbanus.*

10. We haue also manie memorable examples of the like prouidence of God in seueral passages of the life of *S. Francis*, but chiefly at the time of the first general Meeting of his Friars at *Assisium*. For there being about fiue thousand of them then gathered togeather, he gaue them very strict command, that they should not take anie care at al for anie thing pertayning to the bodie, grounding himself in that verse of the Psalme, which he had often in his mouth: *Cast thy care vpon our Lord, and he wil nourish thee.* *S. Dominick* was present, when *S. Francis* gaue this commandment; and he thought it somewhat too much, fearing least he might seeme to tempt God, if he prouided nothing at al for so great a multitude. And behold not long after, there came from al the neighbouring townes and cities such a world of men and beasts, bringing with them al kind of prouision of victuals, household-stuffe, and household-vessel, that *S. Dominick* was quickly changed; and from that time resolued with himself, that his Order also, which was then beginning, should haue no certain reuennues to liue on; relying vpon the Diuine prouidence, wherof he had seen with his eyes so euident a testimonie. *S. Francis.* *Ps. 54. 23.*

11. And *S. Dominick* himself had afterwards trial therof. For once in *S. Dominick*

Rome there was nothing at al for them to eate in the Monasterie : and moreouer two of the Friars that had been al about the cittie begging almes from doore to doore, came back with emptie wallets, to the end the liberalitie of God might be the more remarkable. Wel, notwithstanding al this, *S. Dominick* caused them al to be called downe to an emptie board, and they were no sooner set, but two exceeding comelie youths coming into the Refectorie, serued euerie one of them with a wondrous white manchet loafe, beginning from him that sate lowest; and when they had dealt about to euerie one, they reuerently bowed downe their heads, and vanished out of their sight. *S. Dominick* presently called for wine; and when they that wayted, sayd there was none; he bad them go to the emptie vessels; and coming, they found one ful of excellent wine. What ioy may we think there was at that board? What teares of gladnes, beholding so great liberalitie of God, and that he had so great care ouer them? Manie like examples we haue in al Orders, and also in ours, but they are generally knowne, and nothing is more frequent in the Liues of Saints.

The conseruation of Religious Orders very miraculous.

12 The third commoditie arising of the protection of God, is the conseruation and propagation of Religious Families, wherin we may euidently discouer the great loue of God towards them, and his special prouidence, wherof we speake. For who is there but must needs wonder, if he consider wel, that among so manie Religious Orders, that frō time to time haue been erected and continued from Age to Age, some very different among themselues, some very neer alike, al of them haue been stil sufficiently furnished with subiects; none of them haue decayed with age, none of them haue been reiected for noueltie. And doubtles, as there must needs be a secret vertue in fountains, which breed such a continual streame of water; and in cities, where people dye, there must be others borne, and others againe to breed, that the inhabitants doe not quite fayle: So in these holie Congregations, there is something that doth conserue and multiplie them, and furnish others in time, when others fayle; which certaynly is no human thing, but altogeather Diuine. It is God alone, as I sayd before, that inspireth these good thoughts, and inclineth men to what course of life he thinks good. And moreouer, wheras among so manie Religious Orders, some haue degenerated from their ancient holines of life and discipline, in them also, as they are, God doth shew his goodnes, not suffering them to want men to vphold them, and to keepe their rank in God Almightie's Church; as if he did it of purpose to shew how constantly he sticks to these that he hath once taken into his charge and protection, and how much he wil doe for the Orders that maintayne their first feruour and pietie, seing he doth not cast-of those that are slack and almost falling off from him.

The persecutions of Religious people punished.

13 It remaineth that we speake of the fourth Head which was proposed, to wit, of the continual care which God hath to defend euerie Religious Familie against those that maligne them, and how he hath euer reuenged himself in a most rigorous manner vpon such wicked persons, as haue

banded

banded against them. We haue a memorable example of both in *S. Columbanus* his Life, of which I related some passages before. *Theodoricus* King of *Burgundie*, by instigation of his grandmother *Brunechildis*, among other mischiefs wrought against him, banished him out of the place where he liued, with some few of his Brethren. First therefore in that iourney of his, one of the Officers, that had insolently stricken one of his Brethren with a cudgel, was not long after drowned in the same place, as *S. Columbanus* had foretold him. *Theodoricus* King being at warres with his brother *Theodobert*, was burnt in the cittie of *Metz*, by a fire raysed, God knowes how, by chance, or from heauen. *Clotharius* King of *France* inuaded his Kingdome, and seasing vpon his six sonnes put them al to death. *Brunechildis*, another *Iesabel*, was set vpon a camels back, and carried scornefully through the whole armie, and afterward commanded to be tyed to three or foure wild colts tayles, and torne in peeces, in which torment she died most miserably; and that whole Familie was quite rooted out, the Kingdome being deuolued to *Clotharius*. *Theodoricus K. of Burgundie.*

14 The death of *Balatius* President of *Ægypt*, in *S. Antonie* the *Great* his time, was not much vnlike. He did persecute the Catholicks manie wayes, but chiefly bent his rage against the *Monks*, and would sometimes cause them publickly to be beaten with rods. *S. Antonie* wrote vnto him a short letter, declaring the wrath which hung ouer his head from heauen. He tooke the letter in scorne, and cast it away, threatning besides, that seing *S. Antonie* tooke vpon him to defend the *Monks*, he would haue shortly to doe with him also. But he quickly repented himself of his proud demeanour; for some foure dayes after returning from his pleasure abroad, in companie of one of his bosome-friends, his friend's horse, who til that day was the gentlest that could be, leapt suddainly vpon him in a mad humour, and taking him in his teeth, pulled him to the ground, and trampling vpon him with his feet, could by no means be beaten off: and so he died soone after most miserably, euerie one admiring and confessing the iust iudgement of God in it. *Balatius President of Ægypt.*

15 That also which *S. Gregorie* recounteth in his Dialogues of *Florentius*, who was aduersarie to *S. Benedict*, is very strange, and we touched some what of it before. This *Florentius* had endeauored first to poyson *S. Benedict*; afterwards he laboured to ouerthrow some of his disciples by wanton obiects. *S. Benedict* therefore thought it best to giue way to his wicked intentions, and voyded the place, taking most of his Bretren with him; but he was not gone farre, when the wicked *Florentius* came to his end by the fal of a house vpon him, and so lost both temporal and eternal life together. *Florentius.*

16 That which happned in this kind to the Primate *of Armach* in *Ireland* in the yeare of Christ one thousand three hundred foure-score and six, is very memorable, and was acted vpon a great theatre. For first in *England* then at *Auinion* (where at that time the Pope did sit) he spake much against the Orders of Begging-Friars in open Consistorie of the Cardinals. *The Primat of Armach.*

And perſiſting obſtinatly to proſecute the cauſe againſt them, he dyed ſoone after; and togeather with him al his falſe acciuſations were buried.

16 About twentie yeares after this had hapned, another thing fel out, which is worthie to be noted. Certain Prelats (lead with what ſpirit, I know not) took aduiſe among themſelues to put downe the Order of *S. Francis*; and to effect it, they appointed a meeting of certain Bishops. In the windowes of the great Church of that towne there were two pictures painted vpon the glaſſe, one of *S. Paul* with a Sword in his hand, an other of *S. Francis*, with a Croſſe. The Sacriſtan one night heard, as it were, *S. Paul* ſaying thus: *what doſt thou, Francis? why doſt thou not defend thy Order?* And *S. Francis* anſwered: *what shal I doe? I haue nothing left me but the Croſſe; and it puts me in mind of patience.* *S. Paul* willed him not to put-vp ſuch an iniurie, and offered him his ſword. The Sacriſtan was much frighted; and when it was day, coming into the Church, he found that the two pictures had changed their weapons, *S. Paul* had the Croſſe, and *S. Francis* had the Sword al bloudie. And while he was wondring at it within himſelf, the noiſe was about the towne, that the Bishop, that had firſt moued the buſines againſt the Friars, was found dead, and his head cut off. Then he began alſo to relate, what he had heard in the night, and shewed the pictures to euerie one that came, that they might the rather belieue him.

Another Bishop ſtrangely punished.

17 Manie ſuch things haue hapned to thoſe that haue been troubleſome to Religious people; and few there be of them, that haue not come to ruine, God fighting for his ſeruants; and indeed their cauſes are ſo linked togeather, that he that oppoſeth one, muſt needs oppoſe the other. Wherefore others may glorie, if they pleaſe, in the fauour of Princes and Kings, and beſtow their whole time and paynes in gaining it; our glorie shal be to ſay with the Prophet: *Our ſoule endureth with our Lord, becauſe he is our helper and protectour; our hart shal reioyce in him, and we wil hope in his holie name.* And he on the other ſide wil ſay to euerie one of vs, as he ſayd anciently to *Abraham*: *Doe not feare, I am thy protectour, and thy very great reward*; for both goe togeather, and both agree to Religious people, if they agree to anie bodie in this life; that becauſe they deſire no other happines or reward but God, therefore he is their protectour and defender.

Pſ. 32. 20.

Gen. 15.

The two and twentieth fruit: The protection of our Blessed Ladie.

CHAP. XXXIV.

BEsides the manifest and assured protection of God, which al Religious enioy, they are to vnderstand to their further comfort and benefit, that our Blessed Ladie hath taken them into her particular charge and care, defending and cherishing them vnder her wing and protection. For as in a great household, besids the father, who is head-gouernour, it is fitting there be a mother, not only to breed children, but to bring them vp, and find them necessaries; so though in the household of the Church, Christ be our common Father, who regenerated vs with his sacred bloud, yet it is fitting there should be a Mother also, who with her vertue, care, and deserts might concurre to the breeding, fostering, and maintayning of the spiritual life, which our Sauiour giues vs, this *Health-bringing Virgin, as S. Leo* stiles her, is our Mother; of whom S. *Germanus* Patriarck of *Constantinople*, an ancient graue authour, writeth thus: As the breath, which we draw continually, is not only a signe of life, but a cause therof: so the most holie name of MARIE, which (as he sayth) the seruants of God haue alwayes in their mouth, is both a signe that they truly liue, and withal doth cause and conserue life in them, and giues them comfort and help in al things. And this she doth to al, that truly liue; yet as the Sunne doth concurre to al natural effects, but in greater measure to those, that are greater and more noble: so al degrees in the Church partake of her light and assistance; yet they that are higher in sanctitie and perfection, doubtles do most of al feele the benefit of it. And a Religious state hath this aduantage, that it comes very neere the manner and fashion of life, which she herself lead on earth; for we may truly glorie, that her life was a patterne of a Religious course. The manger, and and the two yong pigeons, and manie things els, beare witnes of her Pouertie. Her marriage, shewes her Obedience, being subiect to a man, whom she did farre excel in holines of life and wisdome. What need we speake of her Chastitie, seing she was the first that displayed the ensigne therof, and held it not only by purpose, and constant resolution, but by Vow? So al do write of her, and S. *Augustin* in particular sayth thus: Her virginitie also was the more pleasing and acceptable, because Christ did not take her, after he was conceaued, to preserue her himself from an other man, that would haue deflowred her, but chose her when she was already dedicated to God, before he was conceaued, to the end to be borne of her. The words in which Marie deliuered her answer to the Angel that brought her tidings of a child, shew as much. How shal

S. Leo ser. 1. de pass.

S. German. in orat. de deip. virg.

The life of our B. ladie a patterne of Religio

S. August. l. de Virg. c. 4.

" this be done, becauſe I know not man? Which truly she would not haue
" ſayd, but that she had vowed virginitie to God before. But becauſe the cuſto-
" me of the Iſraelits did not as yet admit of anie ſuch thing, she was eſpouſed
" to a iuſt mã, who was not violẽtly to take frõ her that which she had vowed,
" but rather to preſerue it from others that might be violent. S. *Bernard* alſo
" writeth to the ſame effect, & among other prayſes he commends her, for that
S. Bernard ſer. ſup. Miſſus. (as he ſpeaketh) tranſcending the decrees of the law of Moyſes, she vowed
" an vndefiled ſanctitie of bodie and ſoule; which inuiolably-grounded pur-
" poſe is proued by her reſolute anſwer to the Angel, that promiſed her a
" ſonne: How shal this be done, becauſe I know not man?

2. Wherefore ſeing likenes breeds loue, and there be ſuch plaine traces of a Religious life in the Bleſſed Virgin, who can doubt, but she doth behold and embrace al and euerie Religious perſon, and euerie Order and Familie of them, with particular loue and care? S. *Bernard* giues vs to vnderſtand as much, ſaying, *that our ſpiritual marriage doth pleaſe her much more, then the carnal marriage, at which we reade she was preſent with her Sonne; in regard that in carnal marriage, one man is coupled with another, but in ſpiritual marriage, our ſoule is coupled with Chriſt her Sonne.*

S. Bernard ſ. de aqua in vinum ver.

3. This wil appeare more plainly, if we conſider the beginnings of manie Religious Orders; for finding them to haue proceeded from the goodnes & charitie of this moſt glorious Virgin, by thoſe of whom we find it ſo recorded, we may gather, that the like hath hapned to others, of whome there is no ſuch thing extant in writing, and that abſolutely al Religious Orders haue been founded by her help, and continued by her aſſiſtance.

Religious Orders erected by her means.

4. We find vpon record, that when the ancient & noble Order of the Charterhouſe-Monks was firſt founded in *Grenoble*, manie things were obiected againſt that holie Inſtitute, by inſtigation of the Diuel, ſpecially at the time that S. *Bruno* their Founder was abſent from them, whom Pope *Vrban* the Secõd had commanded to ſtay in *Rome*, and a great ſtorme of temptation fel vpon that little flock. On the one ſide, the extreme hardnes of that kind of life was repreſented vnto them, the hideouſnes of the place they were ſeated in, it being very ſolitarie, & that they were but few, which of itſelf is irkſome and tedious. On the other ſide the ſpirit of God had taken root in their harts, and the eminent men, who, as ſo manie ſtarres, were their guides, and the fearful end of the Doctour of *Paris*, made great impreſſion in them. And while they were thus ſtumbled in their mind, a venerable old man, with curled haire & a bald crowne, ſtood in the midſt of thẽ, and promiſed them in the name of Almightie God, that our Bleſſed Ladie mother of God should alwayes protect them in that ſolitarie place, and be their Patroneſſe and Aduocate, if they would euerie day ſay their Primer in her honour; and when he had ſpoken theſe words, he vanished out of their ſight, but left in their harts great confidence and ioy. Whervpon making no doubt but that the old man was S. Peter the Apoſtle, they preſently by common conſent and agreement choſe our Bleſſed Ladie for their particular Patroneſſe and Aduocate; and we may plainly ſee by the euent, how faithfully she hath performed her promiſe. For they haue not only perſeuered til this day in

The Charterhouſe-Monks.

that

that ſolitarie place, but made it very famous, and from thence forward encreaſed euer in number and opinion of ſanctitie.

5. We may ſay the ſame of the *Ciſtercian Monks*, the Founders of which Order were two: *S. Robert*, that began it, and *S. Bernard* that augmented and encreaſed it. Whoſoeuer hath read the Works of *S. Bernard*, or heard anie thing of him, can make no doubt, but his Order was exceedingly fauoured by the Bleſſed Virgin, were it but for his owne liuing in it, that was ſo great a Fauorit of hers; and being ſuch, was placed by her in that Order. *S. Robert* (Founder, as I ſayd, of that Order) was ordayned by the Mother of God for that courſe of life, before he was borne. For we find, that ſhe appeared to his mother, while ſhe went with child of him, and holding a gold-ring in her hand, ſpake thus vnto her: *Engeltdis* (for ſo was her name) *I wil eſpouſe the boy thou goeſt with, to my ſelf with this ring.* When ſhe awaked, ſhe reflected vpon it with exceeding ioy, and that ſhe might be the more aſſured of it, the ſame Viſion appeared vnto her the ſecond time; and by the euent it proued true. For the Eſpouſals were his Entring into Religion, and his Vow of Chaſtitie the ring. Of the *Carmelit-Friars* we reade, that while they were petitioning Pope *Honorius* the Fourth to confirme their Inſtitute, our Bleſſed Ladie appeared vnto him in the night-time, and bad him entertaine the petitioners and their petition fauourably, and yeald to their requeſt.

The Ciſtercian Order.

The Carmelit-Friars.

6. The Order of the *Seruites* is principally dedicated to the ſeruice of our Bleſſed Ladie, and beareth her name. Their beginning was thus: They were a kind of Sodalitie or Congregation gathered togeather in her honour. In one of their meetings vpon the feaſt of her Aſſumption, while they were at their prayers, moued by a voice from heauen, they al forſooke the world, and vowed themſelues to the ſeruice of God, and particularly of our Bleſſed Ladie, in the manner they had already begun; and are called *Seruites*, as it were, her ſpecial ſeruants. Some ſeauen yeares after our B. Ladie appeared to euerie one of them ſeuerally in the night, acccompanied with a great and glorious troup of Angels; ſhe had in one hand a ruſſet Habit, in the other a Booke open, commanding them euer after to weare that Habit vnder that Rule, which ſhe ſayd was *S. Auguſtin's*. When it was day, they al met togeather, and related the Viſion which they had had, and reſolued, to the exceſſiue contentment of their ſoules, to do as the B. Virgin, and Queen of Heauen had commanded them.

The Seruites

7. But that which is recorded to haue hapned to *S. Dominick* concerning his owne Order, and the Order of *S. Francis* togeather, is more memorable then anie of the reſt. While he was one night in his prayers in S. Peter's Church in *Rome*, at the time when he was framing in his mind ſuch a courſe of life, he thought he ſaw the Heauens open, and that Chriſt our Sauiour with an angrie & firie countenance ſtood vp, threatning the world with three darts that he had in his hād; the one, to deſtroy the proude; the couetous people, with the other; & thoſe that were laſciuiouſly giuē, with the third: & no bodie did oppoſe himſelf againſt his wrath; only the B. V. Mother of mercie, falling downe at his feet, beſeeched him to ſpare thoſe whō he had redeemed with

The Orders of *S. Dominick* and *S. Francis*.

with his pretious bloud. And when Christ made answer, that Iustice required, that so great offences should be no longer left vnpunished, she replied, that she had some of her seruants, that would willingly bestow their labour to reclaime the people, and bring them to pennance. Our Sauiour appeased with her speeches, desired to see them; and she brought forth S. *Dominick* himself (that saw the Vision) and S. *Francis*. S. *Dominick* had neuer seen S. *Francis* before; yet meeting him by chance the next day, he knew him by that which he had seen the night before, and embraced him with much affection, as his brother and companion in so great a work; and related vnto him, what he had seen. And they often found by the effects her special fauour towards them, and particularly in Pope *Innocentius* the Fourth his time. This Pope was, I know not vpon what ground, auerted from them, and had by his Breues restrayned them of their Faculties and priuiledges. The Friars had no other means of redresse, but by recourse to heauen; and among other deuotions they had appointed to say the Litanies. One day therefore, while those of S. *Dominicks* Order were saying them in their church at *Rome*, one of the Friars saw our B. Ladie standing vpon the altar with her Sonne, as it were pittying the case of the Friars, and their grief and teares which they shed bitterly; and turning to her Sonne repeated these words diuers times, as it is in the Litanies: *Sonne, hearken vnto them.* Not long after, Pope *Innocent*, lying vpon his death-bed at *Naples*, shewed himself very penitent, and speaking those words of the Psalme (*For iniquitie thou hast rebuked man, and made his soule waste away like a spider*) he gaue vp the ghost.

Ps. 38. 12.

8 The B. Virgin shewed the like fauour to the Monks of Mount-Oliuet (a place in Italie) vpon their beginning. For the three gentlemen of *Siena*, who were the first Founders of that Order, agreing vpon a course, and manie resorting to them by reason of the holie life they lead, there wanted not those that informed the Pope against them (who liued then at *Auignion*) as new-fanglers. Wherupon he cited them before him; but dealt fauourably with them and remitted them to *Guido* Archbishop of *Aretium*. While they were vpon their returne into Italie, our B. Ladie Mother of God appeared to the Archbishop, attended with a great number of Angels, commending those men vnto him, and shewed him moreouer a white Habit and the Rule of S. Benedict, which she would haue them vse. In the Church of the B. Trinitie of *Aretium*, they say, there is a picture vpon the wal, which testifyeth this which I haue related; in which Church the Bishop gaue them the Habit and the Rule vnder the protection of our B. Ladie.

The Olinetans.

9 In like manner she promised her assistance to the Order of S. *Hierome*, and shewed fauour towards them. This Order began in Spaine; and when at first there were but two or three little Monasteries of them, some of the Brethren offended with so little a number, resolued among themselues to put themselues into some other Order; and while they were going, our B. Ladie met them visibly vpon the way, and bad them returne, and perseuer in their former course of life; for shortly they should see it spread farre and

The Hieronimits.

fatte and neere, and that al that were of that Order ſhould be her particular ſeruants. Wherewith they were fully ſtrengthned in their firſt purpoſe, and the whole Order of them, vſeth beſides their other garments, a white coate to this day, to teſtifie that they belong to this Virgin.

The ſociety of Iesvs.

10 Finally, we may reckon our Societie of IESVS in this number. For firſt *S. Ignatius* our Founder, was certainly a creature of this B. Virgin. For we reade of him, that while he was yet a ſecular man in his father's houſe, ſhe appeared vnto him very glorious, and ſtood ſome time before him; at which ſight and ſome ſpeech which he had with her, he was quite changed into another man; and not long after he vowed chaſtitie in her honour. Afterwards, when he was reſolued to put himſelf vpon a ſpiritual warfare, he began it in her Church at *Mount-ſerrate*, ſtanding as it were Sentinel al night, before her altar (after the manner of ſome ancient Knights, when they were firſt inſtalled) to giue and dedicate himſelf wholy vnto her. Wherefore as he that ſets the kernel, ſets the tree; ſo when the B. Virgin brought forth *Ignatius*, ſhe brought vs al forth, and our whole Order, as being contayned in him, as the poſteritie of *Abraham*, in his loynes. Which once was ſhewed vnto a Prieſt of our Order, a man of great ſanctitie, by name, *Martin Gutieres*, a Spaniard, who had manie things reuealed vnto him; and among the reſt, as he was trauelling through *France*, he rid by a chapple of our Ladie, and it was giuen him to vnderſtand, that he was to die within eight dayes; and it fel out ſo; for being taken by the Hereticks, and very hardly vſed, he died in their hands. To this man, I ſay, the B. Virgin related manie things, and among others, this which concernes vs al. On a time ſhe appeared before him in verie comelie faſhion and ſtature, and her garment or huke was ſpread out into a great compaſſe, and vnder it was our whole Societie, which ſhe cheriſhed as a mother, and did protect it, as it were, with that garment of her grace and loue. Maſſ. l. 1. vit. Ign. c. 3.

11. Wherefore, ſeing al Religious Orders doe liue vnder the protection of this B. Virgin (as appeareth moſt manifeſtly by the examples and reaſons heer ſet downe) we haue great cauſe to reioyce, and congratulate one another, that we haue the ſelfſame Protectrice and Queen on earth, which the Bleſſed haue in heauen. For what can we want liuing vnder her protection, ſeing there is no miſchief which ſhe is not ſtrong enough to preſerue vs from, nor anie good thing which her prayers and merits are not able to obtaine? For wheras two things are requited in a man that wil doe good to another; power, and wil to doe it, both are ſo great and certain in this B. Queen, that nothing can be deſired more; her power, to ſay in one word al that can be ſayd, is al one with her Sonne's: only he hath it by nature, ſhe hath it by grace and communication: And as for her good wil and inclination to doe good, who can think worthily enough of it, ſeing it is ſo neerly vnited with the Diuine infinite goodnes, and wholy abſorpt and drowned in it? Inſomuch that S. Bernard ſayth thus of her: *She is the Queene of heauen, she is merciful, finally, she is the mother of the only-begotten Sonne of God. And nothing can ſo much commend the greatnes of her power and goodnes, vnleſſe we beleeue that the Sonne of God doth not reſpect his mother, or make doubt, leaſt the bowels of the B. Virgin Marie, are not transformed into al charitable affection; Charitie itſelf, which is of God, hauing corporally reſted in them for nine moneths.* Which ſaying of S Bernard

The Power and good vvil of our B. Ladie.

S. Bernard. ſerm. 1. de Aſſumpt.

extendeth to al Christians; but let vs see, how she doth exercise both power and good will particularly towards Religious people. Of her power we reade a rare example in the Chronicle of *S. Francis* his Order. *Leo* one of the special companions of S. *Francis*, saw one day, as it were vpon a great playne, Christ coming to iudge the world. Multitudes of men and women were gathered thither, the Angels sounded their trompets, and there were two great ladders which reached downe from heauen to the earth, one red, another white; vpon the red ladder Christ leaned, with a seuere and angrie countenance. S. *Francis* standing a litle below him, beckned to his Brethren to come vp confidently that ladder, for that our Sauiour inuited them, and would haue it so: wherefore manie ranne vp hastily, but quickly fel downe againe, some from the third, some from the fourth, some from the tenth, some from the higher steppes, and some when they were almost at the top. At which S. *Francis* was wonderfully sorie, but yet bad them take courage, and runne vp the other white ladder, for there was no danger at al. When they came to it, they saw our B. Ladie leaning vpon the top of it, beholding euerie one of them with a louing aspect, and helping them, and entertayning euerie one of them, so that they al got very easily into heauen; which doth sufficiently shew her power.

A strange vision.

An other comfortable vision.

11. Her goodnes is as admirably expressed in the Historie of the *Cistercian* Order, where we find recorded, that one *Reynaldus*, a very holie man, was one day labouring in the harueſt, among the rest of his Brethren; and because of his old age, he was bid to leaue off, and rest himself; so he sat downe somewhat troubled at it, and behold he saw suddainly a companie of women marching downe a hil that was hard by: they were al clad in white, and one of them went before, much taller and fayrer then the rest, and coming with her retinue to the seruants of God, she embraced euerie one of them very louingly, and kissed them, and wiped the sweat and dust off their browes, with the linnen towels which two of the companie brought with them: and she cherished those most, which laboured hardest. *Reynaldus* beholding it, began to dispute with himself and wonder, who these women might be, that were so bold with the Religious men, beyond al order & custome. And a venerable man appeared standing by him, who told him, that she whom he saw was the Mother of God, with other blessed Virgins, and she came to see her harueſt-folk, for so he called them. This was the vision which *Reynaldus* saw; the rest, though they saw it not with their eyes, yet doubtles they felt it in their soules, and in the increase of corporal strength, and patience, and a heauenlie sweetnes amidst that paynful labour: whereby we vnderstand, that though we cannot see with our eyes the manie fauours which this Blessed Virgin doth vs, yet we receaue manie and often, in al places and seasons, specially in al labour and paynes which we vndergoe for her beloued Sonne our Sauiour IESVS.

THE

The two and twentieth fruit : That the prayers of Religious people are easily heard.

CHAP. XXXV.

IT remayneth that we speake of another fruit of Religion, to wit, that the prayers of Religious people are so graceful and effectual in the sight of God, that they easily obtaine whatsoeuer they aske, as in reason and by daylie experience we may find. A worthie thing doubtles in al mens eyes, and also exceeding profitable, to be thus gratious with our soueraigne Lord and King. For to vse the wealth and power of one that is Omnipotent as his owne, is in a manner to be Omnipotent. In the world it is esteemed so great a thing to haue the care of a Prince, that euerie one doth desire it, and striue for it; what must it then needs be, to be so high in the fauour of God, as to haue accesse vnto him as it were by right, and be so confident, as to aske, and so powerful, as to obtayne, anie thing at his hands? This therefore that is so profitable, and withal so highly honourable a Religious estate among other comodities doth bring vnto vs. For we may iustly make account, that our Lord sayth thus to euerie one of vs: *I am thy Lord God, that haue brought thee out of the land of Ægypt; open thy mouth wide open, and I wil fil it.* The loue which God hath shewed vs in bestowing so great a benefit vpon vs, as to bring vs out of the land of Ægypt, that is out of the world, leauing so manie behind in the miseries therof, doth make vs confident therof. The obedience also of a Religious man, hearkning to the voyce of God, in so great a matter, doth seeme to deserue it; and manie other causes there be, why that infinit goodnes, who is *rich towards al that cal vpon him*, should particularly doe Religious people this fauour. Ps. 80. 11. Rom. 10. 12.

2. The Prophet *Dauid* giueth vs one special reason to think so, when he sayth: *The eyes of our Lord are vpon the iust, and his eares vnto their prayers.* And againe: *He wil doe the wil of those that feare him: and heare their prayer.* Now where is more Iustice and Feare of God, then in that State, which by reason of this feare hath betaken itself, as it were, into a castle of Iustice? for so we may cal Religion, in regard it remoueth vs so farre from al occasions of sinne, and the Diuels from hurting vs, that it is in a manner harder to doe euil, then good: the power of doing euil, is so taken from vs. Ps. 33. 16. Ps. 144. 19.

3 Another reason proper to Religious people, is Pouertie, of which the same Prophet sayth: *Our Lord hath heard the desire of the poore*; God *hath heard the preparation of their harts.* So that God doth preuent the prayers of those that are truly, that is voluntarily, poore, and heare their verie thoughts and desires before they vtter them in prayer: I say, of those that are voluntarily poore; for there be manie whose houses and chests are emptie and poore, but their mind is rich, because it loueth and desireth riches. The Princes of the world, that measure things by their faire out-side, fauour those most, God heareth the poore. Ps. 9. 28.

that are rich and powerful; poore people haue no acceſſe vnto them, they wil not ſo much as looke vpon them. God dealeth after another manner, and admitteth thoſe chiefly to his preſence, and graunteth their requeſts, that for his loue appeare naked before him, and are bare of al human ſubſtance. And how can it be otherwiſe, but that his infinit goodnes and mercie ſhould deale liberally with them, who haue been ſo liberal towards him, and graut them anie thing, that haue giuen him al they had, and al they were in poſſibilitie to haue? For heer that rule takes place, which himſelf preſcribed to his liberalities: *What meaſure you meaſure, ſhal be meaſured againe to you*; yea in more plentiful manner, to wit, a *meaſure preſſed, and ſhaken togeather, and ouerflowing, they wil giue into your boſome.* And if this be the reward of that which we beſtow vpon our neighbour, what may we expect for that which we beſtow vpon God? A third reaſon is, Humilitie; wherof we find written, that the payer *of him that humbleth himſelf, doth pierce the clowdes*; and in an other place: *Our Lord had regard to the prayer of the humble, and did not reiect their prayers.* Now there be two ſorts of Humilitie: the one laſteth for a while only, as for the time we are at our prayers; which humilitie is ſo forcible to obtayne what we deſire, that it is in a manner al in al, as we find by the example of *Achab*, that wicked king, who notwithſtanding his wickednes, no ſooner humbled himſelf in the ſight of God, as the Scripture ſpeaketh, but he obtained what he would. Wherefore if this kind of humilitie be ſo forcible, as to make ſinners haue a fauourable hearing before that ſoueraigne Iudge; certainly the humilitie which is to be ſeen in al our actions, and in the verie manner of our life, and the whole extent therof, muſt needs be farre more effectual to giue the Iuſt a more fauourable audience; I ſay the humilitie of the courſe of life, wherin Religious people liue, which doth not only barre al pompe and ſtate, but placeth vs in the loweſt place, among the poore, ſubiect to euerie bodie, which in a worldlie eye is a great flauerie, though in verie deed it be the greateſt libertie, and to be preferred before kingdomes.

Mat. 7. 1. Luc. 6. 37.

And the humble. *Eccle 35. 21. Pſ. 101. 18.*

3 Reg. 21. 29

4. A fourth cauſe is that, which we find in the Pſalme: *Delight in our Lord, and he wil grant thee the deſire of thy hart*; which is the proper occupation of Religious people. They haue debarred themſelues of al other delights, as of marriage, children, riches, and ſuch as rich men vſe, as hawking, and hunting, banckets, playes, ſtatelie buildings, rich attire, and the like: and in ſteed of them, they haue placed al their delight in God, whom they enioy by prayer, meditation, and reading, and manie other wayes. The ſtate itſelf helpeth them heerin; for being ſpiritual, and wholy dedicated to the ſeruice of God, it giueth them no occaſion of deſiring or asking anie thing, but that which is ſpiritual and pertayning to his ſeruice; which makes that God is the more eaſily inclined to heare them, becauſe when he hearkneth to them in theſe things, he hearkneth to himſelf, and deales for his owne honour and benefit; ſo much doth it import to haue the entercourſe with God, which Religious people haue, and to deale in one and the ſame buſines: ſo that, that which is good or il for the one, is good or il for the other. As when a ſeruant deales for his maiſter, whatſoeuer he doth in that kind, and whatſoeuer he asketh his maiſter, concernes his maiſter more then himſelf; and if his maiſter grant him anie thing, it is for the maiſters profit.

And thoſe that delight in God. *Pſ. 36. 4.*

5. And

5. And doubtles theſe reaſons are very forcible, to moue the infinit goodnes of God to giue vs a fauourable hearing, yet there be two other things which in my opinion are more forcible then anie of the reſt, to wit, the denial of our owne wil, and the vnion and charitie which is betwixt vs. As concerning the firſt, the Prophet *Eſay* anſwering the complaynt which ſome did make, that God did not hearken to their prayers, nor their faſts, nor their teares, ſpeaketh in this manner: *Behold, in the day of your faſting, your owne wil is found;* and promiſeth them moreouer, that if they forgoe their owne wil, *Then you ſhal cal vpon our Lord, and he wil heare you; you ſhal crye out, and he wil ſay, Ia, I am heer;* and he hath reaſō in it. For as it were an vnciuil and vnreaſonable thing among friends, for one to deſire alwayes to haue his owne wil, and neuer to do as his friend would haue him, in regard that in friendſhip there muſt be equalitie, and that which pleaſeth one, muſt pleaſe another, whereby they come to that confidence among themſelues, that they may freely aske, and take by authoritie that which is their friend's: In like manner, in the friendſhip that is betwixt God & vs, nothing doth make him more friendlie towards vs, then the reſigning of our wil to him in al things, great and ſmal. And who is there that doth practiſe this reſignation and conformitie more perfectly, and more conſtantly, then Religious people? who by the Vow of Obedience, haue quite cut off their owne wil, and in place therof, ingrafted in their harts the wil of God? So that (in that meaſure that there can be right and equitie betwixt God and man) a Religious man may in a kind of iuſtice require of God, that ſeing he in al things doth the wil of God, God wil do his wil in ſome thing that concernes alſo his ſeruice.

Denyal of our wils & charitie, two other reaſons, why our prayers are heard. *Iſay. 58. 3.*

6. Of vnitie and fraternal charitie we shal not need to ſay much, ſeing we haue the promiſe of our Sauiour in theſe words: *I ſay vnto you, if two of you agree vpon earth, of whatſoeuer thing they ſhal aske, it ſhal be done vnto them by my Father that is in heauen.* If therefore it go by conſent, what greater conſent can there be then among Religious people, among whom al things are common? and what agreement can be more durable then theirs, who are linked togeather by ſo indiſſoluble a tye, as be their Vowes? So that their prayers muſt needs be more grat ful, and more efficacious in the ſight of God, both in regard of the vertue itſelf of Charitie, which cannot but be exceeding pleaſing to God, who himſelf is Charitie, and for the participation, which, as I ſayd before, is betwixt them, and the communion of al good works, which makes euerie one of them more gratful, and more powerful with God, appearing in his ſight, inueſted with the merits and good works of al the reſt. We reade that *S. Dominick* one day did frākly cōfeſſe to a certain Priour of the *Ciſtercian* Order, that was his great friend, that he neuer asked God anie thing which was not granted him; which the Priour wondring at, ſayd vnto him: And why then do you not aske that God wil make *Conradus* the Dutchman enter into your Order? which *Conradus* was at that time, one of the learnedſt men of Chriſtendome. *S. Dominick* anſwered, it was a hard matter, but yet he did not miſtruſt, but if he ſhould aske it, God would grant it him. And thervpon continued al that night at his prayers; and behold, early in the morning, *Conradus* came to their Church, caſt himſelf at the feete of *S. Dominick*, begging to be receaued into his Order; and was receaued, to the great ioy and

Mat. 18. 19.

A great cōfidence of *S* Dominick in his prayers.

astonishment of euerie bodie. Al bookes of Historie and Deuotion are ful of the like examples, and there is not almost the life of anie Religious person, man or woman, written, wherin we shal not find that they haue obtayned of God manie great things, either aboue the common course of nature, which are the more remarkable or natural and ordinarie, which were vsual with them, but yet lesse noted, and manie not noted at al.

And S. Scholastica.

7. And me thinks, the lesser the things be which they aske and obtaine, the more admirable is the goodnes of God in condescending in them to their prayers and desires; of which kind we reade of *S. Scholastica*, that she fel to her prayers, and God sent a very great rayne, to stay *S. Benedict*, who was her brother, al one night with her. And *S. Thomas of Aquin*, longing for some herrings, when he was sick, he sent him some, though at that time they were not in season. And *S. Francis* in his sicknes desiring to heare some Musick; an Angel came in the night, and played to him in his chamber vpon the lute. These little things, I say, of which there be infinit in the Saints Liues, do shew both how easie God is in hearkning to the prayers of his friends, and that he is farre more inclinable in greater matters, specially such as concerne our owne soules, and others good, as more beseeming his greatnes. In which respect *S. Iohn Chrysostom* sayth, that Religious people are not only beneficial to themselues, but to whole Cities and Common-wealths; and giueth this admonition: When thou seest a man outwardly but meanly clad, yet inwardly adorned with vertue, contemne not that which thou seest outwardly, but fixe thy eyes vpon the riches of his soule and inward glorie. Blessed *Helias* was such, when he had his goat-skin only about him; and yet *Achab* in al his robes, stood in need of his goat-skin. Behold therefore *Achab's* miserie, and *Helias* his riches.

S. Thomas of Aquin

S. Francis.

S. Iohn Chrisost. hom. 4. in Gen.

A comparison between the state of a Religious man, and a Secular Lay-man.

CHAP. XXXVI.

BY the discouerie which we haue made of the fruits and manifold treasures of a Religious life, we may without much labour, easily vnderstand, how farre it excelleth al other courses of life, which be in the world, for as much as concerneth the profitablenes of it, and the easines of arraying to saluation by it. The courses which may stand in comparison with it, are these: The state of a Lay-man, of a Clergie-man, of a Bishop, and of a Solitarie life; and of euerie one of them we wil discourse a-part. And to begin with the lowest, which is the state of a Lay-man, the difference certainly betwixt it and a Religious course, is very great and plaine, and in my opinion euidently expressed by our Sauiour in the Parable of the great supper, from which (and from the seruice of God signifyed by it) three things did with-hold the guests that were inuited; to wit, *I haue bought a farme: I haue bought fiue yoake of oxen: I haue wedded a wife.* Vnder which three heads the Diuine wisedome doth briefly cõprehend al the seuerl trades and occupations;

Luc. 14. 18.

and

and fashions of liuing, which are so diuers in a Secular life. And so *S. Ambrose* doth vnderstand it, adding that our Sauiour in this Parable doth teach vs, that we must forsake al earthlie things, because neither he, that trading in inferiour things, purchaseth earthlie possessions for himself, can come to the kingdome of heauen; since our Sauiour sayd: *Sel what thou hast, and follow me*; nor he that buyeth oxen, seing *Eliæus* killed those which he had, and diuided them among the people; and he that hath wedded a wife, thinks of the things of this world, and not of anie thing belonging to God, not that Marriage is condemned, but because it is greater honour to be intire, for the vnmarried woman; and the widdow thinketh of that which is of God, how she may be holie in bodie and in spirit. Thus farre *S. Ambrose*. And let vs consider a little more particularly these bonds & hindrances, in which al Secular people are intangled, some in one kind, some in another.

S. Ambros. l. 7. in Luc. c. 14. *Mat. 19 21* *3 Reg. 19. 21.* *1. Cor. 7. 34*

2. The dangers and dommages of the first of these impediments are fitly expressed by *S. Augustin* in these words: *By buying a farme we vnderstand the desire of command; for it is naturally pleasing to haue a farme, to be maister of something, to haue other men vnder vs, and to be Lord. A naughtie vice, and the first of al vices; for the first man would needs be Lord, because he would haue no Lord. What is to be Lord, but to be in one's owne power? But there is a greater power. Let vs submit our selues vnto it, that we may be safe.* By which speech of *S. Aug.* we vnderstād both the mischief which is in ambitious seeking to beare rule & sway amōg men, & the happines of Religious people, that are, according to his aduise, so perfectly subiect to God, & bound to his seruice by the indissoluble bond of their Vowes. *S. Gregorie* doth oftēdiscourse of the same dāgerous state, in which they liue that are possessed with an ambitious spirit; and indeed there is no vice which he doth more earnestly inueigh against, then this, and particularly vpon those words of holie *Iob*: *Who sayth to the king: Renegate; and calleth the leaders, wicked*; he giueth vs to vnderstand three things, for which honour and preferment is iustly to be feared. First because, when honour and ambition hath once taken a man in the head, he breaketh with al iustice and honestie, and trampleth it vnder foot. *The sinnes* (sayth *S. Gregorie*) *which are cōmitted out of desire of cōmand, are without number.* Secondly, the verie desire of precedencie, is of itself a great fault, though there be no other sinne mingled with it; & in this sense *S. Gregorie* taketh those words: *Who sayth to the king: Renegate*; because euerie gouernour (sayth he) doth fal into the sinne of Apostacie, as often as delighted with the command he hath ouer other men, he pleaseth himself in that he is singularly honourable. The third danger is by reason of the great charge which lieth vpon him that is in honour, if either he help not his subiects to liue orderly and wel, or, which is worse, they be peruerted by il example; which is the cause, (as *S. Gregorie* interpreteth) why God calleth the *leaders*, *wicked*, because (sayth he) the leader is wicked, who strayeth from the path of truth, & running headlong himself, inuiteth his followers to a downe-fal. Are not therefore they most miserable, that neglecting a supper so plentifully furnished with al that can be desired, cast themselues wittingly vpon so manie mischiefs? In my opinion they are not only most wretchedly miserable, but errant fooles, that being so louingly and freely inuited to this Royal banket, prepared for them without anie labour or cost of theirs, wil rather buy

S. Augustin. ser. 33. de Ver. Domini. The danger of Ambition.

Iob. 34 18. *S. Greg. mor. 24. c. 14.*

buy such a farme, at so deare a rate. And what must it cost them, but a continual slauerie, an infinit care, solicitude, and manie sorrowes, which is dearer then gold or siluer, these being external, the other internal, which goe to our very hart?

The banquet of Religion.

3. Now let vs consider on the other side, the quiet and peaceablenes of a Religious life, free from ambition, fitly expressed in the Parable of a great supper or bancket. For in a great bancket three things doe concurre: Rest, in sitting downe at board; delight, in plentiful feeding; and pleasure, in conuersation with good companie. What greater quiet of mind can anie bodie haue, then a Religious man, that hath forsaken al, and desireth nothing in the world, but contents himself in God, from whom *he is certain*, as the Apostle speaketh, *that neither things present, nor things to come, can seuer him?* What food can be more delightful, then the contemplation of heauenlie things, which infinitly please the palate of the soule? What butchers-meate, or fowle, or delicate sauce, can be compared with the dainties which from the heauenlie bancket of the Blessed, do befal vs? Which are yet made more sweet, by the sweetnes of the companie of so manie of our Brethren and cōpanions as meete togeather at the bancket. For as al meering of good companie togeather is naturally delightful, much more the assemblie of so manie vertuous men so neerly linked to one another. This is the bancket prepared for Religious men, and their whole life time is a bancket, because as the Wiseman sayth, *A safe conscience is a continual bancket.* They liue without danger and anxious feare, and without thought of anie hard and troublesome busines, as in al banckets that which is anie way troublesome, is of purpose layd aside. So that the toylesome and dangerous businesses, which are incident to those that spend al their life-time in buying of farmes, is no way to be compared with the pleasure and securitie of a Religious life.

Rom. 8. 38.

Prou. 15. 15.

The troubles and danger of gayneful occupation.

4. The second rank is of them, that are wholy set vpon yoakes of oxen, and lucre, and gaine, and traffick, and encrease of worldlie substance. A miserable occupation: and to speake the truth, a base kind of people, that set their thoughts so wholy vpon so base a thing; and are therefore iustly compared by our Saviour to them, that bought oxen for tillage, which is the meanest trade of life among the rest. For as they that goe to plough, labour and toyle in earth, and haue their eyes and their minds continually looking downe vpon the earth: so they that scrape wealth togeather, what soeuer they trade in, handle nothing but earth, for in truth al is but earth, though people are foolishly taken with the outward seeming apparance. And the dangers of sinne are so manie, in buying, and selling, and trafficking, that it is very hard to trade in anie thing without sinne, specially if once a man be possessed with the greedie desire of gayne. So that it is most euident, that this kind of life which stands wholy vpon greedines of gaine, cannot be compared with a Religious life in anie thing. For that is alwayes restlesse, ful of trouble and care; this is euer quiet and peaceable, as hauing nothing to doe with things that are subiect to so manie chances, and by reason of them, doe breed exceeding trouble and disquiet. That is in continual hazard of eternal death: this is altogeather safe and without danger. In that it is a rare matter to think of anie spiritual thing, this handleth and taketh delight in nothing els.

5. The

5. The third ſort of people are they that are married, of the bonds of which ſtate though I haue diſcourſed at large before, this may be briefly ſayd, that it is none of the leaſt hindrances for coming to the bancket, to which we are inuited. For if the trial of oxen, and the deſire of wealth, were forcible enough to diuert them from coming to the bancket, what wil not mariage be, which beſides the neceſſitie of getting wealth, brings manie other cares vpon a man, concerning wife, and children, and familie, and manie other things that depend therof; which againe breeds ignorance and forgetfulnes of God, and conſequently much proneſſe to ſinne. Whervpon *S. Bernard* comparing a Religious life with the ſtate of Prelats and married people, ſayth very wel, that *we al labour to paſſe the great and dangerous gulf of this world, but with a great deale of diſaduantage in ſome. Prelats paſſe, as it were, in a ſhip, which is not without danger, by reaſon of the continual tempeſts and ſtormes, in which* (as he ſpeaketh) *ſometimes they mount vp to heauen, treating of ſpiritual things, ſometimes they deſcend euen vnto hel, paſſing iudgement vpon faults infernal. Religious men paſſe by a bridge, which is both a ſhorter, and an eaſier, and a ſafer cut. Finally Secular people that haue entred vpon marriage, and earthlie poſſeſſions, paſſe neither by bridge, nor ſhipboard, but wade quite through*; a dangerous and difficult paſſage (ſayth he) not minding which way they may beſt get through. It is euident, that it is dangerous, becauſe we ſee manie perish in it to our grief, and ſo few to get through as they ought; and it is very hard, ſpecially in theſe dayes, when malice is growne ſo ſtrong, amidſt ſo manie billowes of this world, to shunne the downefals of vice, and the manie pits of mortal ſinnes. This is *S. Bernard's* diſcourſe, liuely expreſſing their miſerable, and our happie lot, they taking ſo dangerous and troubleſome a way, and we a way in which thoſe three things do meete, to wit, ſhortnes, eaſines, and ſafenes, then which nothing can be deſired more.

An excellent ſimilitude out of S. Bernard ſer de 3. Ordin.

6. What shal I need to ſtand ſpeaking in particular of the ſeueral trades of life comprehended in a Secular ſtate, as Souldiers, Marchants, Courtiers, Lawyers, and ſuch as liue by their pen? or which of al theſe can any way be compared with Religious? The moſt gentile of them al, be they that ſpend their dayes in ſtudie, and may eaſieſt of anie others be ſaued, if they wil vſe the knowledge of the things, which God hath created, as a ſtep to the loue and feare of God who made them. And yet how hard and rare a thing is this in the world, where euerie one hath his ſeueral pretences? and making preferment or gaine, or fame and renowne, the end of their ſtudies, do ſpoyle them in the ſetting-on and bring their thoughts and labours at laſt to nothing; that which *S. Bernard* ſpeaketh being moſt commonly true among them, that ſome deſire to know that they may be knowne, which is vanitie; others to know, which is curioſitie; others to ſel their knowledge, which is as it were to marchand it.

The dangers of Students in the vvorld.

S. Bernard. ſer. 36. in Cant.

7. Now if this Secular knowledge be ſubiect to ſo manie dangers, and in a manner nothing but an inſtrument of auarice and ambition, what shal we think of others, & chiefly of thoſe, that follow the Courts of Princes? Doubtles to make a compariſon betwixt theirs and a Religious life, were to affront the ſanctitie of Religion. For though there be ſome little reſemblance betwixt them in that both do ſerue, and both looke for a reward of their ſeruice, yet

and of Courtiers.

in substance there is no comparison. For their reward is very casual, the reward of Religious people most assured; theirs is temporal and perishable, and, sound it neuer so big, it is in truth but smal: the reward of a Religious man is immortal, eternal, farre beyond his hopes, farre beyond the thought of man. The Maisters whom they serue, are mutable and mortal, often froward and hard to please, let a man do what he can for them, and oftimes for a smal offence they leese their fauour, which they laboured manie yeares to gaine: Our Lord and Maister is so good and merciful, that he easily beareth with al our faults and negligences, and of his owne accord offers to cure vs of them; of whom *S. Ambrose* sayd truly and wisely, *that he neither feared to die, nor refused to liue, because he serued a good Maister.*

An excellent saying of S. *Ambrose.*

8. This one consideration of the great difference, which is betwixt seruing men and seruing God, duly weighed, hath been often the occasion that manie haue left the one, to betake themselues to the other. *S. Augustin* relateth of two seruing in no meane place in the Emperour's Court, that falling vpon the Life of *S. Anthonie*, and reading it, were so changed, that presently they forsooke the preferment and hopes which they had at Court, and their wiues which they had lately wedded, and finally al other things which they had in the world; and, as *S. Augustin* expresseth it, encouraging one another in this businesse, they reasoned thus among themselues: Tel me, I pray thee, what do we pretend in al these labours of ours? what do we ayme at? to what end do we beare these Colours? Our vtmost hope at Court, is it not to be in fauour with the Emperour? And how fickle is this, and ful of hazard? And by how manie dangers do we come at last into more danger? and how long wil it last? But if I wil, behold, I am now presently the friend of God. Doubtles it was the Holie-Ghost that put this consideration and light into their mind. And certainly they were in the right, specially where they fel vpon the account, that by manie dangers of wayting, and flattering, and vndermining others, oftimes by slanderous reports, they come at last to get the eare of their Prince, wherin is the greatest danger of al: and for this they take a great deale of paynes manie yeares together, stil vncertain, whether they shal euer compasse it. But the fauour of God is most assured; if I wil, I presently put my self into it; and I shal not need to feare, that after long seruice, I shal be cast off without reward. Wherefore as discoursing of marriage, we sayd, that if a bodie must needs be bound, it is better to be bound to God, who cannot but be good vnto vs, then to man, who is oftimes il, and though he be good, may become euil: so now we may say of seruice; if one must be tyed to do another's wil, it is much better to subiect ourselues to the wil of God, as Religious people do, then to the wil of man. The wil of God cannot but be good, and honest, and profitable for vs to performe; the wil of man is oftimes, yea rather most commonly wicked and vniust, and which is chiefly to be considered, alwayes bendeth to the profit and commoditie of him whom we serue. And this is briefly as much as we shal need to speake concerning the courses of this world in particular.

A memorable example of two Courtiers out of S. *Augustin* l. 8. conf. 6.

9. In general we may say truly of al, that a Secular life must needs be ful of a great deale of mischief, because self-wil, which is the source and fountain of al mischief, doth beare al the sway in it, for our wil being so corrupt and vitiously

Danger of the world by reason of self-will.

vitiously bent as it is, it cannot hold it self from running headlong now into one thing, now into another: and being withal so blind and infirme, and the passions of anger, and hatred, and lust, so violent and headstrong, and so little endeauour vsed to bridle them and keep them in awe, that rather by giuing them continually the raynes, they grow so strong that they beare al before them, infinit mischief must needs come therof both to soule and bodie. For where reason and counsel are shut out, and rash headlongnes taketh place, al must needs be vncertain and ful of miserie, nothing constant and safe. Heervpon we see in the world so manie suddain, and rash determinations, so manie passionate resolutions; for as occasion serueth, and oftimes without anie occasion at al, they enter vpon new counsels of warre, of trading, and other businesses, and alter them as rashly, as they were rashly vndertaken; and no streight, no gulf hath more alterations of waues and billowes, then they haue of their proceedings; whereby oftimes themselues and their families come to vtter ruine and destruction. Religious people being lead by aduise of others, are free from these inconueniences; specially seing (as I haue sayd before, and must often say it, or rather we must continually haue it before our eyes) not man, but God doth gouerne them: so that there is no danger, least blinded with self-loue, they fayle in their choice. For in verie deed they are not at their owne choice, but others choose for them, and so the whole course of their life is gouerned after one constant, certain, and vniforme manner.

Sloath and idlenes, & too much busines, two dangerous rocks.

10. Moreouer in a Secular life there be two other most dangerous rocks, and scarce anie bodie, but rusheth against one of them, to wit, sloath and idlenes, or els too much busines. The first is most commonly the fault of the richer sort, the second of the poorer kind of people, or of those that would fayne be richer then they are, of which kind the world is ful. Idlenes (as *S. Bernard* writeth very truly) is the sinck of al temptation, and of al vnprofitable and naughtie thoughts, finally the height of malice. And as for the danger of too much busines, the same *S. Bernard* doth describe it to a haire, in the beginning of the Books, which he wrote to *Eugenius*, of Consideration, saying, that it doth so harden the hart of man, that it can neither be rent with compunction, nor softned with compassion, nor yeald to threats, nor be moued by entreaties, but is vngrateful for courtesies receaued, shameless in dishoneſt dealings, headlong in dangers, finally it neither feareth God, nor respecteth men. And *S. Gregorie* vnderstanding, that the anxietie of a secular life was figured in *Esau*, and the quiet of a Religious life in *Iacob*, of which one was giuen to hunting and husbandrie, the other was a playne man, liuing at home in his tent, therevpon discourseth in this manner: What was designed by *Esau's* hunting; but their life that follow the flesh in outward pleasures? And he is also sayd to haue been a husbandman, because the louers of this world do the more earnestly labour in exteriour things, the more they leaue the interiour vncultiuated. But to dwel in tents, as in a house, is to restrayne ourselues in the inward of our mind, and not to spend ones-self outwardly in desires, least gaping after manie things abroad, they depart wandering from themselues in their thoughts.

S. Bernard ad fratr. de monte Dei.

S. Gregorie. 5. Moral. 8.

11. Finally to make an end of this comparison, secular Lay-people, as times go now adayes, either runne headlong into al manner of vice, or if anie liue more reseruedly & honestly, they think they do wel enough if they abstayne frō sinne, if they do not steale, if they do not kil, in brief if they offēd not God; if they can do this, they are held rare men, and pointed at, as the best men in the world; Religious people do this; and moreouer vse their vttermost endeauour to encrease in vertue; and purchase new crownes of humilitie, pennance, mortification, and the like; whervnto Religion itself is a great spurre and help. Which of these courses is the better and more profitable, might be declared manie wayes, which for breuitie sake I omit, and wil content myself with this one saying of *S. Hierome*, or whosoeuer was authour of the booke intitled to *Demetrias*, where he sayth thus: It is not enough for thee to do no euil, if thou do no good. Euerie tree which bringeth not good fruit, shal be cut downe and cast into the fire; and yet we soothe our selues, if we be not charged with il fruit, though we shal be condemned, if we beare not good fruit; so we reade, that the Father wil cut off euerie branch that bringeth not fruit in his Sonne; and he that hid the Talent, which he had receaued, in his hand kercher, is condemned by our Lord as an vnprofitable and naughtie seruant; not only to haue diminished, but, not to haue encreased, is damnable. So sayth *S. Hierome*.

Hierome Demetr.

A Comparison betwixt the state of Religion and the Secular Clergie.

CHAP. XXXVII.

NExt aboue the Lay-men is the degree of the Secular Clergie, much more perfect and neerer to God then that of the Laytie, and withal somewhat resembling a Religious estate, in regard they professe themselues seruants to God, and are deputed thervnto by a sacred Character; yet Religious men haue the aduantage of them in manie things of no smal importance. And first Religious men are in a state of Perfection, the Secular Clergie are not; for the nature of a state is to be immoueable, constant, vnchangeable, which cannot be without obligation of Vow; and the Clergie make no Vow, not only if they haue no Cure, but though they haue; for they may relinquish it, and are not bound by anie kind of promise to retayne it. *S. Thomas* handleth this matter learnedly and at large in the Booke which he wrote of the Perfection of a Spiritual life, by occasion of an errour of some vnlearned and wicked men, that to depresse a Religious state were bold to compare the Secular Clergie with them, and also to preferre them before Religious. But their rash censure was expressly condemned by a Decree of the Pope, and cleerly confuted by *S. Thomas* in the Booke aboue-named, where among other things he sayth, that when anie bodie is deputed perpetually for an office or function, the Church vseth certain rites and Ceremonies in it, as when the care of a Church is committed to a Bishop, he is annoynted, and a certain forme of prayer sayd ouer him, the Crosier-staffe and

Religion is a state of Perfection.

S. Thomas de perf. spir. c. 20.

and bread and wine is giuen into his hand, & a ring put on his finger, and manie such other things are done, to shew that he is as it were espoused to his Church, and tyed perpetually vnto it. The profession of Religious men hath in like manner certain rites and ceremonies, which are very ancient, and are related by *S. Denys*, who also deliuereth the reason and signification of them. And these ceremonies are to this day practised, some in one Religious Order, some in another, and some in euerie one. But Secular Priests when they take a Cure vpon them, vse no Ceremonie at al; whereby we may gather, as *S. Thomas* sayth, that they are not only not in a state of Perfection, but not so much as in a state. *S. Denys de Eccl. Hier. c. 6.*

2. And moreouer we may vnderstand how farre their life is inferiour to a Religious state, because it is not only lawful but laudable to passe from the bare life of a Secular Clergie-man into Religion, wheras certainly no man is suffered to descend from the greater and better state to that which is lesse; and the holie Canons haue so determined, not only because a Religious state is more secure, but also because it is more perfect, and ordayned in a certain place, that Clergie-men that desire the institute of Monks, are not to be hindred from it, because they desire to follow a better life, and the Bishops must suffer them to haue free accesse thervnto. And *S. Gregorie* giueth *Desiderius*, a Bishop that held back one of his, a fraternal admonition, and it wil not be amisse to see in what weightie words he doth it. We exhort, sayth he, that your Brotherhood be no hinderance to his earnest deuotion, which he laboureth to haue in the holie purpose; rather by Pastoral admonition inflame him with what exhortations you are able, that the feruour of this desire waxe not cold in him, in regard that he that seuering himself from the turbulent tumult of secular troubles, hastneth to the hauen of the Monasterie, out of desire of quiet, ought not to be intangled againe in the troubles of Ecclesiastical cares, but let him be suffered to remaine safe from al them in the prayses of God, as he requesteth. Thus sayth *S. Gregorie* very wel; specially that a Religious life is a secure and quiet hauen, and contrariwise an Ecclesiastical function ful of trouble, and vnquiet with the tumult of secular cares.

A Secular Clergie-man may become Religious. *C. 19. q 1. c. cleric.*

S. Gre. l. 16. reg. ep. 20.

3. *S. Anselme*, that holie and learned man, wrote an epistle much to the same effect, to *Godfred* Bishop of *Paris*, in good manner, yet withal gravely taxing him, for hindring one of the Clergie that was desirous to take vpon him the yoak of Religion; and proueth by manie reasons, that he had neither reason, nor warrant to do so. *S. Anselme*

3. But that we may proceed the cleerer in this comparison which we haue in hand, betwixt these two liues, let vs consider the danger and difficulties incident to the life of a secular Clergie-man. First, in respect of the dignitie of his Order: secondly, in regard of the weightie charge of soules, that lyeth vpon him: and lastly by reason of his Church-liuings and possessions. As for the dignitie of his Order, who can deny, but that it requireth great vprightnes of life and behauiour, great sanctitie and integritie, and that a little fault in him, is so much the more fowle and vnbeseeming? For certainly the degree of Priesthood is of that ranke and esteeme, that no Princelie dignitie vpon earth, nor of anie Angel in heauen, is equal vnto it, in regard that none of them haue power to consecrate the Bodie of our Saviour, to handle it, to receaue and

The obligations & dangers of the Secular Clergie.

S. Iohn Chrysostome Hom. 83. in Matt.

minister it to others: This power and vertue is Diuine, and maketh the that haue it, rather Gods then men. What puritie therfore of life & soule doth such an office require? *Whom must he not excel in puritie* (sayth *S. Iohn Chrysostome*) *that offereth such a Sacrifice? What beame of the Sunne can be brighter then that hand ought to be, which diuideth this flesh? or the mouth that is ful of this spiritual fire? or the tongue that is died red with this bloud, which can neuer be reuerenced enough?* And *S. Bernard* doth with great reason bewayle the rashnes of men in this kind: and his iust lamentation agreeth as fitly to our times, as to his, and somewhat more: *Euerie one runneth to Holie Orders, and men take vpon them without respect or consideration, the functions which are venerable to the verie Angelical Spirits. They, in whom auarice doth raigne, ambition beareth sway, pride doth rule, yea iniquitie and luxurie doth cõmand, feare not to lay hands vpon the Ensigne of the the heauenlie Kingdome, and put that Imperial crowne vpon their heads.* Religious men are farre from this fault; for though most of them be Priests (because the State should not want so great a dignitie and benefit) yet they come vnto it with an other spirit and preparation: not moued thervnto by auarice, or ambition, which the State itself excludeth, nor so much as by their owne wil and choice: for

S. Bernard ad Cler. c. 19

Hebr. 5. 4.

as in things of lesser moment, so in this chief busines of al, they are ruled by others whom they haue in place of God: and consequently seeing they take not this *honour to themselues*, as the Apostle speaketh, *but are called by God, as Aaron*, no doubt but his infinit goodnes wil furnish them, as he is wont, with abundant grace to go through with it.

A memorable exãple of Rupertus.

4. We haue a memorable and pleasant example therof in *Rupertus*, who was afterwards Abbot of *Tuy*, and a great Writer. He relateth of himself (and we need no better witnes) that being vrged by his Superiours to take Holie Orders, and earnestly refusing it, knowing his owne vnworthines, in the night he saw a vision, by which he plainly vnderstood that it was God's wil it should be so. He saw vpon an Altar, an Image of our Sauiour crucifyed, as if he had been aliue, and looked ful vpon him; at which sight he was much inflamed, and desired very much to embrace the Crucifix: but the table of the Altar being great and large, hindred him: yet he found himself by inward instinct inuited by our Sauiour, and coming neer, the Altar diuided itself, and made him way to the Crucifix; then he confidently layd hold of it, embraced, and kissed it: and our Sauiour, to receaue his kisse, as it were into his hart, opened his diuine mouth, and receaued him gaping; wherwith amidst those louing embracings, his hart was greatly inflamed with the loue of God; & he found within himself a desire to be Priest, which before he so earnestly auoyded. In the morning he related the whole passage to his Abbot, and was not long after made Priest, to the great ioy and contentment of euerie bodie.

L. 12. in Matth.

5. The same *Rupertus* relateth another passage, by which, after he was made Priest, he was much confirmed and comforted. While he lay in his bed, he saw the likenes of a man coming downe from heauen, with his head muffled, as if he would not be knowne, and entring wholy into him, fitted head to head, and feet to feet, and al the rest of his bodie to the other parts therof; and moreouer made such an impression of himself into the substance of his soule, as cannot be declared by words, more quick, and more deep, then anie seale can be printed vpon the softest wax. And he sayth further, a thing which may be easily

beleeued,

beleeued, that he found therupon such a wonderful sweetnes and delight: that had it not been presently stinted by the hand of God, without doubt the torrent of pleasure had taken away his soule from his bodie. Al this was a signe of the holie Eucharist, wherin the Sonne of God doth hide his face, but yet truly infuse himself into our whole soule, and transforme it into his owne likenes, and fil it with heauenlie ioy; into the soules, I say, of them, that come vnto him, as *Rupertus* did, not rashly, nor lead by anie earthlie desire, but inuited, yea cõpelled by God by means of their Superiours. And certainly, if a bodie truly consider the weightines of the busines, and the importance of the function, he can neuer perswade himself, that he can safely vndertake it, vnlesse he be secured by some such Oracle.

5. Seing therefore no man can doubt of that which hath been sayd, let vs passe to the other point of the care of soules; at the heauie charge wherof, we may giue a guesse by that, which the Wise-man sayth in these words: *Sonne, if thou haue answered for thy friend, thou hast nayled thy hand to a stranger, thou art ensnared in the words of thy mouth, and taken with thy owne speeches. Do therefore that which I say, my Sonne, and free thy self, because thou art fallen into the hands of thy neighbour. Runne, make haste, rowse thy friend; giue not sleep to thy eyes, and let not thy eye-lids winke.* These are the cares and snares, as he calles them, in which he intangleth himself, that answereth for another, and not for one man only, but for manie, not in a monie-matter, but in a busines concerning the safetie of a thing immortal and eternal, such as our soules are; and they that haue taken this charge vpon them, do not only offend, if by sinful life and euil example they hurt others (for this is the worst that can be) but by meere cessation, if they do not help others, if, as the Prophet *Ezechiel* complayneth, *they do not strengthen that which is infirme, nor heale that which is sick: nor bind that which is broken, nor bring back that which is strayed, nor seeke that which is lost.* Whereupon *S. Gregorie* hath certain words which are very true, and greatly to be considered, in one of his Homilies, speaking thus: *I am of opinion*, sayth he, *that God doth not suffer more preiudice by anie bodie then by Priests, when he beholdeth those, whom he hath placed for the correction of others, themselues to giue others il example: when we ourselues do sinne, who ought to keepe others from sinne, we seeke not to gaine soules, we daily attend our owne ends: we couet earthlie things, and earnestly hunt after the prayse of men; And because, in regard we are set ouer others, we haue greater freedome to do what we list, we turne the ministerie of the Benediction, which we haue receiued, to be a ground of ambition; we leaue God's cause, and attend to worldlie busineses, we hold the place of sanctitie, and are intangled in earthlie works.* Religious men are free from these dangers, as hauing no charge of soules; which they should haue little cause to brag of, if they did not otherwise attend to the help of soules; for as they should be free from these incommodities, so they should want the great reward, which God doth promise to these that labour in his vineyard. But in my opinion they enioy al the good that can be in so great a work, and yet are free from the dangers therof: for they employ themselues in the helpe of their Neighbour so carefully, and diligently, and paynefully, as nothing more can be expected; and yet because they do it of their owne accord, without anie tye or obligation, they are free from those sinnes, which follow vpon the obligation which others haue.

The heauie charge of the care of Soules.

Prou. 6. 1.

Ezech. 34. 16.

S. Greg. Hom. 17. in Euang.

And

S. Thomas opus de perf. c. 23.

And so we find it plainly deliuered by *S. Thomas*, that Religious men performe the offices of greatest perfection in the helpe of their neighbour, more then other Clergie-men, because most commonly by their Institute they trauel in those charitable functions, not out of iustice, as others of the Clergie, but out of charitie, assisting Bishops in the cure of soules by preaching, hearing Confessions, publick and priuate exhortations, and as manie other wayes as there be meanes in this kind, as euerie one may see with his eyes that so they do.

Church-liuings.

6. A third burthen of the Secular Clergie is their Church-liuings; which most yet think no burthen, but rather labour al they can to encrease them: which they would not do, if they felt how heauie they lye vpon them. One day they wil vnderstand, both that they are a burthen, and in how holie and pious vses these pensions bought by the bloud of our Sauiour, and consecrated vnto him alone by the deuotion of the Faithful, should haue been employed. Al Diuines and holie Writers handle this matter at large; therefore because I wil be short, I wil content myself with the onlie authoritie of *S. Bernard*, who in one of his Sermons vpon the Canticles sayth thus: *The Clergie ought to feare, the Ministers of the Church may be afraid, who in the lands of Saints, which they possesse, deale so vniustly, that they are not content with the stipend which ought to suffice them, but wickedly and sacrilegiously retayne to themselues the superfluous things, wherewith the needie were to be maintayned, and are not afraid to consume the liuing of the poore in vses of their pride and luxurie, offending doubtles with double iniquitie, both because they take that which is not their owne, and abuse holie things in their vanities and filth.* And I shal need to say no more of this point. For the reason is euident, & which to my knowledge, hath conuinced some, and perswaded them to become Religious, discoursing thus with themselues: To what purpose shal I goe seeke to enrich myself by the Church? For when I haue gotten something, if I dot not make the poore partakers of it, I liue in continual sinne: if I giue them part, I liue in perpetual care and trouble: and why should I goe make myself steward to the poore, with so much dommage to myself? This consideration, as I sayd, hath moued manie to leaue al, and embrace the nakednes of Religion. But let vs conclude with this short argument.

S. Bernard Serm. 23. in Cant.

The Clergie in more dangerous condition then anie other.

7. In the Church of God there be men of three conditions, which compared among themselues, wil easily shew what iudgement we are to make of each of them. The first are Secular Lay-men: who haue this incommoditie annexed to their manner of life, that they haue in matter of perfection few helps and manie hindrances: but withal they haue this commoditie, that they haue no obligation to greater perfection, then the law of the Ghospel doth lay vpon al Christians in general. The second are Religious men, who are obliged, not so much to be perfect, as to desire and endeauour to be so, & haue so manie & so great helps thervnto, and are withal so free from being hindred, that they may not only attayne it with ease and facilitie, but with a great deale of pleasure and sweetnes. The third is the order of the Secular Clergie, of which we speake: which (if we weigh things right) suffers in a manner the incommodities of both the other States, and wants the commodities of them. For first they haue the same obligation to Perfection, which Religious men haue, and are certainly somewhat more bound vnto it, then Religious men are, both in regard of the dignitie of their office, and of the diuinenes of the Sacraments of which they are Ministers,

and of

& of the Cure of ſoules, and yet haue not thoſe helps which Religious men haue, for that particular & pitiful influence of grace, of which I haue ſpoken at large before. And againe, they may ſeeme to be in worſe caſe then Lay-men, becauſe they are in a manner clogd with al the impediments of Perfectiō which Lay-men haue, and cannot pretend the excuſe which they may, if they be leſſe perfect; for, liuing as they doe in the world pel mel among them, and ſayling, as I may ſay, the ſame ſeas, they muſt needs be tormented and toſſed with the ſame winds and waues of auarice, ambition, and luxurie, which they are; which vices being in-bred and ingrafted in euerie man's nature, are alſo dayly inflamed more and more, by the preſence of delightful obiects, by the occaſions, and commoditie of ſinning, by libertie itſelf. For how is it poſſible to auoyd the itching deſire of vaine glorie, liuing in the midſt of honours? Or not to be taken with the loue of riches, when we adminiſter them for ourſelus and others? Or how can a man's honeſtie be long in ſafetie, that beholds with his eyes, the ſelf ſame allurements, as Secular people doe, & pampers his bodie with the ſelf ſame fare and attire, and is oftimes farre more curious and delicious then they?

8. *S. Bernard* therefore had great reaſon to ſpeake as he doth, among other things, of this degree of the Church, to Pope *Eugenius*, in his books of cōſideration: What is the meaning, *ſayth he*, „ that the Clergie wil be one thing, and „ ſeeme another, to wit, ſouldiers in attire, and Clerks for gaine? But indeed „ performe neither; for neither do they fight, as ſouliders; nor preach, as Clerks „ O miſerable Bride, intruſted to ſuch attendance, as feare not to turne into their „ owne coffers, that which is aſſigned her for her wearing. And in one of his „ Sermons: Holie Orders are made an occaſion of ſordid lucre, and they eſteeme „ gayne, to be pietie; they are moſt wonderfully deuout in vndergoing, yea rather „ in taking the care of ſoules; but it is the leaſt care they care for; and the laſt „ thought they haue, is of the ſaluation of ſoules. Could there a heauier perſecution then this, fal vpon the Sauiour of ſoules? In *S. Bernard's* opinion therefore, the greateſt fault of that degree, is, that attending to their priuate intereſt, they neglect the care of ſoules, the aduancing of the honour of God, the function of preaching and teaching; that liuing of the Altar, their laſt, and leaſt thoughts be of ſeruing the Altar, but are wholy bent towards themſelues, and their owne priuate ends. And if there be anie that refuſe not theſe Church labours, but employ themſelues in preaching and exhorting the people; where ſhal we find a man that doth it, with the intention it ought to be done? That beſtoweth his paynes and labour, in this vinyard of our Lord God of Hoaſts, *gratis*? That truly aymeth at the ſeruice of God, and reflecteth nothing vpon himſelf. A rare matter and a hard peece of buſines, to preſerue ones-ſelf in the world, from the world, that is, from al touch of ſecular deſire; and contrariwiſe, it is too-too eaſie and obuious, for the deſire of honour, or ſome Eccleſiaſtical preferment, or of a fat Benefice, or ſome other temporal commoditie, to creep-in amidſt thoſe works, which of themſelues are honeſt and laudable. And we need no other proofe therof, then that which *S. Auguſtin* ſayth, in theſe words: Heare the Apoſtle bewayling ſuch men. He ſayth that others preach the Ghoſpel out of charitie; others out of ſome other occaſion; and of theſe, he ſayth, that they preach not the „ Ghoſpel right; an vpright thing, but themſelues not vpright. Whoſoeuer „ ſeeketh anie thing of God, beſides God, doth not ſeeke God purely and chaſtly, „

S. Bernard l. 3. de conſide. in fine.

Ser. de Conuerſ. S. Paul

S. Auguſt. Ser. 49. de Ver Domini. Philip. 1. 15.

" if he did seeke God, he would be chaste, because God is the lawful husband of " a soule.

9. Finally, let vs grant that there be none of al the inconueniences in that manner of life, and frame a Clergieman, as our selues can desire or imagin, that he want nothing that may beseeme his calling, yet this his perfection is farre inferiour to the perfection of a Religious man, and comes farre short of the manie great commodities, of which I haue hitherto treated. He wants the direction of Superiours, the examples, and encouragement of his equals: he enioyeth not that participation of good works, which is so profitable and vseful; The plentie of spirit and grace more fully descending vpon manie so neerly linked togeather: finally, he wanteth the commodities of Pouertie and Obedience, and which is the chiefest of al, be he what he wil, he is his owne, and is not arriued to so much perfection, as to depart wholy, from the vse of his owne wil, and by perpetual and irreuocable donation to yeald it vp to God; this being the priuiledge only of Religious Vowes.

10. Wherefore we may conclude this comparison of Religious men, both with the Secular Clergie and Lay people, with a fit similitude, which *S. Bernard* bringeth of a Procession, which our Sauiour maketh, in which Procession he sayth, there be three ranks of men: some strew their garments on the ground, which be Secular people, of the better and deuouter sort, who of their earthlie substance, which cleaueth to the soule out, wardly as a garment to the bodie, giue almes. Others cut boughs from the trees: which are the good and feruent Pastours and Curats of soules, preaching to their subiects. Both which kinds of men, though they accompanie our Sauiour, though they both enter the cittie with him, yet the beast which he rid vpon, was much neerer to him, and laboured more, because those other bestow vpon him part of that which aboundeth: the beast puts it self wholy vnder his seruice. This beast resembleth Religious people, who are meeke, and gentle, and in outward shew despicable, as the Asse our Sauiour rid vpon, yet strong, and seruiceable, fit for carriage and Obedience, and so neere the Sonne of God, as that they touch him, and receaue him within them, and beare him about to others. Wherupon the holie saint turning his speech to his Brethren, cõcludeth thus ma kind of exultation: Must I say " no more, that you may not be prowde, or rather goe on, that you may haue " comfort? Are not you the beast whom Christ sitteth (according to the saying " of the Apostle) glorifying, and bearing, God in your bodies?

An excellent similitude out of S. Bernard S. 1. de ramis.

1. Cor. 6. 20.

A comparison of a Religious State, with the State of Bishops and Prelates.

CHAP. XXXVIII.

The heauie Charge of a Prelate.

NOw we are to consider whether it be better, more desireful, and more profitable for saluation, to be a Religious man, or to be a Bishop or Prelate. And supposing the dangers to which al Clergie men are exposed, as I haue delared in the pre-

the precedent chapter, the Resolution is easie for the same, yea farre greater dangers do attend vpon the state of Bishops: And those two things which *S. Austin* deliuereth in a certaine Epistle, are very true: That nothing is more easie, more pleasant, more grateful to man, then the office of a Bishop, a Priest, or Deacon, if a bodie cary the matter slightly, and fauour himself in it: yet if a bodie do so, nothing is more miserable, more doleful, more damnable in the sight of God: For the Apostle pronounceth generally of al Prelates, *They watch, as who are to giue account for our soules.* wherupon *S. Gregorie* giueth this pertinent admonition: *Let him*, sayth he, *that is perhaps scarce able to satisfie the rigorous Iudge for his owne only soule, consider that when he shal come to giue vp his accounts, he wil be found, as I may say, to haue alone so manie soules, as he hath subiects vnder him to gouerne.* *S. Ihon Chrisostome* wrote six whole bookes of Priesthood, in which he may seeme to haue imployed al the golden eloquence, from which he takes his name, to shew how hard and dangerous a taske he doth vndertake, that taketh vpon him the gouernment of soules: And among other things he brings a similitude of a shepheard, keeping, not his owne, but another bodies sheep, and if anie of them come to be deuoured of a wild beast, or be stolen, or be lost, as *Iacob* sayd: he standeth answerable for them, because he vndertook to keep them. And if he leese a sheep or two, out of cowardlines, the maister perhaps wil easily pardon him, or take some smal compensation: But he that hath vndertaken the feeding of the flock of Christ, shal not escape vnpunished, if he leese such sheep, nor satisfy with anie thing els, but with his owne soule. A shepheard hath to do with wolues and theeues: A Prelate warreth not against flesh and blood, but against the Princes, and Powers, and Rulers of this darkenes: against a huge armie of vices, against whoredome, vncleanenes, lasciuiousnes, rancour, brawles, iealousies, and manie others: The diseases of sheep are commonly knowne and easie to be discouered, and the remedies are not hard, they may be bound and cut, and seared, as occasion serueth: The diseases of the mind are secret, & hard to be cured, some rankle and grow worse in the cure it self: This is *S. Ihon Chrysostomes* discourse in his second booke. In his third booke he speaketh thus: *If a man would purme in trust with a ship laden with rich wares to passe the Ægean or Mediterranean sea, I should not stand much vpon the refusing of it, for feare of ship-wrack, and yet there is nothing hazarded in it, but gold and siluer: And where there is danger of leesing not a ship, but a soule, and drowning it, not in the waters of the sea, but in the bottomlesse pit of Hel-fire, where death expelles a man, and not corporal death, but together with the death of the bodie, the death of the soule, Who can find it strange, if I refuse to expose my self to so great danger?*

S. Augustin Epist. 148.

Heb. 13. 17.

S. Greg. Mor. 24. c. vlt.

S. Ihon Chrysost. l. 2 de Sacerdotio.

Gen. 31. 39.

Idem. l. 3.

2. S. *Bernard* calleth the care of soules, a thing deposited, and expresseth the worth therof by these similitudes: *It is a cittie*, sayth he, *Be watchful to keep it safe and in peace: It is your Spouse, be careful to loue it, they are your sheepe, attend to find them pasture*: and runneth on discoursing at large of euerie one of them. And much more we may find euerie where in the holie Fathers, to the same effect; for they do often and very seuerely inculcate this truth, so real and solid, that no words can sufficiently expresse it. Wherefore what cōparison can there be betwixt the continual dangers, care, and trouble of this estate of Prelacie, and the quiet, securitie, and holie retirement of a Religious life?

S. Bernard S. 66. in Cant.

S. Bernard Ep. 41.

an ample Theme to discourse on. But me thinks *S. Bernard* hath in few words knit vp togeather al that can be sayd in this matter; When in his Epistle to *Henry* Archbishop of *Sens*, he speaketh thus; If I lurking in a denne, and as it were vnder a buthel, not giuing light, but smoaking, am not yet able notwithstanding to auoyd the gusts of wind, but wearied with continual temptations, and diuers assaults, am waued vp and downe like a reed shaken with euerie blast, what would become of me if I were placed on high vpon a hil, or set vpon a Candle-stick? Heer I haue but my self alone to saue, and yet to my self alone I am offensiue: I am tedious to my self, I am a burthen, and dangerous to my self; so that I am often faine to be angrie with my owne greedie appetite and gut, and my eyes that scandalize me; with what vexation therefore is he turmoyled, what affronts must he needs indure, who though he haue nothing of his owne to trouble him, can neuer want in behalf of others, conflicts without, and feare within? Al this is *S. Bernards* discourse.

The Perfection of the State of a Bishop, and a Religious man.

3. Wherfore, seeing no man can be so blind, but that he must needs acknowledge that a Religious state is farre safer, and neerer to eternal saluation, then the state of a Bishop, let vs consider how the case stands concerning the perfection of them both: Both of them professe perfection, but not after one and the same manner. The dignitie of a Bishop requireth that the man be actually possessed, and grounded in perfection; for Bishops are Successours to the Apostles; and consequently their office and function is a spiritual Maistrie; one of the Apostles professing as much of himself in these words: *I am placed a Preacher, and Apostle, and Teacher of nations, in faith and truth*; and no man that is not himself perfect, can be a maister of perfection, as no man can teach philosophie, or anie mechanical art, that hath not learned the same. The state of Religion requireth not perfection, but leadeth a man vnto it; it is the schoole wherein perfection is learned by little and little, partly by hearing them that teach it, partly by practise therof. Wherfore Diuines do tearme the one a state of perfection already acquired, the other a state of perfection to be acquired: as wherin no man of necessitie must presently be perfect, but it is sufficient if he aspire vnto it, and indeauour by little and little to become perfect. Which is the reason, as *S. Bonauenture* deliuers, why sinners, and such as are imperfect are admitted into Religion, to wit, that they may be reformed, and become good. And concerning Bishops, he bringes this saying of *S. Hierome*: The learning and condition of a Bishop must be so eminent, that his verie gate, and cariage, and al that is in him, must be as it were so manie voyces, that whatsoeuer he doth, whatsoeuer he sayth, be Apostolical doctrine. *S. Thomas* very learnedly doth gather this self same difference betwixt the two States, out of the words of our Sauiour; for wishing a certaine young man to embrace the counsel of Pouertie, he sheweth by the manner of speech which he held with him, that he was not yet perfect, but should be, if he followed his counsel: *If thou wilt be perfect, go sel al.* But being to ordaine a Prelate, he did not aske him only whether he loued, but whether *he loued more then others*, and asked him it three times ouer; either to expresse the great measure of charitie which such an one ought to haue, or as *S. Bernard* teacheth, to giue vs to vnderstand that whosoeuer is placed ouer others, must loue God aboue al things that concerne himself, aboue anie friend of his owne, aboue himself. Finally (to the end that the words sounding alike, make vs

1. Tim. 2. 7.

S. Bonauent. Apol parch.

S. Hierome Ep. 138. ad Fab.

S. Thomas. op. de perf. c. 19.

Mat. 19. 21.

Io. 21. 15.

S. Bernard. ser. 76. in Cant.

not miſtake the matter) both theſe States are perfect, and the State of a Biſhop is in no ſmal degree the more perfect of the two, yet ſo, as the State of a Biſhop requireth perfection, and yealdeth it not, the State of Religion, yealdeth perfection, and yet requireth not altogeather ſo much.

The danger of a Prelate in reſpect of the honour which he hath.

4. The State of a Prelate differeth alſo from a Religious State, in regard that riches, and honour, and temporal goods attend vpon the State of a Prelate, their dignitie is eminent in the ſight of men, they are reuerenced and reſpected by al: whervpon moſt commonly it followeth, that their mind is carried away with the deſire of theſe out ward things, more then with deſire of pleaſing God, and ſerving him, and though they come to their dignitie with great perfection, yet lying open to ſo manie, and ſo violent aſſaults, it is half a miracle if they hold their perfection long, and a rare thing to ſee them hold it. For as *S. Gregorie* ſayth in his Paſtoral: moſt commonly, amidſt the occupations of gouernment the verie vſe of good works is loſt, which in tranquillitie we held, becauſe while the ſea is calme, euerie vnskilful mariner is able enough to ſteere the ſhip, but when it is troubled with ſurging waues, a ſkilful Pilot is eaſily confounded. And what is the power of dignitie, but a tempeſt of the mind, wherin the ſhip of our hart beaten continually with the ſtormes of our thoughts, and wafted hither and thither without intermiſſion, at laſt by ſuddaine exceſſe of deſire and deed, doth as it were ſplit it ſelf by the way vpon the rocks? And this is the caſe of a Prelate. Now with a Religious man it fareth quite otherwiſe, for pouertie and humilitie, and the denial of our owne wil, wayting continually vpon this State, no man can deſire or embrace it; but vpon the motiue of attayning perfection; and it lyeth not open to ſo continual and ſo dangerous combats: whervpon *S. Iohn Chryſoſtome*, hauing in his bookes of Prieſt-hood, diſcourſed at large of the ſnares and dangers which attend vpon the dignitie of a Biſhop, entreth at laſt into a compariſon therof, with the quiet retiredneſs of a Religious life, free from al theſe cares and troubles, and ſayth: that though ſometimes ſome abſurd thought may obtrude ſome ſuch thing to a Religious man, yet the ſuggeſtion is ſo weake and infirme, that he preſently puts it away with eaſe, becauſe there is no outward matter whervpon the flame of that thought may fixe it ſelf. And a Monke takes thought for himſelf alone, or if he muſt ſometimes haue care of others of his owne coate, it is not very troubleſome vnto him, being neither tyed to wife nor children, and hauing al his ſubiects daily before his eyes, wherby he may eaſily eſpie their faults, if they haue anie, and correct them. This is the ſenſe of *S. Iohn Chryſoſtome*: whervnto we may adde, that though Euangelical pouertie (as elſewhere I ſhal declare more at large) be not perfection, but a meanes to perfection, and ſuch as it cannot be denyed, but that we may come to perfection by other means alſo, yet it is ſo eaſie and compendious a way vnto it, that no way can be more readie and certaine. Beſides that, it carrieth a kind of grace and Maieſtie with it, ſpecially ſince it hath been ſanctified in the perſon of our Sauiour, inſomuch, that they that want it, though inwardly they be abundantly qualified with manie rare parts, yet they want a kind of outward gloſſe and compliment of perfection.

S. Greg. l. Paſt. c. 9.

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S. Iohn Chryſ. l. de ſacerdot.

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Pouertie the eaſi way to perfection.

5. The laſt point of this compariſon which we haue in hand, is drawne from Example, more then from Reaſon, and from the Example of men that haue been very memorable both for ſanctitie and wiſedome, for in Religiō we find an

Examples of Men that haue shunned the dignity of a Bishop.

innoit number of them that *haue so resolutely* refused Ecclesiastical dignities and preferments, euen when they haue been proffered them, and haue read such a lesson in this kind to the whole world, that it is much to be admired. *S. Bernard* was chosen Bishop in three seueral cities of note, and twice Arch-Bishop, but could neuer be perswaded, to take the charge vpon him; and doubtlesse more would haue chosen him, but that they al knew, that it was in vaine to make anie such request vnto him.

S. Dominick.

6. We read that *S. Dominick* refused foure Bishopricks, proffered him at seueral times; and was wont to say, that he had rather dye, then haue so heauie a burthen lye vpon him: Two of his Disciples are renowned for treading the same footsteps: *S. Thomas of Aquin*, and *S. Vincent Ferrera*: *S. Thomas* constantly refused the Archbishoprick of *Naples*, proffered him by *Clement* the third: and could not be brought vnto it by no intreatie, nor persuasion. *S. Vincent* with like noble courage reiected first the Bishoprick of *Valentia*, then of *Ilerda*, and lastly a Cardinalship, which *Benedictus* Pope offered him, hauing already prepared a Cardinals Cappe for him.

S. Thomas of Aquin.

S. Vincent.

S. Bernardin.

7. *S. Bernardin of Siena* was of the same mind, and would neuer agree to be chosen Bishop, though he was in electiō of three seueral Townes, to wit, of *Vrbine*, *Ferrara*, and *Siena*: and moreouer, when Pope *Eugenius* once put a Mitre vpon his head, as he kneel'd before him, he humbly begged he would not vrge it vpon him, protesting that he would none of the dignitie, to the end he might the more freely and largely imploy himself in the helpe of soules.

Andrews.

8. To these we may adde, one *Andrew* a Franciscan Friar also, and nephew to Pope Alexander the Fourth; who being made Cardinal by him, resigned his dignitie, and al that greatnes which his neerenes to the Pope had bred him; choosing rather to remayne in the Religious humilitie which he had chosen, to the end, that when the houre came, he might be exalted.

F. Laynes
F. Borgia.
F. Claudius Iaius.

9. I might bring manie more examples of the same nature out of the ancient Records of other Orders, some also of late yeares, out of our owne, as of Father *Laynes*, and B. *S. Francis Borgia*, who should haue been made Cardinals and *F. Claudius Iaius*, who was chosen Bishop: but did their vttermost endeauour to stop those proceedings, and at last ouercame. It being not only their owne desire so to do, but the sence of the whole Societie, al ioyntly concurring with much prayer, and many thowsands of Masses, and much corporal pennance and austeritie to diuert so great a danger and inconuenience from our whole Order. And hauing effected it, they sung the *Te deum* publickly, to expresse the ioye which they conceaued, and the greatnes of the benefit which was befallen them. At which time it happened that there was a young gentleman of Portugal present, who beholding so great an expression of ioye and gladnes among the Societie vpon such an vnusual occasion, was greatly taken therwith, and much edified, and resolued therupon, as it is recorded of him, to enter into the Societie, which accordingly he did. By which examples and many more of the same kind, which I willingly omit, we may gather to our purpose, what inward esteeme those rare men had of a Religious State, in comparison of the state of Prelacie, behauing themselues, as they did in outward fact, in the occasions which I haue mentioned.

Maffei. l. 2. Vit Ignatii. c. 18.

10. The same may appeare by Example of many others, who hauing been

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preſſed and in a manner conſtrayned, by the expreſſe wil of God, or by Obedience, to vndertake this charge, haue notwithſtanding ſo carefully obſerued al manner of Regular diſcipline, that a body may eaſily ſee by them, they held the one as a burthen, and the other, they eſteemed an eaſe and recreation. In this kind, we read of *S. Martin*, that being drawne out of his Monaſterie by no il deuice, vnder colour of viſiting a ſick woman, to giue her ſome ghoſtly counſel, as he was requeſted; the people of *Tours* lying in wayte for him, tooke him by the way, and with one voyce and conſent placed him in the Bishops ſeate; wherin when he was inſtalled, retayning notwithſtanding a loue to his former quiet, he buylt a Monaſterie ſome two miles out of towne, where he liued with his Brethren in ſo great humilitie and pouertie (being particularly deuoted to theſe vertues, as it is recorded of him) that he neuer ſeuered *Rachel* from *Lia*, that is, the Contemplatiue from the Actiue life, but laboured in the one, in regard of his flocke, and in the other, in regard of himſelf and God.

Exemple of Bishops who haue liued in the Charge like Religious men. *S. Martin.*

11. *Caſsian* recounteth the like Example of one *Archebius*, that being taken by violence from among thoſe ancient *Anachorites*, and made Bishop of a City called *Parephyſis*, he neuer ſlacked in any of his former exerciſes of pietie and humilitie, neither tooke any delight in the honour which was put vpon him, and was wont to ſay: that he was not promoted to that dignitie, becauſe he was fit for it, but rather was caſt out of the Religious courſe he was in, as vnworthy of it, in ſeauen and thirtie yeares, which he had liued in it, hauing not arriued, (as he ſayd) to the puritie of ſo eminent a profeſſion.

Caſſ. coll. 11. c. 2. *Archebius.*

12. S. *Bernard* doth much extol S. *Malachie*, who being in electiō to be Biſhop, did a long time at firſt withſtād, that he might not be choſen, & when afterwards vpon cōmandment of his ſuperiour, and alſo of his Metropolitan, he had accepted of it, he behaued himſelfe notwithſtanding in al points like a Religious man; For to ſpeake in *S. Bernards* owne words. He ſerued in the kitchin when his tourne came, he wayted vpon the Brethren as they ſate at table, & would not ſuffer that they ſhould paſſe him ouer, when it was his turne to ſing in the Church, or to read, finally, he was not only partner with them in holy pouertie, but the foremoſt in it, being cheefly and aboue them al, eager and ambitious therof.

S. Malachie.

13. The like is deliuered of *S. Fulgentius*. He hearing that the Catholickes were reſolued to create Bishops in al the Churches which wanted, contrarie to the order which *Traſimundus*, an Arian king had made, fled out of his Monaſterie, and kept cloſſe while many ſought after him, til he was told by one that was of his counſel, that nowe al Churches were prouided; being, retourned to his Monaſterie, the people of *Ruſſa*, who by chance ſtil wanted a Biſhop, flocked thither in great multitudes, and tooke him away by force, and did not intreat him, but compelled him to be their Biſhop. When he ſawe himſelf thus circumvented, and could do no other, he deſired the people they would do him ſo much fauour as to buyld him a Monaſterie, in which, euer after he liued in perfect ſubiection to the Abbot *Felix*, as if he had been one of the leaſt in the Companie, and in al things belonging to domeſtical diſcipline, was wholy ruled by him, attending notwiſtanding diligently and carefully to his paſtoral charge, and not ſlacking in any part of his dutie towards his people.

S. Fulgētius.

14. Shal I omit that light of England, yea, of the whole Church, *S. Anſelme*? who whenſoeuer he could ſteale himſelf from buſines in to his Monaſterie,

S. Anſelme.

euer

euer thought himself a happy man, And once he declared himself to his Brethren in this manner: Discoursing with them, as he was wont often to doe, about Regular discipline, he shewed himself much delighted with their sight and companie, and in a merrie fashion sayd: That he was like an owle; for an owle as long as he is in his hole with his youngones, is pleasant and iocond; but when he flyes abroad among the Crowes and Iayes, they al fal vpon him, and beate him; so he, while he was with his Brethren, had great pleasure; but when he came among secular people, he was alwayes troubled, and combred with much secular busines; and moreouer stood in feare and anguish, least he might runne hazard also of his saluation. And as he was thus merrily deliuering his mind, he suddenly burst forth into teares, vsing that saying of holy *Iob*: *Take pittie of me at least you my friends, because the hand of our Lord hath touched me.* Iob.19.21.

15. *S. Antonine* also, hearing that Pope *Eugenius* the Fourth had designed him Bishop of *Florence*, coming from *Naples*, where he was at that time, thought to haue fled into some desert Iland, and hauing attempted it, was brought back by some of his kindred to *Siena*; where he laboured with al might and mayne, by letters, by intreatie, and by friends also which he made, to auoyd the charge; til the Pope half angrie, threatned to excommunicate him; wherupon aduising with some learned men, and finding them al to be of opinion, that he could not with safe conscience withstand it any longer, falling flat vpon his face, and weeping bitterly, he stooped to that Pastoral charge; yet so, as he forsooke not the burthen of Religion: For he altered neither diet, nor apparel; and ordered his house, as if it had been a Monasterie; and often went into the kitchin, and scoured the pots, and did such like other household offices, as it were to ease the troubles of his Pastoral charge, with those Religious solaces. What more pregnant proofe can a man haue, that Religious humilitie is farre more to be desired, then the dignitie of a Bishop, then to behold so many Religious men, and al of them eminent in sanctitie, either constantly to refuse that degree of honour; or when they could not refuse it, and had trial of it, alwaies to esteeme it as a heauy burthen, and beare it with greefe; and with al, continually to retayne their Religious practises, either as a solace of their charge, or that they might not want the benefit, wherof they knew ful wel, the excessiue greatnes. S. Anton.

A Comparison betwixt a Religious life, and the life of an Heremit.

CHAP. XXXIX.

WE read that in Ancient time, the solitarie manner of life of Hermites, was in great veneration among men, and much honoured of God: Who called many famous men vnto it, and made them admirable to the world, both by the splendour of many rare and excellent vertues, and the glorie of Miracles; yea the perpetual rigour and austeritie of life, of many of them, was a continual miracle. Such were the *Pauls*, and *Hilarions*, two or three of the *Simeons*, the two *Macharius*, and many other great Lights of the deserts, whose deeds, and sayings, and exam-

and examples, haue alwayes borne great sway in al matter of Perfection. But this kind of life and way of sanctitie is now almost out of vse. yet it wil not be a misse to compare the benefit of a Religious life, such as now a dayes is more frequented, with the heigt and rarenes of that kind of perfection; to the end, that seeing it neuer a whit inferiour to that, which in al things was then so eminent, but rather that in many things it hath the aduantage of it, we may the easyer know, what esteeme to make therof within our selues. And vpon whom can we better or more assuredly ground our discourse in this kind, then vpon that famous *Abbot, Iohn*? who as *Cassian* recordeth, when he had liued thirtie yeares in companie of others in a Monasterie, betooke himself afterwards into the wildernes, and there remayned ful twentie yeares; and then in his old age and ripest iudgement, after so long experience of both those courses, hauing liued in them both, with great rarenes of sanctitie, returned againe to liue with others; and made choyce to end his dayes in a Monasterie; and being asked the reason why he did so; he discoursed at large of both kinds of life, as hauing made long trial of them both, and concluded, that a solitarie life had this commoditie, that seuering the mind from al earthly things, it gaue it the more freedome to vnite it self to God; as neere as human infirmitie wil giue it leaue: But a Monastical life had a double commoditie, to wit, that first it doth teach a man to mortifie, or (to vse his owne word) to crucifie his owne wil, and inclination, so that he may humbly say with our Sauiour: *I came not to do my wil, but my fathers that sent me*; Secondly, that it freeth vs from taking care of any thing that concernes the body, and thinking of to morrow, as our Sauiour speaketh; and leaues the prouision therof, which is so troublesome and so ful of infinite distractions, wholy to those that gouerne vs.

Cass. coll. 19. c. 3.

The opinion of Abbot Iohn concerning this point.

Io. 6. 38.

2. *S. Basil*, setting downe the question in these words: *Whether a man that is resolued to forsake the world, were better to liue apart from others, or in companie of others of the same mind and purpose*; maketh ready answer, that for his part he is fully of opinion, that it is better for many reasons, that many liue togeather in one house or seate. And he doth not speake it, as meaning to beare it away by the strength of his owne single authoritie, which notwithstanding were sufficient to carrie it, he being knowne to be so worthy a man in al respects; but brings many solid reasons for it, and reckoneth vp many commodities of liuing in companie with others, which in breef are these.

S. Basil. reg. fus. q. 7.

3. First, he that liueth alone, must needs want many good things; and cannot make much vse of those which he hath; For no one man can haue al things, but some haue one thing, some an other; that by exchange of duties & courtesies bestowed vpon one another, Charitie might be maintayned, and that which is giuen a man, is not giuen him for himself only, but for the benefit of others also: So that in *S. Basils* opinion, a solitarie life hath two incommodities in it; first, that it cannot supply by others, what it self wanteth; secondly, that if a man haue more good parts in him, then may be for his owne vse, they are in a manner lost, because they are not put out to profit, but hidden vnder ground, which our Sauiour in the Ghospel doth much condemne. But where many liue togeather, a man liues vpon his owne, and helps others also with it, and makes vse of that which he finds in others, as much as if it were his owne.

Reasons why it is better to liue in companie of others.

Mat 25. 27.

4. Secondly, he that liueth in companie with others, if he fayle in any thing,

is told of it, reprehended, and corrected for it: and as S. *Basil* sayth, the concurrence of many in it, doth make the greater impression in him; because no man is so obstinate, as not to preferre the opinion of many, before his owne single
2. Cor. 2. 6. iudgment, and yeald to the correction *which proceedeth from many*, as the Apostle speaketh to the *Corinthians*. But in a solitarie life, it is very hard to know when we do a misse, because vice is suttle, and we willingly persuade ourselues that we are wel. Besids that, though the secret iudgments of God should be foreible enough to restrayne vs, yet human infirmitie is more carried by them that they see and heare: as al are naturally much moued with that which falleth within compasse of sense: reason, and faith, haue nothing so much force: and we find by dayly experience, that we stand more in awe of men when they are present, then of God and his Angels: whose eyes we know we neuer can, nor do escape. Wher-
S. Bernard Ep. 115. vpon S. *Bernard* sayth wel: The euil which no man sees, no man reprehends, where we feare not a controller, the tẽptour is more bold to come: and wickednes is
" more freely cõmitted. But in a Cõuent, if thou do any good, no mã hinders thee,
" and thou art not suffered to do euil, though thou haue a mind to it: it is presently
" discouered by many, presently reprehended, and amended: as contrariewise al
" admire, al reuerence, al imitate the good which they see. Thus sayth S. *Bernard*.
" And *Cassian* is of the same opinion, to wit, that in good companie vices are much
" more reproued: & being neuer let alone, but stil layd opẽ, they are quickly cured.

Ep. 17. 5. A third commoditie of liuing togeather, ariseth from the vnion of minds and communion of mutual offices, and of al things els: which as it is much commended in the Ghospel, so it cannot be performed in fact and deed, when a man liues alone, how soeuer in Wil, he may be wel inclined thervnto: and of this S. *Basil*
" speaketh thus. If al of vs gathered togither in one hope of our vocatiõ, be one bo-
" dy, and haue Christ for our head, & are euery one of vs a part of one another: truly
" vnlesse we agree also to be linked togeather in the holy Ghost, and iumpe one
" with another in the likenes of one body, and not lead a life euery one by himself,
" seuered from communication with the rest, howe is it possible that in such a dis-
" traction, and as it were conuulsion, or separation, the parts should sympathise
" among themselues, and performe their duties one towards another? For being so
" seuered a sunder, we cannot reioyce with those that are glad, nor haue compas-
" sion of those that suffer, because the very seperation, makes that we know not
" in what state they stand. This is of S. *Basile*.

6. A nother special commoditie of liuing in common, is that, as nothing is
S. Bernard ser. 1. de circum. more dangerous, according to the opinion of S. *Bernard*, then to suffer the diuel to single vs out in a combat so continual, and about a matter of so great weight and consequence, as is life euerlasting, and to fight alone hand to hand with him: so nothing is more secure thẽ to be where we may haue helpe of many, that fight togeather with vs. We may read the tragical ends of diuers, that liuing many yeares in the desert, haue fasted and watched much, and performed many notable things, and at last spoyled al, being circumuented by the deceites of the wily serpent, or ouercome by that terrible lion and dragon: as *Heron*: who as *Cassian*
Fearful Examples of those that haue fayled in a solitarie life. Cassian. col. 2. c. 15. reporteth, when he had serued God fortie yeares, cast himself headlõg into a wel. And another, that foolishly, or wickedly, became a Iewe, and was circumcised. Which kind of mischances hapening very often among those solitarie people, we cannot imagin any other cause therof, then that one man alone is too weake, and

vnable

vnable to withstand the brunt of so continual and so fierce assaults. That great *Theodosius*, who was, as we read, father and gouernour of so great a Monasterie, vnderstood this very wel, for being perswaded, when he was a yong man, by *Simeon* Stylites, to forsake the world, he was doubtful within himself a good while, whether he should enter vpon a Monastical, or vpon a solitarie life; but at last, hauing considered euery thing, preferred the liuing in common, farre before the other; for as he sayd, *if in an armye no man is so foolish, or so rash, as to forsake his ranke, and himself alone to set vpon the whole hoast; much lesse must we do so in this spiritual combat, which is farre more hazardous, and wherin we haue to do with an enemie that is farre more terrible.* The saying of Theodosius.

7. The fift vtilitie of liuing in common, is not inferiour to the former, to wit, that it is not so subiect to spiritual pride, as is a solitarie life, wherin the danger therof is very great; according to that saying of *S. Hierome*: *In the desert pride quickly creepeth vpon vs* and *S. Basil* giueth the reason therof in these words: *Hauing no bodie with him that can iudge of what he doth, it is easie for him to thinke that he hath abundantly done enough; whence it followeth that the state of his mind being hidden, and priuate to himself, he vnderstandeth neither what he wants, nor what profit he hath made in vertue: For in what can he shew humilitie, who hath no bodie vnder whom to humble himself? Or what testimonie can he giue of his charitie towards others, liuing a part from euerie bodie? Or how shal he exercise patience, when no bodie doth withstand his wil.* *S. Hierome ep. 4.*

8. By which words of *S. Basil*, we do not only vnderstand, that it is easier to get the vertue of patience in a Monasterie, by reason of the cōpanie in which we liue, and by means of obedience; but we are put in mind of an other commoditie of that life, which perhaps also is greater then anie we haue as yet spoken of; for it comprizeth al vertues; which doubtlesse are gotten by practise, and practise requires some matter wheron to practise, and matter there can bee none, in a solitarie life, as we heare *S. Basil* saying: For if we speake of charitie, vpon whom, sayth he, wil you exercise it? If we speake of humilitie, vnder whom wil you reckon yourself to be? And the like we may say of pittie, and compassion, of mercie, and obedience, and other such vertues; and of vices also; for where there is no occasion at al of them, we cannot know, whether there be anie such thing in vs or no; much lesse can we roote it out and extirpate it. Inso much, that *Cassian* sayth, that the vices which we carrie into the desert not cured, are so farre from healing by length of time, as that rather they grow worse and worse: *For a man thinks himself humble & patient*, sayth he, *as long as he comes in no bodies cōpanie; but when occasion is offered, whereby he may be stirred, he wil quickly find nature worke againe: Thē the vices which lay hidden in him presently shew themselues, & as vnruly horses, which haue been long kept-in & fed, breake the more violētly & fiercely ouer the barres, to the vtter vndoing of their Maister; for vices if they be not cured, grow more fierce in vs, for want of exercise and contrarie practise*: Wherefore, if we beleeue *Cassian*, people that haue little or no conuersation with others, may oftimes be in a great errour, thinking that they are free frō some vice, which possesseth thē, or that they are possessed of some vertue, wherof they haue none. And the reason is, because it is easie to allow of vertue and loue it, & cōtrarie wise to hate & detest vice, while we consider the nature of each of thē within our selues; for the beautie of the one, & the deformitie of the other, is such, that they naturally make impression of loue or hatred in the mind; which *Cassian. l. 8. c. 17.* A subtle errour in matter of vertue and vice.

people find, and reflect not on it, they think presently they haue the vertue, because they feele that they loue it, and most cõmonly they are deceaued: for it is one thing to think wel of vertue another thing to haue the habit, of vertue; wickedmen thinke wel of vertue, and in a moment they frame a fauourable conceite of it, and it is but an act of our vnderstanding and reason: but good men only, haue the habit of vertue, and get it by time and practise, and it is seated in the wil and affection. They therefore that liue a solitarie life fal often into such like errours; because they haue no means to try themselues, and bring their vertue to the touch-stone. Trial discouereth these deceits, and the occasion layeth open our faults if we haue anie. In companie this is often offered, in the wildernes neuer: so that it is with them (as *Cassian* sayth in an other place) as it is with serpents; for as long as they are in their holes, they hurt no bodie, not because they haue no poison in them, but because no bodie comes neere them, to take harme by them; but if occasion be offered them, then they spit their secret venime: And *S. Basil* in the discourse before mentioned, laugheth at them that ayme at vertue by meere speculation, and consideration of it; and sayth, that it falleth out with them, as if a man would learne the trade of a Carpenter, or of anie other handicraft, only by considering the precepts, and rules therof, and neuer practising anie thing: for he wil neuer be able to compasse it; which sayth he, *S. Paul* doth insinuate when he sayth: *Not the hearers of the law are iust in the sight of God, but the doers.* And our Sauiour shewed vs, when he did not only in words teach vs humilitie, but added his owne example, girding the towel about him, and washing the feet of his seruants.

Cassian. c. 18

S. Basill.

Rom. 2. 13.

9. Another thing wherin liuing togeather hath aduantage of a solitarie life, is, that a solitarie man, as *S. Basil* discourseth, thinks of no bodies good but his owne: which sayth he, *is apparently against the law of Charitie, which seeketh not its owne*; *which law we find that the Apostle did exactly obserue, not seeking his owne benefit but of manie, that they might be saued*; And a little after, he sticketh not to cal ita dul and barren kind of life: in regard that no action directed to the benefit of mankind, doth follow vpon the contemplation which they haue of God. And *S. Augustin* hauing enlarged himself much in commendation therof, yet addeth at last, that manie think it to be too much retired from that which belongeth to man, because it taketh no kind of paines, or labour for others: And that which *S. Leo* sayth is very true; *No good man is good only to himself, and no wisemans wisedome, is beneficial only to himself: and the nature of true vertue is, to draw manie out of the darknes of errour.* Wherefore they that liue in companie with others are much to be preferred, in regard that euerie one endeauours according to his abilitie to do good to others; and their light shineth to others also, according to the commandment of our Sauiour, and thereby they *glorify their Father who is in heauen.* Which thing *S. Basil* doth make no smal account of. In a solitarie life though manie excellent things be performed, yet they lye al hidde in darknes: nothing appeareth whereby the goodnes of God may be proclaymed, nothing wherely men may be prouoked to follow them; wherfore there can be no doubt but that the race of vertue wherin manie runne togeather, is both more pleasant, and more profitable, then where enerie one runnes alone by himself: and *S. Bernard* doth with reason make account, that the temptation is in a manner equally dangerous, if, a man that is resolued to serue God, think to do penance

1. Cor. 13. 5.
1. Cor. 10. 33.

S. August. de moribus. Eccl. cap. 31.

S. Leo Ser. 3 de Sancto Laurent.

Matt. 5. 16.

S. Bernard Serm. 3. de Circum.

nance amidst the troubles and cares of the world, or contrariwise, enter vpon a solitarie course of life; and sayth: that neither of them do wel consider their owne weaknes, nor the danger which is in combatting with the Diuel.

How much inferiour a retired life is to a Religious course.

10. And this may suffice concerning that manner of solitarie liuing, which was in vse among those ancient Hermites of old: now a dayes people practise another more milde, and easie kind of solitude, leading a spiritual life priuatly in their owne houses, quiet, and free from al earthly and irkesome busines: with which kind of course they are so taken, that they think it a securer way, and lesse subiect to trouble and disquiet, then a Religious life, but they are farre awry: For though it be something that which they do, if we consider it in it self, for they do better, then they that out of ambition or couetise, follow the Court, or trot from market to market, and from one Fayre to another: Yet if we set them in comparison with Religion, they are so farre beneath it, that they are not worthy the speaking of. For first they want al the commodities which wayte vpon a life in common, as through this whole booke I haue shewed: and they are subiect to the same inconueniences, which a solitarie life is: and finally, they are so much worse then the Eremites of old, in regard that they of old betaking themselues into their dennes and caues, forsooke the world quite and cleane, and bad Adieu to al riches and kinsfolk. These men retayne al these things: and so do not perfectly renounce that which they haue, but rather liuing with it, liue in the midst of so manie deadly enemies: For it is the saying of Truth it self; *The enemies of man are his domesticals*: And are in cõtinual dãger to be ouercome by the occasions they are in, and so to forsake the seruice of God, and the way of vertue vpon which they had entred, and retourned to the broad and spatious wayes of the world, vpon the confines wherof they dwel: And though they do perseuer, where is the vertue of obedience? a vertue so rare and excellent, and of so great merit and consequence, where is the denial of their owne wil? where is the exercise of true humilitie? where is the Hundredfold, and the rest of the rewards and honours promised to the followers of a Religious life? Wherfore if a man be of the mind to ouercome the world in his owne house, and home, certainly if he desire it indeed, he should be better aduised, to betake himself to the house of God, that is, into Religion, and rank himself with the hoast of God, where he shal more easily and more constantly ouercome, and find more plentie of grace and glorie. For why should he not do that which he intendeth, with perfection, and the seruice which he is minded to offer to God, offer it in the manner that may be most pleasing to him, and most profitable for himself? And he may do wel, to cal to mind the law which declared that the beasts, which had little wings, and yet did creepe on the ground, were al of them vncleane, and not to be eaten of: which was not without great mysterie, and figureth those, that hauing receaued a good wil of God, whereby they may lift themselues vp from the ground, as it were with little wings, wil notwithstanding stil cleaue to the earth, and thinking they may do both, and haue one foote in the world, and the other in the seruice of God, are reiected from the seruice of God, as beasts that are vncleane.

Matt. 10. 36

Deut. 14. 19.

Of the

Of the benefit of a Religious vocation.

CHAP. XL.

BY this which hath been ſayd of the benefit of a Religious vocation in general, either cõſidered in it ſelf, or as cõpared with other States, it is manifeſt, that it is the moſt compendious, and ſafeſt way of anie other, to bring vs to heauen; and that al other States of life, in compariſon therof, may be ſayd, to ſayle, as it were, at the mercie of the wind and waues and dangerous rocks in open ſea; and that this only courſe of life is now euen in the harbour, ſecure from danger, within ſight of eternal ſaluation; which is the land, for which our whole fleete, as I may cal it, is bound: And conſequently we muſt acknowledge with thanks-giuing (and it is great reaſon we ſhould do ſo) and profeſſe with exceſſiue ioy and pleaſure, that of al benefits which God can beſtow vpon a ſoule in this world, this is the greateſt; and for as much as concerneth a courſe and order of liuing, he hath not anie thing to adde therunto in this our baniſhment and pilgrimage, that can be more worthie or more beneficial. *S. Bernard* diſcourſeth liuely of this ſubiect in one of his ſermons, earneſtly exhorting his Brethren to be grateful to the diuine goodnes for ſo great a benefit, and among other paſſages hath theſe words: *Great, and very great is the mercie of our God ouer vs, hauing by the ſtrength of his Spirit ſo vnſpeakable, and by ſo ineſtimable a guift of his grace, drawne vs frõ the vaine conuerſation of this world, in which we were ſometimes without God, or which is more deteſtable, againſt God, not ignorant of him, but contemning him: And I would to God the vgly Image of the life, or rather of that death (for the ſoule that ſinneth is dead) were alwayes before our eyes, beholding how great blindnes, how great Wickednes that was; that continually weighing in our thoughts the poiſe of his mercies, we might eſteeme of the greatnes of his commiſeration by which he hath deliuered vs, if not to the ful value therof, yet at leaſtwiſe in ſome competent meaſure: But if anie one of vs be careful to conſider diligently, not only from whence he is deliuered, but where he is placed; not only what he hath eſcaped, but what he hath receaued, not only from whence he hath been reclaymed, but whether he is called, doubtles he wil find that the heap of this mercie doth farre exceed the greatnes of the former.*

S. Bernard Serm. de Ingrat.

2. Two things therefore, according to *S. Bernard*, are to be conſidered in this benefit: The Extremitie from which we are deliuered; and the tearme in which we ſtand. For certainly the benefit is the greater, by how much the euil which we eſcape is more greeuous. As if a man be ſet free out of priſon, he is the more obliged to him that ſetteth him free, the more hideous and naſtie the priſon was, wherin he was held. And what was our Priſon? The world ful of miſcheef

The miſerie of the world out of which we are called.

miſcheef and miſerie; ful of ſinnes, which is the greateſt miſerie of al others; ful of ambition, and looſenes, and infinit dangers. The world, where we find no order, but a perpetual confuſion of al things, darknes, blindnes, inconſtancie; The world, the lawes and Maximes wherof are extreame pernicious, the examples deadlie, men and Diuels innumerable prouoking vs to ſinne; let vs therfore giue eare to *S. Leo*, who as he often treateth of this ſubiect, ſo in one of his ſermons particularly he ſayth in this manner: *It is very hard, and difficult, to ſtay the vnſettlednes of our hart from al manner of ſinne, and where innumerable allurements of vanitie on euerie ſide do ſpeake vs faire, to yeald to no kind of corruption: Who toucheth pitch, and is not defiled by it? Who doth not yeald to weakenes in the flesh? Who is of ſo eminent puritie, as to receaue no ſtayne from the manie things, without which we cannot liue?* And thus much concerning the euils from which we are deliuered. *S. Leo ſer. 10. in quadrag.*

3. Of the bleſſednes of the life, to which we are tranſlated, *S. Bernard* ſpeaketh in breef manie things, and theſe are his words: *Which, I beſeech you, is this ſo pretious a Margarite, for which we muſt giue al, that is, our ſelues, to haue it? For he that hath offered himſelf to God, hath giuen al vnto him: Is it not Religion, holie, pure, immaculate? Wherin a man liueth more purely, falleth more ſeldome, riſeth more ſuddenly, walketh more warily; is more often watered, reſteth more ſecurely, dyeth more confidently, is ſooner purged, and more aboundantly rewarded.* What can a man deſire more? Or can there be a greater benefit then this, which contayneth in one, ſo manie benefits? Or be placed in matters of greater weight and importance? What can a man deſire in this life more auailable for ſaluation, or more likely to maintaine a continual peace and tranquillitie of mind and bodie al the time of our life? *S. John Chryſoſtome* hath a long elaborate diſcourſe to this purpoſe, ſhewing euidently, that farre more ſuffer ſhipwrack in the world, then in Religion, and are in farre greater danger, and giueth three reaſons for it. Firſt, becauſe more things trouble them; Secondly, becauſe they liue more negligently and careleſly; Thirdly becauſe they are more weake and feeble. Contrariwiſe, *in the life of a Monk*, ſayth he, *the waues are not ſo great, rather they haue continual faire weather, and a quiet ſeaſon, and their indeauour in breaking and ouercoming the ſeas, is farre more earneſt.* *S. Cæſarius* ſpeaketh eloquently, and wel to the ſame point, in one of his homilies to his Monks: *We knowe*, ſayth he, *that there is a great reward layed vp in the life to come for the ſpiritual warrefare, to which we haue bound our ſelues; but if we marke it wel, we are in a manner in preſent poſſeſſion of part of the reward in the worke it ſelf which we haue in hand: And certainely it is a very great benefit of this courſe, that we haue had the power to contemne the world, and begin to ſerue God: that we haue ſhaken off the miſerable command which ſinne had ouer vs, and eſcaped the filthie ſlauerie of glottonie and luſt: And is it not a great reward to haue nothing to do with the world? not to be troubled with deſire of vanities? not to be acquainted with anie enormous crime? to leade an innocent life? to liue in bleſſed Chaſtitie? to poſſeſſe ſufficient with the feare of God in glorious pouertie? wherof Wiſedome ſpeaketh thus; Better is a ſmal portion with the feare of God; then great treaſures without feare.* *S. Bernard.* The happines of Religion. to vvhich vve are called. *S. Iohn Chriſoſtome. l. 3. c. vltim. Vitæ Mo.* Three reaſons vvhy liuing in the vvorld is more dãgerous. *Cæſarius. Hom. 5. ad Mon.* *Prou. 15. 16*

4. Let vs therfore conſider how much God hath beſtowed vpon vs, in this holy

» holy vocation; let vs reckon, if we can, what gaine we haue made from the
» time which we haue been gathered togeather in this place; from how many coo-
» ſenages; from how many adulteries, theſts, periuries, ſacriledges, we haue been
» deliuered; and then we ſhal feele how much we are alſo obliged to God for the
» preſent benefits. If we were now in the world, what ſhould we do other, then
» wallow in ſynne, and defile our ſoule with dayly ſtaynes, and goare it with
» dayly wounds, and not ſo much as feele them? For this is the properrie of wic-
» ked cuſtome of ſynning, that the more a man ſynnes, the leſſe he vnderſtands
» his ſynnes; and the more he is delighted to ſynne. And on the other ſide, the
» more careful a man is of himſelf, the more he feareth. Al this out of S. *Cæſarius*.

The honour which God doth a man in calling him to Religion.

5. Whervnto we may adde, that God hath not only done vs the fauour to deliuer vs from vnder the power of the Diuel and ſinne; but exalted vs to the height and ſplendour of Euangelical perfection, which doth mightily rayſe the value and eſteeme of his benefit; and no words are ſufficient to expreſſe the greatnes therof; yet we wil endeauour to declare it in ſome meaſure by the example following. For as if a great and mightie Prince had an enemie, that by many treacherous wayes had diuers times ſought his vtter vndoing and deſtruction, and it being now in the Prince his power to kil him, he ſhould notwithſtanding not only willingly pardon him, but be friends with him, and take him into his houſe, ſet him at his board, and giue him an honourable place among his royal iſſue; ſo falleth it out with Religious people, for the infinit goodnes of God, not contented to rayſe vs poore and needy ſnakes his enemies, from the earth of our vayne imaginations, or from the dung of our loathſome ſynnes, hath innobled vs moreouer ſo farre, as to ranke vs *with princes*, with *the princes of his people*, that is, with thoſe, that for as much as concerneth their owne perfection, hold the firſt and cheefeſt ranke in the Church of God, which S. *Bernard* doth as he is wont, moſt ſweetly expreſſe in theſe words: Finally, if perhaps forſaking fornication, we had remayned in coniugal Chaſtitie, and not embracing the councel which we know is giuen of a ſingle life, but abſtayning from rapine and fraude, had lawfully vſed that which was our owne, not arriuing to the Euangelical perfection, wherof it is written: *If thou wilt be perfect, go, and ſel al that thou haſt and follow me*; how great a mercy had it been, if, I ſay deliuered from ſo many ſynnes, in which many of vs being entangled, expected nothing but death, and the ſentence of moſt certaine damnation, we might haue bretched in ſome inferiour degree and courſe of life? The prodigal Child durſt not aſpire to the ranke of Children, but thought himſelfe happie, if he might but deſerue to be admitted among the hirelings. But fatherly loue could not contene itſelf, without ſhewing him mercie in ſo abundant meaſure, as was able to make the elder brother, that had neuer departed from his father, enuie him for it. So, *deerely beloued* the mercy of our God, abundantly powred forth vpon vs, hath of children of wrath and diſtruſt, not only receaued vs among his elect, but called vs into the congregation of the perfect. Thus ſayth S. *Bernard*.

Deut. 22. 8.

S *Bernard. ſ. de Ingrat.*

Mat. 19. 27.

Luk. 15. 19.

A notable ſaying of Iordanus.

6. *Iordanus* firſt General of the Blackfriars after S. *Dominick*, a man of great ſanctitie and authoritie, hath a notable ſaying to this purpoſe. Hauing cloathed a certayne Nouice in the holy habit of his Religion, in the preſence of many of his former Companions, he made a long diſcourſe vnto them of the happines of a Religious State; at which they wept moſt bitterly; whervpon he turned his

ſpeech

speech vnto them, and told them they ought not to weepe, for they were now to part from this their friend, but rather out of enuie, that he had chosen the better part by farre, then they; because Religious men serue God in nature of gentlemen of the priuie chamber to a Prince, with whom he is euer inward and very familiar: But secular people, if they serue at al, they serue as it were in the kitchin or in some other meaner office. Therfore it were farre better for them to open their eyes, and consider, that the dore is open for them also, if they haue a mind to enter, and sit at bord with the king. And his words fel not vpon the ground, for one of the Companie neuer went further, but presently betooke himselfe to Religion, and al the rest soone after tooke in at the same port of saluation.

The Benefits of Religion summed vp in breefe.

7. And certaynly if we cast vp the particulars of al the great commodities wherof I haue at large discoursed, we shal find, that in this one benefit of Religion, al in a manner is contayned, that we can possibly desire: a consideration, which we should alwayes haue before our eyes, & haue deeply imprinted in our harts. For heere we haue perfect remission of al our former offences, as in a second Baptisme: our flesh is tamed by holy sobrietie; we are at leasure to think of heauenly things; and seuered from al that may any way hurt our soule. The wil of God, is the rule of our actions: and al kind of vertue in continual, and vigorous practise. Heere we receaue direction from Superiours; light from particular Rules; abundance of inward grace; increase of merit; comfort in fraternal charitie; mutual assistance; and part of al the good works that are done among vs. Al which are in themselues wonderful beneficial: but withal, greatly inobled and imbellished by the golden linke of our vowes, and crowned at last at the howre of our death, with that securitie which a state so remote from the world, and so neere bordering vpon heauen, and heauenly things, doth vsually bring vnto vs. To the accomplishment and preseruation wherof, do concurre, the particular loue, fauour, and protection of God, and our B. Ladie; a thing wonderfully to be esteemed, both for the profit and pleasure which accompanie it.

Religion a hidden Treasure. *Mat.* 13.44.

8. Seeing therefore we find so much wealth and riches in a Religious State, what can we reckon it to be other, then the *Treasure hidden in the field, which when the man had found, for ioye, he went and sold al that he had, and bought that field*? For certainly Religion may most truly be called a Treasure, or rather it contayneth an infinite Treasure, seeing it hath within it so infinite riches, and such abundance of wealth, not of one kind only, but al manner of wealth heaped in a masse togeather. Now he that findeth a Treasure, hath great aduantage ouer another man, that is rich by trading, or other wise; for he that trades (for exãple) cometh to his wealth by much paynes and labour, and runneth many hazards in the purchasing therof, and it is long before he get it togeather: but he that finds a treasure, lights vpon al togeather, without labour or danger, and in a moment is raysed to excessiue wealth and happines. But it is not euery body that lights vpon it, but rather very fewe. So secular people increase their stock of vertue, by much and long striuing for it, and oftimes they suffer shipwrack, and in one houre, leese al that they had laied vp togeather in many yeares, by falling but into one mortal synne: which alas! how easy, yea how dayly a thing is it, in a sea so ful of shelues and tempests? A Religious man findeth a *Treasure*, and consequently is farre more happie, because al at once is heaped and thronged vpon him. The state it selfe and vocation, breatheth as it were into his hart the spirit of Pouertie,

and a particular affection to Chastitie, and Obedience, as things contayned in the very spirit of Religion; and withal it giueth him al other vertues, as necessarie attendants, partly flowing from those three, and partly needful for the vpholding of them. *A treasure*, where not golden Iaspars, or orient Pearles, but more pretious and truer Gemmes, of great esteeme and vse, not only in earth, but in heauen, are heaped togeather: But yet a *hidden treasure*, because few do know the value of it, few do find it; for that which our Sauiour
Matt.19.11. sayd of Eunuches, is very true, *not al take this word, but to whom it is giuen*; and where is it hidden? *In the field*, a place voyd of companie, free from the noyse of Ambition, from toylesome trafick, from the Courts of Princes, and yet not in a wood, or vpon a hil, but *in a field*, wher people vse to plough and sowe, and bestow labour in manuring the ground; al which agreeth fitly to Religion, for it is seuered from the turmoyles of the world, and cultiuateth the mind with al spiritual industrie, sparing no labour, precaution, mortification; and it can no sooner be layd fayre open before our eyes, by the light which God doth giue vs, but presently our mind is so violently taken, and inflamed with desire of it, that no strength, no bonds can withhold vs, from running to possesse ourselues of it, and that with *ioye*, as our Sauiour speaketh, not weeping and lamenting, as if a man were to vndergo some great trouble or crosse, but as to a ioyful, and gladsome, and fortunate busines; in fine, as to a *Treasure*.

But the more pretious the thing is, the more ought we to consider, by what meanes we may come to the possession of this happie *field*, wherin so great a *treasure is hidden*; for we cannot haue it for nothing, but must *buy* it, and *buy* it at the rate, at which our Sauiour, who hath it to sel, hath set it; that is, by selling al that we haue, and buying it therwith. To purchase this *field*, we must forgo al possessions, Moneyes, preferments, friends, parents, kinsfolke, ourselues; which is both most exactly performed by entring into Religion, and is not easy to say how it can be done otherwise. Where, by the way, we may consider the goodnes of God in not determining any certaine summe of money or wealth, least he that could not make so much, might be excluded from the purchase of so worthy a thing. and hath withal out of his infinit wisdome ordayned, that the price should be, not so much to giue what we had, as to forsake it; to the end, that whether we haue much, or whether we haue little, or nothing at al; we may be al admitted to the purchase, so we leaue al, and retayne nothing to ourselues, not so much as the hope, or possibilitie of hauing any thing. By which means in very deed we do not wholy relinquish that which we leaue, but we make an exchange therof for that which is farre better, and better worth; purchasing so incomparable a treasure, at so easie a rate; a treasure wherin we shal haue the price we gaue, returned vpon vs agayne, and infinitly more added vnto it. Which S. *Hierome* telleth vs in these words: *We receaue more then we gaue, we forsooke a smal thing, and haue entred vpon great possessions, the promises of Christ are performed with returne of hundred fold.*

The price of the field is to leaue al.

S. Hierome Epist. 26.

which being wel considered, and prouing so true and certaine, as doubtlesse it is, what hart can be so cold, as not to burne with desire, and loue of so pretious a Margarite, so inestimable a Iewel and Treasure? or who is there that hath already bought it, but wil esteeme so highly of it, as certainly to preferre it before kingdomes, and seates of honour; and make account of al gold and syluer,

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as a little ſand, or durt, in compariſon of it, and loue it abone health and beautie; or if he haue not yet bought it, wil eſteeme any thing too pretious to beſtow vpon it, and not rather, as *S. Gregorie* ſpeaketh in this very ſubiect, willingly forſake al that he loued among earthly things, forgoing that which he had got, diſtributing that which he had gathered togeather, and thinking the beautie of earthly ſubſtance which pleaſed him before, deformed, in compariſon of the luſter of this pretious Margarite, which now only ſhineth in his mind? *S. Greg. Hom. 11. in Euang.*

8. *Ægidius*, one of the firſt ſtones in the famous buildings of the order of *S. Francis*, a man of ſo great ſanctitie, that when he heard the name of God, or of Heauen, he was wont to be preſently tranſported out of himſelf, is reported to haue made this anſwer, to one that asked his aduice, whether it were beſt for him to enter into Religion: Tel me, ſayd he, if a poore man ſhould come to know for certaine that in ſuch a place there lay hidden a great treaſure; would he ſtand to aduiſe, whether it were beſt for him to dig there or no? The man anſwered, No: Then, ſayd he, with how much more alacritie and readynes ſhould men runne to the infinite Treaſurie of God, where only are the true & eternal riches? which the man vnderſtanding, went preſently and ſold al that he had, and hauing giuen it among the poore entred into Religion. The aduice of Ægidius a Franciſcan Friar.

9. The ſame holy man being once demanded, whether a man might remayne in fauour with God, and liue in the world, made anſwer, that he might, but he had rather haue one degree of grace in Religion, then ten in the world, becauſe grace is eaſyly preſerued and increaſed in Religion, where a man liues ſequeſtred from wordly troubles and tumults, which are deadly enemies of the grace of God; and moreouer is encouraged and egged on to vertue by his ſpiritual Brethren: In the world Grace is eaſily loſt, becauſe ſecular care, which is the mother of diſtraction, doth hinder and quite take away the ſweetnes of grace, and by their euil examples people prouoke one another to euil, and withdraw one another from that which is good, and as it were by force, take a way the life of the ſoule, and throw it headlong into euerlaſting deſtruction; ſo that without doubt it is much better to haue farre leſſe grace, ſo it be ſecured and aſſiſted with ſo many helps to increaſe it, as are in Religion, then to haue farre greater grace, with ſo euident danger, as is in the world. Theſe are the very words of that holy man. The ſame Aegidius preferreth one degree of Grace in Religion, before 10. in the world.

10. Wherfore let vs conclude what we haue hitherto ſayd, and much more which might be ſayd, of the miſerie of this world, and of the greatnes of this treaſure, that is, of the happines of a Religious life, with the heauenly viſion, in which both theſe togeather, were declared to *S. Anſelme*, of whō we find recorded, that being once in an extaſis, trāſported out of himſelf, he ſaw a mightie ſwift Riuer, which drew al the filth of the whole earth into it ſelf, ſo that the water therof was moſt horribly fowle and ſtinking, and beſides, it carried away with it whatſoeuer it met, men and women, poore and rich. Which ſight mouing him to great admiration and compaſſion, he asked how thoſe people liued, and what was their ſuſtenance? and it was anſwered him, that they dranke of that filth wherin they wallowed, and tooke great pleaſure therin, miſerable creatures as they were; and withal, the viſion was declared thus vnto him: That the Torrent was the world, wherin people are blindly carried awaye with their riches and honours, and vnlawful delights; and The viſion of S. Anſelme.

though they be so infinitely miserable, that they cannot temper themselues in any thing, yet they esteeme themselues fortunate and happie men. From thence he was carried into a large spatious seate, walled round about, and the wals being al couered with beaten siluer, made a most glorious shew; within this inclosure he beheld a pleasant meddow, ful growne with grasse of a strange nature, for it was al siluer, and yet grew, and was soft and pliable; so that when he sate downe vpon it, it gaue vnder him, and rose againe, when he rise vp. The ayre was most sweet and pleasant; finally al things were so delicious in it, that a man might think himselfe abundantly happy, if he had no more but that. And this he was told was a Religious life; God shewing him by these similitudes, that in the world al things are vile and loathsome, fickle, deadly, and euer tending to destruction; and contrariewise in Religion, al things beautiful and pleasant, finally bright, and sumptuous, as siluer.

THE

THE SECOND BOOKE,

OF THE HAPPINES OF A RELIGIOVS STATE.

THE PREFACE.

That a Religious State is not only profitable, but honourable.

BEhold how good, and how pleasant it is, to dwel Brethren in one! *Psalm. 132.* As the oyntment in the head, which descendeth vpon the beard of Aaron: As the dew of Hermon, which descendeth vpon mount Sion: because there our Lord hath commanded blessing, and life for euer. *A great commendation of a sociable life, a life lead in common togeather: and great promises, and rewards of Fraternal loue and coniunction, set forth, not by man, but by the Holie-Ghost, who cannot be mistaken in the weight of his prayses, nor misse of the performance, of what hee promiseth: And both the prayses of this life, and promises of the Holie-Ghost do so properly, and apparently agree with a Religious State, that no man can doubt, but the Royal Prophet, when he vttered this Prophetie, had the frame and Idea therof before his eyes, and beheld so long before, the beautifulnes of this forme of life, in the diuine light then communicated vnto him.* Which S. Basil deliuereth, *when speaking of Religious people, and discoursing at large of their happines, in conclusion he sayth, that the Prophet* Dauid *in his Psalmes, sung thus of them:* Behold how good, and how pleasant it is, to dwel Brethren in one! Expressing the holines of their life, by the word, *Good*; and the contentment, and ioy, which ariseth from so great concord and vnion, by the word, *Pleasant. And learned* S. Augustin, *interpreting that Psalme, teacheth no lesse, making no doubt, but that the whole Psalme, was penned purposely, of Religious people; and declareth withal the great force which the* Good, *and contentment heere described, hath to work vpon mens minds:* These words of the Psalter, *sayth he,* this pleasant sound, this sweet melodie, both in the eare, and in the vnderstanding, begat Monasteries: This sound awaked the Brethren, who haue coueted to dwel in one: This verse was their Trumpet: It was heard ouer the whole earth, and they that were before diuided, were gathered togeather. *Thus spake S.* Augustin, *and very truly.*

S. *Basil. Const. Mon. c. 19.*

S. *Augustin. in Psal. 132.*

1. *For first, the name of,* Brethren, *doth so fully expresse, that which passeth in a Religious Communitie, that there could not be a word deuised, to signify, the thing more liuely, because as Brothers, they haue one, and the same Father, one and the same Mother: and receaue the spiritual life which they lead, from one God, by the seed of the Holie Ghost sowen in their harts, and are conceaued in one and the same wombe of their Mother,* Religion, *begot, not by vertue thereof, but by the vertue of God, as I sayd, and Religion feeds them*

Religious men properly are Brethren.

feeds them al, with one milke, nurturing them, and bringing them to perfection, as her true and natural Children.

Though to the Prophets mind, the name of Brethren, did not sufficiently declare the vnion, which is betwixt them that are linked togeather by so streight a bond, and therfore he added, that they dwel in one, that is, are al one togeather; which is so true of Religious people, that it is in a manner proper to them alone. For as the same S. Augustine obserueth, they liue so togeather, that they are al as it were but one man; and that which is written in the Acts, is verified of them: One soule, and one hart. Many bodies, but not many harts.

Act. 4. 32.

Which vnity, is the more to be esteemed, because it is not grounded vpon neernes of place, but vpon spirit, and consequently distance of place, doth not diuide it; because, as Cassian speaketh, the Cohabitation of manners, and not of places, ioyneth the Brethren togeather in the eyes of God. And as the dwelling in one house, auayleth little, where there is not agreement of minds, and conditions; so the distance of place, hindereth not, where minds and affections consort togeather.

Cass. Coll. 16. c. 3.

Wherfore with great reason, the sweetnes, and profitablenes of this life, is compared, to an Oyntment, and to dew: And to no ordinarie Oyntment, but to the oyntment, which was vsed vpon Priests, an oyntment, most fragrant, and odoriferous, and consecrating them to God, vpon whom it was wont to bee powred: To giue vs to vnderstand that they who enter vpon a Religious course, and meete togeather in this brotherly society, are consecrated to God, and consecrated as Priests, themselues being a daily Sacrifice, and offering to the Diuine Maiesty euery day many Sacrifices, and oblations of themselues. No wonder therfore, if from so great perfection of vertue, such aboundance of sweet odours doe issue, as to replenish the whole house of God, which is the Church, and to make Religious people themselues, both amiable, and admirable to al; and as the Apostle speaketh, an odour of life to life to many others, inflaming them with loue of the like vertue and perfection.

Religion Compared to the Priestly oyntment.

2 Cor. 2. 16.

3. Moreouer, as the Priestly oyntment, was so perfectly good and fragrant, because it was compounded of many odoriferous ingredients, so (as I haue sayd more at large elswhere) the beauty, and benefit of Religious people is the greater, because the vertue and sanctity of many, doth meete togeather. In which respect S. Basil comparing a solitary life, with a life lead in company of others, preferreth this; because, as he speaketh, that Good, and Pleasant thing, to wit, the cohabitation of Brethren, in the same house, which the holy Ghost compareth to the fragrant oyntment running downe from the head of the high Priest, can haue no place, in the single habitation of one man alone. The sweetnes of which oyntment, doth not remayne in the head only, but descendeth, to the very skirt of the garment; which S. Augustin doth learnedly, as al other things, interpret to be, either the latter tymes, in regard that so great excellency of vertue, was reserued to the fulnes of the Ghospel; or perfection it self; because as the garment ends in the skirt, so sayth he, they are perfect, who know how to dwel togeather, they are perfect, who fulfil the law.

S. Basil. reg. fus. disp. c. 6.

S. August.

4. Now as the Odoriferous sent of that oyntment, expresseth the pleasantnes of this course; so the similitude of the dew, declareth the profit of it. For as dew is engendred in the ayre, by the heat of the Sunne, and cooleth the selfsame heat, and giueth contentment by the freshnes which it hath; so this heauenly spirit, wherof we speak, comming only from heauen, falleth vpon them, that forsaking earthly things, are inflamed

The spirit of Religion the dew.

med which the sole loue of God, and coueth in them, al loue of things inferiour, and extinguisheth the vnquiet heat of concupiscence. And it falleth not as a suddaine shewre of rayne, with great noyse and violence, but like dew, so smal, as no man perceaues it, but he that hath it, and he that hath it, doth not only find pleasure in the temper of the inferiour heates which possesse vs, but profit by the fruitfulnes, and plenty of good workes bestowed vpon him.

5. And this dew is not promised indifferently to al, but to the high and craggy hils, of Hermon, and Sion; which signifie Religious soules raised aboue al earthly thinges and contemning the world, as inferiour and base; and no riuer can ouerflow them, that is, they are not taken with delight of any of the transitory things, which they haue forsaken. These hils stand in need of the freshnes of this heauenly dew, and if it may be said to be due to any, it is due to them, to the end that hauing before hand, in this life, a tast of that future happines, which we al expect, they may be the more inflamed with the loue, and desire therof.

Wherefore in this state, thus improued and mended by the dew distilling from aboue, thus sweetned and softned with the fragrancy of diuine oyntments, with great reason hath God commaunded blessing and life for euer, that is, not any temporal or short life, or blessing, but a blessing and life eternal, and neuer fading. For here is great measure of the true knowledg, of God, which as our Sauiour telleth vs, is our true life. *Iohn.17.3.* Heere the word of God soundes continually in our eares, which word, is spirit and life. *Iohn. 6. 63.* Heere we loue our brethren by which we know, as S. Iohn speaketh, that wee are translated from death to life. *1.Iohn.3.14*

6. But al are not led by profit, many rather set little by the peyn of profit, and ayme at honour and preferment, that which S. Bernard saith, proouing very true: Al of vs are desirous to ascend, al couet to be exalted, we are noble creatures, and carry a high mind, and therefore naturally desire highnes. Wherefore seeing God hath made so great account of a Religious state, as to enrich it so many other wayes, he cannot be thought to haue left it bare of honour, and suffered it to be inglorious, and contemptible; rather it is certaine, that eyther there is no worth at al, in the spiritual workes of God (which were madnes to think) or if there be any in his other workes, most of al in a Religious state, as in one of the chiefest, and rarest of al his workes. For where as the Maiesty of vertue, is so great, that though there were nothing els to commend it, this maiesty alone would make it shine like a light in the midst of darknes; Religion being the proper seat and kingdome of vertue, must needes partake of the same splendour and Maiesty, and the more, because it is so coupled with vertue, that Religion without vertue, cannot subsist so much as in the thought of man. *S Bernard. Serm 4. de Ascens.* The dignitie of Religion

7. And in some sort, a Religious course of life, hath somewhat more then vertue; because euery body cannot discouer the worth, and dignity of vertue; some are so dul as they can eiue nothing at al of it: but a Religious course, hath not only inwardly wherwithal to delight the eyes of the spiritual, but outwardly it hath that also, which draweth the vulgar into admiration, and in my iudgment, euen for matter of worth and nobility, it is not only equal in greatnes with the world, but farr aboue it.

This second booke therefore by the help of God, shal be spent in declaring the dignity of Religion, a subiect, in it self pleasant, and wherin a Religious man hath particular reason to reioyce.

8. And it is no smal testimony of the dignity therof, that we find such an infinit

company

A great testimonie of the dignitie of Religion.

company of men, that haue so ioyfully spurned at the honours, and worldly preferments, which they might haue had, and forsaken them which they had, or at least-wise infinitly desired to forsake them, to enioy the happines of a Religious life. For the desire of honour, being so natural to man, as I haue saied, it cannot be thought that the bare consideration of profit, could put so much Zeale and feruour into them, but that together with profit, they saw great honour and worth in the busines.

S. Gregory.

9. And among many strange examples in this kind, we shal hardly meete with one more signal, then that of S. Gregory the Great; who hauing lead a Monastical life from his youth, and being afterwards made Deacon of the Church of Rome, was notwithstanding so taken with the loue of his former Religious course, that being sent Legate by the Pope to Constantinople, he would not put himself vpo his iourney, but in company of some of his Monkes, that because he could not himself remaine in his Monastery, he might, as it were, carry a Monastery along with him.

10. And which is more to be admired, when he was chosen Pope, in that height of honour (then which there is not a higher vpon earth) he did so continually mourne, out of desire of Religious quiet, that almost al his writings are ful of his teares; And particularly in his Dialogues he speaketh thus: My vnfortunate mind, goared with

S. Gregorie in proemio Dialog.

the wound of excessiue busines, calleth to remembrance what a life it lead once in the Monastery, how farr al transitory thinges were beneath it; how farr it was aboue al thinges that passe away; how it was not wont to think but of heauenly thinges; how confined within the body, it did passe the boundes of flesh, by Contemplation: and death, which to euery one most commonly, is a greiuous paine, was welcome to my mind, as an entrance to life, and a reward of the labour past. But now by occasion of my Pastoral charge, it is moyled with busines of secular people, and after the comelynes of so goodly a quiet, which it had, it is disfigured, with the durt of terrene actions. I weigh what I suffer, I weigh what I haue lost; and while I behold what I haue forgone, that which I endure is more greiuous vnto me. For behold now, I am tossed in the waues of open sea, and in the ship of my mind, am beaten with the stormes of a mighty tempest, and remembring the state of my former life, as it were casting my eyes back, I sigh at the shoare which I see behind me.

1. Regest ep. Au. & seq.

11. Thus spake S. Gregory; and much more elsewhere to the same effect, and with like inward feeling. And by this his complaint giues vs sufficiently to vnderstand, that out of his owne practise, he discouered something in a Religious life, so beautiful and excellent, that in that height of promotion, he would haue been glad of it, and was sorry that he wanted it. And his example ought to weigh the more with euery body, because he was so great a man, and hauing had experience in his owne person, of both kindes of life, could not notwithstanding quench the loue and desire of the one, which he had not, with the great greatnes of the other in apparence, which he possessed.

THE

THE SECOND BOOKE OF THE HAPPINES OF A RELIGIOVS ESTATE.

HOVV BASE ALL EARTHLY THINGES ARE.

CHAP. I.

THAT which a Religious life aymes at, and the Essence therof, is vtterly to abandon all earthly things: I do not say the loue of them only (for that all must do) but the very vse of them, so much as may be, which all are not obliged to forgoe. To vnderstand therfore, the benefit of a Religious course, and much more the worth and dignitie therof, nothing can be more necessary, then throughly to conceaue, and establish as a certaine ground, how imperfect, and abiect all things of this world are by nature, and how vnworthy the loue, and care of man. For so a Religious man, wil be easily persuaded, to be content to want that, by the absence wherof, he sees he shal suffer no great losse; and secondly that which heere we intend, wil be playne to euery body, to wit, what makes a man truly honorable, and wherin true worth doth consist.

Earthly things little in themselues.

2 First therfore all earthly things, let them carry neuer so fayre, and magnificall a shew, are in deed but bare and slender, and of little value; which we shall finde the sooner to be true, if we looke not vppon the particulars, seuerally; but comparing them with the rest of the world. For if we take the whole earth, and consider wel what it is, compared with the other Elements, and with the large circumference of the heauens, we shall find it is the least of them all, and indeed of no great compasse; great part of it, is hidden vnder water, part of it taken vp with hills, and mountainous places; the remaynder diuided into Prouinces, and kingdomes; kingdomes againe into cities, and townes; townes into houses, and

demaines, and the seuerall possessions of particular men: what a smal parcel now, God wot, falls to the share of euery particular?

Socrates. 3. *Socrates* the Philosopher, hath a graue and witty saying, to this Purpose. For as it is recorded of him, perceauing that *Alcibiades* tooke great pride in his wealth and large possessions, he drew him a side to a mappe of the whole world, and desired him to shew him *Attica* (which was his countrey) in the mappe: and when he had readyly pointed at it, he prayed him to shew him, where his lands, and possessions lay in it; he answered they were not set downe in the mappe. *Wherfore*, then, replied *Socrates*, *art thou so prowde of thy possessions, seeing they are no part of the earth?* But the errour is that men think gold and syluer, and wealth, and possessions, great, not because the things are great, but because themselues are little; as Emitts make account of their little neasts, as if they were large pallaces, and bestow as much labour, and toyle, vppon a handfull of graine to carrie it in, and lay it vp, as if they had got a mighty purchase.

And of no value. 4. Yet if the things that are so smal in bulke, and quantitie, were in price and value any great matter: a man might giue some reason, why they should be desired; but if we enter into the very bowels of them, and consider wherof they are made, we shall finde that they are composed of the knowne elements, wherof some are more suttle and cleare, as fire and ayre; some more grosse and foggy, as water and earth. Whatsoeuer we see, or handle, or take contentment in, is but a compound of these fower things put togither, and in al of them, the earth, which is the most lumpish, and base of any of the rest, hath the greatest part by farre. In the mixture therfore of these things, can there be any thing so very much to be admired, seeing the simples by themselues are so meane? Or what sence is there in it, to make so great account of a little earth, and to keepe it so charily, vnder so many locks, and keyes, if it haue a colour, which pleaseth your eye; and to tread the same earth vnder foote, and make account of it, as it is, when mingled with water it is but dirt? For that which *S. Bernard* sayth, is very true, *Gold and syluer, is it not but white & redde earth, which the errour of men only makes or rather esteemes pretious?* And long before *Saint Bernard*, Saint *Iohn Chrysostome* made the like obseruation. And he sayth wel, that it is not made, but esteemed pretious; because the iudgment of man, when it fall's to be according to truth, can neyther rayse, nor pul downe the price nor true value of any thing; much lesse a false and erroneous persuasion, which people frame to themselues.

S Bernard ser. 4. de Aduent.
S Iohn Chrysost. ser. 2. de vit. Dom.

5. And if we looke yet nearer, into the substance of things, which are most esteemed, we shal find it more certaynly to be as I say. For what is Pearle, but the excrement of a shelfish? And yet people now a dayes, vse it to set forth the beautie of their countenance. Wherin it may seeme to some, a ridiculous thing to set so little by the whole shell, or the fish it selfe, and to value the thicker, and harder part therof, at so high a rate. What are gemmes, but stones? What is silke but the bowells of an vgly worme? What is Cloath, but the fleeces of sheepe, which we account silly things, when they are a liue? What are Ermines and sables, but skinns of beastes? What are stately buyldings, porches, and pallaces, but a heape of stones, set in order? We finde that the Iaponians lay vp in their closets, and treasurie, birdes paynted vpon paper, triuetts, and brasen kettles: and esteeme highly of them, not for any neatnes of fashion or workmanship, (for

The Iaponians treasure.

there

there is no such thing in them) but for bare antiquitie; insomuch that a thing of this nature, though it be quite worne, and eaten away, is sold among them for two, and fowre, and sometymes for six thousand Crownes. And when Christians laugh at them, for casting away so much money, vppon such trifles, they laugh at vs as much, for buying stones and such other commodities at so deere a rate. For their things, say they, are most of them for some vse and seruice, ours serue for nothing. And certainly they haue reason to taxe our errour, but that they are in the like errours themselues, and it falleth out among vs as with [illegible] men, that perceaue wel enough one anothers folly, but see not their owne.

6. A third thing, of farre greater consideration is, that this smal parcel of goodnes, which is in earthly things, is not permanent, but runneth like a continuall streame to nothing which at first was the beginning of it. To which purpose Saint *Augustine* saith excellently well. All things rise and fall; and rising, begin to be, and growe to perfection, and when they are come to perfection, they waxe old and perish. For all things waxe old and all things perish. Therefore when they rise and grow, the faster they grow in being, the more hast they make not to be: for so is their measure. And giues a solide and very plaine reason, why their measure and fashion is so, becausse euery particular thing, being parte of the whole vniuerse, and the whole, being a compound of things past, and things to come; some things must needs giue way that other may haue place, and so the whole succeessiuely be made vp: for as when a man vttereth a speach, wee cannot vnderstand it all, vnlesse the former syllables and wordes passe, and others, and others come succeessiuely after them, so if things were permanent in this world, they would hinder the rest that are still to come after, & the whole, would not be compleate in all parts. And this is the greatest, and most intrinsecall defect, which all things haue that depend of time, that they passe away as fast as time it selfe; and runne hand in hand with it, full as speedily as it, though nothing be more swift then time. Whereupon Saint *Leo* giues vs this good admonition, that wee make account of all temporal things as if they were al ready past; and his reason is, becausse the better part of them, is not; for that which is past, is quite gone; that which is behind, is not yet come; that which is present is but a moment of time. And Saint *Gregory* saith to the same purpose, that to place ones trust, in things that passe away, is as it were to lay a foundation of a buylding vpon the running waters. God standeth for euer, all other things passe away. What therefore is it to fly from him that standeth, but to cleaue to that which passeth? For who was euer caryed with the swelling streame of a swift riuer, & could himselfe remaine immoueable, the water bearing him downewards. He therefore that desireth not to slide, must auoyde that which slideth, least by that which he loueth, he be forced to come to that which he shunneth: for he that cleaueth to a shipperie thing, must needs slide with it, to the place where that which he holdeth, goeth. And he hath the like saying in another place of the life of mã, which may bee applied to any other thing. *To liue* (sayth he, with a necessity of dying, is as it were, to iourney towards death; for as many dayes as passe of our life, so many paces wee drawe neerer the place intended in our iourney. And the very adding of time, is a diminishing of it, becausse the space of our life, which beginnes to be, begins equally as much, not to be.

All things are variable.

S. *Aug.* 4. *Conf.* c. 10.

S. *Leo.* 5. *de resurr.*

S *Greg.* 24. *mor.* c. 2.

Id. 25. *mor.* c. 2.

The shortnes of this life. Pſ. 36. 10.

7. And yet againe, if this ſucceſſion of things were to laſt any length of time, people might haue ſome comfort in the tearme they had in them. But alas, how ſhort, and vnſettled, is this tearme! How ſuddenly is it ended? *yet a little while*, ſayth the Prophet, *and the ſinner ſhall not bee.* And in another place. *Man is like graſſe, his dayes like the flower of the feild, ſo ſhall he perish.* And S. Iames compareth mans life to a vapour; *Iob* calleth it *a point.* Vpon which place *S. Gregorie* writeth thus. *The whole length of time, of this preſent life appeareth euidently to be but a point, when it commeth. For whatſoeuer could haue an end, was but short.* And that we might not thinke that he ſpeaketh only of them, that are taken away by vntimely death in the prime of their youth, he repeateth the ſame more expreſſely elswhere in theſe words. If we looke backe, from the beginning of mankind to this very time, in which now we liue; we ſhall quickly ſee, how ſhort it is, ſeeing once it could haue an end. For if there were a man that hauing been created the firſt day of the world, had liued till this very day, and this day ſhould make an end of his life that ſeeme ſo long; behould the end is come; that which is paſt is nothing, becauſe all is gone, that which is to come in this world, is alſo nothing, becauſe he hath not a moment more to liue. Where then is that long time contayned betwixt the beginning and ending! It is conſumed as if had neuer been.

Pſ. 102. 15. Iac. 4. 14. Iob 21. 13. S. Greg. 15 mor. 24

Id. 15. mor. c. 2.

Euery thing vncertaine.

8. Which incommoditie, hath yet a greater, to wit, that this ſmale pittance of time, which nature hath allotted, to the things of this world, is vncertaine. Euery thing is ſubiect to ſo many chances, and aduentures, that moſt commonly in the midſt of their courſe, they giue vs the ſlipp. By nature they are ſo brittle, that euery little incounter breakes all to peeces, as if they were made of glaſſe. The chances are ſo many, and ſo frequent in the world, by roberies, tempeſts, warre oppreſſion of great men, and infinite other accidents; that it is not conceauable how eaſie it is, for euery thing to perish, & to be changed from one to another. But eaſyly may be ſeene, that it is the hardeſt thing in the world, to keepe any thing long. Which *S. Bernard* expreſſeth in a homilie which he made of the deceitfullnes of this life in theſe words. Men take pleaſure in meate, they take pleaſure in pompe, and pride, they take pleaſure in riches, they take pleaſure alſo in vice, & time. But ſorrow entreth vpon the latter end of this ioy & pleaſure, becauſe the pleaſure which we take in a thing that is changeable, muſt needs change, when the thing is changed. We light a taper; it is not the pure element of fire, but a torch or a taper, and the fire it ſelfe conſumeth that which feeds it, and is not fed, but by conſuming; & as the matter cometh to an end, the fire alſo fayleth. As therefore ſmoake, & darkenes, wayte vpon the end of that flame, ſo the pleaſure of euery ioyfull thing, endeth in ſorrow. Thus ſayth *S. Bernard* excellently well, ſpecially that all theſe temporal things, are ſo very vnconſtant, that they are not only ſubiect to be taken from vs by external violence: but decay ſuddainly by the very vſe of them, and fall away, by little and little, through our fingars, while we handle them, as meate and drinke, and apparel, ſtately buyldings, and the like, how can therefore that long continue, which is continually eating out it ſelfe.

S. Bernard 1. de fall. Imus vitæ

9. Which was the ground as I take it of an anſwere which *S. Macarius* of *Alexandria* is reported to haue made to a certaine Tribune. For paſſing the riuer of *Nilus* with another *Macarius*, and being both of them but poorely clad, and in faſhion ſomewhat contemptible, and two Tribunes paſſing in the ſame boate, richly apparelled

mantled in cloth of gould, with a great trayne of horſes and followers. One of the Tribunes ſpying the two ſeruants of God ſitting in a corner of the boate, ſayed vnto them. *You are happy that make a foole of the world.* *It is true ſayd S. Macarius. We make a foole of the world, and the world makes fooles of you.* With which ſhort and ſaddaine replye the man was ſo ſtrucken at hart, and his vnderſtanding ſo enlightened, that when he came home, he preſently made away al his goods, and betooke himſelf to Religion, perfourming that which *S. Bernard* adviſeth in a certaine place, ſaying. *It is better to forſake the world, then to be forſaken by it.* And penetrating the truth of that which *S. Gregory* deliuers in his moralls. Wee cannot long remaine with the things which we haue, for eyther dying we leaue them, or they perishing do as it were leaue vs, while we liue.

S. Macarius.

S. Bernard ſer. de cœnob.

S. Greg. 18. moral. 12.

10. But let vs ſuppoſe the goods of this world were great, and certaine, and long to be enjoyed, is the vſe and poſſeſſion of them in that faſhion in which we haue them, a matter much to bee eſteemed? For if wee enter duly into the manner of it, we shal finde that al the joy wee haue in them, is by meanes of our fiue ſences, which are common to beaſts, and wherein many beaſts goe farr beyond vs. And conſequently the manner of injoying them is but baſe and infirme, and the joy we haue in them but very ſmal For our ſight only takes pleaſure in ſome, as in pictures, and images, and the beauty of feildes and woods. In ſome, our taſt; ſome ſerue for nothing but to be kept lockt vp in cheſts. Others are ſo farre from the owners reach, that they can neuer ſet eye, or lay hand vpon them. Moreouer in things for example which pleaſe the palate, it is the ſauour only, which giueth contentment: if there be any thing els in them, it is in a manner loſt, and conſequently we neuer thoroughly enjoy any thing. For in other things, the ſmel only is for vſe, in others the colour; and ſo if we paſſe through al, we shal finde that we enjoy the leaſt parcel of them, which certainly is not to bee bought at ſo deere a rate.

The manner of enioying the creatures of this world is but baſe.

11. Finally, to the end we may the better vnderſtand the nature of al theſe earthly things, and enter into a deeper contempt, and hatred of them, we shal do wel to conſider, that the smal vncertaine good, which by the guift of God, is in them, is alwaiſe beſet with ſo many troubles, and mingled with ſo many euills, that are farr greater then the good which they preſent vs with; that the pleaſure, which a man takes in them, can neuer be ful and perfect, but is allwaiſe neceſſarily clipped, and abated in many things. We might proue this by many occurrences, which happen dayly in the life of man before our eyes, but I wil content my ſelfe, with one paſſage out of an epiſtle of *S. Bernard* to *Sophia* a noble ladye, of the deceiptful glory of this world, where hauing firſt diſcourſed of the shortnes of it, he ſayth further of the very continuance which it hath, in this manner: The very permanency of it, ſuch as it is, hath it not more trouble then pleaſure? while you lay clayme to your owne; while you ſtand defending of it, when you enuye, when you are iealous; when you are continually hunting after ſomething which you haue not, and the deſire of hauing, is neuer quenched by that which you haue gotten; what reſt do you finde in your glory? If there be any; yet the pleaſure ſoone paſſeth, neuer to returne; the trouble remayneth, and wil neuer leaue you.

The goods of this world ful of trouble.

S. Bernard epiſt. ad Sophiam.

12. But nothing doth more plainly diſcouer the natural condition and qualities of euery Creature, and ſhew vs more euidently how baſe imperfect al of them

The greatnes of God

beſt shewes the baſenes of Creatures.

are, then if we compare them with their Creatour. For as a poore countrey fellow borne and bred in ſome out village, wil euer thinke his cottage, and his cloutes, ſomething, til he come into a Citty, and there behould the ſtate and magnificence of the Nobility in their buildings, and retinew, and al other things: ſo as long as a man reſts in theſe inferiour things, he shal neuer arriue to the perfect knowledge of them. But if we deſire to ſee thoroughly into them, we muſt rayſe our ſelues to the conſideration of the greatnes and maieſty, and infinitie of God. For if the whole earth, as I inſinuated before, be but a point in compariſon of the heauens, and the heauens themſelues, if they were as many more, and more vaſt then they are, were yet farre leſſe then a point, in reſpect of God, what is the earth in compariſon with God? And if the whole earth be nothing, compared with God, what is a ſmal parcel of the earth, or a handful of money, or any thing els that can be named?

Creatures in compariſon of God are not.

Iob. 14. 4. S. *Greg.* 16. *mor.* 18.

Exod. 3 14.

11. Wherein we may conſider moreouer the exiſtence of euery thing, and the manner or meaſure of their being in this world; For doubtleſſe they haue ſo poore and ſoweake a conſiſtence, that they are euer neerer not being, then being; ſpecially if we ſet the being of God, and the euer permanent exiſtence of his Diuine eſſence in compariſon with them. In regard of which exceſſiue diſtance, *Iob* ſayth of God, *He only is.* Which S. *Gregory* expoundeth in theſe words. Are there not Angels and men, heauen and earth, ſea, and land, the aire and al flying fowle, foure footed beaſts, and ſuch as creep vpon the earth? Al theſe thinges are; but principally they are not, becauſe they ſubſiſt not of themſelues: and vnleſſe the hand of God, that gouerneth them, do maintaine them, they cannot be. Wherefore in al thinges he is only to be regarded, who is principally; and he that ſayd to Moyſes, *I am, Whoam: ſo thou shalt ſay to the Children of Iſraël, He that Is, hath ſent me vnto you.* Al which put togeather, wil eaſily perſuade a man of reaſon and iudgement, that not only one feild, or one houſe, or any priuate mans poſſeſſions (which are often but ſmal in euery bodies eye) are not much to be valued, or rather to be accounted in a manner nothing; but that the whole world, with al that is in it, or if it were poſſible that there were worlds without number in one mans poſſeſſion, are al of them nothing, and as ſuch to be contemned.

WHERIN TRVE HONOVR AND nobilitie doth conſiſt.

CHAP. II.

S *Greg.* 25. *moral.*

THIS ground ſuppoſed, it wil be eaſy to vnderſtand, wherin true Nobilitie doth conſiſt, and what maketh a man truly honorable. Commonly men think it is wealth or preferment, or greatnes of deſcent which makes them honorable, becauſe, as S. *Gregorie* teacheth, people shut their eyes to internal and inuincible things, and feed themſelues only with things viſible. And therfore they reſpect a man not for that which he is, but for that which is about him.

How things are to be valued.

2. This errour may be eaſyly layed open, and confuted if we do but conſider that we value al other things by that which is in them: Who eſteeme of a howſe,

as

as it is moſt fit for habitation; of an oxe, or a horſe, as they are moſt ſeruiceable, either for the plough, or for the race, or ſaddle; and ſo in ſmaller things, we commend a ſword, or a knife if they be for the vſe, for which they were made. What folly is it then, to honour man only for things which are, without him, and farre inferiour to himſelf, and leſſe deſeruing honour? For wealth, apparel, a good howſe and ſuch like, are not onely outward but inferiour to man, and conſequently farre from adding any honour, or ornament vnto him. And in fine, both the good which is in them, is ſmal, and of meane value, and not for a man to glory in, ſeeing himſelf is greater and more noble. And ſecondly, be it what it wil, it is wide of him that poſſeſſeth it. For as it were a ridiculous thing for me for example, to brag of your learning, or you of myne; iuſt ſo it falleth out with them, that brag of their gold, and ſyluer, and poſſeſſions. For that which is good or glorious in theſe things, belõgs to the gracing of the thing it ſelf, & not of man. For that which *S. Bern.* ſayth truly of one kind, may be applied to al. Eſteeme it an vnworthy thing, to borrow beautie of mouſefurre, or of the labours of wormes. The true ornament of euery thing is that which is in it of it ſelf, nothing els. S. *Bernard epiſt.* 113.

3. Wherfore the qualities of the mind, only are the proper ornament of mankind, and only able to giue a man true honour, and worth. Theſe are his owne, & ſtick by him, and are great indeed, and deſerue accordingly, to be highly eſteemed of euery body. Which *S. Ambr* giues vs to vnderſtand in the exãple of Noë, in the booke which he wrot in prayſe of him: põdering how, in the holy Scripture he is cõmended, not for Nobilitie of deſcent, but for Iuſtice & perfection. The deſcent of a good man, ſayth he, is the progenie of vertue? For as men deſcend from men, ſo the linage of ſoules is vertue. *S. Hierom* ſayth as much in other words. Our Religion hath not reſpect to perſons, nor ſtandeth vpon the natures of men; but conſidereth euery ones mind. It iudgeth a man to be of noble, or ſeruile condition by his manners: Not to be a ſlaue to time, is the only libertie with God, & the greateſt Nobilitie, is to be conſpicuous in vertue. For otherwiſe a man doth but in vayne glorie of the nobilitie of his deſcent, ſeeing al that are redeemed with the ſame blood of Chriſt, are of God equally prized and honoured. It maketh no matter, in what ſtate a man is borne, ſeeing al are equally regenerated in Chriſt. Wherin nobilitie conſiſts. S. *Ambroſe lib. de Noë* 4. S. *Hierom. epiſt* 14.

4. This was the ſenſe and opinion of holy Fathers, as we find by what they haue left written; and a Chriſtian that hath good grounds wherby to diſcerne what is truth and what is falshood, what is vayne, and what is ſolide and ſubſtantial, can think no other. The anſwer which *S. Agatha* virgin and martyr made to Iudge *Quintian* was pertinent in this kind. For he caſting it in her teeth, as a diſgrace, *that being borne as she was of noble parentage, she was not ashamed to lead the baſe and ſeruile life of a Chriſtian?* She replied, *that she eſteemed it the greateſt freedome and honour that could be to be the handmaide of Chriſt.* And certainly, as I ſayed, it behooueth al men to be of the ſame mind, Chriſtians eſpecially.

5. That we find the like deliuered by heathen writers, is much more to be admired: And yet *Plato* in his dialogues of a common weale diſcourſeth after this manner. Next after God we muſt honour our owne mind: but it is no true honour, if puffed vp with a foolish opinion of our ſelues, we commend our ſelues, or let our mind do whatſoeuer it hath a fancie to; much leſſe if we giue our ſelues ouer to pleaſure. For this were rather to affront it, and fil it ful of miſcheefe and repentance. Neither doth he honour his mind, that *Plato dial. 5. de reg.*

" esteemeth this life to be any great good thing, because he also doth disgrace and " defile it. Nor he, that preferreth corporal beautie before vertue, or heapeth riches " vniustly. All these do lauish that which in the mind is most beautiful, and most " honourable, for a smale and idle gayne: because all the goods of the earth, or vnder " earth, cannot equal vertue only. And consequently the only true honour is to " follow that, which is vpright and honest.

Arist. 1. Ethico. c. 5.

6. *Aristotle* doth not only deliuer the selfe same more expressly, but addeth the reason, why most men are mistaken in their iudgment, touching this point. He sayth, *that honour is only due to vertue, as a reward therof, and a reward nothing answerable to it, but farre short of it. Because no honour is great enough for perfect vertue.* Also that euery thing that is excellent in goodnes, deserueth honour; and because commonly people take nothing to be good, but that which is outward, as nobilitie of descent, riches, cõmand, and the like; they honour them more, as men excellent aboue others, in whom they find these things. But in truth an honest mã only, is he that is to be honoured, and they that haue these other things without vertue, deserue no honour; though the practise be otherwise in such as put themselues forward in the world, and think because in outward apparence they are great, that therfore they are truly to be preferred before others.

Three difference of natures.

7. And besides the auctoritie of *Aristotle* and others, there is an other reason which is very plaine and euident. For as we see God hath created three differences of natures in this world; on consisting of spirit, and vnderstanding only, as the Angels. One wholy corporal, as beasts. One of a middle composition betwixt them both, or rather contayning them both, which is man: who hath flesh as beastes; and spirit, and vnderstanding as the Angels. And consequently man performeth the functions of both natures, vnderstanding things, considering their beginning and causes, remembring that which is past, forethinking that which is to come, as the Angels do; and eating, drinking, sleeping, greeuing, breeding, growing, increasing, dying as beasts, so that placed as it were in the middle betwixt them both, that way which in the course of his life and behauiour he bendeth himself, to that nature, he doth become most like. If he take the path of sense and sensual or carnal pleasure, he becometh a very beast, which is that which the Prophet sayth, *Man when he was in honour did not vnderstand, he is compared to the foolish beastes, and made like vnto them.* If he gouerne himself by reason, and suppressing desires of the flesh, follow that which is spiritual, be becomes not only like the Angels, but like to God, and increaseth more and more the true resemblance of him in himself, according to the testimonie of the same Prophet. *I sayed you are Gods.* Wherfore there is as much difference betwixt one *that liueth according to the flesh*, as the Apostle speaketh, and one *that liueth according to the spirit*, I do not say, as there is betwixt a Porter and a King (for though this distance be great, it is stil within compasse of the same nature) but as there is betwixt a beast and an Angel. Nothing being more contemptible then the one, nothing vnder God more honourable then the other.

Ps. 48. 13.

Ps. 81. 6. Rom. 8.

8. Wherfore we must needs conclude, that true worth, true Honour, true Nobilitie, consisteth in vertue only; Which whosoeuer doth not vnderstand, hath not eyes to behold the glorie of vertue. And that which *S. Gregorie* sayth proueth true in such a man. *That carnal people though for humane wisdome they seeme to be reasonable creatures, want the light of true reason*; because they see only with the eyes,

S. Gregory 2. in Ez. Reg. 1.

which

which the serpent opened. For sayth he, if they saw the spiritual glorie of vertue, doubtlesse they would couet to haue it within them, as wel as other qualities.

OF THE DIGNITIE OF Religious Pouertie.

CHAP. III.

EVERY vertue that a man doth throughly practice, doth beget him in the eyes and opinion of other men great admiration; and people are in a manner forced to loue him, and respect him for it. And the rarer, and more excellent the vertues are, and more hard to compasse, they work this effect of loue and admiration more forcibly: because as their beauty and splendour is greater, so they draw peoples thoughts the more to admire them. In which number doubtlesse the vertues proper to a Religious state, ought to be ranked, as truly ennobling those that possesse them. Wherfore we will say something of euery one of them in particular. And first of Pouertie; which as *Saint Ambrose* telleth vs: *Is the formost in degree, and as it were the Mother of other vertues.*

Vertue naturally breedeth loue and admiration.

S. Ambr. l. 5. in Luc.

2. Of the benefit, and commoditie of Pouertie we haue discoursed sufficiently in the precedent booke; here we are to speake as I sayd, of the dignitie of it. Which we shall come the easier to vnderstand, if we first suppose, that we talk not heere of Pouertie, which is forced vppon a man by necessitie, or by some suddaine or violent accident: for such Pouertie is base and sordide, and odious among men, and not without reason; because seing it is not voluntarie, it deserues no commendation; and being subiect to many inconueniences from abroad, it hath no inward comfort at home to solace it: it quencheth not the desire of hauing, but inflameth it; it is so farre from bringing quiet and contentment with it, that it rather breedeth nothing but care, and anxietie and anguish of mind.

3. Euangelical Pouertie, which is that, which Religious people professe, is of a farre other straine; for it is voluntarie, willingly vndertaken, willingly vndergone and borne: Though it might haue riches, and whole mountaines of gold, it esteemeth al *as dung* with the Apostle, for the loue of God, and hope of heauenly treasure; and setting al things at naught, is seated aboue all, and after a strange manner, possesseth al, by treading al vnder foot. They that professe it, cast away, not onely that which is superfluous, to bring themselues to the state, of which the wiseman speaketh; *Giue me neither riches nor Pouertie, but grant me onely things needful for my sustenance*: but they depriue themselues of necessaries, and put themselues into a perfect kind of nakednesse of al things. They part not with few things onely, or with many (which yet were very commendable, and much to be admired) but they forsake al, they bereaue themselues of euery kind of thing, and that for euer.

The excellence of Religious Pouertie.

Philip. 3. 8

Prou. 30. 8.

4. A man would think, this were enough, and that no more could be added, because he that saith al, excludeth nothing; and yet in Religious Pouertie, there is

ſomthing, which is yet more to be admired, *viz.* that not only they haue nothing, but haue put vpō thēſelues vpon ſuch tearmes, as abſolutly they can haue nothing, & haue cut off frō themſelues, both al dominion, and the very power of euer returning to haue any dominion ouer any thing. Diuines are wont to declare this point by a familiar example of a labouring beaſt, which expreſſeth it very naturally. For as a horſe, for example, vſeth the ſtable and hay, and litter, and cloath's, and ſuch like, and cannot be ſayd to poſſeſſe any of them; becauſe he hath not vnderſtanding & reaſon, which is the ground of dominion, but is himſelf poſſeſſed by man. So Religious people vſe the cloathes, and the meate, and other neceſſaries which be in the howſe, but they vſe them not as their owne: they haue but the bare vſe of them, and cannot ſay they are maiſters of any thing; becauſe by the vow of Pouertie, which they make, they are altogeather as vncapable of true and lawful Dominion ouer any thing, as the horſe I ſpake of. And that which *Caſſian* commended in the Monks of his time, is common to all: They durſt not ſay any thing was theirs; and it was a great fault to heare a Monk ſay, *my booke, my paper, my garment.* What more perfect Pouertie can there be? or to what higher ſtraine can it riſe?

Caſſ. lib. 4. c. 15.

Voluntarie pouertie is rare.

5. The difficultie which doth accompanie it, doth not a litle commend the Excellencie, and dignitie of it. The difficultie I ſay, which both the nature of the thing it ſelf, doth at the very firſt ſight offer to our eyes, and which may be gathered moreouer, by the ſcarcitie of this kind of pearle, for ſo I may iuſtly tearme it. *Bleſſed is the man* ſaith Eccleſiaſticus, *who is found without ſpot, and hath not gone after gold, nor hoped in treaſure of money: who is he, and we wil praiſe him! for he hath done wonders in his life.* He aſketh *who is he?* as if none were to be found; and giueth this high commendation to a man, that deſireth not wealth, nor laboureth for increaſe of his riches, and is not continually hoarding: but Religious people go higher; for they caſt away that which they haue, and bring themſelues to the perfect nakednes, which I ſpake of; and conſequently that which they do in their life, is a farre greater wonder.

Incitements of Couetouſneſſe in the world.

6. But let vs conſider a little how many wayes the deſire of hauing is ſubiect to be inflamed in this world: for when we shal find that Euangelical Pouertie doth barre all thoſe wayes, and ſubdue ſo many fiery Enemies, we ſhal ſee more plainely the Excellencie of it. Firſt therfore there is a kind of

1. poiſe or inclination, and deſire to haue many things naturally ingrafted in vs; which *Saint Auguſtin* deriueth from the likenes which we haue with *God, ſo deeply* imprinted in vs, that euen when we sinne, we retaine a reſemblance of him: for as God hath all things, ſo man deſireth to reſemble him, by hauing as many as he can. The beautie of the things of this world much whetteth our

S. *Aug. 2. Confeſſ. c. 6.*

2. deſire of them; as the ſhining colour of gold, the ſparkling of gemmes and pretious ſtones, the glorie of gay and coſtly apparrel, the ſtate of large buyldings, and the like. Beſides the many commodities which riches bring with them, releeuing vs in al, or in moſt of the miſeries of this life, and yeilding plentiful meanes of pleaſure, and paſtimes, dayntie fare, pleaſant gardins, abundance of furniture, and whatſoeuer is choyce and ſumptuous. Pouertie on the other ſide bereaues vs of al this, which nature cannot chooſe but feele, & it ſinks the deeper,

3. becauſe it is to laſt all our life time; and puts vs in a manner, in feare of our

liues;

liues; becauſe it takes away the helpes, by which life is maintayned. So that naturally we hate and ſhunne Pouertie, almoſt as much as we tender our owne life, the loue whereof, commandeth all other loues, as euery body feeleth in himſelf.

7. If we adde the point of honour, which men are ſo naturally taken with, what is more in reputation then riches? what more diſgraceful then Pouertie. This is the general perſuaſion of al men, euer from their Childhood; with this we grow, and in this the vogue and faſhion of the times doth ſettle vs, & the familiar diſcourſes of euery body at home and abroad, tend to nothing elſe but to perſwade vs that there is not a happier thing in this world, then to haue large poſſeſſions, great reuenewes, gold and ſyluer at wil, and plenty of all kind of wealth. How noble a ſpirit therefore, and how reſolute a mind, muſt it needes bee that ſpurneth and treadeth vnder foot at once, all that which nature ſo much deſireth, and is taken with: and cõtrariewiſe doth ſo louingly embrace that which men by nature do ſo much abhorr? To which purpoſe *Bleſſed Nilus* an auncient Father, hath a diuine ſaying, commending the excellency both of Pouerty and Chaſtity, in regard, as he ſpeaketh: beautye and riches are much alike deſireful, and it muſt be a reſolute minde that is not takẽ, with either of them. But they that haue vndertaken to poſſeſſe nothing are worthyly much more to be admired, becauſe the eſteeme in which riches are held, could take no hould of them, nor bring them to intangle their minde in ſuch idle cares. For though there be many thinges in this world pleaſing to ſenſe, which eaſily entice a man vnto them, yet riches are much more forcible in this kinde, becauſe they are ſo vſefull both for attayning of honour and pleaſure; and becauſe long cuſtome hath taught fooles to account them happy that are rich, in regard of the glory and pleaſure they liue in. They therfore are worthyly to be eſteemed rare men, that ſtriuing with themſelues, haue ouercome the thoughts of their minde, mouing them to yeild to the opinion, which the vulgar hath of riches, as if they were truly good, and which in the iudgment of all men are thought to be of high eſteeme. Theſe are the very wordes of *Nilus*.

4. It is a ſigne of a noble hart to contemne riches. *Nilus lib. ad magna.*

7. It cannot therfore be denyed, but that to be voluntarily poore, is a token of a noble ſpirit and of a high mind, ſoaring aboue whatſoeuer is in the world, and contemning it as baſe and abiect. And yet it is the more to be admired and valued, in regard it freeth vs from all that baſe vnworthines, which they are neceſſarily ſubiect vnto, who ſeeke after wordly wealth: *S. Iohn Chryſoſtome* in his laſt homily vpon *Saint Matthew*, doth lay it before our eyes in this excellent compariſon: A rich man muſt needes want many thinges, & be a ſlaue & baſely ſtand in awe, & in ſuſpicion, & in feare of thoſe that haue their eyes vpon him, & of their tongues that ſpeake their pleaſure, and of the very deſires of others, that are Couetous. But pouerty not ſo; For this is a princely palace, not ſubiect to theeues, but ſtrongly guarded, a quiet hauen; an Academie and ſchoole of wiſedome. And elſewhere more copiouſly he ſpeaketh thus. If thou look into the very ſoule of a man that loues money, thou wilt find it all boared ful of holes with care, as a garment that is eaten vp by ten thouſand moathes; rotten with ſinn, and ful of iron molles. In the ſoule of him that is voluntarily poore, it is farr otherwiſe; it rather glitereth like gold, ſhineth as pretious ſtones, and is as beautiful as a Roſe. There is neither moath, nor theefe, nor worldly care to beſeen; but in his cõuerſation he is

To hunt after riches is an vnworthy thinge. *Saint Iohn Chryſoſt. Homil. vlt. in Matth.*

Id. Hom. 47 in Matth.

» he is not bound to attend vpon any earthly prince, but wayteth vpon God. He
» ſerueth not in the rancke of men, but of Angels: earth is not his treaſure, but
» heauen: he wants no attendance, but rather hath ſeruants, and poſſeſſions,
» and thoughts that are lordes of al thinges. What is more noble then ſuch a poore
» man? But he hath neither horſes nor coach; what need hath he of them, that muſt
» walk vpon the cloudes and bee with Chriſt?

Voluntary Pouerty poſſeſſeth all thinges.

8. A great Commendation certainely of Pouerty, proceeding from ſo great a Saint; but that which *S. Paule* comprizeth in one only word is yet far greater. *Hauing nothing and poſſeſſing all thinges.* Whoſe words if wee credit (and who is there that will not giue credit to the Apoſtle, vnleſſe he bee extreame vngodly?) *Nothing can bee more magnificent then pouerty, as claiming poſſeſſion of the whole world*, for what maſſe of wealth, what extent of Kingdoms can bee matched with it? Al Kingdomes though they be large, are confined within certaine limits; but the Kingdome of pouerty hath no boundes; by onely hauing nothing, it hath all things and is in poſſeſſion of all, for the whole buſines conſiſteth in the mind: the mind cannot be poſſeſſed of a thing, vnleſſe it be maiſter of it; it cannot not be maiſter vnleſſe it be aboue it; the more it is aboue a thing, the more maiſter it is, & doth the more truly poſſeſſe it. Now they that couet to be rich, cannot but loue the thinges, without which they make account they cannot liue: of loue comes care & ſollicitude, and conſequently the man is a ſlaue vnto them. Contrariwiſe the mind that hath shaken off theſe thinges, is not only aboue them, but doth ſcorne them. Whereupon *Climacus* doth ground that graue and lofty ſaying of his: that a Poore Monke is Lord of the world; and he that hath caſt his care vpon God, by
» that cõfidence, doth poſſeſſe all nations, as his vaſſals. And addeth; that a poore ſer-
» uant of God, loues nothing diſorderly: for he maketh account of that which he
» hath, or may haue as if it were nothing; and if it bee his fortune to leeſe it, he eſteem-
» meth it as dung. To which purpoſe alſo *S. Bernard* applyeth excellently well, as he doth alwaies that which was ſpoken of the only begotten (to vſe his owne word) to al his brethren; *If I bee exalted from the earth, I will draw all thinges to my ſelfe.* For al thinges, *ſayth hee*, are not onely added but made ſubiect vnto them, if naked
» of all earthly thinges, they be exalted farr aboue them. Let not therefore the rich
» men of this world imagine, that the Brethren of Chriſt poſſeſſe onely heauenly
» thinges, becauſe they heare him ſay, *bleſſed are the poore of ſpirit, for theirs is the Kingdome of heauen.* Let them not thinke that they poſſeſſe heauenly thinges onely, becauſe they heare no other named in the promiſe. They poſſeſſe earthly thinges alſo, *As hauing nothing and poſſeſſing al thinges*, & are the more maiſters ouer them,
» the leſſe they couet them. Finally to a faithful man the whole world is his wealth;
» abſolutely al the world, becauſe al thinges, aduerſe and proſperous, are equally
» ſubiect vnto him, and turne to his good. A Couetous man hungers after earthly
» things, as a beggar; the faithful contemnes them, as Lord. He poſſeſſing them,
» goeth a begging; the other contemning them, is in poſſeſſion of them. This is
» *S. Bernards* true and elegant diſcourſe.

All is in the mind.

Climacus grad. 18.

S. Bernard. S. 2. in Cant.

Io. 12. 32.

Matth. 5.

2. Cor. 6.

God is their ſteward.

9. Another thing wherein this kind of pouerty may iuſtly glory, is that whereas no body is ſo wel prouided of earthly wealth, but that ſometimes he wants, or at leaſt may come to want ſomething which he would haue. He that is voluntarily poore, cannot poſſibly want any thing that is needful for him, in regard that God through his deuine prouidẽce, hath vndertaken to prouide for him,

& to

& to maintaine him. The Royal Prophet telleth vs as much. *The rich*, sayth hee, *haue been in want & hungred, but they that seeke after our Lord shal not faile of any good.* Where-vppon *S. Chrysost.* in one of his homilies, doth reckon this also, among the cheefest commodityes of a Religious life, *that God feeding vs*, as he speaketh, wee should not need to take thought for any thing. For as if a king promise thee thy dyet, out of his prouision and store, thou doest fixe vpon it; much more doth it befit thee to lay aside al care and sollicitude, beeing God doth prouide for thee, and [illegible] flow vnto thee from him, as water doth from a fountaine. For if he feede al flesh, much more those who haue consecrated themselues vnto him. Which obseruation of *S. Iohn Chrysostome* hath not only relation to the profit, and quiet of minde, arising of pouertie, but to the worth and glory of it, wherof we speak. For what greater glorie can there bee, then to haue such a steward (as I may say) of our house-hold, and him to make our prouisions for vs, who is Lord of Angels, in the heauenly court, *and vnder whom they stoope that beare the world.*

Ps. 33. 11. " S. Iohn Chrysost. hom. 57. ad pop. " " " Iob. 9. 13.

10. But nothing doth so much grace the state of Euangelical pouertie, as the example of the Sonne of God, *Who* (as the Apostle speaketh) *when he was rich, was made poore for vs*: & not onely *poore*, but a very *beggar*. For that which is in the Psalme, is more truely our Sauiours speach then *Dauid's*: *I am a beggar and poore.* He chose a Mother that was poore, and he that was thought to bee his Father, was a silly Carpenter: he would not bee borne in any man's dwelling house, but in a stable, that was none of his owne: His life was according; for as himselfe is witnesse. *The foxes haue their dennes and the birds of the aire their neasts, but the sonne of man had not where to laye his head.* Finally hee in whose hand, are al the bounds of the earth, was not ashamed, to mayntayne himselfe, and his, vpon others Charitie. What can we desire more? For neither would the word and wisedome of God, that is, God himselfe, haue chosen such a manner of life, but that he knew, it was both noble and beseeming God: and though it had been neuer so meane, and abiect before, his onely example is sufficient to place it in the highest ranck of honour, and nobilitie.

The exãple of our Sauiour who was poore. 2. Cor. 8. 9. Ps. 39. 18. Matt. 8. 20.

11. Following the example of our Sauiour, the Apostles were also poore. For what other thing was it fitting they should learne in his schoole, but to imitate him? and how should they choose, but bee willing to imitate him, seeing he was their maister, they his scollars; he their Lord, they his seruants? Wherefore the cheife of them, professing this golden pouerty, sayd: *gold and siluer I haue none.* Another speaketh thus of himselfe: *In hunger and thirst, in cold and nakednes.* And of the rest of the Apostles: *euen to this houre, wee hunger and thirst and are naked.* And al of them had this rule giuen them: *Possesse not gold nor siluer, nor two coates.* Holy pouerty therfore beeing raysed to such honor and dignity by the example of Christ, and his Blessed Mother, the Queene of heauen, and of his Apostles, al Religious people haue not only embraced it, as allwayes exceeding profitable, but accordingly reuerenced it, as a thing diuine. Of which number and persuasion, was that *Isaac*, of whom *S. Gregory* relateth in his dialogues: that when many large possessions where presented him, to the vse of his monastery, he could neuer bee drawne to admit of them, because (as hee expressed) *that he was as much afraid, to leese the assurance of his pouerty, as the Couetous man is careful, to conserue his fading riches.*

The Apostles were poore. Act 3. 6. 2. Cor. 11. 27. 1. Cor. 4 11. Matt. 10 9. S. Gregor. 3. dial. 14.

12. The like wee read in *S. Antonine* and others, of *S. Clare*, Mother of many S. Clare.

S. Anton 3. Pt. Hist. c. 4. virgins: that shee loued al virtues, but was cheifely inamoured with pouertie, and was wont to say to her sisters, that her Cõuent or companie, should remayne firme and impregnable, so long as it was deffended with the walls of Pouertie. And when shee requested Pope *Innocent* the fourth, to grant her the perpetual priuiledge (as she called it) of Pouertie, the Pope being much taken with that new kinde of forme of priuiledge, (there neuer hauing beene such a requeſt as he sayd, made before to that holy Sea) he did not only willingly graunt vnto it, but with a great deale of contentment to his minde, he writ the whole graunt with his owne hand.

13. And it was no wonder that she was so great a seruant of this virtue, hauing been bred vp in *Sainct Francis* his schoole; who did not only much please him selfe in the commodities of pouertie, but did highly honour and reuerence it as a iewel of great price, and a state whereunto no dignity in the world could bee compared. *Sainct Bonauenture* writeth in his life, that whensoeuer he had occasion to speake of that virtue, he was wont with reuerence, to stile it his *Mother*, his *Spouse*, his *Lady*, and *Queene*; in regard that by the king of kings, and by his blessed *Mother*, the *virgin Marie*, it had beene so highly prized and practised. If by chance he had espyed a beggar in the streetes, that seemed more poore then hee, his heart began presently by to burne within him, with holy enuy against that man, as if he had been out-stript in a matter of great consequence. And againe if hee were inuited to a gentleman's table, as oftentymes he was; in the way as he went, he allwayes begged of the neighbours, from doore to doore some crusts of bread, which when he sate downe, at board, hee tooke most delight to feed on. And once the Cardinal of *Ostia* (he that was afterwards Pope, and tooke the name of *Honorius*) did frendly complayne of him for it, telling him that beeing inuited to his table, he did disgrace his house with that practise. Nay, rather sayd the *Sainct* I do honour your house the more with it: because in doing it, I do honour a greater Lord then you, and Iam fully resolued, neuer to forgo this princely dignity, which my Lord Iesus did assume, when he was made poore for vs; to enioy counterfeit riches for so short a tyme, as they are lent vs for our vse.

S. Francis.

S. Bonau. in the life of S. Francis.

A notable saying of S. Francis.

14. Al other Saynts also were doubtlesse of the same opinion; for they could neuer haue been saynts, but by contemning the world, nor contemne the world, but that this was their iudgment and opinion of it. Let vs heare what saynt *Gregory Nazianzen* speaketh to this purpose, and how he glorieth in this vertue. But they wil vpbraid me, *sayth he*, with the nakednesse, and pouerty which I professe. But these are my riches. In this I
» do not only glory, but I am proud of it. For when my enemyes obiect
» this against me, me thinkes they obiect that I tread his foot-steppes, who
» when he was rich, was made poore for our sakes. And would to God it
» were lawful for me, to cast off euen these raggs, which you see me
» weare, that naked, I might escape from the briars of this world,
» which withhold and draw back those, that are running towards
» God.

S. Gregor Nazian. in Apol.

15. But what wonder is it, that in the light of the Ghospel, Pouerty should shine so gloriously; seing in the darknes of infidelity, it was so highly pri-

The Gentills hos-

zed:

zed: For though that kinde of Pouerty were euer odious, and contemptible, which came by birth or neceſſity; yet voluntary pouerty, and they that did practiſe it, were allwayes in great veneration among al nations. *Ariſtides* a man much adored in Athens, liued in great pouerty, was euer clad in a ragged coate, and did ſuffer at home much cold and hunger. Whereupon when *Callias* a neere kinſman of his, and a moneyed man, was called in queſtion, and cited to the barre, among other things his aduerſaryes layd to his charge, that he relieued not the worthy *Ariſtides*. *Callias* perceiuing by the muttering of the Iudges, that they were offended at it, went to *Ariſtides*, beſeeching him to depoſe in iudgement, with how much, and how often he had offered to furniſh him, and how he had ſtil refuſed al, ſaying, *that he gloried more in his pouertie, then Callias in al his wealth. Forſayth he, there be enough to be found, that ſpend their great ſtockes in idle vſes: few that do ſtoutly beare the grieuances of pouerty; and that pouerty is no diſgrace, but in them that are poore againſt their wills.* Which when *Ariſtides* had deliuered with great applauſe before the iudges, there was no man vpon the bench, that did not much more enuy *Ariſtides* his rare pouerty, then *Callias* his wealth.

noured voluntary Pouerty.

Ariſtides.

Plutarch in his life

16. *Diogenes* his penurious manner of liuing, is alſo much renowned and admired; Kings and Princes often gracing his Tub with their preſence. And many other Philoſophers are named in this kind. Particularly *Saincte Gregory Nazianzen* relateth of *Crates*, that when he had forſaken his poſſeſſions, being proud of it, and deſirous that the people ſhould know, what a great fact he had done, gat vp vpon a high ſtal, and cryed out aloud, *Crates hath this day ſet Crates free.* Which courſe he would not haue taken, but that himſelfe was perſuaded that to be voluntarily poore was a glorious thing, and knew that generally the people thought ſo. *S. Chryſoſtome* in his ſecond booke againſt the diſprayſers of Monaſtical life, doth handle this ſubiect at large, and very eloquently; and directing his ſpeach wholy to the Gentills, and Infidells, drawes al his proofes from the grounds of natural reaſon. There he compares *Plato*, with *Dionyſius* the Tirant; *Socrates* with *Archelaus*; *Diogenes* with *Alexander* the great: and ſheweth that the one are farre more renowned for their pouerty, then the other for their large dominions. And relateth how *Epaminondas* the *Thebean* being called to councel, and excuſing himſelfe, that he could not come, becauſe he had that day put his coate to wahing, and had neuer another to put on, was more renowned and admired, then al the Princes that came to the meeting. Whereupon *Saincte Iohn Chryſoſtome* doth conclude, that the height of Pouertie, doth not onely appeare by the light of the Ghoſpel, but by force of natural reaſon.

Diogenes.

Cratie.

S. *Gregor. Nazian. ora* 30.

S. *Iohn. Chryſoſt l* 2. *aduerſus oppugnatores vit. mon.*

Epaminondas.

17. The truth of al which things, being ſo cleare and apparent, we muſt needs acknowledge alſo that this Pouerty cannot properly be called Pouerty, but rather a wealthy ſtate, abounding in farre truer, and greater riches, then whatſoeuer, princely treaſures, & magazins. For to ſpeake the truth of men, that are eſteemed wealthy in the world, their coffers are rich, but not themſelues: Their minds are voyd and empty, and as poore as *Iob*, allwayes crauing, as if they had little or nothing to liue on. And ſo the holy ghoſt in the prouerbs, diſciphereth them both

Voluntary pouerty, not pouerty.

Prou. 13. 7. „ both vnto vs, both the Euangelical poore, and the falsly stiled rich, in
S. Greg. hom. 15. in Euang. „ these words. There is a man that is rich, and hath nothing, and there
„ is a man that is poore, amidst many riches. Wherefore *S. Gregory* doth rightly
„ obserue that our Sauiour in the ghospel doth not cal these earthly riches, absolutly
„ riches, but deceitful riches. For sayth he, they are deceitful, because they cannot
„ long abide with vs. They are deceitful, in regard they fil not the emptines of our
S. Ambros. l. 3. epist. 1. „ mind. The onely true riches are they which make vs rich in vertue *S. Ambrose*
„ also, handling this matter with his wonted eloquence and copiousnes, & meaning
„ that wisedome onely, doth make a wise man rich, hath these words. He is
„ truly rich that in the eye of God is held so: in whose sight the whole earth is
„ little, the compasse of the whole world is narrow: now God doth account him
„ onely rich, who is rich in eternity, and hoardeth not wealth but vertue. Do
„ you not thinke that he is rich, who hath peace, and tranquillity, and quiet of
„ minde; so farre that he desireth nothing, he is not waued vp and downe by the
Phil. 4. 7. stormes of cupidity, he is not weary of old things, nor seeketh new; nor in the
height of riches, is kept allwayes poore, by continual craving. *This is a peace which is truly rich, and doth surpasse al vnderstanding.* Great therefore is the dignity
Two kinds Euangelical Pouerty. and splendor of Religious Pouerty; and such as al princes and wealthy men
of this world may iustly enuy at, if they vnderstood it right. I wil conclude this
chapter if first I declare briefely that there be 2. kinds of Religious Pouerty: (for
it is a matter of consequence to vnderstand it) and both of them are very worthy
in them selues, and eminent in the way of Euangelical perfection. One kinde of
pouerty retaineth absolutly nothing at al, neither in priuate, nor in common:
Which is the profession, which first of al *S. Francis* vndertooke, and after him
by his example, *S. Dominick* and many others. The other kind of pouerty re-
taineth possession, of certaine necessarie reuenues in common only, nothing in
priuate: which is that, which al the ancient Fathers professed: *S. Benedict*, *Saint Bernard*, *S. Bruno* and *S. Basil*, the most ancient of al the rest: for their Monasteries
were not only indowed, with yearely rents, but with such ample possessions, as
Trithemius li. 1. de viris il. c. 1. the remaynder of them doth testifie their greatnes to this day. Insomuch that
Trithemius is bold to say of his order, that if it were againe in possession of al
that it formerly had, without doubt *S. Benedict*, as he speaketh, would haue the
third part of Christendome in his hands. Which can not seeme strange, to who-
soeuer shal cal to mind, the deuotion of those times, the mother of liberalitie
towards God and his seruants. Kings and princes did take a glorie in buylding
great Monasteries, in the lands belonging to their crowne and patrimonie, and in
bestowing vpon them, very large possessions. And if any wealthy persons did
enter into any of those religious orders (as there were very many that did) they
caried their wealth in with them, and no body sayd nay, no body repined, or
sued them vpon it, but did rather willingly yeald them al fauour, and furtherance.

18. So we read in the life of *Placidus*, that it was *S. Benedict* his fashion, not to
suffer the goods of his monks; to be otherwise imployed, but to the maintenance
of store of Gods seruants. But to say nothing of many others, the only possessions
of this *Placidus* were so large, that he alone was Maister of great part of Sicilie,
besids other things which he had: which is testified to this day by the Register of
them yet extant, which is able to amaze the reader with the only length therof.
S. Bernard. And *S. Bernard* doth speake of it, in one of his Epistles, as of a wonderous thing.

To

To this day sayth he, the land is shewed, which is recorded to haue been giuen with him, and for him. That *Saint Augustin* also did the like, may be proued by his owne testimonie, in an Epistle of his, to certaine Nunnes: Where he aduiseth them to put that in common, to the Monasterie, which they enioyed in priuate, in the world. From whence the constitution of *Iustinian* the Emperour sprung: ordering that the goods of them, that became monks, should, *ipso facto*, belong to the Monasteries, where themselues were Religious. By all which, it is euident that this kind of Pouertie so much practized by the ancient Fathers, mirrours of sanctitie and wisedome, (no other kind of Pouertie being then in vse) is not only voyd of al imperfection, but was esteemed by them most perfect, and most conuenient to be practised.

S. August. Ep. 109. Authent. col. 1. const. 3. §. Illud & coll. 9. Const. 15. §. si qua.

19. *S. Thomas*, the cheefe of Schoole-Diuines, doth giue vs to vnderstand no lesse, for propounding the question in these tearmes: *Whether, to haue any thing in common, doth diminish the perfection of a Religion?* answereth directly, *that it doth not diminish it*: but rather, that it may in some cases, be better, and more conuenient so to do. And al other Diuines agree in the same. For al is, as I haue sayd, not to haue any thing in priuate to a mans self, though in common there be something to be *diuided*, according to the forme prescribed by the Apostles, *to euery one as he hath need.* This is the institution, so much commended by *Saint Hierome* in the monks of his time, in these words. No man can say I want a coate, or a frock, or a mattresse. He that gouernes them, doth so distribute al things, that no man shal neede to aske. Euery one hath what is fitting for him. "If any one of them begin to be il, he is remoued into a larger roome, and "cherished by the seruice of so many elder monks, that he shal not haue euasion, "to long for the delicacies that be in Cities, nor want the careful affection of "a mother.

S. Thom. 2. cont. gens. 135. & 22. q. 188. art. 7.

Act. 4.

S. Hierom. Ep. 22.

OF THE EXCELLENCY of Religious Charity.

CHAP. IIII.

POVERTY (of which I haue discoursed at large in the precedent Chapter) is exceedingly graced, by the Profession of Religious Chastity; And Chastity is so much the more to be admired, by how much our body is dearer vnto vs then our worldly wealth, and in it selfe more noble. Holy Scripture commendeth Chastity with a kinde of admiration: *O how beautifull is a chast generation with clarity?* It calleth thē, that leadea chast life, *beautifull*, and *glorious*, because there is a kind of grateful comelines, belonging particularly to that state, eleuated aboue the strayne of nature, and in a manner diuine.

Sap. 4.

2. To the end we may discouer it the better, it wil not be amisse, to consider how our Nature was ordered from the beginning; wherof *S. Basil* hath a learned discourse in his booke of true Virginity, and layeth this for his first

S. Basil. l. de vera virginitate.

ground, that God when he purposed to furnish the earth, with liuing creatures; would not himself create them al immediately of nothing, but making first a few of euery kind, ordered that the rest should descend of them, and be taken of them, as out of a kind of nursery or seed-plot. And least in so necessary a work his creatures should be slack, whereas he had distinguished them into two sexes, he gaue either sexe a strong inclination to come together, to the end to breed of one another; which inclination is ful as strong in men, as in beasts; and for as much as concerneth generation, there is litle difference betwixt them, but that to man there is a further ground to enforce it. For the woman being taken out of the side of the man, God ordayned she should be subiect and obedient to man, as part to the whole: and on the other side, that he should beare particular affection vnto her, and desire her companie, and as it were clayme her as partie of himself, with desire to be againe ioyned with her, and make two in one, and one in two, and so be two in one flesh. And to the end the loue betwixt them should be the greater, he made woman of a soft and tender mould and disposition, apt to allure man's affection by sight, speech, touching, & euery motion; both to prouoke man the more to the desire of generation, and prouide for the woman's infirmity; for she not being able to defend herself without the help of man; God tempered both their natures so, that the woman's frayltie might be supported by the strength of the man, and man, though by nature stronger, should be deliuered as it were captiue, into the woman's hands, by a secret violence, as a loadstone drawes iron to it. This is *Saint Basil* his discourse of the nature of man, as it was first created by God, and ordered by his al-prouident Counsel.

The natural inclination which man hath to generation.

3. To which if we adde the wound of Original sinne, and the general infirmitie and corruption of our whole nature by it, what shal we be able to say or think? For that which *Saint Bernard* writeth, is very true, that though al parts of our body, haue tasted of the Additiō of Leuiathan, as he tearmeth it, that is, of the poison of Concupiscence, and the sting of intemperate lust, this part hath most of al been taynted with it, and rageth more violently, and is more perniciously malignant by reason of it: in so much, that it often bandeth in rebellion against al deliberation, and whatsoeuer purpose of our wil: which the Saint thinks, was the cause why Circumcision (which was the remedie of original sinne among the Iewes) was rather ordayned in that part of the body, then in any other. Wherefore seing the malignancie of this disease, and our weaknes also is so great, the assaults of the diuel on that side, as vpon the weakest part of our walls, so hot and fierie, so many difficulties and skirmishes arising otherwise; what extraordinarie vertue, what solide constancie of minde must it needs be, which in al these things is both able to abide the brunt, and goe away with victorie? This strength, this abilitie doth not certainly proceed from any ground of nature, nor by our sole endeauour are we able to attayne vnto it, but it descendeth from aboue, as the Wise-man professeth when he sayth: I know that otherwise I could not be chaste, vnlesse God did giue it. And *S. Basil* in the booke aboue-mentioned doth acknowledge it saying: It is natural to marrye, but to be chaste is a thing more excellent, aboue nature, aboue the law, no wher commanded by God, neither in the old Testamēt, nor in the new; because God, would not subiect the merit of so great a vertue

The corruption by Original sinne. *S. Bernard ser. 2. de Circum.*

Chastitie is aboue nature.

Sap 8. 21. S. Basil. supra.

tue

tue, to the neceſſity of a commaund, but leaue it to be a ſpecial token of a noble ſpirit, willingly of our owne accord, not compelled by precept or iniunction, to embrace that which ſoareth ſo high aboue nature.

4. *Climacus* calleth this vertue of Chaſtity, an odoriferous vertue, and ſayth excellently wel, that it is ſupernatural, and a glorious kind of abnegation of nature, whereby this our mortal & corruptible body draweth neere the nature of the heauenlie Spirits, which haue no bodies. That he that liueth chaſte, cānot attribute it, to any deſert or endeauour of his owne; becauſe to ouercom nature, is no eaſy buſines; but whenſoeuer we haue the vpper hand of it, we muſt acknowledge that it cometh frō a higher power, becauſe nothing is ouercom but by that, which is ſtronger & greater then it. Which if we ponder duly, we ſhal eaſily diſcouer the dignity & excellency of this vertue of Continencie, and how it transformeth our minde and body, into a neere reſemblance of the ſtate of life, which the Bleſſed shal poſſeſſe in heauen, after the general reſurrection; when we shal againe be inueſted, with that which was truly out body, & truly our flesh, but then incorruptible and ſpiritual, & free from the baſe and ignoble qualities which heer hang vpon vs, which the Apoſtle calleth natural, the function therof being the ſame with beaſts, and particularly this power of generation, which alteration in this kind our Bleſſed Sauiour expreſſed in two words: *They shal neither marrie, nor be married.*

Climacus grad. 15.

Chaſtitie an odoriferous and heauenly vertue.

1. Cor. 15. 44.

Matth. 22. 30.

5. Wherefore they that performe this now vpon earth, & endeauour heer to mayntaine their fleſh holy and impolluted, liue after a heauenly manner; as *Saint Cyprian* writing to certaine Religious women telleth vs in theſe wordes: That which we ſhal be hereafter, you haue now begunne to be. Now in this world you haue attained the glory of the reſurrection; you paſſe through the world, without thought of the world; and perſeuering chaſt in virginity, are equal with the Angels of God. Which words of *S. Cyprian* concerning the equality of virgins, with the Angels, giue vs occaſion to reflect vpon a farther dignity of this vertue, to wit, that it teacheth vs to liue in mortal flesh, as if we were as Angels, not in flesh. For to be in flesh, is of it ſelf no vnworthy thing; but to do the commaunds of the flesh, and obey the luſt thereof, that is vnworthy. Wherefore they that liue ſpiritually, and performe not the deſires of the flesh, but conſtantly mortify the workes thereof, they liue as the bleſſed Spirits that haue no flesh. Whereupon *S. Ambroſe* diſcourſing of a ſingle life, ſpeaketh thus: It is not contained within the boundes of nature; who then is able to comprehend it? or who can expreſſe with wordes of nature that, which is aboue the ſtraine of nature? It brought from heauen that, which it imitateth vpon earth: neither without reaſon doth it ſeeke in heauen a forme of liuing, hauing found itſelf a ſpouſe in heauen; ſurmounting the cloudes, the aire, the ſtarres, the Angels, it found the Word of God in the boſome of his Father, and entertained it with open breaſt. And who would haue let paſſe ſo great a Good, hauing once found it? Finally it is not my ſaying only, they that do not marry, nor are giuen in marriage, shal be like the Angels of God in heauen. Let no man therefore wonder, if they be compared to Angels, ſeing they are coupled to the Lord of Angels. *Caſſian* hath the like diſcourſe in no leſſe eloquent tearmes. To dwel in flesh, *ſaith he*, to be compaſſed round a bout with brickle flesh, and not to feele the motions of flesh, is as it were to go out of flesh, and

S. Cyprian de habita Virg.

S. Ambroſe li. de Virg.

Caſſian. li. 6. c. 6.

" passe the boundes of nature. And therefore it is impossible for a man to raise " himself with his owne wings, as I may say, to so lofty and so heauenly a " reward, vnlesse the grace of God, by the guift of Chastity, pul him out of this " earthly slough. For by no vertue are men of flesh so properly equalized with " the spiritual Angells, by imitation of their conuersation, as by the grace and " merit of Chastity: by which, liuing as yet vpon earth, they are (according to " the Apostle) Denizens of heauen, possessing heere now in mortal flesh that " which hereafter is promised, that the Saints shal haue, when they haue shaken
S. Greg. Nazian. Hom. in Matt. cum consummasset Iesus. off this fleshly corruption. Let vs heare *S. Gregory Nazianzen* also (so great a Diuine) speaking to the same purpose. He saith thus. You see the excellency and sublimenesse of this vertue is such, as can hardly be conceaued or apprehended. For is it not a thing surpassing the frayletie of flesh, that that which is borne of flesh, should not breed of flesh? Is it not euidently an Angelical " kind of life, to be confined in flesh, and not to liue according to flesh, but to " crow ouer nature? Flesh blindes vs to the world, reason rayseth vs to God. " Flesh holdes vs downe, Reason lifts vs, and in a manner giues vs wings: Flesh " imprisoneth vs, but Loue setteth vs free.

" 6. Wherefore vnlesse we wil wilfully shut our eyes, and not giue way to Reason, we must needes admire the great splendour of Chastity, which ranketh vs, not with Kings and Princes, (an honour so much hunted after
S. Bernard ep. 41. by men) but with the celestial Powers and Principalities. And yet *S. Bernard* steppeth a degree further, being bold to say, that he that liueth chast, is to be " commended aboue the Angells: And his reason is cleare; What is more beauti- " full, *sayth he*, then Chastity, which cleanseth him that is conceaued by vn- " cleane generation, and maketh a familiar friend of an enemie, a man an Angel? " A man that is chaste, differeth somewhat from an Angel; but in happinesse, not " in vertue: if the Angel's chastity be more happy, man's is more heroical. Chastity " is the onlie vertue, which representeth vnto vs the state of immortal glory, in " this time and place of mortality. Chastity alone, amidst the solemnities of mar- " riage, challengeth as a glorious thing the life of that happy countrey, where " they shal neither marry nor be marryed, giuing vs in earth a taste of that " heauenly conuersation. Chastity preserueth the frayle vessel, which we beare " about vs, which often is in hazard of breaking, and preserueth it as the Apostel " speaketh to sanctification; and serues vs as a most odoriferous balsame, to " keepe our bodies incorrupted. It refraineth our senses, it bindeth our mem- " bers from loose idlenesse, from corrupt desires, from the rotten pleasures of
Ioel 1. 17. " flesh, that it be not with vs as we read of some, that they were as rotten as " beastes in their dung. *Saint Chrysostome* iumpeth with *Saint Bernard* in the com-
Saint Iohn Chrys. de virg. c. 79. mendation of this vertue; and expresseth himselfe in these wordes. In what did *Elias*, *Eliseus*, *Iohn*, true louers of integrity, differ from the Angells? Truly " in nothing, but that they were by nature mortal: as for the rest, if a man looke " narrowly into it, he shal find them no otherwise affected, then those bles- sed spirits; and that their nature was of an inferiour mould, turnes rather to their greater commendation. For to the end, that earth-dwelling and mor- tal men should, by the strength of their endeauour, arriue to so great a vertue,
S. Basil. l. de Virg. with what fortitude must they be endewed? What rare course of life must they necessarily hold? We may adde *S. Basil*, who in the booke aboue mentioned

of

of Virginity, discourseth after this manner. They that preserue themselues continent, are certainely Angels in corruptible flesh, and do excessiuely honour the mortal life which they lead. They are Angels of no meane ranke, but most glorious, and most noble: they that are in heauen free from the encumbers of flesh, preserue their integrity, because both by nature and by their place, they are impregnable, seated neare to the soueraigne King of all, our God. But the others vpon earth, striue many yeares with the pleasures and allurements of flesh, and by their continual endeauours ouercoming the temptations of the Diuel, with rare courage and constancy, liue in the sight of their Creatour, in incorruption, equal in purity with the Angels.

Chastity maketh vs like to God.

7. Thus you see how these holy Fathers extol Continency, and Chastity to the dignity of Angels. Others lift it yet higher, and place it in the next degree to the Diuine purity. *Climachus* amongst the rest aduentureth to say, that Chastity is the neareſt similitude, which man can possibly haue with God: who as he is neyther corporal, nor corruptible, delighteth much in integrity, and incorruption: Contrary-wise the Diuells delight in dishonesty; and there want not wise men, that say, they reioyce in noe vice so much, as in that. But *S. Basil* goeth more profoundly to work. Virginity, *sayth he*, is a rare and excellent thing: and to comprehend al in a word; it maketh a man most like to the incorruptible God. It procedeth not from the body to the soule; but being properly in the soule, by the integrity therof, a thing most pretious, our bodies also are preserued intire The soule receiuing impression from the true Good, and from the desire therof, is lifted vp to that good, by the holines of Chastity, as by a forcible wing, and so endeauouring to serue and please the like with the like, that is, the incorruptible God, with purity incorruptible, it leadeth the integrity of the body, as a handmaid, to the seruice of the self same highest Good. And so the faithfull soule preseruing itself, pure and vnspotted, from al kind of filth, arriueth at last to haue within it selfe, as in the finest Christall-seing glasse, the similitude of God; God himself by his many graces infusing his glory and likenes into it, as it were by a most sweet streame or ray therof.

Climacus grad. 15.

S. Basil lib. de virginitate.

8. What can be said more honorable, or expresse more clearly the dignity of Chastity, then that from this dust and dirt of ours, it raiseth vs to the ranke of Angels, and not Angels only, but to the likenes and similitude of God himself? what wil take a man with admiration, if this do not? what dignity wil not iustly seeme base and sordide, compared with this heauenly honour? This is that great happines, which was anciently so much desired by man, that the old crafty Serpent could find no other motiue more forcible, to bring our first fathers to his bent, then to promise them, *they should be as Gods.* But that which was falsely promised by him, that could not performe what he promised, and promised by a way, by which it could not be compassed, we by Chastity do truly attaine vnto, and firmely possesse, doubtles the more solidely the more perfectly Chastity is grounded in vs.

Gen. 3.

9. And because it is euident, by what hath been said, that Religious Chastity is in it self very excellent, we will consider a little, in what degree it is excellent aboue all other kindes of Chastity: as gold doth not only differ in kind from all other inferiour mettalls, but some gold is finer then other some,

Religious Chastitie compared with other kinds of continencie.

by many degrees. A few things considered in the nature of Chastity wil easily discouer this vnto vs. It is ordinary in euery thing, that the more white, the more beautifull, one more neat a thing is, the more foule and deformed is the spot also that falles vpon it: And so it is in Chastity; no vertue is more tender then it. *Aegidius* one of the first companions of *S. Francis* was wont to compare it to a Cristall-looking-glasse, which the very breath doth staine. Others compare the contrary inticements to a flame of fire, which alwayes leaueth some mark behind it, greater or lesser, according as the flame doth continue. Nothing therfore can be worse for Chastity, then to leaue it in a place, where it may come by many rubbs and assaults, such as the world is. For it cannot be, but as *Cassian* writeth, (not only out of his owne dictamen, but deliuering it as the sense of all those ancient Fathers) *that whosoeuer is in continuall battaile, though he oftentimes his aduersary the foyle, yet sometimes he must needes be troubled, or also wounded.* But Chastity garded with the fences of Religion, and therby drawen out of danger of al earthly things, receiueth no such dammage; for eyther the dartes of the enemy come not neare it, or they leese their force before, and so their stroke is without effect.

Cassian lib. 6. c 4.

Helps in Religion to preserue Chastitie.

10. Moreouer Chastity in Religion findeth many helps to preserue it self; and particularly a spare diet, which Pouerty doth in a manner necessarily bring with it. For that which *S. Hierome* deliuereth (an authour certainly to be credited) is very true. *It is hard to preserue Chastity at a full board of dainties.* It hath also another Antidote, of which the same *S. Hierome* writeth to *Rusticus*. *Loue the knowledge of holy Scriptures, and the corruption of flesh thou wilt not loue.* For where do people more frequently and more earnestly studie the holy Scriptures, and al other good things, then in Religion? It hath humility and obedience, two special helps, and so inward to the state of Religion, & withal so present and efficacious a remedy of this disease, that none can be eyther more holesome or more at hand amongst those which God hath left vs. Of the one *Saint Bernard* writeth thus vpon those words of our Sauiour, *Blessed are the meek because they shal possesse the earth.* By this earth I vnderstand our body, which

S. Bernard serm. 1. omn. sanct.

» if a soule intend to possesse, if it desire to haue commaund ouer the members
» therof, it self must needes be meek, and subiect to Superiours For as it self is
» to the Superiour which it hath, so shal it find that, which is inferiour to itself:
» And therfore the soule that finds the flesh rebellious vnto it, must vnderstand
» that itself also is not so subiect to Superiours powers as it ought to be; Of

S. Greg. mor. 26. c. 13.

humility *S. Gregorie* doth often speake in this kind, and particularly in his Morals thus: *The vnspottednes of Chastitie is to be preserued by preseruing humility.* For if our spirit be deuoutly kept downe vnder God, our flesh wil not vnlawfully be lifted vp aboue our spirit. The spirit hath the rule ouer the flesh committed vnto it, if so be notwithstanding, it acknowledge the dutie of lawful subiection vnder God. For if it prowdly contemne him that is the Creatour of it, it is reason it should be combatted by the flesh that is the subiect. Therupon that first disobedient man, as soone as by pride he had sinned, he couered his naked parts; for by reason he had put a spirituall disgrace vpon God, he presently found the disgrace of his flesh, & he that would not be subiect to his Creatour, lost the right of commaund ouer his flesh, which before he ruled.

11. This is the armour, with which Religion doth defend the most beautiful

tiful flower of Chastitie, not only perfectly, but with a great deale of ease and swestnes. It vseth watching, fasting, and disciplines, and the like austeritities, but these vertues of which I haue spoken, and whereof Religion is the proper seate, togeather with the warines and custody, which I mentioned before, are the chiefest defence: by them it may easily, and without any great trouble be conserued all our life time, free from the least corruption, and wholy vnspotted; the body chast, intire, vnpolluted, and (which is the principal) the mind itself pure, innocent, vndefiled. What can be more honourable in this frayle, and slipperie life? honourable certaynly in itself, yet the more to be esteemed, because it is rare, and a guift imparted by God to few. Others through the heat of concupiscence, do as it were fry in the fornace of their owne flesh: they that haue receaued this heauenly guift in the same fornace of flesh, be, as anciently the three Children attended by Angels, who loue this vertue aboue the rest; and are not only nothing annoyed by the fire of lustful concupiscence, but feele a coole dewie wind blowing vpon them, which doth so temper, and abate that parching heate, which is so general to al, that nothing is more easie, or more delightful to them, then to liue chast. *Daniel. 3.*

12. Moreouer in Religion, so soone as a body hath obliged himself by solēne vow to perpetual Chastitie, the power of vsing not only al vnlawful pleasure, but euen of Marriage, is so wholy cut off, that al Marriages are euer after vtterly voyd, as if they were contracted with a dead body; which giues no smal addition to the dignitie of Religious Chastitie: because if it be laudable to abstaine from the vnseemlines of that pleasure, certainly the farther a body doth withdraw himself from it, the more laudable, and more glorious it is vnto him. Now no man can be farther off from it, then he that had bound himself to such a state of life, wherein, though he would, he cannot vse it. For that which we cannot do by right, and lawfully, is truly impossible for vs to do. Which is the point, our Sauiour would giue vs to vnderstand in the Ghospel, by the name of those Eunuches, *which neither nature, nor art of man made so, but themselues made themselues Eunuches, for the Kingdome of God.* Which, as it were fooliſh and absurd to vnderstand of the cutting of the body, so it is euidently to be taken for voluntarie continencie, and not for euery kind of continencie, but for that, which doth not only barre the act, but doth for euer cut of al power to the act. The words of our Sauiour import as much; for he doth not say, *they that do continually gueld themselues*, which might perhaps be applied to such, as with a setled resolution, to bridle themselues in this kind, should liue chast; but he saith: *Qui se castrauerunt; They that haue guelded themselues*; pointing at those that by once making a vow, haue bereaued themselues of al power of vsing any such act euer after. The excellencie and dignitie of which thing is diuinely declared vnto vs, by the *Prophet Esay*, who being wholy rauished, with the splendour of the Ghospel, among other commendations thereof, doth also fal vpon this, in these words. *Let not the Eunuch say; behold I am a dry tree, withered away, because this sayth our Lord to the Eunuches: They that shal haue kept my Sabbaths, and chosen that, which I would haue, and kept my, couenant I wil giue them a place within my house, & within my walls, & a name better then Sonnes, & Daughters: I wil giue thē an euerlasting name, which shal not perish.* Who are these Eunuches, to whom this is sayd, and promised, but Religious people? They keepe *Esay 5. 6. 7.*

Religious people vncapable of Marriage.

the Sabbaoth of our Lord, alwayes abſtayning from the toyleſome, and ſeruile works of earthly buſineſſes, and wholy attending vpon God: they haue made a couenant with God, & confirmed it by Vow; they make choice of that, which God would haue done, becauſe by the conduct of Obedience, they depart not a haires-breadth, from the performance of his holy wil. Theſe men therefore, though they attend not to generation, and haue moreouer bereaued themſelues of the power thereof, haue not any reaſon notwithſtanding to be ſory for it, or to eſteeme themſelues therfore barren and vnfruitful, becauſe in the houſe of God, they shal haue ſomething, that is farre better and more happie, then ſonnes and daughters in the world. Which, as *S. Baſil* doth diſcourſe vpon it, is not only to dwel in his houſe, but to be in that ranke and place therein, as shal farre ſurpaſſe al the ſplendour, and dignitie, which ſucceſſion of children might haue brought them; And not only ſo, but as *S. Auguſtin* addeth, they shal haue a peculiar glorie proper to themſelues, & not common to the reſt that liue in the ſame houſe and kingdome; which therefore perhaps is tearmed a *Name*, becauſe by it they shal be diſtinguished from all other people. Which glorie, and eminent dignitie, and happines, no doubt but the holy Ghoſt did alſo intend to expreſſe in that other paſſage of holy Scripture. *Happie is the barren and vndefiled and the Eunuche, that hath not wrought iniquitie with his hands, nor thought miſcheeuous things againſt God; The choice guift of faith shalbe giuen him, and a moſt acceptable portion in the temple of God.* Who can thinke that this moſt welcome, or (as it is heere tearmed) moſt acceptable portion, is promiſed to any other Eunuches, then the Eunuches of God, who haue voluntarily depriued themſelues for euer of all delights of this nature, and not without ſome trouble and difficultie, as it were, cutting away part of their body; ſo that not without reaſon, God may be ſayd to owe them a greater recompence of future pleaſure and delights diuine. Wherefore it cannot be, but that the honour & dignitie of Chaſtitie, muſt be very great, ſeing it shineth euen in that heauenly glorie aboue the reſt. And what may we thinke of the light, and ſplẽdour, which it hath in the darknes of this world, ſeing in that height of glorie & ſplendour of the Saints, it is ſo farre from being obſcured, that it rather addeth grace & brightnes to their glorie: we may iuſtly make account that this ſtate of continencie is a moſt curious rich iewel, vnknowne a long time vpon earth, but brought from heauen by our Sauiour Ieſus, and firſt conſecrated in his owne and his Bleſſed Mother's flesh, then deliuered to his Spouſe the Church, to the end that decked there with, and her grace and beautie highly ſet forth by it, she might be the more welcome and amiable, both to her Spouſe, and God her father. For as *S. Hierome* noteth, *In the old law there was a kind of felicitie, which called him bleſſed that had ſeed in Syon, and premiſe of riches. But preſently when the Sonne of God ſet foot on earth, he enacted a new law in his owne behalfe, to wit, that he that by the Angels was adored in heauen, should haue alſo Angels here vpon earth.*

S. Baſil lib. de Virg.

S. Auguſt. li. de ſta. Virg 25.

Sep. 3. 14.

S. Hierome ep. 22.

Of the

Of the dignitie of Religious Obedience.

CHAP. V.

IT followeth that we ſpeake ſomething in brief, of the dignitie of Obedience; which though we ſhould be leſſe capable to vnderſtand by other meanes, the example and iudgement of our Lord and Sauiour Chriſt may be a ſufficient teſtimonie of it; finding, as we do, that he did ſo highly eſteeme of it. For as a man, that hath no skil in iewels and pretious ſtones, if he ſee another, that is skilful, buy a ſtone at a high rate, and after he hath bought it, be very charie of it, and ſet greatly by it, cannot chooſe but think it was worth his money: ſo in weighing the deſerts of whatſoeuer vertue, but chiefly of this of Obedience, we muſt not rule our ſelues ſo much by reaſon, as by the example of him, who, as we know, was Wiſdome itſelf, and could not miſtake or be ignorant of what he did. Now that he did value Obedience at a very high rate, is euident, becauſe whatſoeuer he did, or ſayd, or proiected in his life-time, though al other vertues had a part in it, is notwithſtanding in a manner wholy aſcribed to Obedience. For of himſelf he ſayth, *that he came downe from heauen, not to do his owne wil, but the wil of his Father that ſent him.* And *S. Paul* aſcribeth his whole life and death, and the particular manner of his death, wholy to Obedience; *He was made obedient to death, yea the death of the Croſſe.* Finally *S. Bernard* affirmeth, that he preferred Obedience before his life, chooſing rather to die, then not to obey. Obedience therefore muſt needs be a great vertue, or rather there is ſomething diuine, and more then vertue in it; ſeing the Sonne of God, the ſampler of perfection, he that came of purpoſe to put vs into the way of perfection, did himſelf ſo ſeriouſly practice it, and commended it to vs, to be no leſſe ſeriouſly obſerued by vs. *S. Thomas* doth giue this manifeſt reaſon of the importance and excellencie of it; for as, *ſayth he*, in natural things it was neceſſarie, that the things which are higher, ſhould moue the inferiour by the abundance of natural vertues inſtilled by God into them; ſo in humane gouernment, good order did require, that one should direct another, by force of authoritie and power communicated by God; which direction depending of reaſon and wil, is not executed but by precept and command. Wherein, *as the ſame Saint affirmeth*, as the rule of our actions is no humane thing, but the firſt rule of al is the Diuine Wil, gouerning and ruling al other wils, whereof one is more neere vnto him then another, according to the order which God himſelf hath inſtituted. Which diſcourſe of S. *Thomas* doth clearly diſcouer vnto vs the nobleneſſe of Obedience, becauſe it conioyneth our wil and iudgement intirely with God; in which coniunction al perfection of men and Angels doth conſiſt. For neither almes-deeds, nor preaching of the word of God, nor whatſoeuer

Chriſt our Sauiour valued obedience at a high rate. *Io. 6. 38.* *Philip 2. 8.* *S. Bernard in Cant ſer. 46.* *S Thomas 2. 2. q 104. art. 1.*

soeuer auaunce (and why should I stand to reckon vp al particulars?) Martyrdome itself is of no esteeme nor merit, vnlesse it haue relation to the performance of the Wil of God. Wherefore, as Charitie is vsually called the Queene of Vertues, Obedience certainly is the next vnto it, and resembleth it very much in al things; for both of them conioyne vs with God; both of them make vs to accept or refuse that, which God desireth or refuseth: The difference is, that Charitie worketh in nature of a friend, Obedience in nature of a subiect; so that, though the manner be different the thing is the same, and the profit no lesse of the one then of the other; and in it we see the excellencie of Obedience, whereof we speake, in regard that going through al our actions, it directeth them by a rule Diuine, to wit, by the self-same rule, wherewith the actions of God himself are directed. And what dignitie can be greater in anie creature? Vpon which ground, Diuines do stile Obedience the forme or sampler of other vertues, because the actions of al other vertues do ayme at nothing els, but to performe the commands of God.

A comparison betweenCharitie and Obedience.

3. Whereunto we may adde another excellencie, to wit, that though it be a peculiar vertue by itself, yet it hath a general extent to al things, comprehending whatsoeuer may happen in the life of man. For whosoeuer giueth himself wholy ouer, and subiected himself wholy to another man, reserueth nothing at al, neither place, nor worke, nor any employment, neither outward nor inward busines. So that, whether he be in action or out of action; whether he remayne stil in a place, or be vpon going; whether he vndertake, or leaue, or alter from this busines or the other; whether the matter be great or smal, he is absolutely obliged in al things, & true Obedience taketh hold, & seasoneth and perfecteth al. And moreouer al vertues concurre in it, and, as it were, attend vpon it, to the perfecting of a most admirable peece of worke, compounded of many gemmes and pretious stones. For no man can euer subiect himself wholy to another man, vnlesse he be first greatly inflamed with the loue of God, and haue placed his whole trust and confidence vpon him; he must also haue great and profound humilitie, patience, fortitude, constancie, and al other vertues; for if Obedience want anie of them, it wil quickly beginne to halte, and suddainly fayle, and fal to the ground.

It runneth through al.

And comprehendeth al vertues.

4. But nothing doth shew the excellencie of this Vertue more, then the consideration of the matter, to which it doth extend itself; which al Maisters of Spirit assigne to be threefold. First, al outward things commanded by Superiours, the execution whereof belongeth to Obedience; which is the lowest and least part of Obedience, and of itself very imperfect, and if nothing els concurre with it, it is but such as slaues and brute beasts haue, which are ruled by outward force, but their wil doth not concurre therunto. The second degree therefore is a step higher, and comprehendeth the wil, which as S. *Gregorie* speaketh, *is killed and sacrificed by Obedience*: For the wil of the subiect conspiring with the wil of his Superiour, they are both perfectly conioyned togeather, or rather the subiect wholy casting off and rooting out his owne wil, hath the wil of the Superiour fully ingrafted in him, and is moued and wealded by it euery way, as if it were his owne. The third

Three degrees of Obedience.

S. *Greg.* 35. *Moral.* c. 10.

third and higheſt degree of this Vertue, is to ſubiect alſo our reaſon and iudgement to the iudgement of our Superiours; and not only to wil, but to think the ſelf ſame thing with them, and eſteeme it right, reaſonable, and profitable, whatſoeuer they shal ordaine; in a word, that their onlie beck beare ſuch an authoritie in our minde, that vnleſſe it be apparently contrarie to the knowne commandment of God, their iudg[illegible] and opinion do wholy ſwey ours, and lead it captiue after it.

Obedience a guift preſented to God.

5. This is, as it were, the feature and beautiful countenance of Obedience, which if men could behold with their corporal eyes, they would be greatly inflamed with the comelie ſight and noble aſpect therof. Obedience alſo is a guift preſented to the Diuine Maieſtie; wherefore looke how much the thing which is preſented, is iuſtly to be valued, ſo much is Obedience to be prized. Now what hath man more worthie or more deare vnto him, then reaſon and wil? For to be a man, he muſt haue them both, and conſequently loue them as much as he loues himſelf. For if naturally we loue our fleſh and bone, and the leaſt parcel of them, ſo dearely, that to preſerue them we wil take any paines; what affection muſt we needes haue to thoſe higher parts, parts more noble, and more eſſential to the nature of man? And ſo we find, that nothing is more natural to vs, then to preſerue not only the powers of our wil and vnderſtanding, but the verie vſe and actions of them. The proper act of our wil, is libertie; the proper act of our vnderſtanding, is to paſſe our iudgement vpon a thing. Wherefore euerie man doth ſo naturally and ſo violently deſire to haue his owne ſaying, and his owne wil, in euerie thing: which is more apparent, when (as oftentimes it hapneth) the thing itſelf is but a trifle; but it pleaſeth vs to haue it ſo, becauſe we wil be free. If a thing be forbidden, the very forbidding of it doth whet our deſire, for no other reaſon, but becauſe, as I ſaid, the ſweetnes of libertie doth of itſelf delight vs. Wherefore ſeing theſe things beare ſuch ſwey in vs, the difficultie muſt needes be the greater in breaking the violent courſe of them; and ſo much the greater, then in ouercoming anie other natural propenſion, by how much we are carryed towards them by a more violent current. If therefore we put al theſe things togeather, the greatnes of the oblation comprehending in it ſelf ſo manie things; the worth of theſe two things, which we offer; the labour and difficultie, which is in offering; we shal eaſily vnderſtand the excellencie of Religious Obedience, and how farre it doth ſurpaſſe the bounds of Nature, ſeing it cannot poſſibly be accomplished, but by perfect ouercoming and ſubduing Nature. In which ſenſe *S. Gregorie* doth interpret that ſaying of the Wiſeman; *The Obedient man shal ſpeake victories; becauſe, ſaith he, while we humbly ſubiect ourſelues to an other's voice, we ouercome ourſelues within our harts.*

Prou. 21. 28. S. Greg. 35. mor. c. 10.

6. But that, which doth shew the magnificence of Obedience more then anie thing elſe, is, that not only things, which are euil, or ſuch as are but meanely good, but things very ſpecially good, compared with Obedience, doe leeſe of their

light and beautie as the ſtarres in preſence of the Sunne. It is *S. Gregorie's* ſaying (who in my opinion, among al the holie Fathers did beſt vnderſtand, and hath beſt declared the nature of euerie vertue) and he doth not intend to carrie it by his ſole authoritie, but he proueth it by holie Scripture: *Better is obedience then ſacrifice.* You may ſee, ſaith *S. Gregorie*, in what heigh t of perfection the vertue of Obedience is placed, the Prophet beholding it in a higher eleuation, then the diuine oblations. And if we will follow the ſpiritual ſenſe, ſacrifices haue relation to great auſteritie of conuerſation; Holocauſtes to the compunction of a retired life. Better therefore is Obedience then Sacrifice; and to harken, rather then to offer the fat of rammes: becauſe it is of farre higher deſert, alwayes to ſubiect our owne wil to the wil of another, then to pinch our bodyes by extremitie of faſting, or to kil our ſelues by compunction, in a more priuate Sacrifice. For what is the fat of rammes, but an inward and oylie deuotion? But yet Obedience is better, becauſe he that hath learned perfectly to fulfil the wil of his directour, doth paſſe in the heauenlie Kingdome thoſe that do faſt and weep. Thus ſaith *S. Gregorie.*

1. Reg 15 22.

S. Greg. lib 5. in lib. reg. c. 2.

The excellencie of Obediẽce confirmed by miracles.

7. Finally, in my iudgement, the greatnes of the often Miracles, which haue been wrought by Obedience, are a moſt certain proofe & euident confirmation of the excellencie of it. For as if a man doe manie things aboue the courſe of Nature, we take it for a ſigne of great ſanctitie in him; ſo among vertues we may vſe the ſame argumẽt, &, as I may ſay, canonize them the rather, & eſteeme them worthie of veneratiõ, the more their gratefulnes to God hath been ſhewed by miracles. But who can reckon the miracles, which haue been wrought by Obedience? Al books are ful of them; eſpecially the Liues of the ancient Fathers, who haue giuen good proof to the world, how highly this vertue is to be eſteemed. *S. Paul*, diſciple of great *S. Antonie*, is much renowned for it. For as he was greater then his maiſter, in the power of miracles, as to whom *S. Antonie* was wont to ſend thoſe that himſelf could not cure; ſo by *S. Anthonie* his owne confeſſion there was no other cauſe of it, but Obedience; which he was euer wont to point at, as a patterne for others to imitate; & manie notable facts of his in this kind are to be ſeen vpon record to this day. *Iohn* is alſo very famous in this kind, who being by his Abbot in ieaſt bid to bring a lioneſſe vnto him, taking it as ſpoken in earneſt, did not only not feare leaſt ſhe ſhould fal vpon him, but following her when ſhe fled, and crying after her in his Abbot's name to ſtand, tooke her, and brought her bound to the Monaſterie. What shal we ſay of him, that by command of his Abbot caſt his ſonne into a burning furnace, and tooke him out againe whole & ſound? He certainly imitated Abraham, in offering his ſonne; but in the greatnes of the miracle he went beyond him, when he receaued him ſafe againe. An other *Iohn* for 3. yeares togeather watered a dry ſtake euerie day, as he was commanded, and fetched his water a great way of: At laſt it bore greene leaues and fruit, which his Maiſter gathering brought to the church, and ſaid to the Bretheren: *Behold the fruit of Obedience.* No leſſe wonderful is that, which *Climacus* recordeth of a yong man called *Innocentius.* This man in his life-time was much deuoted to the vertue of Obedience; and after his death and burial, being called vpon and asked whether he were dead or no, he anſwered with a loude voice: That the obedient man could not dye. That, which is related of *S. Columbanus*, is alſo very memorable,

S. Paul.

Iohn.

memorable, that coming to the Monaſterie of Luxouium which himſelf had founded; and finding almoſt al ſick, he vſed no other phyſick, but called them al into the court to threſh the corne in the heat of the ſunne. A hard task, eſpecially for ſome of them, that were ſo feeble that they could hardly ſtand on their legs. Some of them, that thought themſelues wiſer and warier then the reſt, kept themſelues in their beds; others deſirous to obey, came downe to their worke: al theſe were preſently ſo perfectly cured of their diſeaſe, that they felt not ſo much as any grudging of it; the others punished for their ſlacknes and diſtruſt, had their agues al the yeare long, as *S. Columban*, reprehending and blaming them, had foretold.

8. In the hiſtories of the ancient Fathers we reade of an other ſtrange accident, wherein alſo we may ſee what Obedience is, compared with other vertues. Two natural brethren liued in one Monaſterie; one of them practiſed Obedience very much; the other gaue himſelf to much auſteritie. This laſt, to try the other's ſanctitie, commanded him to goe into a riuer that was ful of crocodiles; which he did without delay; and the cruel ſerpents came fawning vpon him, and licked his feete. Not long after they hapned both vpon a dead man's bodie, and falling ioyntly to their prayers, the man came to life: Which the Monke, that was giuen to faſting, ſecretly in his thoughts attributed to himſelf; but his Abbot chid him sharply for it, hauing vnderſtood by reuelation, that it was not his faſting, but the other's obedience that obtained it.

9. Such therefore is the dignitie of Obedience, as to be worthie to be declared by ſuch extraordinarie miracles. And no wonder. For they that liue in Obedience, haue put themſelues wholy into the hands of God, to be entirely poſſeſſed and gouerned by him. And conſequently that, which is in the Prophet *Eſay*, is fulfilled in them: *Thou ſhalt be a crowne of glorie in my hand, and a kinglie diademe in the hand of thy God.* From which glorie and excellentie, the commodities alſo doe follow, which are there mentioned: *Thou ſhalt no longer be called the forſaken, and thy land ſhal be no more called deſolate, but thou ſhalt be called: My wil in it.* Which glorious name, and much more the thing it ſelf, to whome doth it more fitly agree, then to a Religious man, who by obedience is ſo wholy, as I ſayd, in God's poſſeſſion, that the Diuine wil is in him alwayes moſt perfectly performed in al things? Men therefore may reioice, if they wil, in whatſoeuer other titles of honour, and be called Kings, and Princes, and Cardinals: A Religious ſoule hath farre more ſolid ground of ioy in this name, which God hath impoſed, and wherein is briefly comprized al that is Good, *My wil is in it.* *Eſay 62. 3.*

That a Religious man is aboue al earthlie things; and how glorious this is.

CHAP. VI.

IF the dignitie of euerie one of theſe Vowes by itſelf be ſo very great as we haue shewed, what ſplendour and dignitie muſt needs ariſe of them al, when they meet togeather, as they do in a Religious ſtate, it conſiſting wholy of theſe three Vowes concurring in one, with al that which is good and excellent in them, to make, vphold, and adorne the nature, ſubſtance, and eſſence of Religion? which once ſet on foot and vndertaken (beſides the ſeueral greatneſſes and ornaments, which riſe of ſeueral things in it) it hath one general operation, rare and admirable, to wit, that it breedes in him, that embraces it, ſo generous, ſo noble, and ſo loftie a diſpoſition of minde, that ſeated aboue al worldlie things, he beholds them as things vnworthie to be regarded, he deſpiſeth them, he ſets them at naught, and contemnes them, and doth not only not hunt after them, as worldlings, who wholy employ themſelues in the purſuit of them, and runne into ſo manie debates and differences among themſelues about them; but when they are offered, he refuſeth them; when he had plentie of them, he caſt them away; he ſpurnes at them as dirt, or, as we ſayd before out of the Apoſtle, he loathes them as *dung*, which, as baſe and ſtinking, is hateful. How proper this diſpoſition of minde is to a Religious ſtate, and how naturally and how deeply it is ingrafted in it, *S. Gregorie* wil tel vs, deſcribing his owne ſtate of minde in both his changes, when firſt he was Religious, and afterwards choſen Pope of Rome. Theſe are his words: Deſiring nothing in this world, nor fearing anie thing from it, I ſeemed to myſelf to ſtand, as it were, vpon the top of al things; in ſo much that I did almoſt think that fulfilled in me, which by the promiſe of our Lord I had learned out of the Prophet: *I wil lift thee vp aboue the heights of the earth*; for he is lifted aboue the *heights of the earth*, who, by contempt of minde, treades vnder foot the things, which ſeeme in the world high and glorious But ſuddenly blowne off, by the tempeſt of this temptation, from the heighth I was in, I am fallen into feares and tremblings; for though in behalf of my ſelf I do not feare, yet of thoſe, that are committed to my charge, I greately ſtand in feare.

The generous minde of a Religious man.

Philip. 3. 8.

S. *Gregorie*, 1. *regeſt. epiſt.* 5.

Eſa. 38. 14.

2. Which is not the ſenſe of *S. Gregorie* only; but *S. Gregorie* hauing taken it from Religion, it is the general perſwaſion of al Religious people, that liue according to their Rule, and indeed of Religion itſelf. Al haue this ſpirit infuſed into them, togeather with the minde and reſolution, which is giuen them to forſake the world: For they could not forſake it, but that they contemne it; nor could they contemne it but that they

How much Religious people doe leaue.

are

are rayſed in minde aboue it. And they forſake not only that, which they haue in preſent (which oftimes is but a ſmal matter) but the deſire and greedines of hauing, which hath a great extent, or rather hath no bounds at al, but reacheth abſolutly to al things. Wherefore no Religious man muſt think ſo meanely of this his oblation, as to conceaue that it is little, which he offers to God, when he barres himſelf by the Vow of Pouertie from poſſeſſing anie thing vpon earth: becauſe he doth not only offer that which he had, or that which might haue befallen him, or which he might haue gotten by induſtrie, but abſolutly the whole world. Which we learne by the example of S. *Peter*, who certainly left not much, yea rather that which he left, was little or nothing, and yet he did not ſtick to ſay, as we read in S. *Mathew*: *Behold, we haue left al things.* Of which profeſſion S. *Auguſtin* writes to *Paulinus* that, which agreeth fitly to Religious perſons: The fiſher-men, that at the voice of our Sauiour forſooke their nets and their little boats, boaſted with great ioy that they had left al things, and followed our Lord. And he contemneth al things, who contemnes not only what he could, but what he would haue had. The difference is, that the eyes of God only are witneſſes, of what a man would haue had; of that which a man had, man alſo is witnes. S. *Gregorie* is of the ſame opinion, teſtifying that S. *Peter* and S. *Andrew* are therefore to be ſayd, to haue left much; becauſe they left the deſire of hauing anie thing; the affection being more to be weighed, then the ſubſtance, which we doe forſake. *He left much*, ſayth he, *that retayned nothing to himſelf; he left much that left al, though al were neuer ſo little.*

Matt. 19. 27.
S. Auguſt. ep 8. 34.
S. Greg. hom. 5. in euang.

3. This is that, which al Religious people doe; For they depriue not themſelues only of the poſſeſſion of things, but caſt away al deſire of whatſoeuer things in the world: Which whoſoeuer doth, hath the whole world vnder his feete, and conſequently hath not only whereof greatly to reioice, and account himſelf happie in the peace, and tranquillitie, and pleaſure of his mind; but is to be accounted in honour and dignitie higher then Kings and Princes, notwithſtanding their dominions and commands; and may be fitly compared to the Eagle, which (as holie Scripture ſpeaketh) *is rayſed at the command of God, and buildeth his neaſt in craggie places.* Vpon which wordes S. *Gregorie* diſcourſeth in this manner: This is a ſpecial token of the Elect, that they know ſo to walke the paths of this preſent life, as by certaintie of hope to diſcouer, when they are arriued to the high places, where they may behold al tranſitorie things beneath them, and, through the loue of Eternity, tread, whatſoeuer is high in the world, vnder their feete. From whence it is, that God by the Prophet ſayth to the ſoule, that followeth him: *I wil lift thee vp aboue the heighths of the earth.* The low places of the earth are loſſes, reproaches, pouertie, contempt, which the louers of the world, walking the playnes of the broad way, doe not ceaſe to treade vnder foot, by auoiding them. The heighths of the earth are Intereſt, flatteries of ſeruants and ſubiects, aboundance of wealth, honour, and heighth of promotion, which they, that creepe ſtil vpon the ground through earthlie deſires, eſteeme high, becauſe they make account there is ſome great matter in them: but if our hart be once fixed in heauenlie things, preſently it appeareth how abiect that is, which before ſeemed high.

Iob 39 30.
S. Greg. 31. mor. 19.
Eſ. 58.

Religious people doe good with eaſe.

4. Thus farre *S. Gregorie*; whereunto we may adde further, that as the Eagle, which is heer deſcribed, doth not only ſoare on high, but build alſo in high places: ſo may we ſay of Religious people, and apply it fitly vnto them. For as to fly, is laborious, importing a continual ſtrife and contention, and conſequently cannot be perpetual; but in the neaſt a bird is quiet, and ſetled at eaſe; ſo we may obſerue the like difference among men, which follow vertuous courſes. For they, that by ſtrength of conſideration only and deſire, rayſe themſelues from the earth, as manie ſecular people doe, certainly doe very wel; but it is, as it were, by force and ſtrength of armes: and that which *S. Auguſtin* bewayled in himſelf, muſt needes befal them, *But I fal back into the ſame, through the weight of my miſeries, and am ſwallowed-vp againe by my wonted defects; and they hold me, and I weepe bitterly; but they hold me very ſtrongly; ſo heauie is the burthen of Cuſtome vpon me.* But they, who haue builded their neaſt on high, doe both ſpare this wearifomnes of contention and ſtrife with themſelues, and repoſe at eaſe. The neaſt of a Religious man, is the ſtate itſelf. And haue not then Religious people placed their neaſt on high, ſeing their ſtate is rayſed aboue al things created? In which height they containe themſelues, not only without anie difficultie, but with exceeding pleaſure, abhorring nothing more, then to ſtoope to theſe baſe things againe, which both in minde and deed they haue ſet at naught.

S. Auguſt. 10. Conf. c. 40.

5. And that we may the better conceaue both the great honour and profit of a minde thus ſeated on high, as the Scripture expreſſeth vnto vs in the ſimilitude afore-ſayd, let vs imagin with ourſelues, that we ſee a man rayſed by degrees ſo high from the ground, vp into the ayre, that at laſt we behold him ſeated vpon the verie cloudes, looking downe vpon vs. For by this repreſentation, which cannot be verifyed in a bodie, we ſhal come to vnderſtand, what may be donne, and is dayly acted, in the minde. For if a man were ſeated ſo high, as I ſay, vpon the cloudes, manie things were conſiderable in him: Firſt, that al would admire him; ſecondly if he had any enemie vpon earth, he were in ſafetie, quite out of his reach; thirdly, theſe inferiour things being ſo farre beneath him, would not trouble his ſight; manie of them he would not ſee at al. The like doth happen to a ſoule, when God hath rayſed it from this earthlie duſt and filth, and placed it in the eminent eleuation of Religion. For it getteth preſently a kind of nobleties of hart, farre more excellent then that, which worldlie honour, or promotion, or birth, doth rayſe a man vnto; as *S. Cyprian* auoucheth in theſe wordes: He that hath renounced the world, is aboue al honours and kingdomes: and therefore he that conſecrateth himſelf to God and our Sauiour, deſireth no earthlie but heauenlie kingdomes. Which admirable worth of a Religious ſoule, doth not only lye open to the eyes of God (which were indeed enough) but it is moſt commonly very apparent to men; for though they be not willing to imitate, yet they cannot but admire, thoſe that put themſelues vpon theſe high courſes. Whereupon *S. Hierome* ſayth very truly, that, to haue riches, is nothing commendable, but to contemne them for Chriſt our Sauiour; nor to gape after honour, but to neglect it: and after a ſtrange manner of reuolution, they that haue theſe things, are neglected; and they that wil not haue them, are much commended.

Religious people are noble-harted.

S. Cyprian de Oratione Dominica.

S. Hierome epiſt. 27.

6. Religious

6. Religious people moreouer are not subiect to chances and misfortunes, as other men are. For what power can chance haue ouer them, who forsaking al changeable things haue barred it quite out from them? and consequently, as it were, placed aboue the windes, are neuer moued, but are constant in al euents, and in a perpetual calme; which calme or tranquilitie of minde, were it to be bought for gold, what would not be giuen for it? But gold wil not buy it, nor is it to be purchased by any earthlie thing, but by contemning al things: because whatsoeuer earthlie thing thou hast, thou mayst loose it; but he that hath forsaken al things, hath nothing, by the losse whereof he may be either hurt or troubled; so that this continual and neuer-changeable peace of minde, this minde and countenance which in al euents is euer the same (such as S. *Athanasius* doth tel vs that S. *Antonie* did alwaies carrie) is proper to a Religious state. And the same doth place vs beyond the reach of al the firie darts of our malignant Enemie; so that either they come not neare vs, or are easily auoyded; which S. *Cyprian* doth expresse very wel in these words: What power and strength hath such a minde? not only cleansed, and pure, and vntouched by whatsoeuer spot or blemish the Enemie endeauoureth to cast vpon it, by reason it hath withdrawne itself from the pernicious traffick of this world, but higher and stronger then anie force he can make; in so much that it hath a kind of maistrie and command ouer his whole hoast and armie.

Not subiect to worldly misfortunes.

S. *Athan. in vita S. Antonij.*

S. *Cyprian l. 2. ep. 1.*

7. But that which is most of al, and most behoueful for our soules, is, that this state doth naturally breed in our minde an extraordinarie light, making it very plaine vnto vs, that whatsoeuer is vnder the cope of heauen, is of smal value, deceiptful, idle, and vnworthie of our loue. To which effect S. *Chrysostome* doth discourse eloquently in this manner: As when we looke downe from the top of a hil, al things seeme little vnto vs, not only men and trees, but whole cities & armies, are like so many emmets vpon the ground: so they, that rayse their minde to heauenlie things are as it were seated on high, thinke al humane things, as power, glorie, wealth, and the like, so smal and so little to be regarded, that they iudge it an vnworthie thing, if the noblenes of their vncorruptible minde should stoope vnto them. What can be more glorious then such a state, which by leauing vs nothing, doth put vs into so great safetie, and make vs so impregnable, that we shal not need to feare neither force, cor fortune; neither man nor anie humane chance? Which the same blessed Saint doth attribute much to Pouertie: for taking vpon him to commend a single life, among other prayses therof, doth reckon this blessing, that it may be poore, and cutting of therby al care and danger, rayse itself the neerer to Heauen. For, *sayth he*, he that hath nothing, despiseth al things, as if he had al at command: and with great freedome, is bold to speake to Prince and Potentate, and to him that weareth the crowne. He that contemneth money, being a downe-right man, doth easily also contemne death itself; and being aboue al, fearing nothing, dreading nothing, doth speake the more freely to al. But a man that is greedie of money, is not only a slaue to his money, but a slaue to the opinion and reputation of men, a slaue to his owne life, and, in one word, a slaue to al that belongeth to this life. S. *Gregorie* also, in the seauenth of his Morals doth beate vpon the same point; Let vs lift vp the eyes of our mind (*sayth he*) and behold in what heighth the Elect are inwardly

Aboue al things.

S. *Chrysost. hom. 15. ad popul. Antioch.*

S. *Chrysost. de Virg. cap. 81.*

S. *Greg. mor. lib. 7. cap. 15.*

„ ſeated, that are outwardly oppreſſed; al that which is eminent abroad, to their
„ inward ſight lyes flat, and is contemptible. For inwardly lifted aboue them-
„ ſelues, they place their ſoule on high, and whatſoeuer they ſuffer in this life,
„ they behold it as it were paſſing vnder them, and little belonging to them; and
„ while, as I may ſay, they ſtriue in minde to be rid of their fleſh, they are al-
„ moſt ignorant of what they endure in it. For, as ſeated in the top of a great high
„ hil, they vtterly contemne the ioyes of this preſent life; and being higher then
„ themſelues by a ſpiritual highnes, they behold within, al that beneath them,
„ which by carnal glorie is ſo high flowne without. From whence it cometh, that
„ they ſpare no power oppoſing itſelf againſt vertue, but by the authoritie of their
„ ſpirit keep downe whomſoeuer they eſpie lift themſelues vp by pride. Thus
„ ſpake *S. Gregorie*, bringing alſo manie examples of this nature, out of holie Scripture, as of *Moyſes* againſt *Pharao*; *Nathan* againſt *Dauid*; *Helyas* againſt *Achab*; *Elizeus* againſt *Ioram*. And the like ſpirit Religion doth put into thoſe, that follow it; and giueth them an vndaunted courage, not proceedring of pride, but from the noblenes of their hart, and the contempt of al earthlie things, euen to ſtand with Princes and Kings in behalf and defence of the glorie of God.

Religious men freely ſpeake their mind.

8. It is recorded of *S. Bernardin of Siena*, that he was wery free to ſpeake his mind; and when cauſe required, ſticked not publickly to reprehend the vices of people of great qualitie, without reſpect of perſons. In a ſermon once he reprehended the Duke of Milan; whereupon the Duke being highly diſpleaſed, ſent him word he ſhould die if he left not off. *S. Bernardin* the next day ſpake farre more ſharply againſt the ſame vice, in a great aſſemblie of people; which confidence of his did ſo daunt the Duke, that he durſt neuer after trouble him. But to try whether he could be corrupted, ſent him a golden boule ful of gold; which though the Saint reiected with a great deale of indignation, the Duke commanded it ſhould be againe preſented him with a long complement, and much entreatie to admit of it. They, that carryed it, did ſo preſſe the Saint, that when he ſaw there was no end, riſing vp, he bad them follow him, and going directly to the priſon, he beſtowed it vpon thoſe that were in for debt, and ſet them al free the ſame day. We read, that *S. Columbanus* vſed the like freedome in reprehending *Theodorick* King of the French, for his wicked life. And once the King hearing, that he was come to towne, ſent a princelie ſupper for him, to his lodging, with al things neceſſarie, and a great retinue to wayte vpon him. *S. Columbanus* ſeing it, reiected it with angrie countenance and ſpeech, pronouncing that verſe out of Scripture: *The guifts of the wicked, are not acceptable to the Higheſt.* Adding moreouer, that it was an vnworthie thing to pollute the mouthes of God's ſeruants, with meate from him, that did ſo vniuſtly make warre againſt them. He had ſcarce vttered theſe words; when al the veſſels, in which the meate was brought, brake in peeces, the wine and ſider runne about the floare, and euerie thing was ſcattered hither and thither. They that ſerued it, were much amazed; the King himſelf much affrighted ranne preſently to the Saint, telling him: He was his ſeruant in whatſoeuer he would command. But not long after, he fel to his wonted courſes, and the Saint ſpared not to check him, and threaten him for it. But what ſhal we ſay to the courage of *S. Anthonie of Padua*? when *Ezelinus* waſted Italie with fire and ſword, he went and ſpake thus vnto him: *Thou cruel and bloudie Tyrant, when wilt thou make an end of ſpilling the bloud of men?*

S. Columbanus.

Eccl. 44. 25.

S. Antonie of Padua.

men? And following on his discourse in he same strayne, he ripped vp al his violent proceedings, his murthers, robberies and pillages, threatning him with vengeance from heauen, and the wrath of the Eternal God. His followers hearing this kinde of language, looked for no other, but that their Maister, according to his bloudie custome, should bid them rūne the man through, that made himself so bold a controuler. But it hapned farre otherwise; for taking his gyrdle, he put it about his owne neck in steed of a rope, of a wolf being become a lamb, and falling downe vpon his knees, he humbly begged pardon for his sinnes, and promised he would doe whatsoeuer satisfaction or punishment the Saint would impose vpon him. But after a while returning to his former villanies, he made an attempt vpon the vertue of the Saint, after the manner following: He sent some of his retinue to him, with very rich presents, commanding them, that by earnest entreatie and importunitie, and al meanes possible, they should winne him, to accept of them: and if he did accept of them, they should presently cut of his head: if he could not be wonne vnto it, they should patiently stand to heare, whatsoeuer he would say vnto them. They went, and with al the courtesie and seeming humilitie of the world, they pressed him ouer and ouer againe, to admit of the present, their Lord and Maister had been pleased to honour him with. But *S. Antonie* with great freedome spake thus vnto them: Away instantly with your wicked guifts, least the house fal vpon you, » or the earth open and swallow you vp, and we come in danger by your destruction. And so sent them away; which *Ezelinus* hearing did euer after honour the man, as a great Saint. So great is the opinion, which the contempt of earthlie things doth breed in the mindes euen of wicked men.

9. Now seing a Religious state doth thus arme vs against al aduersitie, let vs consider a little also, how it doth defend vs in prosperitie; that contemning both, we may neither feare the one, nor care for the other. Great *S. Antonie* shal be our president in this kinde; of whome we find it recorded, that whereas *Constantine* the Great, that famous Emperour, and his two sonnes *Constance* and *Constantius*, were wont often to write vnto him in most submissiue & courteous manner, as to their Father, he was so farre from glorying in it, that he was wont to say: That no man must think it any great matter, if the Kings of the » world doe at anie time write to the seruants of God; for though they haue in » outward appearance a greater power, their nature is the same; they liue and » die, as others doe. The thing which is great indeed, and highly to be esteemed, » is, that God hath sent letters vnto vs, that is, his Law, the summarie of his wil, & » hath spoken vnto vs by his onlie Sonne Which notwithstanding, his Brethren entreating him to make them some answer, that he might not seeme to slight the courtesie of so great Princes, he writ back vnto them, exhorting them to Iustice, and Clementie, and alwayes to remember they were Men, and should one day themselues appeare in iudgement before the Tribunal of CHRIST, who is true Lord of al. This mind so noble and so high, seated aboue al earthlie things, contemning them al as dust, *S. Antonie* and the rest did not bring with them to Religion, but sucked it out of Religion; and we also being bred in the same schoole, may easily gaine the like; and the noblenes of our calling doth require it and, doubtles, instil it into vs.

Religion preserueth vp in prosperitie.

S. Antonie the great.

How noble a thing it is in a Religious man, to forſake his natural kindred.

CHAP. VII.

IT is a great matter to ſet al earthlie things at naught; and they that doe ſo, are not to be ranked any more with the vulgar ſort, but to be honoured as people of high degree of promotion and excellencie: Yet it is a farre greater worke, to forſake our kindred and neareſt allyes in bloud. For the loue, which we beare them, is of a higher ſtrayne, farre more intenſe, more natural, and more deeply rooted in vs. For what likenes, or what connexion hath a man with gold, and ſiluer, with lands and poſſeſſions? But with men he hath a natural affinitie, and ſpecially with ſuch as come of the ſame ſtock: which is the reaſon, that the loue of parents towards their children, of children towards their parents, and of brethren among themſelues, is ſo hard to be diſſembled. And that this proceedeth not ſo much out of iudgement and deliberation grounded in reaſon, as of a natural inclination and force, we ſee by that which hapneth in beaſts, who, to preſerue their yong-ones, ſtick not to venture life and limme. And conſequently the ſtronger this bond and tye is, the greater force is required to breake it, and a hart more reſolute, either to abide or to act this diſiunction. So that among the reſt of the commendations of a Religious ſtate, this is none of the leaſt, that, as it rayſeth a man aboue al other things, it ouercommeth alſo this natural affection, parting a man from thoſe, with whome he was bred and borne; and bringing him, for the loue of our Sauiour, to enter league with others, whome he neuer ſaw; and to take more pleaſure in liuing with them, then with his owne natural kindred: which is an euident argument, that this manner of calling is farre aboue the reach of Nature. For if we ſee a father of manie children oftimes lament and grieue ſo bitterly for the loſſe of ſome one among them, though the reſt of his familie and ſtocke be ſound and ſafe; what grief ſhould theirs, if we ſpeake of nature, be, who leeſe al at once, parents, brethren, ſiſters, friends, domeſticals, and al that nature or cuſtome and familiar acquaintance had linked them ſo long & ſo deeply vnto? It is not nature therfore, that worketh this ſtrange effect, but it is abundant grace from Heauen, and plentie of vertue infuſed from aboue.

The force of the loue of our kindred.

2. And ſo we find in the Ghoſpel, that our Sauiour doth challenge it as one of his greateſt works. *I came not*, ſayth he, *to ſend peace, but the ſword. For I came to ſeuer man againſt his father, and the daughter-in-law againſt her mother-in-law.* And it is not without great conſideration, that he tearmeth this grace, *a ſword*. For as, ſword is made of iron, and vſed to cut a-ſunder things which grow faſt togeather; ſo it giueth vs to vnderſtand, that this natural tye of affinitie is very ſtrong, and cannot be ſeuered but by a force as ſtrong as iron, that is, by the mightie hand of God, drawing to himſelf the harts of whome he wil, and parting them from whome he wil: and daylie experience doth teach vs it to be ſo. For how ſhould it otherwiſe come to paſſe, that they, who before liued moſt dearly linked togeather in the ſame houſe, inſpired

Grace ſtronger then nature.

Matt. 10. 31.

afterwards

afterwards by this heauenlie Spirit, should so suddenly resolue not to yeald to flesh and bloud, but departe for euer from them, with that constant resolution, as if they had neuer knowne them, and did nothing belong vnto them? and (which is more signal) they that remaine, weepe for him that goeth; he that goeth away, is ful of ioy and gladnes. What is the reason of it, but because euen before he parte with them, he is already cut off and seuered from them by this diuine sword; and therfore parteth without anie sense of feeling: but they that haue not felt the force of this sword, are stil linked to him, & consequently feele much grief in parting. *Theodoret* recounteth of one *Marcianus*, a man of noble extraction, and indeed of the bloud Royal, that he betook himself into a Monasterie, that was seated farre out of the way. After manie yeares, his sister, who was Ladie of the Cittie where she dwelt, coming with her sonne (that was vnder age) and manie presents to the Monasterie, he would by no meanes see her; only he admitted the child, to the end he might send him home with some good instructions. And when she entreated him, that he would at least accept of the presents which she had brought, if not as he was her kinsman, yet as one that was poore, and might haue need of them, he made her this answer: *How manie monasteries of poore people did you meete by the way, before you came to me? And seing you bestowed not these presents vpon them, it is cleare you present them me for hindred sake.* And so constantly he reiected them al. Which fact of his *Theodoret* doth so extol, that he sayth, he was a man aboue nature, fashioned after a heauenlie māner. Doubtlesse therfore this disposition of Religious people, is one of the specialest graces, which the Holie-ghost is wont to imparte vnto vs, and requireth great strength of minde; and is also a signe of much vertue and worth in them that haue it. In so much that it is one of the chief commands, which our Lord is pleased to lay vpon the Spouse, whom he chooseth for himself, & desireth should be without spot or wrinkle; *Hearken, daughter, and see, and incline thy eare, and forget thy people, and the house of thy father.* To be his Daughter, to be his Spouse, and worthie to be in the armes of God, this prime condition is first required, as a portion setled, that she doe not only forsake, but forget her carnal kindred: and if she doe so, what is further promised? *And the king shal couet thy beautie.* As who should say: By that fact of thine, thy beautie and comelines wil be so encreased, that the soueraigne King and Lord of the world, enflamed with thy loue, wil presently take thee for his Spouse, and place thee in Princelie dignitie.

Theodoret in Relig. hist.

Ps. 44. 11.

3. We haue a memorable example hereof in that great Patriarch *Abraham*, whose fact doth both much resemble, and greatly illustrate that, which al Religious people doe. Our Lord sayd vnto him: *Goe forth of thy land, and from thy kindred, and from the house of thy father, and come into the land, which I shal shew thee.* It had been enough, as *S. Ambrose* discourseth, to haue sayd, *forth of thy land*, because in this one word, al the rest is contayned; but he would adde these particulars, that his affection might be the more tryed. Wherfore his faith is worthily renowned: and (as the same S. *Ambrose* sayth) by this his fact, he preuented the sayings of the Wise-men, wherof one is: *Follow God.* This al Religious people doe going out of the house of their father, & forsaking their kinsfolk, not only by leauing the affection to them, but corporally parting from them; and which is more then al the rest, they parte

Gen. 12. "
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S. Ambros. lib. 1. de Abrah. c. 2. "
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not to goe to some certaine determinate place, but whithersoeuer God from thence-forward shal appoint them. For they deliuer themselues ouer, to the wil and command of their Superiours, not in some one particular thing agreed vpon, as it were, by couenant and consent, but in whatsoeuer they shal be pleased to order, and, as God's Vice-gerents, shew vnto them.

The fact of Abraham and Religious men compared.

4. And if I may be bold to speake my minde, me thinks I see somewhat more in that which euerie Religious man doth, then in the fact of *Abraham*, for as much as concerneth this particular. For *Abraham* left indeed his countrey, and part of his kindred: but yet carried with him al his wealth, which was very great, and his brother *Loth*, *Sara* his wife, al his seruants, and a ful house-hold; so that a man may in a manner rather say, that he carried the chief commodities of his countrey away with him, then that he left his countrey. But Religious people, how truly, how perfectly doe they forsake house, possessions, kindred, and naked, and solitarie betake themselues to the standart of Christ, who hung naked for them vpon the Crosse? *Abraham* vpon the performance of that commandment of God, was promised great matters: *I wil blesse thee, and magnifie thy name, and thou shalt be blessed. I wil blesse them that blesse thee, and curse them that curse thee.* Which being spoken and performed to him, why should not we also hope to be partakers of the same promises and reward, seing in fact we iumpe with him? yea expect somewhat more. For these blessings in him were temporal, and consequently a farre lesse reward; but ours are spiritual without comparison greater and better. But yet from hence we may learne, how great the dignitie of a Religious vocation is, in regard of the point we speake of, seing it equals so noble a fact of so diuine a man.

Gen. 12. 2.

Examples of carnal affection subdued.

5. For what power ouer al carnal affection had that famous *Pastour*, who, as we read in *Vitis Patrum*, would not speake to the Prouost in behalf of his sister's sonne, that was in hazard to be put to death? or *Pior*, who being bid by *S. Anthonie* (whose disciple he was) to goe to his sister that was come to see him, went to her, but yet held his eyes shut, so that he did not see her. By whose example, *Iohn* also being commanded to present himself before his sister, shewed himself disguised as a stranger, and she not knowing him, he presently went his way. And as these two dealt with their sisters, so did *Marcus* with his mother; for he al besmothed his face with soot and smoak, and in a dirtie frock of sack-cloth stood before her, with his eyes shut, that he might haue no sight of her. *Euagrius* followed the same strayne: For when one brought him word that his father was dead, he told him: *he lyed, for* (sayth he) *my father is immortal. S. Francis* might haue sayd as much, who togeather with his father's inheritance renouncing also his father, made that worthie profession, that now he was more free truly to say: *Our father which art in heauen*. And manie more like examples we might bring; as of *S. Bernard* and his Brethren, of *Pachomius*, and *Theodore* a disciple of his; whereof the first forsooke their sister, the latter two their mother, and refusing to admit them into their sight, were cause that they also at last abandoned the world.

6. But we shal not need to search ancient Records; we see daylie examples of the like vertue before our eyes. For how often, or rather,

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as I ſayd, how dayly haue we ourſelues beheld, not only men growne in yeares, but verie youthes, entertaine their weeping parents, and their whole kindred, without ſhedding one teare, yea rather laughing when they lamented and grieued? Which comes not of hardnes of hart, or dul ſtupiditie, for if a ſtranger were in grief and miſerie, they would ſoone bewaile his woes. But the *Sword*, I ſpeake of, is to be ſeen in their harts, and hath diuided them from their friends and kindred, to whome before, their affection was ſo deep engaged; not that they haue left to loue them, ſeing they make profeſſion to loue their verie enemies, but caſting of al carnal affection, which oftimes puts vs vpon things vnworthie, they haue wholy changed it into ſpiritual charitie. Which noble diſpoſition, as it is in itſelf moſt excellent, cannot chooſe alſo but be moſt grateful to God, and plentifully rewarded with great graces. *Moyſes* doth, to my thinking, liuely expreſſe it, when in his Prophetical teſtament, directing his ſpeach to the Tribe of *Leui* dedicated to God, and for that reaſon reſembling ſomewhat a Religious ſtate, he pronounceth this bleſſing ouer them: *He that hath ſayd to his father, and to his mother: I know you not; and to his brethren; I am ignorant of them, and haue not knowne their children. Theſe haue kept thy ſpeech, and obſerued thy Couenant. Bleſſe, ô Lord, his ſtrength, and receaue the workes of his hands. Strike the backs of his enemies, and let not them riſe, that hate him.* Deut. 33. 9.

That a Religious man hath alſo forſaken himſelf; and how noble a thing that is.

CHAP. VIII.

NEXT to external goods, and natural kindred, which Religious people doe wholy forſake, there is a third and more excellent degree behind, and doubtleſſe the higheſt that can be in matter of Perfection; to wit, that he leaues himſelf. This is *to liſt himſelf*, not only aboue al other things, but *aboue himſelf*. Which the Prophet *Hieremie* doth ſo highly commend. And of the rarenes, and difficultie, and worth therof, *S. Gregorie* doth ſay excellently wel: Perhaps it is no very hard matter for a man to leaue his poſſeſſions; but it is very hard to leaue himſelf: for it is a leſſe matter to renounce what he hath; but it is very much to renounce what he is. And certainly it is very true. For if we finde ſo much difficultie in forſaking what we haue, louing it for ourſelues; how much more difficultie muſt there needs be, in forſaking ourſelues? For as natural and inbred as the loue of a man's ſelf is, ſo hard muſt it needs be, to caſt away a man's ſelf: And if we Thren. 3. 28. S. Greg. Hom. 33 in Euang. The difficultie of renouncing oneſelf.

consider wel, what the busines is, and it be done in earnest, it is not much lesse, yea it is a kind of death, because it is to dye to ones-self. And accordingly
» S. *Gregorie* doth expresse it in these tearmes: *To renounce that which one is;*
» *To fal fowle with ones-self; To kil that which he is.* And heerupon a Religious man is accounted a dead man. Which *Apollo*, one of the ancient Fathers,
S. *Bernard ser. de miraculo in nuptiis.* declared by this notable fact of his, related by *S. Bernard* and others: One of his carnal brethren came once vnto him, craving his assistance in some busines, which he had: the Saint asked him, why he did not rather goe to a third brother of theirs; his brother wondering at this question, told him he was dead and buried long agoe. *So was I*, sayth *Apollo*, *about twentie yeares since, when I tooke this holie habit vpon me.*

S. *Basil. Reg. fus. c. 6.* 2. *S. Basil* is of the same opinion; and disputing the question at large deliuereth, that no man entangled in the world, can attayne to this abnegation of himself, wherof our Sauiour sayth: *If anie one wil come after me, let him deny*
» *himself*; and giueth this reason: Because to deny ones-self, is nothing els but
Luc 9. 23. wholy and vtterly to forget euerie thing belonging to his former life, and to
» depart from his owne wil; which in a secular life is most hard to compasse; not
» to say, that it is altogeather impossible.

3. And we may compare this high degree of Perfection, to which Religion doth rayse vs by the denyal of ourselues, an other way. For as when we giue a thing away to another man, we wholy forgoe it; so when we giue ourselues to God; this being the nature, or, as I may cal it, the essence of Religion (as I haue shewed at large els-where) to put vs wholy ouer to God by force of Vow, and giue him ful dominion ouer vs. For first it deliuereth our bodie vnto him, both by the vow of Chastitie, and, as al other things, by the vow of Obedience, so that it is no more ours that liue in it, but his, for whome we liue in it. Vpon which ground *S. Bernard* doth solidly build this docu-
S. Bernard ser. ad fratres de monte Dei. ment; that Religious people must deale with their bodies, as with a thing, that belongeth not to themselues, but to God. Secondly, it deliuereth our soule vnto him, that is, our Wil, our Iudgement, our Freedome, which is Al in al. For our soule is, as it were, the Castle in a Cittie; the key of this Castle is our libertie; so that when we deliuer our libertie vp to God, we deliuer al vnto him; and so long as it is in his hands, he is maister of al. Finally it deliuereth vp to God, the vse of al these things; which though it necessarily follow of the former, yet to make the thing more plaine, we speake of it a part. For we cannot employ our soule nor our bodie in things, which of ourselues we are inclined vnto, but in those, to which our Superiours are pleased to order vs. And this deliuerie is not a thing priuate or hidden, acted only in thought or resolution, but it is made externally, by an outward declaration, by word of mouth, before witnesses, and in the hands of an other man, that, in place of God, accepteth the donation; in brief it is a kinde of contract, to the solemnizing and authenticating whereof, nothing is wanting. And consequently a Religious man, that by solemne promise hath once demised the dominion of himself, hath so wholy giuen ouer himself, that if afterwards he goe about to resume anie thing of himself, he offendeth as
S *Basil. reg.* much as a man, that taketh from an other that, which himself had neuer anie
4 *fus. c. 14.* right vnto. Whereupon *S. Basil* sayth, that *Whatsoeuer stealeth himself from God,*

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having once consecrated himself vnto him, committeth sacriledge. And *S. Bernard* reprehendeth some of his Moncks vpon the same grounds, in these words: *You, that haue once entrusted vs with the care ouer you, why do you meddle againe with yourselues?* As if he should say: what power haue you now ouer yourselues, since you haue once giuen ouer your right? Which if it be true, as *S. Bernard* wil haue it, can there be a more perfect manner of renouncing ones-self then that, which is practised in Religion? Againe; how excellent a thing must Religion needs be, and how high in the fauour of God, seing it is so liberal towards him? *S. Bernard ser. 19. in Cant.*

4. Among men, slauerie and captiuitie is accounted one of the hardest and heauiest things that are, becausе it taketh away a man's freedome, and maketh him so subiect to an other, that he must doe al things after an other's fancie. Yet if we looke into the matter wel, that kind of seruitude bindeth the bodie only; the minde is altogeather free: for there is no slaue but he may think his pleasure, and loue and hate what he listeth, grieue and reioyce at what he wil. But a Religious man, offering his verie soule to God, offereth also the operations of the soule; and must conforme al his inward affections to the same rule: wherupon in al Religious Orders, the lawes and constitutions, which are set downe in writing, and the commands of Superiours by word of mouth, prescribe not only what is outwardly to be done or auoyded, but much more what is inwardly to be performed. So that no seruitude euer was or can be more strict then that, which Religious people vndergoe: But the more strict it is, it proues also the more pleasant; becausе of the infinit pleasure which is in God, who communicateth himself so much the more plentifully to his creatures, the more narrowly they binde themselues, and the more sincerely they are subiect, vnto him. Wherefore, among other great treasures of a Religious life, we must also reckon this, that it bringeth vs wholy to forsake and cast off ourselues for euer, by so strict an obligation, that it can neuer be called-in or made voyde. In commendation of which thing the *Glosse* (the authoritie whereof is very great in the exposition of holie Scripture) doth worthily speake these words: *Others vow calues, others rammes, others their houses; the Nazarean voweth himself; this is the vow of the Nazarean, which is aboue al other vowes. Our sonne, and our daughter, and our cattle be without vs: but to offer ourselues, to employ not an other's but our owne labour, is more perfect and more eminent then al other vowes.* *Glosa num. 30.*

That al Vertues concurre in a Religious State.

CHAP. IX.

Vertue the riches of a Christiã.

THE onlie wealth of a Christian, is Vertũe. He that hath little vertue, is poore; he that hath much vertue, is to be accounted truly rich; and the more vertue a man hath, the richer he is. How much is therefore Religion to be esteemed, where a man shal finde, not one or two vertues only, but absolutly al, in great abundance concurring togeather? insomuch that the verie nature of Religion is, as it were, a Compound of Vertue; and if we looke into it, we shal finde it to be so; becausse if anie one vertue be wanting, the whole State of Religion is the weaker by it.

Vertues infused with a Religious vocation.

2. I speake not now of those vertues, which euerie one doth get by his owne long practice in them, and daylie endeauour, which notwithstanding this State doth so greatly facilitate, that it is deseruedly called the Schoole of Vertue, as I haue shewed before: But I speake of those, that in the verie first conception, as I may cal it, of a Religious Vocation, are infused into our soules togeather with the vocation itself, and so inwardly linked to the State of Religion, that whosoeuer admitteth of the State, must necessarily also receaue those vertues with it. Let vs therefore search out what vertues, and how manie, this State requireth, as necessarily belonging vnto it; for as manie as are necessarie, certainly it bringeth with it.

3. And as a house, that is buylt of manie parts, hath some of them, that lye open to the view of euerie bodie, as the fore-front, the windowes, the porches, and the like; and some againe that are hidden, as the timber, and ioyces, and iron-worke, and chiefly the foundation: And in the bodie of euerie liuing creature compounded of manie members, some appeare outwardly, as the head, the legs, and thighs, and such like; some lye inward, as the hart, the brayne, the bones, & sinnewes, which also are more necessarie, then manie of the outward parts: So in Religion, the three Vowes of Pouertie, Chastitie, and Obedience lye open to the view of euerie bodie; others are more secret. yet withal so necessarie, euen for the due maintenance of those three Vowes, and of the State itself, that without them, al falles to the ground.

The admirablenes of the three Vowes of Religion.

4. And yet if there were nothing in Religion but the practice of the three Vowes, we could not imagin a thing more beautiful. For what is Pouertie, but so noble a disposition of minde, that it maketh no more account of heapes of gold and siluer, and of the reuennues and kingdoms of the world, then of a little chaffe? yea it doth not only neglect them, as things of no value, but doth auoyd them, as burdensome. A great Vertue; and a great guift of God. And if we cast our eye vpon so manie other men in this world, that do so highly esteeme and admire, and so earnestly hunt after

Pouertie.

those

theſe earthlie things, we cannot chooſe but ſee the greatnes of it.

5. What is Chaſtitie? A mind ſtrengthened and hardened againſt al manner of pleaſures of the fleſh; againſt thoſe pleaſures which do ſo domineere ouer the nature of man-kinde. How rare therefore and how glorious a thing is it, to oppoſe ones-ſelf againſt them, and withſtand them ſo conſtantly, and with ſo great a courage? The verie rarenes of this vertue doth make it the more glorious; for we ſee that the greateſt part of al the world is lead away captiue with deſire of theſe pleaſures. Chaſtitie.

6. Finally, what a noble diſpoſition of mind is Obedience? importing a denial of ourſelues, and a renouncing of our freedome, which naturally we deſire ſo much in al things, & in al the paſſages of our life; ſo that certainly, as we cannot ouercome ourſelues in a greater matter, ſo there cannot be a more noble, or more glorious victorie. And conſequently, as I ſayd before, if there were no other vertue in Religion but theſe three, which are in euerie bodie's eye, the beautiful aſpect therof could not but breed great admiration and loue in the beholders. Obedience.

7. But, as I touched euen now, ſo fayre a building of Vertue could not long ſtand, if it had not other vertues to vphold it, whereof ſome goe before, as preparatiues; ſome alwayes accompanie it. And to begin with the three Theological vertues (which are ſo called becauſe their obiect is God) it is euident, not only that a Religious ſtate cannot be without Faith, but it cannot be without ſingular and very excellent Faith. For euerie Religious man doth forſake that, which he hath in his hands and before his eyes, for things which he doth not ſee; he leaueth the preſent for the future, and, which is more, for that which is not to come but after ſo long a diſtance of time, relying vpon the ſole promiſe and word of God; which no man would doe, were he not fully perſwaded, that the future is much more aſſured, then that which is preſent; which is the greateſt act of Faith that a man can haue. Faith.

8. The like we may ſay of Hope, which conſiſteth in two points: Firſt and principally in hoping the glorie of Heauen; which, though it be ſtil to come, Religion doth giue vs ſo good pledges of, as if we were actually in poſſeſſion of it; and in regard therof, as I ſayd of Faith, we forgoe whatſoeuer we had in our hands; Secondly Hope extendeth itſelf to the neceſſarie helps of this preſent life; which part therof, where is it more practiſed then in Religion? Religious people depriuing themſelues of al things, which they may haue need of, and bringing themſelues to a moſt perfect nakednes, vpon the confidence which they haue in God. So that in my opinion there cannot be a greater hope and confidence in the Pilgrimage of this world, then this, which Religious people haue; becauſe it extendeth itſelf not only to ſome one kind of thing, or to manie things of ſmal conſequence, but concerneth abſolutly al, and our verie life, with which we put God wholy in truſt. Charitie is written in the verie bowels of Religion, and as it were in the Eſſence of it; and hath three branches: The one extending itſelf towards God; the other towards thoſe of the ſame Inſtitute; the third towards al other men. Towards God, becauſe doubtleſſe it is the ſole Loue of God, which driueth a Scule vpon ſuch a ſtrict courſe of life, Hope. Charitie.

and the force or flame therof muſt needs be exceſſiue great, to be able to thruſt out ſo abſolutly, as it doth, al other loue of our carnal brethren, our parents and kinsfolk, of riches, and al other worldlie commodities, and finally the loue of ourſelues. For it were not poſſible for a man to forſake al theſe things for God, if he loued not God much more then anie of them. And if the beginnings of this loue be ſo great, and the firſt coulours, as I may cal them, ſo liuelie and beautiful; what wil be the continual encreaſe therof, to which it muſt needs riſe in time, by the daylie functions of Religion, by prayer, meditation, and other vertuous exerciſes; the end of them al being to encreaſe in the loue of God.

The loue towards thoſe of the ſame Inſtitute. *Ariſt. 1. Ethic.*

9. Now whereas the ſtreames of loue and good wil towards our neighbour are deriued from this fountaine of the loue of God, they ſal firſt vpon them, whome God hath linked vnto vs by profeſſion of the ſame Inſtitute and courſe of life; who alſo, by reaſon of this nearnes, haue been alwayes wont to cal Brothers among themſelues. And this loue is wholy of Charitie. For, as Ariſtotle diſcourſeth, euerie ſocietie of men, being neceſſarily grounded vpon communication, in one kind or other, as the companie of ſea-faring men, vpon ſhipping; a companie of ſouldiers, vpon militarie actions; a fellowship of Students, vpon the doctrine of their Maiſter; a companie of Marchants, vpon money; ſuch as the thing is, whereupon they agree, ſuch is their followship or ſocietie: Let vs therfore ſee, what is the ground, whereupon Religious people agree, and what bond tyeth them togeather. For certainly it is not nearnes in bloud; becauſe oftimes they are meere ſtrangers one to another; neither is it anie ciuil contract or bargaine; in brief, if we reckon vp al, that can be reckoned, we ſhal find that they haue no other ground of their aſſociation, but this ſupernatural loue, which is Charitie. Charitie bread it; Charitie vpholds it; without Charitie it inſtantly faileth. And, as a little before I ſaid of the loue of God, ſo this fraternal Charitie hauing ſo noble a ground, and, as I may cal it, ſo honourable a deſcent, it hath manie things in like manner conſequent vnto it, and greatly aduancing it. And firſt, the likenes, which they haue among themſelues; which in al things is a great encreaſer of loue, and among Religious people of the ſame Rule and Inſtitute is ſo great, that greater can hardly be in this world; for al their intentions, practiſes, rites, and ceremonies, & their verie outward Habit and behauiour are alike; Vertue itſelf, which a man cannot but loue in his enemie, their daylie conuerſation one with another, continual cohabitation, finally the ſeruices and charitable offices one towards another, al proceeding of loue, muſt needs adde oyle to this burning flame of loue, and inflame it more and more.

The excellencie of the ground therof.

10. The third branch of Charitie reacheth to al men. For excepting ſome few Inſtitutes, which attend wholy to Contemplation (who yet by prayer and good deſires help towards the ſaluation of others in no ſmal meaſure) al the reſt are ſo wholy at the ſeruice of their neighbour, that al their thoughts and endeauours ſeeme to bend that way. And the employments of euery Religious familie giue ſufficient teſtimonie, what their affection is in this kind. For not only when they appeare in publick to preach, or teach, or exhort, but when in priuate they giue themſelues to ſtudie, when they labour and watch, or performe anie other exerciſe of religion, al of it is directed

directed not only to their owne saluation, but for the better helping & assisting of others to get Heauen. So that Religious people, as *S. Paul* sayd of himself, *haue made themselues seruants of al men*, taking their cause so to hart, that next to their owne saluation, they busie themselues wholy vpon their neighbour, either actually seruing them in some thing or other, or preparing that which may conduce to their good: finally as oft as they are called, they are as readie to attend vpon them, as any seruant can be at his maister's beck. Al which shewes, that Charitie is intrinsecal to a Religious vocation, and, as it were, a kind of glue, to binde soules togeather among themselues, and with God; which if it faile, Religious Orders themselues must needs fal asunder, because they haue no other stay or hold. 1. Cor. 9. 19.

11. It followeth that we speake of Moral vertues; among which the first &, as it were, the light of the rest, is *Prudence*, so coupled with Religion, that without it we cannot vnderstand, what Religion meaneth. *S. Augustin* defineth *Prudence* to *be the knowledge of what we are to desire, and what we are to fly*. And where is this knowledge more abundant, then in Religion? *S. Thomas* deliuereth a doctrine which is very true, to wit, that Prudence consisteth not only in the Vnderstanding or Reason, but dependeth very much of a wel-ordered wil, and consequently is obscured and lost rather by disordered affections, then by forgetfulnes or obliuion. Whereupon it followeth also further (as the same holie Doctour teacheth) that a sinner cannot haue perfect Prudence: for perfect Prudence is that, which considering the true End of man, doth apply to the attaining of that End, *vpright aduise, vpright iudgement, and an vpright command*; which be the three acts of this vertue. Now where is the true End of man better considered of, and better weighed, then in Religion, where we direct ourselues wholy to God, for whome we were created; and put ourselues so intirely vnder his dominion and power, that we doe nothing for anie creature, not so much as for ourselues? Religion moreouer sheweth vs, how to deserue the grace of God, how to preserue it, and preuent and auoyd the deceits of the Diuel, what we ought to doe or shunne in al the particulars of our life. These are the acts of true wisedome; this is the Prudence, which is both commendable, and necessarie; not as commonly people take it, to know how to grow rich, or to get preferment, which is rather craft, then Prudence. For failing of the knowledge or pursuit of the true end of man, and seeking some particular end of this or that busines, or ayming at some thing which is naught, it followeth either to be imperfect, if it stay in the first; or falsly stiled Prudence, if it degenerate to the latter. Prudence. *S. Aug. lib. 83. q. 61.* *S. Tho. 2. 2. q. 47. a. 13. & a. 13.*

12. Iustice is yet more apparently coupled with Religion: For it is not only farre from doing anie bodie anie wrong (for though there were nothing els, the state itself barreth al Religious people from al occasions of fraud & deceipt) but the office of Iustice being to giue euerie one his owne, and chiefly to God, that which belongs vnto him, Religion beats wholy vpon this point. Al things, that be in the world, belong to God; ourselues, and al that we haue. Whosoeuer therfore reserueth anie thing to himself, either of his owne person or anie thing belonging vnto him, wrongs God, and certainly deales more vniustly with him, then if he should take another man's goods from him: Now Religion laboureth nothing more then to deliuer vp to God, first al things Iustice.

which are without vs; secondly, the things which are within vs; and lastly our selues; by this meanes compendiously complying with al the dutyes of most perfect Iustice.

Temperance. 13. As for Temperance, who can doubt but that Religion is the proper seat of it? For, as Aristotle deliuereth, the office of Temperance is, to bridle the pleasures of the bodie, chiefly those that belong to the sense of Touching; of which there be two kindes: some serue towards the sustenance of the bodie, by eating and drinking; some for the vse of generation. The first, Religion confineth within the bounds of necessitie, Pouertie (the mother of frugalitie, and sobrietie) helping therunto: The second belonging to generation (the desires whereof are more violent and intemperate) it doth wholy cut of and shunne, as a bodie would shunne the plague. The greatest commendation, which *Aristotle* and the rest of the Philosophers gaue Temperance, was to keepe a meane in these pleasures, and durst not presse Nature anie further. How farre greater commendation therefore doth Religion deserue, which doth not only temper these pleasures, but vtterly abolish them, and banish them out of sight and thought?

Arist. 3. Eth. c. 10.

Fortitude. 14. Some bodie perhaps wil think, that Fortitude hath nothing to doe in Religion, because there is no occasion of going into the field, nor anie vse of weapons, nor anie thing to be done that requireth strength of armes: which fancie if we yeald vnto, we may as wel grant that a Bul, or an Elephant, is to haue the preheminence of strength and fortitude aboue al men. But the nature of Fortitude is farre other; and, if we belieue *S. Gregorie*, it is to be measured by the disposition of our mind. The Fortitude, *sayth he*, or strength of the iust, is to subdue their flesh, to contradict their owne wil, to quench the delights of this present life, to embrace that which is hard in the world, for the rewards eternal, to contemne the smiling countenance of prosperitie, to ouercome in their harts the feare of aduersitie. Which words of *S. Gregorie*, what doe they decypher vnto vs, but the dutie of a Religious life? so that we must of force confesse, that true Fortitude is chiefly among them. For if we account them valiant, that fight stoutly against other men; we haue much more reason, to yeald this commendation to Religious people, who in the continual warre, which they wage against this world, ouercome enemies farre more strong in nature then they, and farre more in number.

S. Greg. 7. mor. 8.

15. Besides these Moral vertues, which are the principal, there be others as it were branches of them; as Patience, a vertue so noble and withal so neeessarie, that Religion meeting with so manie things as it doth, which are very harsh to Sense, it cannot long endure without it. It must therefore necessarily haue Patience; and the daylie occasions of practice of it, do much strengthen and encrease it. To which purpose *S. Ambrose* speaking in commendation of *S. Eusebius* Bishop of *Vercels*, hath these words: This Patience did first fasten in *S. Eusebius* by Monastical conuersation, and he grew able to endure anie kind of labour and paynes, by custome of more strict obseruance.

Patience.

S. Ambros. Epist. 25.

Liberalitie. 16. But euerie bodie wil perhaps easily find out, that Religion must haue Patience; but make a question, whether there be anie place for Liberalitie; because Religious people reserue nothing that they can bestow vpon others; and yet truly considered, Religion is not without this happines. For, as *Aristotle* sayth, Liberalitie, as other vertues, is to be measured by the disposition of a

Aristot. 4. Eth. c. 2.

man's minde: Whosoeuer is so disposed in minde, that he contemnes al worldlie wealth, and is readie, if he had it, to bestow it in laudable vses, is to be accounted truly liberal; so that, according to the opinion of the same Philosopher, poore men may also be liberal; and consequently Religious people are so farre from wanting this vertue, as they are rather to be esteemed more liberal, then anie bodie els. For who can more from their hart contemne riches then they, that not only doe not seeke after them or desire them, but are readie to refuse whole mountaines of gold, if they were offered? Besides that, they haue already acted al that magnificence and worth, which can be in bestowing the goods of this world, when they forsooke al, togeather with the world; specially if it fel in their way to doe also that, which *S. Basil* aduiseth, and *S. Francis* put in practise, and (which is the principal) that which our Sauiour commanded, to wit, if they distributed that, which they had, wholy in releef of the poore. For they that lauish their substance in following their pleasures, or spend it in statelie buildings, or burie it in orchards and gardins, are not, euen in *Aristotle's* iudgement, to be accounted liberal. Religion therefore wanteth no part in Liberalitie, but hath it to the ful, as a special ornament among other graces.

S. Basil reg fus. c. 9. *Matth. 19.* *Arist. 4. Eth. c. 1.*

17. But neither these, nor anie other vertue doth seeme so natural to Religion, as Humilitie. For first, what is Religion but an absolute renunciation of al wordlie honour? which renunciation is an act of Humilitie. Secondly, the whole practise of Religion consisteth in humbling ourselues as much as possibly we can, and in endeauouring to hide ourselues from being spoken or thought of, and to be rather subiect to euery bodie, then to goe before any one; finally nothing is more ordinarie, nothing more laboured-for in Religion, then to be the least and lowest of al men. And consequently the commandment of our Sauiour (*Sit downe in the lowest place*) is no-where more exactly fulfilled. The lowest place is, to lay ourselues vnder euerie one's feete, to depriue ourselues of our owne wil, and of al power of doing anie thing of ourselues; for no man can descend lower, then he that hath left himself nothing. We *sit downe*, that is, we take vp our rest, in this *lowest place*; because the Humilitie of Religion, is not one act or two, such as some Secular people stoop-vnto some-times, but it comprehendeth our whole life, & is intrinsecally setled in the State itself, which we are bound to stick to, al the dayes therof. And besides this humilitie, which the state itself doth bring with it, the daylie practise of humble offices is so annexed therunto, that we see people, that are nobly borne, and brought vp, not only honourably, but deliciously, & attended-on before, with much state, performe howerly & continually, the seruil offices, which *S. Hierome* so much commẽdeth in *Paula* & *Eustochium*, two noble Ladies, to wit, to set vp lights, make fires, sweep the house, shel beanes and pease, put hearbs into the pot when it boyleth, couer the table, serue beere, dresse-out the meate, runne hither and thither: which are al acts of Humilitie, and partly shew vs what Humilitie the State doth breede in vs, partly encrease it dayly more and more.

Humilitie. *Luc. 14. 10.* *S. Hierome Epist. 25.*

18. And this shal suffice, for as much as concerneth Vertue. The like may be sayd of the guifts of the Holie-Ghost. For where is more perfect Wisdome then in Religion, where that light doth shine, which teacheth vs to value euerie thing according to the true worth of it? that is, to make great account of Diuine and heauenlie things, and to set lightly by earthlie things: wherupon

Wisdome.

S. Aug. in Pſ. 118. S. Auguſtin hath this ſaying: The Prophet ſayth: *The beginning of wiſedome is the feare of our Lord.* And what is the beginning of wiſedome, but to renounce the world? becauſe to be worldly wiſe, is foolishnes. Where is that *Vnderſtanding* more quick, which diuing into the deapth of euerie thing, diſcouereth clearly from whence they haue their beginning, by whome they were created, what beauty is in them, what benefit they bring vnto vs, and how the Authour of them is made knowne by them?

Vnderſtanding.

Knowledge. 19. *Knowledge* (as the tree in the midſt of Paradiſe, by which we might haue diſcerned good from euil) flouriſheth alſo in this place; neither are we heer forbidden to touch it, as then we were, but rather we are bid to make vſe of it.

Counſel and Fortitude. The ſame we may ſay of Counſel, and Fortitude; wherof the one armeth a ſoule againſt the vice of head-long raſhnes, that it may neyther erre nor fal; the other ſtrengthneth it againſt aduerſitie, that it may reioyce and triumph in the midſt of it.

Pietie. 20. Pietie ſoftneth the hardnes of our hart, and melts it with loue, of God and our Neighbour; and the feare of God ſhutteth vp the ranke, that no man may confide in himſelf, or in his owne ſtrength, but as the Wiſe-man admoniſheth, *be alwayes feareful*: which holeſome feare is proper and intrinſecal to Religion. For the onlie cauſe (at leaſt a chief motiue) why people vndertake this profitable flight, from the pleaſures of the world, to the ſwcet yoake of Chriſt, is, becauſe perceauing the dangers of the world, and the malice of the Diuel, and their owne weaknes, to be ſo great, they can think of no better refuge, then to ſhelter themſelues in Religion (as little chickens, when the kite houers ouer them) vnder the wings of our Lord; and there to remaine, *til iniquitie paſſe away*, and the miſerie of this life, the whole length wherof is deſeruedly called by holie *Iob*, *a warrefare vpon earth.*

Feare of God.

Prou. 28. 14.

Iob. 7. 1. 21. Wherefore to draw to a concluſion of this point, ſeing there is ſuch plentie of rare vertues in a Religious courſe, what can we liken it vnto better, then to a Crowne or diademe of gold ſet with pearle and pretious ſtones of al ſortes? So that vpon whomeſoeuer the Crowne is beſtowed, al the gemmes and pretious ſtones muſt neceſſarily be beſtowed vpon him; becauſe they are ſet faſt in it; for in like manner, whomeſoeuer God doth inſpire to take a Religious courſe, at the ſelf-ſame time, and by the ſelf-ſame act, he conferreth vpon him al the bleſſings and guifts, which I haue rehearſed, and that great heape of heauenlie wealth and treaſure is, at it were, at the ſelf-ſame inſtant put into his boſome. And as, when a man is borne into this world, al things, which are neceſſary to the conſtitution of a man, are conſequently beſtowed vpon him, to wit, the bodie of a man and the members therof, and the ſoule of a man with the properties belonging vnto it; becauſe otherwiſe he ſhould not be a man: though this bodie is at firſt little, and the ſelf-ſame in time and by the continual nourishment, which we take, growes bigger and bigger; and our ſoule, which is at firſt in a manner vnpolished, muſt be perfected by labour & induſtrie: So when God, *who commandeth light to ſhine in darknes*, doth enlighten a man's hart, and *drawing him out of the power of death, makes him worthie of this lot of the Saints in light*, he doth neceſſarily alſo giue him al the vertues,

2. Cor. 4. 6. which are neceſſarily required for the accomplishing of this courſe, as Pouertie, Faith, Humilitie, Obedience, and the reſt, which I haue already mentioned;

tioned; some expresly and directly, others at least inuoluedly, giuing him a desire and affection to others some, with a ful deliberation, and purpose to purchase them: though al these vertues are afterwards to be conserued, encreased, and put into a better forwardnes, by the grace of God and man's owne endeauour concurring togeather. Which doth euidently discouer the greatnes of this heauenlie benefit. For if al these vertues were to be purchased by our owne labour and industrie, to what an exigent should we be brought? How much toyle and sweat of our browes would euerie one of them cost vs, they being so manie in number, and so hard to compasse? But now being al included in a Religious state of life, God, that giues the state, giues the vertues also: and whosoeuer takes the State vpon him, must necessarily receaue them togeather with it.

How great the perfection of a Religious State is.

CHAP. X.

SVPPOSING this great concourse of Vertues, whereof a Religious state is compacted, as a bodie of manie members, (as I haue shewed) it wil not be hard to coniecture, or rather it is apparent of itself, how great the perfection of this manner of life is. For Vertue being the onlie perfection of a nature, that is endued with reason, the institute or course of life, wherein al vertues concurre in so eminent a degree, must needs be most perfect, most honourable, and most glorious, for a reasonable man to liue in. And this is that, which at this present we wil take into our consideration; chiefly recording the sentences of holie Fathers concerning this point, least following our owne discours, we may be thought to flatter ourselues, and praise our owne trade.

2. *S. Dionyse* (one of the ancient Writers in the Catholick Church, and of greatest authoritie, next to the holie Scriptures) called the degree and Order of a Bishop, a Perfecting degree, because it is ordayned for the perfecting of others; and the state of Monks (whereof he deliuereth manie great commendations) he calleth a state of such as are perfect. Which our Diuines declaring in other tearmes, say, that the State of Monks aymeth at their owne perfection, the State of a Bishop at the perfecting of others. *S. Basil* in his Sermons of the Institution of a Monke, hath this discours: He that hath renounced the world, must make account, and alwayes beare in minde, « that he hath stepped a degree beyond the bounds of humane nature, and « betaken himself to an Institute farre different from the course of the bodie, « and consequently vndertaken to imitate the conuersation of Angels: For it « is proper to the nature of Angels to be free from earthlie tyes, and hauing « their eyes continually fixed vpon the face of GOD, not to be drawne to « contemplate anie other beautie; This is *S. Basil's* iudgement of this course « of life, which els-where he calleth a *Sublime and excellent manner of* « *liuing*.

S. Dion. Ecc. Hier. c. 5.

Caiet. 2 2. q. 189. a 3. S. Basil. de Inst. mo. nach. ser. 1.

Id. Ser.

S. Hiero. Ep. 150. 3. *S. Hierome* in his Epiſtle to Hedibia ſpeaketh thus: Wilt thou be perfect, and ſtand in the higheſt rank of promotion? Doe that, which "the Apoſtles did; Sel what thou haſt, and giue it to the poore, and follow "thy Sauiour; attend vpon the ſole naked Croſſe with ſincere vertue. And Id. Ep. 8. in another of his Epiſtles to *Demetrius*: It is the heighth of an Apoſto- "lical life and perfect Vertue, to ſel al and deale it among the poore; and "thus lightned and diſburdened, to fly vp to heauen with Chriſt; though in "this, euerie age and euerie perſon is left to his free wil and choice. He Id. Ep. 34. ſaith: *If thou wilt be perfect*; I doe not force you, I doe not command "you; I propoſe the prize, I shew the rewards; it is yours to chooſe, "whether you wil be crowned in the liſts and combat. And yet more "plainly and copiouſly writing to Iulianus: This I exhort thee vnto, "if thou wilt be perfect; if thou ayme at the heighth of Apoſtolical dig- "nitie; if taking thy Croſſe thou wilt follow Chriſt; if laying hand on "the plough, thou looke not back; if placed in a high place at the feaſt, "thou contemne thy old cloathes; and let goe the cloake of this world, "to eſcape the Ægyptian Ladie. For Elias making haſte to the heauenlie king- "domes, cannot go vp with his cloake, but letteth his vncleane gar- "ment fal to the world, that is vncleane. Thou wilt ſay: This is for men of "Apoſtolical dignitie, and ſuch as wil be perfect. Thou that art firſt in the "world, why ſhoudſt not thou be firſt in the houſe-hold of Chriſt? And a little "after: If thou giue thy ſelf to God, and perfect in Apoſtolical vertue begin to "follow our Sauiour, then thou wilt perceaue, where thou wert, and how in the armie of Chriſt thou holdeſt the loweſt place. *S. Hierome* ſtileth the place, in which *Iulianus* then was when he wrote this Epiſtle to him, *the loweſt place*, becauſe he was ſtil in the world; a man not euil and vitious, but a good man, and among ſecular people, rare for his vertue and pietie, leading a ſingle life, and being one, who (as *S. Hierome* writeth of him) mayntay- ned whole companies of Monks, vpon the large poſſeſſions, which God had giuen him: And yet he doth not doubt to rank this man, that was ſo rich in S. Auguſt. lib. de Virg. c. 31. good works, with the laſt in the armie of Chriſt.

4. *S. Auguſtin* ſpeaketh to the ſame effect in manie places, but chiefly in the Booke, which he wrote of holie Virginitie, where he ſayth thus: When the profeſſours of perpetual Continencie, comparing themſelues with married people, ſhal find, that (according to holie Scripture) they that mar- rie are farre inferiour to themſelues, both in the labour and in the hire belon- ging to it; in their deſire, and in the reward; let them inſtantly cal to mind Eccl. 3. 20. that, which is written: *The greater thou art, humble thyſelf the more in al things.*

Id. 89. 5. There is alſo an excellent Epiſtle of his extant, where he enlargeth himſelf very much in commendation of this kind of life; and among other things he ſayth, that to leaue al, is a noble reſolution; a more excellent perfection, then the only keeping the Commandments of God; finally that they, who entertayne this Counſel of Perfection, *to ſel al, and diſtribute it among the poore*, to the end that eaſing their ſhoulders of the burthen of this world, they may be the freer to take vp the ſweet yoake of our Sauiour

Sauiour Christ vpon them, doe it out of a kind of generositie of a noble Spirit; and they that arriue not to this perfection, are the more infirme, and not thought fit for so glorious an enterprise; though, if they keepe the Commandments, and vse their wealth as if they had it not, they may be saued.

6. *S. Gregorie* particularly vpon those words of holie Iob: *I haue despayred, now I wil no longer liue*, hath this excellent saying: There be some iust men, that ayme at heauenlie things; yet so, as not to breake with the hopes, which they haue in their earthlie substance; they reserue the inheritance, which God hath giuen them, to supply their necessities; they retayne the temporal honours and preferments which doe befal them; they couet not that which belongs to others; they vse their owne within compasse of Iustice and equitie. There be other iust men, that buckling themselues to the attaining of the heighth of Perfection, while they inwardly ayme at the highest, forsake al things which are without; they bereaue themselues of the things they did possesse; they depriue themselues of the glorie of worldlie preferments; they refuse the comfort of al outward things; and the nearer they approach in their mind to the inward ioyes, the more absolutly doe they kil within themselues the life of corporal delight. For to them *S. Paul* addresseth his words when he sayth: *You are dead, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.* And Truth itself in his owne words admonisheth vs, saying: *If any wil come after me, let him deny himself.* And againe: *Vnlesse a man renounce al that he doth possesse, he cannot be my disciple.*

Iob. 7. 16. *S. Greg.* 8. *moral.* c. 15. *Col.* 3. 3. *Luc.* 9. 32. *Luc.* 14. 33.

7. *Origen* (an Authour much esteemed for his learning and antiquitie) speaketh thus: If a man haue vowed himself to God; if he entangle not himself in secular businesses, to the end to please him to whom he hath engaged himself; if he be seuered and parted from the rest that liue carnally, and are tyed to worldlie affayres; not seeking the things which are vpon earth but those which are in heauen; such a man is deseruedly called holie. For while a man remayneth in worldlie companie, rolling vp and downe in the multitude of vnquiet people, not attending to God alone, nor seuered from the vulgar; he cannot be holie. Thou therfore that heareſt these things when the law of God is read, to whome the Word of God himself doth speake, saying: *Be holie, because I, your Lord God, am holie*: vnderstand with discretion what is sayd, that thou mayst be blessed, when thou hast performed it. This is that which is sayd vnto thee: Departe not only from euerie other man, but euen from thy brother, that walketh vnquietly; seuer thyself from earthlie dealings, from the concupiscence of the world; vow thyself to God, as the first-fallen calf; be holie and layd-aside for the vse of the Priests only, giuen ouer to their vse, as the first-begotten of euerie liuing creature; seuer & set thyself apart, as a holie viol-glasse, as holie censers to be vsed only in the Temple; and attending to the seruice of God, be holie and seuered within the temple of God, as the holie Vestments of the high Priest. Finally the verdict of *S. Bernard* must not be forgotten, when speaking in commendation of a Religious State, he giues it a singular preheminence of a Spiritual

Origen. Hom. 11. *in Leuit.* *Leuit.* 20. 25. 2. *Pet* 1. 16. S *Bernard de prec. & disci-*

life (for so he speaketh) excelling al other kinds of humane conuersation; and making the professours and louers of it like Angels, and farre vnlike to men; and reformeth in man the image of God, conforming vs to Christ.

Religion an Apostolical life.

8. Moreouer we may vnderstand the perfection of a Religious vocation, by that the ancient Fathers doe vsually stile it, an *Apostolical life and calling*; which is to place it in the very top of al Sanctitie. For no man can doubt, but that the Apostles did excel in al Euangelical perfection, as being Christ's owne disciples, and Maisters of the whole world, and, as S. *Paul* speaketh, had the first fruits of Spirit, so abundantly, as the day of Pentecost doth witnes. Whereupon S. *Bernard* in a certain Sermon speaketh thus to his Brethren: What is it (thanks be to him, by whose grace al this is donne) what is it, that your life doth resemble the life of the Apostles? they forsook al; and assembled togeather in the Schoole of Christ, in his presence, drew waters in ioy of the fountaine of our Saviour, drinking of the fountaine of life at the fountaine itself. Blessed are their eyes that beheld it. Haue not you also done somewhat the like, not in his presence, but in his absence; not at the word of his mouth, but vpon the word of his messengers? Maintayne this your prerogatiue, which they vpon sight and word of mouth, you by hearing and by message, haue believed. Behold, how he compareth a Religious State with that worthie act of the Apostles, and in a manner doth preferre it before them, in regard that, as our Saviour sayd, *they are more blessed, that haue not seene, and haue believed.*

Rom. 8. 23.

S. Bernard de 4. deb.

Io. 20. 29.

9. In an other place he doth yet more fully and more playnly compare this kind of life, not only with the Apostles, but with the Prophets, and the verie Angels. These are his words: You see, my Brethren, what spirit you haue receaued; the spirit, which is of God, that you may know the things which God hath giuen you. We haue heard the degree of excellencie, wherein the Apostles, and the Prophets, and the Angels are seated, and I make account we cannot ayme at anie higher thing. Verily me thinks, I find something of each of them in you, and something that is excellent. For who wil not be bold to say, that this single life of yours, is a life celestial and Angelical? or that in the Resurrection, al the Elect shal be as you now are, as the Angels of God in heauen, wholy forbearing marriage? Preserue, my Brethren, this precious Iewel, preserue that sanctitie of life, which resembleth you to the Saints, and maketh you of the house-hold of God; holie Scripture saying, that *Incorruption maketh a man neare to God.* You are that which you are, not by your owne desert, but by the grace of God, in regard of your chastitie and sanctimonie, Angels vpon earth, or rather Citizens of Heauen, but yet a while vpon earth pilgrims. What shal we say of the guift of Prophecie? Truly it is a rare kind of prophecying, that which I see you giuen vnto, and an excellent studie to which I see you applied. What is that? that which the Apostle speaketh of, *not to consider the things which are seene, but which are not seene.* This certainly is to prophecie; *To walk in spirit; to liue according to faith; to seeke the things which are aboue, not which are vpon earth; to forget the things which*

S. Bernard ser. de circu. & Baſil. Cordis.

Religion compared with the Prophets, Apostles, and Angels.

Sap. 6. 20.

A rare kind of Prophecie.

2. Cor. 4. 18. Col. 3. Phil. 3. 13

are

are behind; to ſtretch to thoſe which are before vs, is a great part of Prophecie. For how is *our conuerſation in heauen*, but by the ſpirit of Prophecie? For ſo the Prophets of-old were, as if they were not among the men of their time; but by ſpirit and Prophetical commotion, tranſcending the dayes they liued in, they did reioyce *to ſee the day of our Lord; they ſaw it and were glad in it.* Let vs heare what profeſſion the Apoſtles were of: *Behold, we haue left al, and haue followed thee.* If it be lawful to glorie, we haue glorie; but if we be wiſe, we wil haue care, that we haue it with God. For not our mightie hand, but our Lord hath done al theſe things. He that is powerful hath done great things to vs, ſo that our ſoule may worthily magnify our Lord. For it is by his great guift, that in ſo great meaſure we follow that great courſe and purpoſe, in which thoſe great Apoſtles did glorie. Thus doth *S. Bernard* diſcourſe in commendation of a Religious ſtate, paralelling it in manie things with thoſe three degrees of Perfection. Let vs ſee how in ſome things he doth preferre it, which is a farre greater commendation. Perhaps, *ſaith he*, if I wil glorie alſo in this, I ſhal not be vnwiſe; for I ſhal ſpeak the truth: There be ſome here that haue left more then a boat and nets. And what is it, that the Apoſtles *left al* indeed but to follow our Sauiour, who was preſent with them? It is not for me to ſay what it is; we ſhal with more ſafetie heare our Sauiour himſelf ſaying: *Becauſe thou haſt ſeene me, Thomas, thou haſt beleeued; bleſſed are they that haue not ſeen me, and haue beleeued.* Perhaps alſo it is a more excellent kind of Prophecie, not to attend to anie temporal thing, nor to things that with time doe periſh, but to thoſe that are ſpiritual and Eternal. And the treaſure of Chaſtitie is more illuſtrious in a veſſel of earth, and vertue in ſome ſort more laudable in fleſh that is fraile and weake. When therefore we find in this bodie of ours an Angelical conuerſation, in our hart a Prophetical expectation, in both an Apoſtolical perfection, what a maſſe of grace is there? Thus ſpake *S. Bernard*; and I know not what can be ſaid more to the honour and commendation of a Religious Inſtitute.

10 But what do we ſtand heaping togeather the praiſes of men, when we haue the verdict of Truth it ſelf from God's owne mouth? For of this State our Sauiour ſpake thoſe words: *If thou wilt be perfect, go and ſel al that thou haſt, and come follow me.* Where it is to be conſidered what our Sauiour ſaid; and to whome. He ſpake to a man that was not wicked and debauched, but honeſt and orderlie; for he had kept the commandments of God al his life-time he had done no man no wrong; and our Sauiour beholding him, did loue him. Who would not haue thought that this man was perfect, ſeing he had been ſo carefal and diligent in fulfilling the law of God? and yet our Sauiour tels him: *Thou wanteſt yet one thing*; a thing ſo great and of ſo high a ſtraine, that the man (though inuited by our Sauiour) had a horrour to climbe vp this one degree and ſtep. Let vs ſee therefore in what this Perfection doth conſiſt, which the man did want, *If thou wilt be perfect, go and ſel al.* He therefore that ſelleth al, that is, he that forſaketh al and followeth the doctrine of Chriſt, is in a perfect ſtate: he that hath not done this, though he haue done al other things, wanteth yet one thing. Wherefore a Religious life is the higheſt Perfection, by confeſſion not only of learned and holie men, but of our Sauiour himſelf:

Matth 19.

Matth. 19. 21.

and for as much as concerneth the perfection of our owne ſoules, there is not a higher or more eminent State.

Religion the chiefeſt of the Euangelical Counſels.

11. If we conſider the nature itſelf of Religion, we ſhal diſcouer more plainly the ſame Prerogatiue. For firſt, Religion is ranked among the Euangelical Counſels, and is one of the chief of them, or rather the chiefeſt and greateſt among them. Which we may gather by the manner of our Sauiour's ſpeach, when he wiſhed the yong man to this courſe, ſaying: *If thou wilt.* For as then it was propoſed to that yong man, ſo it is now propoſed to euerie one vnder the ſame forme: If they wil. Now certainly a Counſel is farre more excellent then a Precept, for manie reaſons. Firſt in regard of the matter, The matter of a Precept is more eaſie, the matter of a Counſel more hard and difficult; The matter of a Precept is grounded vpon the ſame grounds that Nature leads vs to, the matter of a Counſel is aboue the ſtraine of Nature; The matter of a Precept is alwayes good, of a Counſel better; becauſe a Counſel includeth the Precept, and addeth ſome-what more aboue it. Moreouer Precepts be common to al, to the high and to the low, to the wiſe and to the ſimple; Counſels are not for al; yea they are for thoſe only, that wil of their owne accord admit them. Precepts oblige people euen againſt their wil; Counſels are free and voluntarie, before a man hath willingly obliged himſelf vnto them. Precepts, if they be kept, deſerue a reward; if they be neglected, bring puniſhment vpon vs; Counſels, if they be not vndertaken, bring no puniſhment at al vpon vs; if they be vndertaken and kept, deſerue a great reward.

Precept and Counſel compared.

The actiõs of Religion aboue Nature.

12. Another thing, by which we may diſcouer the perfection of a Religious State, is the excellencie of the actions which flow from Religion; for they are not only aboue the ſtrength of Nature, but doe ſo farre ſurpaſſe the bounds therof, as that they cannot be atchieued but by an extraordinarie abundant current of Grace. For to bridle our ſenſes, to ſubiect our fleſh to Chaſtitie, vtterly to kil our owne wil, to forgoe our freedome, to put our necks into a yoake of perpetual ſeruitude, to embrace Pouertie, to poſſeſſe nothing, to doe the baſeſt offices in a houſe, to be readie at euerie beck of another man, and alwayes wholy to depend of another's wil in al things concerning vs: Theſe and manie other things of the ſame nature, which are ſo inward to a Religious life that Religion cannot be without them, are no leſſe repugnant to our corrupted nature bending wholy to ſelf-loue, then it is againſt the nature of a man's bodie, to fly in the ayre. For as the heauines of our bodie doth hinder that we cannot fly; ſo the heauines and corruption of our mind is oppoſit to al theſe things. What therefore is a Religious man but a perpetual Miracle vpon earth, & ſo manie Religious men, ſo manie Miracles? whereof *S. Bernard* alſo ſpeaketh in this manner: What greater miracle can there be, then for ſo manie youths, ſo manie yong Gentlemen, ſo manie others whome heer I ſee to remaine as it were in an open priſon without irons, held only by the feare of God, and to continue in ſo great affliction of Pennance, beyond the force of man, beyond nature, contrarie to their wonted cuſtome, and breeding? I verily think, that your-ſelues doe ſee, how manie miracles we might quickly finde, if we would ſearch particularly into euerie man's paſſage out of Ægypt, his

A Religious man a great miracle.

S. Bernard ſerm. 1. de dedic. Eccleſiæ.

his iourney in the desert; that is, his renouncing of the world, his entrance into the Monasterie, and his conuersation while he is there. What perfection therefore can be greater then the perfection of Religion, which is so miraculous?

13. Where we may obserue, that the Perfection of euerie thing is two-fold. For there is a Perfection, without which a thing is not perfect in his owne nature; as, if a man want bodie or soule; whereas if he haue both these, he is sayd to be perfect, for as much as concerneth the nature of man. There is another Perfection, which giues a kind of grace to a thing; and if it want it, though in nature it be compleat, it is stil sayd to be imperfect; as, if a man haue bodie and soule, but his bodie be crooked and deformed. In like manner the perfection of a Christian is two-fold; one is as it were essential, and consisteth in the ful obseruance of the Commandments; and this Perfection by itself alone, is but lame and imperfect; because it wanteth that grace and beautie, which the keeping of the Counsels may adde vnto it, as a degree of farre higher perfection; a perfection which no man, doubtles, can choose but loue and desire, if he doe behold it. For goodnes, and beautie, and order, is naturally so forcible, that we cannot but desire it, if we once cast the eyes of our minde or bodie vpon it; though in smal things there can be but smal shew of it. How forcible therefore must it needes be, when it appeares in things that are rare and excellent? For as we doe not only take pleasure in viewing a gardin (for example) that is neatly kept, and wel set-forth and furnished; or a house that is wel built and commodious, and such other things of greater bulck; but in a flower, and an apple, and in anie little thing that is curiously wrought, and hath anie workmanship in it, and finally in whatsoeuer we find anie expression of beautie and handsomnes, and in euerie one of these things, according to the seueral kinds and natures of them: Much more contentment, doubtles, must we needes take in anie thing, the more compleate and admirable the perfection of the thing is. Wherefore seing among al the things of this world, nothing can be better or of greater value, then one's Minde and Soule; the perfect ornament, and most compleat perfection therof must needes be the thing, which of al others is most beautiful and comelie in itself, and most to be desired. For if a man, that beholds attentiuely the beautie of a bodie, be necessarily taken with the proportion that is betwixt one member and another, and with the conuenient temper of the coulour and complexion of it; the same temper, and proportion, and beautie being in the Mind farre more excellent, shal it not draw a man to the like contentment and admiration? And if no man, in whose power it were to frame himself a bodie, would make it lame, imperfect, and deformed; what madnes is it, to choose a soule, that is crooked and imperfect? In al other things, we desire the best, and the most compleate. If we be to buy a horse, or to build a house, or to make a sute of clothes, or a payre of shoes, we should thinke ourselues fooles, if of purpose we should choose the worst, when we might haue better; and of things that are within

Two kinds of Perfection.

Religion much to be desired.

vs, we desire in al other things to be excellent; They that studie, desire to be excellent in learning; they that practise their weapon, content themselues with no meane skil in it; and in euerie handie-craft, though in itself the trade be base and seruil, yet euerie bodie desires to do it after the best manner; because Perfection pleaseth in euerie thing, and euerie bodie doth ayme at it, and labour for it. If therefore in these little things, perfection doth so much please vs, the perfection of the mind must certainly in reason be farre more pleasing, as being farre more graceful and admirable, and specially the perfection, which vertue and good life doth worke in vs. Wherefore seing there cannot be found a subiect more noble then our minde, nor a more noble forme then sanctitie, and the compound of them both must consequently needes be the rarest and most Diuine that can be: Religion, which contayneth al this, must necessarily also be valued accordingly, and loued, and embraced, and sought for by al meanes possible.

Of the dignitie of a Religious State, in regard of the similitude, which it hath with God and with our Sauiour.

CHAP. XI.

HITHERTO we haue spoken of so much of the dignitie of a Religious life, as comes by the Vertues and other extrinsecal ornaments which are in it: Now we wil consider what honour and excellencie doth accrue vnto it by the similitude, which it hath with Christ our Sauiour, and with God; which doubtlesse is so great, as greater cannot be vpon earth. And as for the similitude which it hath with our Sauiour Christ, two things may be briefly considered, both of them in themselues apparent enough. First the likenesse which is betwixt his manner of life, and a Religious course; secondly, the great honour and dignitie, which this similitude doth bring with it.

Religious people imitate our Sauiour neerest of anie men.

2. Al Christians, as the Apostle telleth vs, must imitate our Sauiour; their profession & their verie name doth require it of them: Religious people therefore doe aboue al others most punctually and most exactly endeauour vnto it, framing their seuetal institutions, after the manner of life and conuersation of our B. Sauiour; as painters draw a picture after life. Their pouertie, resembleth his pouertie, who had not where to leane his head; Their chastitie, his chastitie, who was the brightnes of the light Eternal; their obedience is drawne from the deapth of his humilitie, who was obedient euen vnto death; finally whatsoeuer Religious people doe, al their exercises, al their endeauours, are conformable to that patterne and example, which was shewed the world in that mystical Hil, which is the humane Nature of our Sauiour, ouertopping al men in vertue and dignitie, farre higher then the highest hil doth the rest of the earth. Whereupon *S. Bernard* sayth, that men of good wil, who

Ex. 25 40.

S. Bernard serm. de festo omn.

out of a Christian resolution haue either exchanged their riches with pouertie, or, though they had none, haue set them at naught as if they had had them, forsaking al for him, as he forsooke al for their sakes, doe follow whersoeuer he goeth. Which onlie word (*whersoeuer he goeth*) doth imply not only imitation, but a most perfect expression of him.

3. This expression is most of al to be seen in the Crosse of Christ; which *Cassian* doth lay before our eyes in liuelie coulours, out of a Speach, which *Pennsius* (a holie Abbot) made in his hearing, to a Nouice, when he admitted him to a Monastical course. For, according as *Cassian* relateth, he sayd thus vnto him; that the forsaking of the world, is as it were an image of the Crosse, the whole life of a Religious man expressing the manner in which our Sauiour hung vpon it. For as he that is crucifyed, cannot stirre his bodie as he list, neither on the one side, nor the other; so the wil of a Religious man is fastned to the Crosse, that is, to a thing that is continually paineful and irksome to flesh and bloud: And as he, that hangeth vpon a Crosse, doth neither minde that which is before his eyes, nor care for prouiding for to morrow, nor desireth lands nor possessions, but liuing in bodie, is dead to al things in though, and affection, and hath his mind wholy fixed vpon that which shal befal him in another world; so a Religious man is not only dead to vice and concupiscence, but to this verie natural world itself, and to al things in it, and his mind and bodie is wholy bent to that place, where euerie moment he hopeth to arriue, and consequently being absolutly dead to the world, and to al the actions and desires therof, he liueth in him only, who was Crucifyed for him.

Cassian l. 4. c. 32.

A Religious man an image of Christ Crucifyed.

4. This similitude with Christ Crucifyed wil easily leade vs to the vnderstanding of the honour and dignitie, which a Religious man getteth by it. The Maiestie of the Eternal God is so very great, and the dignitie of his Person so infinit, that whatsoeuer he vniteth to himself, he rayseth it withal to an infinit degree of honour and worth, and giueth it part of his owne beautie and glorie, by the vnion, which it hath with himself, how meane soeuer the thing were before. For what can be more contemptible then flesh, which is but dirt and filth? and yet so soone as it was vnited to that Diuine subsistence, that verie dirt was not only worthie of al veneration, but deserued to be adored as a thing Diuine. The Crosse itself, which before was so infamous, and, as the Apostle speaketh, a curse, now since the Sonne of God hath touched it, is become so honourable, that Kings and Princes weare it for an ornament vpon their heads. Which how due it is vnto it, S. *Andrew* felt in himself, when at his death he was not only not afrayd of the Crosse which was prepared for him, but hauing long-before desired it, went to it with ioy, and gaue the reason in these wordes: *Haile, Crosse, dedicated in the bodie of Christ, and adorned with his members*, as with so manie pretious Iewels. And whosoeuer acknowledgeth and worshippeth Christ for God, must haue the like reuerent esteeme not only of the Crosse of Christ, but of pouertie, and contempt, and obedience, whereby we subiect ourselues to other men, and of al the parts and offices of Religious humilitie; for by the connexion, which they haue with our Sauiour, they receaued, as it

The honour which he hath by it.

S. *Andrew.*

were, a ray of his Diuinitie, which hath exceſſiuely graced and ennobled, and, as I may ſay, in a manner Deifyed them. Wherupon *S. Bernard* ſayd excellently wel: Becauſe Pouertie was not found in heauen, and abounded on earth, and yet the price of it was not knowne, the Sonne of God deſcended, to make it eſteemed, by the account which he made of it. And in another place: The ſwathing-clowts of our Sauiour are more honourable, then anie purple-garment; and his manger more glorious then the golden Chaires-of-ſtate; and his pouertie more rich, then whatſoeuer wealth and worldlie treaſure. And yet more ſignally in one of his Sermons vpon Chriſtmas-day: Our Sauiour, to whome al the gold and ſiluer that is, doth belong, doth conſecrate holie Pouertie in his owne bodie. What can be ſayd more to the commendation and honour of Pouertie, and of an humble life, then that, by the vnion with God, it hath receaued a kind of ſanctitie and conſecration? Which manner of ſpeach I finde alſo that *S. Hierome* vſeth in his epiſtle to *Nepotianus* telling vs, that now we haue no reaſon to be drawne to loue riches by example of the ancient Patriarcks among the Iewes, ſeing our Sauiour hath ſanctifyed the pouertie of his houſe. Faith therefore grounded in the example, which we haue before our eyes, in our Sauiour, ought in reaſon to moue vs to this eſteeme of it; ſpecially ſeing the ſame example of our Sauiour not yet acted, but foreſeen only afarre-of by the light of Prophecie, was ſo powerful with Moyſes, that when he might haue been thought to haue been of the bloud-Royal of Ægypt, he choſe rather, as the Apoſtle ſpeaketh, *to be afflicted with the people of God, eſteeming the reproach of Chriſt greater riches, then the Ægyptian treaſures.* If, I ſay, the knowledge of Chriſt was ſo forcible when he was as yet to come; ought not his example, in reaſon, be now much more powerful after his coming, when we behold him as it were *painted and hanging before our eyes*, and hauing filled the world with ſo manie, ſo cleare, and ſo pregnant examples of al kind of Humilitie? For, as *S. Leo* ſayth very wel, rich men ought not to contemne the humilitie of Chriſt, nor noble men be aſhamed of it; for no earthlie felicitie can riſe to that greatnes, as to think ſcorne of that, which God in the ſhape of a ſlaue did not think vnworthie of himſelf.

S. Bernard vig. nat. Serm. 1.

Id. Serm. 4.

Pouertie commanded,

Id. in nat. domini, Serm. 4.

S. Hierom. Epiſt. 2.

Heb. 11. 24.

Gal. 3.

S. Leo ſerm. 2. de Reſur.

5. Thus doth the ſimilitude with Chriſt our Sauiour grace and honour a Religious State. But if deſcending to our Nothing, he could ſo exalt and ennoble vs, what ſhal we thinke he doth when he rayſeth vs to the likenes of that, which he is in himſelf? For therefore did the louer of mankinde ſtoop to the likenes of our weake ſtate, that he might exalt vs to the ſimilitude of of his Diuinitie. Therefore we wil conſider further, how this courſe of life doth not only make vs like to his humiliation, but to his Maieſtie; which if we can proue, what higher dignitie can there be for a Religious ſtate to ſtretch itſelf vnto? For certainly the greateſt excellencie that can be thought on in heauen or vpon earth, is to be like to God, which the Prince of Pride vnderſtanding, and being ambitious of it, ſayd, *I wil get-vp aboue the ſtarres, and be like the Higheſt*; and was not condemned for deſiring it, but for deſiring it diſorderly, that is, not in that meaſure and way, which he ought. And ſo *S. Leo* ſayth: We find man created to the image of God, to the end he may imitate

No excellencie greater then to be like to God.

Eſay. 14. 14.

S. Leo ſer. 1. de ieiunio 10. mens.

imitate his Creatour; and we are then in the dignitie, which doth naturally belong vnto vs, when the face of the Diuine goodnes doth, as it were, in a looking-glasse appeare in vs. And S. *Gregorie* discoursing of those wordes of *S. Paul, We are of the progenie of God*, sayth thus: We are sayd to be of the progenie of God, not that we are borne of his nature, but because by his spirit he hath voluntarily begot vs, and as it were created vs againe by adoption; and consequently the more a man is renewed to the likenes of God by imitation, and more liuelie expression of the image, which he hath receaued, the nearer doth he come to his natiue nobilitie. *Act. 17. 28.*

6. Therefore to be like to God is without exception the greatest dignitie, which man can attaine vnto; let vs then see how manie and how efficacious meanes Religion hath to aduance vs to this likenes. First, it rooteth al vice out of our minde, and al turbulent passion; which two are the chiefest hindrances of the similitude we speake of. *S. Basil* doth reckon this a chief benefit of a Religious State; and in one of his Sermons discourseth thus of it: Man being created to the image of God, stayned this his dignitie most miserably, when he suffered his minde to stoop to sinne and sinneful desires. But wheras it is natural to God, alwaies to enioy perfect peace and tranquillitie of minde, neuer troubled with anie sinister affection; whosoeuer bringeth himself to this quiet, doth doubtlesse restore the Image of God (defaced in him) to the beautie which he formerly had, and maketh himself like to God: And consequently a Religious course of life must needs be wonderfully effectual for this purpose, in regard of the Chastitie and Abstinence, which it doth professe; not only cleansing vs thereby from al filthie pleasure, but reforming our whole life also, and restrayning our whole behauiour within certain limits, without which the integritie of a single life cannot be preserued. Religious people like God. *S. Basil ser. 1. de Inst. mon.* By quiet of mind.

7. To which purpose also S. *Gregorie* bringeth that saying of the Wise-man: *Thou, o Lord, iudgest with tranquillitie*; and sayth thus: We must specially note, that as often as we restraine the turbulent motions of our mind by the vertue of meeknes, we endeauour to returne to the likenes of our Creatour. It being therefore al the employment in a manner, which Religion hath, to alay these passions, and to teach vs how to compose them; it doth necessarily follow, that it leades vs withal to the perfect similitude with God, of which we are speaking. *Sap. 12. 18. S. Greg. 5. mor. 31.*

8. And yet Religion worketh a man to a higher and more excellent degree of this similitude with God, directing him wholy to cut-of his owne wil, that the sole wil of God comes to haue absolute preheminence in him in al things, great and little; in so much that he desireth nothing, but what God wil; nor refuseth anie thing, but what God disliketh; and stands moreouer so deeply obliged to God, that it is not lawful for him to desire anie thing but what God wil haue; which is the most absolute similitude, which man can possibly haue with God vpon earth. And of it *S. Bernard* speaketh in this manner: The vnitie of spirit, which a man, that hath his hart seated on high, hath with God, is the perfecton of a wil that profiteth to God-ward, when a man doth not only desire what God wil haue, but is both so affected in minde, and And by conformitie of wil. *S. Bernard ad Fratres de Monte Dei.*

„ ſo perfect in his affection, that he cannot deſire anie thing els, but that „ which God wil haue. For to deſire that which God wil haue, is to be „ like to God; but moreouer not to be able to deſire but that which God „ wil haue, is to be that which God is; whoſe wil and being are the „ ſame.

9. This great perfection, which *S. Bernard* ſpeaketh of, either cannot be gotten in this life, or if there be any meanes to get it, it is by the Vowes of Religion; which doe not only ſubiect our wil to God, but bind it vnto him in bonds that cannot be broken. From which firmnes of our Vowes, we may gather another ſimilitude betwixt vs and God. For as nothing is more natural to God, then to be immutable, and ſubiect to no kind of change or alteration; ſo the Vowes of Religion giue a man the like propertie, as much as man is capable of it. Which *S. Bernard* alſo doth inſinuate when he ſaith: There is yet a nearer ſimilitude with God by meanes of our wil „ conſiſting in Vertue; when a Soule doth ayme, as it were, to expreſſe „ the greatnes of the Souueraigne Good, by the greatnes of Vertue; and „ the vnchangeablnes of his Eternitie, by conſtant perſeuerance in that „ which is good. Thoſe ſacred bonds therfore of the Vowes bring with them this firmnes; which is a kind of expreſſion of the Eternitie of God, binding vs euen againſt our wil, yet withal giuing vs ſtrength and force to be willing. And we may wel liken it to a ſhip, that rides at ancker, which may be wafted and toſſed by the billowes of the ſea, but cannot be carried into the mayne, nor driuen vpon the rocks: ſo a Soule obliged to God (who in himſelf is ſo firme and immoueable) may lye floating vpon the water, and ſometimes be toſſed, by reaſon of our natural infirmitie; ſo long as we are in this world, ſpecially the waues and guſts of temptation ruſhing againſt vs; but the cables of our Vowes doe eaſily ſtay vs; and though we be heaued at, we giue not place, but ſtick immoueably to God, to whome we haue vowed our ſelues.

And by the immutabilite of our Vowes.

S. Bernard ibid.

10. There is yet an other ſimilitude with God, which is admirable. For whereas in God there be two kinds of Excellencie; the one conſiſting in Holines, the other in Power; men moſt commonly care not greatly to be like him in Sanctitie, but doe greatly affect to be like him in Power and authoritie, and dreame of nothing els, but how they may get honour, preferment, and command. Wherein they commit two ſeueral errours: For if a bodie muſt needs fayle of being like to God in one of theſe, we ſhould rather ſeeke to be like him in ſanctitie, in regard it is neceſſarie to ſaluation, then in power, which is not neceſſarie; ſecondly becauſe there is not a more effectual meanes to be like him in power and honour, then if we be like him in ſanctitie: For as they are both neceſſarily conioyned in God, ſo whoſoeuer doth imitate the excellencie of his goodnes, muſt neceſſarily be alſo like him in power. And this hath been the rayſing of a Religious State aboue al things created; for, as I haue diſcourſed at large before, it is rayſed by deſpiſing and treading al things vnder foot; for they that loue them, are ſlaues to them; they that contemne them

Two kinds of Excellencie in God.

Sanctitie the way to honour.

are

are maisters ouer them. Which subiect *S. Bernard* doth handle diuinely in one of his Sermons vpon the Canticles in these words: When thou beginnest to renew and reforme thy self according to that rare and ancient similitude of the Eternal God (*with whome there is no transmutation nor shadow of change and vicissitude*) amidst the aduerse and prosperous chances of changeable time, thou wilt retayne a certain image of Eternitie, to wit, an immoueable and inuiolable euenness of a constant minde praysing God at al times, and consequently clayming, as it were by right, a kinde of state of perpetual vnchangeablenes, euen in the midst of the doubtful euents and vndoubted defects of this tottering world. For as he is, so shalt thou be in this world; neither in aduersitie fearful, nor dissolute in prosperitie. Thus, I say, this noble Creature made to the image and likeness of him that made him, doth manifestly receaue againe and recouer the ancient degree of honour, which it had, esteeming it an vnworthie thing, to be conformable to this present world, but endeauouring rather (according to the doctrine of S. *Paul*) to be reformed in newness of his sense, to that similitude, to which he knoweth he was created; and by this meanes after a strange manner turning the state of things, he compelleth this world, which was made for him, to conforme itself to him; in regard that al things beginne to cooperate vnto him for his good, as acknowledging their Maister, for whose seruice they were created, as it were, in his owne natural likeness, hauing shaken-of the base shape which he had assumed. So that in my opinion, that, which the Only-begotten sayd of himself, may be also applyed to al his brethren, to wit, that if he were *exalted from the earth, he would draw al things to himself*; to them, I say, whome the Father hath foreknowne and predestinated to be conformable to the image of his Sonne, that he may be the first-begotten in manie brethren. And I, if I be exalted from the earth (I may boldly say it) wil draw al things to my self: for I doe not (my Brethren) rashly vsurpe his speach, whose likeness I put on. Thus farre *S. Bernard.*

S. Bernard ser. 21. in cans.

Iac. 1. 17.

Rom. 12. 2.

Io. 12. 32.

Rom 8. 29.

11. Wherefore it is certain, that this is the greatest glorie and honour which man can rise vnto, to be in this manner like vnto the Highest; for it placeth a Soule in that pitch of heighth, that it hath a kind of Soueraignte ouer al creatures, like a little God. But no man arriueth vnto it, but he that (as *S. Bernard* speaketh) is exalted from the earth, that is, he that hath seated himself farre aboue the earth and al earthlie things, by contemning and abandoning them.

Religion is a kind of Martyrdome.

CHAP. XII.

AMONG al the dutyes, which belong to a Christian, none is more excellent, none more commended, then Martyrdome. And the reason is, because both Charitie, from which it proceedeth, is the highest of al vertues; and among the workes of Charitie, Martyrdome is the greatest worke. The euil also, which we vndergoe by Martyrdome, is the greatest of euils, to wit, death; and the good, with which we parte, is the most desired of al goods, to wit, life. And yet this being so great a worke as it is, if we compare it with a Religious State, we shal find, that as in manie things Martyrdome goeth beyond Religion, so in manie things a Religious State doth surpasse Martyrdome; and be it neuer so great, Religion doth partake in great measure with it.

Religion compared with Martyrdome.

2. *Martyrdome* excelleth, in regard it endureth farre greater torments; yet the greater the torments are, they must needes be the shorter, and bring a man the sooner to his end. *Religion* therefore euen in this doth, in a manner, excel *Martyrdome*; because, though the paines be not so sharp, they are of greater continuance, and last the longer time. *Martyrdome* is to be preferred in regard it hath the glorie of laying downe a man's life, which, as I said, is the greatest thing that one can payne for another. *Religion*, though it haue not this glorie, it hath the continuance of a long and holie life, furnished with plentie of good works, aduancing a man highly in the fauour of God, & rewarding him with manie degrees of glorie in heauen; so that, if we ayme at spiritual gaines, which is the intent of our trauels in the pilgrimage of this life, there is no doubt, but manie yeares wel and holily spent in *Religion*, according to the Rules and orders of that State, wil amount to a greater masse & encrease of reward, then one onlie act of *Martyrdome*, which ordinarily doth passe in a moment of time, can purchase vs.

Religion the safer way.

3. Moreouer, whereas both these kinds of trafficking for the heauenlie kingdome are doubtles very gaineful, and bring a plentiful returne to those that deale in them, Religion notwithstanding must needes be the safer way of trading. For in Martyrdome certainly the hazard is very great; and so we finde that manie, who at first seemed stout and couragious, fainted at last most shamefully, when they came to the push. In which kind we reade of one of S. *Pacomius* his disciples, who hauing by importunitie drawne a consent from S. *Pacomius*, that he might put himself into an occasion of Martyrdome, fel most miserably, and returning to his monasterie, repayred by Religious discipline the damage, which he had suffered by ouer-greedie desire of that Crowne. How pittifully doth S. *Cyprian* lament manie, who in his time were ouercome before the battaile, ouerthrowne before the encounter; who, so soone as Proclamation was read, voluntarily of themselues ranne to the Market-place,

S. *Cyprian lib. de lapsis.*

to deny Christ; and when the officers delayed them, because night grewon, vrged stil, that their wicked Protestation might be presently admitted? Religion on the other side is not subiect to this danger, because it is more sutable to a man's disposition; and there be manie things in it, which alay the harshnes of the course, so that the hardnes of it is not greatly felt. *Martyrdome* is not in our power: for neither ought we kil ourselues, nor prouoke others to kil vs; both because it were presumption to doe so, and because, as S. *Thomas* argueth, we should prouoke another to doe euil, which is against Charitie: so that the meanes of meriting by way of *Martyrdome* happens seldome, and is scarce or not at al to be had. *Religion* is at hand; we may this day, if we wil, embrace it.

S. *Thom.* 2. 2. q. 124. a. 1.

4. Finally, *Religion* is a kind of *Martyrdome*; and if we consider the nature of *Religion*, togeather with the sayings of holie Fathers to this purpose, we shal not stick to yeald it so much honour. For first S. *Gregorie* writeth thus: There be two kinds of *Martyrdome*; the one in minde, the other both in minde and outward worke. We may be Martyrs therefore, though we be not killed by the sword of another, that striketh vs. To dye by the hand of the Persecutour, is *Martyrdome* in open deed. But to abide reproachful speaches, to loue those that hate vs, is *Martyrdome* in secret thought. And S. *Augustin* to the same purpose writeth in this manner: Let vs striue against the deadlie allutements of sinne, knowing that Christians cannot want daylie *Martyrdome*, euen in these things. For if Christ be Chastitie, Truth, and Iustice, he that layeth wayte against these Vertues, is a persecutour; and he a Martyr, that is resolued to maintaine them in himself, and defend them in others. So that in the opinion of S. *Augustin*, inward *Martyrdome* consisteth in this, that as in the *Martyrdome* of the flesh, when the persecutour endeauoureth to take Christ from vs by taking away our faith, he is a Martyr that resisteth, to death; so when the diuel, (who is our greatest and cruellest persecutour) laboureth to take the same Christ our Sauiour from our harts, by depriuing vs of other vertues, as of Chastitie, Temperance, Humilitie, and the like; whosoeuer fights for our Sauiour in this kind, and remaineth constant in the difficulties of this conflict, is also a Martyr; the one fighting against the diuel, as it were, in person; the other hauing a man for his aduersarie. In which respect *Climacus* calleth a Religious State, *the warfare of a spiritual Martyrdome*. And S. *Hierome* writeth thus vpon the death of Paula: Not only the shedding of bloud is to be accounted *Martyrdome*, but the vnspotted behauiour of a deuout minde, is a daylie *Martyrdome*; The former Crowne is made of roses and violets, this of lillies; whereupon it is written in the Canticles: *My beloued is white and ruddie*, in peace and in warre bestowing vpon those, that ouercome, rewards alike.

Religion a kinde of Martyrdome.

S. *Greg. hom.* 35. *in Euang.*

S. *August. ser.* 150. *de temp.*

Climacus grad. 4.

S. *Hierom. Epist.* 27.

5. There be other things also, which draw this commendation vpon a Religious State; and, if we belieue S. *Bernard*, Pouertie is none of the least: for thus he speaketh: What is the matter that one and the same promise is made to Martyrs, & to those that be poore, but that voluntarie Pouertie is in verie deed a kind of *Martyrdome*? What is more admirable, or what *Martyrdome* can be more grieuous, then to be hungrie in the midst of

Voluntarie Pouertie a kind of Martyrdome.

S. *Bernard ser.* 1. *de omnib. sanctis.*

dayntie

» daynties fare, to ſtarue for cold in plentie of coſtlie apparrel, to be poore in
» the midſt of riches, which the world affordeth, the Diuel offereth, our
» greedie appetite deſireth? Shal not he deſeruedly be crowned that fighteth in
» this manner, reiecting the World with his promiſes, ſcorning the Enemie with
» his temptations, and (which is farre more glorious) triumphing ouer him,
» and crucifying al itching Concupiſcence? Finally the Kingdome of Heauen is
» therfore promiſed both to Martyrs, and to them that be Poore: becauſe it is
» purchaſed by Pouertie; but by ſuffering Martyrdome for Chriſt, it is preſently
S. Bernard ſer. 50. in Cant. receaued without delay. And in another place, comparing the incommodities
of Pouertie and other corporal auſterities with Martyrdome, he ſayth, that
when our Sauiour telleth vs, that we muſt hate our life, it is to be vnderſtood,
either by laying it downe as a Martyr, or by punishing it, as thoſe, that be
penitent, doe; And addeth moreouer, that this kind of Martyrdome, in
which by ſpirit we mortifye the deeds of the Flesh, is not in shew ſo terrible,
but in continuance more troubleſome then that, in which our bodie is killed.
» And againe in another Sermon: There is a kinde of Martyrdome and shed-
» ding of bloud, in the daylie affliction of our bodie. Where alſo he ſaith againe,
S. *Bernard in oct. Paſc. Id. in ſer. Par.* that it is a milder, but a longer kind of Martyrdome.

Chaſtitie and Obedince a kind of Martyrdome.

6. We may ſay the ſame of Chaſtitie; and S. *Bernard* among the ſeueral kinds of Martyrdome without bloud, reckoneth Chaſtitie preſerued, ſpecially in the time of youth. The ſacrifice of our owne wil, and the binding of it ſo to Rule and to the pleaſure of other men, that it cannot winde itſelf as it liſteth, is another Martyrdome; which Abbot *Pambo* (a man of great authoritie and fame among the ancient Hermits) confirmeth in this manner: Foure Monks coming once to him, al of them rare for ſome one vertue or other, one for rigorous faſting, another for pouertie, the third for charitie toward his neighbour, the fourth for that he had liued two and twentie yeares vnder Obedience, he ſticked not to preferre this laſt before them al; becauſe the reſt had practiſed the vertues which they had, according to their owne minde; but this laſt wholy caſting of his owne wil, had made himſelf a ſlaue to the wil of another man; and added further, that they that doe ſo, are Martyrs, if they
S. *Athan. in Vit S. Ant.* continue in that courſe to the end of their life. And S. *Athanaſius* writeth of S. *Antonie*, that going to *Alexandria* with deſire of ſuffering Martyrdome, and miſſing of his purpoſe, in regard that God had ordained otherwiſe, he returned back to his Monaſterie, to the daylie Martyrdome of his Faith and Conſcience, as S. *Athanaſius* ſpeaketh.

Religion is a kind of death.

7. But becauſe Diuines deliuer, that without death there is no Martyrdome, we wil ſhew that Religion wanteth not this perfection of Martyrdome alſo. Death bereaueth vs firſt of our wealth, our friends, and of al manner of things in this world: Religion doth the ſame; and ſo wholy, that we can no more enioy them, then if we were dead indeed; where it is particularly to be conſidered, that when we dye our bodilie death, it is eaſie to beare the want of al things, becauſe we go to a life, where we ſhal haue no need of them; but heer where we haue need of theſe things; and where the preſence of them before our eyes doth continually moue vs to deſire them, it is farre more hard to deny them to our ſelues. Secondly our bodie feeleth paine, if we be killed by our enemies; and who can deny but our mind hath his ſorrowes, and ſor-

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rowes the more paineful by how much the mind is more noble? For if it hath part with the bodie and the griefs therof, becauſe it is the forme of the bodie; the grief, doubtleſſe, which is within itſelf, muſt needs be more paineful to it. By Martyrdome a man dyes to his bodie; In Religion a man dyes to himſelf. For (as I haue ſhewed before) a Religious man can no more doe anie thing of himſelf, or for himſelf, then if he were dead and buried, bereaued both of bodie and ſoule. And what is it for a man to haue his ſoule ſtil in his bodie, if he can haue no vſe of it for anie ends of his owne? For neither in Martyrdome is the ſoule killed, but paſſeth from this miſerable world to a more happie life; life is not loſt by it, but changed for a life that is farre better and more pleaſant; ſo that if we lay al theſe things togeather, confirmed by holie Fathers, we ſhal finde not one Martyrdome alone, but manie Martyrdomes in one Religion: One in Pouertie, another in Chaſtitie, a third and greateſt of al in the perpetual denial of our owne wil; another againe in the affliction and ſubduing of our fleſh; and finally in the perpetual conflict and combat, which we haue with the craftie *Serpent*, who laboureth by al poſſible meanes to take Chriſt from our hart. This was the ſenſe of *Paphnutius* a holie Abbot (not he of whome there is often mention *in Vitis Patrum*, but another of great ſanctitie and auſteritie of life.) This man in the raigne of *Dioletian* the Emperour being apprehended by the Preſident of Ægypt, whoſe name was *Arianus*, and threatned with racks, and Scorpions, and burning frying-pans, and ſuch like tortures (which the Preſident cauſed to be brought before him) vnleſſe he would Sacrifice to the Gods, laughing at them ſayd: Doeſt thou think, that thy torments are ſo terrible to me, that to auoyde them I ſhal chooſe to deny the liuing God? No; but rather know, that the Rules of our Monaſteries doe contayne manie more grieuous torments then theſe be; for we are continually tryed in manie paineful exerciſes, but our Sauiour doth ſtrengthen vs ſo that we are able to beare and ouercome them al; wherefore he alſo wil now ſtrengthen me to ouercome thy crueltie.

Many Martyrdomes in Religion.

Paphnutius.

7. *S Bernard* declared the ſelf-ſame point by a pleaſant paſſage, which was thus: Meeting one day in the territorie of Prince *Theobald*, a great throng of people leading a fellow to the gallowes, that had been a notable robber by the high-way-ſide, ruſhed in among them to the theef, and would needs haue him from them, ſaying, he would hang him with his owne hands. Prince *Theobald* being aduertiſed of the arriual of the Saint, came running to him, and thinking that he knew not what the fellow was, began to repeate his enormous crimes, and to proteſt with great vehemencie, that he deſerued to dye. *S. Bernard* ſmiling anſwered thus: I know al this wel enough; and therefore, becauſe one death is not enough for his manie offences, I wil make him dye manie deaths. And ſo taking of his irons he lead him to his Monaſterie, where becoming a Monk, and for thirtie yeares togeather *dying* (as the Apoſtle ſpeaketh) *euerie day*, he puniſhed himſelf with manie deaths, in lieu of that one death, which he was to ſuffer by the hand of Iuſtice.

S. Bernard.

1. Cor. 15. 31.

Religious people are the Friends, and Children, and Spouſes of God.

CHAP. XIII.

S. *Bernard. Serm. de Ingrat.*

SAINT *Bernard* in one of his Sermons to his Brethren, diſcourſing of a Religious vocation, among other commendations therof, to extol the greatnes of this benefit, ſayth in this manner: " He hath not done ſo to euerie nation, as to manifeſt not only " his Iudgements vnto them, but alſo his Counſels. But certainly " with vs he hath dealt magnifically, not only admitting vs to be his ſeruants, " but chooſing vs to be his friends. He ſayth truly, and with very good ground, that God hath dealt magnifically with vs; becauſe the friendſhip of God, doth not only inuolue exceſſiue profit, but exceeding great honour, and dignitie, according to that of the Pſalme: *Thy friends, ô God, are greatly honoured, and their principalitie is greatly ſtrengthned*; where he calles them Princes, whome God hath exalted to his friendſhip.

Pſ. 138.17.

2. But to the end we may vnderſtand how farre this dignitie reacheth, it wil not be amiſſe to conſider the ground which *Ariſtotle* giues in this matter, who in Moral things, as farre as the light of Nature can carrie a man, writes ſolidly. He therefore ſayth, that Friendſhip conſiſts in an equalitie betweene partie and partie, ſo that if there happen to be great inequalitie betwixt the parties that are friends, either by difference of their diſpoſitions, or diſparitie of their fortunes and ſtate of life, friendſhip muſt needs fayle betwixt them; which is the reaſon, why we cannot (as he ſayth) haue friendſhip neither with Kings nor with God. In that he ſayth, there muſt be ſome equalitie or likenes betwixt friends, his opinion is not to be reiected; but he was miſtaken in that he ſaw not how man might be like to God; and no wonder, becauſe he knew nothing of the guift of God, which ſupplieth that in man, which is wanting in Nature. We haue reaſon rather to giue eare to our Sauiour telling vs expreſſely: *Now I wil not cal you ſeruants, but I cal you friends*; and to the Apoſtle who ſticketh not to cal vs, the *domeſticks of God*. Wherefore from the ground, which *Ariſtotle* layeth, we may more truly conclude, that ſeing friendſhip muſt neceſſarily be grounded vpon an equalitie, ſomething is put into vs by the hand of God, which rayſeth the baſenes of our nature to ſo excellent a likenes with him, as to be capable of his friendſhip. Of which guift though al be partakers, that haue the Iuſtifying-Grace of God inherent in them, yet Religious people haue manie particular reaſons to reioyce in it aboue others, and reape manie ſingular commodities by enioying it.

Ariſtotle Eth. 6.

How there may be friendship betwixt God and and man.

Iohn. 15. 15.

Eph. 2. 19.

3. And firſt, they haue that moſt excellent ſimilitude with God, which conſiſteth in the freenes, which they enioy, from vice and multiplicitie of affections, and in the conſtancie and permanencie of their wil in good, where-

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of I haue discourſed at large before; and alſo by the ſublime diſpoſition of their minde, ſoaring aboue al things created, and domineering ouer them by contemning them; finally, not to repeate euerie thing againe, by the integritie of their chaſt and continent life, whereof the Wiſe-man ſayth: *Incorruption maketh a man neare to God*; and doubtles the nearer we come to the likenes with God, the truer and more perfect is our friendſhip with him; and the effects of his friendſhip, more ſignal and more abundant in vs. For wheras the firſt thing in friendſhip is, to make things common among friends; what is there that Religious people doe not giue vnto God, or what hath God, which he doth not impart to them againe? The Religious giue themſelues, and that they haue; God on the other ſide beſtowes vpon them his graces, and his glorie, that is, himſelf. As therefore in this ſtate of life, there is a real communication of al things betwixt God and them, and conſequently true & perfect friendſhip; ſo they that haue not yet arriued to this degree of communication, may vnderſtand thereby, that as farre as they are ſhort of it, ſo farre they are ſhort of the perfection of the friendſhip with God.

Sap. 6. 20.

The effects of friendſhip.

4. Moreouer, in this friendſhip there wanteth not Conuerſation, without which (as Ariſtotle affirmeth) no friendship can hold. I doe not meane ſuch external conuerſation, as depends of nearnes of bodie and ſenſe, which can not reach the preſence of God, and things Diuine; but the communication which we may haue by our minde and ſpirit, wherewith we traffick with God and his holie Angels, and performe that which the Apoſtle ſayth: *Our converſation is in heauen.* For where is this more perfectly, more frequently, & more at eaſe performed then in Religion, which of purpoſe barreth al other conuerſation, wholy to attend to this? And God, who ſayth, *His delight is to be with the ſonnes of men*, cannot but converſe much more willingly with them, that ſo ardently deſire his bleſſed companie, & abſolutly preferre it before al things created.

Ariſtotle 7. Eth. 5.

Converſation with God.

Philip. 3. 20.

5. What honour therefore, what pleaſure, what commoditie muſt neceſſarily follow of this Conuerſation? For if we deſire to converſe with wiſe men, to the end we may learne by their wiſdome; and with rich men, that we may partake of their riches; vpon farre more ſolid grounds we may hope for al kind of good by conuerſing with God, and in particular, manie heauenlie illuſtrations, manie ſweet communications, and preſent tokens of his loue towards vs; which cannot but bring wonderful contentment to our ſoules, and make vs feele within ourſelues that, which in the Book of Wiſdome is ſpoken of the wiſdome which we are ſpeaking of: *His converſation hath no bitternes, and his commerce no irkſomnes, but ioy and gladnes.* Wherefore S. *Bernard* had great reaſon to make the compariſon, which he doth, betwixt the Religious and Secular people, ſaying, that Religious people be of the houſe-hold of God; Secular people, and they that are good among them, belong indeede to his Armie, but further off; and addeth: Happie are you that haue been thought worthie to be of his houſe-hold, to whome the Apoſtle ſpeaketh when he ſayth: *Now you are not ſtrangers and forreners, but you are Citizens with the Saints, and domeſticks of God.* It is therefore a matter of great conſequence to be the friend of God, and to converſe familiarly with him, and a place of great honour and dignitie, and alſo of exceeding great commoditie.

Sap. 8. 16. S. *Bernard. ſerm. de Quadr.*

Religious people are kindred of with God.

6. But yet this league, which is betwixt a Religious man and God, is in my conceit of a higher ſtraine then friendſhip, and deſerues a more honourable name, claiming a kinde of kindred and neare propinquitie with him; which if I did fayne of mine owne head, it would ſauour of pride and preſumption for me to ſay it; but ſeing our Sauiour hath ſo expreſly caſt it vpon vs, it were both fooliſh not to entertaine it, and wicked not to belieue it. No man can be ignorant of the anſwer, which he made to the man that brought him word, that his mother and his brethren were ſtanding without, *He that doth the wil of my Father that is in heauen, he is my brother, and my ſiſter, and my mother.* To what ſtate of life doth this ſaying more properly agree, then to a Religious courſe, where people fulfil the wil of God, not in one or two things, but in al & alwayes, and are bound to the wil of God as ſtrictly, as they are bound to the Obedience which they vow to keepe perpetually al their life-time? Wherefore the promiſe alſo, which S. *Paul* cites out of the ancient Prophets, doth belong vnto them:

Matth. 12. 50.

2. Cor. 6. 17.

» Goe out of the midſt of them, and be ſeparated from them, ſaith our Lord, and » I wil be a father to you, & you ſhal be my ſonnes and daughters, ſaith our Lord » Almightie. Religious people therfore hauing performed the firſt, and departed out of the midſt of the world and worldlings, it remaineth that God entertaine them as his children; and though it were honour enough to be ſeruants to ſo infinit a Maieſtie, yet they may iuſtly claime this other title, and expect he ſhould haue a fatherlie care ouer them, and cheriſh them with fatherlie loue.

Religious people the ſpouſes of Chriſt.

S. Thom. 4. *d.* 27 *q* 1. *ar.* 3. *ad* 3.

7. Finally, that no degree of loue and friendſhip nor benefit alſo might be wanting in this one benefit of God, he deales ſo liberally with theſe his children, that (as al Diuines deliuer, and particularly *S. Thomas*) he makes them his Spouſes; which I know not whether I may ſay it is a nearer, but certainly it is wont to be a more ſweet kind of tye, then that of children. And to ſay no more then that which is true, the marriage of a Religious ſoule with God, is in a manner as truly a marriage, as any can be between man and wife. S. *Auguſtin* attributeth this effect to voluntarie Chaſtitie. They that vow virginitie to God, *ſaith he*, though they haue a higher place of honour and dignitie in the Church, yet they are not without marriage; for they pertaine to the marriage with the whole Church, in which mariage, the Bridegrome is CHRIST. Which doubtles agreeth particularly to al Religious people, in regard of their Continencie. For God wil neuer ſuffer himſelf to be ouercome with liberalitie, but whatſoeuer we doe for his loue, he rewardes it euen in things of like nature with great encreaſe. For as he returneth a hundred-fold in poſſeſſions to them that leaue their poſſeſſions for his ſake, & to them that leaue father and mother he giueth himſelf in lieu of them, with a hundred times as much loue and charitie as father and mother could beare towards them; ſo he repayeth in like kind them, that forſake carnal marriage for his loue, and vouchſafeth them a more happie marriage with himſelf. Though beſides Chaſtitie, there is another thing in Religion, which much reſembleth marriage. For as marriage tyeth man and wife togeather with ſo abſolute a bond, as that our Sauiour ſayd of it, *That which God hath conioyned, let not man ſeuer*; ſo when a man hath bound himſelf once to God by ſolemne Vow in Religion, that bond can neuer be broken or diſſolued by anie humane power. So that looke what

In regard of Chaſtitie.

Auguſt. 9. in Ioan.

And of their vow.

Matt. 19. 6.

what force the words (*I take thee*) haue in carnal marriage, the same force that word (*I vow*) hath in our spiritual marriage with God: and when it is once vttered, it draweth vpon vs so firme, and strong, and perpetual a tye, that no humane power (as I sayd) can free vs of it. The difference is that the first bindeth vs to man, the second to God; where we may easily see the infinit disparitie, which is both of dignitie and contentment betwixt the one and the other; yet they agree in this, that as man and wife are both of them equally obliged by marriage, so the Vowes of Religion tying vs to God, doe tye also God to vs; such is his infinite loue towards vs. What therfore can we desire more? They agree also in that, *as the wife hath not power ouer her owne bodie, but the husband* (as the Apostle speaketh) so Religious people haue no power neither ouer bodie nor minde; because spiritual marriage doth equally giue both to God, and indeed the mind rather then the bodie, or at least principally the mind; so that Christ our Sauiour hath ful title, and right, and power ouer both, establisshed vpon him. 1. Cor. 7. 4.

8. Moreouer as in carnal marriages the Bride leaues her father's house, her parents, and kinsfolk, and brethren, and al her friends which she had at home, and goeth to howse with her husband; so Religious people forsake al their kindred, their parents, and al with whome they were bred and acquainted before, to goe to howse with Christ, and be incorporated in his familie. And they forsake them more, then any wife is wont to doe; because they parte from them not in bodilie presence only, but withdraw their mind and affection from them, and barre al communication with them. Vpon which point S. *Bernard* hath a pleasant discourse (as his manner is in al other things) in one of his Sermons vpon the Canticles, where hauing shewed how like a Religious Soule is to the Eternal Word of God, he goeth on in this manner: From this degree she, that is as I haue said, dares now think of marriage; and why should she not, beholding herself therefore marriageable, because she is like? Highnes doth not fright her, seing likenes doth equal her. Loue makes the agreement, and her Profession weds her. The forme of Profession is this: *I haue sworne, and resolued to keep the iudgements of thy iustice.* The Apostles following this forme said: *Behold, we haue left al, and followed thee; what therefore shal we haue?* That which was spoken of carnal marriage, but represented by the spiritual wedding of the Church with Christ, foundeth to the same effect. *Therefore shal a man forsake his father and mother, and cleaue to his wife, and they shal be two in one flesh.* Wherefore when you see a Soule forsake al, and cleaue to the Eternal Word with al her desire, when you see her liue according to the Word, rule herself by the Word, and conceaue of the Word, that which she may bring forth for the Word; a soule that may say: *To me, to liue is CHRIST; and to dye, gaine*; make account she is a wife, married to the Word, the hart of her husband confideth in her, knowing her to be faithful, because she hath set al things at naught in comparison of him, and esteemeth al things as dung, that she may gaine him. Thus S. *Bernard*.

They goe to howse with Christ.

S. *Bernard. S. 85. in Cant.*

Ps. 118. 106

Matt. 19. 27.

Gen. 2. 24.

Philip. 3. 21.

Prou. 31. 11.

9. Some bodie perhaps wil aske, where be the children of this marriage? They are not wanting; because nothing that is good and delightful should be wanting in it. S. *Bernard* in the place before alleaged sayth, that in this spiritual marriage there be two kinds of bringing-forth of children, & two sorts of

The children of this spiritual marriage.

children, different, but not contrarie, to one an other; to wit, when these blessed Mothers either by preaching bring-forth soules, or in meditation bring-forth spiritual conceits. Of the first kind of children *S. Paul* speaketh in these words; *My little children, with whome againe I am in labour, til Christ be formed in you.* Of the second he sayth; *Whether we suffer excesse of mind, to God.* And comparing them both togeather *S. Bernard* sayth thus: The mind is otherwise disposed, when it doth fructifie to the Word and otherwise when it doth enioy the Word. There the necessitie of others doth cal vpon it; heer the sweetnes of the Word doth inuite it: And certainly such a Mother is ioyful in the children, which she bringeth; but much more ioyful in the armes of her Spouse embracing her; deare are the pledges of children, but kisses doe more delight; It is good to saue manie; but to suffer excesse, and to be with the Word, is more delightful.

Galat. 4. 19.

2. Cor. 5. 13.

S. Bernard vbi sup.

S. Ambros. ser. 9.

10. This is the true and real marriage of a Soule with the Eternal God, wherein if it glorie, as S. *Agnes* anciently did, it shal not be vnwise; because she is betroathed to him, vpon whom the Angels wayte; by whose loue and embracings, puritie is not lost, but doubled; from him she receaues a ring and princelie iewels, and by his vermilion-bloud her cheekes are dyed red. Of the happines & perpetuitie of this Marriage, *Osee* the Prophet speaketh excellently wel in these words: I wil espouse thee to me for euer; and I wil espouse thee to me in iustice, and iudgement, and in mercie, and commiseration; and I wil espouse thee to me in fayth, and thou shalt know that I am thy Lord. It is grounded (as he sayth) in fayth, not in flesh and bloud; for it is not contracted with man, but with that infinit Maiestie; whom we come to embrace, not with the armes of our bodie, but by stretching forth the armes of our soule, by the sinnewes of fayth.

Osee 2. 19.

Spiritual marriage euerlasting.

11. But what consideration can be more delightful then that, wheras carnal marriage ceaseth when we cast of this flesh by death, the heauenlie espousals (as the Prophet calles them) are euerlasting; they beginne heer on earth, but are perfected and consummated in heauen; and are to last as long as our Bridegrome and we doe liue, which is for al eternitie. Finally of the dignitie of this marriage *S. Bernard* in an other Sermon both truly and eloquently speaketh thus: How hapneth it, ô Soule of man, how hapneth it to thee? From whence comes this inestimable glorie vpon thee, that thou shouldst deserue to be the Bride to him, whom the Angels desire to behold? Whence comes it that he should be thy Bridegrome, whose beautie the sunne & the moone admire, at whose beck al things are changed? What wilt thou render to our Lord, for al that which he hath bestowed vpon thee, that thou shouldst be his companion at board, his companion in his kingdome, finally his companion in bed; that the King should bring thee into his chamber? Looke what thou wilt heerafter think of thy God, looke what thou mayst presume of his Maiestie? Consider what armes of charitie thou wilt lend him in the meane time, to loue him againe, and embrace him, who hath valued thee at so high a rate, yea who hath made thee to be of so high a value. For he made thee againe out of his side, when for thee he slept vpon the Crosse, and to that end entertayned the sleepe of death. For thee he came forth from his Father, and left the Synagogue his mother; that thou cleauing to him, mightst be one spirit with him. Thou therfore, daughter,

S. Bernard. de aqua in vinum mutat.

daughter, harken, and see, and consider how great things thy God hath thought thee worthie of, and forget thy people, and the house of thy father; forsake thy carnal affections; forget thy secular behauiour; abstaine from thy former vices, and forgoe thy euil customes. Thus speaketh *S. Bernard* in this point. In which if we may giue him credit, so graue a man as he is, and writing so aduisedly as he doth, what life can be more honourable, or in regard of pleasure more desireful, then Religion? For in euerie ordinarie marriage it is generally the custome and also necessarie, that man and wife partake of one an-others condition, state, and goods; insomuch that if a Prince, or a King, take a woman of meane estate to his wife, she hath part with him, both of his wealth, and of his command; because as by marriage they are al one, so whatsoeuer they haue, must needs be common betwixt them. And the self-same hapneth in our spiritual marriage with God, and is so much the more perfectly performed, by how much the goodnes of God is infinitly greater, and his loue towards mankind infinitly more ardent and vehement.

Religious people are the Temples of God, in regard they are consecrated to his honour.

CHAP. XIV.

ANOTHER degree of dignitie accrueth to Religious people by Consecration. A dignitie certainly farre higher then al humane honour, and raising vs to a kind of participation of Diuinitie itself, as much as humane frayltie is capable of. For as al honour, worship and reuerence is due to the Diuine Nature, by reason of the supereminent excellencie and worth which is in it; so when a thing is once dedicated to God, the verie relatiõ which it hath to him, puts a new kind of worth into it, and euerie one takes it euer after to be worthie of particular respect and reuerẽce, as a thing seuered from the ranck and nũber of other things, which otherwise are of the same nature with it. And this is that which Religion doth, by dedicating & consecrating to God those that vndertake that course. For so the Glorie of Schoole-diuinitie, *S Thomas* & the *Thomists*, deliuer, when disputing the nature of a solemne Vow they say it consists in Consecration, which leaueth such a print in the soule, of relation to God, that it can neuer be blotted-out or razed by anie meanes. And it may be cõfirmed out of *S. Augustin*, who expounding one of the Psalmes sayth expreslly, that by force of the vowes of Religiõ we are made Tẽples of God. And *S. Basil* sayth, that whosoeuer renounceth the world, is made as it were a vessel for the seruice of God, and consequently must beware he be not polluted by sinful vse, but carefully preserue himself as a thing dedicated to God, least defiling his bodie againe, which he hath consecrated to God, in the ordinarie seruices of this life, he be guiltie of sacriledge. Behold, *S. Basil* accoũteth it Sacriledge, not only if a man, that is once cõsecrated to God, pollute himself by sinne, but if he returne to prophane, or, as he speaketh, to cõmon and ordinarie cõuersation.

S. Thomas 2. 2. q 88. art. 7. By solemne Vows we are consecrated to God.

S. August. in Ps. 231.

S. Basil ser. 1. de mon. Inst.

S. Bernard S. de dedic. Eccl.

2. S. *Bernard* discourseth to the same effect, applying the whole Ceremonie of the dedication of a Church, to the consecration of a Religious man to God. The solemnitie of this day (dearly beloued Brethren) is yours; yours is this solemnitie, you are they that are dedicated to God; he hath chosen and selected you for his owne. How good an exchange haue you made (my beloued) of whatsoeuer you might haue enioyed in the world, since now by forsaking al, you haue deserued to be his, who is Authour of the world; and to haue him for your possession, who is doubtles the portion and inheritance of his? And so he goeth-on applying, as I said, to Religious people the whole ceremonie, which is vsed in consecrating Churches, wherein (as he sayth) these fiue things concurre: Aspersion, Inscription, Inunction, Illumination, and Benediction, al which is performed in a Religious state. *Aspersion* is the washing away of our sinnes by Confession, by riuers of teares, by the sweat of pennance. *Inscription* made not in stone, but in ashes, signifyeth the Law, which Christ the true Bishop and Pastour of our soules writeth with his fingar, not in tables of stone, but in the new hart which he giues, a hart humble and contrite. *Vnction* is the plentie of grace, which is giuen to the end to make *this yoake rot from the face of the oyle*. *Illumination* is the abundance of good works, which proceed from Religion, and shine before men, *that they may glorify the heauenlie Father*, and haue before their eyes what they may imitate. Finally *Benediction* (which is the conclusion of the whole Ceremonie) is as it were a signe and seale of eternal glorie, fulfilling the grace of our Sanctification, and bringing a most ample reward of al the good works which we haue done.

The Ceremonies of Consecration applyed to Religious people.

The dignitie of a soule consecrated to God.

3. Seing therefore the Consecration of a church built of lime and stone, doth so liuely represent vnto vs the Consecration of a Religious soule to God; from the same similitude of a material church we may take a scantling of the dignitie of a soule that is in that happie state. We see what difference there is betwixt the house of God dedicated to his vse, and an ordinarie house which is for the dwelling of men. If we regard the material, they are the same in both; stones, and morter, and timber alike: But the vse of them is farre different. For in our ordinarie dwelling, we eate, and drink, and sleepe, and play, and worke, and bring-in our horses and cattle for our vse, and we doe these things lawfully, and there is no indecencie in it: but if we doe anie of these things in a Church consecrated to God, it is an irreuerence to the place, and a sinne. The same we may say of a Chalice that is hallowed; for not only if we cast dirt vpon it, but if we drink in it at table, it is a great offence; and so we find, that the King of Babylon, after he had vsed the vessel of the Temple of Hierusalem at his board, within few howers lost both his kingdome and life; so great is the sanctitie of these things; and people doe vsually make no other account, but that there is something in them, for which we ought not to vse or handle them without reuerence and veneration. As therefore betwixt the house of God and other houses, and betwixt a consecrated Chalice and other cups, there is so maine a difference in the esteeme of them: so a soule that is consecrated to God, doth farre excel the soule of a secular Lay-man in ranck and dignitie. And we haue so much the more reason to think and say so, because these material things being voyd of sense and reason, are not capable of

Dan. 5. 1.

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anie inward ſanctitie by Conſecration; but though we ſay that the walles, and the veſtements, and the veſſels be holie, and we reuerence them as ſuch, yet al this holines is but outward; inwardly they are nothing altered: But the ſoule of man, is the proper ſeate of ſanctitie, and conſequently by Conſecration it is inwardly adorned, and perfected, and drawne to a higher degree of dignitie, and nearer to God. What beautie therefore and grace muſt there needs be in that ſoule, which thus inwardly changed putteth off, as I may ſay, al mortal hue, and is cloathed with a kind of Diuinitie? what gold or pretious ſtone can be compared vnto it? or what ſunne did euer ſhine ſo bright at noone-day, if we had eyes to behold this wonderful dignitie of ours, & of others that follow the ſame courſe.

God particularly preſent in Religious ſoules.

4. And this dignitie is the greater, in regard that as a temple made of ſtone is therefore called the houſe of God, becauſe the infinit Maieſtie of God, which is euery where, doth particularly manifeſt itſelf in ſuch a place, and as it were reſt in that houſe: ſo in theſe ſpiritual temples, built, not by the workmanſhip of man, but by the hand of God, when they are once conſecrated vnto him, he doth willingly reſt, and particularly ſhew his goodnes in them. Which S. *Paul* witneſſeth in theſe words: *You are the temple of the liuing God, as God ſayth: Becauſe I wil dwel in them, and walke among them, and be their God.* And God himſelf declared it to be ſo in that famous Temple of *Salomon*, when after the conſecration, as we reade, ſo ſoone as the Prieſts came out of the Sanctuarie, where they had ſet downe the Arke, a clowd coming downe from heauen, filled the whole houſe, in ſo much that the Prieſts could not ſtand to doe the office; for as holie Scripture ſpeaketh, *The glorie of our Lord had filled the houſe of our Lord.* And *Salomon* out of his wiſdome vnderſtood it wel enough; for preſently he brake into theſe words for very ioy; *Our Lord hath ſayd, that he would dwel in a clowd.* Which is the ſame, which paſſeth in a ſoule that hath voluntarily and legally conſecrated itſelf to God; for God doth fil our ſoules alſo with his preſence, and with his glorie; and not in a clowd, that may hinder vs in our dutie towards him, by the thicknes and obſcuritie of it; but rather in a clear light both delighting and helping vs in ſo great a work. And conſequently whatſoeuer belongeth to a conſecrated temple, muſt much more belong to a Religious ſoule; to wit, that the Angels dwel the more willingly about it, by reaſon of the ſanctitie of it; that the prayers of ſuch a ſoule are the more acceptable to God, in regard they come from a holie place; and the goodnes of God inhabiting in it, muſt needs fil it with abundance of al kind of bleſſings, no leſſe then the Arke among the Children of Iſraël; and finally al the thoughts, and actions and endeauours of ſuch a ſoule, retayning the natural ſauour of the roote from which they grow, muſt needs be the more welcome to God by reaſon of this conſecration, and more gratious in his ſight. To conclude, as in the temple of God we offer Sacrifice, as in a place properly ordayned for that purpoſe; ſo a Religious ſoule doth dayly offer to God ſacrifices without number, laude and prayſe of God, inflamed acts of Charitie, of thanks-giuing, of ſorrow for our ſinnes, *a contrite hart and afflicted ſpirit*, and manie holie deſires and purpoſes, which are *the ſpiritual ſacrifices acceptable in the ſight of God*, which S. *Peter* wisheth vs alwayes to offer.

2. *Cor.* 6. 16. 3. *Reg.* 8.

And the holie Angels.

1. *Reg.* 6. 12.

Pſal. 50.

1. *Pet.* 2. 5.

Religious people are a continual Sacrifice, in regard of the oblation which they make of themſelues.

CHAP. XV.

BY that, which hath been ſayd, we ſee how Religious people are truly the Temples of God; now let vs conſider in brief, how they are alſo truly a Sacrifice; for the Sacrifice doubtles is more holie and more excellent then the Temple, ſeing Temples are not conſecrated but for Sacrifices. Whereof *S. Gregorie* ſpeaketh thus: *S. Greg. 9. moral. 3.* We *offer ourſelues in Sacrifice to God, when we dedicate our life to his diuine ſeruice*; and applyeth to this purpoſe that which is commanded in *Leuiticus*, that the parts of the Victime be cut in peeces, and ſo burnt by fire; which, as he ſayth, is performed, when we offer the works of our life diſtinguiſhed into ſeueral vertues. And *Waldenſis*, a graue Diuine, doth not only cal it a Sacrifice, but a high and excellent Sacrifice, when a man, as he ſpeaketh, conſecrateth al the actions of his mind and bodie euerlaſtingly to God, by entring into Religion. *Waldens de Sacramentis tit. 9. c. 78. 1.* And certainly, if it be a Sacrifice to offer anie thing that we haue, to God; what queſtion can there be but that to offer ourſelues, is truly a Sacrifice? the eſſence whereof conſiſteth in the perfect oblation of ourſelues, ſpecially in ſuch an oblation, as is not afterwards in our power to reuoke. For as in the ancient Sacrifices the Hoſte was killed, and could returne to life no more: ſo the guift which we make, and whereby we dedicate ourſelues to God, is immutable, and we cannot clayme or re-aſſume ourſelues againe, or that which we haue once offered. Wherupon *S. Auguſtin* diſcourſeth in this manner, and ſayth in expreſſe tearmes: That a man conſecrated and vowed to the honour of God, is a Sacrifice, in regard he dyeth to the world that he may liue to God: when alſo we chaſtize our bodie by temperance, if we doe it for God, as we ought to doe, to the end not to yeald our members weapons of iniquitie, but weapons of Iuſtice to God, it is a Sacrifice. If therefore our bodie, which is but as it were a ſeruant & inſtrument of our Soule, be a Sacrifice, if the good and vpright vſe therof be directed to God; how much rather ſhal a Soule be a Sacrifice, when it directeth itſelf to God, to the end that inflamed with the fire of his loue it may deſtroy in itſelf the forme and impreſſion of al worldlie concupiſcence, and be reformed according to his vnchangeable likenes, ſubiect vnto him, and ſo much the more grateful, by how much it partaketh of his beautie? Al this is of *S. Auguſtin*.

Entrance into Religion is a Sacrifice.

S. Auguſt. 10. de Ciuit. c. 6.

2. Whereby we ſee that the Sacrifice, which we offer of ourſelues, is two-fold, to wit, a Sacrifice of our bodie, and a Sacrifice of our ſoule: and both of them are ſo wholy directed to God, that they haue no relation at al to ourſelues,

ſelues; which is to dye to ourſelues, and liue to an other. If anie bodie aske: whereis the Prieſt, & the knife, & the fire, to offer, kil, & conſume this Sacrifice? The Prieſt is the ſame with the Hoſte and Victime; to wit, the man himſelf. For this oblation conſiſteth in ſpirit, and is performed in ſpirit, and conſequently no man's hand but his that offereth himſelf, can reach this Hoſte; according to that which we reade in the Pſalme: *I wil voluntarily Sacrifice vnto thee.* The knife is the hatred of our owne life, which our Sauiour willeth vs to haue, and the fire is no other then that *fire*, which the ſame our Lord and Sauiour *came to ſend into the world*, and *wished*, and ſought no other, but that *it ſhould burne.* For this heauenlie fire deſcending from aboue, when it once takes in our hart, eaſily conſumes our Sacrifice, as it did the Sacrifice of *Elias*, and the wood, and ſtones, and the very duſt; that is, it directs vs wholy, & whatſoeuer is in vs, be it neuer ſo earthlie and baſe, to the ſeruice of God alone.

The Prieſt, and knife & the fire, in this Sacrifice.

Pſ. 53. 8.

Luc 14. 26.

Luc 12. 49.

3. *Reg* 17. 38.

3. But becauſe anciently there were manie kinds of Sacrifices, and the greateſt of them al was a Holocauſt, becauſe in it, not part only, but the whole Hoſte was burned to the honour of God, we muſt vnderſtand that the oblation which Religious people make, is a Holocauſt, which doth adde no ſmal beautie and grace to their dignitie. *S. Gregorie* ſayth it in theſe words: They that doe the things which pertaine to God ſo, as not to parte with ſome things notwithſtanding which pertaine to the world, they offer Sacrifice, but not a Holocauſt: But they that forſake al things that pertaine to the world, and conſume their whole ſoule in the fire of the loue of God, they are in the ſight of God both a Sacrifice and a Holocauſt.

S. *Greg. hom.* 12 *in Ezech.*

4. How could he haue ſpoken in clearer tearmes, or deſcribed a Religious man in more natural colours? And *S. Thomas* giueth the ſame reaſon why Religion is a Holocauſt, to wit, becauſe it giueth al to God; and whoſoeuer putteth himſelf into a Religious ſtate, offereth al things, outward and inward, to the Creatour of al: for we are not only ſayd to Sacrifice the things which are within vs, when we offer them to God, but alſo the things which are without vs, when we forſake them for God; as *Dauid*, when he caſt away the water which he had in his hand, and caſt it away for God's ſake, he is ſayd to haue Sacrificed it to God; the verie depriuing himſelf of it in that manner, being a new kind of faſhion of Sacrifice.

S. *Thom.* 2. 2. *q* 186. *art.* 7.

2 *Reg.* 23. 17.

5. The bleſſed Apoſtle *S. Paul* doth in my iudgement clearely expreſſe the nature and excellencie of this inward Sacrifice, when he calleth it *a liuing hoſte, holie, pleaſing to God, a reaſonable ſeruice*; for by calling it *reaſonable*, that is, ſpiritual, he giueth vs to vnderſtand, that not only our bodie but our minde, and reaſon, and ſoule is offered; calling it an *Hoſte*, he ſignifyeth that heer alſo is a kind of death; adding the word (*liuing*) he inſinuateth that this death doth ſtrangely both take away our life and preſerue it; finally he calleth it *Holie and pleaſing to God*, becauſe whatſoeuer is conſecrated to God, is holie; and nothing can be more pleaſing to God, then a ſoule that doth willingly and entirely ſacrifice itſelf to

Rom. 12. 1.

The ſoule of man a grateful Sacrifice.

The soule of a man a grateful sacrifice.

his Diuine Maiestie for his loue. For if those ancient Sacrifices were so acceptable vnto him, that he receaued them willingly in an odour of sweetnes, notwithstanding that in them there was only offered the flesh of a heyfer of three yeares old, or of a red calf or some other such beast; that which is offered in this spiritual Sacrifice being farre more noble and excellent, as being bought with the inestimable price of the most precious bloud of God, the oblation therof to God must needs be also farre more grateful and acceptable. And what is this but the soule of man, which we may truly say is sacrificed in this Holocaust? because, as we haue shewed else-where, it is proper to Religious people, to dye to themselues and to the whole world, because they leaue themselues and the world, as much as if they were verily dead, and the state, which they vndertake, bringeth vpon them an vndoubted & irreuocable obligation to doe so. Whereupon *S. Bernard* describing a Religious man, setteth him forth vnto vs not only as a Pilgrim or stranger, because a stranger hath something, though he hath but little; but he likeneth him to a dead man, and a man that is crucifyed: because, *saith he*, he is as free from the works of the world as either of them: & it is al-one to him whether he heare one praise him or dispraise him, or rather he heareth them not at al, because he is dead; and the honours, & riches, & pleasures, which the world doth loue, are a crosse vnto him.

S. Bernard. serm. 7. Quadrag.

6. But that which is most strange in this Sacrifice, togeather with true death we find true life conioyned, as the Apostle insinuateth; life not hindring death, and death not taking away our life; which as in those other Sacrifices it could not possibly happen, so in this our spiritual Sacrifice it cannot be otherwise. For if it should bereaue vs altogeather of our life, it would take away our meanes of seruing God; and yet if it were not death, it were not a true Holocaust. Both therefore of necessitie must be conioyned togeather, that, as *S. Gregorie* speaketh, it be an Hoste, because a man dyes to the world, and yet is liuing, because stil he doth al the good he can. And of this liuing-death, as I may cal it, *S. Paul* sayth very wel: *You are dead, and your life is hidden with Christ in God*; to which state, as the same *S. Gregorie* interpreteth, we arriue, when seuered from the turmoiles of secular desires, forsaking al outward things, we attend only to the inward, to the end that our minde aspiring wholy to the loue of God, may not be touched with trouble of any earthlie thing. So that we may fitly apply also to this Sacrifice that, which God commanded should be obserued in the ancient Holocausts; to wit, that whereas the rest of the Hoste was consumed by fire, the skin was reserued for the Priest. For, as I sayd before, there being in this Sacrifice no other Priest but our selues, nothing at al remaines of the Sacrifice to ourselues but the skin, that is, the outward shape of a bodie, which Religion doth not take away. Al the rest that is inward, is consumed by that Diuine fire, when it is consecrated to God and to the honour of his Diuine Maiestie; and so in this state that is easily performed, which *S. Paul* sayd of himself, *that he liued*, to wit, according to the outward shew, but yet that *he did not liue, but Christ in him*. Al which being in itself cleare, we may deseruedly and truly say, that the whole life of a Religious man is a Holocaust, as wanting neither death, or anie other part or perfection of a Holocaust, & a Holocaust which dureth not for a while, but continually, & dayly, lasting as long as our life doth last; which one thing discouers the wonder-

Life and death conioyned in this sacrifice.

S. Greg. hom. in vlt. in Ezech.

Col. 3. 3.

S. Greg. 6. mor. c. 5.

Leuit. 7. 8.

A Religious life a continual Holocaust.

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ful dignitie of a Religious life. For if *Abel*, or *Noë*, or *Abraham*, neuer pleased God more, then when they offered those memorable Sacrifices, which are recounted of them; and no man in his whole life-time can doe anie thing better, or more holie, then to offer Sacrifice; which notwithstanding we cannot alwayes doe, but seldome, and at certaine times; what shal we worthily think of that state of life, which is a continual Sacrifice, lasting as long as the man himself lasteth and breatheth? And this our Sacrifice is so much the more excellent then anie of those ancient Sacrifices, in regard that it is not the flesh of rammes and bullocks which is now offered, but our owne flesh, and our owne soule, farre more pretious then anie flesh whatsoeuer.

A Religious State compared with the State of a King.

CHAP. XVI.

THIS, which I haue deliuered concerning the dignitie of a Religious State, being wel considered, is enough to make a man easily contemne al worldlie preferment in comparison of it, and esteeme not only meaner places of honour farre inferiour vnto it, but euen Princelie dignities and the degree of a King; which in mens iudgement is the highest place, and the top of that, to which humane ambition can aspire. A comparison which might with some colour seeme to sauour of pride and arrogancie, if we should ground it vpon our owne conceit; but so manie worthie and graue Authours vse it, that their name and authoritie must needs carrie it against al that shal oppose. Though if we weigh that which hath been formerly sayd of the dignitie of a Religious life, we may find reason enough to think, that this comparison doth rather diminish then adde to the luster of it. For it is a farre greater thing, to be like to God, and so like as we haue shewed, then to resemble anie earthlie Prince, whose power and Maiestie is little or none at al if we compare it with the power and Maiestie of God.

2. First therefore a Religious State doth resemble the State of a King in a degree, which is common to al iust and holie men, whome venerable *Bede* calleth great Kings, because they suffer not themselues to be carried downe the streame with euerie inordinate motion, which doth tempt them by consenting vnto them, but they know how to command and gouerne them. To which purpose S. *Gregorie* applyeth that of the Canticles: *Three-score be Queenes.* For he sayth thus: What is signified by these *Queenes*, but the soules of the Saints, which ruling their bodies with discretion, purchase an eternal kingdome? For there be some in the holie Church, that pul downe their flesh, and punish it for God; they ouercome their passions and vice; they subdue the Diuels, as tyrants and vsurpers; they prudently direct al their affections in an orderlie course; they preach to others that which they doe themselues; they draw manie out of the iawes of the Diuel, fighting against him with the sword of the Word; what are these Soules but *Queenes*, who tenderly louing Christ their

Al iust men are Kings. *Bed. 3. in Luc. c. 48.*

Can. 6. 7. S. *Greg.*

King and Spouſe, by commixtion of loue, and deteſtation of luſt, bring forth a Princelie of-ſpring, that is, Faythful people? *S. Gregorie* doth not name *Religious people* in this place, but by the actions and functions, which are proper to them, he doth shew plainly the thing itſelf, and the State; ſpecially where he calleth theſe ſoules the *Spouſes of Chriſt*, which title the obligation of their Vow doth giue them, as I haue shewed before.

3. *S. Iohn Chryſoſtom* handling this argument more at large, doth bring ſuch reaſons for it, as cannot be applyed to anie other but a Religious courſe. For in the Work which he wrote againſt the Diſprayſers of a Monaſtical life, addreſſing his ſecond Booke to the Heathens and Gentils that were ignerant of the Ghoſpel, and of the glorie of the life to come, he layeth downe ſo pregnant prooſes, drawne from that which happeneth in this preſent life, to demonſtrate that the life of a Monck is farre to be preferred before the ſtate of a King, that no man can haue anie colour to doubt of it. For wheras in a King there be two things principally which are moſt aymed at, to wit, Power and Honour, thus he diſcourſeth of them both: "What is in your opinion the greateſt ſigne of Power? Is it not to be able "to reuenge himſelf of al his enemies, and of whoſoeuer ſtands againſt "him; and reward al them that haue been beneficial or duriful vnto him? And "yet you wil not find al this power in a King; For he hath manie enemies, "of which he cannot haue his wil; and manie that are louing and benefi- "cial vnto him, whom he is not able to reward. But a Monk hath a greater "and a more eminent power then this, which Kings cannot enioy. For if it "be an act of greateſt power to be reuenged of our enemies, it is a farre "more excellent thing to find out ſuch a ſtate of life, as no man can hurt, "though he would neuer ſo fayne. For though it be a great matter to be "ſo skilful at one's weapon, as to be able to ſtrike anie man that can ſtrike "me; yet it is farre better, and more rare and excellent, to haue ſuch a "bodie, as cannot be hurt by any skil. And yet there is a greater power then "this, to wit, not only that a man cannot be hurt, but to be in ſuch a "ſtate, that no man can haue a mind to hurt him. For ſo he is in much "more ſafetie, becauſe oftimes though a man cannot hurt another, yet if he "hate him, this verie hatred doth in no ſmal meaſure abridge his happines and "contentment. What therefore can be imagined more rare and Diuine then "this ſtate of life, which no man hath a minde to hurt; and if he had a "mind, he could not hurt it: For how can it come into any man's minde to "malice or offer iniurie to him, that hath nothing to doe with anie man? For "we malice people either out of enuie, or feare, or anger. But this noble and "indeed Prince-like man is aboue al theſe things. For who wil enuie him that "laugheth at al things, which others loue and admire? Who wil be angrie "with a man that offereth him no wrong? who wil feare a man, of whome he "can haue no ſuſpicion? No man therefore certainly wil hurt ſuch a man. Now "that he cannot hurt him though he would, is alſo plaine; for he cannot finde "wherein to entrap him. For as an eagle ſoaring on-high cannot be caught in "the nets, that are layd for leſſer birds; ſo alſo a Religious man. For how, or by "what occaſion can anie man hurt him? He hath neither monie nor wealth, that "he need feare the loſſe of it; he hath no countrey, out of which he can be threat-

S. Iohn Chr. l. 2. con. Vitup. vitæ mon.

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ned to be banniſhed; he aymeth not at glorie ſo, as to feare anie diſgrace. One thing you will ſay there is, to wit, death: but whoſoeuer ſhal kil him, ſhal not only not hurt or contriſtate him, but ſhal doe him a great pleaſure; for he ſends him thereby to another life which he deſireth with al his hart, and for which he doth al that which he doth. And if we regarde honour, a Monk is in greater honour, then anie ſecular man. For ſecular power hath manie that feare it, and neuer a whit fewer that hate it: But euerie bodie doth willingly and ioyfully reuerence a Religious man. And oftimes it hapneth that people of meane birth, they that haue been children of peſants or trades-men, giuing themſelues to this kind of Philoſophie, haue been ſo venerable in the eyes of al men, that men of great qualitie haue not been aſhamed to goe to their Cottages, and conuerſe with them with ſuch ſignes of affection, as if the verie ſpeaking with them had been a ſingular fauour and fortune vnto themſelues, as in truth it was Thus diſcourſeth S. *Chryſoſtome*, and much more copiouſly of this matter.

4. And yet more largely in another Homilie, which he intitles: *A Compariſon betweene a King and a Monk*, where he handleth this ſubiect ſo ſolidly and clearly, that whoſoeuer ſhal readeit, wil find al that his hart can deſire of this matter. We wil only coppie-out a peece of it into this place. A King (*ſayth he*) ruleth ouer Cities and Prouinces, and manie Nations: A Monck commandeth ouer Anger, and Enuie, and Couetouſnes, & Luſt, and the reſt of the diſeaſes of the minde, & hath his thoughts eleuated aboue al humane things. And doubtles we haue more reaſon to account this man a King, then the other; for if the King himſelf be a ſlaue to feare and luſt, he is not the gouernour of the people, but the things by which himſelf is gouerned, & whoſe diſtramens he followeth. A King makes warre againſt barbarous nations for the bounds of his Empire, for wealth, for riches: A Monck fighteth againſt the Diuels, whoſe aſſaults be more violent, and their nature more noble, and conſequently the victorie more glorious: and the intent of this warre is Pietie, and the ſeruice of God. Behold both their converſations, and you ſhal ſee a Monck conuerſing with the Prophets, learning the wiſedome of S. *Paul*, paſſing from *Moyſes* to *Eſay*, from *Eſay* to S. *Iohn*, from S. *Iohn* to ſome other, and by this meanes becomes like to them, with whome he doth conuerſe, as it vſually hapneth. A King paſſeth al his life-time with them, who ſpeake him fayre to his face, and flatter him for their owne ends, and doe nothing but vant themſelues of their owne deeds. A Monck watcheth in the night to ſpeake with God, to haue the companie of the holie Angels, to delight himſelf in heauenlie things: A man, that is Gouernour ouer people and nations, you ſhal finde at thoſe times layd along in his bed and ſnorting, not much differing from a dead man. A King be he as bountiful as he can, that which he giues, is but gold: a Monck obtaynes of God the ſpirit of Grace, and corporal benefits alſo, by his prayers; and nothing is more hateful to the Diuels, then the prayers of a Monck, nothing doth terrifye them more; and Kings themſelues haue been often conſtrayned to haue recourſe vnto them, as Achab to Elias, Ezechias to the Prophet Eſay. Finally death is terrible to a King; to a Monck it is welcome. A King is alwayes in feare of death, and therefore he hath

Hom. de comp. regis & mon.

; *Reg.* 18.

4. *Reg.* 19.

» ſouldiers, for the Guarde of his bodie; A Monck doth not only feare no man,
» but guardes others, yea whole citties, as if he were a rampire vnto them. Thus
» farre S. *Iohn Chryſoſtome*.

Religious people come more nobly to their ſtate then a King to his.

5. To which for a Concluſion we may adde another conſideration of the difference, how they come to their ſeueral dignities. For Kings are either borne vnto it, and ſo come to their Kingdome by ſucceſſion; or they are choſen by voices, which is more glorious of the two; for to be borne to a Kingdome, is fortune; to be choſen, is a ſigne of Vertue, if ſo be that people haue regard to vertue in it: Religious people arriue to this great honour, neither by birth nor by humane election or grant, but by the ſole wil of God, who chooſeth them out from manie others, and vouchſafeth to tranſlate them into his familie, and regiſter them among his houſehold-ſeruants. For it is not humane wit, or induſtrie, or the ſuggeſtion of anie other man, or natural ſtrength, wherewith we compaſſe theſe hard and difficult enterpriſes, to forſake the world, to ouercome the loue of our parents and kinsfolks, to ſubiect our wil vnder ſuch a continual yoake, as this is. Nature hath not ſo much ſtrength, nor ladders ſo high, nor wings ſo ſtrong as to carrie it to ſo high a pitch; but whatſoeuer we doe in this kind, is the worke of God, as our Sauiour telleth not his Apoſtles only, but al, when he ſayth: *You haue not choſen me, but I haue choſen you.* And againe; *No man can come vnto me, vnleſſe my Father* doe not only cal, or inuite, and put him on, but *draw him*. How greatly therefore are we bound to God, that hath ſo voluntarily and of his owne accord loued and embraced vs, and made vs partakers of ſo great a good, without anie deſert of ours? yea rather when we did deſerue the contrarie, & were wholy vnworthie of it, ſpecially conſidering that he leaues manie others; that we may iuſtly ſay with the *Prophet*: *He hath not donne ſo to euerie nation; nor manifeſted his iudgements vnto them.* Great therefore is the dignitie of a Religious man, not only in that he is choſen to ſo high a Vocation, but in that ſo high a Perſon hath made choice of him; a perſon, I ſay, whoſe iudgement in our caſe is to be preferred not only before the iudgement of one nation caſting a kingdome vpon a man, but before the iudgement of the whole world, and of al the men that are, or euer were, or euer shal be in the world.

Iohn 15.16.
Ib. 6. 44.
Pſ. 147.

Kings haue forſaken their Kingdomes to be Moncks

6. How great this difference is betwixt a Religious ſtate, and the dignitie of a King, manie Kings and Princes haue teſtifyed by forſaking their Scepters and Princelie palaces, and ſtooping to a poore cottage, and a coorſe garment, and profeſſing that they found more contentment and farre truer happines in that kind of life, then they euer did in al the honour which the world doth ſo fooliſhly admire. And among the reſt, we haue a rare example heerof in *Sautocopius*, King of Morauia, in the yeare 900. who hauing been defeated in a battail againſt the Emperour *Arnulphus*, forſaking his kingdome betook himſelf into the Wildernes, where finding certain Moncks in the mountain *Sambri*, he put himſelf into their companie, liued with them ſome yeares in a Monaſtical habit vnknowne what he was, and gaue himſelf to much faſting and watching, and other auſterities. When he drew towards his end, he called them al togeather, and declared who he was; giuing this glorious teſtimonie of a Religious courſe, that hauing had trial both of it, and of the life of a King, he found that without compariſon a Religious life was to be preferred.

Sautocopius King of Morauia.

For

For heer (sayth he) I haue slept quietly without anie feare at al; heer rootes, and hearbes, and a cup of cold water hath sauoured farre sweeter to me, then al my Princelie daynties did before; for they were continually mingled with much gal and bitternes of care and danger, and consequently this smal time that I haue liued amongst you, hath been to me farre more happie, then al the time I liued floating in pleasures; and haue learned by my owne experience, that that life compared with this, is rather to be called death. This was the iudgement of that King at his death.

Of the Power of Iudicature which Religious men shal haue.

CHAP. XVII.

AL worldlie command and dignitie endeth with this life; but Religious people haue manie prerogatiues in this life, and shal enioy manie more in the life to come; among which we must reckon, that in the latter day they shal sit with Christ in Iudgement, to giue fauourable sentence vpon them, that shal stand at the right hand, and a terrible sentence vpon them, that shal stand on the left. And to the end we may the better vnderstand the greatnes of this Prerogatiue, we wil consider somewhat of the horrour and terriblenes of that day, of that day, I say, which the Prophet *Sophonias* describeth in these wordes: The great day of our Lord is at hand; it is at hand, and very swift. The voice of the day of our Lord is bitter; there the strong shal be afflicted. That day, a day of wrath; a day of tribulation and anguish; a day of calamitie and miserie; a day of darkenes and mist; a day of clowds and whirlwinds; a day of the trumpet, and of the sound of the trumpet. In which strayne the Prophet *Ioel* doth also speak, when terrifyed, as it were, with the presence of that day, he sayth thus: *Let al the dwellers of the earth be troubled, because the day of our Lord doth come; because the day of darkenes and mist is at hand; the day of clowds and whirl-winds. For the day of our Lord is great and very terrible, and who wil abide it?* S. *Gregorie* doth rightly make a coniecture of the terriblenes of that time, by that which hapned at the entrance of the Passion of our Sauiour, when with one mild answer of his mouth he struck al his armed aduersaries to the ground; What therfore, sayth S. *Gregorie*, wil he doe when he shal come to iudge, seing he stonned al his enemies with a word, when he came to be iudged? What Iudgement wil that be, which he wil exercise being Immortal, seing no man could withstand his voyce, when he was yet mortal? who wil be able to abide his wrath, when his verie meeknes was not to be abidden? Wherefore at such a time when al the men of the world shal be apaled, and stand amazed with feare, and sorrow, and expectation of the rigid sentence of such a Iudge, then in that general vexation of al men, to be without feare and trouble, and attend that last and irreuocable decree and sentence with ioy, must needs be an inestimable and excessiue benefit.

The day of Iudgement a terrible day. *Sophonias* 1. 2. 4. *Ioel* 2.

S. Io. Chrisost. ho. de com. regis & ma.

2. S. *Iohn Chrisostom* sayth, that Religion affordeth this benefit; for first in this life it filleth a man with al good things; and secondly in the life to come it presenteth vs before the Tribunal of God, ioyful and sporting, when the Princes of the earth, whom before al men adored, shal be seuerely punished for their offences. S. *Bernard* fitly applyeth to the same effect that, which is sayd in the Psalme; *Because he wil deliuer me from the snare of the hunters, and from the bitter word.* He sayth, that this snare is that, which the Apostle speaketh of, when he sayth: *They that wil be rich, fal into temptation, and into the snare of the Diuel*; and that the bitter word, is the last sentence in the day of Iudgement; And turning his speach to his Brethren, he speaketh thus: You that haue forsaken al, and followed the Sonne of man, who had not where to leane his head, reioyce, and say: *He hath deliuered me from the snare of the hunters.* Prayse him with al your hart, al your soule, al your strength; and from the verie bottome of your hart giue him thanks, saying: *because he hath deliuered me from the snare of the hunters.* And that you may know how great this benefit is, and vnderstand the things which are giuen you by God, harken what followeth: *And from a bitter word.* O man, or rather beast that thou art, didst thou not feare the snare? at least stand in awe of the hammer; *From a bitter word*; What is this bitter word but: *Let the wicked be taken away, that he see not the glorie of God? Go you accursed into eternal fire.* But you, my Brethren, you that haue wings, before whose eyes it is in vayne to cast the net, you that haue forsaken the wealth of this world, why should you feare a bitter word, seing you haue been deliuered from the snare? For to whome shal it be sayd: *Go you accursed into euerlasting fire; for I was hungrie, and you gaue me not to eat?* To whome, I say, shal this be spoken, but to them, that had wealth in this world? Are not your harts much reioyced at this word, and filled with spiritual contentment? doe you not value your Pouertie farre beyond al worldlie treasure, in regard it is your Pouertie, which freeth you from this bitter word? For how can we think that God wil require at our hands that, which we haue forsaken for his loue? Al this is of *S. Bernard.*

S. Bernard ser 3. qui habitat. 1. Tim. 6. 9. Esay. 26. iuxta 70. Math. 25.

3. Wherefore, if this happie course did bring no other commoditie to Religious people, but that at that time, when *other men wither away for feare, and expectation of the things, which are to come vpon them*, they *exult*, becaus *their redemption approacheth*; this one thing were benefit sufficient to make a man think al the labour and crosses, which he endureth, very wel bestowed. But there is yet another thing which giueth Religious men farre greater securitie, and addeth also a farre greater dignitie; to wit, that in the power of Iudicature, which Christ hath receaued from his Father, they haue their part and place; and are not to stand at the Barre to be iudged, but to sit vpon the Bench to administer Iustice. Which is so high a prerogatiue, that it could not possibly come into the thought of anie man to be so bold as to hope for it, nor yet scarce to belieue, that such a dignitie should be cast vpon him, but that He, that doth preferre him vnto it, can doe al things, and cannot fayle of his promise. What therefore can be more welcome to a Religious man, then to behold the

Luc. 11. 26.

Religious men shal be Iudges of secular people.

forme

forme of this assignement, and promise? *Amen I say vnto you, that you, that haue forsaken al things, and followed me, in the regeneration, when the Sonne of man shal sit, you also shal sit vpon twelue Seates iudging the twelue Tribes of Israel.* Where naming the twelue Tribes of Israel, he doth not vnderstand only the people of the Iewes; but in a phrase, in which the Scripture is wont to speake, he comprehendeth al the Kingdome of God, and al the Faithful. And by the word (*you shal sit*) first he giueth vs to vnderstand the office of a Iudge; secondly the securitie, and eminencie of dignitie aboue the rest; and lastly a place of sitting neare vnto Christ our Iudge. *Math. 19. 28.*

4. And it must not stumble anie man, that he maketh mention only of twelue Seates For as *S. Augustin* (answering this verie obiection) wel obserueth, there is a mysterie in those words, and by that certain number of Twelue, whatsoeuer other greater number is to be, vnderstood. For if there must be precisely but twelue Seates, and no more, *S. Paul*, who is the thirteenth Apostle shal not haue where to sit, and consequently shal not be able to iudge; and yet he saith of himself, that he shal iudge, not only men, but Angels. *Not only therefore* (saith *S. Augustin*) *the twelue Apostles and S. Paul, but as manie as shal iudge, shal haue place in the twelue Seates, by reason of the Vniuersalitie, which the word doth signifie.* And this which *S. Augustin* saith, is grounded vpon good reason. For (as the tenure of the promise of our Sauiour doth sound) the onlie cause, why this power and glorie was conferred vpon the Apostles, was, because they had forsaken al, and followed him: wherefore al they that haue done the like, and forsaken al worldlie wealth, & forgoing the hopes and desires therof haue put themselues into the schoole of Christ, shal haue right to the like reward & promotion. For, that the Apostles followed Christ when he was present with them, and Religious people follow him now he is not present, doth not diminish the value of their faith and seruice, but doth rather encrease it. For they had manie motiues therunto, which we haue not, as miracles wrought before their eyes, the sweetnes of his dailie conuersation, and of his doctrine; wherof *S. Peter* speaking in the name of the rest, sayd: *Lord, to whome shal we go? thou hast words of life euerlasting.* *S. Aug. in Ps. 86.* *1. Cor. 6. 3.* *Io. 6.*

6. Neither is the merit euer a whit the lesse, by reason that they were immediatly subiect to our Sauiour; we subiect ourselues to another man that beareth his place. For now also they that subiect themselues in this māner, subiect themselues to Christ, whome they acknowledge and reuerence in the person of that man; and if we value this busines by the fayth and fidelitie, which is practised in it, perhaps it is the greater act, not only to obey a Prince when he deliuereth his owne commands himself, but also to obey his meanest officers and ministers commanding in the Prince his name. Wherefore though doubtles this action was performed by the Apostles with greater vertue and charitie, as hauing the first fruits of the Spirit bestowed vpon them: yet if we regard the fact itself, we doe the same thing that they did, and for the same end, and vpon the like motiues as they did. Insomuch that *S. Bernard* doth not stick to glorie both for himself, & vs, that *we al haue made profession of an Apostolical life, al of vs are inrolled in the same Apostolical course.* Which is not to be thought to be spoken of the eminent sanctitie, which they deserued to receaue for themselues *S. Ber. &c. ing.*

and for the whole world, as the Pſalmiſt doth intimate in theſe words: *Let the Hils receaue peace for the people, and the Hilloks iuſtice*: but of the profeſſion, which S. *Peter* made in behalf of them al ſaying, *Behold we haue forſaken al, and followed thee*. Whereunto we may adde, that as the Redemption of Man-kind was the proper worke of our Sauiour CHRIST, in which reſpect he is called the Father of the world to come; ſo it was a prerogatiue properly belonging to himſelf to be Iudge of the world, becauſe the *Father iudgeth no man, but hath giuen al Iudicature to his Sonne*. And conſequently the ſame our Lord hauing been pleaſed to aſſociate the Apoſtles to himſelf in ſo great an Office, as was the Redemption of Man, and not how ſoeuer, but by meanes of the ſame pouertie, and humilitie, and ſufferings, as himſelf did vndergoe in this life; it belonged to the ſame his goodnes, and alſo in a kind of equitie it was reaſon that he ſhould communicate his honour with them, that did share in his labours.

Ef. 9. 6.

Io. 5. 22.

6. Now certainly Religious people haue their share in labouring with Chriſt, and haue alwayes had; for as we ſhal ſhew more at large hereafter, there haue been at al times ſome Religious men that haue aſſiſted the Church of God very much, euen among the Orders of Monks, and much more in later Ages, ſince by ſpecial inſtinct of God Religious Profeſſions haue been directed as wel to the help of others, as for their owne ſaluation. And though there be in the Church abundance of other Work-men alſo, who inſtruct the people, and aſſiſt them with no ſmal paines and labours, for which they are highly to be commended; yet ſet Religious people aſide, and where shal we find that Euangelical Pouertie, which is ſo perſpicuous by poſſeſſing nothing, as they may worthily ſay: *Behold, we haue forſaken al things*. S. *Thomas* deliuereth, that the Order of Biſhops how ſoeuer it was moſt certainly inſtituted by our Sauiour Chriſt, yet it was not inſtituted with that circumſtance of poſſeſſions, and wealth, and external ſplendour; but rather he gaue them inſtructions how they ſhould be poore, when he preſcribed that rule: *Carrie not a ſatchel nor a ſcrip*, and the like; but riches were afterward admitted of by the indulgence and diſpenſation of the Church, times ſo requiring. And this which S. *Thomas* ſayth of Biſhops, is true of al the reſt of the Clergie that miniſter in the Church. Whereby it is apparent, that this rare vertue, to which our Lord hath promiſed ſo great a preheminence in the latter day of Iudgement, is not only truly found in Religious men, but in a manner is only in them, becauſe they alone haue forſaken al things.

Religious men haue laboured much in the Church of God.

S. *Th. opuſc. cont. retra. ar. vel. c.* 6. & 7.

Luc. 10.

7. But becauſe this honour is ſo great, and this promiſe ſo honourable, that the ſtreightnes of our hart can hardly conceaue it ſhould be ſo; let vs ſettle this diſtruſt by the authoritie of holie Fathers, who vnderſtanding this ſaying of our Sauiour in the right ſenſe, haue vpon this title taken occaſion to enlarge themſelues much in commendation of Religion. S. *Gregorie Nazianzen* in his Oration againſt Iulian the Apoſtat, among other praiſes of a Monaſtical life, reckoneth alſo, that they are to ſit vpon Thrones to iudge. S. *Hierome* in a certain Epiſtle of his ſayth: It is proper to the Apoſtles and Chriſtians to offer themſelues to God, and, caſting the mites of their pouertie with the widdow into the Treaſurie of the Church, to deliuer al the ſubſtance which they had to our Lord; and ſo deſerue to heare: *You shal ſit vpon thrones iudging the twelue Tribes of Iſrael*. S. *Auguſtin* (an approued and ſure Authour) ſayth

S. *Greg. Nazian Or. in Iulian.*

S. *Hier. Ep.* 28.

Mar. 12. 2.

ſayth the ſame : They that haue not followed (ſayth he) that great and perfect Counſel of Perfection, of Selling al, and yet keeping themſelues free from damnable crimes, haue fed our Sauiour in thoſe that are hungrie, ſhal not ſit on-high to iudge with Chriſt, but ſhal ſtand at his right hand to be iudged in his mercie. And contrarie-wiſe *S. Auguſtin* held it ſo certain, that Religious people are to ſit in Iudgement with our Sauiour, that in the ſame Epiſtle he reprehendeth ſome of them that were ouer-haughtie in bragging ouer the lower and more imperfect ſtate of Secular people, in theſe words : Let them walke the way of Perfection, ſelling al, and giuing it out of charitie to the poore. But if they be truly the Poore of Chriſt, and gather not for themſelues, but for Chriſt, why doe they puniſh the weaker of our Sauiour before they haue receaued their ſeates of Iudicature ? For if they are to be ſuch, as to whome our Lord ſpeaketh, when he ſayth : *You shal ſit vpon twelue Seates, iudging the twelue Tribes of Iſraël* ; and of whome the Apoſtle ſayth : *Doe you not know that we shal iudge the Angels* ? let them prepare to receaue into the eternal manſions rather vertuous then wicked rich men, by whome they were made *friends by the Mammon of iniquitie.*

S. *Auguſt. Epiſt.* 89.

S. Auguſt. ibid.

Luc 16.

8. *S. Gregorie* doth often deliuer this doctrine. For in the latter end of his tenth Booke of Morals he diſcourſeth thus : Then the wicked ſhal ſee with their eyes, that they, who haue forſaken al earthlie things, ſhal be eſtabliſhed in a heauenlie power ; of which Truth itſelf ſpeaketh to the Elect : *You that haue followed me, in the regeneration when the Sonne of man shal ſit in his Maieſtie, you alſo shal ſit vpon twelue Seates, iudging the twelue Tribes of Iſraël.* Neither muſt we think, that heauenlie Bench and Court ſhal haue but twelue Iudges to ſit, but by the number of Twelue, the whole generalitie is expreſſed ; for whoſoeuer ſpurred-on with the loue of God, ſhal leaue his poſſeſſions, ſhal doubtles obtaine a high ſeate of Iudicature, coming as a Iudge togeather with the Iudge ; becauſe in conſideration of that Iudgement he puniſhed himſelf heer by voluntarie Pouertie. Wherupon *Salomon* ſayth of the Spouſe of the holie Church : *Her husband is honourable in the gates, when he shal ſit with the Senatours of the earth.* And the Prophet *Eſay* : *Our Lord shal come to iudge with the Elders of his people.* In which reſpect Truth doth tearme the ſayd Elders not ſeruants, but friends : *Now I wil not cal you ſeruants, but friends* ; ſuch friends as the Pſalmiſt beholding ſayth of them : *To me thy friends, ô God, are very much honoured* ; and beholding the noblenes of their hart, and how they ſpurned at the glorie of the world, he preſently added : *Their principalitie is very much ſtrengthned.* And becauſe we ſhould not think them few that arriue to this heighth of Perfection, he ſayth further : *I wil number them, and they shalbe multiplied aboue the ſands of the ſea.* And in an other place, ſpeaking of a kinde of fooliſhnes, which is truly wiſdome, he ſayth thus : They that perfectly follow this fooliſhnes, deſerue to heare from the mouth of Wiſdome ; *You that haue followed me, shal ſit vpon twelue Seates.* Behold, they that forſake temporal things, purchaſe glorie of eternal power. What therefore in this world is accounted more fooliſh then to forgoe that which is one's owne ? and what is more honourable in Eternitie then to come as Iudges with God?

S. *Greg. to. moral.*

Prouerb. 31. 23.

Eſay. 3. 14.

Iob. 15. 15.

Pſ. 138. 17.

S. Greg. 8. mor. c. 26.

9. And in the ſame Worke he handleth the ſame ſubiect yet more copiouſly, where diſtinguiſhing the men that ſhal appeare in the latter day of Iudgement

Foure sortes of men to appeare in Iudgement.

into foure ranks, he sayth: Some shal come to be iudged & perish, as wicked Christians; others shal not be iudged and also perish, as Infidels, who sinning without law, shal perish without law; others shalbe iudged and raigne for euer, as good and faithful people; of the fourth kind of people, that shal not be iudged and yet raigne for euer, he writeth in this manner: They that by perfection of vertue goe beyond the precepts of the Law; they that are not content only to fulfil that which the Law of God commandeth, but through a more eleuated desire striue to performe more then the general Precepts doe require of them; they to whome our Lord sayth; *You that haue forsaken al, and followed me, when the Sonne of man shal sit in the seate of his Maiestie, you also shal sit vpon twelue Thrones, iudging the twelue Tribes of Israel*; These in the latter Iudgement are not iudged and doe raigne, because they come as Iudges also with their Creatour. For leauing al things, they fulfilled more out of a willing minde, then they had heard generally commanded. For that which was sayd to the yong-man; *Goe and sel al that which thou hast, and giue it to the poore; and thou shalt haue a treasure in heauen; and come and follow me*, was by special aduise spoken to a few more perfect, not generally to al; for if it had been a general command binding al, it were a sinne to possesse anie thing in this world; but it is one thing which holie Scripture commandeth al in general, and an other thing which is specially required of the perfect; and therefore with reason they are not subiect to the general Iudgement, who in their life haue gone beyond the general Precepts. For as they are not iudged and yet perish, who by perswasion of Infidelitie contemne the Law; so they are not iudged and yet raigne, who by perswasion of Pietie haue profited beyond the general commandments of the Diuine Law.

S. Greg. 7. moral. c. 20.

Matth. 19

S. Bede in serm. de S. Benedicto.

10. Venerable *Bede* (an approued and learned Authour) is not to be omitted. He discoursing of this promise of our Sauiour in *S. Matthew*, of which I haue often spoken, sayth in this manner: A iust reward; that they, who for Christ contemned heer the glorie of humane preferment, should there, glorifyed by Christ, sit as Iudges in special commission with him. And let no man think, that only the twelue Apostles shal then be Iudges, because, after the fal of Iudas, *S. Matthias* was chosen in his roome; as there be not only twelue Tribes to be iudged: for els the Tribe of *Leui*, which is the thirteenth, should scape vniudged; and *S. Paul*, who is the thirteenth Apostle, should be depriued of his place of Iudicature; whereas he sayth: *Doe you not know that we shal iudge the Angels*? For we must know that al they, that according to the example of the Apostles, haue left al they had, and followed Christ, shal come with him as Iudges, as al man-kind is to be iudged. For because by the number of Twelue in holie Scripture the generalitie is often signifyed, therefore by the twelue Seates of the Apostles the generalitie of al them that shal iudge, and by the twelue Tribes of Israël the generalitie of them that shalbe iudged, is expressed vnto vs.

S. Thomas opusc. contra error. a. 14. c. 6. & 7.

11. The testimonie of *S. Thomas* in this matter (he being the chief of the Diuines) must needs sway much. He therefore is so confident, that this power of Iudicature is promised to Euangelical Pouertie, that vpon the eminencie of this reward he groundeth an argument to proue, how excellent a thing Pouertie itself must needs be, and moreouer teacheth vpon the

ſame ground, that Secular people ought to beſtow their almes rather vpon Religious people, then vpon anie others, to the end they may comply with the commandment of our Sauiour; becauſe Religious people haue power to receaue them into the eternal Manſions. *For* (ſayth he) *they shal be iudges with Christ.* S. *Antoninus* (another great Diuine) is of the ſame opinion, and confirmeth it moreouer with that ſaying out of *Iob*: *He giueth iudgement to the poore.* To which ſentence S. *Gregorie* addeth this reaſon, becauſe (*ſayth he*) the more contemptible they were to the world through their great humilitie, they grew then to a higher preeminence of power, receauing Seates of Iudicature. We may adde S. *Anſelme*, who in one of his Epiſtles writeth thus: Our Lord counſeleth thoſe, that wil be perfect, to leaue al and follow him; he alſo promiſeth thoſe that do leaue al and follow him, that they ſhal ſit in Iudgement, iudging the twelue Tribes of Iſraël. But S. *Bernard* doth both moſt eloquently and ſweetly after his wonted manner apply that of the Pſalme to Religious men: *Their Iudges are ſwallowed-vp neare vnto the rock*; deliuering that they shal not only be Iudges with the Rock, which is Chriſt, but ſo vpright, that laying aſide al feeling of compaſſion, they wil be at that time mindful only of Iuſtice, according to the example of the Soueraigne Iudge himſelf, ſwallowed-vp and wholy turned into a diſpoſition of doing Iuſtice, and imitating therin the hardnes of the Rock, to whome they are ſo nearely linked; hauing forſaken al other things, meerly to follow and to cleaue vnto it. For this (*ſayth he*) is that which, when *Peter* asked what they ſhould haue, the Rock itſelf made anſwer: *You alſo shal ſit iudging the twelue Tribes of Iſrael.* O fauour of familiaritie! O heighth of honour! O priuiledge of confidence! O prerogatiue of perfect ſecuritie! For what can be more dreadful, what can be imagined fuller of great anxietie and exceſſiue care, then to ſtand before that terrible Tribunal to be iudged, expecting the ſtil-vncertain ſentence of ſo rigourous a Iudge? As ſome mens ſinnes, ſo doubtles ſome mens good endeauours are ſo apparent before the Iudgement, that as they wayting for their ſentence ſink inſtantly into hel by the weight of their crimes, ſo theſe contrarywiſe mount vp without anie contradiction, in ful libertie of ſpirit, to the ſeates prepared for them. Happie is the voluntarie Pouertie, my Lord *IESV*, of thoſe that haue forſaken al, & followed thee. Doubtles a moſt bleſſed Pouertie, which makes men ſo ſecure, yea ſo glorious in that ſo hideous a diſſolution of the elements, ſo feareful a trial of deſerts, ſo doubtful an expectation of Iudgement.

S. *Antonine* *Pſ.* 3. c. 16. c. 10. 8. 8.

Iob. 36. 6.

S. *Greg.* 26. *moral.* 20

S. *Anſelme* *Ep.* 10.

Pſ. 140. 6.

S. *Bernard* *ſerm.* 8. *Qui habitat.*

12. And els-where the ſame Saint diſcourſing at large & extolling the greatnes of this dignitie and preferment, giueth alſo the reaſon, why Religious people aboue al others are rewarded in this kind. For wheras (*ſayth he*) Pouertie hath two incommodities, which accompanie it, to wit, contemptiblenes, and toyle and labour, God hath with reaſon appointed, that in regard of their former labours, they should ſit; in regard of the contempt they ſuffered, they should be endued with ſo great a power, that if a man were greedie of pleaſure, he might thirſt after that torrent of pleaſures; if he were deſirous of glorie, he might rather ayme at this true and incomparable glorie; and therefore quiet without perturbation is promiſed vs in the Seates, & prehemineńce of honour in the power of Iudicature. Vpon which ground he enlargeth himſelf in declaring

S. *Bernard* *ſer. Ecce nos.*

Why voluntarie Pouertie is rewarded with ſo great dignitie.

» the glorie of this promiſe, and how much this dignitie doth ouertop al » worldlie titles and preferments. What ſecular honour (*ſayth he*) can be » thought of, which is not baſe in compariſon of ſo great a preheminence? » For they are to ſit Iudges with Chriſt, not vpon one cittie, or people, or » countrey, but vpon the whole world. They ſhal not only iudge men, but » Angels. They, I ſay, who diſdaining and blowing aſide the vapour of this » preſent glorie, which ſhineth for a while, haue preferred the reproach of » Chriſt before al titles of honour. *Be not afrayd, you little flock, becauſe it hath* » *pleaſed your father to giue you a Kingdome.* The decree is made, which ſhal not be » voyd; the ſentence ſtands vnchangeable; finally your Lord hath ſworne, » and it wil not repent him. *Amen* I ſay vnto you, that you that haue followed » me, in the regeneration, when the Sonne of man ſhal ſit in the Seate of his » Maieſtie, you alſo ſhal ſit Iudges. What can be more glorious? Let the Sonnes » of Pride ſit now with their King that hath choſen the ſide of the North; Let » them iudge, and be preiudicate. O vnhappie ambition, which knoweth not » how to aſpire to great things, but ſeeketh to riſe by trifles, and faileth of that » which is great indeed! They loue the firſt ſeates, which as vntimelie figs wil » quickly fal. They therefore that loue the firſt ſeates, let them beware they faile » not of the ſecond; and they that chooſe to ſit at board in the firſt place, begin » not with ſhame to take the laſt. *You shal ſit*, ſayth he, *vpon twelue ſeates, iudging* » *the twelue Tribes of Iſraël.* Theſe ſeates he foreſaw, who ſayd of the heauenlie » Cittie: *There ſate Seates in Iudgement, Seates vpon the houſe of Dauid.* There doubt- » les, not heere. For this is the ſpecial glorie of the Perfect, to be eminent euen » among the faithful, and to haue precedencie of Iudiciarie power euen before » others that shal be ſaued, that according to the Pſalme, *they may ſit vpon the houſe* » *of Dauid.* What miſerie is it, that man should be ſo negligent as to ſleepe when » he heareth the word of ſo great a promiſe?

12. Thus doth *S. Bernard* admire this prerogatiue of a Religious ſtate; and withal that men being ſo greedie of vaine and fickle and tranſitorie honour in this world, ſeeke not after this ſo true and ſo high a preferment, as to be companions with Chriſt himſelf the Sonne of God, in ſo noble and glorious an action, in the view not of one Cittie or Kingdome, but abſolutly of al men that are, or euer were, or ſhalbe, and of innumerable multitudes of Angels.

Of the glorie, which Religious people shal haue in Heauen.

CHAP. XVIII.

THOVGH the glorie of this action, of which I haue diſcourſed in the precedent Chapter, be ſo great, that al Princelie power and glorie layd togeather, is no wayes to be compared with it; yet the glorie, which Religious people shal enioy in heauen, is farre aboue it. For their Iudiciarie power is but temporal: their glorie in heauen is eternal; the firſt is but an honour done outwardly vnto them, this ſecond is inwardly fixed in their ſoule; which we shal the better vnder-

ſtand,

ſtand, if we conſider, that (as Fayth doth teach vs) though the bliſſe euerlaſting of the Saints, be one thing in al of them, conſiſting in the clear ſight of that Good, in which al good is comprehended, to wit, the vnchangeable Eſſence of our GOD; yet there be diuers & very different degrees of ſeing it; wherof *S. Gregorie* ſpeaketh in theſe words: Becauſe in this life ther is difference in our works, doubtles in the other ther wil be diſtinctiõ of honours; & as one is aboue another in merit, ſo one shal ſurpaſſe another in the reward. Wherefore ſeing the inequalitie there, proceedeth meerly out of the inequalitie heer of merit in this life, if we shew that the courſe of a Religious life in this world doth furnish them with farre more commoditie and plentie of merit heer, it wil be eaſily granted, that their reward there, muſt needs be farre more plentiful alſo in the world to come.

Diuers degrees in the bliſſe of Saints.

S. Gregorie 4. mor. c. vlt.

2. Firſt therefore, this State doth afford farre more abundant occaſion of exerciſing vertue, then a Secular life, and of vertues more ſingular and more heroical. For in the world, a bodie ſeldome hapneth vpon occaſion of doing good, vnleſſe he be careful in ſeeking it: Religious people haue daylie occaſions at home; for both their Inſtitute, and their Rules, and their Superiours, and their Companions, al and euerie thing that is in houſe with them, miniſtreth them occaſions of vertuous actions, and indeed thruſteth them vpon them, and requireth them at their hands. And as the work of a carpenter or a ſmith, is wholy in wood or iron, becauſe his art is in handling thoſe materials; ſo the works of Religious people is Vertue, and they are al day employed in the inward and outward exerciſes therof. Wherin not only our owne deſire and deuout endeauour doth help vs, but a kind of neceſſitie of doing wel, hauing tyed ourſelues to certain Rules & orders, which compel vs in a manner ſometimes to pray, ſometimes to reade, ſometimes to employ ourſelues in humble offices, ſometimes in charitable actions towards our neighbour; ſo that, though we would not, we cannot but doe wel. And euerie day and euerie hower being ful of theſe vertuous practiſes, it is eaſie to ſee to what a ſumme the reckoning wil at laſt amount. To which purpoſe it is recorded that *Ægidius*, *S. Francis* his Companion, was wont to ſay: If the riuer of Tyber should haue ſtood, and the water been ſtopt, which was wont to haue his courſe; how would it haue been ſwollen by this time? Not only ſo manie yeares as it hath already had his courſe, but a few dayes would be enough to make it of a Riuer a great Sea. The like we may ſay of Religious people continuing dayly and howerly in vertuous actions, and day and night labouring to multiplie them; what an encreaſe of glorie, & heape of crownes muſt they needs gather togeather at laſt?

More occaſions of vertue in Religion then in the World.

Ægidius.

3. Pouertie moreouer is of itſelf a liuing fountaine of merit, by reaſon of the daylie troubles and incommodities which it bringeth, the ſuffering wherof doth infinitly enrich a Soule. And Obedience is no leſſe, the leaſt and meaneſt kind of works being by meanes therof oftimes more pleaſing to God, then farre greater works vndertaken of our owne accord and fancie. A Religious life therefore conſiſting wholy vpon Obedience; and al kind of actions, great & little, being ruled by it, our verie diet and ſleepe and recreation and ſuch like, who wil be able to ſay, to what an infinit treaſure it wil come at length? *Palladius* (a Monk, and Regiſter of the actions of ancient Monks which himſelf had ſeen) writeth of himſelf, that being troubled in mind as thinking with

Pouertie and Obedience.

Palladius.

himself that he lead but an idle and vnprofitable life in his chamber, he went to that famous *Macarius* of *Alexandria*, who (as he was ful of the spirit of God) vnderstanding his grief, sayd vnto him: *Answer thy thoughts, that for our Saviour Christ thou keepest the foure walles of thy Cel*; giuing vs to vnderstād, how meritorious the works of a Religious man are, when vacancie from al work for the loue of God and for the performance of his wil, is not to be accounted idle or vnfruitful.

Humilitie.

4 What shal we say of the humilitie of a Religious course, which doubtles is a great glorie vnto it? For the saying and promise of our Sauiour must necessarily be fulfilled: *Euerie one that humbleth himself, shal be exalted.* Which if it be to be vnderstood also of them that inwardly in their mind are humble, and think meanly of themselues, much more doth it agree to them that are not only humble in mind, but haue chosen an humble manner of liuing farre from al pride and ostentation, persseuering moreouer in perpetual pouertie, which in mens opinon is the baseſt and most disdaigneful state of al. It is reason therefore they should be exalted in heauen, seing they haue so much abased themselues heer on earth.

Luc. 18. 14.

Religious people Christ's houshold seruants.

5. Our Sauiour doth also put Religious people in good hope by this other saying: *He that ministreth to me, let him follow me, & where I am, there let him be that is my minister.* Now among the seruants of Christ there be manie differences. For as Kings and Princes haue manie subiects, and al of them owe some dutie to him, but the name of the King's seruant doth properly follow them, that liue in household with the King, and are readie at a cal and at a beck, and haue no other busines but the King's: So al Christians may be called, and are, the seruants of Christ; but they that haue left their owne houses and possessions, and betaken themselues into the house of God, to attend wholy and only to his affaires, may most truly and most properly challenge this Prerogatiue.

Ioa. 12. 26.

6. Wherof Religious people reape another commoditie (which I haue spoken of more at large before) to wit, that seing the busines which they handle is God's, and not their owne; by occasion of the state itself in which they are, they may farre more easily and the more effectually direct al their actions to God and good ends, in which the greatest part of our merit doth consist. For vnlesse a man wil be wilfully euil, and defraud his maister of his seruice, as a naughtie seruant doth him of his money, and employ it in other vses; most of the works which a Religious man doth, of themselues doe tend to God; others may be easily guided to the same end, with smal industrie and labour; which works God accepteth, acknowledging them to be done for his sake, and rewards them with liberal reward; and being multiplyed in that manner as they are, they must needs bring a man an infinit treasure and masse of glorie in the life to come. Of which glorie S. *Basil* discoursing, bringeth God, as it were, speaking to the voluntarie Eunuchs, such as haue bound themselues to liue chast by Vow, and sayth thus: For a mortal name, I wil giue them the name of immortal Angels, which shal not be taken from them; they shal haue heauen and the choycest part therof to dwel in, to wit, my owne house; and dwelling within my walles, they shal not only partake of the nature of the Angels, and of the glorie of their perpetual succession, being themselues sufficiently able to found a succession of their owne in the life eternal; but they shal

They haue an eminent place in heauen.

S. *Basil lib. de Virg.*

shal haue an honourable and an eminent place among the Angels, and a name which shal neuer faile in regard of the splendour of their rare vertue.

7. *S. Iohn Chrysostom* speaking of the same glorie in his third Booke against the Dispraysers of a Monastical life sayth in this manner: What then shal we say? may not he be saued that hath a wife and house-hold? First there is not only one way and meanes to be saued, but manie different wayes, which our Sauiour giuing vs to vnderstand sayth, that *there be manie mansions in the house of his Father*; and *S. Paul* when he telleth vs, that one is the brightnes of the sunne, another of the moone, another of the starres: that is, others shal shine like the sunne, others like the moone, and others like the starres. Consider therefore wel what steps of honour and merit thou must leaue aboue thee, if thou stoop from the greatnes of the Sunne to the least and lowest starre. Thus speakes *S. Iohn Chrysostom*, adding moreouer that men deale their busines in this kind but vnworthily and with great disaduantege to themselues; in regard that if they ayme at a place at Court, they wil endeauour to get the best and most honourable, and be as neare and as deare to the King as they can possibly be: but it being in their choice to be Courtiers and Souldiers of heauen, as he speaketh, they are neuer a whit sorrie nor grieued, if they light vpon the last place, and be the very hindmost of al. And he repeateth the same in the latter end of his sayd Booke, and endeauours to beate it into vs, saying, that though we were certain of our saluation, yet we should striue for the first place in heauen; as in al matches that are made, it is a shame to come behind. But Secular people, sayth he, shal stand in the last place, supposing they be able to breake through the rubbs which the World doth lay in their way, which notwithstanding is very hard & difficult. Can there be therfore a foolisher thing then to choose to remayne behind with the last, when a man may step-vp so high, as to looke the very Angels in the face? Thus speakes *S. Iohn Chrysostom* in that place. For in his other Treatise, where he compareth a Monk with a King, he sayth further thus: After this life we shal behold a Monck taken-vp glorious in the sight of al in the cloudes, to meete Christ in the ayre, resembling his Captaine, the beginner of this soueraigne kind of life, and Authour of al Vertue. But a King though he haue gouerned his Kingdome with iustice and integritie, shal notwithstanding haue a lesse degree of saluation, and lesse glorie. And if he haue not behaued himself wel, who can expresse the miserie which you shal see him endure, scorched with that fire, flead with those whips, and punished with those torments, which neither tongue can declare, nor can in themselues be abidden.

S. *Iohn chrysost. lib. 3. contra vitup. vit. Mon.*

Secular people the last in heauen.

Idem Hom. de Mon. & Rege.

8. And we may adde one thing more, which manie learned men doe auouch; to wit, that Religious people shal not only enioy an eminent place in the glorie which is common to al, as we haue declared, but shal haue a particular Laurel or garland (as Diuines doe tearme it, and define it to be an Accidental ioy added ouer and aboue the Essential reward) manifestly to be seen in some particular glorie of their bodies, in testimonie of some noble and heroical act atchieued. As we see in common-wealths that are wel gouerned; al are kept to their dutie by certain general rewards and punishments; besides which general rewards for that which is good, there be certaine peculiar rewards for heroical actions: as if a souldier had done anie special

The Accidental glorie of Religious people.

exployt, beſides his ordinarie penſion, he was anciently rewarded with a kind of Coronet, or Laurel, or triumphant Chariot, according vnto the enterprize in which he had ſhewed his valour; So in heauen, beſides the eſſential reward due to al good deeds, there be certain honours, as we may cal them, & particular recompences for Virgins, and Martyrs, & Doctours, as hauing very eminently ſhewed their valour, & gone away with ſingular victories ouer the Fleſh, & the Diuel, and Death itſelf. If therefore theſe three haue their particular Coronets, or garlands; why may we not ſay, that Religious people shal haue one alſo particular to themſelues? ſeing they embrace perpetual Chaſtitie, as Virgins; and ceaſe not to doe great good to their Neighbour, as Doctours; and in regard of the manie croſſes they endure, ſtand in ſo neare a degree to Martyrs, as I haue ſhewed; and though there were nothing els, haue vtterly ſet the World and al worldlie things at naught, and liued perpetually in ſo great a contempt of it, as we ſee; which no man can denye but that it is one of the nobleſt and moſt heroical actions, which a man can performe in this life, and conſequently may worthily deſerue a ſingular reward, and, as the holie Scripture ſpeaketh, *Sap. 5. 17.* *euerie one of them receaue from the hand of God a kingdome of glorie, and a diademe of beautie.*

9. The greatnes of this glorie, which attends vpon Religious people, hath been diuers times ſhewed to manie, and once in particular to a certain Nouice of S. *Francis* his Order, and made great impreſſion in him as in reaſon it might. The burthen of Religion ſeeming vnto him very heauie, and being moreouer ſorely tempted by the Diuel, he was vpon the point of yealding, and began to harbour vnworthie thoughts of returning to the world, but was cured by this heauenlie remedie. One night as he paſſed through the Church, bowghing his head and his bodie to adore the Bleſſed Sacrament as he went by it, in the verie inſtant he was in a Rapt, and had this Viſion: He ſaw a long ranck of people paſſing by him clad al alike; their garments were white; their faces, & their hands, and feete, did ſhine like the ſunne; they went (as he thought) in great haſte and ioy to meete, and embrace, and entertayne a certain gueſt, that was newly come among them. And being much aſtoniſhed with this ſight, he asked one of the companie, what al this was; and it was anſwered him, that they were Franciſcan-Friars that were going to accompanie a certain man of their Order into Heauen, that was newly departed; that they themſelues liued al of them in Heauen in great glorie & happines; and that the honour of that white garment was particularly granted them in lieu of the Habit of Religion, which they did weare on earth; the glorie of their bodies for the incommodities, which they had ſuffered in it; of which glorie he ſhould be partaker, if he remained firme and conſtant in the courſe he had begun; which afterwards he eaſily effected, being ſo encouraged with this Viſion, that he neuer after had anie wandring thoughts at al.

A notable Viſion.

10. Which Viſion doth put vs moreouer in mind of another happines and particular ioy, which Religious people ſhal haue in heauen, by the concourſe and meeting of manie of the ſame Order and Religion togeather. For (as the troop, which this man ſaw, doth giue vs to vnderſtand) we muſt think, that in heauen there is a ſeueral diſtinct place for euerie Religious Order to be in, to which place al that are of the ſame Order doe preſently repayre,

ſo

ſo ſoone as they arriue in heauen, which cannot but giue euerie one new matter of glorie and gladnes. For if in this world it be ſo ioyful a thing to meete with our Bretheren, & conuerſe with thoſe of our owne Order and Inſtitute, in regard of the loue which is betwixt vs; there can be no doubt, but that in heauen this ioy wil be farre greater, where our loue shal be more feruent, and al perfections of Nature and Grace more eminent, without anie mixture of vice or imperfection; and withal moſt apparent to euerie one, beholding them before our eyes as in a criſtal-glaſſe; which as they wil exceſſiuely encreaſe our loue, ſo alſo the eternal ſweetnes of our louing conuerſation. Wherefore it is certain, that to be continually in that Bleſſed companie, and ourſelues to be a bleſſed part therof, muſt needs be an infinit happines, farre greater then we heer can either conceaue or belieue.

Of the Antiquitie of Religious courſes; and firſt how they were prefigured in the Old Law.

CHAP. XIX.

WE are now to diſcourſe of another kind of dignitie belonging to a Religious ſtate. For that, of which we haue hitherto ſpoken, though doubtleſſe it be the chiefeſt and moſt to be eſteemed, as being founded vpon the plentie and rarenes of the Vertues which concurre in it, the coniunction and ſimilitude with God, and the rewards and honour, which in the life to come it expecteth; yet it is partly ſpiritual, and concealed within vs; partly alſo not preſent, but long to come heerafter; and conſequently the glorie and ſplendour therof lyeth open only to the eyes of God, and to thoſe, that hauing their ſoules enligthned with his ſoueraigne light, are withal enabled to make a true eſtimate of theſe ſpiritual things; who certainly are but few, and in a manner none in compariſon of the reſt; for (as the Wiſe-man ſayth) *of fooles, the number is infinit.* Where- *Eccl. 1.*
fore to the end that ſo rare and ſo excellent a thing ſhould not be hidden from the moſt part of men, God hath enriched it with other graces and ornaments, ſo playne and conſpicuous to be ſeen of al that the rudeſt ſort cannot be ignorant of them. *No man,* ſayth our Lord, *doth light a candle and put it vnder a buſhel,* *Matt. 5.*
but vpon the candleſtick, that it may giue light to al that be in the houſe. And that which he ſayd, he did; for he hath not placed this light of Religion in dennes & caues of the earth, but in the publick view of the world, into which he brought it, to enlighten the darknes therof; and hath beſtowed ſuch high fauours vpon it, that it doth not only march ſide by ſide with the Nobilitie of the world, but goes farre before it, euen for the things which the world doth moſt of al eſteeme and prize. For wherefore is it that Families, and Citties, and whatſoeuer Companies or Corporations, are eſteemed honourable in the eyes of men, but for the antiquitie of their ſtanding or deſcent, the number and worth of their ſubiects, their noble acts atchieued, and deriued to the notice

of others by common fame, and ſuch like other things, which, as I ſayd, are in the world accounted glorious? Of al which a Religious ſtate is ſo abundantly furnished, that humane Pride hath not wherof to extol and boaſt itſelf, nor anie thing indeed, which can be comparable to this true and ſolid Glorie. Wherfore we wil beſtow ſome leaues in diſcourſing of theſe ornaments; and firſt we wil ſpeake of the Antiquitie of Religion. For though ſo rare an excellencie of eminent vertue was to be reſerued to the times of the Ghoſpel, and for the Sonne of God himſelf to bring downe from heauen, thoſe former Ages (which the Apoſtle compareth to the childhood of the world, becauſe the Law brought nothing to perfection) not being capable of ſo much ſpiritual perfection; ſo rare vertue, I ſay, being to be reſerued to the fulnes of times, and grace beſtowed vpon vs by CHRIST IESVS our Sauiour, yet it is no ſmal honour and glorie for it, that it is ſo plainly and ſo expreſly prefigured in the Old Law.

Antiquitie of Religion in figure. 2. Cor. 13.

Heb. 7.

2. Firſt *Elias* was a liuelie patterne of this courſe, liuing without wife, or children, or familie, a chaſt and ſingle life; and continuing in it, in that pouertie, that his garment is expreſſed to haue been a belt of leather, and that he receaued his ſuſtenance in a manner of almes, ſometimes by a widdow, ſometimes by meanes of a crow. *Elizæus* was one of his chief diſciples, and reſembled him moſt in the courſe of life which he had liued; and being inuited by him to this forme of Perfection, he preſently forſooke his father's lands and cattle which he was following, yea his parents, and houſe-hold, giuing Religious people ſo long-before a rare example, how couragiouſly they are to forſake al theſe things for the loue of CHRIST.

Elias. 4. Reg. 1. 3. Reg. 17. 3. Reg. 15. Elizeus.

3. The Sonnes, as they called them, of the Prophets, were men that vnder the conduct and diſcipline of theſe two, which I haue named, did profeſſe and follow a more perfect kind of life then others in thoſe dayes. For the miracles which *Elizeus* is recorded to haue wrought at their requeſt, in Healing of the waters, and in Sweetning the bitterneſſe of the pot, and in Multiplying the bread which was to ſerue them al, doth ſufficiently teſtifie, that they were ſeparated from the reſt of the Children of Iſrael, and liued in Communitie togeather. And we may gather that they liued a ſingle life, becauſe we doe not find anie mẽtion of anie wife or children which they had; and indeed with them they could not haue liued in common. Finally it appeareth ſufficiently that they liued in Obedience; becauſe as *Elizeus* returned from beholding the taking vp of *Elias* into the ayre, they al meeting him, fel downe on their faces, and adored him, as we find in holie Scripture; as it were, profeſſing by this outward ſigne of reuerence, that what Obedience they yealded before to *Elias*, the ſame they were readie to yeald to him. Wherupon *S. Hierome* doth with reaſon ſtile al thoſe, which I haue named, Monks of the old Teſtament; & in another place reckoning himſelf among them, he ſayth thus: Our beginner was *Elias*, *Elizeus* was ours, our leaders were the Sonnes of the Prophets. And *Iſidorus* in his Booke of *Eccleſiaſtical Offices* ſayth the ſame thing, almoſt in the ſelfſame words; and calleth *Elias*, and *Elizeus*, and the reſt of the Prophets, Authours of Monks; with whome we may ranck *Caſsian* ſaying, that the beginnings of Monaſtical profeſſion were founded by them.

3. Reg. 4. Sonnes of the Prophets.

4 Reg 4. & 6.

S. Hierome Ep 4. Ep. 13. Iſidorus l. 2. Eccl. off. c. 15 Caſſian. l. 2 c. 2.

4. But none in the Old Law doe more neare and more playnly reſemble Religious people, then the Nazareans; and al the whole Ceremonie which was

Nazareãs.

vſed about them. For which reaſon *S. Gregorie Nazianzen* in the Oration which he made in the prayſe of *S. Baſil*, doth cal al Religious, our Nazareans. And *S. Thomas* deliuereth, that the Nazareans, which were wont in the Old Law to be ſanctified, did ſignifie thoſe that aſpire to the heighth of al Perfection; and doth learnedly conclude therupon, that a Vow is neceſſarie to a ſtate of Perfection. They did therefore much reſemble our kinds of Inſtitute, in regard they were conſecrated and ſanctified to God, as we; and wholy dedicated themſelues to the ſeruice of God, obliging themſelues therunto by Vow. But we goe farre beyond them; becauſe they moſt commonly ſtood not obliged for their whole life, but for ſome certain time, longer or ſhorter as they thought good; Our obligation is perpetual; They abſtained from ſome certain things only; we wholy forſake al worldlie things. But the lawes, & ceremonies preſcribed by God concerning them, repreſenting in figure diuers Religious practices, doe moſt apparantly lay before vs, both the likenes and the differēce, which is betwixt them and vs; and by the ſhaddow of thoſe carnal things, we may eaſily diſcouer the perfection of this ſpiritual ſtate.

S. *Gregorie Nazianzen Orat in laud. dem S. Baſ.* S. *Tho. 22. q. 186. a. 6.* *Num. 6.*

5. Firſt therefore, they are moſt ſtrictly obſeruant in abſtayning from wine, & ſider, & whatſoeuer lickour that might make them drunk. *S. Hierome* taketh wine to be whatſoeuer may inueigle our vnderſtanding; to wit, the loue of anie earthlie thing. For as no man loueth drunkennes in itſelf, but the wine; which when he taketh ouer-largely maketh him drunk; & the pleaſantnes of it to our taſte, doth draw vs on to take largely of it; ſo there is no bodie that wil willingly be inueigled, but it followeth by the vſe of earthlie things, becauſe it can hardly be, but that our mind and affection ſhould cleaue vnto them. Religious people therefore to auoid this drunkennes which is ſo preiudicial, forſake lands and goods & al things, & vſe but very ſparingly the things which are neceſſarie for their ſuſtenance, & haue no dominion or power to diſpoſe of them; which is to be moſt perfectly naked of al things. Where it is ſpecially to be noted, that the Nazareās did not abſtaine only from wine, but from anie thing that had anie affinitie with it, as vineger, & whatſoeuer lickour that came of the grape, & from the grape itſelf, & al kinds of rayſins, inſomuch that they might not ſo much as ſuck the ſtalkes of them. For in like māner Religious people by their verie Inſtitute haue no cōmunicatiō not only with ſinful things, but not with anie that haue anie affinitie or neernes vnto them, or may be anie inducement therunto: for it is eaſie to be drawne frō the ſtalke to the grape, frō the grape to the wine, & frō wine to drunkennes, that is, frō leſſer to greater things, & frō things lawful to the vnlawful; the nature of our Senſes and appetite inticing vs alwayes on.

The ceremonies of the Nazareans applied to Religious people. S. *Hieron. Amos. 2.* They drink noe wine.

6. The ſecond ceremonie of the Nazareans was, that the razour ſhould not come vpon their head, but that they ſhould preſerue their hayre vntouched; which doth euidently giue vs to vnderſtand, that Religious people are ſo wholy God's, and intirely conſecrated vnto him, that not only themſelues, but whatſoeuer is in them, is holie and deuoted vnto him. For if the hayre was accounted holie, which is leaſt of al belonging to man, and leaſt neceſſarie; much more our tongue, and our hands, and the reſt of our bodie, and moſt of al our Soule. To which purpoſe *Origines* ſayth very wel: The Nazareans doe not cut-of their hayre, becauſe al things which the Iuſt doe, ſhal proſper, and their leaues ſhal not fal. Therfore alſo the hayres of the heads of the diſciples of our Lord are ſayd to be nūbred, that is, al their works, al their ſpeeches, al their thoughts

They cut not their hayre. *Orig. Hom. 6. in Leuit.*

are layd-vp in the ſight of God, becauſe they are iuſt, becauſe they are holie.

They touch no dead body.

7. The third law, which they were to obſerue, was that they were not to accompanie anie dead bodie, not ſo much as their owne fathers or mothers, or brothers or ſiſters corps, leaſt they might be defiled. A man might doubt, who are to be vnderſtood by dead bodies, but that our Sauiour himſelf hath declared it vnto vs. For ſpeaking of ſecular people to one, whom he deſired should follow him, he ſayd: *Suffer the dead to burie the dead; but thou come and follow me*; now the dead, whom this man would haue buryed, was his father. In Religion they that follow it, doe vtterly abandon and forſake the world firſt of al, which is chiefly vnderſtood by the dead; ſecondly they forſake al fleſh and bloud, the too much loue wherof muſt needs defile our ſoules; but they haue no communication with it any more, by which meanes they eaſily preſerue themſelues pure and vnſpotted.

Matth. 8.

The Sacrifices of the Nazareans.

8. Fourthly, when the time of their Vow was expired, they were brought to the doore of the Tabernacle, and there were to offer three ſorts of Sacrifices, to wit, for their Sinne, a Peace-offering, and a Holocauſt. With vs, the tearme of our ſeruice, and of our life, are both one; when our life endeth, our Vow expireth. Then we are preſented at the doore of the Tabernacle; of that Tabernacle, I ſay, in which God hath his dwelling, and into his glorie we are tranſlated to receaue the abundant reward of our long ſeruice. The ſtate itſelf of Religion affordeth vs a triple offering: A Holocauſt, becauſe by it we are wholy offered to God, nothing at al reſerued; A Peace-offering, becauſe there is no better way then Religion, to haue peace with him, and plentie of his fauours; A Sacrifice for our ſinne, becauſe though we may haue been ſomewhat negligent in our life-time, the force and vertue of Religion, and the abundance of good workes performed in it, wil eaſily blot that out. Wherupon alſo it followeth, that the hayre which is cut-of, is caſt into the fire as a compliment of the Sacrifice; into that fire, I ſay, in which the Sacrifice itſelf is burnt and offered. For to what purpoſe may we think this is? to giue God contentment by the noyſome ſmel of the burning hayre? No, but it giueth vs to vnderſtand, that the ſmalleſt actions of Religious people are exceeding pleaſing to God, becauſe they are offered in the fire of Charitie, which fire the State itſelf doth kindle; which is then moſt of al to be ſeen, when, the euening coming, the work-men are called to receaue their hire. Wherefore ſeing the Nazareans and the Religious people reſemble one another ſo neere, yea ſeing Religious people doe ſo farre ſurpaſſe the Nazareans of-old; how can we doubt, but that, as the Nazareans in the Religion of the Iewes had the chiefeſt place of eſteeme, ſo Religious people ought to haue it among vs?

Thren. 4.

9. Howſoeuer, we may truly and with farre more reaſon ſay of our Nazareans then of thoſe of-old, thoſe words of the Prophet Hieremie: *More white then ſnow, more neate then milk, more ruddie then ancient Iuorie, more beautiful then the Sapphire.* Which place *S. Gregorie* doth fitly apply to Religious people, telling vs, that their life is ſayd to be more white then milk or ſnow; becauſe by the ſnow, which comes from aboue, we may vnderſtand good and godlie men; by milk, which ſpringeth from fleſh, we may vnderſtand them that diſpenſe earthlie goods vprightly; but a Religious ſtate excels them both. And becauſe by feruour of ſpirit they ſeeme ſometimes to go beyond the life and conuerſa-

S. Gregorie 22 mor. c. 17.

tion

tion of the ancient and heroical Fathers (for Iuorie is a bone of a great beast) therefore the Prophet sayth, *more ruddie then ancient Iuorie.* Finally, because by their heauenlie conuersation they surpasse manie that haue gone towards heauen before them, they are sayd to be more beautiful then the Sapphire; for the Sapphire is of an ayrie colour. Thus sayth *S. Gregorie.*

10. Wherefore as a Mappe of a Palace or of a gardin is pleasing to the eye, not in regard of itself, but in regard of the Palace or garden which it representeth; and the things themselues when they are perfect, doe much more delight then anie perfect delineation of them; so seing we find, that that draught, as I may cal it, of those ancient Nazareans being but a shaddow of our Religious people, was so highly pleasing to God; how much more pleasing must these our Institutes needs be vnto him, wherin there is such solid perfection of al Euangelical Vertue? And consequently in the Euangelical Law we may with much more reason, then they could in those dayes, in a manner glorie, and proclame it to al Christians and to the whole Church as a singular benifit, that which we find in the Prophet *Amos*: *I am he that made you ascend from the land of Ægypt, and rayssed Prophets of your sonnes, and Nazareans of your yong-men.* For so great a worke, and so holie a conuersation (as we haue sayd before, and may often repeate) cannot be begunne, but by the hand of God, nor continued without his help. *Amos. 2.*

That a Religious state was instituted by our Sauiour himself; and first in his Apostles.

CHAP. XX.

NOW if we wil search into the beginnings of a Religious state, and value, as it were, the nobilitie by Descent, we shal find the pedigree therof to be more noble, and more illustrious, then of anie thing els. For it began not by man nor by humane means, but from the Sonne of God himself, in whom are al *the treasures of wisdome, and knowledge of God*; and among other documents of Saluation he left this forme of life so much the more cleerly and carefully expressed, both by word & example, by how much it is more perfect: wherof I find no bodie but Hereticks to make anie doubt at al. Hereticks indeed both ancient and new (and among the rest that wicked *Wickleff*) doe clamour and vrge very hotly, that al this manner of life is a meer humane Inuention. But it is clear without question on the other side, that Christ himself was the sole Authour of it; and that by his aduise, and voyce, and authoritie it was first diuulged; wherof manie haue learnedly written, but more largely then the rest, *Waldensis*, a graue and principal Diuine, and later then he, *Clitoueus* in his Booke of Monastical Vowes.

Only Hereticks cal this in question.

Waldensis lib. de Sacrament. tit. 9. cap. 83.

Clitoueus lib. 3. cap. 9.

2. But what need we cal men to witnes, hauing the authoritie of the Ghospels clear for vs? for wheras Religion consisteth of the three Vowes,

Matth. 19. wherof I haue often ſpoken, we ſhal quickly find, that al of them were firſt brought to light by our Sauiour. For of Chaſtitie we haue it from his owne mouth, that *there are Eunuchs, who haue geulded themſelues for the kingdome of God*; which ſaying cannot be vnderſtood of thoſe who abſtayne from marriage meerly voluntarily, and out of a ſingle purpoſe or reſolution of their mind; for hauing it ſtil in their power to make choice of the ſtate of marriage, when they liſt, they cannot be called Eunuchs; they only therfore are decyphered vnto vs in theſe words, who haue vtterly cut-of al power of this kind from themſelues by a perpetual and ſolemne Vow, ſuch as Religion obligeth vs vnto.

Pouertie. Luc 11. Luc 10. 3. And as for Pouertie, in what tearmes could he more plainly and more effectually commend it vnto vs, then when he ſayd: *Vnleſſe a man renounce al that he poſſeſſeth, he cannot be my diſciple*? or when he preſcribed his Diſciples this rule: *Poſſeſſe neither gold nor ſiluer*; and bids them carrie with them neither *bag nor ſcrip*.

Obedience. Luc 9. Concilium Senenſe decret. 9. Matth. 19. Marc 10. Luc 18. S. Auguſt. Epiſt. 89. 4. He inſtituted Obedience when he ſayd: *He that wil come after me, let him denye himſelf*. For by this denial of one's ſelf, Doctours doe generally vnderſtand the Vow of Obedience; and (which is of more weight) the Councel of *Sens* (as appeareth by a Decree therof) doth conſtrue it to the ſame effect. And our Sauiour hauing thus ſeuerally vpon occaſion giuen vs theſe documents, he doth as it were ioyntly commend them al vnto vs, when to the yong-man, that came vnto him and asked him how he might come to Life Euerlaſting, he giueth anſwer in theſe words, which three Euangeliſts doe relate almoſt word for word alike, laying before our eyes (as *S. Auguſtin* auerreth, and al learned men after him) a moſt perfect patterne of a Religious vocation, & a draught of that, which dayly hapneth in Soules, that are induced to embrace that kind of life.

5. For firſt if we conſider, that *our Sauiour beholding him, loued him*, as it is ſayd in the Ghoſpel: what doth this ſignifye other, then that ſo great a benefit is not giuen but to thoſe whom God doth behold after a particular kind of manner and ſingularly loue? That he telleth him, that *One thing is yet wanting vnto thee*; and ſayth it to one, that from his verie youth had alwayes obſerued al the Commandments, doubtleſſe he would edge him on with deſire of Perfection, the beautie therof being of itſelf wonderfully amiable. For as if an Image were ſo farre begunne, as that the head, and the breaſt, and the armes were moſt curiouſly carued, and the reſt of the bodie not yet finiſhed, the image itſelf, if it had ſenſe and vnderſtanding, would grieue and deſire, that it might be brought to perfection; ſo this yong man, hearing how much he yet wanted, in reaſon he ſhould haue been ſo netled within, that he could not haue reſted til he had obtayned it. There followeth the Counſel, and forme of Perfection, with the reward belonging vnto it: *Goe and ſel al that thou haſt, and giue it to the poore; and come and follow me; and thou ſhalt haue a treaſure in heauen*. Naming *Al*, he willeth him to reſerue nothing to himſelf, but bereaue himſelf abſolutly of al things. Bidding him *Sel al*, he preſcribeth a perpetual and irreuocable abdication and defeiſance. Finally in thoſe words, *Follow me*, he comprehendeth Obedience, and the reſt of the Counſels. This

therefore

therefore was the Counsel of our Sauiour, cleerly and expresly deliuered by his owne mouth.

6. Which perfection, though the yong man foolishly reiected it when it was offered him by our Sauiour, the Apostles, who were his first Schollars, admitted of it. For so doe diuers very learned men deliuer, to wit, that the Apostles were the first that euer receaued this kind of forme of Religious Institute, and first put it in practise. And of the Pouertie which they professed, there can be no doubt made, because we find it by that which is written of their practise in the Ghospel; and *S. Peter* testifyeth as much, when in the name of them al, he sayth: *Behold, we haue forsaken al things*; which words declare not only their Pouertie, but their Chastitie also. For vnder the name of *Al things*, doubtles their wiues are also to be vnderstood; and *S. Hierome* vseth it as an argument against *Iouinian*; specially seing (as he sayth) our Sauiour answering *S. Peter*, mentioneth wiues among other things that were to be forsaken, insinuating that the Apostles had already performed that part. Wherupon *S. Hierome* concludeth, that they had wiues before they knew any thing of the Ghospel; but when they were chosen Apostles, they presently layd aside the vse of them; vpon which ground in an other place he sayth, that the Apostles were al of them either virgins, or, hauing been married, abstayned from their wiues. Finally we may gather their Obedience from these words: *And we haue followed thee.* For what is it to follow an other, but to liue according to his direction, and to obey him in al things? Seing therfore al these things are without question to be found in the Apostles, let vs shew, that they obliged themselues also therunto by Vow.

The Apostles the first Religious men.

Matth. 19.

S. *Hierome lib. 2. in Iouin.*

7. Besides other Diuines, *Aluarus Pelagius* (a graue and learned Authour) doth cleerly demonstrate this point in the Booke which he writ *of the Complaint of the Church*, and bringeth manie arguments to proue it, but chiefly this, that *a Vow*, as he sayth, *is the Counsel of Counsels, and the soule and perfection of them*; because whatsoeuer Counsel is confirmed by Vow, it is essentially the more perfect, and the more acceptable to God. From whence he concludeth, that if the Apostles had made no Vow, they could not be sayd to be in the top and heighth of Perfection; but the abdication of the self-same things, which Religious people doe dayly professe, would be more perfect then that which the Apostles practised, in regard they oblige themselues by Vow: now it were temerarious, and wicked, and impious to think or say so of the Apostles. And he confirmeth it, because there can be no question, but that the Apostles did not only leaue the possession of that which they had, but the wil of hauing anie thing; that they might truly say: *They had forsaken al.* But this wil of hauing, cannot be forsaken, but by Vow; because we renounce not our wil, as long as we may resume it againe at our pleasure. We may adde moreouer, that certainly the Apostles did not forsake that, which they had, more vnperfectly then the yong man, we spake of, had forsaken them, if he had followed the Counsel of our Sauiour, and sold al; for our Sauiour gaue him the same Counsel, which the Apostles had already embraced: But he that selleth a thing, reserueth to himself no power or right at al euer it;

Aluar Pelag. lib. 2. cap 56. de Planctu Eccl.

S. Thomas 2.2.qu.88. ar. 4. ad 2. and consequently neither did the Apostles reserue anie thing to themselues. S. Thomas doth cleerly and solidly auerre the self-same, to wit, that there is no doubt to be made, but that the Apostles did vow al things belonging to a state of Perfection, when forsaking al, they followed Christ. But S. Augustin doth

S. August. 27. de ciuit. cap. 4. most perspicuously and most learnedly of anie other deliuer it in these words: „ That poore man is raysed from the earth aboue al rich men, and that needie „ man is extolled aboue al wealthie people from that dung, to sit with the Power- „ ful of the people, to whom he sayth: *You shal sit vpon twelue seates*; giuing them a Seate of glorie in inheritance. For these Powerful people had sayd: *Behold we haue forsaken al, and followed thee.* This Vow these most Powerful had vowed. So S. Augustin. Seing therefore it is cleare, that the Apostles obserued Pouertie, Chastitie, and Obedience, and moreouer that they did not obserue them meerly voluntarily, but obliged themselues therunto also by Vow; why may we not acknowledge, that this height of Perfection is descended from Christ by them, and account them the first foundations of Religious Conuents? And certainly it was but reason, that so rare a course should be commended by their Dignitie and Sanctitie; and that they, who were to be the Maisters and Doctours of the world, should not want this ornament, which in the glorie of the Ghospels is so conspicuous.

How Religious courses did flourish in the time of the Apostles.

CHAP. XXI.

Act. 2. 3. THE Apostles hauing receaued of Christ our Sauiour this forme of sanctitie, they instantly printed it in the harts of the first Beleeuers, which were then tender and pliable to al good things, and apt to admit of whatsoeuer impression of the Holie-Ghost. Wherefore not only those Hundred and twentie persons, who

Act. 4. 32. remaining togeather in that Vpper roome (as it is mentioned in the Acts) made, as it were, one bodie among themselues, embraced this Pouertie, & nakednes

The first Christians vowed Pouertie. of al things, and a life in common; but other Christians also of those dayes conuerted in Hierusalem by their meanes; of whom it is written: *The multitude of Beleeuers were of one hart, and one soule; and none of them called anie thing*

S. Hierome Epistola. 8. *his owne of that which they possessed, but al things were common among them. For as manie as were in possession of lands and houses, selling them, brought the price of that which they sold, and layd it at the feete of the Apostles. And diuision was made of it to euerie one as he had need.* That withal they made some Vow or

Act. 5. 3. promise, not only S. Hierome and diuers others doe testifye, but that which S. Peter sayd when he reprehended *Ananias*, doth euidently shew it: *Why, sayth he, hath Sathan tempted thy hart to lye to the Holie-Ghost, and defraude of the price of the field? Thou hast not lyed to men, but to God.* For if *Ananias* had

had been so liberal meerly out of deuotion, and out of a forwardnes of a franck disposition, wholy free and disobliged; neither could he haue been sayd to haue lyed to the Holie-Ghost, nor certainly deserued so grieuous punishment.

2. Wherefore *S. Hierome* sayth right wel of that Age: The Church of the first Beliuers was such as Monks now adayes desire and endeauour to be, that no bodie haue anie thing of his owne, none be rich among them, none poore; they diuide their patrimonie among the poore, attend to Prayer, Psalmes, Doctrine, and Cõtinencie; such as *S. Luke* relateth that the first Beliuers were in Hierusalem. So that in those verie beginnings, they that aspired to this perfect forme of a Religious life, were greatly encreased and multiplied, liuing also apart from companie of the rest in one certain place among themselues, vnder the gouernment and obedience of some one. Wherupon *Cassian* writeth that the life of those that liue in common, descendeth from the times of the Apostles preaching; when manie out of the loue of Perfection, not contenting themselues with that which al did, to wit, to lay al they had in common, but ayming at higher things, began to withdraw themselues into more priuate places out of the towne; and because they abstained from their wiues, and from the companie of their kindred, and from al worldlie conuersation, they were called *Monks* by reason of their solitude, and *Conuentuals* by reason of their liuing in common.

S. Hieronim in Scriptor. Eccles. in Philone.

Cas. lib. 2. cap. 5. & col. 18. c. 5.

3. Which perfection rested not only in *Hierusalem* and *Alexandria*, but spred itself also at that verie time into other parts of the world. For we find that in Æthiopia the King's daughter was consecrated to God by *S. Matthew*, *Thecla* by *S. Paul* in Greece, *Domitilla* at Rome by *S. Clement*; and in France *S. Martha* (she that was our Sauiour's hostesse) after the Ghospel was preached at Marseils, is recorded to haue built a Monasterie in a solitarie place retired from the companie of men, where togeather with diuers women of worth consecrated to God, she lead a most heauenlie life. And finally *S. Denis* (a man that liued in that first Age) writeth of this kind of Institute, as of a thing vsually receaued and practised; and by that which he sayth of it, he giueth vs to vnderstand, not only that it is very ancient, but also that euen in those dayes it was highly reuerenced. For this reason, *sayth he*, our Diuine teachers haue giuen them names which sound of holines: some calling them Worshippers, others calling them Monks, for the sincere worship, and seruice which they doe to God, and for their solitarie and single life, which maketh them One, and apt to attaine to Vnion with God, and perfection pleasing vnto him, by holie coniunction of things diuided. And then goeth-on to declare the Ceremonies and Rites anciently vsed in the Consecration of Monks, and the reasons and mysteries of them. For first, he sayth, it was the order that the Priest standing before the Altar should say some prayer suitable to the Ceremonie they had in hand; and when the prayer was ended, turning himself to him that was to be admitted, he asked him whether he were indeed resolued to renounce his secular life (which, as his manner is, he calleth a *diuided and distracted life*, because it forceth a man to be sollicitous, and troubled about manie things) and separate himself from the verie sight of it, betaking himself to an other place. Then proposing vnto him a most perfect forme of liuing, he gaue him to vnderstand

Religion spred ouer the world.

S. Denis de Ec. Hierar. c. 10.

The names and Ceremonies of Monks in the Primitiue Church.

that from thence forward he was to surpasse in conuersation, both the vulgar and middle sort of men; which shewes how perfect this kind of course is, seing (as he sayth further) it is not ranked in the middle rank of them that ayme at Perfection, but with the higheſt and moſt perfect; ſo that manie things may be done without blame by them that are of the middle ſort, which Monks are forbidden, becauſe their buſines is to draw themſelues as neere as they can and vnite themſelues with God. When he that was to be conſecrated had promiſed al this, the Prieſt making the ſigne of the Croſſe vpon him, did cut-of his hayre in the name of the Bleſſed Trinitie, and ſtripping him of his garments, gaue him others to put on; and himſelf and others that were preſent ſaluting him, and giuing him ioy, at laſt he gaue him the Diuine Myſteries, that is, the holie Communion and moſt bleſſed Sacrament.

The ſignification of theſe Ceremonies.

4. This is that which *S. Denis* relateth; and addeth withal the explication of al the Ceremonies. For the cutting-of his hayre (*ſayth he*) did ſignifie, that laying aſide al humane and earthlie ornaments, and from that time forward deſpiſing them, he was reſolued to ſeeke to pleaſe God by the ſole beautie of his ſoule. The changing of his garment, betokened the inward change of his hart and mind; and withal it was to put him in mind, that his life and conuerſation was to differ as much from others, as his Habit did from anie vulgar weare. The ſaluting him, repreſented that which our Sauiour ſayd: that *ther ſhould be ioy in heauen of one ſoule conuerted to God*; for the like ioy and gladnes doth happen alſo to them that on earth doe endeauour to imitate God. Finally the receauing of the ſacred Bodie of our Sauiour, doth put vs in mind of the end, for which ſuch holie courſes are taken; to wit, a moſt perfect and inward coniunction with that Infinit Sanctitie, the fruit of Diuine aſſociation, which he was to reape by Monaſtical exerciſes. Thus farre S. *Denis*. And I doubt not but whoſoeuer in his hart doth loue a Religious courſe, wil be willing to heare the particulars of the beginnings therof, and as it were behold with his eyes, how ful of deuotion and feruour they were; and it wil not be from our purpoſe to relate them, becauſe they wil much confirme the Antiquitie of Religious Orders, which is the point we handle.

Luc. 15.

The particulars anciently practiſed by Monks.

Philo de ſupp. virt. S Hierome de Scrip. Eccl. in vita Marci.

Euſebius Eccl. Hiſt. lib. 2. cap. 17.

5. *Philo* (who is ſayd to haue liued in the time of *S. Peter*, and to haue ſpoken with him at Rome) ſhal be our Authour. He being (as *S. Hierome* writeth) the eloquenteſt of al the Iewes, wrote a booke as it were in prayſe of his owne Nation, which he intitled *Of the Vertues of the Suppliants*, ſtiling them ſo, in regard they ſpent their whole time in ſupplicatiõs & prayer. And though the Booke be yet extant, and eaſie to be had, I wil notwithſtanding cote that which is for my purpoſe rather out of *Euſebius*, a graue and ancient Hiſtoriographer, who taketh what he ſayth word for word out of *Philo*, and doth moreouer giue vs ſome more light with apt interpretations which he addeth. For ſo we ſhal vnderſtãd the thing better by the light which he giueth; and the authoritie of two ſuch graue writers ioyned togeather wil be the greater. *Euſebius* therefore hauing ſayd ſome-thing before in prayſe of *Philo*, and of the title of his Booke, writeth thus: Firſt he recordeth, that they, who did enter vpon this kind of Philoſophie, did forſake their poſſeſſions, and yeald-vp the right of that which did belong vnto them, and ſequeſtred themſelues from al

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the cares of this life, and forsaking the cities, liued solitarily in the fields and gardens, perswading themselues for certain, that the companie of them, that followed an inferiour course of life, would be vnprofitable and hurtful vnto them, that at that time endeauoured in that course as they ought. When the aforesayd *Philo* had sayd thus word for word, he addeth: This kind of men is in manie parts of the world dispersed (for it was fit that both the Grecians and the Barbarians should be partakers of so perfect a good thing) but in Ægipt they abound in euerie Prefectship, as they cal them, and most of al about *Alexandria*. They renounce the world.

6. Then describing the fashion of their dwellings, he sayth thus of the Churches of that Countrie. In euerie one there is a holie house, which they cal a Monasterie, where they remayne celebrating the mysteries of holie life; and they carrie nothing in thither, neither meate, nor drink, nor anie thing that belongeth to corporal sustenance, but the Lawes, and the Oracles of the Prophets and Hymnes, and other things of like nature, whereby knowledge & deuotion is encreased and perfected. And a litle after he sayth: Al the time which is from morning to euening they bestow in exercise. For reading the holie Scriptures, they discourse vpon them, and handle their National Philosophie Allegorically. For they make account, that vnder the manifest sense of Scripture there be certain mysteries of hidden nature signified by the figures. And they haue also Commentaries of ancient Writers, who, as they were principal men of their owne profession, left manie worthie Monuments after them in figure of things Allegorically deliuered. Their Churches. Their exercises.

7. He seemes to speake as if himself had been a Schollar to them that expounded the holie Scriptures. And it is likelie that the Commentaries of those ancient Writers, which he sayth they had, were the Ghospels and Writings of the Apostles, and some Expositions of the ancient Prophets, such as the Epistle to the Hebrewes is, and manie other Epistles of *S. Paul*. And much more he sayth in that Booke of them, of whom now we speake; but I haue thought good to make choice of those things, by which he giueth vs a scantling of this Ecclesiastical conuersation. Thus therefore he writeth: Continencie they place as the first foundation in their Soule, and vpon it they build other vertues. None of them doe either eate or drink before sunnesset. For they make account, that the studie of Philosophie is worthie of the light, the necessities of the bodie may be supplied in darknes; therefore they bestow the day vpon the former, and a smal parcel of the night vpon the latter. Some of them remember not to eate in three whole dayes, as hauing a more earnest desire of knowledge then of corporal sustenance. Some of them are so delighted and ouer-ioyed with the food of Wisdome, furnishing them with abundance and plentie of documents, that they double this time of abstinence, and for six dayes togeather doe hardly take anie necessarie sustenance. And he sayth moreouer, that there be certain women among these people of whome he speaketh; most of them ancient virgins, obseruing Chastitie, not of necessitie (as the Vestals among the Gentils) but of their owne accord for the zeale and desire of wisdome; and attending diligently therunto, they contemne the pleasures of the bodie, desiring rather Their Continencie.

„ immortal children, which a Soule louing God may of itſelf bring forth, then „ anie mortal of-ſpring. What ſhal we need to ſay further, how they meete in „ conuerſation togeather, the men by themſelues, and the women by themſel- „ ues apart; and what their exerciſes be, which continue to this day, and are „ practiſed by vs, ſpecially about the Feaſt of the ſoueraigne Paſſion, in faſting „ and watching by night, and in reading of the Diuine words? which the fore- „ ſaid Authour hath carefully ſet downe after the ſame manner, as with vs they „ are hitherto obſerued, deſcribing their exercciſes with the Hymnes which we „ are wont to ſay; and how, while one ſings a Verſe, the reſt harken in ſilence, „ and make an end of the Hymne, ſinging the clauſe therof al togeather with „ him. He addeth moreouer, how they, to whome the Eccleſiaſtical functions „ are committed, doe gouerne among them; which if anie one deſire to know „ more fully, he may reade it in the foreſayd Hiſtorie of this Authour. So *Euſebius* „ out of *Philo*.

8. And doubtles Religion continued the ſelf-ſame courſe and manner of liuing, not only in thoſe firſt times of the Apoſtles, and Apoſtolical men, but three hundred yeares after, and more. For *Tertullian*, who liued next vnto the times of the Apoſtles, wrote a Booke of *Veyling of Virgins*, which is yet extant. And we find moreouer to this day an ancient Decree of Pope *Pius* the Firſt, made in the yeare of our Lord one hundred fourtie ſeauen, of the Ceremonie to be obſerued in the *Conſecration of Virgins*; which Ceremonie *S. Ambroſe* in his Booke of the *Inſtitution of a Virgin*, and *Euſebius* in the life of *Conſtantine*, doe deriue from the Primitiue Church. And in the writings of moſt of the ancient Fathers we find often mention of Virgins, accuſtomed euen in thoſe dayes to be ſolemnely veyled and conſecrated the Spouſes of God; and they ſpeake of it, as of a thing very ancient, and much vſed. As in *S. Iuſtin the Martyr* in his ſecond *Apologie*, which he wrote in behalf of Chriſtians, *S. Clement of Alexandria* in his ſecond Booke of *Stromata*, in one of *S. Ignatius* his Epiſtles, who was diſciple to *S. Iohn* the *Euangeliſt*, *S. Cyprian*, and *Origen* and manie others. *Ruffinus* and *Theodoret* doe alſo relate, that *S. Helen* when ſhe went to Hieruſalem to ſeeke-out the wood of the holie Croſſe, found Virgins there conſecrated to God. And *S. Hierome* in manie places of his Works, but ſpecially in the life of *Malcus*, whome he knew a very old man when himſelf was very yong, doth often make mention of Monaſteries, and Fathers of monaſteries, and of the liuing of manie Brethren togeather; Finally there is ſcarce one of the ancient Writers, in whome we ſhal not meete with certain marks, or rather with moſt euident teſtimonies and proofes, of this kind of courſe.

Tertullian. c. 20. q. 1. co. Virg.

S. Ambr. de Inſt Vir. c. 17.

Euſeb. vita Conſt. l. 4.

Iuſtinus Martyr in 2. Apolog.

Clem. Alex. in 2. Stromatum.

Ignat. epiſt. ad Tarſen.

Cyprian l. 2. epiſt. 11.

Ruffinus.

Theodoret.

S. Hierome.

Religious Orders anciently the ſame, as now they are.

9. If a man aske, whether the manner of liuing of Religious people in thoſe ancient times were the ſelf-ſame which now is held; there is no doubt to be made, but that they are both alike, and al togeather the ſame; and to denye it, were Hereſie, or very neer vnto it. For in thoſe dayes, they did not only profeſſe Pouertie, and Chaſtitie, & Obedience to their Gouernours, as we haue ſhewed out of *Philo*, but al of them, or in a manner al, did oblige themſelues by Vow; ſo as to go back from that ſtate, was both vnlawful and wicked. The difference was (if there were anie) that thoſe Monaſtical Vowes carried not as then that authoritie, or (as Diuines doe ſpeake) had not that Solemnitie which now they haue.

10.

10. Besides that, in those beginnings it is more probable that they did make their Vowes expresly and publikly; but Profession was so annexed to a Religious life, by the general acceptance and opinion of euery bodie, that though by word of mouth they made no promise, yet they made account, that whosoeuer did enter vpon that state, did oblige himself to professe it; much after the same manner, as I take it, as now adayes the Vow of Chastitie is included in the receauing of Holie-Orders: which we may gather out of a certain passage of *S. Basil*, where he sayth, *that they who did enter into the Order of Monks, did tacitly admit of a Single life.* Which custome stood as long, as that ancient pietie and bashfulnes was sufficient to keepe men in awe; afterwards it was thought more conuenient (as *S. Basil* ordayneth in the same place) to exact an expresse promise of Continencie; but so as at first, if a man breaking his Vow had married, he had committed a great offence; yet his marriage held. In which kind *S. Cyprian* in his Epistle to *Pomponius*, and *S. Hierome* to *Demetrias* doe speake of Nunnes, aduising them to marrie, if they cannot liue continently, as they had made Profession; because marriage by legal dispensation obtayned of the Bishop, was at that time no sinne. And we meete with the same aduice in *S. Epiphanius*; and *S. Augustin* doth expresly dispute against those that denyed the marriage of such people to be good marriage.

S. Basil Epist. 2. ad Phil. cap. 19.

The obligation of the Vow of Chastitie in ancient times.

S. Cyprian lib. 2. Epist. 11. S. Hierome Epist. 8. S. Epiph. Her. 62. 1. Apostol. S. August. de Bono vid. c. 9 & 10. Conc. Tolet. 27. q 1. c. vidua.

11. And wheras Pope *Innocent* the First, who liued in those times, and some Councels doe command, that such marriage should be broken-of, it is to be vnderstood that they appointed (for the punishment of the parties) that they should not liue togeather, which doubtles they might with good reason ordayne; but they say not, that the marriage itself was not valide; and yet this punishment was not euen in those dayes generally receaued and established in the Church. For Pope *Leo* the First, who liued litle more then twentie yeares after Pope *Innocent*, teacheth that it was a sinne to marrie, but sayth nothing of breaking the marriage. And Pope *Gelasius*, who sate in the yeare Foure hundred ninetie two, exhorteth such Nunnes to resume the state from which they were fallen, but doth not compel them, nor disannulle their marriages. *S. Gregorie* himself, who was more exact in this kind then anie of his Predecessours, in diuers of his Epistles and Decrees commanding such, as were thus contracted, to be separated, and put into their Monasteries againe; yet doth not say anie thing which enforceth vs to vnderstand, that their marriage was inualide. But rather we may gather, that their marriages did hold, by that which in one of his Homilies he relateth of his Aunt *Gordiana*, that hauing consecrated herself to God togeather with two of her sisters, after their decease, forgetting (as he speaketh) the feare of God, forgetting al shame and bashfulnes, forgetting her Consecration, tooke a husband, and liued euer after with him.

S. Leo Epist. 92. c. 24. Gelasius lib. 17 q. 1. c. de viduis. S Gregorius vid. c. 27. q 2. Item Hom. 31. in Euan.

12. Wherefore the first (for ought we find recorded) that did not only forbid Religious people to marrie, but make their marriages voyde, if they should chance to marrie, was Pope *Innocent* the Second, in a General Councel at Rome, in the yeare of our Lord, One thousand one hundred thirtie nine. And yet if we search to the bottome of it, we shal find, that though this was at that time first of al decreed by general consent of the Church, and brought into vniuersal practise, diuers Bishops notwithstanding had ordayned the same before

Innocent the Second first disannulled mariages of Religious people.

S. Basil. Reg. fus. disp. c. 14. before in their particular Dioceſes; for we reade in the Larger Rule of *S. Baſil*, that he that hauing once conſecrated himſelf to God, and obliged himſelf by Vow, did afterwards paſſe to an other kind of life, did commit ſacriledge. Idem in lib. de Virginitate. And againe in his Booke of Virginitie, he proueth the ſame at large, giuing this reaſon, becauſe as it is adulterie and not matrimonie to couple with an other, while the huſband or wife liueth; ſo for one, that is already eſpouſed to Chriſt who liueth for euer, it is adulterie to marrie at al. Now that *S. Baſil* firſt ordayned and decreed this, is euident by that which he writeth in his Epiſtle to *Amphilochius*, where he ſayth thus: Becauſe now by courſe of time the Church of God is made ſtronger, and the number of Virgins is encreaſed, the marriage of Canons (that is, of Regulars) is to be diſannulled, and they that are polluted therwith, are not to be admitted to the Bleſſed Sacrament, before they haue cleered themſelues of that crime.

Idem Epiſt. Can. 6. & 18.

S. Iohn Chryſoſt. S. Ambroſe. 13. We find that *S. Chryſoſtome* doth write to the ſame effect in very weightie tearmes to *Theodore* a Monk that was fallen. And *S. Ambroſe* in like manner to a Virgin that had forſaken her purpoſe; *If ſhe wil marrie* (ſayth he) *as others doe, ſhe committeth adulterie; ſhe is made a ſlaue to death.* Al which layd togeather doth proue, that Religious Vowes did alwayes make ſecular marriages vnlawful; but the force which they haue to make them voyde (which Diuines tearme the Solemnitie of the Vow) was by ſucceſſe of time brought in by degrees; and is a great ornament, and withal giues great ſtrength and worth to Religious courſes; ſo that they not only yeald nothing to the ancient Inſtitutes, but for matter of order and forme haue ſomething in them, that is better and the more to be eſteemed.

How Religious Orders haue deſcended to our times.

CHAP. XXII.

HITHERTO we haue beheld, as I may ſay, the birth and yonger yeares of Religion; and it cannot be but to our much greater contentment, to ſee it now in the perfect growth, and as it were in man's eſtate; to which, we may truly ſay, it came about the yeare of our Lord Three hundred and fiftie, when in that Golden Age of *Conſtantine*, al partsof the Church of God began to flouriſh; and this not the leaſt among them.

S Antonie the chief aduancer of Religious men. 2. The principal Authour of this ſo notable encreaſe, was that great *S. Antonie*, whome the wiſdome of God may be ſayd to haue furniſhed with plentie of al heauenlie guifts for this paticular end. For it is euident, that before his time there were Monaſteries and Religious people, by that which *S. Athanaſius* writeth in his Life, that he began this ſpiritual warfare in Monaſteries, vnder the conduct of others, and in companie of them, by whoſe example and imitation, *as he writeth*, he indeauoured ſo to benefit himſelf, that he became more perfect in vertue euerie day then other, and picked out of euerie one

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of them some spiritual profit, as bees doe their honie. And stil burning with desire of greater perfection, he attempted to transport himself and his disciples after him more inwardly into the Desert, and further from the companie of men; and his sanctitie growing conspicuous to the world, it made such impression and change in mens minds, through the example which he gaue them, that the Deserts of *Armenia*, and *Scythia*, and *Nitria*, & of both the *Thebais*, and al *Ægypt* was filled with Monasteries gouerned by his wisdome and direction, he being as it were a general Father of them al.

3. We may wel say, that innummerable Monks and Religious people haue been deriued from this fountaine of Monastical discipline, and among others that renowned *Hilarion* (an other *S. Anthonie* in a manner) who, as *S. Hierome* writeth, was the first Founder of Monasteries in *Palestine*, wheras in al *Syria*, there had not been a Monk seen before him. *He* (sayth *S. Hierome*) was the Authour and Founder of this Conuersation in that Prouince; Our Lord IESVS had in *Ægypt* old *Antonie*; in Palestine he had yong Hilarion. And by his example there began to be Monasteries without number, and euerie one did striue to come to him, to receaue from him documents of heauenlie conuersation; which he perceauing gaue the prayse to the grace of our Lord, and exhorted euerie one to haue regard to the benefit of their soule. Thus writeth *S. Hierome* of *S. Hilarion*. S. *Hilarion*. S. *Hierome* in his life.

4. About the same time in Greece, *S. Basil*, surnamed also deseruedly the *Great*, without any relation (for ought I know) to *S. Antonie*, but meerly out of his owne disposition and iudgement, did wonderfully aduance and set forward monastical Discipline, himself being a professour of it. And we may see it by what he writeth of himself in one of his Epistles. We are accused, *sayth he*, that we haue men with vs that follow their deuotions, that haue renounced the world, and al temporal cares; which cares our Sauiour likeneth to *thornes not suffering the word to bring forth fruit*; they carrie about them the mortification of IESVS in their bodies; and taking-vp their Crosse, they follow God. As for my owne part, I would willingly giue my life to haue such iniuries layd to my charge, and to haue people with me that by my direction should haue made choice of such exercises. I heare indeed that in Ægypt there be men of such rare vertue; and perchance in Palestine they liue directly according to the Ghospel. I vnderstand also, that in Mesopotamia there be perfect and blessed men. But we are children in comparison of the Perfect. S. *Basil*. *Ep. 65.*

5. But it was not in number only that *S. Basil* aduanced Religious Institutes, but much more by Rules and Constitutions. For wheras before him, there was no other certaintie of their orders and manner of gouernment, then what either the inward vnction of the Holie-Ghost did inspire euerie one, or the Gouernours, whom they had chosen, would bid them doe by word of mouth; *S. Basil* was the first, that drew certain Rules and orders, in themselues most holie, and most vseful for the direction of that manner of Conuersation. He appointed a time for Probation, at the end wherof they should al oblige themselues by Vow; he set downe a certain method of liuing, as what exercises of vertue they were to performe, what they were to auoyd as hurtful; he appointed certain punishments proportionable to the faults of the offenders; and ordered euerie thing with that wisdome and S. *Basil* the first that wrote Rules.

moderation, that they were not only presently admitted-of by al, and put in practise, but to this verie day the Monasteries of Greece and of al the Eastern parts haue no other Rule, but *S. Basil's*.

6. He brought also an other thing to passe; to wit, that wheras before, al that did make profession of a Religious course, did attend only to themselues, and to their owne priuate spiritual benefit, and therefore of purpose did shunne companie, as an enemie to their desired quiet; he brought this Diuine Philosophie as it were from the Third heauen, and planted it neerer citties and townes, that their Neighbour might reape fruit and commoditie by it. *S. Gregorie Nazianzen* doth cleerly testifye it of him in these words: To the end he might not only benefit himself but others, he first of al men thought of Monasteries, and brought that ancient and solitarie fashion of liuing of Monks, to a certain methode and order, neerer to Religion. For perceauing, that they, who liued among others in the world, though they were careful to obserue a kind of Monastical abstinence, yet benefited others, and not themselues so much, because of force they must dwel in the midst of manie euils, contrarie to a quiet and perfect life; and on the other side, that they, who liue farre remote from companie in the Desert, are more constant in their good resolutions, and more vnited to God, but yet are but for themselues, because they want experience, and haue no communication at al with others; he laboured to ioyne both these kinds of life in one. To which purpose he ordered the building of Monasteries not farre from companie, and would not haue them wholy separated; that when Charitie required, they might be at hand by reason of their neernes; and be otherwise confined within their owne limits, to the end that companie might not hinder their quiet; by which means they should neither be depriued of the employment which Charitie towards others would cal them vnto, nor their employment againe become vnprofitable, by reason of the multitude, but one help an other; and the life of Monks become fruitful by conuersation with them that liue in the world; and they againe learne quiet, and contemplation, and wisdome of the Monks; and be as the sea and the land embracing and helping one an other. Al this is out of *S. Gregorie Nazianzen*.

The first that brought Religious people to help their Neighbour.

S. Gregorie Naz. orat. de S. Basil.

7. At this time when the Grace of God was so plentiful in aduancing Religious courses in Greece and in al the Eastern parts; we must not think that the rest of the world was depriued of this glorie. For *S. Augustin* writeth that he saw a Monasterie at Milan, which *S. Ambrose* (as he speaketh) nursed vp; and *S. Augustin* himself (as *Possidonius* relateth) did found Monasteries of men and women in Africk, which manie doe think (& among the rest *S. Antoninus*) that they were of the Institute, which now adayes we cal the Heremits of *S. Augustin*. For thus he writeth: *S. Augustin*, before he was Bishop, built a monasterie in a wood neer the cittie of Hippo; which monasterie both in his life-time, and after his decease grew to great greatnes, and diuided itself into manie branches in the bordering citties, but after some yeares was by the Introde, which the Barbarians made, dispersed; & some of the Religious came into Italie, others went to other places, til *Innocent* the Fourth, who was Pope in the yeare One thousand two hundred fourtie three, finding diuers other Heremits dispersed heer & there, called them al togeather, and ioyning them both

Monks in the West.

S. August. 1. conf. 6.

S. Anton. 3. p. tit. 24. 14.

The Augustin friars, or Hermits of Saint Augustin.

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in Habit and Habitation, incorporated them to the Rule of S. *Auguſtin*, and withal commanded them to liue in Citties, that they might alſo benefit their Neighbour; which courſe his ſucceſſour *Alexander* the Fourth did follow much more eagerly, being moued therunto by a heauenlie Viſion, S. *Auguſtin* appearing vnto him with a great head, and a litle bodie; by which addition this Religion encreaſing dayly more and more doth flouriſh, as we ſee this day, in the Church, and in the midſt of the Citties keepeth the name of Hermits, which it had from the beginning, deriued from the ſolitude, which it profeſſed. But this hapned much later; wherfore let vs returne to the times of S. *Auguſtin*.

8. S. *Hierome* inſinuateth, that much about that time Religious courſes were brought vp to Rome, or rather notably encreaſed there. For writing in commendation of *Marcella*, he ſayth, that wheras before, the purpoſe of Monks was not knowne in Rome, and no bodie durſt by reaſon of the noueltie of it take vpon him that name, which as then was, in the opinion of the vulgar, vile and contemptible; *Marcella* hauing learned the manner of life of S. *Antonie* yet liuing, and of the Monaſteries of *Thebais*, by meanes of the Prieſts of *Alexandria*, that were in baniſhment for feare of *Arius*, was not aſhamed to make profeſſion of that which ſhe knew was pleaſing to Chriſt. And erecting a Monaſterie in a place without towne, by her example there grew to be manie Monaſteries of Virgins, and an infinit multitude of Monks; inſomuch that the multitude of them made that glorious, which before was contemptible. S. *Hieronie Epiſt.* 16.

9. Vpon theſe foundations Religiòn ſtil grew more and more, and deſcended to S. *Benedict* his times, which was a little more then a hundred yeares after; and we may gather it by that which S. *Gregorie* relateth of him, to wit, that *Romanus* a Monk before him, brought him his meate to the denne where he was retired; and that he was choſen Abbot by a whole Monaſterie, when the Abbot therof was deceaſed; whereby we may ſee, that there were diuers Monks in Italie before S. *Benedict*, where notwithſtanding he is deſeruedly called the Father and Patriarch of of Monks, becauſe he did rayſe Monaſtical diſcipline to ſo great a height of ſanctitie, and eſteeme of wiſdome, that he may be in a manner ſayd to haue been the Authour of it. For hauing begun his Order in Monte-Caſſino in the yeare Fiue hundred and twentie (as we find recorded) he founded, as it were in an inſtant, twelue Monaſteries in Italie, and out of them drew other branches into France by S. *Maurus*, into Sicilie by S. *Placidus*, and by others into other places. And he did not only ſtore Religion with an infinit number of ſubiects, but reformed the Orders of it. For he wrote a Rule which is yet extant and in practiſe, ſo ful of wiſdome, that S. *Gregorie* ſpeaking in commendation of it, calleth it very truly *perſpicuous in words, rare in diſcretion*. Inſomuch that as the Eaſt doth honour S. *Baſil*, ſo the Weſt doth honour S. *Benedict*, as the Authour and Father of Religion. S. *Benedict*. S. *Gregorie* 2. *diſt.* c. 2. & 3. S. *Gregorie* 2. *diſt.* 36.

10. Out of this root, which he planted, diuers branches of ſeueral Families haue ſprung, embracing the ſubſtance of the Inſtitute of S. *Benedict*, but reforming, or adding, or ſlightly changing ſome things, and differing ſomewhat from it.

11. The firſt and moſt ancient among them is the Order of *Cluny*, which was begun in the yeare Nine hundred and thirteen, by *Odo* Abbot of Cluny, The Order of Cluny begunne by Odo.

and from him taketh the name. For the Institute of *S. Benedict* growing to decay, as al other things naturally doe in time, he being eminent both in learning and holines of life, endeauoured to restore it to the former perfection, and effected it. By whose example most of the Abbots of Italie, Spayne, Germanie, and England applyed themselues to the reforming of their Monasteries with like successe and fruit, and vniting themselues together, and concurring in one spirit, the authoritie of the Pope helping also therunto, they had a meeting euerie yeare, wherin they aduised and resolued vpon such things, as might conduce to the maintenance of Religious discipline; and the change was so notable for the better, that it is obserued, that there were two thousand Monasteries restored and reformed.

Camaldula. 12. A branch of the same Institute is the Order of *Camaldula*, founded by *S. Romualdus*: who about the yeare of our Lord One thousand, seating himself in the Mount *Apennine*, to the end there to follow a course of pennance and Religion, made such a change in the harts of men by the example and admiration of his sanctitie, that (as we find recorded) it was thought, that the whole world would haue become Religious, vnlesse he had hindred it. And there were so manie Monasteries built euerie where according to his Rule, that it may be in a manner accounted a new Order.

Valle-Vmbrosa. 13. The Order which is called of *Valle-vmbrosa* had the like beginning and successe, seauentie three yeares only after that of *Camaldula*. *Iohn Gualbertus* was the beginner of it, who not only pardoning his enemie, whom he had in his power to kil (in regard he besought him by the Passion of Christ who suffered as that day, that he would spare him) but louingly embracing him, and telling him, that from that day he would take him for his owne brother, whome the other had killed; this fact of his was so highly pleasing to our Sauiour, that coming presently into the next Church, and praying before the image of a Crucifix which was of wood, the head of the Crucifix bowed downe vnto him, as it were, thanking him, and the noyse of the crack, which the wood gaue, was playnly heard by those that were present. And withal God planted in his hart a desire of being Religious; and first he retired himself, and beganne a Religious course in his owne house, and afterwards in the Valley aforenamed, a place as then but meane and obscure, but not long after much renowned for the vertue of this blessed man. And his Order grew great in time, and diffused itself into manie branches.

The Cistercians. 14. But the *Cistercian* Order is one of the noblest of them al, and the beginning therof as noble. In the yeare One thousand ninetie eight, in the raigne of *Henrie* the Fourth Emperour, and *Philip* the First King of Erance, *Robert* Abbot of *Molismes*, finding that his Monks grew disorderlie by reason of the number of them, and of their great wealth, aduising with some of them that were more vertuously giuen (to the number of one and twentie, as it is recorded) transported himself to *Cabillon*, the chief cittie of Burgundie in those dayes; and chose his dwelling in a solitarie place called *Cisteaux*, from which the Order is named the *Cistercian* Order. But the Monks of *Molismes* reclaming themselues in the meane time, were earnest with *Robert* to returne vnto them; which he did; and placed *Stephen* in his roome at *Cisteaux*, a man feruently giuen, and, as it is thought, the Authour of that separation.

Their

Their Companie was very ſmal, and continued ſo for fifteene yeares, that it was likelie to come to nothing; til *S. Bernard* inſpired by God, coming vnto it, did not only vphold it, but made it wonderfully famous. For he put himſelf into that Monaſterie with thirtie others, wherof three were his owne brethren; and not long after, the fame of his vertuous liuing breaking-forth of that obſcuritie, he drew ſo manie to follow his footſteps, that ſending his brethren and diſciples abroad into the whole world, he founded one hundred and three-ſcore Monaſteries in his owne life-time.

15. Al theſe Families ſprung out of the Rule of *S. Benedict*, which in thoſe dayes did beare al the ſway; inſomuch that in al the Weſtern parts it is holden, that there were no other Monks but they that profeſſed that Rule, til the Charterhouſe-monks began, which was ſome ſixteen yeares before the beginning of the *Ciſtercian* Order; and the origin of them is wel knowne, and famous. For a Doctour of the Law in Paris dying with great opinion both of learning and ſanctitie, as he lay vpon the hearſe, while the Dirige was ſinging for his funeral, and manie aſſembled at it three ſeueral dayes togeather, ſpake alowde, one day *that he was accuſed*, an other day *that he was iudged*, and the third day *that he was condemned*. Wherupon *Bruno* a famous Doctour alſo of the ſame Vniuerſitie, afrighted, turning to his Schollars ſayd: *And who then can be ſaued, vnleſſe he forſake the world?* And preſently betooke himſelf with ſix companiõs to a ſolitarie place about *Grenoble*, eſteeming it the fitteſt ſeate to retire himſelf vnto, from the world. And it was reuealed to *Hugo* Biſhop of that Dioceſe, that their reſolution was from God; for as he lay in his bed, he ſaw (as he thought) the Maieſtie of God deſcending vpon that deſert place, and that himſelf was building a palace for him there, & anone he ſaw as it were ſeauen ſtarres of great brightnes to riſe by litle & litle from the earth in forme of a Coronet, farre vnlike to anie other ſtarres both in faſhion, and ſituation, and motion.

16. The Inſtitute of the *Carmelits*, though it were brought into Italie about a thouſand two hundred yeares after Chriſt, yet learned men doe deliuer, that it is much more ancient; for we find that *Iohn* Patriarch of Hieruſalem, in the yeare Foure hundred and twelue, being of this Order and the head of it, wrote a Rule for it; whereby it appeareth, that it ſhould be yet more ancient then his time. And there want not thoſe (and among them *Waldenſis*, an approued Authour) that are of opinion, that it began in the Apoſtles time in Mount *Carmelus* (and the name ſheweth no leſſe) in a Church which was the firſt, that euer was dedicated to the Bleſſed Virgin our Ladie in this world; and encreaſing in number of ſubiects and houſes through-out al Paleſtine, was diſperſed by the Saracens that ouerranne the coũtrey; & they being rooted-out againe, it flouriſhed as before, much about the yeare One thouſand one hundred. This is moſt certain, that about foure-ſcore yeares after this reſtoring of it, *Albert* alſo Patriarch of *Hieruſalem* (a man learned & wiſe) reſtored the Rule which *Iohn* had inſtituted, & augmented it very profitably; and about the time I ſayd before, Pope *Honorius* the Third bringing diuers of the Religious of that Order into diuers Prouinces of Europe, approued and confirmed their Rule; being wished thereunto by our B. Ladie appearing vnto him in a Viſion, as it is reported; and

The Carmelits or White Friars.

Waldenſis de ſacram. tit. 9. c. 84.

not long after, Pope *Innocent* the Fourth made diuers Decrees in fauour of it, and tooke it into the protection and safegard of the Sea Apostolick. A happie Age, not only for the propagation of this Order, but for the instituting of foure other Orders, to wit; the *Franciscans*, the *Dominicans*, the *Celestines*, and the *Seruites*.

The Franciscans or Gray-Friars.

17. The *Franciscans* began in the yeare One thousand two hundred and twelue. For we find that this yeare *S. Francis* brought his Rule to Pope *Innocent* the Third, and that it was confirmed by him, they being as yet but few of the Order; but it was half a miracle to see how quickly it encreased; insomuch that not long after there met of them at a General Congregation at *Assisi* fiue thousand, and at the self-same time there were fiue hundred more that entred among them; so that in a short time they filled the whole world, and are now so manie of them, that being diuided into three branches, euerie branch of them is so populous, that they may seeme euerie one of them to be a great Order of itself.

The Dominicans or Black-friars.

18. The *Dominicans* haue their name and beginning from *S. Dominick*, who being first a Canon-Regular vnder the Bishop of *Huesca*, laboured hard for ten yeares against the *Heretickes* of Tolouse; and then making some few partakers of his determination, he framed a new Rule and Institute, the end wherof should be to preach the Ghospel, which is the reason they are called *Friars-Preachers*. And they write that it was first cõfirmed by word of mouth by *Innocent* the Third in the time of the Councel of *Lateran*; and afterwards in writing, by *Honorius* the Third, in the yeare One thousand two hundred and sixteen.

The Seruites.

19. Some sixteen yeares after, the *Seruites* began at *Florence*, at the time when the Emperour *Frederick* the Second, being at variance with Pope *Gregorie* the Ninth, and with the Church, wasted the Pope's territorie by al the meanes he could. For it is recorded, that seauen Gentlemen of worth, and wel able to liue, called by a voyce from heauen retired themselues to a hil that was not farre of, and liuing priuate there for some time, were discouered and made knowne to the world by their vertuous life, wherupon many adioyned themselues vnto them; and being afterwards dispersed into seueral Prouinces, are growne to that encrease which we see. They are called *Seruites*, because they particularly professe themselues Seruants and slaues of the Blessed Virgin.

Celestins.

20. Not long after the *Celestines* were instituted by *Peter Morone*. This man, as it is recorded of him, liued manie yeares in the Wildernes; but the austeritie of his life, together with the manie miracles, which he wrought, made him so famous in Italie, and throughout al Europe, that manie putting themselues vnder his conduct, they were distributed afterwards into seueral houses and countryes. And there being at that time a General Councel at *Lions*, and Pope *Gregorie* the Tenth present at it in person, he went thither, and procured his Rule and Institute to be approued by him in the yeare One thousand two hundred seauentie three. But the reason why they are called *Celestines* is, because this very man some twentie yeares after being made Pope, called himself *Celestin* the Fifth; and euer after that name of his remayned to his Order.

Crochet-Friars.

21. We must not let passe the *Crochet-Friars*, the beginnings of which Order two Popes, *Alexander* the Third, and the Sixt, in their seueral Breues, doe deriue from *Clerui*, *S. Peter* his successour; not that they liued in that manner then,

them, which now we see, but that there was in those times a Companie instituted for the entertayning of Pilgrims that were Christians, specially if they were poore; which Companie being impaired by the cruel persecutions of those first Tyrants, and chiefly by *Iulian* the Apostat, *Vrban* the Second restored it in the time, when Christian Princes armed with the signe of the Crosse, went against the Barbarians, and happily recouered *Antioch* and *Hierusalem*. *Alexander* the Third afterwards did them manie great fauours, in regard that in his flight from *Frederick Ænobarbe*, they often and liberally entertayned him in their Hospitals, notwithstanding the sharp orders of the Emperour to the contrarie. Lastly *Pius* the Second in the yeare One thousand foure hundred and three-score, in a Councel at *Mantua*, when he was preparing a voyage to the Holie land, appointed that they should weare a purple Habit (it is not certain wherefore) wheras before they went in ash-coulour.

21. The beginnings of the Order of *Mount-Oliuet* in Italie are also famous. Blessed *Bernard Tolomeus* is sayd to haue been the Authour of it, togeather with two others, whom he stirred-vp with an eloquent Oration, which in the Academie of *Siena*, where he was publick Reader of Philosophie, he made of the Vanitie of the world, as it were bidding it Adieu. For presently they retired themselues from companie to a hil not farre of, which was called *Oliuet* (from which the Order taketh that name) to the end they might with better commoditie attend to a heauenlie life. This was in the yeare One thousand three hundred and twentie. And their feruour & strict liuing soone spred their fame, and drew others to imitate their course of life. Mount-Oliuet.

22. Not long after, to wit, in the yeare One thousand three hundred fiftie six, there began an other Order in the same cittie of *Siena*, called the *Iesuati*. The founder of them was *Ioannes Columbinus*, who is sayd to haue been conuerted by reading the life of *S. Marie* of *Ægypt*, vpon which he had fallen by chance; and suddenly changed therupon, lead a most holie life, ful of good works, and specially of the denial and contempt of himself; when diuers others following the same course, Pope *Vrban* the Fift returning out of France embraced them louingly as a new and tender of-spring of the Church of Christ, and gaue them manie priuiledges. Iesuati.

23. Much about the same time the Order of the *Heremits* of *S. Hierome* sprung vp, which flourisheth chiefly in Spayne and Portugal. *Peter Fernandez* is sayd to haue been the founder of them. For leauing the Court of *Peter* King of *Castile*, in whose fauour he was both for his owne and his father's seruices, he first ioyned himself to certain Heremits, that liued a solitarie life; afterwards togeather with some others, to whom he communicated his resolution, he tooke vpon him the Rule which *S. Hierome* first began in the cittie of Bethleem, and was afterwards continued for a long time, but as then decayed; and this he did first in the Prouince of *Toledo*. Then coming to *Rome* he brought this his new Rule to *Gregorie* the Eleuenth, who was then Pope, in the yeare One thousand three hundred eightie foure, which when it was confirmed by him, it quickly encreased in number of subiects and houses. Heremits of Saint *Hierome*.

24. After these againe there arose the *Minimes*, about the yeare One thousand foure hundred and fiftie; people that in their life and Rule professe the humilitie, which their name maketh shew of. The head and Authour of this Minimes.

Order was *Francis* of *Paula* (a towne in *Calabria*) a man rare for Vertue, and as rare for a kind of facilitie, which he had of working miracles; so ordinarie with him, that we may say, he did them alwayes at his pleasure. Wherfore it is no wonder that his Order also graced with such a Founder, doth flourish so in Italie and Spayne, and chiefly in France, and is so conspicuous in the world, that it may deseruedly stand in comparison with those that are more ancient.

Of the Religious Orders of the Clergie.

CHAP. XXIII.

IF that be true, which we haue sayd aboue of the manner of life, which the Apostles held, and of the perfection professed in those times, as it is most certain; there was not only anciently a Religious Order of Clergie, but absolutly the first Religious men that euer were, were of the Clergie. For seing Religion consisteth in three Vowes, which I haue often mentioned, and both Reason and Authoritie conuinceth that the Apostles made them; why may we not say, & indeed openly maintaine, that they were Religious, and that Religious courses haue their origine & beginning from them. And vpon the like certain grounds, we may also affirme the same almost of the whole Clergie of those dayes; for taking example by the Apostles, it was wholy framed and bred-vp to the like perfection. And as for Chastitie there is no doubt to be made, but they did vow it, when they tooke Holie Orders; for though some tooke Orders, that had their wiues yet liuing, yet (as *Medina* and manie others affirme and proue) they were wont in that case to imitate the Apostles, who (as we sayd before) did voluntarily barre themselues of the vse of marriage. And euerie one of them vowed Obedience to his Bishop: wherof among other proofes, we haue this euident signe, that, as *Sulpitius* recordeth, *S. Hilarie* hauing taken an affection to *S. Martin* by reason of his vertuous disposition, could think of no stronger meanes to oblige him, and bind him to his seruice, then by putting him into Holie Orders. And *S. Gregorie* obserueth, that euen in his time it was stil a custome in *Rome*, that, in whatsoeuer Church a man had taken Orders, it was not free for him afterwards to departe from it. And both these things are to this day in vse in holie Church. For they that take Holie Orders, are obliged by solemne Vow to liue chaste, and they expresly promise Obedience to their Bishop: though vse and practise hath giuen a large scope to this second Vow; for wheras in those dayes they obeyed their Bishop exactly in al things, now they are obliged but in very few. But the Vow of Chastitie hath now as much force among them, as it hath among Religious people; and maketh their marriage not only vnlawful, but absolutly voyde. As for Pouertie, if we regard that, which is now in vse, it were hard to proue it; but if we cast our eye vpon that which was anciently practised, nothing is more cleer. For anciently it was the order, that the Clergie should yeald vp their liue-lode, if they had anie, and possesse nothing in priuate

The Clergie were at first Religious men.

Medina lib. 2 de Canon. c. 36.

Sulp. in vit. S. Martin.

S. Gregorie li. 4. Reg. Epist. 74.

priuate to themselues. Wherof *S. Hierome* giueth good testimonie, yealding this for the reason, why from the beginning of the Church the Clergie did shaue their crownes; to signifie, *sayth he*, the casting-of al temporal things; because contenting themselues with food and cloathing, they ought to haue nothing proper, but al things common.

2. *S. Prosper*, an ancient writer, reporteth the same. It is fitting, *sayth he*, to haue possessions of the Church, & to contemne one's owne, for the loue of perfection. For the possessions of the Church are not our owne but common; & therefore euerie one that contemneth his owne, forsaking or selling that which he had, if he be chosen Prelat of a Church, he is made steward of whatsoeuer the Church hath. And bringeth the example of *S. Paulina* and *S. Hilarie*, who selling their patrimonie, distributed the money among the poore, & being afterwards both of them created Bishops, did carefully menage the Church-liuings. *Prosp. lib. 1. de vita cont. c. 9.*

3. That the Clergie did liue in common, may be proued both by what we haue sayd, and by the Epistle of *S. Clement* Pope to the Clergie of Hierusalem, where he sayth: It is necessarie for euerie one to liue in common, but specially for them that desire to serue God, and to imitate the life of the Apostles, and of their Disciples. *S. Gregorie* also writing to *S. Augustin*, willeth him to bring in among the Clergie of the Church of England (which was then budding) the manner of conuersation which was practised by our fore-fathers in the Primitiue Church, when no bodie called anie thing his owne, but the possessions, which they had, were al common among them. And among the Canons of *Eugenius* the Second, we find a Decree commanding, that the Clergie should haue one Refectorie, one Dormitorie, and so of the rest of the Offices. Finally that they were obliged to these things by Vow, Pope *Vrban* testifyeth in his Epistle *to al Bishops*, when after diuers other things, directing his speach to the Clergie, he sayth thus: Whosoeuer among you hath vndertaken a common life, and vowed that he hath nothing proper, let him take heed that he make not his promise voyd, but keepe carefully that which he hath promised God, that he may not heape vpon himself damnation, but merit; because it is better not to vow, then not to performe his Vow. The Clergie did liue in common. *C. 21. q. 1. c. Dilectissi S. Greg. in respons ad August. 12. q 1. c. necessaria.* And did vow it. *Refertur 12. q. 1. c. simus.*

4. By al which we may see, that in those dayes either al the Clergie, or in a manner al, specially they that did ayme at greater perfection, did make these three Vowes, and consequently were truly Religious men. In which also Diuines doe agree; and in particular *Medina* (a learned Authour handling this question of purpose) bringeth manie proofes for it, and among others, confirmeth it by the name of Canons which is yet in vse, and is as much to say, as Regulars. And moreouer he sayth, that the case of the Parish-Priests was also the same, and that it was not free for them neither to possesse anie thing as their owne; but that in regard they must necessarily liue at large in their Parish, and could not be with the communitie among the rest, they were exempted; much after the manner that now adayes Monks are, when by command of their Superiours they are sent to gouerne a Parish. Thus he; and addeth that Pouertie, in which Religion consisteth, was so proper to the Clergie, that it was rather by sufferance, that they began to haue anie thing proper. And proueth it by that saying of *S. Augustin*, who in one of his Sermons of the Common life of the Clergie sayth, that *heertofore* he was *Medina lib. 5. de continent. c. 10.* Canons. Parish-Priests. *Aug. t. 2. de com. vita. refertur. q. 12. c. certis.*

„ of a mind not to take anie into the Clergie, but those that would leade their life
„ in common; but afterwards he altered his mind, least (which was worse) anie
„ through hypocrisie & dissembling should breake the Rule, and not satisfye his
„ promise; and therfore from thence forward he would admit a man into the Clergie, though he would not liue in common. Out of which *Medina* doth argue, that the nature of the State requireth, that a man should professe Pouertie; and if al did not doe it, it was by sufferance and dispensation.

Two causes of relaxation in the Clergie.

5. And I imagin that the causes of this relaxation might be two: First, the great encrease of the number of the Clergie; for the number of Christians growing to that height, that they could not be holpen by few, and it being also a great ornament to the Church to haue manie Ministers, the feruour and zeale of perfection could not be so wel maintayned in so great a number. An other reason might be, because the farther times grew from the primitiue state of the Church, Charitie and the loue of God grew also more cold among men, self-loue and the affection to priuate commodities taking place; so that it was hard to keepe al the Clergie to that strict denial of al things; and yet some, that had more courrage and more feruour, maintayned it, and so applyed themselues to the functions of the Clergie, that they performed also the offices of Religious people, and kept their wonted orders exactly. *S. Ambrose* commendeth *Eusebius* Bishop of *Vercels* for his diligence in this kind, ordering his Clergie so, that (as he speaketh) he required of them two things togeather: the continencie of the Monasterie, and the discipline of the Church. These being different in themselues, *Eusebius* (of holie memorie) first ioyned togeather in the Western part; & dwelling in the cittie, kept the orders of Monks, & gouerned his Church with sobrietie of fasting. For it doth greatly aduance the grace of a Priest, if he bind youth to the practise of Abstinence and the rule of Integritie, and barre them that dwel in the cittie, from the vse and conuersation of the cittie. Thus speaketh *S. Ambrose* of *Eusebius*; making him, if we marke it, not absolutly the first Authour of this manner of liuing, but the erectour of it in the Western parts only; for it flourished in other Countries long before, as we find by that which *Possidonius* writeth in the Life of *S. Augustin*, where he telleth vs, that *S. Augustin* practised it, erecting a Monasterie within his Church, where al liued at common charge, and did eate at the same table, and no bodie called anie thing his owne; and moreouer addeth, that this fashion of liuing was first brought-in vnder the holie Apostles. Pope *Pius* the Fourth speaketh to the same effect, when in a Bulle of his decreing certain things for the honour of the Canon-Regulars, he giueth this reason: because this Order was instituted by the Apostles. *Nauarre* cites the Bulle, and addeth manie things to like purpose. So that *S. Augustin* also was not so much the first Founder as the restorer or Reformer of this Religious Order of the Clergie; and I meete with no man, that maketh anie doubt, but that the Order, which he did institute, is the same Order of the Canon-Regulars, which euen now I mentioned. For when *S. Augustin* dyed, and the cittie of *Hippo* was destroyed by the *Wandals*, *Gelasius*, an African borne, came to Rome with some Religious of that Order, and himself being afterwards made Pope, his Companions perseuered in the Religious course, which they had begunne; and the Church of Lateran was assigned them for their dwelling. Wherof we finde good testimonie to this

S. *Ambrose Epist.* 2. 5.

Possidonius in vita Augustin.

Pius 4. *bulla* 1. *incipit: sedis Apost. apud Nauarrum in c. statuimus* 19. *q.* 3. *in* 6. *&* 7. *seu in* 4. *Comm. de Regu.* 10. 1. *sup oper.*

this day both in the ruines of that Monaſterie, and in ſome of the Popes Bulles, and ſpecially of Pope *Eugenius* the Fourth. And it is vpon record, that their employments were to ſay Maſſe, to preach to the people, to miniſter the Sacraments vnto them, and finally to performe al Prieſtlie and Apoſtolical functions, liuing in common togeather vnder Obedience to one Prouoſt or Superiour, and hauing nothing of their owne. And it is certain, that *Boniſacius* the Eighth was the firſt that remeued theſe Canon-Regulars from their houſe at Lateran, after they had had poſſeſſion of it neere vpon eight hundred yeares, and placed Secular Canons in their roome, giuing euerie one of them his part of the rents, which before were in common. And we haue manie proofes, that this Inſtitute was not only in vſe in Rome, but in moſt countries beſides. For *S. Dominick* in Spayne was firſt for a time a Canon-Regular, and the Life and Epiſtles of *S. Bernard* ſhew that there were manie of them in his time in France; for he relateth diuers things of them. There was therefore in thoſe dayes this onlie Inſtitute of the Regular Clergie, for ought we know, to wit, the Canon-Regulars, as I haue ſayd. But in this our Age, by the ſpecial prouidence and wil of God, diuers other Orders haue ſprung-vp much of the ſame kinde, and much to the aduancement of the Church, al of them labouring in the cultiuating therof, as in the Vineyard of our Lord, ſo much the more feruently and chearfully, and with more fruit, by how much they come vnto it with new ſtrength and vigour, and, as freſh work-men, leſſe wearied.

And their employments.

S. Bernard Ep. 3. & 81.

6. In which number we may with reaſon place this our Societie of IESVS; which God in theſe latter dayes hath brought to light, to wit, in the yeare One thouſand fiue hundred and fourtie; for in that yeare it was confirmed by Pope *Paulus* the *Third*, and eſtabliſhed by decree of the Apoſtolick Sea. We wil here ſay nothing of the Founder therof, nor what beginnings it had, becauſe things are freſh in memorie, and knowne to euerie bodie. Only I wil ſhew briefly, after what manner it endeauoureth to couple Religious diſcipline with the functions of the Clergie, embracing as much as may be, that which is beſt and principal in both the kinds of life. For whereas Religion chiefly conſiſteth in Pouertie, in forſaking the world, in departing from fleſh and bloud, and in perpetual Obedience (which we may worthily cal the principal part of Religion, and as it were the Eſſence of it) the Societie of IESVS embraceth al theſe things, and in particular ſo exact Obedience, that it bendeth al the forces it hath to the perfect practiſe and exerciſe therof; yet it maketh account, that Obedience and to be eminent in the perfect abnegation of our wil and iudgement, is the peculiar marke, whereby the true and right children and ſubiects of the Societie are knowne and diſtinguiſhed from al others. Now as for the manner of liuing of the Clergie, if we wil goe ſolidly to worke, we muſt chiefly haue an eye to that, which was inſtituted by the Apoſtles, as our heauenlie Maiſters, which doubtles was very different from that, which now we ſee. For anciently it attended to the functions only of teaching and preaching the Ghoſpel, of inſtructing the ignorant in Chriſtian doctrine, of miniſtring the Sacraments, and, in a word, to purge, illuminate, and perfect the ſoules of others; by which threefold employment the Eccleſiaſtical Hierarchie reſembled the Angelical, which is in heauen. The ſame kind of exerciſes, our Order hath vndertaken to put in practiſe, next after the ſauing

The Societie of IESVS.

and perfecting their owne soules, attending to help and perfect their Neighbour, by word and worke, in priuate and in publick, at home and abroad, finally by al conuenient meanes that may be. Neither is it contrarie to the ancient practise of the Clergie, that in our Schooles we apply ourselues to the teaching of children. For we finde it decreed in ancient Councels, that Priests and Monks should haue schooles in their Monasteries and Churches, where the Faythful might send their children. And S. *Basil* moouing this verie question, *Whether it be fitting, that among the Monks there be some Maisters to teach Secular children*, he answered that it is very fitting and agreable to the Ghospel, so it be done to the end, that togeather with learning, they be taught deuotion and the feare of God. And there want not examples of manie Monks and Monastical Orders, that haue had Schooles, not only for their owne, but to teach secular people also; whereby this, which I say, may be confirmed. And so much concerning our Societie.

Schooles.

Syn. 9. c. 4. & 5. Conc. Mog. c. 41. S. Basil. reg. Prou. q. 291.

7. But to returne to the Orders of the Regular Clergie in general, we may easily iudge by what hath been said, how laudable a thing it is, to couple two so profitable and excellent courses togeather, and how much it is to be desired. For the Order of the Clergie, and the Order of the Monks, are as it were two eyes, or two hands, or armes of the Church, whereof it hath vse in al occasions, both of them noble and excellent in themselues, and so fraught with their seueral commodities belonging to each of them, that whosoeuer shal come to compare them togeather, wil finde that they surpasse and are surpassed againe by one another. For in the Clergie the labour and industrie, wherewith they employ themselues towards their Neighbour, is remarkable, their diligence in preaching and opposing themselues to the power of the Diuel, and aduancing the glorie of God, their Priestlie Order and function, and the handling of the sacred Mysteries belonging thereunto. In Monks we admire their Pouertie, hauing nothing, possessing nothing; the brotherlie loue and louing charitie and vnion which is among them, being, as it were, of manie members one bodie; the mutual assistance, which they haue by one another; their Obedience to Superiours, together with the lowlines of the state itself, and humilitie and other fruits, which Obedience bringeth. So that each of the states hauing manie excellencies proper to themselues, which are not in each other, what an excellent kinde of life must that needs be, which ioyneth them both togeather, and enioyeth the excellencies of them both, togeather with the care of their owne soules, which is proper to Monks, attending also to the benefit and perfection of their Neighbour, which is the busines of the Clergie? And so much the more, because the ioyning of them togeather bringeth also more plenciful fruit in them both, then when they are exercised seuerally. For God doth bestow his graces in greater abundance, when they are directed to the aduancing of his glorie in others; & (ordinarily speaking) the nearer the instrument of these spiritual effects is conioyned with God the principal Cause & Authour of them, the more benefit they worke in our Neighbour; and the coniunction is wrought by vertue, and chiefly by Humilitie and Obedience, both which belong intrinsecally to a Religious State.

The state of the Clergie, and the state of Monks compared

8. But let vs spare our owne, and heare how S. *Ambrose* discourseth of

of both theſe liues, comparing them togeather. Who maketh anie doubt, ſayth he, but that theſe two, to wit, the functions of the Clergie, and the orders of Monks, are to be preferred before al the earneſt deuotion, which is practiſed among Chriſtians? the exerciſes of the Clergie being ordayned to ciuil and humane conuerſation; the Monks accuſtoming themſelues to abſtinence and patience. They are ſeated, as it were, in the open theater of the world; theſe liue priuate and ſecret: euerie bodie's eyes are vpon them, theſe are hidden from euerie bodie. Therefore that noble Champion ſayth: We are made a ſpectacle to this world. They are in the race, theſe are within the liſtes. They ſtriue againſt the confuſednes of this world, theſe againſt the deſires of the fleſh. They conquer the pleaſures of the bodie, theſe doe ſhunne them. Their life is more pleaſing, this is more ſafe; they gouerne, theſe reſtraine; yet both denye themſelues, that they may be *Chriſt's*, becauſe it is ſayd to the perfect: He that wil come after me, let him denye himſelf and take vp his Croſſe, and follow me. That life therefore fighteth, this ſtandeth aloofe; that ouercometh the allurements, this auoydeth them; that triumpheth ouer the world, this banniſheth it; that crucifyeth, or is crucifyed to, the world, this doth not know it; that abideth more aſſaults, and therefore the victorie is the greater; this falleth ſeldomer, and preſerueth itſelf more eaſily. Thus S. *Ambroſe*, whereby we may clearely ſee that which I ſayd a litle before, how rare that courſe of life muſt needs be, where the excellencies of both theſe ſtates are vnited togeather, ſeing that ſeuerally they haue ſo manie commendations in them, that it cannot but be an excellent thing to embrace either of them. And doubtles it is a hard peece of buſines, and a maiſter-worke to conioyne them; but nothing is hard to God, *with whome no word is impoſſible.* S. *Ambroſe.*

Of the great multitude of Religious, and Religious Orders.

CHAP. XXIV.

HAVING diſcourſed briefly of the beginning and progreſſe of Religious Orders, we wil ſpend a litle time in conſidering the number and varietie of the branches of them. For who is there, that calling to minde the infinite multitude of them, that haue profeſſed this kinde of life in al Ages almoſt of the Ghoſpel, wil not greatly admire and be euen aſtoniſhed? We haue ſpoken before of S. *Antonie*, whoſe fame and example drew ſo manie to forſake the world, & giue themſelues to a ſolitarie life, euen while the ſuperſtitiō of the Heathēs was yet ſtrong in al coūtries, that we may truly ſay of that Age with the Royal Prophet: *Thou wilt bleſſe the crowne of the yeare of thy benignitie, the fairenes of the deſert wil grow fat, & the hillocks wil be gyrt with exultation.* Let vs ſet before our eyes that which S. *Athanaſius* writeth of him and his diſciples in his Life. Vpon the hil, ſayth he, there were Monaſteries like tabernacles, ful of Celeſtial Quiers of people that ſung therein S. *Antonie.* *Pſ.* 64. 12. S. *Athan. in vita Antonij.*

„ time in singing of Psalmes, in reading, and praying; and occupying a great ex-
„ tent of land, they made as it were a towne among themselues, seuered from
„ worldlie conuersation. Who is there, that beholding such a world of Monks,
„ and taking into his consideration that heroical companie of people agreing
„ in one, where there was neuer an il-one, no detraction, but a multitude of fol-
„ lowers of Abstinence, and a continual striuing in matter of Pietie and good
„ offices, would not presently breake forth into those words? How good are
Numb. 24. 5. „ thy houses, *Iacob*, and thy tabernacles, *Israel*? as woods that giue shadow, as
„ a garden vpon riuers, as tents pitched by God, as Cedars of *Libanus* neere the
„ waters.

S. Hilarion. 2. The like we may say of *S. Hilarion*; who, as *S. Hierome* writeth, founded
S. Hierome in eius vita. about the same time Monasteries in Palestine without number; and of *Macarius* a disciple of *S. Antonie's*, renowned for sanctitie, and a Father of very
S. Macarius manie, that followed his foot-steps. Of *Cariton* also it is recorded, that he
Cariton. built diuers Monasteries in Palestine; and still as he had finished them, he retired
Isidorus. himself further into the desert. We reade that *Isidorus* was gouernour of a thou-
Apollonius. sand Monks in one Monasterie. And *Apollonius* afterwards in the same Monasterie enlarged, had fiue thousand vnder him. And vpon a hil of *Nitria*, about a dayes iourney from Alexandria, there were fiue hundred Monasteries, that stood almost wal to wal, & al of them were directed by one Maister or President. *Palladius* an ancient Authour, and an eye-witnes of manie of these things,
Pallad. in hist. Lauſ. relateth in the historie of his Pilgrimage, that he saw a Cittie, in which there were more Monasteries then Secular houses; so that euerie street and corner ringing with the Diuine prayses, which those seruants of God did sing, the whole Cittie seemed a Church. He also testifyeth, that he saw an infinit multitude of Monks in *Memphis* and *Babylon*, al of them singular for diuers guifts of the Holie-Ghost; and that not farre from *Thebæ* he met with *Ammon*, who
Pacomius. was Father of three thousand Monks. What shal we say of *S. Pacomius*, who flourished about foure hundred yeares after Christ? of whome we reade, that in seueral houses standing not farre asunder from one another, he had seauen thousand disciples; and in the house, wherein himself liued, he had aboue a thousand with him; and al these he diuided into foure and twentie Companies, according to the foure and twentie letters of the Christs-crosse-row, that he might the better take an account of them. *Palladius* also writeth, that he saw
Serapion. *Serapion*, when he had ten thousand Monks vnder him, distributed into seueral
S. Hier in Epitaph. Paulæ. houses. And *S. Hierome* in the Epitaph of *Paula* maketh mention, that when she went into the desert to visit those holie Fathers, there met her (as he speaketh) innumerable troupes of seruants of God; and that she was so taken with that sight, that forgetting her sex, she had a great desire to dwel amidst so manie thousands of Monks. And whose Celle (sayth he) did not she goe into? at whose feete did she not cast her self? she made account, she saw Christ in euerie Saint.

The multitude of Religious women. 3. And as the number of Monks was infinit, the multitude of Religious women was litle lesse; as we finde recorded chiefly by *Theodoret* in the end of his Religious Historie; where he sayth, that there were infinit Monasteries of them throughout al the Eastern parts, in *Palestine*, in *Ægypt*, in *Asia*, *Ponius*, *Cilicia*, *Syria*, and in *Europe* also. Because, sayth he, since our Sauiour was

borne

borne of a Virgin-mother; the freſh fields of Virginitie are euerie where multiplyed.

4. And to the end we may not thinke, that in ſo great a number there was much diſorder and confuſion, as it falleth-out in a throng of people, it wil not be amiſſe to ſet before our eyes that which *S. Hierome* writeth of the order of thoſe times. The firſt thing they agree vpon, *ſayth he*, is to obey their Superiours, and to performe whatſoeuer they ſhal command. They are diſtinguiſhed by tens and hundreds, ſo that euerie tenth man is ouer the nine, and againe the hundredth Superiour hath ten gouernours vnder him; euerie one liues by himſelf alone; but their Celles are cloſe one to another. Their order is, that til the Ninth Houre they gee not to one another, vnleſſe it be the Decurions I mentioned, to comfort thoſe, that are vnder their charge, if anie one of them chance to be troubled in his thoughts. After the Ninth Houre they meete al togeather, they ſing Pſalmes, they reade the Scripture as it is preſcribed them, and when they haue ended their prayers, they al ſit downe; and he, whome they cal their Father, ſtanding in the middle of them, beginneth his ſpeach. While he ſpeaketh, there is ſuch ſilence, that they dare not looke vpon one another, nor ſpit. The commendation of the ſpeaker, be the teares of the hearers; their teares trickle ſoftly downe their cheekes, and their grief breakes not forth into ſighes. Then the meeting breaketh-vp, and euerie compañie ſits downe at board with the Father of it, and they wayte vpon one another by weekes. There is no noyſe, while they are at their meate; no bodie ſpeaketh while he eateth. Then they riſe al togeather, and hauing ſayd Grace, they returne to their Celles. There til euening they diſcourſe euerie one with thoſe of his owne Compañie, and ſay: Did you not marke this man or the other? what a grace he hath? how great his ſilence was? how graue was his carriage? If they perceaue anie bodie to be weake, they comfort him; if feruent in the loue of God, they exhort him to follow it. And becauſe, ſetting aſide the times of publick prayer, euerie one watcheth in the night in his owne Celle, they goe to euerie Celle; and laying their eare, they liſten carefully what they are doing. If they finde anie one more ſlow then others, they doe not rebuke him, but taking no notice that they know anie thing of it, they viſit him oftener; & beginning themſelues firſt, rather encourage then compel him to pray. Thus *S. Hierome* writeth of them, & much more to the ſame effect.

The great order, that was among them. S. *Hier.* 22.

5. Let vs returne to our former diſcourſe of the multitude of them; which we muſt not attribute ſo to the happie fruitfulnes of thoſe times, as to thinke, that with time alſo it ſhrunk away. For we finde the like encreaſe of number in *S. Benedict's* dayes, & alſo in later Ages. *Tritemius*, who liued about the yeare One thouſand foure hundred and foure-ſcore, ſpeaking of the encreaſe of his Order, bringeth for proofe therof, that in his time in the onlie Prouince of *Ments* there were one hundred and twentie foure intire Abbyes yet ſtanding, beſides ten others, that were drawne out of them; ſo that by this one Prouince we may gueſſe at the largenes of the whole Order. And it is no wonder there ſhould be ſo manie, if we conſider, what he addeth further, that there was a time, when they had fifteene thouſand Abbyes, beſides Prioties and other leſſer Monaſteries. *S. Bernard* alſo in the Life of *S. Malachie* recordeth that in Ireland there was

The multitude of Religious in *S. Benedict's* dayes. *Tritem. l. 1. de Viris Illuſtr. c. 2.*

S. *Bernard in vit. Malachiæ.*

Monaſteries in Ireland. a Monaſterie, the head of manie Monaſteries, out of which manie thouſands of Monks had been bred; and ſayth further of it thus: A holie place indeed, and fruitful of Saints, bringing forth abundant fruit to God, inſomuch that one onlie childe of that holie Congregation, whoſe name was *Luanus*, is reported to

Luanus. » haue been himſelf alone Founder of a hundred Monaſteries; which I ſpeake,
» that by this one the Reader may gather, how infinit the reſt of the multitude
» was. In brief, the branches therof haue ſo filled both Ireland and Scotland, as
» we may thinke, that thoſe verſes of Dauid did chiefly foretel of theſe times:
Pſ. 64. 20. *Thou haſt viſited the earth, and made it drunk; thou haſt multiplied to enrich it*; and
» in like manner the reſt, which followeth. And theſe ſwarmes of Saints haue
» not only ſpread themſelues in the Countries aforeſayd, but haue alſo, as it were,
S. Columbanus. ouerflowne into forraine parts. For *S. Columbanus* coming from thence into this our Countrie of France built the Monaſterie of *Luxouium*, and rayſed there a
« great people. And the report is, that the number of them was ſo great, that they
« continued among themſelues the Diuine Seruice day and night, one companie
S. Bernard. ſucceeding ſtil another, that there was not a minut of time free from ſinging prayſe to God. This *S. Bernard* relateth of others; and we may ſay the like of himſelf and his Familie; for in a ſhort time it encreaſed ſo faſt, that it was euen a miracle to ſee it. For while he was at *Clairevaulx*, and his companie was as yet but ſmal, he ſaw in a Viſion a multitude of people of ſeueral ſtates and conditions and in ſeueral attires flocking downe the adiacent hils in that abundance, that the place was not able to contayne them.

The Franciſcan-Fryars. 6. What ſhal we ſay of later Orders, eſpecially of the *Franciſcans*, who ſeeme to haue been particularly bleſſed in this ſuddaine and large propagation of their Order. For whereas they are diſtinguiſhed into ſeueral branches, al deriued from one Founder *S. Francis*, the ſole Order of the *Obſeruantines*, as they cal them, did reckon of late yeares, that they were in number about a hundred thouſand Religious. Finally it wil not be hard to ſhew, that the number of Religious people in theſe our dayes is in a manner infinit; and there is apparent reaſon for it, beſides that we may ſee it with our eyes. For Religious Orders hauing flouriſhed now ſo manie Ages, ſo manie of them anciently inſtituted, ſo manie new ones growne-vp in ſucceeding times, thoſe of-old haue ſtil cõtinued, and the new ones haue been dayly encreaſed to an exceſſiue number. Which makes me think, that the number of Religious people cannot only not be leſſe then anciently it was, when there was ſuch abundance of them, but muſt needs be ſomewhat greater then in thoſe times. It may be, that then the number of them made a greater ſhew, becauſe al that would be Religious, betooke themſelues to two or three Orders (for in thoſe dayes there were no more) now we doe not reflect ſo much vpon the great number of them, becauſe they are diuided into manie Houſes and Families. And what greater commendation can we deſire, or proofe of the excellencie of this kind of life? This being in a manner the ſelfſame bleſſing, which anciently God promiſed to the Iewes, as an euident token of his fauour and preſence with them: *My eye ſhal be vpon you, and I wil make you encreaſe; you ſhal be multiplyed, and I wil confirme my couenant with you.*

The number of Religious in theſe dayes.

Leuit. 26. 9.

5. Yea it is an apparent ſigne of great perfection; for as by courſe of nature, a thing muſt firſt be rightly compoſed, and growne to perfection in the kind

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it is in, before it bring forth an other like vnto it; as we see in al herbes and plants, and more apparently in al kinds of beastes & in men also: insomuch that the abilitie of engendring an other, is a signe of abundant strength & vertue in the thing it engendreth: so in this supernatural kind of life, this excessiue encrease, which I speake of, argueth abundance of great perfection and sanctitie, which were not much to be admired, if Religion were a course of licentiousnes and libertie, which worketh much vpon Sense, and draweth the flesh & bloud after it. But it is quite cõtrarie; for it taketh those things quite away, which are anie way pleasing to our bodie, and prescribeth others, which are opposite to Nature, as pouertie, paynes-taking, contempt of our selues, voluntarie afflictions, and a perpetual carrying of our Crosse. So that this great concourse to Religion generally of yong people, wel borne, and wel bred, in those yeares and that education, which naturally abhorres al hardnes and austeritie, must needs be a signe, that there is something Diuine in Religion; and there can be no other cause giuen of it.

The multiplication of Religious people a signe of perfection in Religious Orders.

8. Moreouer the multitude of Religious Orders is a great ornament to the Church of God. For, as *S. Bernard* doth rightly and prudently obserue, the Church distinguished into so manie different Orders, is as the Queene, of whome we reade in the Psalme, that she was *clad round With varietie*; and in it we behold the *garment of seueral colours*, not of that *Ioseph* who saued *Ægypt*, but of him that saued the world; and a *garment without seame*, in regard both of the inuiolable charitie, and the vniforme difformitie which is in it. And besides this beautie, which *S. Bernard* heer speaketh of, it is a great honour, and a great benefit to the Church. An honour, because as in the Courts of Princes, so in this Court of the Eternal God, which is the Church, it is both honourable and Maiestical to haue seueral degrees of seruants, distributed into seueral ranks, and different both in their attire, and offices; and it doth much set-forth the glorie, and seruice of God, and of CHRIST our Bride-groome; and for the Church his Spouse and Bride, nothing could be more glorious or more magnificent, then to resemble in this so neere the order and varietie of the heauenlie Hierusalem; in which there is not one Order of Angels only, but manie Orders, manie Hierarchies of those Blessed Spirits, like in nature, and yet different in degree and office, conspiring al in the perpetual seruice of God. To which purpose *S. Thomas* sayth both learnedly and wittily, that as in natural things God made such varietie of them, to the end that the seueral qualities and perfections, which are in them, might be the more knowne, the more they were dispersed into manie particulars: So in the order of Grace, the multiplying of States, and Offices, and Functions, makes that the fulnes of Grace, which flowes from CHRIST our Lord and Sauiour, as from the head and fountaine, is cõmunicated to more particulars, & in more differẽt fashions. By which, CHRIST himself is doubtles more glorified; in regard that both the force of his merit, & his liberalitie in giuing, is much more conspicuous to the world by this meanes. And addeth, that the beautie of the Church is also much encreased and graced by it, as we touched before; because Order is of itself a comelie and graceful thing, and Order cannot be but among manie; and he accommodateth that saying of

An ornament to the Church. S. *Bernard in Apol.* *Ps.* 44. 20. *Gen.* 31. 3.

S. *Thomas* 2. 2. q. 183. ar. 2.

the Apostle to this purpose: *In a great house there are not only vessels of gold and siluer, but of wood, and earth.*

2. Tim. 2. 20.

9. And doubtles it is also a great benefit to the Church, because euerie Religious Order proposing some particular thing to itself, at which it chiefly aymeth, it compasseth that, which it hath in hand, better and with more perfection; because it attendeth wholy to that one thing. For manie businesses be of that nature, that they hinder one an other; others are more easily and more sweetly brought to perfection, if they be vndertaken seuerally. Wherefore, as Aristotle sayth, the bodie of man is naturally framed so, as euerie Sense hath a seueral member, and instrument, as it were, appointed for it, to the end they might not hinder one an other, if there were occasion to exercise seueral functions at one time: so in the functions of Grace, it did much more beseeme the bountiful and magnificent wisdome of God to distribute to seueral particulars the work and reward, which he hath appointed. And as it is both decent and beneficial for a Cittie to haue trades-men of seueral professions, some working in wool, others in iron, or timber, and the like, to the end al may haue sufficient to cloath and maintaine themselues; and not only there be seueral trades on foot, but seueral particulars working at one trade and occupation, to the end things may be the more plentiful; so in this spiritual Cittie of God, because very manie things are required to bring a man to Heauen, out of his infinite wisdome he hath prouided, that we should haue plentie of them by meanes of the seueral Religious Orders which are erected.

Varietie of Religious Orders a benefit to the Church.

Aristotle. 2. c. 1.

10. The Church of God stood in need of Prayers, to releeue it in al dangers and difficulties that doe occurre, and for a continual defence and rampire in al occasions. Therefore God prouided certain Orders that should employ themselues wholy in Contemplation of Heauenlie things. It needed Fastings and other austerities, both to appease the wrath of God bent against the sinnes of men, and that they might haue good example to imitate. To which purpose there are other Orders founded, which giue themselues most to this kind of rigorous life, professing it in their outward habit, and long abstinence, and extreame pouertie. It wanted Sermons and teachers, and some that might priuately instruct the people, and heare Confessions. The prouidence of God hath furnished al these, and appointed seueral work-men for them, giuing them both wil and abilitie to performe euerie one his seueral function: whereby this Cittie of God, as I stiled it before, hath al the helps, which can be thought either necessarie or vseful for our eternal welfare.

11. And there is one thing in it worthie to be obserued, because it shewes the goodnes of God very apparently, & his particular prouidence ouer man-kind. For as when a sick man hath lost his stomack, the Physicians as much as they can, doe order such meates for him, as he hath least auersion from, and doe propose of themselues diuers kinds vnto him, that he may take a liking to some one of them: so because secular people through multiplicitie of earthlie businesses had lost their appetite to heauenlie things, and al desire and feeling of them, God of purpose hath prouided, as it were, seueral spiritual dishes, dressed and seasoned by particular men seueral wayes, that they, that could not away with one, might be taken with an other.

Seueral dispositiõs required seueral Orders.

12.

12. An other reaſon alſo might be, and that very neceſſarie, becauſe God out of his infinit goodnes would prouide for al, and as it were prepare the way for euerie bodie, that had a mind to be perfect in vertue. For people are of ſeueral natures and diſpoſitions, ſeueral inclinations and abilities, euen of bodie. Some loue to be alone, others in companie; ſome cannot abide to haue litle or nothing to doe, others cannot away with buſineſſes; ſome haue their health wel, others are but weake, and are not able to take much paynes, or endure anie hardnes, ſo that euerie one of theſe was to be prouided for, and to haue as it were a ſeueral diet by himſelf, which might agree with his health and complexion; and the ſweetnes of the prouidence of Almightie God, which he alwayes vſeth, and neuer fayleth-of in the gouernement of mankind, could not but order it in this manner.

13. And finally his Diuine wiſdome, in this multiplication of Religious Orders, had a reſpect alſo in the prouiſion of new ſupplyes to the Church, which being freſh and intire, might themſelues fight the more valiantly, and encourage others alſo to pul-vp their ſpirits, who were perhaps euen wearie with fighting. For it is ordinarie, that they, who come laſt, are more feruent, and either by their example, or for ſhame, or for other reaſons, others take hart and courrage by ſeing them: by which meanes, feruour is alwayes maintayned in the Church of God; becauſe theſe new ſparkes, which euer and anone are added, keepe life and fire in it.

Of diuers Religious men, that haue been eminent both in learning and ſanctitie.

CHAP. XXV.

AS among the proofes for the Catholick Church it is none of the leaſt, that ſo manie eminent men haue been of it, of whome it is ſcarce credible that anie one, much leſſe that al ſhould erre; ſo in my opinion, we may vſe the like argument in commendation of a Religious courſe, that ſeing ſo manie rare men haue embraced it, their ſole example and authoritie is forcible enough to conuince that it deſerueth al prayſe and honour; ſpecially the number of them being ſo great, that if we would ſtand to reckon-vp al, that haue been conſpicuous for learning and ſanctitie in the whole Church of God, we ſhould without al queſtion find, that the greater part of them al haue been Religious For if Religion brought them to ſo much eminencie in both theſe rare qualities; what can be better, what more beneficial then a Religious ſtate? If being before ſo eminently qualifyed they betooke themſelues notwithſtanding to Religion, this were ground ſufficient to extol a Religious courſe, that men ſo eminent would profeſſe that kind of life; ſuch men, I ſay, as it cannot but be both ſafe and commendable to follow them. And if whole Cities and Countries doe eſteeme it a glorie to haue had ſome one or two

The greateſt part of the moſt eminent men haue been Religious.

among their inhabitants, singular for Learning, or Militarie discipline, and keep them vpon record in their Annals and Chronicles, boasting themselues of them to al posteritie, as if the proweſſe of one particular man did redound to the honour of the whole communitie; how much more reason hath Religion to glorie and boast itself of so manie rare men, that haue been bred in it? For it is but by chance, that a man was borne at Rome, or at Athens; and he, that was borne there, had no part of his choice in it: but these men entred into Religion vpon good consideration & of set purpose, because they knew the good that was in it. So that the more eminent they were, the more honour they did Religion by embracing it; first, because they would neuer haue set their affection that wayes, but that they knew it deserued al loue: secondly, because the renowne, which they brought with them, could not but adde much grace to the dignitie which Religion had before of itself. And the number of them, who became Religious, and were eminent and famous in the world, is without number; wherfore we wil not striue to reckon vp-al, because it would be an endlesse labour, but confine our selues to those, that haue coupled exquisite Learning with singular Vertue; and among these also we wil only pick-out the chiefest in euerie Age; and first the Grecians, then those of the Latin Church.

Serapion. 2. *Serapion* doth first present himself, as ancientest of them al, about the yeare of our Sauiour One hundred ninetie three. It is recorded of him, that being in his youth brought-vp in Monastical discipline, he was afterwards chosen Patriarck of Antioch, the Eighth in order after *S. Peter* the Apostle; and that he was the learnedst and eloquentest man of his time, and wrote manie excellent things for the benefit of posteritie.

Pamphilus. 3. *Pamphilus*, a man not much inferiour in al things, liued not long after, to wit, in the yeare Two hundred and eleuen; he was also accounted the eminentest of his Age for learning; and *S. Hierome* maketh mention of the great Librarie which he had, and being put to death vnder Maximian the Emperour for the Faith of Christ, added the glorie of Martyrdome to the commendation of the Religious life which he had lead.

S. Hierome de scrip. Eccl.

Lucian. 4. Much about the same time, *Lucian*, who from his tender yeares was bred-vp a Monk, was also famous for learning; and, as *Suidas* writeth of him, taught a Schoole at Antioch, out of which manie rare men proceeded; at last the same Maximian hauing caused him to be imprisoned, and commanded that nothing should be giuen him but such meat as had been offered to Idols, he there perished by famine.

Iohn Climacus. 5. *Iohn Climacus* is worthie to be reckoned in the number, who about the yeare Three hundred and fourtie, was a Monk in *Mount-Sinai*; and honoured his times not only with his exemplar life, but with his good exhortations and writings.

Effrem. 6. To whome *Effrem Lyrus* is nothing inferiour; he, whome *S. Basil* was told by reuelation what he was, when he came once to visit him; and being made Priest by him could neuer be perswaded to say Masse, he thought so humbly of himself; yet he performed other Priestlie functions with great applause, teaching and instructing the people with such eloquent perswasions, that he is esteemed to haue had one of the fluentest tongues of his Age. And he wrote also manie things, which (as *S. Hierome* reporteth) were wont to be read

S. Hierome de scrip. Eccl.

publickly

publickly in most Churches of the East, next after the holie Scripture.

7. But none were so conspicuous in those dayes, as *S. Basil* himself, and *S. Gregorie Nazianzen*, both equal in learning, and sympathizing in affection, and in their manner of life. For *S. Gregorie* saylíng to Athens, and being in great danger vpon the sea, vowed to be a Monk, if he might escape with life; which Vow, when at the end of his studies he was resolued to performe, he drew *S. Basil* with him, who had been his familiar friend during that time. And for thirteen yeares togeather giuing themselues in a Monasterie to the studie of Scripture only and of Diuinitie, they aduanced themselues so farre in them both, as the whole world is witnes, by the great benefit, which it feeleth. After which time *S. Basil* was made Bishop of Cesarea; and *S. Gregorie* first of Nazianzen, afterwards of Constantinople. The things which both of them did, and suffered, and haue left written, are so knowne, that it is needlesse to repeate them. Only I thought good to obserue, that they retayned alwayes both of them such a loue to a Monastical life, that *S. Basil* togeather with his Pastoral Charge did euer ioyne the practises of Monastical discipline; and *S. Gregorie* giuing-ouer his Charge, betooke himself to his home, and there gaue himself wholy to the priuate exercise of those, that liue in Monasteries, til his dying-day. And we shal haue no cause to think it strange, if we consider what himself writeth of himself in a certain Oration, wherin he giueth this reason, why refusing a Bishoprick which was offered him, he fled into Pontus; to wit, because he was so much taken with a Religious life, that he could not be perswaded to leaue it; Which life, *sayth he*, I hauing had so great an affection vnto it from my youth, as few, that haue giuen themselues to learning, may compare with me, and hauing vowed it to God when I was in extremitie of danger, and moreouer practised it to these yeares, and encreased more and more in the loue and desire of it by the verie practise, I could not suffer myself to be drawne out of it, no more then out of Sanctuarie.

S. Basil. *S. Gregorie Nazian.* *Vide Ruffin. lib. 11.*

8. Next after these we may reckon *S. Epiphanius*, who was certainly a very rare man. He was borne of Iewish parets; but meeting one day with *Lucian* a Monk, and beholding a Bowle of light descending ouer his head, was so inflamed not only with the loue of Christian Religion, but also of a Monastical life, that resoluing presently vpon it, he would needs put himself into the seruice of God in his Monasterie; and wheras the Monasterie before was of no note or fame, by his presence it came to be greatly renowned. At last being chosen Bishop of a certain place, & putting himself into the first ship he met, with intent to auoyd it, he fel vpon the same pikes which he laboured so much to escape. For arriuing at Salamina in the Iland of Cyprus, where they were treating about choosing a Bishop, by Diuine instinct, and the general voice of al, he was there consecrated Bishop, though with much repugnance and reluctation on his part.

S. Epiphanius.

9. What shal we say of *S. Iohn Chrysostome*, who flourished about this time also, to wit, in the yeare Foure hundred? For we reade of him, that while he liued in a certain priuate Monasterie, an Angel appearing to *Flauianus* Patriarck of Antioch, in a great light, willed him to goe to *Iohn Chrysostom*, and consecrate him Priest; and in like manner at the selfsame houre and time, the Angel appeared to *Iohn*, and willed him to follow *Flauianus*, in whose Church for twelue yeares togeather he did God great good seruice; and from

S. Iohn Chrysostome.

thence being made Archbiſhop of Conſtantinople, he tooke ſo much paynes, & went through ſo manie troubles, what with preaching, what with writing, what with prouiding for the Common good, and withal was ſo toſſed and turmoiled through the enuie of his opponents, & the power of Princes, againſt whome he ſtood with great courage, that dying in baniſhment, and in great miſerie, beſides other titles of honour and commendation which he deſerues, he may worthily be ſtyled a Martyr.

S. Iohn Damaſcen. 10. *S. Iohn Damaſcen* was alſo a very famous man about the yeare Foure hundred and thirtie. His Workes, which are yet extant, doe ſufficiently teſtifye his learning; & his life was ful of holines grounded vpon the deep foundation of Humilitie and Mortification. Al which he oweth to an other Monk, that being led captiue into Syria, became Maiſter to *S. Iohn Damaſcen*; and in ſhort time put al his learning into him.

11. There were others alſo leſſe renowned then the former, but yet were rare men, as *Nilus*, *Iſaacius*, *Eutimius*, *Diademus*, *Anaſtaſius*, and that Beſſarion. great *Beſſarion*, who in the yeare One thouſand foure hundred thirtie nine, was the chief actour in the *Councel* of *Florence*, in the reconciling of the Grecians to the Latin Church, and ſolidly confuted both by word of mouth, and afterwards in writing, the Biſhop of *Epheſus*, that was the only opponent in that buſines. And being deſeruedly eſteemed one of the learneſt men of that Age, and beſides hauing ſo much zeale and pietie, he was made Cardinal by *Eugenius* the Fourth, and did greater matters afterwards for the aduancement of the Church of God. And this ſhal ſuffice concerning the Grecians.

S Hieronie. 12. Among the Latins, thoſe two lights of the Church, *S. Hierome* and S Auguſtin. *S. Auguſtin*, doe by right challenge the firſt place. And as for *S. Hierome*, it is euident, that he was a Monk from his youth, and neuer forſooke that courſe of life; though we find that he trauelled to Rome, and to Antioch, and other places. Inſomuch that when *Paulinus* Biſhop entreated him, and in a manner S. Hierome Ep. 62. compelled him, to take Holie Orders, he yealded, but vpon this condition, that he might not forgoe his Monaſtical profeſſion, as himſelf writeth to *Pammachius*, giuing this reaſon, becauſe he would not haue that taken from him vnder the title of Prieſthood for which he had forſaken the world; wherefore Idem Ep 60. though he were made Prieſt, he neuer ſuffered himſelf to be ranked among the other Clergie, nor would he ſpend his labours in preaching to the people, though he was much importuned vnto it by *Epiphanius*, as himſelf writeth in his Epiſtle to *Iohn* Biſhop of Hieruſalem. Finally growing now in yeares he returned to Hieruſalem, and wheras *Paula* had built two Monaſteries at the Idem Ep 26. Manger of our Sauiour, at her owne coſt and charges, one for women, an other for men, he tooke vp his reſt in this that was for the men, & enlarged it » at his owne expenſes. For to this end (as he writeth) he ſent his brother Paulinian into his owne countrey, to ſel the decayed Mannours which had eſcaped » the hands of the Barbarians, and the reſt of his patrimonie, to the end he might » haue roome to entertayne the multitudes of Monks, which flocked to him » from al parts of the world, and did (as he ſpeaketh) in a manner ouerwhelme him. And we may gather alſo that he had the gouernment of the ſaid Monaſte- Idem in lib. 4. Hier. tie in his hands, by that which himſelf writeth in an other place, that he was forced to diſpatch his Commentaries vpon *Hieremie* by peeces, by reaſon of the

number

number of thoſe that came to the Houſe, and of the charge of the holie Brethren, and of the Monaſterie.

13. As concerning *S. Auguſtin*, though the courſe of life, which he lead, be ſufficiently teſtifyed and knowne by that which ſeueral Authours haue left written, and chiefly *Poſſidonius*, yet it wil not be amiſſe to heare what he ſayth of himſelf. I (*ſayth he*) who write this, haue been much in loue with the perfection of which our Sauiour ſpeaketh to that rich yong man, ſaying: *Goe, ſel al thou haſt, and giue to the poore, and come follow me*; and not by my owne forces, but by the help of the grace of God, I haue performed it. And I know more then anie other man, how much I haue profited in this way of perfection; yet God knoweth it better then I. And I exhort others al I can to the like courſe, and haue companions in it in the name of our Lord, who haue been perſwaded by my meanes. In an other place he ſetteth downe what the Hereticks ſayd of him for this cauſe: *Petilian* with his fowle mouth aduanced himſelf in diſprayſe of Monaſteries and Monks, finding fault alſo with me, becauſe I haue been authour of a courſe of life of this nature; and yet he knoweth not what kind of life it is, or rather maketh as if he knew not that, which is knowne ouer al the world. What therefore can be ſayd of a Religious ſtate that can be more for the honour and credit of it, then that two ſo rare and excellent men haue embraced it with ſuch loue and earneſtnes, as themſelues expreſſe? For if we ſpeake of wit, who was there euer more acute? if of Learning, who more learned? If we ſeeke able Pennes and tongues, where ſhal we find anie more eloquent and copious? if Vertue, who more holie? Finally if we regard Authoritie, none did euer carrie more ſway in the Church of God then they two, nor euer ſhal. *S. Auguſtin Ep. 29. q. 4.* *Idem 3. contra Petilian. c. 40.*

14. *S. Hierome* in one of his Epiſtles, giueth vs to vnderſtand that *S. Paulinus* Biſhop of Nola, a Gaſcon by nation, was alſo a Monk. For writing to him as to a Monk, and not as to a Biſhop as yet, he commendeth him for changing his coat togeather with his mind, and for glorying in pouertie both of ſpirit and of works; & aduiſeth him to auoide the companie of Secular people, and particularly of great men. For how (*ſayth he*) can it be neceſſarie for you to behold the things often, by contempt whereof you began to be a Monk? His owne writings doe ſufficiently teſtifye his learning, and eloquence; and his vertue is admirable in many things, which he did, but chiefly for ſelling himſelf to the Barbarians to redeeme a widdowes ſonne; which fact of his is highly extolled, and not without great reaſon, by *S. Auguſtin*, and *S. Gregorie*. *S. Paulinus.* *S. Hierome Ep. 13.*

15. I haue cauſe to ranke that great *S. Martin* Biſhop of *Tours* with the rare and excellent men of that Age: for though he had not that Learning which people get in Schooles, yet he was ſo ſtored with Learning infuſed from heauen, that he did both preach, and diſpute, and diſcharge al other parts belonging to the office of a Biſhop with great applauſe, which could not be done without Learning. And firſt he began a Monaſterie at *Milan*, and being thruſt out from thence by *Maxentius* the *Arrian*, he erected an other at *Poictiers*, and a third at *Tours* after he was Biſhop. Where, notwithſtanding he was Biſhop (as *Sulpitius* writeth, who was *S. Martin.*

„ inwardly acquainted with him) he obſerued Religious diſcipline to his
„ dying day, togeather with foure-ſcore other Monks, and in extreme ri-
„ gour of pouertie, wheras moſt of them were nobly borne, and daintily
„ bred.

Iohn Caſſian. 16. *Iohn Caſſian* liued much about the ſame time, a Scythian borne, but for his ſtyle to be reckoned among the beſt Latiniſts. Firſt he was ſchollar to S. *Iohn Chryſoſtome*, and afterwards built a monaſterie at *Marſeils*; in the ordering and gouerning wherof no doubt but he put in practiſe al that which he had ſet downe in writing of the ſpeaches and conuerſation of the holie Fathers; which euerie bodie knowes how much perfection it contaynes.

Eucherius. 17. *Eucherius* Biſhop of *Lions*, choſen out of the Monaſterie of *Lerin* to that Paſtoral charge, was famous in his time (which was about the yeare Foure hundred and fiftie) and is yet to this day for the manie learned Books, which he hath left written.

Proſper. 18. *Proſper* Biſhop of *Rhegio* liued about the ſame time, and as Hiſtories report of him, was firſt a Monk, and then Secretarie to Pope *Leo* the Great, & penned manie of his Epiſtles.

S. *Fulgentius of Ruſpa.* 19. Not manie yeares after, to wit, about the yeare Fiue hundred, S. *Fulgentius* was renowned in Africk and throughout the whole world. The paſſages of his life, and his writings, are ful of great learning, which he ſhewed chiefly againſt Hereticks, from whom alſo he ſuffered manie things with great conſtancie, and eſteemed ſo highly of a Religious courſe of life, that he ſtil practiſed it al the while he was Biſhop.

Caſſiodorus. 20. *Caſſiodorus* was ful as famous as he, once a Senatour of Rauenna, and Chancelour to *Theodorick* king of Italie; but deteſting his companie after that he had ſlayne *Boetius*, and forſaking him, and the world alſo, he founded the Monaſterie of *Claſſis* for the Benedictin-Monks, which were new begun, and entred himſelf into the Order; a man rare for al Secular learning while he was in the world, and afterwards alſo for Diuinitie, as his Works which are yet extant doe witnes. He liued in the yeare Fiue hundred and fiftie.

S. *Gregorie the Great.* 21. Who can commend S. *Gregorie* the Great as he deſerueth, who liued ſome fiftie yeares after? or who can ſufficiently admire his ſanctitie, or the abundance of his learning, deriued to the benefit of al poſteritie, in ſo manie Books as he hath left written? But we ſhal haue occaſion to ſpeake of him againe among the Popes.

S. *Gregorie of Tours.* 22. S. *Gregorie* of *Tours* liued alſo in his time and was placed in that Biſhoprick out of a Monaſterie; and there be manie things yet extant which teſtifye his great learning.

Eutropius. 23. In Spayne Religion hath had the honour to haue *Eutropius*, firſt conſecrated to our Sauiour Chriſt from his youth, then Abbot, afterwards Biſhop of *Valentia* about the yeare Six hundred and ten.

Iſidorus. *Ildefonſus.* 24. *Iſidorus* alſo, after he had ſpent much of his life in a Religious courſe, was made Archbiſhop of Seuil. S. *Ildefonſus* was his ſchollar, and imitated his vertues with ſo great benefit to himſelf and others, that he was created Archbiſhop of *Toledo*. His learned writings are yet to be ſeen; and among others

others his Booke of the Virginitie of our B. Ladie, whoſe deare ſeruant he was; and it is recorded of him, that when he had written that Booke, our B. Ladie appeared vnto him, holding the Booke in her hand, and thanked him for the paynes he had taken in ſetting forth her prayſes.

25. About the ſame time *Cæſarius* was famous in France; he was firſt a Monk, then Abbot of *Lerin*, afterwards Biſhop of *Arles*; a learned and a holie man, and doubtleſſe very eloquent. *Cæſarius.*

26. England alſo hath had rare men bred-vp in Religious Orders; as *S. Bede*, who dyed in the yeare Seauen hundred thirtie three. From ſeauen yeares of age, when he firſt entred into Religion, til he was foureſcore and twelue (for ſo long he liued) he ſpent his whole time in Learning and vertuous exerciſes, and hath left ſo manie volumes ſo learnedly written, that he is in a manner held to be another *S. Auguſtin*. And we may gather, what eſteeme the world had of him, by that, while he was yet liuing, his writings were read publickly throughout the Churches of England, togeather with the holie Fathers. And becauſe in his life-time he could not be ſtyled *Saint*, they ſtyled him *Venerable*; which title remayneth ſtil in his Workes after his death. But that he was blind, as the vulgar reporte of him, is altogeather falſe and forged. *Venerable Bede.*

27. *S. Anſelme* alſo flouriſhed in England about the yeare One thouſand and foure-ſcore. He was firſt a Monk, then choſen Archbiſhop of *Canterburie*; and by the holines of his life and learnednes of his writings, which are yet extant, hath gotten himſelf much renowne, and done much honour to Religion. *S. Anſelme.*

28. And beſides theſe, there haue been manie others in ſeueral Religious Families, that coupling rare Vertue with no leſſe exquiſit Learning, haue ſhined, and doe yet ſhine, in the Catholick Church, as ſtarres to giue light in the night of this our pilgrimage. For what did *S. Thomas* of *Aquin*, or *S. Bonauenture*, and manie others, want for learning or holines, that they may not be compared with them that are more ancient? But we ſhal ſpeake of them in another place.

29. Now we wil conclude this Chapter with ioyful acknowledgement and admiration, beholding with what rare men, or, as the Apoſtle ſpeaketh, with what *Pillars* Religious Orders haue furniſhed holie Church, and embelliſhed it and themſelues. For by that, which hath been ſayd, we may perceaue, that of the Foure Greek Doctours, three of them were Religious, and alſo three of the Foure Latin Doctours; and moreouer that the farre greater part of the holieſt and learnedſt men were in like manner Religious. *Gal. 2. 9.*

Of Kings and Princes, that haue been Religious.

CHAP. XXVI.

ALL ſoules, as they are in nature equal, are of equal eſteeme with God; and if he ſeeme at anie time to make a difference betwixt them, we ſhal find that he rather maketh choyce of the poore then of the rich; of thoſe that are abiect and contemptible in the world, then of them that are in honour and dignitie. And yet, I know not how, the better a man is borne, and the more nobly he is deſcended, he is the more admired and applauded, if he be alſo vertuous; either becauſe it is a harder thing for him to be ſo, or for the reaſon, which *S. Auguſtin* giueth, becauſe ſuch people being knowne to manie, they leade manie to ſaluation by their example, & make way for manie to follow them; and therefore there is much ioy of them, becauſe the ioy is not of them alone. And the Enemie is more ouercome in one of whome he hath more hold, & by whome he holdeth more; & he hath more hold of the proude by occaſion of their nobilitie; and holdeth more by their meanes in regard of their authoritie. And this is the reaſon, that God of his infinit goodnes hath called manie of theſe alſo to Religious courſes, to the end he may not ſeeme *to haue abandoned the powerful*, as Iob ſpeaketh, *himſelf being powerful*; and that Religion might not want the grace of Secular Nobilitie; and finally that the force and efficacie of the Grace of God might ſhew itſelf the more, in breaking through ſuch mayne obſtacles, as ſtand in great mens wayes betwixt them and heauen. To which purpoſe *S. Bernard* in a certain Epiſtle of his directed to a companie of yong Noble-men, that had newly put themſelues into the Ciſtercian Order, writeth thus: *I haue read, that God choſe not manie noble men, not manie wiſe men, not manie powerful*; but now by the wonderful power of God, contrarie to the ordinarie courſe, a multitude of ſuch people is conuerted. The glorie of this preſent life waxeth contemptible, the flower of youth is trodden vnder foot, nobilitie not regarded, the wiſdome of the world accounted follie, fleſh and bloud reiected, the affection to friends and kinſfolk renounced; fauour, honour, dignitie, eſteemed as dung, that Chriſt may be gayned. And *S. Hierome* admired the ſame in his time in theſe words: In our Age Rome hath that, which the world knew not before. In old time among Chriſtians there were but few wiſe men, few great men, few noble men; now there be manie Monks that are wiſe, and great, and noble.

Ezech. 18.

Why Religion ioyned with Nobilitie is ſo admired.

S. Auguſtin 8. Conf. c. 4.

Iob 36. 5. 25.

S Bernard Ep 109.

1. Cor. 1. 26.

S Hierome Ep 26.

2. This is therefore the ſubiect, which we haue now in hand, to ſet downe the names of thoſe, out of ancient Records, that forſaking the honours and titles, which the world doth ſo much admire, haue triumphed ouer it, and (to vſe S *Bernard's* word) *by the contempt of glorie, are more glorioufly exalted, and more ſublimely glorifyed.* And firſt we wil ſpeake of Emperours, then of Kings, and laſtly of inferiour Princes; wherin if our diſcourſe proue of the longeſt, I hope the pleaſantnes therof wil ſo alay and temper it, that it wil rather ſeeme too ſhort and conciſe.

3. Manie

3. Manie of the Grecian Emperours, as we find recorded, haue lead a Monastical life; as *Anastasius* in the yeare Seauen hundred and fifteen; *Theodosius* not long after; *Michael* in the yeare Eight hundred; and an other *Michael* in One thousand and fourtie; *Isaacius Commenus* in One thousand and threescore; and diuers others. But becauſe ſome of them were in ſome ſort forced to that courſe of life, others though they freely choſe and profeſſed it, yet liued not in that vnion with the Latin Church as they ought to haue done, we wil not inſiſt vpon anie of them, but paſſe to the Emperours of the Weſt eſtabliſhed in the yeare Eight hundred by Pope *Leo* the Third in the perſon of *Charles* the Great, King of France. Grecian Emperours Religious.

4. The firſt therefore of the Latin Emperours that profeſſed a Religious life, was *Lotharius*, from whom the Prouince of Lotharingia or *Lorraine* is ſo called, whereas before it was called *Auſtraſia*. He gouerned the Empire fifteene yeares, and was a iuſt and vertuous Prince; and remembring, as it is thought, the ſpeach which *Lewis* his father had held vnto him (while he lay a-dying) of the vanitie of this World, himſelf hauing found it true by his owne experience, he reſolued to quit al earthlie things, and to betake himſelf into the quiet hauen of Religion, from the tempeſtuous toiles of the Empire. And to the aſtonishment of the whole world, he retired himſelf into the Monaſterie of Preme; leading the reſt of his life in Pouertie and Obedience. He liued about the yeare Eight hundred threeſcore and fiue. Weſtern Emperours. *Lotharius.*

5. In the yeare Nine hundred and twentie, *Hugo* King of Prouence and Emperour, hauing gotten much renowne for Martial affaires, and being glorious for manie victories, builded a great Monaſterie, wherin himſelf embracing the humilitie of CHRIST, exchanged his Imperial Robes and Dominions with a ſolitarie Celle, and the poore Habit of a Monke. *Hugo.*

6. *Rachiſius* was the firſt king in Italie (that I know of) that became a Monk. He was a Lombard, and ſo powerful, that he had a great part of Italie ſubiect vnto him. It is conceaued, that this change began in him vpon a parley which he had with Pope *Zacharie*, who held the Sea of Rome in the yeare Seauen hundred fourtie one. For preſently therupon leauing the ſiege of Perusia, he returned to Pauia, and diſpoſing of his kingdome to his brother *Aſtulphus*, he retired himſelf to the Monaſterie of Mount-Caſſin, wherof it is thought that he was afterward Abbot. Kings. *Rachiſius king of Italie.*

7. *Pipin* king of Italie and eldeſt ſonne to Charles the Great, king of France, in the yeare Eight hundred and fiue, followed his example, and after much honour gotten in warre, frighted notwithſtanding with the manie dangers which he ſaw were incident to ſo great a power, he betooke himſelf to a Monaſterie, which he had built at Verona in honour of *S. Zeno*, and had giuen it a good foundation. *Pipin.*

8. In Spayne king *Bamba* hauing raigned eleuen yeares, and ſhewed himſelf a valiant King both at home and abroad, and among other victories defeated two hundred ſayle of African Pirats, and taken king Paul aliue, that came againſt him out of France, preferred a Monaſtical life before al this, wherin hauing liued holily ſeauen yeares, he went to receaue his eternal reward the yeare Six hundred ſeuentie foure. *Bamba.*

9. And in the yeare Seauen hundred eightie ſix, the ſame Spayne ſhewed vs *Veremund.*

an other example of the like conuerſion in *Veremund* King of Caſtile, of whom we alſo reade that he gaue his voice for his coſen *Alphonſus* rather to ſucceed him then his owne two children that were vnder age, becauſe ſo it was better for his ſubiects, then to be gouerned by children.

Ramirez. 10. About the yeare One thouſand one hundred and fiftie, *Ramirez* King of Aragon became twice a Monk: firſt in his youth, while his father *Don Sanche* was yet aliue, who afterwards dying without iſſue, and one *Peter* being choſen King, and not long after depoſed for his pride and arrogancie, this *Ramirez* was by the Pope's authoritie taken out of his Monaſterie, and crowned King, and alſo married; of which marriage hauing had a daughter, he gaue her his kingdome in marriage for her portion; retiring himſelf to his former quiet life in his Monaſterie, as hauing diſcharged himſelf ſufficiently of ſo great a work.

Kings of England Religious. 11. England hath been more fertil of theſe examples then anie other Countrey. For firſt while the land was as yet diuided into manie kingdomes, *Sigebert* King of the *Northumbers*, a man renowned for his learning, and much more for vertue, hauing about the yeare Six hundred and fourtie eſtabliſhed manie good orders in his kingdome for the ſeruice of God, conſecrated himſelf alſo vnto him in a Monaſterie; of whom among other things it is recorded, that when not long after *Penda* King of the *Mercians* inuaded the Northumbers *Sigebert.* with a great armie, the whole Countrey had their eye vpon *Sigebert*, and compelled him for the glorie of God to take vpon him the defence of the kingdome in ſo great an occaſion of danger, he went therfore into the field to fight for the Chriſtian cauſe, but in the ſelfsame habit which he wore in the Monaſterie, and gouerned the whole armie with his ſtaffe in his hand, without anie other armour; and wheras (God ſo diſpoſing) the Chriſtian armie was ouerthrowne, he alſo togeather with the King was ſlayne in battaile, and is therefore by ſome reckoned among the holie Martyrs.

Ethelred. 12. In the yeare Seauen hundred and foure, *Ethelred* King of the *Mercians* with like deuotion, hauing gouerned the kingdome diuers yeares very religiouſly, left it to *Chenred* his brother's ſonne before he was yet of age, and betooke himſelf to a Monaſterie that was within the ſame his Dominions, wherin he profited ſo farre in vertue, that he was made afterwards Abbot.

Chenred. 13. *Chenred* being more ambitious of this latter courſe of life which his Vncle lead, then of the former, when he had raigned fiue yeares, went to Rome, and receaued the habit of a Monk of Pope *Conſtantine* the Firſt, and ſpent the reſt of his dayes in that Cittie in great ſanctitie.

Offa. 14. *Offa* King of the Eaſt-Saxons accompanied him in his iourney and in his holie purpoſe; and in the flower of his age, and the height of his worldlie proſperitie, contemning and treading al vnder foot, was by the ſame Pope *Conſtantine* ſhauen a Monk, and Cloathed with a Monaſtical weed.

Inas. 15. Not long after, to wit, in the yeare Seauen hundred and fourtie, *Inas* King of the ſame Eaſt-Saxons, renowned in warre and peace, and ſo memorable for his deuotion towards that Sea of Rome, that he voluntarily made his whole kingdome tributarie vnto it, went himſelf in perſon to Rome; and reſigning his kingdome, tooke vpon him a Religious courſe of life with great feruour, to the end the more naked he was, he might the more freely follow our Sauiour

Sauiour, that vouchsafed to be naked for our sakes.

16. The like did *Ceolulf* King of the Northumbers, to whom Venerable *Bede* dedicated his Historie. For hauing raigned eight yeares, wearied with worldlie affaires, and desirous of a quiet life, he fled to Religion, and left his kingdome to his Vncle *Egbert*; who also, when he had held it twentie yeares, followed the same course with *Ceolulf*, and was professed a Monk in the self-same Monasterie. Al these we haue out of England only. *Ceolulf.* *Egbert.*

17. Out of Germanie we haue a rare example in *Charlemain* sonne to Charles Martel. He was King of *Austrasia* and *Sueuia*, famous for manie noble acts; but taken with the loue of heauenlie things, he went to Rome as a poore priuate man; and receauing Holie Orders of Pope *Zacharie*, and the habit of a Monk, he built a Monasterie in the *Mount-Soracte*, and there spent part of his dayes; but finding himself encumbred with manie visits, by reason he dwelt so neere the Cittie, and his spiritual quiet much disturbed, he remoued to *Mount-Cassino*; where *Petronax* Abbot of that place entertayned him with great ioy and comfort; and the profit which there he made in al kind of vertue, but chiefly in humilitie, is very wonderful. We reade in the Annals of that Monasterie, that (so great a man as he was) by commandment of his Abbot he was appointed to be a shepheard or heards-man, & attended to that busines with farre more alacritie, then euer he did to the affaires of his kingdome; and on a time one of the sheep falling lame, he tooke it vpon his shoulders, and carried it to the fould, nothing reflecting vpon the nastines of the busines. He liued about the yeare of our Sauiour, Seauen hundred and fiftie. *Charlemain.*

18. What shal we say of *Trebellius* King of the Bulgarians, who in the yeare Eight hundred three-score and two, by meanes of Pope *Nicolas* the First embraced the Christian Faith with so much feruour, that he presently banished Photinus the Heretick out of his kingdome; and deliuering his Scepter to his sonne, bound himself to the seruice of God alone; and finding not long after, that his sonne was fallen againe to his former impietie, he grieued exceedingly, and tooke it so to hart, that leauing his Monasterie, and recouering his kingdome, laying hold on the yong man, he caused both his eyes to be pulled out, and condemned him to perpetual imprisonment; finally setling the kingdome vpon a yonger sonne called *Albertus*, and giuing him holesome Instructions, he retired himself againe to his Celle. *Trebellius.*

19. These are the Kings that in ancient time embraced a Religious life: for in later Ages these kind of examples are farre more seldome to be seen. And yet we find it recorded, that *Iohn Prena* King of Hierusalem and Emperour of Constantinople was a Franciscan-Friar. For *S. Francis* appearing once visibly vnto him while he was at his prayers, and offering him his habit, he presently sent for his Ghostlie Father, and tooke that habit vpon him; and not long after died of a feuer; and coming as it were at the *Eleuenth houre*, receaued notwithstanding his *hire*. *Iohn Prena King of Hierusalem &c.*

Henrie King of Cyprus was yet more happie; for he liued manie yeares in that holie Institute, and is glorious both for vertue and miracles. *Henrie K. of Cypres.*

20. Finally *Iohn* king of Armenia is not to be left out, whose kingdome was so large, that he had foure and twentie kings vnder him, al crowned with Princelie Diademes; but he forsaking so great a kingdome & resigning it to his *Iohn King of Armenia.*

his nephew *Leo*, choſe to be abiect in the houſe of God, and rather to ſerue for his loue, then to rule ouer others. The Turks breaking into the Countrey, and *Leo* not being able to make head againſt them, *Iohn* ſeing God's cauſe in danger, putteth armour ouer his Religious weed, and after this new faſhion going into the field, is maiſter of it with very great loſſe on the enemie's ſide; but following the victorie (it pleaſed God) he was ſlayne in a certain skirmiſh, and ſo went to enioy the reward of Heauen.

Three ſonnes of *Charles* the *Great*.

21. Next after Kings and Emperours, their ſonnes doe follow: manie of them hauing preferred a Religious life before al worldlie honour. And firſt *Charles* the *Great* had three of his ſonnes that were Monks: *Hugo*, *Drogo*, and *Pipin*. The two firſt embraced that courſe of their owne accord; *Pipin* was at firſt compelled vnto it by his father (becauſe he had thought to make himſelf King afterwards) when he had taſted of that quiet life and found it ſweet, he willingly continued in it. They al liued about the yeare Eight hundred and thirtie.

Three ſonnes of *Vibian* King of Ireland.

22. The three ſonnes of *Vibian* king of Ireland, were al of them Monks, and al of them Saints; *Froſcus*, *Folliang*, and *Vltan*. They in the yeare Six hundred and fiftie, forſaking their Countrey came into France, and were courteouſly entertained by *Clouis* then king, who alſo giuing them choice of a place, where they would make their aboad, they built the Monaſterie of Pontiny, and there choſe their ſeate. But the holie contention which hapned betwixt the two ſonnes of a Britiſh king, about the yeare Six hundred fiftie ſeauen, is very rare and memorable. For *Iudaellus* ſucceeding his father in the kingdome diſcouereth to his brother a purpoſe which he had of entring into Religion, willing him to prepare himſelf to take the gouernment vpon him of the kingdome, which ſhortly he would leaue him; *Ioyce* deſired his brother to giue him eight dayes tearme to conſider of the buſines; and in the meane time, preuenting his brother, he betooke himſelf priuately to a Monaſterie, to the end he might not be hindered of his reſolution, thinking with himſelf, that if the fortune of a King were ſuch, as it was beſt for his brother to forſake it, it could not be good for him to accept of it.

A notable example.

Two ſonnes of *Richard* K. of England.

23. *Richard* alſo king of England had two ſonnes that were Religious in the yeare Eight hundred and two; one of them by name *Willebald* profeſſed in *Mount-Caſſin*, the other *Vnebald* at Magdebourg in Saxonie.

Two ſonnes of *Charles King* of France.

24. No leſſe noble were the two brethren *Clotaire* and *Carleman* ſonnes of Charles King of France in the yeare Eight hundred fourtie one, both of them preferring the yoak of Religion before their Royal Scepters. And in the number we may place *Frederick* ſonne of *Lewis* King of France, in the yeare Nine hundred threeſcore and two; and *Henrie* ſonne of an other *Lewis* King of the ſame Countrey, though ſomwhat later, to wit, in the yeare One thouſand one hundred and fiftie.

Frederick ſonne to Lewis K. of France.

Henrie.

Kings ſonnes that were Franciſcan-Friars.

25. The firſt that we read of, that entred among the Franciſcan-Friars, was *Iames* eldeſt ſonne of the King of Mallorca, who though by right he was to haue ſucceeded in the Kingdome, preferred the Kingdome of heauen before it, and entred, as I ſayd, into the Order of *S. Francis*; and leading therin a very holie life, did much good alſo to his Neighbours, both by word and example.

26.

26. An other of the same Order was *Lewis*, eldest sonne also of *Charles* the Second King of France, a man of singular parts, both for bodie and mind. He, while he was left in Spayne for a pledge, resolued vpon this holesome course of Religion, and the Franciscan-Friars stil differring him, for the respect which they bore to the King, he bound himself publickly more then once by Vow vnto it. And when afterwards in the yeare One thousand two hundred ninetie seauen, Pope *Boniface* the Eight presented him with the Archbishopriek of *Toulouse*, he would not accept of it, vnlesse they would first agree, that he might enter among the Franciscan-Friars, according to his former Vow; and so taking the habit in a great assemblie of the Nobilitie, he neuer left it of, but togeather with the weed continued also the rigour of the life belonging vnto it, and mingled Religious exercises with his Episcopal cares. S. *Lewis*, Bishop of *Toulouse*.

27. His nephew *Peter* sonne to the King of Aragon followed his example, in the yeare One thousand three hundred fiftie seauen. And it is recorded of him, that, while he was in deliberation of abandoning the world, and hung doubtful in the contention of flesh and spirit, as it hapneth to very manie, this *S. Lewis* appeared vnto him in the night with some of the Brethren of his Order, al in great glorie, and encouraged him to take that course of life, which was in Heauen so highly rewarded; and so he did not long after, and liued in Religion twentie yeares, to the great benefit of himself and manie others, for that he was a great preacher, and inflamed manie in the loue of God by his sermons. *Peter* sonne to the King of Aragon.

28. It is not possible to name or number al the Dukes, and Lords, and inferiour Princes, that haue led a Religious life; yet we wil point at some by the way. Of this degree was *Algerius*, Duke of Aquitaine, and his sonne *Amandus*, in the yeare Foure hundred thirtie nine; also *Anselme* Duke of Modena, Anno Seauen hundred and fourtie; *Dietland* and *Ancigard*, Dukes of Sueuia, in the yeare Eight hundred and fifteene; *Vigesius* Duke of Spoleto, in the yeare Eight hundred and twentie; *William* Duke of Gasconie in the yeare Foure hundred and fourtie; and after him another *William*, Second of that name, in the yeare Nine hundred and twelue; of whom it is recorded, that in the Monasterie of *Cluny* he led so humble a life, that he was euer subiect to the least and lowest; and being by his Abbot put to bake some bread, he was so quick and exact in obeying, that because he had not a mowkin at hand, he crept into the ouen hot glowing as it was, and swept it with his coate, and was not hurt, nor any thing endomaged by the fire. Princes of inferiour degree.

29. Manie others of the same rank haue been Monks, but it were long to rehearse them al; wherefore we wil passe to those that haue been of *S. Francis* his Order, and reckon vp a few of them: as *William* Duke of Burgundie; *Gonsalue Marino* a Portugez; *Adulphus* Count of Alsatia, who entring among the Franciscans about the yeare One thousand two hundred and fiftie, among other vertues was much giuen to Mortification; and once in particular going through his owne Cittie with a pitcher of milk which he had begd about the towne, he met his three sonnes, whom he had left in the world, walking the streets with great state; and because he began a litle to be ashamed, to ouercome himself therin, he lifted the pitcher vp to his head, and powred it al vpon himself. And manie such rare men haue been of this Order. Great men of *S. Francis* his Order.

And of the Societie of Iesvs.

30. And in this our leaſt Societie of Iesvs, within theſe few yeares ſince it was founded, there haue not been a few Noblemen called vnto it. But the prime man of them al was *Francis Borgia* Duke of Gandie, who being in great fauour and eſteeme with *Charles* the Fift in Spayne, to the aſtoniſhment of al beholders, laying aſide al his greatnes, embraced the humble ſtate of a Religious life, and profited exceedingly in it. The reaſon why he choſe to enter into the *Societie* before al other Religious Orders, was this, which himſelf gaue to the Emperour, and I haue it by relation from his owne mouth in my hearing. If a man, that had manie fruitful vineyards, ſhould moreouer reſolue to plant an orchard, for his owne priuate pleaſure and contentment, you could not doe him a greater courteſie then to preſent him with a ſlip or tree to plant in it; Our Lord therefore hauing lately planted this orchard of the *Societie*, after ſo manie other anciẽt & worthie vineyards of other Orders, I thought with myſelf (ſayth he) that it could not but be very grateful vnto him, if I preſented myſelf, ſuch as I am, as a tree to be planted in it. Of the ſame rank of Dukes was *Antonio de Cordoua*, ſonne to the Duke of *Feria*, a man of ſingular vertue. And in Italie we had Fa. *Rodulphus Aquauiua* ſonne to the Duke of *Atri*, which is one of the ancienteſt and nobleſt Families in the kingdome of Naples. He was called to Religion with ſuch abundance of the ſpirit of God, that he could not by anie meanes or force be diuerted from it, though much was vſed to withdraw him. And hauing in a ſhort time profited exceedingly in al kind of vertue, by his owne importunitie, as I may ſay, he was ſent into the Eaſt-Indies; where he lead ſo holie a life, that not only thoſe of our *Societie*, and al other Chriſtians, but the verie Heathens themſelues did admire him, and commonly called him the Angel. At laſt being ſent to the Ilands of Salſedo to preach the Chriſtian Fayth, he was killed with ſome others of the *Societie* by the inhabitants that were Mahometans, in hatred of Chriſtian Religion; adorning his former life, and al his Religious vertues with the crowne of a moſt certain and moſt glorious Martyrdome. There be diuers others alſo in our *Societie* of like Nobilitie, deſcended from Dukes, and Marqueſſes, and other Princes; but becauſe they are al yet liuing, and we liue and conuerſe dayly with them, Ciuilitie, neither of our part, nor of theirs, wil not ſuffer vs to name them: but we muſt obey the counſel of the Wiſeman, where he ſayth: *Prayſe no man before his death.* Wherfore paſſing the reſt in ſilence, we wil remember only one that is lately dead, to wit, *Andrew Spinola*, a prime man of Genua for his birth; and of Rome, in regard of the place which he bore in that Court next to the Cardinals, and as it were in the verie entrance to a Cardinalſhip. But he contemning both the honour in which he was, and the preferment which he might haue hoped, ſtooped rather to Religious diſcipline; and ſet the world and the vanitie therof ſo much at ſcorne, that not long after, he went twice about the ſtreetes of Rome in an old tattered coate, begging his bread from doore to doore; which ſtruck ſuch an admiration into al Rome, that people for ſome dayes could talke of nothing els; and a certain Preacher diſcourſing of that place of the Prophet Eſay: *Euerie hil and euerie hillock ſhal be humbled*, did not ſtick to point at this our *Spinola*, as to one of the hils and hillocks, which had humbled themſelues by the example of our Sauiour. But it is time to draw to a concluſion; for as I ſayd before, there haue been ſo manie of this degree of Nobilitie, both in elder and

Fa. Francis Borgia, Duke of Gandie.

Antonie de Cordoua ſonne to the Duke of Feria.

Raphe Aquauiua ſonne to the Duke of Atri.

Eccl. 11.

Andrew Spinola.

latter

latter times, that ſhunning the waues and ſhelues of this world, haue ſurged with exceſſiue ioy at the port of Religion, that, if we ſhould goe about to rehearſe them al, we muſt reſolue to make a whole long Volume of it by itſelf.

Of Noble women that haue liued in Religion.

CHAP. XXVII.

AFTER ſo manie rare examples of men, we wil ſpeake alſo of ſome women, both becauſe they haue been in their kind a great ornament to a Religious ſtate, and becauſe the more infirme their ſexe is, the more encouragement doth it giue to men, to employ themſelues in al kind of vertue.

2. The Empreſſe *Theodora* doth firſt offer herſelf. For being married to *Theophilus* an Heretick Emperour about the yeare Eight hundred and foureſcore, ſhe kept herſelf alwayes conſtant to the Catholick Faith; and after his deceaſe, ſhe did wonderfully aduance the Catholick cauſe, chiefly by reſtoring the vſe of holie Images, and recalling holie men from their places of banniſhment. And hauing for ſome yeares gouerned the Empire, ſhe of her owne accord layd downe al that ſtate and power, and ſhut herſelf vp in the monaſterie, where her mother *Trurina* had giuen herſelf to God before her. *Theodora* Empreſſe.

3. *Auguſta* an other Empreſſe practiſed the like deuotion, not weighing the infancie and lonenes of her ſonne, after *Iſaacius* her huſband's death: but appointing him certain Tutours, withdrew herſelf out of the world. When *Alexius* (for ſo was her ſonne called) came of age, the Tutours would by no meanes giue vp the adminiſtration of the Empire; wherefore by her ſonne's entreatie returning to Court, ſhe tooke the gouernment into her owne hands againe, retaining notwithſtanding her Religious purpoſes and practiſe, her veyle and her whole Monaſtical weed; til finding means to eſtabliſh the gouernment vpon her ſonne, ſhe returned to her Monaſterie about the yeare One thouſand one hundred and ninetie. And theſe two were out of the Eaſt. *Auguſta.*

4. In the Weſt we find, that *Richarde* wife to the Emperour *Charles le Groſſe*, being brought into ſuſpicion that ſhe had been falſe vnto him, eaſily cleared herſelf; but yet made vſe of the occaſion to quit his marriage, as ſhe had long deſired; and retiring herſelf into Halſatia, built a monaſterie, wherin ſhe lead a Religious life about the yeare Eight hundred ninetie nine. *Richarde.*

5. The caſe of *Cunegundes* wife to Henrie King of England firſt, then afterwards Emperour, in the yeare One thouſand one hundred thirtie nine, was not vnlike to this. For diuorcing herſelf from him vpon the like ſuſpicion and fault, which was caſt vpon her, ſhe made a better marriage with Chriſt our Saniour. *Cunegundes.*

S. Cunegundes. 6. And yet another *Cunegundes* was more happie about the yeare One thousand one hundred and twentie. For being married to the Emperour *Henrie* the First, she liued manie yeares with him, and kept her virginitie; and he dying before her, she lead so holie a life for fifteen yeares togeather in the Monasterie of *Confugium*, that she is regiſtred among the Saints in the Church of God.

Agnes. 7. *Agnes* wife to the Emperour *Henrie* the Third, gouerned the Empire after his deceaſe, according as he had left in his Wil, til his ſonne (who at the time of his death was but an infant) came to twelue yeares of age; and then giuing ouer the charge of the Empire, and alſo the Dukedome of Bauiere, which belonged vnto her, ſhe went to Rome, and there choſe to liue in the humilitie of a Monaſtical life, in the yeare One thouſand one hundred fiftie ſeauen.

Elizabeth. 8. The like did *Elizabeth* wife to the Emperour *Albertus* the Firſt, & Archduke of Auſtria; for he being moſt lamentably ſlayne, ſhe bad the world Farewel, and liued a heauenlie life in a Monaſterie, which herſelf had built, in the yeare One thouſand two hundred and ninetie. Two of her daughters followed her example, the one married to the King of Hungarie, the other to the Count of Ottighen; & two of her grandchildren, the Queene of Polonia, and her daughter, though ſhe were ſure to the Duke of Vratiſlaw.

Teſia. 9. Now from Empreſſes to come to Queenes; in Italie *Teſia* wife to *Rachiſius* (of whom we ſpake before) following the example of her huſband, would not be farre-of from him neither in diſtance of place. For as he retired himſelf into the monaſterie of *Mount-Caſſin*, ſo ſhe with her daughter *Retruda* hid herſelf in a Monaſterie, which was not farre diſtant, wherin *S. Scholaſtica* had ſometimes liued, and ſhe had reſtored; and there ſhe ſpent her dayes in great ſanctitie.

Radegundes. 10. In France in the yeare Fiue hundred twentie fiue, *Radegundes* being married againſt her wil to king *Clotaire*, after ſome yeares by much importunitie got his conſent, and retired herſelf to Poictiers, and there gaue herſelf to God with great feruour and earneſtnes of deuotion, that in a ſhort time ſhe arriued to a high degree of perfection in vertue, as it is recorded of her.

Adocra. 11. Not manie yeares after her, *Adocra* wife to *Chilperick* king of France, togeather with her daughter *Childerade* forſaking their Princes pleaſures, betooke themſelues to the ſame heauenlie profeſſion. And *Batilda* about the yeare Six hundred and fiftie, by the deceaſe of king *Clouis*, remaining as it were at libertie, and with ful power to performe what ſhe had alwayes deſired from her infancie, ſhe went to *Callis*, and enlarging a Monaſterie, which was there already built, ſhe ioyned herſelf to a better Spouſe our Sauiour, and was famous for al kind of vertue, but ſpecially for her humilitie.

Batilda.

12. In Spayne we find recorded of two Queenes that were alſo Religious; *Nunez* wife to *Veremund*, of whom we ſpake before; for ſhe entred before her huſband, and was no litle encouragement vnto him by her example; And *Tereſa*, who being by her brother *Alfonſo* king of *Leon*, married to *Abdalas* king of Toledo (a More or Saracen) ſhe not being able by al the entreaties & proteſtations, which ſhe did alleage to hinder it, God did hinder it. For he ſent the Barbarous king a moſt grieuous and deadlie ſicknes; whereby he vnderſtanding it was the hand of God, ſent *Tereſa* back againe vntouched; &

ſhe

ſhe preſently eſpouſed herſelf according to her deſire to our Sauiour, in the Monaſterie of *S. Pelayo*, in the yeare One thouſand and ſix.

13. But it is ſtrange to ſee how manie of theſe like examples we haue out of England; as of *Alfred* Spouſe to the King of the Northumbers, who was ſlayne before they were bedded togeather, in the yeare Six hundred and ſeauentie; and *Ethelburg*, who perſwaded king *Inas* to the reſolution which he tooke, as we ſayd before, and afterwards followed his example in the like courſe. But what can be more ſtrange then that which hapned to *Etheldred*, who being wife to two Kings kept her virginitie with them both, and obtayned of the ſecond, after twelue yeares that they had been married togeather, leaue to goe liue among other Virgins in a Monaſterie? What a life may we imagin ſhe liued in the Monaſterie, that was ſo great a Saint in her worldlie kingdome? And ſhe is alſo regiſtred among the Saints by Holie Church. She liued about the yeare Seauen hundred and ſix. English examples: *Alfred.* *Ethelburg.* *Etheldred.*

14. *Sesburg* her ſiſter, Queene of Kent, followed her not long after, ſo ſoone as her huſband was dead. And *Alfrede* Queene of the *Mercians* and *Northumbers* is not to be omitted, who, like another Magdalen, to redeeme her former offences, and, among the reſt, the vniuſt murther of her yong innocent ſonne-in-law, lead an auſtere life among other ſeruants of Chriſt, in a Monaſterie, which herſelf had built at her owne proper coſt and charge, about the yeare of our Lord Nine hundred ſeauentie fiue.

15. It were long and tedious to rehearſe al the Kings daughters, which both in England and other Countries haue conſecrated themſelues to God in Monaſteries; the number of them is ſo very great. Wherefore paſſing thoſe in ſilence, which are more ancient, we wil mention a few only of thoſe that are of later memorie. *Margaret* daughter to *Bela* king of Hungarie is famous among the Nunnes of *S. Deminick's* Order for her rare vertue, and ſhineth like a ſtarre in the firmament. For of eight and twentie yeares, which ſhe liued, ſhe ſpent foure and twentie in Religion, being vowed therunto by her parents, when ſhe was but foure yeare olde. But the Nobilitie of her bloud was the leaſt thing in her; for the Sanctitie of her life, and the rigour which ſhe vſed in puniſhing her bodie both by continual faſting and with whippes like ſpurres, is farre more conſpicuous, & her profound humilitie which ſhe chiefly ſhewed in tending the ſick; being alwaies giuen to ſuch like humble and charitable offices; the practiſe wherof was farre more to be admired in her, then her Princelie deſcent. And it is recorded of her, that out of the great eſteeme which ſhe had of this Religious courſe of life, ſhe conſtantly refuſed the marriage of three Kings, to wit, of Poland, of Bohemia, and of Sicilie; and when it was offered her, that there ſhould be a diſpenſation procured from the Pope for her Vowes, ſhe anſwered reſolutly, that ſhe would rather cut-of her noſe and her lippes, and pul-out her eyes, then yeald her conſent to be married to anie creature. She dyed in the yeare One thouſand two hundred and ſeauentie. *Margaret* daughter to the King of Hungarie.

16. In the yeare One thouſand three hundred fourtie three, *Sancha* Queene of Sicilie and Hieruſalem, a few moneths after the deceaſe of *Robert* her husband, put on the habit of *S. Francis* his Order at Naples, profeſſing the Pouertie and Rule of *S. Clare*; by which Rule none of them can poſſeſſe *Sancha.*

anie thing as their owne, not ſo much as in common. It is reported of her, that out of humilitie ſhe earneſtly begged of the General of the Order, that he would forbid euerie bodie very ſeuerely from calling her anie more Queene, and that they ſhould cal her Siſter as the reſt.

Agnes. 17. No leſſe was the vertue of *Agnes* daughter to Orethus King of Bohemia, about the yeare One thouſand two hundred and fourtie. For being giuen in marriage to Frederick the Second, ſhe would neuer yeald her conſent, but vowed Virginitie in a Monaſterie of the ſame Order of *S. Francis* in Prague. The like is recorded of *Cunegundes* daughter and wife to a King; for being daughter to the King of Hungarie, and eſpouſed to *Boleſlaus*, ſurnamed the *Chaſte*, King of Poland, ſhe kept her Virginitie vndefiled togeather with him, and afterwards lead alſo a Religious life in a Monaſterie, which herſelf had founded.

Cunegundes.

Ioane. 18. *Ioane* alſo daughter to the King of Nauarre, preferring the heauenlie before the earthlie kingdome, vowed herſelf to the ſeruice of God in a Monaſterie in Paris, to her owne exceſſiue benefit, and great aſtoniſhment of al the world. *Iſabel* daughter to the King of France, and ſiſter to *S. Lewis*, deſpiſing the world tooke vp the Croſſe of Chriſt in the ſame Order, and liued with ſo great feruour in it, that ſhe is alſo famous for miracles. *Blanch* daughter of Philip King of France followed the ſame foot-ſteps about the yeare One thouſand three hundred and fifteene.

Iſabel.

Blanch.

19. And of late yeares our Age hath been ennobled with no leſſe rare an example (with which I wil conclude) in the perſon of *Margaret of Auſtria* daughter to Maximilian the Emperour; and *Marie* ſiſter to Philip King of Spayne. She, notwithſtanding her ſo noble Extraction, contemning worldlie marriages and al earthlie things, vowed Virginitie a few yeares agoe in the Order of *S. Clare*, in a Monaſterie, where the ancient rigour of that Order is ſeuerely kept, and perſeuereth therin to this verie day with great commendation of vertue.

Margaret.

20. What therefore can be more beautiful in the eye of the minde, or more delightful to men or Angels, then to behold ſo great a Maieſtie and ſo great Power voluntarily ſtooping to a Habit ſo contemptible, and to ſo poore a Celle, and ſuch humble offices as are incident to ſuch a ſtate of life? Certainly, if there be *ioy in heauen of one ſinner*, that turning to God, beginneth but to lay the firſt foundations of vertue; how much more ioy muſt there needs be at the practiſe of vertues ſo heroical and ſo abſolutly perfect in al kinds?

Luc. 15.

Of Popes, that haue been taken out of Religious Orders.

CHAP. XXVIII.

HITHERTO we haue ſpoken of Secular Nobilitie, and ſhewed how Religion hath been graced by the entrance of people of great rank in the world, into it. Now we are to ſhew, that it hath receaued no leſſe honour by thoſe, that out of Religious courts haue been exalted to high dignities and promotions in the Church. And firſt we wil ſpeake of Popes, becauſe it cannot but be a great honour to be aſſumed to that dignitie, to which on earth there is none to be compared, being inferiour to none but God; and ſuſtaining ſo weightie a burthen as muſt needs require a great wiſdome coupled with no leſſe ſanctitie and holines of life. And conſequently as a Houſe or Familie, and al the kindred belonging vnto it, be it neuer ſo meane and poore before, is rayſed in the opinion and eſteeme of the world, and made noble, by one man's promotion to this great honour and dignitie; why may we not ſay and think the fame of euerie Religious Familie? a Religious man hauing ful as much relation vnto the Religion wherin he is profeſſed, as to his natiue Houſe and ſtock, and by meanes therof arriued to ſo high promotion, as manie as from thence haue been aſſumed vnto it.

2. The firſt Pope therefore that without al queſtion was a Religious man (for I purpoſely ſpeake not of thoſe, of whom there is anie doubt) was, as we find recorded, *Dionyſius* a Grecian borne, two hundred and threeſcore yeares after Chriſt, who poſſeſſing that Sea ten yeares, is ſayd to haue ordained manie good things both at Rome and in other places; and is chiefly memorable for oppoſing himſelf in the Councel of Antioch againſt the Hereſie of Paulus Samoſatenus, who then began to ſpread his pernicious doctrine, & endeauoured to take away the Diuinitie of our Sauiour Chriſt. Afterward ſuffering alſo death for Chriſt, he had a double Crowne, of Martyrdome and of Religion. *Dionyſius.*

3. In the yeare Fiue hundred ſeauentie fiue, *Benedict* the Firſt, a Roman borne, hauing been a Monk, was created Pope in moſt woeful times, when al Italie was in combuſtion by meanes of warre; and hauing ſate at the ſterne foure yeares, he went to heauen. *Benedictus* 1.

4. Diuers Authours, and in particular the Booke which is intitled the *Pontifical Chaire* (wherin the ſucceſſiō of al the Popes is exactly ſet downe) doe make mention, that *Pelagius* the Second (whoſe ſchollar & ſucceſſour was *S. Gregorie*) was choſen Pope out of a monaſterie of Monks. He was made Pope in the yeare Fiue hundred ſeauentie nine; and ſate ten yeares. *Pelagius* 2.

5. Next after him ſucceeded *S. Gregorie* the Great, who had been a Monk in Rome in the Monaſterie of *S. Andrew*, and liued according to the Rule of *S. Benedict*. What ſhal we need to repeate the famous things which he performed during his charge, which was thirteen yeares? his liberalitie towards the poore, his care in watching ouer Hereſies which were ſpringing vp, his courage in oppoſing himſelf euen againſt Princes, his patience *S. Gregorie the Great.*

in corporal infirmities, his endeauour and application in attending to the cure of al parts of his flock, his diligence and copiousnes in his written Books, and (which graced al the reſt) his wonderful modeſtie and humilitie, and al kind of true vertue; his miracles alſo, and holeſome Decrees, ſeing they are infinit, and in a manner as knowne to al, as if he had liued in theſe our dayes.

Bonifacius 4.

6. Not much more then two yeares after him, an other of the ſame Order of *S. Benedict* was Pope, to wit, *Boniface* the Fourth, who being bred-vp in Rome in the Monaſterie of *S. Sebaſtian*, learned there that vertue and pietie, which he afterwards practiſed in his Pontifical charge; and is recorded to haue borne ſo great an affection to the Religion, out of which he was taken, that he made his father's houſe into a Monaſterie, and gaue it ſufficient rent for the maintenance of it. And hauing ſpent ſix yeares and ſome moneths in ſuch kind of works, he went to receaue his reward in heauen.

Adeodatus

7. Writers doe generally agree, that *Adeodatus* the Firſt of that name was alſo a Monk of the Monaſterie of *S. Eraſmus* in Mount *Cælius* in Rome; and of ſo holie a life, that in the height of his honour he practiſed al kind of vertue belonging to a Religious man, and was renowned ſpecially for his meeknes and ſweet conuerſation; and was ſo great a deſpiſer of worldlie wealth, that he ſpent almoſt al vpon the poore and diſtreſſed, and in releeuing the Pilgrimes that came to Rome. He was Pope foure yeares.

Agatho.

8. Two yeares after him *Agatho* (a Sicilian borne) was choſen out of a Monaſterie; whoſe ſanctitie is teſtified by diuers miracles, among which that was rare both for power and practiſe of charitie, when vouchſafing to embrace and kiſſe a leaper, whom he met, he preſently alſo cured him. And his conſtancie was no leſſe in oppoſing the Hereſie of the *Monothelites* (that ſayd Chriſt had but one wil) and gathering a famous Counceł at Conſtantinople for the ſpeedie condemning of them, which is called the Sixt Synode. In which his ſpeedie courſe of Vertue, he was taken away by more ſpeedie death; to wit, after two yeares and a half that he had been Pope.

Benedictus 2.

9. Ten moneths after (in which time *Leo* the Second ſate) *Benedict* the Second ſucceeded in the yeare Six hundred foureſcore and three; of whom it is recorded that he lead a Monaſtical life in Rome from his infancie, and was a ſingular man both for vertue and learning. The Emperour *Conſtantine* made a decree in fauour of him, that they ſhould not need to wayte for the conſent of the Emperours in chooſing the Popes, but that the Election of the Clergie and People of Rome ſhould take place without it. But the Church had rather a glimſe then a ſight of his rare vertue; for he dyed after ten moneths to the great grief and lamentation of euerie bodie.

Gregorie the Second and the Third.

10. There followed him two *Gregories*, the Second and the Third, the one in the yeare Seauen hundred and ſixteen, the other fifteen yeares after; for ſo long the former held that Sea, and did much good both in the Cittie of Rome by building Churches and Religious houſes, and in the whole Church of God, and ſpecially in Germanie, whether he ſent *S. Boniface* a Monk to preach the Faith of Chriſt, & receaued the firſt fruits of Gentilitie out of that Countrey with ſo much contentment, that with his owne hand he Baptized them. The ſanctitie and proweſſe of the other *Gregorie* did chiefly ſhew itſelf in the conflict, which he had concerning the Catholick Faith with the Emperour

Leo

Leo the Third, who was an Heretick, and an enemie of holie Images, for which cause also he depriued him of the Communion with the Faithful, and of his Empire. Yet as none was more courageous then he against his enemies, so none could be more meek, and affable, and liberal towards the poore, and orphanes, and widdowes, he being commonly called the Father and Patron of al such people. He liued in his Pastoral charge almost eleuen yeares. The Booke intitled the *Pontifical Chaire*, which we mentioned before, and diuers other Authours relate, that both these *Gregories* were Monks.

11. In the yeare Seauen hundred sixtie eight, *Stephen* the Third was promoted to the Sea. He was bred-vp from a child in the monasterie of *S. Chrisogonus* in Rome, and was rare both for vertue and learning, and ioyning also practise therewithal, was held a wise man; and therupon was employed in matters of great moment concerning the Church, by three Popes, to wit, *Zacharie*, *Stephen* the Second, and *Paul*. And coming himself to the Popedome thus furnished, it is incredible, how much he did benefit the Church of God both by his exemplar life, and famous deeds; among which we may reckon the Councel of *Lateran*, which he gathered for Reformation of manners in the Church. He also by the strength of his wisdome and courage thrust-out one *Michael*, that had intruded himself into the Archbishoprick of Rauenna by fauour of some Kings and Princes. And finally after three yeares and a few moneths, leauing this world, he left also in the minds of men both a great opinion of his sanctitie, and a great desire that he might haue continued longer with them. *Stephanus* 3.

12. In the yeare Eight hundred and seauenteen, *Paschalis* the First, by special prouidence of God, was taken out of the monasterie of *S. Stephen* in Rome, where he was Abbot; and placed in the Pastoral charge ouer the whole Christian flock, held the place a litle more then seauen yeares. A man not only eminent for sanctitie and Religion, which a bodie might iustly expect of a Monk, but for his courage, which he shewed in suppressing the endeauours of some Secular powers, that would needs challenge a right in the choosing of Popes, wheras no such thing was due vnto them. He was also famous for his deuotion, and magnificent in building, and adorning Churches. *Paschalis* 1.

13. Foure yeares after this *Paschalis*, *Gregorie* the Fourth was chosen Pope out of the Monasterie (as some say) of *Fossa-noua*, where, manie yeares after, *S. Thomas* of *Aquin* died, as is recorded of him. This Pope, as al Writers testifie, was eminent in sanctitie, learning, wisdome, and eloquence, and al manner of vertue. And when the Barbarians coming ouer into *Sicilie*, had made thēselues maisters of the Iland, by his meanes and authoritie the Prince of *Corsica* setting vpon part of Africk, forced them to retire home againe to defend their owne countrey. And hauing thus happily and holily gouerned the Sea sixteen yeares, he rested in our Lord. *Gregorie* 4.

14. Foure yeares againe after this man's decease, *Leo* the Fourth was assumed to that dignitie out of the Monasterie of *S. Martin* in Rome, and gouerned the Sea in the great difficulties & dangers, wherin Italie then was by the incursions of barbarous people, that spoyled the whole Countrey, and threatned the vtter destruction of Rome itself; but he put them al to flight, more with his holines, and with lifting-vp his hands to heauen (as another Moyses) then by force of armes; and yet afterwards fortifyed the Cittie of Rome, that it might be the *Leo* 4.

better able to withstand the like incursions. He entred vpon his charge in the yeare Eight hundred fourtie seauen, and held it eight yeares.

Leo 5. Trithemius l. 4. de Vir. Ill. c. 8.

15. And in the yeare Nine hundred and two, *Leo* the Fift was chosen, and sate only fourtie dayes; who, as *Trithemius* reporteth, was also a Religious man.

Sylvester 2.

16. After him *Sylvester* the Second was the next that was promoted to that Sea from a Monastical course of life, two yeares before the thousand after Christ. He was bred in France in the Monasterie of *Floriac*, & first made Archbishop of *Rhemes*, then of *Ravenna*, and then Christ's Vicar ouer the whole Church; and held the charge foure yeares and six moneths. He was a man compleat in al kind of Learning, as Authours write of him; but specially versed in Mathematick & al kind of Philosophie, as appeares by the Booke which he hath left in written hand of Geometrie; which Science of his hath been the occasion that people talke that he was a Sorcerer, & that he came by his promotion by sorcerie, and by a compact which he had made with the Diuel; and at last deceaued by the doubtful speaches of the Diuel, died miserably in the church of Holie-Crosse of Hierusalem. Which fable taken vpon trust of ignorant people, hath crept also into the Records of some careless writers. But the more learned and more diligent writers shew how this errour came, by reason that there being in that Age but few Philosophers and Mathematicians, they that were giuen to such kind of studies were accounted Astrologers, and Sorcerers; & people beleeued it the rather of this man, because being a stranger, he was notwithstanding preferred to this great honour before al others.

Sergius 4. Ioannes 19.

17. Againe in the yeare One thousand and nine, *Sergius* the Fourth, and in the yeare One thousand twentie two, *Iohn* the Nineteenth, were placed in the Sea of *Rome*; the one taken out of the monasterie of *S. Anastasius* in *Rome*, the other out of another monasterie not certainly knowne, but of the Order of *S. Benedict*. *Sergius* continued in the Chayre not ful three yeares, *Iohn* sate some nine yeares.

Stephanus 9.

18. *Stephen* the Ninth was not only a Religious man before he was chosen Pope, but liued a holie and deuout life; for being of noble extraction, & sonne to *Cotelo* Duke of *Lorraine*, he was made Cardinal by *Leo* the Ninth, and sent Legat to *Constantinople* to reconcile the Grecians to the Latin Church, which also he performed. Returning to Rome, and finding Pope *Leo* dead, wearie of the world, he retired himself to the Monasterie of *Mount-Cassino*, where he applyed himself so seriously to this new warfare of Christ (so great a man as he was) that he wonne the good opinion of al, and within lesse then two yeares was chosen Abbot of that place. And coming to Pope *Victor* the Second to haue his Election confirmed by him as the manner then was, not only obtayned what he came for, but was againe created Cardinal by him; & *Victor* dying not long after, he was by the consent of al placed in his Chayre in the yeare One thousand fiftie seauen; but continued not therin scarce eight moneths, before death seazed him, to the great grief of al that knew him. And not long after, to wit, in the yeare One thousand seauentie three, the administration of the Church of God fel againe into the hands of Religious men, & cõtinued among thẽ fiftie yeares togeather, to the great benefit & contentment of al Christians.

Popes Religious men for fiftie yeares togeather.

Gregorius 7.

19. The first of them was *Gregorie* the Seauenth, a Florentine borne; but yet he followed *Gregorie* the Sixt (whome the Emperour *Henrie* had thrust out of the Popedome) into France; & *Gregorie* dying, he shut himself into the Monasterie of *Cluni* in Burgundie, where he lead so Religious a life, that after few yeares

he was made Abbot of that Monaſterie. Soone after, he was in ſo great fauour with *Leo* the Ninth, *Victor* the Second, and *Stephan* the Ninth, that they would doe nothing without his aduice; & much more was he in grace with *Alexander* the Second, whome he ſucceeded; and gouerned the ſea ſo like himſelf, that diuers Authours affirme, that ſince the Apoſtles times there hath not beene a Pope, that hath taken more paynes then he for the Church of God, or gone through more trouble, or ſtoode more conſtantly for the liberties therof. He excommunicated *Henrie* the Fourth twice as a deadlie enemie of the Church, & freed al his ſubiects from their Alleageance, nothing daunted with his power & the great armie, which he brought before the Cittie of Rome. He did the like to *Nicephorus*, that had inuaded the Empire of the Eaſt. *Hilbertus* Archbiſhop of Rauenna being in faction againſt him, ſurpriſed him, and caſt him into priſon, vpon Chriſtmas-day at night; but in the morning the people, that loued him dearely, thronging togeather, tooke him out by force. And manie other things without number he endured courageouſly, and decreed with great wiſedome, in the twelue yeares which he gouerned the Church.

20. *Victor* the Third ſucceeded him, ſonne to the Prince of *Beneuentum*, who in his youth being conſtrayned to marrie a wife, fled to the Monaſterie of *Mount-Caſſino*, before he touched her; where he was created Abbot, & afterward made Cardinal by *Gregorie* the Seauenth, & after his deceaſe was eſteemed the fitteſt to vndertake the gouernment of the Church; in which charge he was not only conſpicuous for his Religious pietie & modeſtie, but for ſuch courage, as might beſeeme a General of an armie. For he thruſt out of Rome the Antipope by force of armes, & leauying a great armie from al parts of Italie, he ſent it into Africk, with ſuch happie ſucceſſe by the ſpecial help of God, that he had both the victorie miraculouſly at the verie firſt entrance into the land, & the newes of it in Italie the verie ſelfſame day, that the armies met, which was yet more ſtrange. Finally holding a Councel al *Beneuentum*, he was taken with his laſt ſickneſs, & cauſed himſelf to be carryed to *Mount-Caſſino*; that, where firſt he had receaued the ſpirit of Religion, there among the prayers of his Bretheren he might more ſecurely and holily giue-vp his laſt breath, which he did a yeare and three moneths after he had taken the Paſtoral charge vpon him, that a man may iuſtly wonder, how he could be able to thinke of ſo manie things as he did, much more how he could performe them in ſo ſhort a time. *Victor 3.*

21. *Vrbanus* the Second ſucceeded him, taken out of the Monaſterie of *Cluni* in Frãce. He gouerned the Church ſomewhat more then eleuen yeares, & ſhewed himſelf a notable Pope. For gathering three Councels in Italie, he decreed manie vſeful things, both for the quieting of thoſe turbulent times, and for reformation of manners. Then he went into France, and as he viſited manie Citties, he ordayned manie holeſome things; & among the reſt in the Councel of *Clermont*, he proclaimed the voyage to the Holie-land; for which enterpriſe there were leauyed three hundred thouſand foot, and a hundred thouſand horſe; by which forces at that time the Holie-land was recouered.

22. *Paſchalis* the Second, a Monk of *Mount-Caſſino*, much againſt his wil, and much lamenting his caſe, was, in the yeare One thouſand ninetie nine, placed in the Chayre of *S. Peter* with ſo general conſent of the people and the Clergie and the Cardinals, that he could not poſſibly withſtand it. He gouerned the Church eighteen yeares, in which time he paſſed through manie *Paſchalis 2.*

changes of times, and manie difficulties, and ſhewed great courage in them. For by his wiſdome & dexteritie he extinguiſhed the Schiſme, which had manie yeares moſt miſerably diſtracted the Church of Chriſt through the infidelitie of ſome great Princes. He alſo reſtored & enlarged the dominios of the Church, which had been inuaded by ſeueral perſons; & hauing ſuppreſſed manie other ſeditious proceedings, & compoſed manie differences of Chriſtian Princes and Common-wealths, he was ſo beloued of al men, that returning to Rome, he got his laſt ſicknes in the preſſe of people, that came to meete him; and died.

Gelaſius 2. 23. *Gelaſius* the Second did ſomewhat repayre the loſſe. He was alſo bred-vp from his infancie in *Mount-Caſſino*, & had been made Cardinal by *Vrban* the Second, and liued in his Pontifical dignitie with great ſanctitie of life and temperance; a man of great learning and eloquence, as Authours write, which was half a miracle in thoſe dayes. He was much encombred through the factious proceedings of ſome wicked men, and chiefly by the Emperour *Henrie*, and moſt vnworthily alſo beaten by ſome of his followers; but he tooke the iniurie as it beſeemed the Vicar of Chriſt, imitating his meekenes, and following the example of *Ionas*, after the ſecond tempeſt rayſed by his occaſion, he went into France, where he dyed in the Monaſterie of Cluny, hauing held the Chayre but one yeare.

Calliſtus 2. 24. And preſently the Cardinals, that were in his companie, gaue the dignitie to *Calliſtus* the Second, who was ſonne to *Wilyam* duke of Burgundie, and had been a Monk either in the Monaſterie of *Palleri* or *Cluni* (for Authours doe varie in it) and was then Archbiſhop of *Vienne*. A wiſe man, & dexterous in buſineſſes, as it is recorded of him, and in effect he ſhewed it. For he was ſcarce arriued in Rome, but he ſurprized *Burdin* the Antipope, and caſt him into priſon; and making peace with the Emperour Henrie vpon good condition, he appeaſed the controuerſies, which had long time wronged the Church. And continuing neere vpon ſix yeares in his Paſtoral care, he died in the yeare One thouſand one hundred twentie foure, to the great regret of euerie bodie, and much longing that he might haue liued longer.

25. One and twentie yeares after his deceaſe, there followed three Popes *Eugenius 3.* one after an other taken out of Religious Orders; and firſt *Eugenius* the Third a Ciſtercian Monk, though he were not ſo much as Cardinal before, but only Abbot of the Monaſterie of *Tre-fontane*, which is yet extant; ſo great was the *S. Bernard. Epiſt. 236.* opinion which people had of his vertue and wiſdome *S. Bernard* in his Epiſtle to the Court of Rome doth much admire this their proceeding. God forgiue you (*ſayth he*) what haue you done? You haue produced a man that was buried in his graue; a man that was fled from the companie and trouble of men, you haue thruſt him againe into care and trouble; he that was crucifyed to the world, is rayſed againe to the world by you; & he that had choſen to be abiect in the houſe of his God, you haue choſen him to be Lord ouer al. He had powerfully freed himſelf from the allurements of the fleſh, and from the glorie of the world, as from the violent hands of the Diuel; and yet he could not eſcape your hands. What reaſon or counſel was there in this buſines? ſo ſoone as the Pope was dead, preſently to ruſh-in vpon a countrey-fellow; to lay hands vpon one that had hid himſelf; and taking from him his axe, or his hatchet, or his ſpade, to drawe him to Court, to place him in the Chayre, to cloath him in

in purple and silk, to gyrd him with a sword, *to doe vengeance in nations, reprehensions in the people, and to tye their kings in fetters, and their nobles in manicles of iron.* So; was there not among you a wise and practical man, to whom these things might better agree? In very deed it seemes a ridiculous thing, that a thread-bare fellow should be assumed to gouerne Princes, to command Bishops, to dispose of Kingdomes and Empires. Shal I say, it is ridiculous, or miraculous? certainly it is one of them. This was the astonishment which *S. Bernard* conceaued in the busines; and agreeth no lesse to al the rest of whom we haue hitherto spoken, or shal heerafter reckon, as raysed from Religious Humilitie to so great Honour; for in al of them there is part of that miracle which *S. Bernard* mentioned.

26. But to returne to *Eugenius*, we may guesse how vertuous he was, and how much he loued Religion, by that which we find written of him; to wit, that vnder the splendour of his Pontifical attire, he wore his Monastical weed, that is a wollen garment next him, and his Hood, in which also he alwayes slept, and his bed was of straw only, though the bedsteed were guilt, and hung with courtins of purple-silk; by which meanes he outwardly carried the Maiestie which beseemed his place in the eyes of men, and inwardly in the eyes of God he neuer forsooke his Religious Humilitie. After he had visited France, and among other things, giuen the Crosse to King *Lewis* for the voyage into the Holie Land, returning to *Rome*, and being receaued with great ioy, he died in the eighth yeare of his Popedome, when *Anastasius* the Fourth succeeded, Abbot of the Monasterie of *S. Rufus* in the Diocese of *Velitrra*; and in one yeare of his Popedome (for he sate no longer) he gaue great signes of vertues, and chiefly of liberalitie towards the poore, releeuing them plentifully in a great dearth, which wasted almost al Europe. *Anastasius* 4.

27. *Adrian* the Fourth succeeded *Anastasius* in the yeare One thousand one hundred fiftie foure. He was an English-man borne, and as some say Abbot of the Monasterie of *S. Rufus* in France, afterwards made Cardinal by *Eugenius* the Fourth, and Legate into Swedeland and Norway, great part of which Countrey he brought to the Faith and worship of Christ. Being put in the Chayre and office of *S. Peter*, for the time that he held it (which was fiue yeares and eight moneths) he maintayned the dignitie of the Apostolical Sea in manie things; and particularly in excommunicating Wiliam King of Sicilie, and depriuing him of his right to the Kingdome, for spoyling some townes belonging to the Patrimonie of the Church of Rome. *Adrianus* 4.

28. A good space after him, to wit in the yeare One thousand two hundred ninetie foure, *Celestin* the Fift was raysed from this dust of Religion, to sit in the Turone of glorie. From a child he went into the wildernes, and liued there manie yeares; afterwards he founded a Religious Order, which being spred farre and neere, himself liuing a very austere life, and working manie miracles, his sanctitie grew so famous, that whereas the Cardinals could not for two whole yeares agree vpon the election of a new Pope, they al gaue their voyces to this man, though he were absent and hidden from the world; and his Consecration was honoured with the concourse of more then two hundred thousand people. Being Pope he slacked not the rigour of his life, nor the humilitie of his conuersation; and within a short time began so to loath the noyse and *Celestinus* 5.

ſmoake of Court, and ſo to long after his wonted quiet, that he reſolued to ſhake-of that troubleſome burthen and care, notwithſtanding the people of *Naples* (whither he had retired himſelf) and King *Charles* were much againſt it; & the people, whereſoeuer they met him, with lowd voice beſeeched him, he would not doe ſo. Yet fiue moneths were ſcarce at an end, when he gaue ouer his charge; diuers bewayling the loſſe of him, others admiring ſo great humilitie, and an example therof neuer heard-of til that day.

Benedictus 12.

29. In the number of theſe Popes the memorie of *Benedict* the Twelfth is venerable. He was aſſumed to that charge in the yeare One thouſand three hundred thirtie foure, from the Ciſtercian Order, hauing been Abbot of a monaſterie in France called *Mont-froid*. Manie notable things are recounted of him, both publick and priuate; and in particular, that he preferred none of his kindred to anie Eccleſiaſtical Office, ſaying, that the Pope had no kindred. Whereby & for his manie other vertues, he was ſo wel beloued of al, that dying after he had ſate ſeauen yeares, his funerals were honoured with manie teares, as it is recorded of him.

Clemens 6. Maiſon-Dieu.

30. The vertue of his ſucceſſour *Clement* the Sixt alayed part of the common grief. He was a Monk and Abbot of a monaſterie called *Caſa-Dei* in the Dioceſe of *Clermont*, a man of a great wit, and great learning; & hauing been made Cardinal by his predeceſſour *Benedict*, when they came to chooſe an other Pope, he eaſily carried it by the conſent of al; and in his Popedome to his other prayſes he added ſingular munificence and liberalitie beſeeming a Pope, that is a common Father and Paſtour of al. He contracted the yeares of Iubilie from a hundred yeares to fiftie. He held the Chayre ten yeares to the great contentment of the whole world.

40. Not long after, to wit, in the yeare One thouſand three hundred ſixtie two,

Vrbanus 5. *Vrban* the Fift Abbot of *S. Victor* was aſſumed to the ſterne of the Church; a man, in the iudgement of al men, of ſingular vertue, great courage, vnſpotted life, and one that applyed himſelf wholy to the common good. After he had ſate eight yeares, by the ſpecial prouidence of God paſſing by *Marſeils*, he gaue vp the ghoſt in the ſelfſame Monaſterie, where he had been bred, in the aſſemblie of manie Monks, much comforted in beholding them, and much aſſiſted by their prayers.

Popes of the Order of *S. Dominick.*

41. Theſe are al the Popes which haue been Monks, vnleſſe perhaps ſome haue eſcaped me at vnawares; now we wil looke into other Religious Families alſo, wherin it can be no wonder if we find fewer, becauſe the Orders themſelues are much later. In *S. Dominick* his Order we find that three of them haue been Popes, vnleſſe we wil reckon *Iohn of Vercels* to be the fourth; of whom we reade in their Chronicles, that hauing been Gouernour of his whole Order twentie yeares, and gone on foot to al the Monaſteries therof, it being at that time diſperſed in a manner through the whole world, in the Conclaue which was held betwixt the times of *Nicolas* the Third, & *Martin* the Second, in the yeare One thouſand two hundred and foureſcore, by cõſent of the Cardinals he was choſen Pope; and being abſent, dyed before he could haue newes therof, preſerued from manie troubles which that weightie Charge would haue drawne vpon him. Leauing him therefore who was deſigned to that Charge, but neuer vndertook it; the firſt of this Order that was placed in it, was *Innocent* the Firſt,

which

which name of his, and that alſo which he had before of *Petrus Tarantaſius*, is wel enough knowne by the Books which he hath left written. Entring vpon this dignitie in the yeare One thouſand two hundred ſeauentie ſix, he preſently gaue his mind to pacifye the diſcords, which had ſet al Italie on fire. For wheras the *Florentins* had been long in armes againſt thoſe of *Piſa*, and the *Venetians* againſt the *Genoueſes*, he excommunicated al that would not preſently lay downe their armes; and had doubtleſſe brought this and farre greater things to paſſe, if God had lent him life, which he enioyed but ſeauen moneths. *Innocentius* 5.

42. In the yeare One thouſand three hundred and three, *Benedict* the Eleuenth was choſen out of the ſame Order, and liued in his Charge much about the ſame length of time, to wit, eight moneths; but ſupplyed the ſhortnes therof with his famous deeds. For by the verdict of al, he was a man of wonderful wiſdome and ſanctitie; and while he was General of his Order (hauing long and laudably borne that office) receauing letters in his Monaſterie of *Narbona* from Pope *Boniface* the Eight, wherin the Pope commanded him to admit of a Cardinal's Hat, he almoſt blotted-out the letters with his teares, and yet could not but obey the commandment. In the time of his Popedome, how manie profitable things did he ordaine, decree, and eſtabliſh in a ſhort time, ſpecially being to ſucceed *Bonifacius*, who had a turbulent time of it; and to cure the wounds, which Chriſtianitie had formerly receaued? He proiected to gaine *Syria* and *Paleſtine* out of the hands of the Barbarians; which ſheweth his zeale and courage. But yet, in my iudgement; it was a greater matter, that when his mother, who was yet liuing, a poore and needie woman, came to *Rome* to congratulate him, and preſented herſelf before him in coſtlie attire, ſuch as friends had abundantly furniſhed her with; he taking no notice of her, but as if ſhe had been a ſtranger, asked, who that Noble-woman was? and being anſwered, that it was his mother: *No certainly* (ſayth he) *for I know my mother is very poore, and hath not wherewithal to cloath herſelf in this manner.* At which words ſhe bluſhing went her wayes; and returning not long after in her owne apparrel, the Pope roſe-vp vnto her, acknowledged her for his mother, and friendly entertayned her. Where ſhal we find a more temperate and mortifyed man? or what greater teſtimonie can we require of the ſanctitie of anie man, then ſuch humilitie, which doubtleſſe he learned no-where but in Religion? So that it is no wonder, if he wrought miracles after his death, as they write of him. *Benedictus* 11.

43. The third Pope of this Order was *Pius V.* for vertue like to *Benedict*, farre beyond him for the buſineſſes which paſſed through his hands; and the memorie of him is yet freſh in mens minds. What can we ſay worthie of his vertue? Who being created Pope in the yeare One thouſand fiue hundred threeſcore and ſix, in the ſeauen yeares, which he liued not fully compleate, ſhewed againe to the world the vertues of the ancient Popes, ſuch as Religious diſcipline doth teach; as frugalitie, innocencie of life, and wonderful deuotion; and ſuch as are proper to great Princes, as munificence, prouidence, ſtrict rigour of iuſtice, courage in warre againſt Hereticks, and againſt the Turcks; entring league with the Spanyards, and the *Pius* 5.

Venetians, and by that meanes defeating a great nauie which theſe Infidels had prepared. Theſe were the vertues which got him an opinion of ſanctitie, not only among Chriſtians, but euen among the enemies of God's Church. And theſe be the three Popes, which hitherto haue been aſſumed to that dignitie out of the Order of *S. Dominick*.

Popes that were Franciſcans. *Nicolaus 4.*

44. The Order of *S. Francis* hath had one more. The firſt was *Nicolas* the Fourth in the yeare One thouſand two hundred eightie eight; and liued foure yeares in the Charge, deſeruing exceeding wel of al Chriſtianitie by his diligence and care in performing al things belonging to his Paſtoral function. And among other things his carriage towards his kindred was memorable; for he was wont to ſay, that he owed them no more then he owed anie good man whatſoeuer. And being rid of this houſehold-bond, as I may cal it, he was the freer to attend to the common good of the Church, and was careful in it; for he appeaſed manie controuerſies betwixt Chriſtian Princes, and brought them into league one with an other; and recouered alſo by force ſome Cities belonging to the Church, which had been vniuſtly vſurped by others. And yet how vnwilling he was to be in honour, he ſhewed long before, by that which he did when he was made Cardinal by *Gregorie* the Tenth. For hauing receaued newes of it by letters in France, he wrote againe to the Pope as effectually as he could, beſeeching him to excuſe him; and in the meane time, til a new command came, he would not alter anie thing concerning himſelf. And it is moreouer reported of him, that he was wont to ſay, he had rather be cooke of a Monaſterie, then Cardinal.

Alexander 5.

45. *Alexander* the Fift followed not long after in the yeare One thouſand three hundred and nine, though the honour abided not long in him, to wit, ſome ten moneths, yet in ſo ſhort a time he gaue manie demonſtrations of a deuout and noble mind. For he depriued *Ladiſlaus* of his Kingdome, a powerful King, and a great enemie to Eccleſiaſtical libertie. He was ſo liberal towards the poore, not only during his Popedome, but in al his former life, that it is recorded that he was wont to ſay in ieaſt of himſelf, that he was a rich Biſhop, a poore Cardinal, and a beggar when he was Pope.

Sixtus 5.

46. *Sixtus* the Fourth was of the ſame Order, placed in the Chayre, in the yeare One thouſand foure hundred ſeauentie and one, and ſate thirteen yeares; a man rare for al that belongs to wit, or learning, or prudence in handling of buſineſſes. He ſhewed his zeale, both in the warres which he made for defence of the Dominions of the Church, and in ſetting-forth a nauie againſt the Turcks.

Sixtus 5.

47. The fourth that out of the Order of *S. Francis* hath been exalted to this dignitie, is *Sixtus V.* he that holdeth the ſterne at the time that we are writing this; of whoſe life and actions we wil ſay nothing for the preſent, leaſt we may ſeeme to flatter him; ſpecially ſeing no toung can ſo wel expreſſe that which is in him, as his owne liuelie preſence. He was charged with the Paſtoral care in the yeare One thouſand fiue hundred eightie fiue; and this is the fourth yeare that he holdeth it.

Eugenius 4.

48. Beſides theſe, there be two other Popes of two other Orders, to wit, *Eugenius* the Fourth, and *Paul* the Fourth. *Eugenius* was of the Monaſterie of *S. Gregorie* in *Alga* in *Venice*, of that Order which *S. Laurence Iuſtinian* liuing

at

at the ſelf-ſame time, and famous for al kind of vertue, did much illuſtrate. He liued in the Paſtoral charge neere vpon ſixteen yeares, hauing been promoted therunto in the yeare One thouſand foure hundred thirtie one. Of whom al Writers agree, that he was diligent in the warres he waged for the Church, graue and wiſe in peace, liberal towards people of learning, patient in occaſions of wrong done him, and a ſpecial Patron of Religious people, granting them manie priuiledges and franchiſes, and alſo great reuennues. But his maiſter-peece was the breaking of the neck of the Councel of *Baſle*, which began to make head againſt the Pope's authoritie; but partly by courage, partly by his ſingular wiſdome & prudence, he diſappointed their deſignes, & called an other Councel firſt at *Ferrara*, and afterwards tranſlated it to *Florence*, whither *Iohn Paleologus* Emperour of Greece came, and acknowledged the Pope of Rome to be Head of the Church. *Paul* the Fourth was not only a Religious man, but Founder of a Religious Order of Regular Prieſts. For firſt giuing ouer his Biſhoprick of *Theate*, he betooke himſelf to a priuate and ſolitarie life; afterwards others, that had the like purpoſes and reſolution, ioyning with him, he began a new courſe of Religious diſcipline, and profeſſed it publickly in a great aſſemblie in *S. Peter's* Church in Rome, togeather with them of his Companie, in preſence of the Clergie of that Church, at the Tombe of the Apoſtles, making the three Vowes which are common to al Religious people, in the yeare One thouſand fiue hundred twentie eight, vpon the day of the Exaltation of the Croſſe; and from thence we account the beginning of this Order, which ſince hath been very much encreaſed, and doth dayly ſpreade itſelf more and more to the great benefit of the Religious themſelues, and al others. *Paul* himſelf, who was then called *Iohn Peter Caraſa*, was not long after made Cardinal by Pope *Paul* the Third, and created Pope in the yeare One thouſand fiue hundred fiftie fiue; and ſate foure yeares. *Paulus 4.*

49. Theſe are the Popes, which we find vpon record taken out of Religious Orders; whoſe promotion doubtles is a great honour to that courſe of life, not only by reaſon of the greatnes of that dignitie, as I ſayd before, but much more for the vnſpeakable benefit, which the learning, and ſanctitie, and wiſdome of ſo manie rare men hath brought to the Church of God in al Ages, and in al kind of buſineſſes, as we ſee it hath. Wherefore though there were nothing els in Religion, this alone were ſufficient to conclude, that a Religious courſe of life hath deſerued very much of al Chriſtians and Chriſtendome.

Of Prelats that haue been taken out of Religious Orders.

CHAP. XXIX.

TO the glorie, which hath accrued to Religion by the manie Popes, ſo often and with ſuch benefit of the Church, taken out of Religious Orders, we may adde another degree of ſplendour not farre inferiour to the former, ariſing from the like choice of other Prelats out of the ſame Religious diſcipline, to no ſmal profit of Chriſtianitie in al Ages. We haue ſet downe the number, and the names, and the order of the ſucceſſion of the Popes that haue been Religious; but it is impoſſible to doe the like in rehearſing other Prelats, becauſe the number of them is without number; neither do we find al their names vpon record; and though they had been al regiſtred, it were not worth the labour to reckon them vp ſeuerally.

Trith. de vir. Illuſt. c. 11. Cardinals Benedictins 80. Dominicans, 30. Franciſcans, 43.

2. For firſt, if we ſpeake of Cardinals, *Trithemius* a careful and diligent Writer, doth ſhew, that of *Benedictins* only there had been til his time (which was about a hundred yeares ſince) foureſcore Cardinals, whoſe names were extant, beſides manie others that were not knowne. And I find that the *Dominicans* haue had thirtie, and the *Franciſcans* three and fourtie of their Order; of other Orders there haue not been ſo manie, yet moſt of them haue had ſome. And whereas theſe men were choſen to this dignitie, not in conſideration of the noblenes of their bloud, nor for their ambitious pretences, but by reaſon of their long tryed and approued learning, vertue, and pietie; it is no wonder, that we may truly ſay, they did not ſo much receaue, as they did adde honour to the honour, to which they were aſſumed. For to omit manie others, what a man was Cardinal *Torquemada*, and *Caietan*, and *S. Bonauenture* ancienter then them both? and diuers beſides, whom we ſhal not need to ſpeake of; themſelues hauing got ſo great renowne as the world knowes, both by their learned pennes and noble actions.

Bishops.

S. Anton. p. 3. tit. 23. c. 10.

3. Much leſſe ſhal we need to ſpeake of Arch-Biſhops, and Biſhops; it is ſo euident, that there haue been in a manner infinit preferred to theſe ſacred degrees of Dignitie, out of al ancient and moderne Orders. *S. Antonine*, a knowne graue Authour, reckoned a hundred twentie fiue of *S. Dominick's* Order, til his dayes; adding that he nameth not al, but rather few. And leaſt a bodie might think, that it was the deuout diſpoſition of thoſe times, which caſt theſe dignities vpon them, we can reckon in theſe laſt three-ſcore and ten yeares, wherof the memorie is yet freſh, aboue a hundred and foure-ſcore Franciſcans only that haue been Biſhops, which a man may iuſtly wonder at. What ſhal I ſay of the Benedictins? of whome alone *Trithemius* aboue mentioned hath collected to the number of aboue fiue thouſand threeſcore and ten: which no man hath cauſe to find ſtrange, conſidering that anciently the name of a Monck was ſo venerable, that Biſhops were almoſt euerie where choſen only out of Monaſteries. In ſo much that *Sulpitius*

Trith. l. 4. c. 10. Bishops Benedictins 5070. *Sulpitius.*

relating

relating of manie Bishops, which had been elected out of the Couent, which *S. Martin* founded, he concludeth thus: *For what Cittie or Church was there, which desired not a Bishop of S. Martin's Monasterie?*

4. Throughout al Greece it was so general a custome, that to this verie day, notwithstanding the Schisme in which they liue, they consecrate no Patriarck or Bishop that is not a Monck. In other Countries it was also very frequent, so long as the Dignities of the Church were not so ambitiously pretended, but cast vpon those, that were farre from desiring, and farther from willingly thrusting themselues vpon them; vpon those, I say, that did rather indeed resist their promotion, and decline it as a heauie burthen. Who can expresse, how beneficial the light of these men, placed vpon a candlestick, was not only to the people whome they had in charge, but to other both people & Pastours, that learned to gouerne their flock by their forme of gouernment and example? For where is it possible for men to learne the *Art of Arts* (as *S. Gregorie* stileth the busines of gouerning of soules) more exactly then in Religion? For that which is now growne into a common Prouerb, is most true, that *No man can profitably be ouer another, that is not willingly vnder; and hath not learned how to be so.* And doubtles the hardnes of the work requiring great forces, no place is more apt to breed them, or by daylie practise and exercise to encrease them, then Religion. *S. Greg. 1. p. Past. c. 1.*

Religious men more fit to gouerne then anie others. Why?

5. *Innocentius* the Fourth vnderstood this point very wel; and accordingly it is recorded of him, that he chose so often and so manie Bishops out of Religious Orders, and chiefly from among the *Dominicans*, that euerie bodie did wonder at him; which though it were a great credit to the Order, yet most of the Religious tooke it very heauily for diuers reasons, and particularly because they found themselues bereaued of their principal and graueſt Fathers. And therupon their General *Iohn Teuto* laying open his owne and his whole Orders aggrieuance to the Pope in this behalf, and earnestly beseeching him that he would from thence-forward leaue the Religious of that Order in the humilitie, which they had professed; the Pope made him answer in the words of our Sauiour: that *the candle is not to be hidden, but to be set in the midst, that it may giue light to the whole house; and that the Maister condemned the Seruant that had hid his talent.* *Matth. 5. & 25.*

6. Moreouer it is of no smal moment that these kind of people come not by stealth into the sheep-cote, *but enter by the doore*; that is, they hunt not after these dignities vpon ambitious desire of honour or wealth, but being lawfully called, they obey the voice and commandment of God. So that being chosen in this manner, and bringing with them the vertue, which is necessarie for the performance of their charge, they must needs be both fit instruments for great matters, and bring forth most plentiful fruit for the glorie of God by their industrie. Witnes *S. Basil*, and his equal in time and bosome-friend *S. Gregorie Nazianzen*. Both their atchieuements are wel knowne to the world; *S. Basil's* against the heretical Emperour *Valens*; *S. Gregorie's* against the *Arians*, the *Macedonians*, the followers of *Apollinaris*, and against *Iulian* the *Apostate*; and once he ran hazard of his life, because the seditious people began to throw stones at him, while he constantly stood for God's cause. *Io. 10.*

Manie notable Bishops that were Monks.

S. Basil. S. Greg. Nazian.

7. *S. Iohn Chrysostome* was not inferiour vnto them in vertue and

conſtancie, both againſt *Gainas* an Arian Prince, and againſt the Empreſſe *Eudoxia*, not ſticking publickly in a Sermon, which he made, to cal her an other *Herodias*. In a later Age *S. Fulgentius* was not behind in courage; for himſelf alone withſtood the ſtorme, which wicked King *Traſimond* had rayſed againſt the Catholicks; encouraging the Faithful, and danting his aduerſaries very much by his great learning, and ſanctitie, and by the admirable eloquence of his tongue, ſo farre that he was banniſhed into *Sardinia*; yet parting with the great grief of al, he prophecied that he ſhould ſhortly returne; and ſo it hapned. For *Traſimond* dying not long after, his ſucceſſour *Hilderick* reſtored the Church to the former peace.

S. Fulgentius.

8. And to come yet lower, *S. Anſelme* Archbiſhop of Canterburie came out of the ſame ſchoole of Religion; and often ſhewed, how much he had profited therin; but particularly in his oppoſition againſt King *Henrie* of England, who diuiding himſelf from Pope *Vrban*, ſtood in Schiſme againſt him, and commanded that no Appeale ſhould be made to Rome in al his Kingdome. *S. Anſelme* gathered a National Councel to deliberate vpon this buſines; and wheras al the Biſhops, and Abbots, and Peeres of the Realme held-of for feare of the King, he alone with two others only, whom he had wonne to himſelf by his authoritie, ſtood for the Pope, and voluntarily went into banniſhment, rather then he would yeald to vniuſtice.

S. Anſelme.

9. *Wiliam* a Monk of the Ciſtercian Order may be rancked with theſe great men; whom nothing could compel to vndertake the Biſhoprick of *Burges* but the command of his Abbot, and of the Pope's Legate, both of them by ſharp letters willing him not to withdraw himſelf from that which was the wil of God. In that dignitie he neuer put-of his Religious weed, he neuer eate fleſh, nor remitted anie thing of his former obſeruances; but to his priuate vertues he added thoſe, which are proper to them that haue care of ſoules, neuer ceaſing to feed his flock by publick Sermons, and priuate conuerſation, and manie profitable decrees and lawes: he maintayned continually whole troups of poore people at his owne charges; he courageouſly withſtood the King of *France* trenching vpon the Eccleſiaſtical liberties, and ſtopped the furie of the Hereticks that raged in *Guienne*, ſending diuers of his Ciſtercian Monks to preach among them; and when that would not doe, gathering an armie by conſent of the Pope, and ſowing a Croſſe vpon his garment, made himſelf in a manner commander of it; and though he dyed before the armie marched, yet there is no doubt, but he aſſiſted much more from heauen towards the victorie, which not long after the Catholick partie wonne againſt their enemies. And thus haue theſe Religious men and Saints behaued themſelues in oppoſition againſt the enemies of God. What haue they done in peace, and calmer times, as in a field more ſutable for Religious people to trauel in, their endeauours euer bending rather to peace and quiet? And accordingly we find that in the quiet times of Chriſtendome, the vigilãcie of ſuch Paſtours hath been the more remarkable, attẽding to feed their flock by example, word, and work, ſo much the more glorioufly and with greater effect, by how much more their famous endeauours were euer coupled with admirable contempt of humane things; which vertue doth make them more pliant to the ſeruice of God, and others more readie to giue credit vnto them.

Guilielmus Bituricen.

10.

10. *Boniface* about the yeare One thousand one hundred and fiftie, borne of the bloud Royal, and neer kinsman to the Emperour *Otho* the Third, and so highly in his fauour, as the Emperour was wont to cal him his *Soule*, entred into the Order of *S. Romualdus*, and hauing done pennance a long time in it, he was moued by instinct of God to goe and preach the Ghospel to the *Russians*; which the Pope agreed vnto, and moreouer made him Archbishop of that Countrey; notwithstanding which dignitie, he altered nothing from his former rigour of Abstinence and hard cloathing; but riding on hors-back barefoot, the cold being extreme violent, when he lighted, his foot was frosen to the stirrop, so that he could not pul it out, but that he had some warme water brought him to bathe it in. Which poore fashion of liuing brought-forth wonderful fruit in short time. For coming to that Barbarous nation of the *Russians*, & beginning to preach the Faith of Christ to the King, at first the King made account that he came to tel them some strange things, whereby to get himself some releef; but finding that he constantly refused the great guifts with which he had caused him to be presented, and moreouer seing him passe through the fire without anie hurt, he not only embraced the Ghospel togeather with his whole Kingdome, but making his sonne his heyre, he resolued himself to become disciple to *S. Boniface*; and had effected it, had not *S. Boniface* within a short time after been most barbarously slaine by the King's brother; which hapned wel for him, and according to an ancient desire which he had of suffering Martyrdome for Christ. Which kind of examples are frequent in elder times; and yet of later yeares also there neuer haue wanted in the house of God the like burning and shining lights, as *Andrew* Bishop of *Fiesoli*, about the yeare of Christ One thousand three hundred and sixteen; who being a *Carmelit* was put into that Episcopal dignitie much against his wil, as he euidently shewed; because presently vpon the first notice that he heard that such a thing was in handling, he hid himself in a Monasterie of the *Carthusians*, til in an assemblie of the Canons, that had chosen him, he was by God's permission discouered by the speach of an infant; and at the self-same instant a child in a white garment appeared to him also, bidding him not resist any longer the wil of God, which was the occasion of his making Bishop; and telling him, there was an Angel appointed him for his Guardian, to direct him in the performance of God's pleasure. He being therefore so euidently chosen, not by men, but by God, we may easily imagin, how he carried himself in his Pastoral function. Among other things it is recorded of him, that he was so louing and liberal towards the poore, that he had al their names written downe in a paper, & could not behold them without teares. His wisdome was such, as besides the Decrees, which he made in his owne Dioces, he appeased with great dexteritie a domestical dissention which was risen in *Bologna*, being sent thither to that purpose by *Vrban* the fift, reconciling both parties, and preuenting infinit danger, which was coming vpon that cittie. Finally much more is recorded of this man's vertue and sanctitie, wherof we haue testimonie enough in the miracles, which he wrought, and in that he is Canonized for a Saint.

S. *Boniface.*

Andreas Fesulanus.

11. What shal we say of *Laurentius Iustinianus*; who hauing lead a Religious life for thirtie yeares togeather, & at last being charged by *Eugenius* the Fourth with a Pastoral function, vsed al meanes, and al entreatie, and made vse of al

Laurentius Iustinianus.

his friends to decline it; and when he could doe no more, he admitted of it; and handled it so, that to al mens thinking nothing could be added to his wisedome in gouerning, his zeale of God's honour, his fortitude in withstanding great men, and his care of the poore, towards whome he was rather accounted profuse. Insomuch that they write of him that both the people of his Diocese, and strangers from forrain places, had recourse vnto him as to an Angel sent from heauen; and that as often as he went abroad, people thronged after him to behold him.

S. Antonine.

12. *S. Antonine* was his equal in time and vertue, compelled to take vpon him the Chaire of *Florence* by the same *Eugenius*, and shewed no lesse pietie, and skil in gouerning, then he hath shewed learning and erudition in his written Bookes. It is written of him, that he much reformed the Clergie of that Church, and visited al his Dioces himself in person; and in time of the sicknes, like a good shep-heard, did not refuse to goe to the infected as they lay raging in their disease, to comfort and refresh them; leading about with him a beast loaden with physick, to minister vnto them; finally that he was so profuse towards the poore, that hauing but three loaues of bread in his house, he gaue them to the poore, though not without ful gaynes and recompence; for the selfsame binne, that was emptie before, was presently found ful of bread, and that very white. We shal not need to say anie thing of his wisedome; because, when he was but yet a priuate man, he was as it were an Oracle in al doubtful questions, at home and abroad; insomuch that euen then he was commonly knowne by the name of *Antonine the Counsellour*. Great was also the feruour and constancie, wherewith he more then once defended the liberties of the Church against those that were in highest authoritie. In which busines he once answered one that threatned him grieuously, that he did not feare him, because he had stil a corner, wherunto he should not vnwillingly retire himself; and withal shewed him the key of his Celle, which he kept of his Monasterie; giuing to vnderstand besides, from whence he had receaued so much courage.

Antonius Consiliorum.

13. Manie like examples we might lay togeather not only out of *Italie*, from whence the former are taken, but from people beyond the Seas, and beyond the *Alpes*, among whome Religion did anciently wonderfully flourish; but because our intent is not heer to write a Historie of these things, we wil cõtent ourselues with one *S. Dunstan*, who, about the yeare One thousand & twentie, being Abbot of *Glastenburie*, was made Archbishop of *Canterburie*; in which dignitie it is incredible how nobly, and how beneficially to his flock he carried himself. We find in particular, that he was wont to rebuke the two Kings, *Ethelstan* and *Edward* his successour, with such freedome and confidence, that he was twice banished for that cause, and yet called back againe, and vsed by the selfsame Kings in publick businesses of great weight; such was the opinion which they had of his wisedome. He was rare also for his guift and feruour in preaching the Word of God; and one Ascension day, as he was at his prayers, preparing for a Sermon, an infinit number of Angels clad in white presented themselues vnto him, and told him, that they came to carrie him to heauen, if notwithstanding he were readie. He answered them, that for his part he was ready: but yet it would grieue him, if vpon so high a Day the people should be frustrated of the food of the Word of God. And the Angels taking

S. Dunstan.

his

his excuse, appointed the next day to come for him; wherin he departed with excessiue ioy.

14. In these our dayes we haue had occasion to behold the like vertue in diuers Prelats, and particularly in *Martin Sarmiento* a Franciscan-Friar; who hauing long laboured with abundant fruit, in the Prouince of *Mexico* in the West-Indies, was at last presented with the Bishoprick of that place; but stood constant in the refusal of it, til commanded by his Superiour in vertue of holie Obedience he accepted it. And hauing vndertaken it, he altered not his humble and austere manner of life; but wore the Habit he did before, and trauelled about al his Dioces alwaies on foot, with one of his Friars for his Companion; and finally dyed in the performance of his function, hauing spent three whole dayes one after an other in ministring the Sacrament of Confirmation. *Martin Sarmiento.*

15. Which examples, in my opinion, doe make it much clearer then anie reason or proofe by argument can doe, that Religious Orders haue in al times been, as it were, a Seminarie or Nurserie of Prelats; and of Prelats that haue been exceeding beneficial both to their owne charge by their worthie labours, and to others by their example of life.

Of the fruit, which Religious people haue brought-forth in the Church of God.

CHAP. XXX.

WHEN the wisdome of God had begun to lay the grounds of the Order of the Gray-friars in *S. Francis* and his eleuen first Companions, and this new offspring was vpon the poynt of being brought forth, it was represented in a Vision to Pope *Innocent* after this manner. He conceaued that he saw the Church of *S. Iohn Lateran* (where at that time the Pope had his Pallace) gaping at the foundation, and readie to fal; and that a poore beggarlie fellow came running towards it and held it vp with his shoulders. When not long after *S. Francis* with his little Companie presented himself before him, demanding approbation of his Rule; the Pope beholding him attentiuely, and weighing his Rule with good aduice, made no question but that he was the poore man, that was shewed him in the Vision aboue mentioned; and the euent proued it true. For not only that Age, wherin this Order sprung vp, was wonderfully enlightned and holpen by it, but it hath euer strengthned and vpheld the Church of God these 376. yeares, which it hath continued since the first beginning of it. *Bonauent. in vita S. Francis.* Religious people vphold the Church.

2. Which commendation, as vndoubtedly it belongeth not *falsly and idly* but by the true and solide testimonie of that heauenlie Vision to the Order of *S. Francis*; so, in my opinion, it may as truly be giuen to the Order of *S. Dominick*, which hath laboured in the same cause with no lesse industrie; and in like manner to al other Orders, which our Lord from time to time hath *sent fresh workmen at diuers houres into his vinyard.* And if it may be sayd of euerie

The prayers of Religious people very beneficial.

one of them ſeuerally, that they haue been ſo beneficial for the defence, and cultiuating, and maintaining of the dignitie of the Church; how much more truly may we ſay it of al of thē togeather? So that we muſt needs conclude, that the profit and fruit, which Religious Orders haue wrought in the world ſince they were founded, is vnſpeakable. For ſetting al other things aſide, their prayers only & hidden deſerts in the ſight of God, certainly are very powerful to reconcile him to mankind. Vpon which ground S. Bernard ſaith, *that they are ordained to pray for the bodie of the Church, for the liuing and for the dead*; and S. Gregorie Nazianzene, *that their teares are the deluge of ſinne; the world's ſatisfaction, and purging*; and Euſebius, *as being conſecrated to God in lieu of al mankind.* Who therefore can imagine, from how manie miſchiefs, and what diſaſters, the world hath been freed by their interceſſion, what benefits their prayers haue obtained? how often our Lord hath been appeaſed not only at their humble ſuit, but at the verie ſight of their good deeds? But to ſay no more of the account which God makes of them, and of that which is only knowne to him; let vs goe forward in the conſideration which we haue propoſed concerning al of them, and weigh the fruit which in al Ages they haue brought-forth two ſeueral wayes; firſt by example, then alſo by their labour and induſtrie.

S. Bernard ſerm. par. 93.

S. Gregorie Nazian. or. in Iul. Euſeb. l. de Vit. c. 8.

3. As for matter of Example, it cannot be denyed, but that for the moſt part, al Euangelical vertues had been hidden in darknes but for the light which Religion hath giuen them; firſt practiſing them, and by their verie practiſe preſenting them to the view of al men, as it were, in a publick Theatre to be beheld of al. So that their modeſtie, humilitie, pietie, & deuotion, hath been alwayes a leading direction for al kind of people to follow; and we may iuſtly conceaue, that this was the reaſon why they are tearmed by S. Iohn Chryſoſtome, *the lights of the world.* For by them the world hath learned, how God is to be ſerued, with what reuerence, with what feare he is to be adored in the Churches and in the Sacraments, with what diligence & attention we ought to pray vnto him, how patient we ought to be in aduerſitie, how charitable towards our neighbour; finally there is no Chriſtian vertue, wherof they haue not left manifold examples in the world.

The benefit of Example.

S. Iohn Chryſoſtome hom. 56. ad pop.

4. Yea though al this were not, their verie forſaking of al things to embrace the Croſſe of Chriſt, wheras manie of them were nobly and richly borne, and in the prime of their dayes, muſt needs be of great force to induce men to contemne the riches and honours of the world; and ſo we find it hath been; and though few haue the ſtrength and courage of mind vtterly to abandon theſe things, yet by that which they ſee theſe men doe before their eyes, they learne to loue theſe earthlie things leſſe, or at leaſt wil vnderſtand that they deſerue not to be loued. What ſhal we ſay more? their verie aſpect is a ſecret exhortation to vertue, & reprehenſion of vice; which manie dayly experience to be true, & S. *Chryſoſtome* doth plainly teſtifye, exhorting the people in two ſeueral Sermons, often to viſit Religious houſes for this verie reaſon, becauſe they cannot but carrie ſome benefit home from them. For there, *ſaith he*, al things are voyd of temptation, free from al diſquiet & diſturbance; they are moſt quiet hauens, and the dwellers of them are like ſo manie fires, ſhining from high places, and giuing light to them that come neere them; and hauing taken vp their reſt in

S. Iohn Chryſoſtome hom. de deſp. reb. & hom 59. ad pop.

the

the hauen, they inuite others to the ſame tranquillitie, and ſuffer not thoſe, that haue their eyes vpon them, to runne hazard of ſhip-wrack, or to be in darknes, if they behold them. Goe therefore to theſe men, conuerſe with them; goe, I ſay, caſt yourſelues at their holie feet, for it is farre more honourable to kiſſe their feet then the head of other men. For, I pray you, if ſome apprehend the feet of certain Images, only becauſe they repreſent the King; ſhalt not thou be in ſafetie if thou embraceſt him that hath Chriſt within him? Their feet therefore are holie, though otherwiſe they ſeeme abiect and contemptible. Thus ſpeaketh *S. Iohn Chryſoſtome.*

5. Deſeruedly therefore may we apply to Religious people, that which was ſpoken to the honour of the Apoſtles, and is common to them that leade an Apoſtolical life: *You are the light of the world, you are the ſalt of the earth*; the one belonging to example of life, of which we haue ſpoken; the other belonging to their induſtrie, of which we are now to ſpeake; which is farre greater alſo then example itſelf, to wit, not only to preſerue the behauiour of men from corruption (as it were) by caſting ſalt vpon them, but which is beyond the nature of ſalt, to reſtore them when they haue been corrupted; which Religious people performe, when they reclaime thoſe that are gone aſtray, raiſe thoſe that are fallen, inſtruct the ignorant, aſſiſt with their counſel, learning, and al manner of induſtrie, them, that are in temptation and difficulties. We ſhal not need to proue theſe things by authoritie of the holie Fathers, or by that which others haue left recorded; for we ſee it dayly before our eyes, and find in our daylie practiſe, that it is ſo. It is apparent to euerie bodie, how much Religious Orders doe further the ſaluation of mankind by hearing Cõfeſſions, by publick Sermons, by priuate reprehenſion of vice, by taking away (as much as lyeth in them) the occaſions of ſinne, by appeaſing diſſention and diſcord, finally releeuing al ſorts of people, inſtructing and teaching them how to behaue themſelues againſt the Diuel, againſt their owne infirmities, againſt the allurements of the world; al which buſineſſes Religious people haue in a manner ſo ingroſſed, that few beſides them, ſtirre in them; and euen thoſe few are oftimes ſtirred-vp by their example, and by a holie emulation of them.

Matth. 5.

Religious people do greatly help towards the ſaluation of others.

6. And though theſe things be in themſelues great, yet becauſe they are daylie, they are not eſteemed; and people perhaps think but ſlightly of them, as the faſhion is. The warre which we haue with the enemies of God's Church, and with Hereticks, is of more reckoning; and Religious men are they, that beare the greateſt part of that burden alſo, oppoſing themſelues as a counterſcarpe and bulwark againſt the furie of them, in their Diſputations, and Sermons, and written Bookes, in priuate and publick meetings. Finally that which is moſt glorious and of greateſt weight, is the good which they haue done, not in particular men, but in whole Prouinces and Kingdomes, bringing them vnder the yoak and obedience of the Faith of CHRIST. How often haue they ſpread the light of the Ghoſpel, where it was neuer ſeen before, and reſtored it where it hath been obſcured? How manie times hath Faith and Religion gone to decay in manie places, and they haue ſet it vp againe? Certainly their zeale in this kind hath been ſo eminent, that whoſoeuer ſhal giue himſelf to reade Hiſtories, and obſerue the manner how the

Religious men oppoſe themſelues againſt hereticks.

And conuert Nations.

Faith of Christ hath been brought into euerie Countrey since the Apostles, & those Apostolical times, wil scarce finde a man named in the busines that hath not been Religious. It wil be too tedious to rehearse them al; yet some we wil touch vpon, for example sake.

S. Remigius.

7. First therefore we finde that *S. Remigius*, he that about the yeare Fiue hundred and thirtie conuerted al *France* from Idolatrie to the Faith of Christ, was from his childhood a Monk, and afterwards Archbishop of *Rhemes*.

Martin.

8. About the same time, to wit, in the yeare Fiue hundred and fourtie, *Martin* a Monk reduced the Swedens from the Arian heresie. It is a knowne thing, how England by *S. Augustin's* instruction (whom *S. Gregorie* sent thither with foure other Monks) was conuerted to God togeather with King *Ethelbert*, in the yeare Six hundred and three. And in Six hundred twentie two, *Lambert* a Monk of *Liege* brought the countrey of *Taxandria* in the Lower Germanie to the Faith of Christ; and at the same time *Kilian* a Scottish Monk wrought the like in *Franconia*, and there dyed a Martyr. *Wilfride* also a Monk of the monasterie of *Hirpue* in England, and afterwards Bishop of *York*, about the yeare Six hundred foure-score and three, as he was sayling towards Rome, was by tempest cast vpon the coast of *Holland* and *Frizland*; and not to passe the winter without fruit, he began to preach the Ghospel, which til then had not been heard-of in those countries. And returning home, and not permitted by wicked King *Egfrid* to remaine in his charge, he went to the South-Saxõs, that were yet Infidels, and shewed them the light of Faith; and withal conuerted the whole Iland of *Wight*.

S. Augustin of England.

Lambert.

S. Wilfride.

9. And that which *Wilfride* began in Frizland, *Willebrord* continued, a Monk of the monasterie of *Rippon* in England, and was afterward created Bishop of *Maestricht*. At the same time *Swithbert* bred-vp in the famous Monasterie of *Lindisferne*, with eleuen others (in memorie of the number of the Apostles) went to the Saxons, and is recorded to haue instructed an innumerable companie of them in the Faith of Christ; and was afterwards made Bishop of *Werda*, and did not cease notwithstanding to take great paines.

10. *Bonifacius* also is renowned in this kinde, and to this day deseruedly worshipped as the Apostle of *Germanie*. He was borne in Scotland, and led a holie life a long time in a Monasterie, to which his parents had offered him from the time he was fiue yeares old; and being sent by Pope *Gregorie* the Second into *Germanie*, he conuerted to the Faith of Christ *Thuringia*, *Frisia*, and *Hesse*, about the yeare One thousand two hundred and sixteen; and that he might the better gouerne those whom he had instructed, he was honoured with the Archbishoprick of *Mentz*, though he receaued yet more honour by the crowne of Martyrdome.

S. Bonifac.

Willehard & Ludger.

11. *Willehard* and *Ludger*, out of the monasterie of *S. Willebrord* in France, went into *Franconia* a prouince of *Germanie*, about the yeare Eight hundred; and begat manie children there to Christ, and themselues endured a great deale of hardnes for his sake.

Ansgarius.

12. Not long, to wit, some ten yeares after, *Ansgarius* with three companions out of the Monasterie of *Corby* in the *Wallons* Countrey, passed through diuers Prouinces preaching the Ghospel, in Denmark, Swedland, Scotland, and Greenland, with incredible fruit. And out of the

the ſame Monaſterie came *Stephen*, who ſucceded *Auſgarius* in the harueſt of *Swedland*, and paſſed afterwards into the prouince of *Helinghen*, and brought it wholy out of errour into the way of truth; and laſtly ſlayne by ſome wicked people there, went to enioy the crowne of Martyrdome.

13. To whome we may adde *Albus* Abbot of *Floriac*, a Monaſterie which was built by *S. Maurus* in the poſſeſſions of one *Florus* Count, as we find recorded; for he tooke much paynes in dilating the Chriſtian Faith in that part of *France* which is called *Gaſconie*; a man famous for his Eloquence, and Sanctitie, and the glorie of Martyrdome. He liued about the yeare Nine hundred and ſeauentie. *Albus.*

14. What ſhal we ſay of *Adalbertus*? who when he was Archbiſhop of of *Prague*, coming to *Rome*, liued a long time a Religious life in the Monaſterie of *Mont-Caſſino*, about the yeare Nine hundred and foure-ſcore; and then togeather with his brother *Gaudentius* a Monk alſo of *S. Alexius* in Rome, went into *Hungarie* to preach the Faith of Chriſt; where he met with King *Geiſa*, that had notice of his coming before from God; and being entertayned honourably by him, he conuerted al that fierce and barbarous people to the obedience of of our Sauiour; and from thence going higher into *Sarmatia*, preached the Ghoſpel to the *Ruſſians*, *Lituanians*, *Moſcouites*, *Pruſſians*, and chiefly to the *Polacks*, and their King *Boleſlaus*. Finally in *Pruſſia* being by the wicked miſbeleeuers bound to a ſtake, and ſtuck with ſeauen darts, while he ſtood gaſping, he gaue God thanks, that he had at laſt vouchſafed him that fauour to dye for his ſake, which he had long deſired. *Adalbertus.*

15. *Bruno* alſo ſonne to *Lotarius* Duke of *Saxonie*, after he had lead a Monaſtical life in the Monaſterie of *S. Alexius* in Rome, was ſent by *Iohn* the Nineteenth to the *Ruſſians* about the yeare One thouſand twentie fiue, and reduced manie of that Countrey to the way of Saluation; and to the end he might not want his reward for his ſeruice in that cauſe, he was crowned with Martyrdome. And about the ſame time *Boniface* Diſciple to *S. Romualdus*, trauelling into the ſame Countrey *Ruſſia*, conuerted the King & the whole Kingdome, ſauing the King's brother, by whom being barbarouſly ſlayne, he watered with his bloud the Vinyard which he had planted. *Bruno.*

16. In the yeare One thouſand and fiftie, *Humbert*, a Benedictin Monk, being ſent Legate from the Pope to *Conſtantinople*, to conuince the Grecians of their Schiſmatical errours, appointing a day of meeting with *Nicetas*, confounded him in Diſputation before the Emperour *Conſtantin*; and forced him to burne the Booke, which he had written. *Humbertus.*

17. *Otho* in like manner a Monk of the Monaſterie of *Waburg* a cittie in *Germanie*, being, in the yeare One thouſand one hundred twentie fiue, ſent by *Calliſtus* the Second into *Pomerania*, conuerted Prince *Warciſlans* and his followers; and trauelling al the coaſt of *Denmark*, & the cõfines of *Poland*, wrought great conuerſions, and viſited alſo manie Citties of *Saxonie* with great fruit. *Otho.*

18. Not vnlike to him was *Vicelinus*, who not long after going out of France to the Wandals with foure Companions, took incredible paynes for thirtie yeares togeather in al that Countrey, inſtructing innumerable people in the Law of Chriſt, and founded manie famous Monaſteries there. *Vicelinus.*

19. And of Conuerſions of the like nature wrought by Monks, we might

adde much more; but for breuitie sake, we wil descend to the Religious Orders, which are of later standing; for since they haue appeared in the Church of God, businesses of this nature haue for the most part passed through their hands.

20. The Dominicans haue had manie occasions of doing God great seruice in this kind; and particularly about the yeare One thousand two hundred fourtie seauen, we find that diuers of them were sent by *Innocentius* the Fourth to the *Tartarians*, the chief among them being *Ascelinus*, a holie man; though for that time there came no other good of it, but that which themselues reaped by the manie iniuries and incommodities which they suffered in that measure, that it is a wonder, that either their bodies, or their harts were able to endure it. Wherefore not manie yeares after, they went in greater number and with better successe to the conuersion of Nations; and trauelled manie countries, where the light of the Gospel had neuer been seen, with such abundant fruit, that it was not possible, as they write, to number the soules conuerted by them; specially in the Countrey of *Cuma*; from which parts *Benedict* (who was Superiour of the rest of the Bretheren) writing to their General, relateth that manie thousands not only of the common sort, but of the Nobilitie of the Countrey had receaued the Sacrament of Baptisme; which may suffise for a taste of the fruit which that Order hath and doth dayly bring forth in the Church of God; there being whole Books extant ful of Relations concerning it.

Dominicans.

21. Of the Franciscans, besides other times, in the yeare One thousand two hundred and seauentie, one *Hieronymus Esculus* was sent to *Constantinople*, to treate a reconciliation of the Greek Church; he that afterwards was chosen Pope, and called *Nicolas* the Fourth. And he had so good successe in the busines he went for, that he perswaded the Emperour and the Countrey to submit themselues; & (which was a ioyful sight) brought fourtie Peeres of the Countrey to kisse the Pope's foot, and to the Councel, which was then assembled at Lions.

Franciscans.

The Greek Church reconciled.

22. The Religious of the same Order haue also more then once passed to the *Tartarians*, first in the yeare One thousand two hundred fourtie fiue, sent by *Innocent* the Fourth, at which time manie being conuerted to the Ghospel, not long after there went more of them into that Vinyard, and erected there manie Monasteries; and Christianitie did much prosper among them.

Tartarians.

23. In the yeare One thousand three hundred fourtie one, two againe of the same Order were sent Legats from *Benedict* the Tenth, with others of their Brethren with them, who obtayning leaue of the Emperour of the Countrey to preach the Faith of Christ, built againe manie Churches and Monasteries, to the great enlargement of the Seruice of God, and conuersion of manie soules.

24. Moreouer no smal number of them passed into *Armenia* in the yeare One thousand three hundred thirtie two. The chiefe man among them was *Gonsales Saurata*, a man very learned, and one that hath much benefitted that Countrey both by his feruent preaching & by translating manie of our bookes into their language. And about the same time we finde that one *Paschalis* trauelled in the conuersion of the *Medes*, and one *Gentilis* among the *Persians*. The former

Armenia.

Medes and Persians.

former writeth in an epistle, which is yet extant, that the people of the Countrey tempted him at first with diuers presents, and offered him manie wiues; which and manie other allurements he constantly refusing, they fel to iniuries, and reproches, they twice stoned him, and burnt his face, and the soales of his feete, with fire; and yet he was so farre from being danted therewith, that he neuer so much as altered his Habit for it, nor intermitted his preaching. *Babylon.*

25. And of *Gentilis* there is this notable thing recorded, that liuing in *Babylon*, and finding himself dul in learning the Arabick language, he resolued to returne into Italie. But as he was vpon the way, there met him a yong man, that hauing sifted out the cause of his iourney, bad him goe back againe, because God would giue him the guift of that tongue; and from that houre he spake it as perfectly as if he had been borne in the Countrey. *Dalmatia.*

26. *Bosna* a cittie of *Dalmatia* was also in those dayes conuerted from Heresie by the meanes of *Gerard* General of that Order, as he had occasion by chance to trauel that way; and afterwards sending diuers others thither, he wonne also the countrey there abouts, it being infected with the same Heresie; and brought it within the fould of Christ.

27. *Odoricus* of *Forli* much about the selfsame time, both to shunne the honour which euerie one was forward to giue him, and through the burning zeale of Soules, got leaue of his Superiour to goe preach to the Infidels; where making his excursions into diuers countreys towards the East and the South, in seauenteen yeares, which he spent in that noble work, he is reported himself alone to haue baptized and instructed twentie thousand Soules. *Cataye.*

28. Vpon the yeare One thousand three hundred and seauentie, *William Prate* being sent to *Cataye* to preach the Ghospel of Christ, carried three-score of his Friars with him. And in Hungarie the King hauing lately brought diuers adioyning Prouinces to his obedience, sent eight Franciscan-friars amongst them, who within the compasse of fiftie dayes, brought two hundred thousand to beleeue in Christ. The King seing the happie successe, wrote earnestly to the General of their Order to send him two thousand of his Friars, assuring him they should not want employment. The letter which the General wrote back is yet extant, wherin he deuoutly and feruently inuiteth his Religious to so wishful and glorious an enterprise. And among the rest we must not let passe *Iohn Capistranus*, who about the yeare One thousand foure hundred and fiftie brought to the bosome of the Church in one excursion twelue thousand Infidels, and manie Schismatiks besides. *Hungary.* *Vid. Annianum in 5. hab.*

29. We might heer speake of much more that hath been done to the exceslliue benefit of the Church both by Other orders, and by this our least Societie of IESVS, which in *Italie* and *Spaine* (where Catholick Religion doth remaine incorrupt and flouriſh) laboureth with that fruit which euerie one seeth and knoweth; and in France, Germanie, the Low-countries, Poland, and in al the Northern parts infected more or lesse with Heresie, employeth itself incessantly in strengthning Catholicks, instructing the ignorant, reducing or conuincing Hereticks, by preaching, teaching schooles, priuate conuersation, and by al manner of holesome meanes and wayes At which how much the Diuel is grieued, he lately shewed (as by certain Relation we haue heard) when being vrged by Exorcismes in a possessed person, among other The Societie of IESVS.

things he profeſſed, that he hated no kind of people more then the Ieſuits.

30. But not to be too long, we wil inſtance the matter we haue in hand, in two only of two ſeueral Families, by which it wil ſufficiently appeare, how much the whole Orders may haue benefitted the Church of God, ſeing one man in an Order hath done ſo much good. *S. Bernard* is one; and the good which he hath wrought in the Church of God, cannot indeed be valued. For in that fearful Schiſme, which was raiſed againſt Pope *Innocent* the Second, he beſtirred himſelf ſo diligently that we may truly ſay, he was the cauſe and meanes at laſt of extinguiſhing it. For he alone brought al *France* to the Pope's obedience; the Synod of *Eſtamps*, where al the Biſhops of the Realme, the King & al his Peeres were purpoſely aſſembled to that end, putting al their voices in him. He reconciled King *Henrie* of England alſo to the Pope, euen againſt the mind and endeauour of al the Biſhops of the Countrey; and afterwards brought-in *Germanie*. Then he went to the Councel of *Piſa*, and was not only preſent at al their meetings and deliberations in the weightieſt affaires of Chriſtendome, but did in a manner gouerne them, al referring themſelues to him. Againe, when the Church of *Bourdeaux* was miſerably torne by factious people, inſomuch that in diuers places the lawful Biſhops were thruſt out of their Seas, he (ſtirred-vp by the Pope's Nuntio, Biſhop of *Chartres*) quenched al that fire with his eloquence, authoritie, and miracles. After this, *Rome* being oppreſſed with publick calamities, he was called thither by the often and earneſt letters of the Pope and Cardinals, and there confuted *Roger* King of *Sicilie* in open diſputation, and by his counſel & wiſdome ſo weakned the partie of the Antipope *Peter Leo*, that being forſaken of al, he made a miſerable end. *Peter Abaylard* was an Heretick ſo proude of his learning and eloquence, that no man almoſt could ſtand againſt him. *S. Bernard* firſt in a priuate meeting, then publickly in the Councel of *Sens* put him to ſhame. Soone after in the Councel of *Rhemes*, he ſo palpably cõuinced *Gilbert Parret*, a man that was alſo famous, that he himſelf publickly cõdemned his owne errour. He alone conſtrayned *Henrie* (an other Apoſtate) to flye, one that had infected the Dioces of *Toloſe* with his wickednes, and was ſtil labouring to infect it more and more; but at laſt he was intercepted and deliuered-vp in chaines to the Biſhop. What ſhal I ſay of his other iourneys to *Milan*, to *Genua*, to the King of *France*, al which he vndertook for affaires of great conſequence to the Church, and al of them with proſperous ſucceſſe? And in theſe iournyes who can number the cauſes which were brought vnto him, or the concourſe of people, to and fro, to his lodging, preſſing-in one vpon another? Neither can it be imagined, with what benefit he preached to the people; what an infinit cõpanie he reclaimed from their wicked life; how manie were reconciled by his meanes; how manie drawne out of the iawes of the Diuel by the firie flames of Diuine loue, which he breathed whereſoeuer he came. But we may giue a gueſſe at it, by that which is recorded of him, that beſides thoſe that forſaking the vanities of the world, betooke themſelues to other Religious Orders, he neuer returned home to *Claire-vaulx*, but attended with a great troup of Nouices, whome he had driuen by his owne perſwaſions into the nets of our Sauiour; and moſt commonly they were men eminent either for Diuinitie, or Humanitie, or for their birth; among whome we find *Henrie* brother to the King of *France*, and one *Heracleus* of the bloud Royal. And ſo much of *S. Bernard*.

S. Bernard.

Carnotenſis Epiſcopo.

31. The other, whom I purpoſe to inſiſt vpon, is *S. Vincent* of the Order

of S. *Dominick*; whose labours haue extended so farre, that it is a wonder that anie one man could goe so much ground as he hath trauelled, preaching the Ghospel of Christ. For first in Spaine he went ouer al the Kingdomes of *Valentia*, *Catalannia*, *Aragon*, *Nauarre*; and setting aside *Galicia* and *Portugal*, where for certain reasons he came not, he passed through al the rest of the Prouinces, and euerie towne of them, and almost euerie village. Then coming into the kingdome of *Ouiedo*, *Daulphinie*, *France*, *Burgundie*, *Normandie*, *Prouence*, *Auuergne*, *Gasconie*, *Britanie*, *Flanders*, and al *Sauoy*, he went-vp into *Italie*, & came downe againe by *Lombardie*, *Piedmont*, & *Genua*, & al that coast, and sayled to the *Ilands* of the *Mediterranean* Sea; and being inuited into *England* by King *Henrie* his letters, and an expresse messenger and a ship to waite vpon him, he visited al that Iland; and from thence went into *Scotland*, and *Ireland*, & rested not only in the head-citties, but passed, as I sayd before, to euerie towne & litle village, following the exãple of Christ our Sauiour. Who therefore but God alone can number the soules, which he reclaimed from their vicious courses, & from the gates of hel; how manie euil customes he rooted out of whole citties and countries; what light and knowledge of heauenlie things he left behind him? S. *Vincent.*

32. We find recorded that he conuerted aboue fiue and twentie thousand Iewes; which Sect, as in those dayes it raigned much, he laboured particularly with great zeale to extirpate; of the Saracens he cõuerted eight thousand; & of Christians debauched, that turned ouer a new leafe, aboue a hundred thousand. But it is more easie to reckon-vp the Countreys and Prouinces, then the soules which he brought into the way of Saluatiõ. For they write of him, that wheresoeuer he set his foot, there followed presently a general repentance of their former offences, a general reformation of manners; dicing, and blaspheming, and periurie, and other crimes, yea idle sports and toyes, were so layd aside, that people did think no more of anie such thing; and their contrition, deuotion, and modestie was so great, not only while he was present, but for some time after, that it did seeme a new Primitiue Church.

33. Wherefore if Religion had had only these two subiects, that had laboured in the reformation of the world, and deserued wel of the Church; were it not a sufficient commendation and glorie vnto it? But it hath had verie manie; as *S. Francis* himself, of whom we reade wonderful things in this kind; *S. Antonie of Padua*, *S. Bernardine of Siena*, both of them not much, or nothing at al inferiour to *S. Vincent*; and others whom it were long to rehearse.

34. And though these things doe turne much to the glorie and renowne of Religion, yet nothing is more worthie of admiration and prayse, then the conuersion of the New-found World, which is wholy to be attributed to Religious people. They were the first that carried the Ghospel into those Countreys, they diuulged the Name of Christ there where it was vnknowne and neuer heard-of before, and cease not to this verie day to spread it stil further and further. The first that vndertooke this charge, were the Franciscan-Friars, who also helped not a little to the finding-out of those Countreys, the names wherof were not so much as knowne before. For when *Christopher Columbus* first treated with King *Ferdinand* of Spaine about that Voyage, and had no great audience, in regard that the thing seemed a noueltie, and vncertaine, it is sayd that two Franciscan-Friars

The Franciscans the first finders and conuerters of the New World.

helped the busines much, both animating the King and exhorting him not to omit the occasion, but to trye what would come of it. *Columbus* therefore with certain ships which were granted him, finding out the Kingdome of *Mexico*, and returning into *Spayne* to bring the ioyful tidings of it, presently some Priests of that Order shipped themselues for those parts about the yeare One thousand foure hundred ninetie three.

34. About the same time, to wit, in the yeare One thousand fiue hundred, *Vasques Gama* by order of *Emmanuel* King of *Portugal* finding a way into the West-Indies, eight of the same Order of *S. Francis* eminent for learning and sanctitie, were sent to preach the Ghospel. And by little and little the Order multiplying in those Countreys, they built manie houses in a short time, and were diuided into thirteen Prouinees (as they tearme them) greatly aduancing the Christian cause euen to this day.

The Dominicans.

35. The Dominicans not long after, to wit, in the yeare One thousand fiue hundred and fiue, ioyned themselues in the like busines, and haue done manie famous things in those farre Countryes; and after them the Augustin-Friars, and lastly our Societie of IESVS, at the request of *Iohn* King of *Portugal* was brought into the East-Indies by *S. Francis Xauier* in the yeare One thousand fiue hundred fourtie one; and few yeares after into the West-Indies by order of *Philip* King of *Spayne*; and hath so taken it to hart, that from that time it hath neuer ceased not only to instruct those that were Christians before, but to preach the Ghospel farre and neere, and spread it in places where it was not heard of; as in *Iaponie*, where though the Countrie be so large, that it is said to containe aboue three-score Kingdomes, yet al the Religion and Faith that is in it, hath been wholy and solely planted and watered by the Societie; and God hath giuen such encrease, that they reckon now therin about two hundred thousand Christians. And lastly also our Societie hath made a hole into *China*, a Kingdome so large, and so rich, that it is almost incredible; which it seemes the Diuel had, as it were of purpose, kept hitherto shut; but notwithstanding the penaltie of death, to which al strangers are liable by their lawes, if they come within their bounds, they got-in fearing nothing, and remaine there to this day, with such hopeful beginnings, that if it succeede accordingly, vndoubtedly the fruit wil be incomparable.

The Societie.

36. Now let vs consider a litle, what honour it is in the sight of God, and his Angels for these Religious men, that they only are called to so great a work in al that part of the world. For first the preaching of the Ghospel and promulgating the Faith of Christ, where it was neuer before, is a great and Apostolical work in itself. For our Sauiour chose his Apostles, and said vnto them: *Going into the whole world, preach the Ghospel to euerie creature, baptizing them, and teaching them to keepe al that I haue commanded you.* As, I say, he gaue the conuersion of this our World in charge to those his Disciples, so he hath giuen the charge of this other World to Religious people. If we compare the greatnes and extent of that World with this, they say there is not much difference; but if we looke into their fashions and dispositions, we shal find them a great deale more barbarous and blind, worshipping the Sunne and Moone, Serpents, and Stones, and the very Oxen, in some places, as in the kingdome of *Mexico*, they make their festiual dayes most fearful by Sacrifices of men; manie of them

feed

feed moſt greedily vpon man's fleſh; a great part of them know not what it is to goe cloathed, but are alwayes naked, contrarie to nature itſelf. Whereby we may ſee, that the verie light of nature is ſo obſcured and dulled in them, that they are in a manner beaſts, vnder the ſhape of men. In ſo great darknes and ignorance, it can not be but that they ſhould be extremely giuen to al manner of vice, and moſt enormous crimes; and no man can iuſtly wonder, if, as we read of them, they make no account at al of things that are hideous to be named. Whereby we may conceaue, what paynes, what labour, and toyle was needful to bring ſuch ignorance & barbarouſnes to the knowledge and feare of God; and to tame them ſo, as to ſtoope to the yoak of Chriſt; and caſting of their brutiſh behauiour, to embrace Chriſtian humilitie, temperance, and chaſtitie. For the glorie therof (next to the grace of God) falleth al vpon Religious people, by whome thoſe Sauages haue been inſtructed and taught, & bred-vp to the ciuilitie & deuotion, which now they haue.

The labours, troubles, & hazards, in conuerting of Barbarous nations.

36. To the labours and paynes, which the buſines itſelf requires, we may adde the manie difficulties, and incommodities, and troubles without number both of bodie and mind, which are incident and annexed vnto it; as the long and difficult voyage by ſea; the diſpoſition of the Climat and Country, for in ſome places it is extreme cold, as in *Laponie*; in other places extreme hot, as at *Ormuz*, where they write that the people in the ſommer-time lye vp to the neck in water to coole themſelues; the want of victuals, the countryes being barren and vncultinate; and that which is to be had, is not for our diet, and manner of feeding; oftimes they ſuffer ſhip-wrack vpon the rocks and ſhelues; and, which is moſt glorious, they are often in danger to be ſlaine by the Sauages and enemies of Chriſtian Faith; which, if it happen, they are vndoubted Martyrs, as killed for the Faith of Chriſt. And I belieue, that diuers Religious men of ſeueral Orders haue been martyred in thoſe parts; but that which I find recorded, is of the Franciſcans, that thirtie of them in ſeueral places haue ſuffered for Chriſt ſeueral kinds of death; and of our Societie in theſe few yeares, there haue been about threeſcore and ten crowned with Martyrdome, and ſome of them very lately.

37. How acceptable therefore may we iuſtly think our labours are to Chriſt our Sauiour, which being ſo much benefit to ourſelues, are ſo beneficial withal to others, and ſo much for the glorie of God? God ſhewed it once to one *Alonſo Rojas* a Franciſcan-Fryar, who hauing ſpent diuers yeares in this great work, and returning into *Spayne*, to recollect himſelf, and prepare himſelf the better to dye, as often as he ſet himſelf to meditate vpon anie good thing, he conceaued he ſaw our Sauiour Crucifyed before him, in a kind of complayning and angrie manner, asking him, why he had left him ſo vpon the Croſſe, and betaken himſelf to his eaſe. Which Viſion hapning to him often, he was ſo pricked with it, that he reſolued to goe into the Indies againe to his former labours, & beſtowed himſelf there manie yeares very profitably. Not vnlike to this was the manner, in which God inuited our *S. Xauerius* to the ſame work long before he vndertooke it. For as he was wont to relate of himſelf, oftimes in his ſleep he carried a Black-a-Moore vpon his ſhoulders; and the burthen ſeemed ſo heauie, that it awaked him out of his ſleep, much wearied with the verie weight of the man. And both came afterwards to

paſſe; for by his labour and induſtrie he brought thoſe people to Chriſt, as it were vpon his ſhoulders; and tooke ſo much paynes in that harueſt, that it is wonderful how the forces of his bodie could endure them. And this may ſuffiſe for a taſte of that fruit, which the feruent endeauours of Religious men haue brought-forth in the Chriſtian world.

Reaſons, why a Religious courſe of life is moſt proper to bring-forth theſe kinds of fruit.

CHAP. XXXII.

IT is not only true, that Religious Orders haue brought forth ſuch abundance of fruit, as I haue ſayd; but alſo that no ſtate of life, no companie of men, is ſo proper and wel prouided for it, as they are. Wherof there might be manie reaſons giuen, but we wil reduce them to three. The firſt may be drawne from the nature and diſpoſition of God, and the faſhion which he doth hold with vs. For if we conſider attentiuely the wayes, which from the beginning of his Church he hath vſed to bring men to Saluation, we ſhal find, that he hath alwayes choſen thoſe inſtruments and helps for ſo great a buſines, which were moſt deſtitute of humane meanes towards the performance of it.

God choſe the ignoble to preach the Ghoſpel.

2. This is that which *S. Paul* writing of the Primitiue Church obſerued and taught, that there were *not manie powerfull, or noble, or wiſe men according to the flesh, but God choſe the weake of the world to confound the ſtrong; and the ignoble, and contemptible, and the things which are not, to deſtroy thoſe which are*; and giueth this ſolid reaſon of it, *that al flesh may not glorie*, that is, that the glorie of ſo great a work ſhould not be giuen to men, and humane forces, *and ſo the Croſſe of Chriſt be euacuated*, as he ſpeaketh. To which effect *S. Ambroſe* alſo ſpeaking very wel, biddeth vs marke the heauenlie proiect. He hath choſen, *ſayth he*, to ſend not the wiſe, or the rich, or the noble, but fiſher-men and Publicans; to the end that he might not be thought to haue inuited the world by oſtentation of power, or bought it out with abundance of wealth, or drawne anie man to his fauour by the ſhew of nobilitie and greatnes, that the force of truth, and not grace in diſputing, might preuaile. And we muſt not think that God is changed, or that the wiſdom of God taketh an other courſe now for the conuerſion of ſoules, then anciently he did. For neither can there be anie change in God, and the motiues ſtil remaine, leaſt that, which is altogeather Diuine, be attributed to humane ſtrength; to which men are prone enough in their owne diſpoſition; becauſe their carnal eyes behold only that which outwardly is done by man, and cannot reach to ſee the force of the inward grace, from which

1. Cor. 1.

S. Ambroſe 5 in Lucam.

which al these effects proceede. The difference only is this, that anciently God for the most part chose those, which were bred and borne in pouertie & want; and now he maketh vse of those who haue voluntarily made themselues poore of their owne accord. And the reason is, because if al they, that are nobly and richly borne, were excluded from this perfection, they should be depriued of so great a good without anie fault of theirs: and on the other side, if they should be admitted vnto it with their worldlie riches, God should goe from his rule, as I haue sayd; and therefore he hath diuinely tempered it so, that they that are nobly descended, and wealthie, and powerful, might haue part of this glorie, yet so as first they forsake their worldlie wealth and honour, and bring themselues of their owne good wil to an humble and poore estate. And we may obserue further, that so long as the Church had no earthlie possessions, and the work-men therof were poore and destitute of worldlie helps, and lead their life, as the Apostles did, *in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakednesse*, God vsed in a manner no other instruments in it but them: But when afterwards, as *S. Hierome* writeth, *it grew greater in power and riches, and lesse in vertue* (which Age he so long agoe tearmeth the dregs of times) then, and euer since, the Diuine goodnes hath called Religious poore men to this work, which cannot be effected but by them that are poore. This was figured in that great *Golias* the Giant, representing the Diuel, that stood vpbraiding God and his forces; for God chose not an other Giant, nor yet a man growne to pul him downe, but a beardles and naked boy: And when the walles of *Hiericò*, that is, the fortifications which *Satan* maketh, were throwne downe to the ground, not by Cannon-shot, or militarie engines, but with the blast of a trumpet, which God knowes how weake it is: And the same was foreshewed in that new manner of going into the field, without anie weapon, but only a lamp put into an earthen pitcher, to wit, sanctitie couered with an outward humble manner of life; which notwithstanding cannot but shew itself, and shewing itself, confound al the hoast of *Satan* and al his forces. This is the reason which hath moued God to hold this course.

2. *Corinth.* 9.

S. *Hieromie in vita Malach.*

1. *Reg.* 17. 34. 49. *Ios.* 6.

3. The second reason reflecteth vpon the men that are to be holpen. For wheras example of life is much more forcible to perswade, then words alone, if the Auditorie heare a discourse of shunning honour, of embracing pouertie, of voluntarie abasing and humbling ones-self, and of al that mortification which the Ghospel teacheth; and yet the man himself that speaketh it, abound in riches, and honour, and worldlie glorie, his words wil haue litle force; because though we may retaine these things, and our hart and affection not be vpon them, yet it seldome is so; and when it hapneth to be so, yet people cannot know it, because they cannot diue into the secrets of our hart. And heer we speake not of what may be, but what is more forcible to perswade and winne peoples harts. For who can make anie doubt, but that people wil easier beleeue, that a man sets al humane things at naught, if they see him indeed contemne them, then if outwardly they see no such thing by him, though inwardly in his mind he be so disposed?

Example more forcible then words.

Contempt of the world, admirable in the eyes of the world.

4. Besides that, this kind of life carrieth a great authoritie in the world. For whereas the goods and pleasures therof, like smooth-toungued dames leade the greater part of the world by the nose, they beholding others so easily to resist them, and to treade those vices vnder foot, to which their consciences tel them that themselues and others are in bondage, they cannot but haue a great conceit of them, and secretly in their harts admire them, and extol them among their neighbours as men that haue done strange things; and not without great reason. For it is a great point to be maister in this kind of al earthlie things, to subdue ourselues, and the crooked inclinations which are in vs; and they that contemne the world with al the allurements therof, must needs be of a noble and heroical spirit, and endued with rare and eminent vertue. So that breeding so much admiration in the minds of men, nothing can be more forcible also to moue and perswade; and they that haue not this in them want a special meanes, and as it were a proper instrument both to sow and reape this fruit of soules.

S. *Iohn Chrysostom hom. 46. in Matth.*

5. Let vs heare what *S. Iohn Chrysostome* sayth to this purpose; for he doth verily think this to be the cause, why in the Apostles time there was so much good done, and the Age wherin himself liued, was become so barren. If twelue men, *sayth he*, were able to conuert the whole world, think with yourselues how great our wickednes is, who cannot reforme our owne subiects, being so manie of vs, that we might suffise for leuen for ten thousand worlds. You wil say, the Apostles wrought miracles. But it was not their miracles, which made them so much admired. For manie sinners did cast out Diuels, and wrought no such effects, but were punished. What was it then which made them so great? The contempt of money, the despising of honour, the abstaining from al businesses of this life; if they had not had these things, though they had raised the dead, they would not only not haue holpen anie bodie, but been esteemed seducers. Thus farre *S. Iohn Chrysostome*, most properly to the commendation of a Religious state; the profession wherof is pouertie, and a perfect renunciation of al things.

Religious people more free to attend to the conuersion of Soules.

6. The third reason may be drawne from the workmen themselues, that labour in this haruest of Soules. For it cannot be doubted, but that they are much better prouided for this work, then others; by reason they haue nothing at al in the world. For first they are free, and lightsome, and readie to goe and runne, whither soeuer the spirit of our Lord shal moue them, because their minds are not entangled in thoughts of children, or possessions, or household-affaires, which thoughts bring two great inconueniences vpon them; for they take vp time, which might be better spent in more profitable things; and our mind (wil we, nil we) doth cleaue too much to them, while we handle them, which is both vnworthie, & vnbeseeming a labourer in the Ghospel, & greatly inconuenient.

Deut. 20.

7. This was anciently figured in that Militarie Law, which God made; that they who had built a new house, or planted a new vinyard, or newly wedded a wife, or were otherwise feareful, should not goe with the Camp: vpon which Caueat we find often, and particularly in the warre, of which *Gedeon* was the leader, that two and twentie thousand souldiers were sent back. And of the ten thousand that remained God casheered

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al that layd themſelues downe vpon their breaſt to drink at the riuer, and in the muſter they were left but three hundred, that had drunk ſtanding; and yet as few as they were, they got a notable victorie. What is this but that which we haue hitherto ſaid, that they that plant vinyards, that is, who giue themſelues to worldlie buſineſſes, or follow the pleaſures of marriage, and other cõtentments of the bodie, or are poſſeſſed with anie other worldlie feare, or loue, and abaſe themſelues to theſe inferiour things, are vnfit to follow this heauenlie warfare? The choſen band of three hundred men, a handful in itſelf, but ful of manlie courage, euidently ſignifie Religious people, that are voyd of al earthlie cares, and al humane feare, which is wont to attend vpon them; and they are but few, if we compare them with the multitude of other people. *S. Ambroſe* therefore ſayth wel: The precepts of the Ghoſpel ſhew plainly, what a one he ought to be, that preacheth the kingdome of God, that without rod, without ſcrip, without ſhoes, without bread, without money, that is, requiring no aſſiſtance of worldlie help, ſecure in faith, he makes account, that the leſſe he lookes after theſe things, the more he may haue. *S. Ambroſ. lib. 7. in Luc.*

8 We may adde moreouer, that wheras men for the moſt part ſinne not out of ignorance (for the Law of God is now ſufficiently diuulged, and people know ſufficiently what they are to doe) wheras therefore, I ſay, they offend not, becauſe they know not wherin they offend, but becauſe their wil is infirme and weake, they want not ſo much inſtruction, as feruour; and their wil is more to be ſtirred vp, then their vnderſtanding informed. Now to ſtirre-vp others, nothing is ſo powerful and ſo neceſſarie, as that he, that goeth about it, be himſelf moued and inflamed; which *S. Gregorie* declareth excellently wel, as al other things, in a certain place of his Morals: The mind (ſaith he) occupied with deſires of outward things, cannot be warme in the loue of God; and therefore the warmth, which comes out of a cold hart, cannot inflame the auditorie with heauenlie deſires; for that which hath not fire in it, cannot kindle another thing. Which ſaying of *S. Gregorie* is grounded vpon good reaſon; for if, according to Philoſophie, the effect muſt be like the cauſe from which it proceedeth, the works of louing God, flying from ſinne, going againſt our inclination, and the like heauenlie and diuine effects, can neuer be wrought by force of human inſtruction, or eloquence, but there muſt be a Diuine and heauenlie vertue added, which vertue as it is ſeldome to be ſeen in the world, ſo it is ordinarie in Religion, and ſpringeth largely and plentifully out of the fountains therof; where euerie one filling himſelf, deliuereth out of the abundance of his hart, as out of a plentiful ſtore-houſe, *new and old*, for the benefit of his neighbour. People ſinne more out of infirmitie, then ignorance. *S. Gregorie 2. Moral. c. 25.*

9. There be yet two other things in Religious people, that greatly conduce to the bringing-forth of abundant fruit, and beating downe of the aduerſe partie. Firſt, the vnion of ſo manie togeather, and ſo great vnion as there can-no be a greater; for it is euident, that there can be no great matter atchieued but by the help of manie. And the reaſon is that, which we haue diſcourſed-of at large els where, that no one man can haue al things in him; & conſequently he that ſhal go about to aſſiſt his neighbour himſelf alone, muſt needs find himſelf ſhort in this as in manie other things. Contrariwiſe, Religious people (as *S. Baſil* expreſſeth it) are as ſouldiers, that fight manie of them cloſe togea- Vnion of manie, is a great help to compas good things. *Conſt. mo. c. 9.*

vnder their targets, that it is impossible to break through them or amongst the: so Religious people being so vnited togeather as they are, they are a fence, as he speaketh, & defence one to another, and easily ward the blowes which the enemie giueth, and put others also in safetie, causing them to flye, and yeald the field; and this they doe laying their wits, and their forces, and their labours togeather, and doe it the more effectually, the more perfectly this vnion and concord of wils and iudgements is obserued in euerie particular Religious Order.

Chastitie a great help.

10. The second is the Vow and obseruance of Chastitie, which God doth so highly esteeme, that he hath vsed it in diuers occasions to ouercome, and beate downe the Diuel; a figure wherof we haue in *Holofernes* & his armie, which God put to route by no other forces then those of chast *Iudith*, as *Ioachim* the high Priest obserued, and published in the publick thanks, which he gaue after so great a victorie, speaking thus in commendation of her: *Because thou didst loue chastitie, and hast not knowne anie other man since thy husband, therefore the hand of our Lord hath strengthned thee, and thou shalt be blessed for euer.* And certainly if it were so great a wonder to find one *Iudith* among such a multitude of people as there were, and this one woman brought so great a happines to al that nation; how glorious is it for the Catholick Church to behold so manie that liue pure and chast in it? and what benefit may we expect therof, but an excessiue strength, and force to the vtter ouerthrowing of the Infernal *Holofernes*, that is the Diuel, and of al his Satanical boast?

11. Which when we behold, we may iustly admire the wonderful prouidence of God, in continually releeuing his Church with new supplyes. For we may distinguish, as it were, three Ages in it: The first of blessed Martyrs, that haue made the field of the Church more fruitful by watering it with their bloud. The second Age was of holie Doctours, who in the Booke of *Iob* (as *S. Gregorie* interpreteth) were designed by the *Hyades*. For as the *Hyades* begin to appeare when winter is gone, and bring raine with them; so the Doctours began to raine showers of knowledge and learning vpon the earth, when the Winter of persecution being gone, and the night of Infidelitie lessened, the Spring began to come-in & quiet-times. The third Age was of Religious men, sent after the two former in farre greater number, to assist in the saluation of mankind. And as in those first beginnings, when the Faith of Christ, being but yet as it were in the cradle, was sorely cõbated with manie enemies, it was fit there should be some to defend it with the losse of their owne life; and as the number of the Faithful encreasing, the learning of Doctours was necessarie for their instruction, and for the suppressing of Heresies, that necessarily sprung vp; so in this third state of the world, wherin the continuance of peace and securitie bred loue of earthlie things, and brought people as it were into darknes by forgetfulnes of heauenlie things, it was a special act of the wisdome of God, to introduce such a kind of forme of liuing euerie where in the world, as should both curbe vice by example of voluntarie pouertie and humilitie, and with learning fight also against the Heresies, that are stil growing vp.

S. Greg. mor. 2. c. 9. Iob. 9.

12. Al which, in my opinion, was euidently declared to *S. Francis* in an admirable Vision, which he had, and by him to al others, that haue forsaken the world as he did. For *S. Bonauenture* relateth of him, that on a time, when he had giuen his cloathes from his back to a poore man that asked him an almes

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for the loue of God, the night following as he was at reſt, it ſeemed vnto him, that he was brought into a great pallace, where there was a faire Hal ful of al kindes of weapons, and al the weapons were marked with the Croſſe of Chriſt. He asked whoſe al that armour was; and it was anſwered him, that it al belonged to him, and his ſouldiers. Awaking out of his ſleepe, and not acquainted as yet with ſpiritual things, he imagined that the Viſion aboaded him ſome great excellencie in Chiualrie and great honour; wherefore he preſently went to a Count in *Apulia*, by whoſe meanes he thought he might be aduanced to ſome fortune in that kind. In his iourney our Lord appeared againe vnto him as he was aſleepe, and ſaid: *Francis*, who can be more beneficial vnto thee, the Maiſter or the ſeruant? the rich or the poore? *Francis* anſwered that which was the truth. Wherefore then (ſayth our Sauiour) doſt thou leaue the Maiſter for the ſeruant? and God that is rich, for man that is poore? And S. *Francis* replyed: What then wilt thou haue me doe? Returne (ſaith he) into thy countrie; for that which thou haſt ſeen, doth not aboade anie temporal thing; neither is it to be fulfilled by any humane, but by diuine help. Out of which Viſion we may learne that his Order, and al other Religious Orders, which in like manner make warre againſt the Diuel for the help of Soules, are al of them as ſo manie magazins and armouries richly ſtored, and as ſo manie *Towers of Dauid built with forts*, from which, as it is in the Canticles, *a thouſand ſhields doe hang, and al the armour of the ſtrong*. *S. Bonau. in vita S. Franc.* *Cant. 4.*

How manie Religious men haue been eminent in learning and eloquence

CHAP. XXXII.

BESIDES theſe ſpiritual ornaments, which are ſupernatural, and without al queſtion the chiefeſt of al, and moſt to be eſteemed; there be others within the compaſſe of nature, which adde both grace and abilitie for the buſines of which we are ſpeaking; wherof the principal are Learning and Eloquence. For as there be two things proper to man, wherin he ſurpaſſeth the nature of beaſts, to wit, Reaſon and Speach: So whoſoeuer doth bring theſe two to greateſt perfection in himſelf, he is to be accounted moſt eminent among men, and more eminent then if he excel others in wealth and riches; and men among themſelues are wont moſt of al to admire theſe things in others, and to haue a great conceit of thoſe perſons, in whome they behold them. Wherefore though the benefits of Grace and Spirit be, as I may ſay, the proper coppy-hold of Religious men, in which they are maiſters; yet the infinit goodneſſe of God hath been alſo pleaſed to heape vpon them theſe others in great abundance; either becauſe a Religious State ſhould not want anie thing that might be a true and ſolid grace vnto it, or becauſe Learning and Eloquẽce applied to ſpiritual things, make an excellent

Man excelleth beaſts in two things.

temper, both for the benefitting of our owne soules, and for the help of our Neigbours, which most of these Institutes do attend vnto.

Religious men haue made Learning more learned.

2. And to begin with Learning, it hath doubtles so flourished at al times in Religion, that we may truly say, that Religious men haue made Learning more learned, and brought it to a more easie way of learning, and deriuing itself to posteritie. For in their life-time they gaue light vnto it by teaching, arguing, explaining; and left after their death so manie learned writings behind them, that al Sciences, which they thought worthie themselues to take paines in, are now by their endeauours farre more plaine and perspicuous to conceaue. We wil therefore briefly runne-ouer al the Ages of Religion from the beginning, that we may take a view of the infinit multitude of learned men, that haue been famous in al times. And it wil be the more strange to find so manie of them, if we cõsider that the ancient Monks did of purpose withdraw themselues from matters of learning, to giue themselues wholy to contemplation of heauenlie things, as *S. Gregorie* relateth of *S. Benedict*, who began to studie the Liberal Sciences in *Rome*, but left them of purpose, that he might be, as *S. Gregorie* speaketh, *learnedly ignorant, and wisely vnlearned*. And yet there neuer wanted learned men euen in these times; for then there was a *Serapion*, *Lucian*, *Pamphilus*, the six Doctours of the Church, three Greek Doctours, and three Latin, of whome I spake before, and manie more, whom I spare to mention, that we may come downe neerer our liues.

S. Gregorie 2. dial. c. 1.

3. To begin therefore with the Order of *S. Benedict*, which is the ancientest Order of the Latin Church, it is now one thousand and threescore and ten yeares since it first began. In the eleuen hundred yeares therefore which haue been since the beginning of that Order, it is a thing almost incredible, how manie eminent learned men it hath produced. For in the first Age, that is, til the yeare Six hundred after Christ, we find *Cassiodorus*, whome I mentioned before; and while he liued, *Dionysius* surnamed the Litle, the learnedst man absolutely of his Age, both in Diuinitie and Humanitie, as the writings, which he hath left, doe shew. About the same time liued also *S. Gregorie* the Great, *Gregorie* of Tours; and *Leander* of *Seuil*, men that are famous to this day.

Cassiodorus. *Dionysius exiguus.* *2. Gregories.* *Leander.*

4. In the second Age, from six to seauen hundred, *Cæsarius* (of whome also I haue spoken before) was famous in *France*, *Eutropius* in *Spaine*, *Iohn* Bishop of *Gerunda* in *Portugal*, Abbot *Adaman* in *Scotland*, *Theodore* in *England*, who being a Monk at *Rome*, was sent to *Canterburie* by Pope *Vitalian*, and was the seauenth Archbishop of that Sea, in whose commendation *Venerable Bede* speaketh often.

Cæsarius. *Theodore.*

5. In the third Age, which is to the yeare Eight hundred, liued *Venerable Bede*, a man sufficiently knowne by his writings; and *Boniface* Apostle of *Germanie*, renowned both for Sanctitie and Learning. After them came *Ægidius* Abbot, a Grecian borne, who was a great Philosopher, a Poet, and a rare Physitian, and hath left manie things written in Verse of matters of Physick. And *Alcuinus* maister to *Charles* the *Great*, and so highly in fauour, that he was wont to cal him his *Delight*; to his wisedome *Charles* committed the ordering of the Vniuersitie of *Paris*, the forme wherof he brought from *Rome*. He hath written manie things both of his owne inuention, and vpon the holie Scriptures. *Paulus Diaconus* was in esteeme about the same time, he that made the Hymne

Venerable Bede. *Boniface.* *Alcuinus.*

of

of S. Iohn Baptiſt, and wrote manie other things, wherof part is yet extant.

5. In the fourth Age, til the yeare Nine hundred, *Haymo* a Monk of *Fulda*, ſchollar to *Alcuinus*, and afterwards Biſhop, is deſeruedly to be ranked among the learneſt of his time; he hath written vpon al the Scripture & manie things of his owne. *Rabanus* Abbot alſo of *Fulda*, and Archbiſhop of *Mentz*, is not inferiour to him; his writings alone are able almoſt to fil a Librarie. For when he was but a child when his parents offered him to the Monaſterie of *Fulda*, he had profited ſo farre in Poetrie, Philoſophie, & in the Scriptures, that he had not his like in al *Germanie*, and perhaps not in the world. *Angelomus Luxouienſis*, knowne by his writings, and *Strabus* of *Fulda*, who is ſayd to be the Authour of the *Gloſſa Ordinaria* compiled out of holie Fathers, were next vnto him in time and learning. *Haymo.* *Rabanus.* *Strabus.*

6. In the fift Age, from the yeare Nine hundred to One thouſand, *Odo* Abbot of *Cluni* is cõmended for his knowledge in Diuine & human learning. *Heriger* Abbot of *Lob* hath the name of a learned man not only in *France*, but in *Italie* and *Germanie*. *Ratherius* alſo a Monk of *Lob*, Biſhop of *Verona*, a man rare for ſimplicitie ioyned with deepe learning; & manie others; but among them none is more famous then *Raphe* a Monk of *Fulda*, of whome the whole Church of God had ſo great an opinion, that thinking none comparable to him for Philoſophie or Diuinitie, al the hard Queſtions were ſent him from al parts of the world. *Odo Cluniacen.* *Rodulphus Fuldenſis.*

7. The ſixt Age was yet much more fruitful of ſuch wits; and among them, beſides manie others, whoſe names are extant, we may reckon *Marianus Scotus*, who liued ſhut-vp in a Celle at *Fulda* eleuen yeares togeather, and fifteen yeares at *Mentz*, in which time of his retiremẽt he wrote his Chronicle from the beginning of the world to his dayes, and was much reſpected by al for his learning, and much more for his ſanctitie. *Marianus Scotus.*

8. About the ſame time *Lanfranck* was held to be the learneſt of his Age in Logick and Philoſophie, and the Light and Maiſter of Diuines. It is reported of him, that going from *Pauia* (where he was borne, and had read with great applauſe) into *France*, he fel into the hands of theeues, that robbed him, and carried him away; which he took ſo impatiently at firſt, that reflecting vpon it afterwards, he much condemned himſelf for it; becauſe hauing ſpent ſo much time in the ſtudie of holie Scriptures, he had not learned to prayſe God in aduerſitie; and preſently he made a Vow, that if he eſcaped their hands, he would betake himſelf to the ſeruice of God. Being ſet free he came to the Monaſterie of *Beck*, & there liued for a while vnknowne, as if he had been an Idiot without anie learning at al, til ſome Italian marchants coming thither, diſcouered what he was. Then he was put to reade in his owne Monaſterie, and afterwards was promoted to the Archbiſhoprick of *Canterburie* by the Pope's Holines. *Anſelme* was his ſchollar and ſucceſſour in his Chaire, firſt at *Beck*, then in the Archbiſhoprick of *Canterburie*, and reſembled him in al things. The books, which are yet extant, of his writing, ſhew ſufficiently his learning, ſo that we ſhal not neede to ſay anie more of him. *Lanfranck.* *S. Anſelme.*

9. Next vnto theſe, we may reckon the two Cardinals that liued at the ſame time; to wit, *Humbert* a Monk of *Toul*, whom *Leo* the Ninth made Car- *Humbert.*

dinal for the rare learning and vertue which was in him, and sent him to *Constantinople* to suppresse the audaciousnes of an other *Leo* Bishop of the *Bulgarians*; and *Petrus Damianus*, whose learning and eloquence is to this day testifyed by his writings; his sanctitie appeareth in that hauing been a long time Cardinal, and Bishop of *Hostia*, wearie at last of that kind of life, he withdrew himself (as *S. Gregorie Nazianzen* had done before him) to his former Monastical course, and yealded reasons therof in writing.

Petrus Damianus.

Hermannus Contractus.

10. Finally, to let passe others, *Hermannus Contractus* was a great man in those dayes; and his learning was the more memorable, because he had it by miracle. This we find written of him. He was descended of a noble Count of *Swedland*, and was crooked and lame from his infancie, which gaue him the surname of *Contractus*. Entring to be a Monk, he besought our Blessed Ladie very earnestly, that she would be pleased to cure him of his infirmitie. She appearing vnto him in broad day-light, bad him choose, whether he would be freed of his lamenes, and remaine vnlearned as he was, or continue with his infirmitie, and be eminent in al manner of learning. *Hermannus* choosing this latter, as he ought, he euer after profited wonderfully in al kind of knowledge; and it is thought, that he had not his like in manie Ages; and particularly he spake Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, as his natural language.

Petrus Cluniacensis.

11. In the seauenth Age, til the yeare One thousand two hundred, we find manie very learned men in al kind of Sciences. *Peter* Abbot of *Cluni* is reckoned amongst the chiefest of them, whose books are yet extant, and in particular his Book of Wonders and Reuelations, that hapned in his time.

Sigebert.

Gratian.

12. *Sigebert* Monk of *Gembloux* at the same time wrote his Chronicle and other Histories. *Gratian* Monk of *Bologne* compiled the famous Work called the Decrees, out of the Sentences of the holie Fathers, and Determinations of Popes; which Work was afterwards allowed-of by Pope *Eugenius* the Third. But the famousest of al were *Hugo of Saint Victor* in Paris, and *Rupertus* Abbot of Tuy. The manie Volumes which this latter hath left written, doe testifie the eminencie of his learning, and the miracle also by which he receaued it. For finding himself very dul, he earnestly begged of our Blessed Ladie, she would vouchsafe to beg of her Sonne, that he might vnderstand the Scriptures. Our Blessed Ladie appeared vnto him, and tolde him, his request was granted; and that he should haue so much insight in them, that no bodie in that Age should come neere him; only that he should not burie his Talent in the ground, but carefully traffick with it; which certainly he performed abundantly; for he neuer after ceased to write and reade. In the eighth Age, from One thousand two hundred til One thousand three hundred, *Helman* a Monk of *Beauuais* was very skilful both in holie Scriptures, and Secular learning, and left manie things written. And at the same time *Wiliam* Abbot of *Poictiers* was a great Diuine, and a great Ciuil-lawyer. And *Philip Pergamus* in a Monasterie of *Padua* was rare both for learning and eloquence; and *Peter Berchorius* a Monk in *Paris*, of whose bookes there is a long Catalogue to be seen.

Hugo Victorinus.

Rupertus.

Helman.

13. From the yeare One thousand three hundred til the yeare One thousand foure hundred, we meete also with manie famous men of learning, as *Lapus*

Abbot

Abbot of *Saint Miniat*, for Diuinitie, and both the Ciuil and Canon law; and *Peter Boherius* Abbot of *Auian*, Doctour of the Canon law; and *Peter Rogers*, he that was afterwards Pope, knowne by the name of *Clement* the Sixt, a man of great wit, and excellent learning, and so eloquent, that he drew the people in his Sermons to what he would; that it can be no wonder, if a man so qualifyed, was rayſed to the higheſt dignitie in the Church of God. *Lapus. Boherius Auian. Clement 6.*

13. The tenth Age til the yeare One thouſand fiue hundred, beſides other rare men, reckoneth ſome that are very eminent in the Canon Law; as *Henrie* Abbot of *Nuremberg*; *Iohn Rhode* Abbot of *Treuers*, who did God good ſeruice in the Councel of *Baſle*; *Nicolas* alſo, he that firſt was Abbot of *Munichen*, afterwards Archbiſhop of *Palermo*, and laſtly Cardinal. He wrote manie Aduiſes in Law, and a Comment vpon the whole bodie of the Canon law; the authoritie wherof is to this day ſo great, that no man is more famous then he. *Panormitanus.*

14. Finally in this laſt Age, in which we are, we know of manie learned men; as *Ignatius* Abbot in a Monaſterie of *Florence*; *Iohn Baptiſta* in Parma; both of them eminent in Diuine and Secular learning. In Spaine we heare of one *Paſchalis*, that was publick Reader of Diuinitie in *Salamanca*. And finally in theſe our dayes, the name of one *Gregorie* is famous, who was Abbot of the great Monaſterie of *Mantua*, and afterwards made Cardinal by *Paul* the Third. He is ſaid to haue been skilful in al Sciences; & that he ſpake Latin and Greek both readily and eloquently. And as he lay on his death bed, it is reported of him that he ſpake thus to him that wayted in his chamber: Behold, we haue been Cardinal thus manie yeares; what becomes now of this honour? How much better had it been to haue dyed in Religion, where my ſoule had been in leſſe danger? A memorable ſaying of a Cardinal.

15. Theſe were Monks, & few in compariſon of them I might name. In other Religious Orders, Learning hath flouriſhed more, becauſe their endeauours haue been directed to the help of others, who cannot be holpen without learning. And it is a thing worthie of admiration, to ſee how plentifully al Orders haue been ſtored with rare wits, and men of great learning. But becauſe theſe Orders are of later ſtanding, and conſequently the ſubiects of them more knowne, we wil paſſe them ouer curſorily, and only name them.

16. Firſt therefore, what rare men haue the Dominicans had? *Albertus Magnus*, *Herueus*, *Durand*, *Hugo Cardinal*, who hath written learnedly vpon al Scripture; *Raymund*, he that, according to *S. Antonine*, ordered the Decretals, by appointment of Pope *Gregorie*; *S. Antonine* himſelf, a man rare for learning and ſanctitie; *Capreolus*, *Petrus Tarantaſius*, he that afterwards was Pope by the name of *Innocent* the Fift; *Petrus Paludanus*, *Chryſoſtomus Iauellius*, *Ferrara*; both the *Sotus*; two Cardinals, to wit, *Torquemada*, and *Caietan*, and manie more whom it were to long a buſines to rehearſe. But he that among them al cannot be omitted, and of whom we haue ſpecial reaſon to ſpeake apart, as the chief of them al, is *S. Thomas*, whoſe profoundnes, perſpicuitie, & abundance of knowledge, who can extol as he deſerueth? And beſides theſe who are al of them knowne by their writings, who is able to reckon al them that haue laboured profitably in the Church of God, in euerie Age, to the great benefit of their Neighbour, by teaching ſchooles, determining doubts, deliuering their opinions in ſeueral occaſions, and haue liued with Dominicans. S. *Thomas.*

great commendation of al men, the number of them is so infinit?

Franciscans.

17. The *Franciscans* began somewhat later and not so generally at first to giue themselues to Learning. For their Founder *S. Francis* hauing receaued the wisedome and knowledge, which he had, rather from heauen, then got it by his owne labour and industrie, brought-vp his Friars to the same. Yet *S. Antonie of Padua* coming to his Order with a great deale of learning from the world, he permitted him to teach Diuinitie to them of his owne Order; and the short Epistle is yet extant in which he giueth him leaue to doe it; so that withal he be careful, as he speaketh, *that the occupation of learning, extinguish not the Spirit of prayer.* Afterwards vpon this president (and also vpon necessitie, that they might be able to help their neighbours) others among them fel to their studies, and profited exceedingly in them. For about the yeare One thousand two hundred fourtie fiue, *Alexander Hales* was famous for learning; and after him his schollar *S. Bonauenture*, a man ful of knowledge, and facil and cleere in his explications. And about the yeare One thousand two hundred fourescore and fiue, *Richard Midleton*; and *Iohn dunskot*, commonly knowne by the name of *Scotus* in the yeare One thousand three hundred; a man admirably subtile and acute. There followed them their schollars *William Ockam* a very wittie man; and *Francis Mairon*, he that in the Vniuersitie of *Paris* is stiled the *Illuminate Doctour.* About the same time liued *Aluarus Pelagius* a Doctour of the Canon and Ciuil Law, and of Diuinitie; of whom euerie bodie had a great opinion in his life-time, but chiefly *Pope Iohn* the Two and twentieth. We may adde *Peter Aureolus*, who by his learning got the Chayre at *Aix*; and *Nicolas Lyra*, a Iew by descent, who is famous for his Notes vpon the whole Scripture according to the Literal sense, about the yeare One thousand three hundred & thirtie; & of late yeares *Alfonsus a Castro, Michael Medina, Francis Titelman*, singular in interpreting the holie Scripture, and diuers others, that are so knowne that it is to no end to name them.

S. Anthonie of Padua.

Alexander Hales.

S. Bonauenture.

Richard Middleton.

Scotus.

Ockam.

Mairon.

Aluarus Pelagius.

Lyra.

Other Orders.

18. We may make the like catalogue of men of other Religious Orders; for al of them haue been fraught with learned men, and some very eminent among them. As among the Augustins *Ægidius Romanus*, in the yeare One thousand and fourescore. Among the Carmelites *Thomas of Walden* in the yeare One thousand foure hundred and thirtie. Amorg the Carthusians *Dionysius*, in the yeare One thousand foure hundred and fourescore. To be short, he that desires to know more at large, what learning hath been brought to light by Religious men of al Orders, and what fruit hath come of it to the Church of God, let him reade *Trithemius*, who hath diligently and carefully layd togeather al the Ecclesiastical writers, that haue been since the birth of Christ in euerie Age; in which large Work of his, he shal find that Religious men are the farre greater part among them, and shal meete with few others in comparison of them; which is an euident argument of what I haue sayd.

Ægidius Romanus.

Thomas Waldensis.

Dionysius.

The Societie of Iesvs.

In which kind also our Societie of Iesvs, though last in time, hath done somthing, & added a helping hand to the aduancemēt of Learning. For not only the whole bodie of the Societie doth attēd to learning, it being one of the chief things, which by institute it professeth; but it hath reuiued that which was anciently the practise of Religious men, but of late yeares hath been intermitted,

and

and not contenting itſelf with profeſſing learning within itſelf, it vndertaketh to communicate al the learning, which it hath, with others, by teaching publick Schooles. And to the end it may deriue the greater benefit to others, it confineth not itſelf to Diuinitie or Philoſophie, as for the moſt part other Religious Orders doe, but it teacheth al Arts & Sciences and Grammer-ſchooles; and leaueth out none but ſuch as are not ſo ſuitable to a Religious profeſſion to meddle in, as the Ciuil or Common Law, and Phyſick.

19. In fine, to ſumme-vp the diſcourſe which we haue made, Religious men may in a manner glorie, that moſt kinds of learning haue been reuiued by their induſtrie, which but for them would haue been wholy extinct; others haue been refined and poliſhed by them. For what had become of Diuinitie, which is the Queen of al Sciences, if it had not been cultiuated by them, and brought into the way and method, in which it is? And though Philoſophie hath been learnedly handled by others, yet Religious men haue much illuſtrated and enlarged it, and added, and explained, and reformed manie things in it, according to the rule of Faith.

20. It remayneth that we ſpeake of Eloquence, wherin Religious men haue been as eminent as in Learning. And we ſhal eaſily ſee it, if we conſider the infinit multitude of Preachers, which in the Chriſtian world are beating their Pu-pits, ſpecially at ſome times of the yeare. For though al of them be not equally eloquent, yet no man can deny that there haue been and are to this day very manie exquiſit tongues, that with a fluent ſtile, and choyce words, and abundance of good matter wel couched togeather, take, and delight, and leade the Auditorie to what they pleaſe. For if the effect of Eloquence be the applauſe of the hearers, certainly they, that deale with people that are ſenſual (ſuch as naturally loathe ſpiritual things) & are notwithſtanding able not only to draw them to giue eare vnto them, but to hold them ſuſpenſe in admiration, and delight them, and ſteale vpon their minds and affections, ſo as to bring ſome from diſhoneſt behauiour to chaſtitie, ſome from vnlawful trading to vpright dealing, ſome from rancour and hatred to peace and concord, finally not a few from the loue of the world, in which they were drowned ouer head and eares, to the contempt therof, and vtter forſaking of al earthlie things, muſt needes haue a great guift in ſpeaking. Anciently the Oratours that could ſpeake to the humour of the people were in greateſt eſteeme; and we find few either in *Greece* or *Rome* that could doe it; and thoſe few are ſo famous that the Countreys, where they were borne, are renowned for them. What an honour therefore is it to vs, to haue ſo manie rare men in this kind? But if we reflect vpon the ſolidnes of the matter, the weight of both their ſayings, and, as I ſayd, vpon the effects which ours haue wrought, there is no compariſon betweene them and vs. Eloquence.

21. We reade of *S. Bernardin of Siena*, a Franciſcan-Friar; he was a man ſo wel-ſpoken, that in what place ſoeuer & at what ſoeuer time he was to preach, not only the people that had nothing elſe to doe, came to heare him, but euen tradeſ-men ſhut vp their ſhops, and euerie bodie elſe their houſes, to be at his Sermon. *S. Bernardin of Siena.*

22. We find the like recorded of *S. Peter*, who is now commonly called the *Martyr*, of the Order of *S. Dommick*. He trauelled almoſt through al parts of *S. Peter Martyr.*

Italie; and making a ſtay for ſome time in euerie cittie and village, he reclaymed an infinit number of people by his holeſome exhortations from the filth of ſinne. At his firſt arriual vnto anie place, it was an ordinarie thing for al the inhabitants, from the higheſt to the loweſt, to go out to meete him with flags and ſound of trumpets, and accompanie him with like ſolemnitie when he went away, and had much adoe to parte from him; and ſuch a multitude alwayes thronged to his Sermons, that he was forced oftimes to be carried away in a cart, that he might not be cruſhed in the preſſe.

S Antonie of Padua.

23. What ſhal we ſay of *S. Antonie* of *Padua*? whome the people did vſually follow in ſuch multitudes, that the largeſt Churches they could chooſe, were not capable of them, but they were fayne to carrie the pulpit into the ſtreets or into the fieldes; and yet they flocked thither ſo faſt to take place betimes, that a man might ſee noble men & women repayre thither before day, and ſtand expecting his voice as it were from heauen. And while he was ſpeaking, though there were ſometimes thirtie thouſand Auditours, there was not the leaſt noyſe, or muttering, or ſpitting to be heard, but al were extreamly ſilent and attentiue. Did the like euer happen to *Demoſthenes*, or to anie of thoſe ancient Oratours, though they were held to be neuer ſo eloquent?

S. Vincent.

24. We reade no leſſe of *S. Vincent* a Dominican-Friar; and one thing in particular, which doth liuely ſet-forth the force of his eloquence. For wheras on a time two malefactours were going to dye, he commanded them to ſtand at a place where he was preaching, their faces couered, probably to the end they might be leſſe diſtracted; where he began to diſcourſe with that vehemencie of the fowlenes of ſinne, of the paine of hel, and ſuch other motiues as are wont to ſtirre-vp ſorrow and repentance, that the two malefactours began firſt to ſweate for verie grief and contrition of hart, and at laſt were turned into a very coale, as if they had been burned with fire; which was apparent vnto al the people, ſo ſoone as their faces were vncouered. How vehement was his ſpeach, which was able in this manner to inflame both the mind and the verie bodie alſo? We meete not with manie of theſe very ſtrange effects, which *S. Vincent* wrought; but we meete with others much of the like nature, to wit, inward conuerſions, ſtrange reformations, great reſtitutions. And that *S. Vincent* and other Religious men were ſo powerful in their ſpeech, is a great honour and commendation to the whole State of Religion. Wherefore to conclude this diſcourſe of natural helps, as God commanded the Iewes, when they went out of *Ægypt*, to borrow the *Ægyptians* beſt veſſel and houſehold-ſtuff, & carrie it with them: So when Religious men forſake the world, they goe not out of it voide of natural guifts, but carrie their abilities of wit, and memorie, and learning, and other qualities with them; and employing them with eare and induſtrie, the Graces of Heauen concurring, they wonderfully encreaſe them, and grow eminent in them; and haue in Religion both more abundance of theſe natural guifts, then they could haue had, if they had remayned in the world, and are more able to make vſe of them. For how often, or rather how daily are mens wits, and eloquence, and other nobilities loſt in the world, lying dead for want of action? And though they be employed vpon ſecular occaſions, they are notwithſtanding but idly ſpent; becauſe the things in which they are employed, are earthlie & periſhable; wheras in the negotiation, which Religion

Exod. 11.

Religious men more eloquent in Religion, then they could haue been in the world.

Religion affordeth, they are bettered, for the reasons which I haue sayd, and concurre in great measure to the aduancement of the glorie of God.

25. In which respect some doe truly and fitly compare Religion to that holie *Iudith*, who towards the ouercoming of *Holofernes* applied not only prayer, and fasting, and hayre-cloth, as she was wont to doe before, but made vse of her rings, and pendants, & slippers, and al her best attire, and set-forth her natural beautie to the most; and God blessed her endeauours, adding (as the Scripture telleth vs) more grace and beautie to her countenance; & giueth the reason of it, because she intended al this trimming of herself not for loosenes, but for vertue. So when Religious men seeke these natural abilities, they seeke not themselues, hauing vtterly forsaken al from their hart; but they seeke the glorie of God and the benefit of their neighbours, for whose good al that beautie is intended; and consequently it belongeth also to the goodnes of God, to encrease their abilities, and (as I sayd before) to make them more graceful and effectual, then the self-same would haue been in a secular course of life. *Iudith.*

Reasons, why Religious men profit so much in Learning.

CHAP. XXXIII.

BESIDES the special assistance of God, which doubtlesse is the chiefest cause, there be other reasons, why Religious men haue been and are most commonly so eminent in al kind of Learning. For first the studie of wisdome requireth time and application of mind; both which are seldome found in the world, and abound in Religion. For Secular people are continually in one busines or other, and wholy taken-vp with the cares of the world; they that haue no busines, spend their time in vnprofitable things, as in hunting and hawking, in play and such like pastimes; people being generally giuen to ease, and to shunne labour, as an enemie to nature. Religious men on the other side are free from al worldlie busines, and consequently haue time at wil, and they spend it not in idle trifles; neither are they called from their studies, by the trouble and paines, which is annexed vnto them; because they are accustomed and take a delight in this crosse and mortification, as wel as in manie others. Time and application.

2. Peace of mind, which followeth out of the suppression and rooting-out of our disordered affections, is a great help to profit in learning; for if it be not possible to keep our mind attentiue to our studies while we are running-about or in anie violent exercise of the bodie, much lesse can we vnderstand anie thing, if our mind itself be wholy troubled, no more then we can see in a durtie troubled water. Peace of mind.

3. Temperance and sobrietie helpeth also thervnto. For those that are ful fed, haue not the functions of the minde free as they must, but are dul and heauie. Temperance.

Chastitie. 4. What need we stand multiplying words? *Auerroes* a Heathen, and yet a good Philosoper, sayth, that Chastitie and other vertues, by which the desires The Grace of God. of the flesh are curbed, are special helpes for the attaining of Speculatiue knowledge. And finally (as I sayd before, but I meane to insist somewhat more vpon it) the light and grace of God concurreth aboue al. For Religious men directing their studies & labours to the seruice of God his immortal light, when God giueth them good successe in them, he dilateth his owne busines, and concurreth to the aduancing of his owne glorie and cause; which is otherwise with most secular people, that studie for honour or lucre sake. And so we see that God doth oftimes enlighten the mind of Religious men, and shew them obscure and hidden things, and makes them capable to vnderstand the hardest Questiõs by miracle, beyond the course and abilitie of their nature.

S. Thomas. 5. S. *Thomas* finding great difficultie in soluing a certain Question, on a time when he had stuck much vpon it, was ouer-heard by his companion *Reginaldus* being in the same chamber, as if he had been speaking with some bodie in the night; and when their communication was ended, he called-vp his companion, & dictated vnto him manie things without stop or pawse, contrarie to his custome, as if he had been reading them out of a book composed to his hand. *Reginaldus* falling downe at the Saint's feete, beseeched him earnestly and pressed him to tel him, who it was he had been discoursing-with a litle before. S. *Thomas* ouercome by his importunitie, told him, it was S. *Paul* the Apostle, that had giuen him the solution of that Question. And at other times the same Saint told *Reginaldus* in familiar conuersation, that al the knowledge he had, came to him more by light from heauen, then his owne labour and industrie. Which *Reginaldus* kept to himself so long as S. *Thomas* liued; for the Saint had desired, he would; but after his decease, he spake of it often both in priuate and in open Schoole, that others might by his example learne, which is the shortest and gayest way to wisedome.

6. That which I related before of *Hermannus Contractus*, and *Rupert* Abbot of *Tuy*, is yet more admirable, both of them coming to so eminent learning by *Albertus Magnus.* the guift of our B. Ladie. The like hapned vnto *Albertus Magnus*; for as we reade in the Chronicles of the Dominican-Friars, entring into the Order when he was but sixteen yeare old, and profiting litle or nothing in his studies, because he was dul and had but a weake memorie, he grew so wearie of it, that he was tempted euen to forsake the Religious course which he had begun. And while he was thus wauering, he dreamed in the night, that he was scaling the walles of the Monasterie to get away, and that two venerable Matrons appeared vnto him, & first the one & then the other thrust him downe the ladder, as he was getting vp; and endeuouring the third time to step vp, a third Matron asked him, what he went about to doe, & wherefore? And hauing told her, she willed him rather to beg the assistance of a fourth Ladie, which was the Mother of God and Queene of Heauen; and told him that herself and the rest would stand his friends. He did as he was aduised; and our B. Ladie gaue him friendlie audience, but asked him, in what Science he would choose to be eminent, in Philosophie or Diuinitie. He, like a yong man, that had not tasted of higher matters, sayth he had rather be eminent in Philosophie. And our B. Ladie replyed, it shal be as thou desirest; but because thou hast preferred this knowledge

knowledge before the knowledge of my Somne, in thy latter dayes thou shalt leese al thy knowledge, and fal into thy former dulnes, which now shal be taken from thee. The Vision vanishing, he presently felt an alteration in himself, and euer after was easily maister of whatsoeuer he heard or read; or if he met with anie difficult question, he turned himself to our B. Ladie, & claimed her promise; and instantly he was at the end of it. By this meanes he came to that greatnes which we reade of him, and he taught manie yeares, and wrote very manie things. And three yeares before he dyed, whilst he was giuing the explication of some passage or other in a publick assemblie, he felt at the instant, that his memorie failed him; insomuch that he could not remember anie thing at al. Then he told his Audience, what had hapned vnto him in his youth; and making protestation, that whatsoeuer might befal him, he belieued the articles of the Catholick Faith, and desired to die in the profession of them, he came downe out of his Chaire, his Schollers following him with teares, and embracing him; and in the rest of his life he waxed as it were a child againe; and passed his time in great simplicitie; yet so, as he omitted not anie thing belonging to the dutie of a Religious man; for his memorie serued him for such things, and for nothing els. This strange accident which befel *Albertus* (God taking from him al the knowledge which he had lent him, to shew that it was his guift) giueth vs to vnderstand, that other Religious men, that are or haue been excellent in Learning, haue had it also by the special help and grace of God.

Of three degrees of Beautie and Dignitie, which are in Religion.

CHAP. XXXIV.

LET vs now consider the dignitie of Religion, as it is grounded in the distinction, which Diuines doe giue, of three kinds of Religious Orders; for some giue themselues to Action; others to Contemplation; others couple Action and Contemplation both togeather.

2. The first degree therefore confineth itself to outward actions, which though they be done to men, haue relation to God; which *S. Thomas* discoursing of, proueth, because a Religious State is directed to Charitie; and Charitie resteth not in God only, but stretcheth itself to our Neighbour; and yet in regard we loue not our Neighbour but for God, whatsoeuer seruice we doe to our Neighbour, we doe it to God; in which respect al such outward actions belong to the vertue of Religion. And so we find, that whatsoeuer beneuolence is bestowed vpon man, is called by *S. Paul, a Sacrifice, and an Hoste*; and consequently, as the same *S. Thomas* inferreth, Religious Orders may be erected for the performance of anie work, that is behoofful for our Neighbour; as for the exercises of Learning, or of Warre, so it be intended for the honour of God, for the Church, or for the common

Religions which giue themselues to Action.

S. Thomas 2. 2. q 188. 2.

Hebr. vlt.

good; and the like we may say of other works done for God's sake, as to ransome prisoners, to gather almes for releef of the poore, or for the placing of yong women in marriage; to serue in Hospitals, and the like.

3. Which kind of Religious Orders is no new inuention; for they haue been anciently in vse, as we may vnderstand by that which we reade in *Cassian*, where he bringeth Abbot *Nesterot* discoursing to this effect: This manner of practical life (for so he stileth it) is vsed in diuers sorts. Some employ themselues in entertayning of guests, in which kind he commendeth *Macarius* for his meeknes and patience; others take charge of sick people; others beg releef for them that are in miserie; some againe bestow their labour in teaching, and instructing their neighbour, others in other businesses, and (as he speaketh) haue been accounted great men for their good wil and deuotion. And what can be sayd more in commendation of these kind of courses, then that they that follow them, haue made themselues voluntarie seruants not of God only, but of men for the loue of God, and of men infirme and needie? What charitie, what humilitie, what true and solid patience must needs belong to such a course of life? Finally our Lord himself highly commendeth them in these words: *What you haue done to the least of mine, you haue done to me.* In testimonie wherof himself in person, King of Kings, hath vouchsafed to honour these kinds of seruice, with euident miracles; as when he was entertayned by *S. Gregorie*; and receaued an almes from *S. Martin*; and the charitie of *Iohn Columbinus*, to whome he appeared in the shape of a sick leaper lying in the streets; and when *S. Iohn* tooke him vp vpon his shoulders, and carried him home, and had washed him, and layd him in bed, he vanished away.

Cassian. Colla. 14. c. 4.

Matth. 25.

Religious giuen to Contemplation.

4. The second degree of Religious Orders betaketh itself to the exercises of the mind in Contemplation; which kind of life hath been alwayes held so worthie, that *Aristotle*, and al the Philosophers that came any thing neer the truth, placed the felicitie of man in it. Neither is this kind of quiet and retirement to be accounted idle or vnfruitful; for as *Aristotle* also did obserue, it cannot be called idle, because though it cease from outward action, it hath the inward; and speculation itself is a kind of action. And we see, that outward actions are oftimes attributed to them, that haue not outwardly laboured in them, but inwardly only in thought and forecast; as a victorie is attributed to the General, though he fight not with his sword, but by his counsel. Which if a Heathen Philosopher could arriue to know, what opinion ought we to haue of such a kind of employment, who know how great the busines is, which we handle in Contemplation, what communication is to be had with God, what light, what acts of loue? So that if we cannot but think the studie and occupation of knowing God, to be the prime and most excellent work we can employ ourselues in, we must needs also conceaue, that the Religious, who giue themselues wholy to this studie, are equal, noble, and excellent. Let vs heare how *S. Augustin* doth set them forth with his eloquence: I say nothing of them, that wholy retired from the sight of men, contenting themselues with bread and water, which is brought vnto them at certain times, dwel in the desert places, enioying familiaritie with God, to whom with a pure minde they cleaue; and by contemplation of whose beautie they are most happie;

Aristotle. 10. Eth. c. 7 & 8. Eth. 1. 63.

S. August. de morib. Eccl. c. 31.

happie; which happines cannot be conceaued, but by them that are Saints. I » wil say nothing of them. Some are of opinion, that they retire themselues out » of the world more then they ought; not vnderstanding how much benefit we » reape by their soules eleuated in prayer, and by the example of their life, » though we be not suffered to see their bodies. It were long and needles to » dispute this question. For if a man conceaue not of himself, how venerable » and admirable this eminent height of sanctitie is, how shal my words make » him conceaue it? Thus sayth *S. Augustin.* Now if we compare these two degrees together, no doubt but this latter is more noble then the former, consisting, as I sayd, in outward action. For as *S. Gregorie* speaketh, *great are the deserts of the Actiue life, but the Contemplatiue is to be preferred*; and this was figured (as he discourseth) in the sisters, *Rachel* and *Lia*, *Martha* and *Marie*; *Iacob* bearing more loue to *Rachel* then to *Lia*, and our Sauiour commending *Marie* aboue *Martha*, because she was not sollicitous about manie things, and *had chosen the better part, which should not be taken from her.*

S. Greg 6. mor. c. 18. *Gen. 29.* *Luc. 10.*

5. But because the vulgar sort, who measure euerie thing by that which they doe, and are capable of no more, are wont to hold, that the Religious courses which are in Action, are more difficult then others, which giue themselues to Contemplation; making account that these latter liue but an easie life; the authoritie of *S. Gregorie*, and the reason also which he giueth, doth euidently confute their errour. He sayth thus: The mind » fastneth vpon the Actiue life without fainting; but in the Contemplatiue it » is soone wearied by the weight of our weaknes. The Actiue lasteth more » constantly, by reason it dilateth itself in things that are obuious for the » behoof of our neighbour; The Contemplatiue shrinketh away the sooner, » because straying itself beyond the bounds of flesh, it labours to rayse itself » aboue itself. The Actiue taketh the playne beaten way, and consequently » treadeth stronger in the works it goeth about; the Contemplatiue ayming » at things higher then itself, falleth the sooner through wearines to itself.

The contemplatiue life *is* a hard life.

S. Greg. 10. mor. c. 11.

6. But now finding that these two liues are both of them excellent, though one of them be more excellent then the other, we may easily conceaue, how farre the third degree, which comprehendeth them both, is more eminent and more noble then either of them seuerally. For if we take them apart, notwithstanding their excellencie, there is something wanting in both of them. For to goe no further then the authoritie of *S. Gregorie* aboue-mentioned, *Rachel* (as he sayth) signifyes *the Beginning seen*; and *Lia* signifyes *payneful*: betokening that in Contemplation we seeke a *Beginning* » which is God, in Action we labour vnder the heauie burden of necessitie. » Againe *Rachel* is sayd to be beautiful, but vnfruitful; *Lia* bleare-eyed, but yet » fruitful: because, the mind taking rest in Contemplation, seeth more, and » begets fewer children to God; but where it is directed to the labour » of preaching, it seeth lesse, and bringeth-forth more children. These are *S. Gregorie's* words. And by that which he sayth we may see, that if there were a course of life, that without the incommodities of each of these States, could enioy the commodities of them both, there could not be a more perfect or more excellent course. For wheras the greatest thing we can ayme at, is God, who is the Soueraigne Good, and from whome we receaue al

Religious giuen both to Actiue and Contemplatiue.

S. Greg 6. mor. c. 18.

Most excellent to ioyne Action and Contemplation.

things, and next are men of the ſame nature with vs, which is the greateſt propinquitie or kindred in the world, no action in this life can be more noble, then that which is directed to the glorie of God, and good of our Neighbour. And moreouer God himſelf, Prince and Gouuernour of this world, bending his thoughts and actions in a manner to nothing els, but to rayſe mens minds to Heauen, from earthlie things to which they haue ſo baſely ſtooped, there is no queſtion, but to imitate this care of his, and co-operate with him in it, is one of the moſt noble, and moſt acceptable buſineſſes we can employ ourſelues in.

S. Thomas 2. 2. q. 188. art. 6.

7. Wherefore *S. Thomas* doth rightly diſtinguiſh the functions of the Actiue life into two ſorts. For, ſayth he, ſome haue their ful perfection in the bare outward action; as to entertaine pilgrims, to ſerue the ſick, to goe to warre; and theſe certainely are farre inferiour to Contemplation: others flow from the abundance of Contemplation, as when our mind inflamed with the loue of God, breaketh-forth into the outward actions of Preaching, Teaching, Catechiſing, and the like. And theſe are not only more noble then Action by itſelf, but alſo greater then Contemplation alone, when it reflects no further then itſelf, and reaches not to the benefiting of others. And yet this kind of life ſhal not need to ſtand in feare, leaſt it fal into that which our Sauiour reprehendeth in *Martha*, to wit, *ſolicitude and trouble about manie things*. For when Contemplation is coupled with outward Action, they agree ſo wel togeather, that Contemplation is a help to the outward work, which we haue in hand, and the outward work doth not hinder Contemplation. For, as *S. Auguſtin* ſayth very wel, There is a kind of ſecuritie and ſolid contentment of mind, which man doth ſometimes fal vpon, ſo great as al worldlie ioy is not to be compared to the leaſt parcel of it; and it happeneth to him ſo much the oftner, the more inwardly in the ſecret cloſet of his mind he adoreth God; and the ſelfſame tranquillitie remaynes not only while a man is ſolitarie and retired, but when he is in action, if his action proceede from that inward retirement.

Two ſorts of outward actions.

S. Auguſtin Epiſt. 116.

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8. For mine owne particular, I am of opinion; that they that reſolue to communicate their vertue with others, are ſo farre from leeſing anie thing by it, as they rather get, in no ſmal meaſure. For they put God to a kind of neceſſitie of giuing them that, which is his wil they ſhould beſtow vpon others. To which purpoſe we may apply that, which our Sauiour ſayd; *Giue, and it ſhal be giuen you*; and the Holie-Ghoſt in the Prouerbs inſinuateth: *The ſoule which bleſſeth, ſhal be fatned*; *and he that maketh another drunk, ſhal be made drunk*. So that it is with them much as it is with the Prince's Almner, whome the Prince alwayes furniſheth with ſtore of money; though, if the Almner be truſtie, there remayne nothing to his ſhare, nor is he euer a whit the richer. Wherefore we may rather liken them to one of the Prince's Nurſes, that is fed from the Prince's table, and giues the infant part of that, wherof herſelf hath plentie.

Luc 6.

Prouer. 11.

9. Now how farre this kind of life goeth beyond al other Inſtitutes, appeares by this one thing, becauſe euen they that haue giuen-ouer al buſines, & betake themſelues to the ſpiritual reſt of Contemplation, ſhal fayle notwithſtanding of their dutie, if, when their Neighbours are in ſpiritual neceſſitie, they

they leaue not their retired thoughts, and runne to help them. Which argument *S. Augustin* vseth writing to the Monks of the Iland *Capraria*, exhorting them not to preferre their owne quiet before the neceſſitie of the Church; at whoſe labour (ſayth he) if no good people would aſſiſt, themſelues would not haue found the way, how to come into the world. And ſo we find, that thoſe great men among the ancient Fathers often forſooke their ſolitudes and the deſerts in which they had continued manie yeares, for this onlie reaſon; as *Theodoret* in his Booke intitled the *Religious hiſtorie* relateth of *Iulian*, that when the wicked opinion of the *Arians* began to ſpreade itſelf, Biſhop *Acatius* drew him from his denne, with this perſwaſion, that ſeing he endured ſo much to pleaſe God, the beſt way to pleaſe him, was to goe now into the field, and to his power reſcue the Church, that was in danger. Chriſt, when he asked *Peter* thrice, whether he loued him, bad him alſo thrice feede his ſheepe. And God tendering the Saluation of Man-kind ſo much as he doth, expects that al that loue him and deſire to be loued by him, take this buſines to hart. And of *Euſebius* he alſo telleth, how *Amianus* wonne him to the like buſines, wiſhing him to take heed he loued not himſelf more then God, ſpending his whole time and induſtrie vpon himſelf; for if he did truly loue God, he would labour to bring manie more to loue him.

S. *Aug.* Ep 81.

Theodoret in Hiſt. Relig. Iulian a Monk.

Io. 21.

Euſebius.

10. But that which he recounts of *Aphraates*, a very holie man, expreſſes beſt of al that which we are ſaying. For in the perſecution which the Emperour *Valens* rayſed againſt the Church, he came like a good Souldier into the field, and put himſelf of his owne accord into the batail, leauing the wildernes, in which he had ſpent great part of his life. And on a time meeting the Tyrant, and being challenged by him, what he did among men, being a Monk, he anſwered vndantedly in theſe words: Tel me, ô Emperour; If I were a mayde retired in my cloſet for modeſtie ſake, and ſhould ſee my father's houſe al on a burning fire, were it fitting for me to ſit idly beholding the flame? And if I ſhould doe ſo, I ſhould alſo be conſumed by the fire? And if thou think it commēdable for ſuch an one to runne out, and carrie water, & labour by al meanes to quench the fire; it is that which thou ſeeſt me doing: thou haſt ſet the Houſe of God on fire, who is moſt truly our Father; and I doe what I can to quench it. Thus ſpake *Aphraates* in thoſe dayes; and ours are not much better, but are peſtered with as much infection now brought-in by *Satan*, as was then by *Valens*. So that the Religious Orders, which now are in great number, and oppoſe themſelues to his furie, do benefit the Church exceedingly, and deſerue great commendation and honour for it.

Aphraates.

Religion is a perfect Common-wealth.

CHAP. XXXV.

HItherto for the moſt part we haue diſcourſed of the dignitie, which euerie Religious man purchaſeth to himſelf by his vertue; which vertue notwithſtanding Religion itſelf abundantly giueth occaſion and meanes to purchaſe. Now we wil conſider, what beautie and excellencie is in the whole bodie of Religion. For it cannot be, that God ſhould ſo liberally beſtow his graces vpon euerie part therof, and leaue the bodie neglected; the good of the whole being (as *Ariſtotle* ſpeaketh) more diuine. Therefore we wil ſhew, that Religious Orders are a moſt perfect Common-wealth within themſelues. And I inſiſt the rather vpon it, becauſe manie ancient Philoſophers hauing ſtrayned their wits to ſet downe ſome abſolute forme of good, ſolid, and perfect gouerment, not to the end to bring it to effect and put it in practiſe, but only to draw ſuch a thing in conceit, and leaue the forme therof in their writings, could neuer bring it to ſo much perfection, as we ſee practiſed in Religious Orders; but that which they diſcourſe of in their bookes, comes farre ſhort, of what by the goodnes of God we poſſeſſe.

Ariſt. Imit Polit.

2. Firſt therefore to euerie man there belongeth two kinds of life: a natural life conſiſting of bodie and ſoule vnited, and a ſupernatural life infuſed by Grace and other celeſtial habits; and conſequently there be two ſorts of Communication amongſt men; one in natural, another in ſupernatural things; and, that which neceſſarily followeth, two Common-wealths. For as *S. Auguſtin* telleth vs, *a Common-wealth is nothing els but a companie of men linked togeather by ſome common bond of ſocietie.* So that the nobler and the more excellent the bond is, in which men agree (it being the ground of al Communities and Common-wealths) the more noble alſo and more excellent is the Communitie and Common-wealth; as the Common-wealth of the *Romans*, contayning the gouerment of the whole world, muſt needs be more maieſtical then a Common-wealth of peſants, or trades-men, if anie ſuch be. This our Common-wealth therefore doth in this one thing farre ſurpaſſe al Cõmon-wealths that euer were, or could be deſired or proiected by the Philoſophers; becauſe the good, which is intended in worldlie Common-wealths, is earthlie and humane; the good which is in ours, is Heauenlie and Diuine; and conſequently ſurpaſſeth al other more then anie man can conceaue.

S. Auguſt. 1. de Diuit. de c. 8.

Ariſt. 3. Pol. c. 6.

3. Another thing wherin our Common-wealth excelleth, is this. Cities, as *Ariſtotle* acknowledgeth, are not erected for people only to liue in; for ſo (as he obſerueth) there might be a cittie of beaſts, becauſe they muſt liue; nor only for defence againſt enemies, nor for traffick; becauſe ſo al Confederats ſhould make but one Cittie. The cauſe therefore, why Citties are built, is, to liue honeſtly and wel in them. For if euerie one, that gouerneth himſelf by Reaſon, doe that, which he doth for ſome good end; a Cittie alſo, which is a thing much more

more noble then euerie priuate man by himself, must intend that which is the best and greatest good, which is vertue and honestie. This is *Aristotle's* discourse. To what Common-wealth therefore (if *Aristotle* himself were aliue to iudge) doth al this agree more properly, then to Religion? the end of it being nothing but Vertue, & hauing so manie easie wayes to attaine vnto it; specially that being also true, which he obserueth, that *where Vertue is not respected and honoured aboue al other things, the best state that is, cannot long endure.* For where shal we find one Common-wealth among those of this world, where power, and wealth, and nobilitie, and fauour doe not beare the sway? But in Religion vertue doth not only vsually, but almost necessarily, rule al; because they haue reiected al earthlie things, the glorie wherof doth so much dazle peoples eyes; finding also one thing more in it, which the Philosopher in another place doth make a great matter of, to wit, that it is a rule among Religious Orders, that equalitie or superioritie goes not by riches or bloud, but by vertue; so that they that are equal or more eminent in vertue, are truly equal or more eminent, and not if they be equal or more eminent then others in bloud or riches.

Ide 1. Col. c. 9.

Ide 3. Pol. c. 6.

4. Wherefore hauing layd this foundation, as it were a beginning of our Religious Common-wealth, let vs consider the rest of the forme of it, wherof there be two parts; for as the bodie of euerie liuing creature consisteth of the head that ruleth, and of other members that are ruled and obey, so the bodie of euerie Common-wealth hath certain members which belong vnto it, to wit, euerie particular person of it; and the head, which be the Gouernours and Magistrats. And to beginne with that which is principal, it is no smal benefit and commendation of Religious Orders, that they are gouerned not by manie, but by one man. For whereas the greatest good that can happen to a Communitie, is to be vnited and one within itself, it is a much more effectual meanes to maintayne this vnion, to haue the gouerment in one man's hand, then to haue it in manie; for if it were in manie, to gouerne wel they must become one by cõsent; as when manie help to draw or carrie a great weight; for they cannot carrie or draw it, vnlesse they be in some sort vnited, and in that vnion and consociation become like to that, which is truly one in itself.

The gouerment of one, commended.

5. Which kind of gouerment we see in Nature. For al things depend of one; al the members of a bodie are gouerned by the hart; al the powers of the soule, by reason; the whole world and al things in it, by one God. It is true, that in the command, which one man alone hath ouer others, there is this danger; least al being in one man's hand, he turne al to his owne priuate ends, by the strength of his power, riches, or ambition. Wherefore to the end he may gouerne wel, he must (as *S. Thomas* discourseth at large in his Direction for the gouerment of a good Prince) haue God before his eyes, and endeauour to bring his subiects to the obedience, and seruice, and honour of God; which how hard it is in the world, and how easie and daylie in practise in Religion, who is there that doth not see? For the principles, which are most apt to peruert mens thoughts and affections, and turne them from the true seruice of God to their priuate intentions (to wit, that we must establish our greatnes; desire, to be feared; cut-of the heads and causes of conspiracies; abound in pleasure and plentie of earthlie goods) are furthest of al from the seruants

of God; becauſe in that poore eſtate, there is no ground of wealth or pleaſure, wherupon to build the deſire of theſe things.

Gouernours in Religion haue nothing particular, but their authoritie.

6. And moreouer it is no ſmal help, that they that gouerne in Religion, haue nothing more then the reſt, but their authoritie; they haue neither ſtate, nor palace, nor attendance, nor ſeruants, as Secular Magiſtrats haue, which are wont both to feede and inflame ambition, and make it ſwel; and ambition brings with it al corruption of Gouerment. Contrariwiſe the humilitie of the ſtate of Religion, which the Gouernours themſelues alwayes retayne, puts them in minde, that they are but like others that are vnder them; and that, which *S. Gregorie* admoniſheth, is practiſed among them: They who gouerne, conſider not in themſelues the power of order, but the equalitie of their condition; to the end they may not reioyce in being ouer men, but in being beneficial vnto them.

S Greg 2. Paſt. c. 6.

Gouernours by Election. *Ariſt. 2. pol. c. 7. & 9. 3. pol. c. 10.*

7. And in this kind our Common-wealths haue the aduantage of moſt others; becauſe that, which *Ariſtotle* eſteemeth beſt in a Common-wealth, is obſerued in them; to wit, that the Gouernours ſucceede not by birth and deſcent, but by election; being choſen therunto by weight of their life, and behauiour, and wiſedome. For they that come to their Gouerment by inheritance, falling vpon their charge as it were by chance, whatſoeuer they be, they muſt be tolerated; by which meanes manie Citties haue come to great michief, the gouernours vndoing themſelues and others, through raſhnes, and want of skil. The gouernment of Religion is free from this inconuenience; becauſe it deſcends not by right vpon anie man, but is giuen by Voices, or by other lawful power. And wheras in other Common-wealths there is danger in the Voices, becauſe Offices and Promotions not being conferred but vpon them that pretend and labour for them, commonly he that preſſeth moſt, and ſometimes he that giueth moſt money, and maketh moſt friends, goeth away with it: In Religion it is farre otherwiſe; for Offices are rather caſt vpon them, that decline and refuſe them. Wherin, ſeing *Ariſtotle* himſelf doth directly affirme that they who pretend, are euen for that reaſon leſſe worthie, in regard they ſhew themſelues to be ambitious and deſirous of honour, and ſuch people doe manie vniuſt acts, what is it fit for vs to think?

2. Pol. c. 7.

3. Pol. c. 15. Aduiſe for Gouernours.

8. The ſame Philoſopher doth giue this pertinent aduiſe alſo, that the power of them that gouerne, muſt be on the one ſide ſo large, that they muſt haue more then anie one particular man; and yet ſo limited, as they muſt haue leſſe then al of them togeather; which we ſcarce ſee obſerued in anie worldlie Common-wealth. For he that once gets to the ſterne, doth preſently ſo ſtrengthen himſelf, that euer after he curbes the people at his pleaſure, and doth with them what he liſt. In Religion the forme of gouerment requireth, that as they receaue their power from their Order, ſo it is ſtinted and limited by the Order, and may alſo be taken wholy from them.

1. Pol 4. Gouernours are ſeruants of their ſubiects.

9. Finally, not to ſpine-out this diſcourſe too long, let vs ſee what doth chiefly belong to the dutie of a Gouernour, in the opinion of this Philoſopher. He placeth it in that he make account, that he is ſeruant to al his ſubiects, and bend al his actions and thoughts, to the benefitting of them. This, ſayth he, was at firſt the reſolution of euerie good King; but fel to be corrupted, meerely by the cõmodities which accompanie that place. This which *Ariſtotle* therfore ſayth,

fayth was anciently in vſe, and grew afterwards to be otherwiſe, we finde ſtil in practiſe in Religion. For the Gouernours doe wayte vpon the benefit of their ſubiects, as ſeruants vpon their maiſters; principally taking care for their ſoules, and being alſo careful of that which belongeth to the bodie; when the ſubiects are at reſt, & know not how or which way they are prouided of neceſſarie food and ſuſtenance, the gouernours watch and labour for them, and euerie one in particular taking no thought at al for himſelf, they are conſtrayned to be ſollicitous for al. What is ſlauerie, if this be not? By which meanes they are alſo free from the danger, which is in Kingdomes and Empires, leaſt the commodities which attend vpon them, ouerthrow Religious diſcipline, becauſe the Pouertie, which Religious men profeſſe, excludeth al theſe commodities, & bringeth manie incōmodities with it, & conſequently excludeth al enuie and ambition.

10. And ſo much for the head. If we compare the members one with another, two things concurre to the beautie and dignitie of Religious Commonwealths. Firſt a great equalitie of vnequal members; ſecondly, as perfect a communication of al things among them, as can be. For as a Cittie, which hath not ſeueral States and Degrees of the Nobilitie, and meaner, and middle ſort, of trades-men, and others, is but poorly prouided, and neuer able to ſubſiſt; and yet if this varietie be not bound and linked togeather by participation in diuers things, it would be in great confuſion, becauſe it could not be anie wayes One, but, as *Ariſtotle* ſpeaketh, *ful of manie enemies of the Common-wealth*. In Religious communities the ſelfſame is ful as neceſſarie; and they enioy both theſe perfections without the incommodities oppoſite vnto them. *Ariſt. 5. Pol. c. 3.*

11. For firſt, there is an inequalitie and difference among them in their natural diſpoſitions and inclinations, in their ſtudies and knowledge, in their wit & capacitie, and other abilities of their mind and vnderſtanding; as in al other things that are rightly ordered, there is euer ſome difference and diſtinction. In the heauens, ſome ſtarres are bigger or leſſer then other ſome; in this inferiour world, al the beaſtes of the earth are not of like bignes, or ſtrength, or quicknes; the members of the ſelfſame bodie haue a difference in the honour and beneficialnes of them; and that great Houſeholder hath not diuided his Talents equally among al men, but to ſome he hath *giuen one*; *to ſome, two*; *to ſome, fiue*; which kind of diſparitie in Religion, as it is altogeather neceſſarie and very vſeful, ſo doubtles (if we conſider it wel) it cannot chooſe but be a great ornament vnto it. Diuerſitie of Talents.

12. And to the end it may be no occaſion of breach of vnitie and concord, it is tempered with ſuch admirable equalitie among them, that there cannot be anie thing more like and equal one with another, then people that liue in Religion. They goe cloathed alike, and al weare one kind of Habit, their lodging and diet is alike, and euerie thing els that is outward to the eye but much more that which is inward, agreeing in loue, & participation of good works among them, of which I haue ſpoken at large before, and hauing benefit by what ſoeuer good is in the particular Religion of which they are, and in al other Religious Orders beſides. Theſe are the ſolid comforts of a Religious life, wherin there is no difference betwixt the learned and the vnlearned, betwixt the wiſeſt and the ignoranteſt man among them. No breach of vnitie among Religious.

13. Why therefore may we not ſay of them, as *S. Auguſtin* ſayd of a Cittie *S. Aug. 1. Ciuit. c. 1.*

Similitudes of concord.

wel gouerned, that they are al like a conſort of Muſick, where diuers Notes combined togeather make a melodious harmonie? For what Cittie can challenge this propertie with more right then Religion, where there is ſuch varietie of perſons, lincked togeather with ſuch concord and diſcord, & proportionable diſproportion? For if the connexion of natural things is beautiful and admirable, by reaſon of the dependencie, which they haue of one another in their motions, from the firſt to the laſt, finding the like connexion in things that are gouerned with reaſon, it muſt needs be the more beautiful and decent, the more perfect and noble the nature of them is; and conſequently, if the diſpoſition and order of thoſe inferiour things, breed delight in whoſoeuer doth behold them, theſe muſt needs breed much more in practiſing the like order and connexion. So that wheras the *Pythagorians* imagined a kind of Harmonie in the Celeſtial Orbes, by reaſon that their motions ſo wel ordered, & ſo conſtantly obſeruing the ſelfsame courſe and diſtance, doth expreſſe a kind of Muſical cõcent equally various; Religious Orders do ſo liuely repreſent the ſame, that if we lend the eares of our mind vnto them, we cannot but perceaue a moſt heauenlie cõſort.

14. Finally, the perfect communication of al inward and outward things, which I mentioned before, no bodie drawing anie thing from the reſt to his owne particular, is an exceeding grace and ornament to this Religious Common-wealth. Plato, that great Philoſopher, did ſo highly eſteeme this one point, that it was the mayne thing which he required in the Common-wealth, which he went about to frame, as I ſayd before; but it neuer could be brought to paſſe in anie Communitie, but in Religion. *S. Iohn Chryſoſtome* doth highly commend Religious people for it, becauſe their houſes are free from *Mine* and *Thine*, which two words (ſayth he) haue been the vndoing of mankind. And it is in itſelf of great cõſequence; not only becauſe it is an euident ſigne of Vnion and charitie, but moreouer preſerueth and nouriſheth it, and cutteth-of al matter of diſſention, which the deſire of particular things, which euerie bodie cannot enioy, is apt to breed. And beſides this communication, there be ſo manie other meanes and wayes, to breed and eſtabliſh perfect concord and vnion among them, that, as I ſayd els-where out of *S. Auguſtin*, they are one ſoule, and one hart; manie bodies, but not manie harts. They that wayte, & thoſe that are wayted on (ſayth *S. Iohn Chryſoſtome*) ſit at one board, and are ſerued alike; they are cloathed, & lodged alike, leade the ſame kind of life. There is not pouertie and riches, honour & contemptiblenes. There be litle & great among them, according to the meaſure of euerie one's vertue; but no man ſees that. He that is litle, is not grieued, as if he were ſlighted; nor is there anie man, that ſlights him.

Plato. dial. 5. de Rep.

Iohn Chryſoſtome Ho. 58. ad pop.

S. Iohn Chryſoſtome Hom. 58.

15. Deſeruedly therefore doth the Prophet *Dauid* reckon this among the wonderful works of God, that *he maketh people of one faſhion to dwel in a houſe*; that is, ſo louing and vnited togeather, as if manie were but one. And our Lord himſelf ſpeaketh of it by the Prophet *Sophonias*, as of a promiſe of great account: *I wil reſtore to the people a choſen lip, that al may cal in the name of our Lord, & ſerue him with one ſhoulder.* Where the nature of a Religious ſtate is deſcribed vnto vs, cõſiſting in two things; to wit, in worſhipping, and praying, & calling vpon God, expreſſed by the word *Lip*, and *a choſen lip*; and in brotherlike loue and vnion, al concurring with their ſtrength, and making as it were one ſhoulder, by which meanes, if there be anie burthen in this ſeruice of God, it is the lighter to euerie particular, and felt the leſſe by them.

Soph. 3. 9.

How

How much honour Religious Orders haue done to the Church of God.

CHAP. XXXVI.

A Cittie placed vpon a hil, cannot be hidden; and they light not a candle, and put it vnder a bushel, but vpon a candlestick, that it may giue light to al that be in the house. Vertue hath this propertie, that it bewrayeth itself by the light which it hath, no lesse then anie other light; and the more perfect it is, the more it doth shine abroad. Which if it be true in euerie particular man that is vertuous, how much more true is it, when manie vertuous men ioyne togeather, and make one Corporation and cittie? We may iustly therefore say, that Religion is a Cittie *placed vpon a hil*, both becausse it is compounded of seueral persons as a Cittie is, wherof we haue spoken alreadie at large in the precedent Chapter; and it is seated in an eminent and loftie situation, to wit, in in the top of Euangelical Perfection, which al, that haue not arriued to so high a pitch, but remaine in an inferiour estate, must needs admire, and lift-vp their eyes, as to people that are aboue them. And consequently the Cittie itself being so noble, and seated moreouer vpon a hil, so that it cannot be hidden, but must needs be in the eye of euerie bodie, al the glorie, and commendation, and worth, which it hath, must also redounde to the glorie and commendation of the whole Church, wherof it is a part. For which consideration *S. Gregorie Nazianzen* calleth *Religious people, the first fruits of our Sauiour's flock, pillars, and crownes of Faith, and pretious margarits.* And *S. Hierome: Certainly the Order of Monks, and Virgins, is the flower, and as it were a pretious stone among the ornaments of the Church.* He sayth a Religious course is both a Flower, and a Pretious stone, declaring in the one the beautie of that state, and in the other, the great esteeme and value, which is moreouer to be made of it, and the holie Church partaketh of them both. For the dignitie and beautie of this life doth both exceedingly comfort, and delight, and encourage the Faithful, and confound the Aduersaries therof. Insomuch that that great Champion of the Catholick Faith *S. Augustin*, in the booke which he wrote of the *Manners of the Church*, among other arguments, which he brings to disproue the errours of the Manichees, against whom he penned that Treatise, he insisteth mainly vpon this, that in the Church, there shal be such multitudes both of Heremits leading a solitarie life, and Monks liuing in common togeather; and describing their manner of conuersation at large, at last he concludeth, as it were, brauing the Manichees in these words: Oppose yourselues, if you can, you Manichees, against these; behold them wel, and name them if you dare without lying, and with shame enough. Compare their fasting with your fasting, chastitie with chastitie, cloathing with cloathing, fare with fare, modestie with modestie, charitie with charitie, and, that which importeth most, orders with orders.

Matt. 5.

S. *Gregorie Nazian. or. 2. in Iul.*

S. *Hier. Ep. 17.*

S. *August. de moribus Eccl. 3. 34.*

2. S. *Laurence Iustinian*, a man renowned for learning and sanctitie, handleth this selfsame subiect yet more copiously, and deserueth to haue his

S. *Laurence Iust. de Obed. c. 18.*

" whole diſcourſe ſet downe at large. He ſayth thus: Among other things which
" aduance the glorie of God, and make Infidels haue a good eſteeme of the Ca-
" tholick Faith, is the liuing of the Faithful in common togeather; and ſpecial-
" ly the life of them, that contemning the vanities of this tranſitorie world, and
" abandoning the pleaſures of the fleſh, and promiſes of wealth and honour,
" dedicate themſelues to God in the Cloiſters of Monaſteries by perpetual vow
Deſcription of a Religious life. " of a voluntarie ſeruitude. For who can doe otherwiſe but prayſe and extol the
" Diuine goodnes, and wiſdome vnſpeakable, beholding innumerable people of
" both ſexes in the flower of their youth, in perfect health, and proportion of
" their bodie, ſwimming in abundance of earthlie ſubſtance, happie in the poſ-
" ſeſſion of lands, and vinyards, and houſes, and ſeruants, and honoured with ma-
" nie noble friends and kinsfolk, willingly to renounce the world, and ſpurne at
" the pride therof, to forſake al their kindred, and to put themſelues into the ſer-
" uice of our Sauiour Chriſt, by exerciſe of obedience, vnder the conduct of a man
" that in a maner is a ſtranger vnto them? For this certainly is beyond that, which
" men ordinarily doe, and beyond the common faſhion of liuing. For the natural
" affection which we haue as children, doth not ſuffer vs to contemne them that
" begot vs, & brought vs into the viſible light of this world. The law, I ſay, which
" is naturally inbred in the harts of men, doth not perſwade vs to leaue our owne
" cittie, al our kindred, al our play-fellowes, al our friends and acquaintance; and
" to goe dwel with ſtrangers, to trauel into farre countries, citties, and villages,
" not for a yeare, or two, or three, but al our life-time; & of our owne free choice
" to ſuffer hunger and thirſt, cold and nakednes, to puniſh our bodies alſo with
" watching, and faſting, and other labours, to bring it vnder with daylie abſtinen-
" ces, and, that which is greater then al this, to fight againſt the inclinations of our
" owne wil. For nature itſelf inticeth, cuſtome teacheth, humane frayltie vrgeth,
" loue of good companie draweth, common curteſie perſwadeth, and the ſweet
" conuerſation of people at home, and ſpecially of our kindred, doth compel eue-
" rie bodie, that hath anie ſpark of reaſon, to keep where he was borne, to enioy
" the companie of his kindred, to take care of his owne poſſeſſions, and take his
" pleaſure in them, and to follow the inclinations of his owne wil. But when we
" ſee the quite contrarie acted, it proceedeth either out of feare of death, or cer-
" tain knowledge of the ficklenes and falshood of the world, or out of an aſſured
" and ſtrong hope of future happines; which hope we cannot taſte of, but by the
" light of Faith, which is giuen vs before. And we come not to the poſſeſſion of
" this Faith, of which we ſpeake, by our owne free wil, but by the guift of God,
" who hath mercie on vs, and draweth vs, and preſerueth vs. The glorious Mar-
" tyrs enlightned with the ſplendour of this Faith, haue with moſt ardent cha-
" ritie endured for Chriſt, fire, impriſonment, chaynes, ſtripes, torments, repro-
" aches, exile, loſſe of goods, and death. The holie Anchorets, endued with the
" cleernes of this Faith, haue filled the deſerts, walked the wilderneſſes, builded
" Monaſteries, therin to attend to the glorifying of God, to giue themſelues to
" often prayer, to labour with their hands at conuenient times, and to aſſemble
" togeather the children of God diſperſed euerie where abroad, and to ouer-
" come the ſecret attempts of their inuiſible enemies. Inſpired certainly by
" God, they vnderſtood that this world is ful of concupiſcence of the
" fleſh, allurements of the eyes, and other pleaſures, and of pride of
life.

life. They saw that men did dayly cast themselues headlong vpon vice, neglect the Law of God, contemne his commandments, follow the pleasures of present delight, and giue themselues wholy to earthlie lucre, transitorie honour, hurtful dishonestie, and secular cares, which make the louers of them strangers to God & to themselues, and breed an auersion from al vertue. For, light and darcknes, vanitie and truth, vertue and vice, the loue of God and of the world, the works of the flesh and of the spirit, the ioyes of this life and of the life to come, cannot meete in one, nor stand togeather. Wherefore to the end they might doe God the seruice, which is due vnto him, and curbe the passions of vice, which continually boyle-vp from the sting of sinne and itching flesh, and bridle their owne wil, from which euerie beginning of sinne doth receaue nourishment, for the loue of Christ they haue deliuered themselues ouer into such prisons. By these laudable intentions, by this manner of liuing, our holie Mother the Church is glorifyed. For euen in these times, in which we see iniquitie abound, and the charitie of manie to grow cold, there want not some, who treade the footsteps of the holie Fathers, though not with so great feruour of charitie, as they. For there be sundrie Congregations of the seruants of God, which though they be in their habits different, different in their constitutions and ceremonies, yet labour with one and the same intention of glorifying God, and gayning their Neighbour, and for the same end of coming to their Heauenlie countrie. O how manie of both Sexes, in this great multitude of seruants of Christ diffused euerie-where almost throughout the whole world, are eminent for sanctitie? How manie fatten themselues with singular deuotion, and continual prayer? How manie are conspicuous for heroical vertue? Some are rare for humilitie, others for constant patience, others for puritie of mind, others for zeale of righteousnes, others for the loue of God and their Neighbour, others for their singular preheminence in Religious conuersation. Al of them labour without enuying one another, without pride of hart, according to the measure of Faith, and of the Grace, which is giuen them, to please God, to profit dayly, and to heape-vp gaynes of the Talents, which are lent them.

3. Thus farre *S. Iustinian*; wherin he hath discourssed so largely, and so eloquently, that we shal not need to say anie more of this point, but only agreable to the sense of these holie Fathers, applye the saying of the Holie-Ghost to Religious people, where he sayth by his Prophet: *I haue framed this people for myself; they shal recount my prayse.* For who hath framed this people brought from a farre-of, as there it is sayd, and gathered togeather from the vtmost bounds of the earth, but God, who commandeth *light to shine from darknes*? And to what purpose is it framed, but to recount his prayse? This is the busines of Religious people, not only because they sing and proclaime his prayses with their mouth, and speake of his glorie to al men, but they recount them by their verie life and conuersation. For as a curious picture, or whatsoeuer excellent peece of workmanship, doth silently tel vs, how rare the workman is, and layes his worth before our eyes, & perswades more euidently and certainly of it, then anie man's speach can doe: so these kind of Religious Institutes, of which God only can be the Authour, doe most cleerly and certainly lay downe before vs, his infinit wisdome and goodnes. *Esa. 42.*

Of the honour, which is done to Religious people, euen in this life.

CHAP. XXXVII.

1. *Reg.* 2. OVR Lord ſpake a word by his Prophet, which he hath alwayes made good: *Whoſoeuer shal honour me, I wil glorifye him; and they that contemne me, shal be ignoble.* Religious people therefore employing themſelues ſo wholy in ſeeking the glorie of God, that it is their whole endeauour to humble and abaſe themſelues to that end, we may with reaſon think, that the Diuine goodnes hath alſo had a particular care to honour this ſtate of life, and to giue it ſuch beautie and grace, as ſhould be admirable euen in the eyes of men. For the *Prou.* 14. promiſe, which we reade in the Prouerbs of the fruit of Wiſedome, was to be fulfilled in them: *Take it, and it wil exalt thee; thou shalt be glorifyed by it; when thou shalt haue embraced it, it wil giue to thy head an addition of graces, and protect thee with a noble crowne.* *S. Baſil* *præf. in lib. Aſcet.* *S. Baſil*, among other reaſons, which he bringeth to moue people to Religious courſes, doth not ſtick to vſe this; that they, that enter into Religion, ſhal be glorious euen vpon earth; their friends wil make great account of them, and vſe their help and interceſſion in their behalf, and furniſh them with neceſſaries, as valiant ſouldiers, & inuite them home to their houſes, and entertaine them ioyfully as Angels of God, and (as the Apoſtle ſpeaketh) *Gal.* 4. as CHRIST himſelf.

2. And if we conſider the nature of the thing itſelf, we ſhal find, that it is in a manner neceſſarie, it ſhould be ſo. For firſt *Ariſtotle* ſayth truly, that the true ground of honour, is goodnes; and the greater the goodnes is, the greater honour is due vnto it; and conſequently Vertue is the onlie thing, which with reaſon we can think to be worthie of honour; and in like manner, they that haue vertue. People that are noble and rich in the world, and haue great power, haue but an outward kind of worth and excellencie, in compariſon of them, that haue vertue; but the reaſon, why they are vulgarly more honoured, is, becauſe the vulgar ſort of people make account, that there is no other good, but theſe exteriour things. This is Ariſtotle's diſcourſe; wherof it followeth, that not only the wiſer ſort, but the vulgar alſo, if they haue anie conceit what true Vertue is, muſt needs honour it farre more, then anie outward thing; and conſequently, if Vertue be ſo playne and conſpicuous, that euerie bodie muſt needs ſee it, they cannot but beare great reſpect vnto it, and behold it with great veneration. Religious perfection is of this nature. For it is an eminent ſtate of life, ſeuered from the ordinarie courſes which people take, and ful of thoſe orders and practiſes, which muſt neceſſarily be admirable to the beholders. For the greater part of the world being ſo much carried away with the loue and deſire of honour, and wealth, and pleaſure, and other earthlie commodities, they cannot but admire thoſe, that they behold

Ariſt. 4. *Eth* 3.

Vertue is only worthie to be honoured.

ſo

ſo high-flowne aboue them, that they doe not only not ſeeke after earthlie things, but contemne and deſpiſe them. Which contempt is not ſecret in the mind and hart only, but is to be ſeen in their vgrie habit and whole courſe of life; ſo that euerie ordinarie man muſt needs diſcouer it, and needes no great reflexion to make him in loue with it.

Neernes to God, makes them reſpected.

3. Secondly, the neere relation which they haue to God, being conſecrated to him, and dealing familiarly with him, as his domeſtical ſeruants, or rather friends, doth naturally breed a great veneration towards them. In ſo much that we ſee, that it hath alwayes been the cuſtome, not only among Chriſtians, but among Infidels, and thoſe that haue not had the true knowledge of God, to deale with more reſpect with them, that haue particularly deuoted themſelues to the ſeruice of God, then with anie others. For as there is no nation ſo barbarous, but doth in ſome ſort acknowledge, that there is a Soueraigne Nature ſo powerfull, that al good things are to be asked of it, and puniſhment expected for offences committed, in which reſpect they worſhip that Nature with particularities and ceremonies; ſo there is no bodie, that doth not think, that they are particularly to be reſpected and reuerenced, that haue particular relation to that Nature; and ſo we ſee the practiſe of al Antiquitie. For, as we reade in *Geneſis*, it was a cuſtome in Ægypt, that the Prieſts ſhould be maintayned at the common charge; which was the reaſon, why their poſſeſſions were not taxed, nor ſeazed in that dearth. And at *Rome* not only the Prieſts, but the Southſayers, and diuers other inferiour Sacrificers, were in ſo great veneration, that thoſe Offices being in the guift of the people, they were ſought after and conferred with great concourſe and emulation; and it was held to be ſo worthie and magnifical a function to Sacrifice, that when the Kings were put downe, and the name of a King was ſo odious among them, that nothing more, it remayned notwithſtanding to the Prieſt without enuie or diſtaſte. And we reade that the Prieſt of *Iupiter* bore ſuch ſway, that people flocked vnto him, as to a Sanctuarie. For if a priſoner fel at his feet, he was inſtantly releaſed; and if he were guiltie, he was pardoned. The *Veſtal Virgins* (which among them were as our Nunnes are among vs) were held to be ſo holie, that no bodie muſt touch them, and they had two Sergeants went alwayes before them; and if by chance they had met anie man that had been going to execution, he was preſently ſet at libertie. And to ſpeakē of theſe our dayes; what honour and power do not the *Iaponians* yeald to their *Bonzi*; who imitating euerie thing, which our Monks profeſſe (but Chaſtitie and vertuous behauiour) their habit, and ſinging, and liuing in common, and the like, are reported to be in ſo great veneration, that they are like earthlie Gods among them; they rule in a manner al, and oftimes giue and take away Kingdomes at their pleaſure. And to conclude, it is moſt certain, that al that euer haue acknowledged anie Diuine Nature (as al haue done) haue alſo borne particular reſpect to them, that haue dedicated and conſecrated themſelues to this Nature; and this opinion is bred not by perſwaſion of others, or by law, or ſtatute, but by the light of Nature, without anie teaching or inſtructing; which general conſent of al nations in whatſoeuer it be, is to be accounted the voice of Nature itſelf.

Gen. 47.

People conſecrated to God, reuerenced among al Nations.

4. Wherefore, if not only the fooliſh but wicked Superſtition and beleef of falſe Gods was aneiently, and is yet ſo powerful in this kind, certainly the true Religion, and worſhip of the true and Soueraigne God, muſt needes be much more powerful. For the greater knowledge and eſteeme Chriſtians haue now of the great Maieſty of God, more then the Infidels had of their falſe Gods, cannot but breed alſo a greater veneration of them, that are neer to ſo great a God.

S. *Dominick* honoured in his life-time;

5. We reade of *S. Dominick*, that the more he did humble himſelf, the more euerie bodie, euen Cardinals and the Pope himſelf, did reſpect him; and the common people did honour him ſo much, that they thought themſelues happie, if they could but come to ſpeake with him, or touch his garment; and euerie bodie did cut-of peeces of his garment, and kept them for relicks, ſo that his vpperweed was alwayes cut-of by the knees. And when his Friars, to eaſe him of that trouble, would hinder the people, from ſo continually pulling him by the coate, he bad them let them alone, ſaying: they muſt ſatisfye their deuotion.

&S *Francis.*

6. When *S. Francis* hapned to come into anie towne, people thronged ſo thick about him, that he was in danger ſometimes to be oppreſſed; and once he ſtood ſtil, and gaue euerie bodie, that would, his hand and his garment to kiſſe. His companion admiring at it, asked, when he was priuate with him, what he meant to doe ſo. *S. Francis* anſwered him; Know, Brother, that they haue not done me the hundredth part of the honour, which is due vnto me. Which anſwer troubling him more then before, he gaue him this reaſon: Becauſe (ſayd he) people honour not me, but God in me, who gaue me al the good and al the Religion that is in me. And it is not the vulgar only that honour Religious people, but great Princes and Monarcks, as *Conſtantine* honoured *S. Antonie*, the Emperour *Otho S. Romualdus*, coming to ſee him in his celle, and vouchſafing, as great a man as he was, to take a lodging vpon his hard couch.

S. *Maurus*

A rare example of pietie.

7. When *S. Maurus* was ſent into *France* by *S. Benedict*, *Florus* who was the greateſt Fauorit, King *Theodobert* had, preſented his ſonne and al his wealth vnto him; and afterwards betook himſelf alſo to his Monaſterie, to the aſtoniſhment of al France. And King *Theodobert* himſelf went ſome dayes iourney to viſit that new companie of Chriſt's Souldiers; and when he came thither, and had made an end of his deuotions in the Church, going into the Monaſterie, he caſt himſelf vpon the flore before the Monks, laying his purple Robes and his Royal Maieſtie vnder the feete of poore beggerlike men; & beſeeching they would vouchſafe to admit him into their Companie (for ſo were his words) and inrole his name among theirs; and beſtowing manie rich preſents of gold and ſiluer for their Church-ornaments, he departed, thinking that God had done him a ſingular fauour in ſuffering him to ſee and conuerſe with thoſe ſeruants of his.

S. *Francis of Paula.*

8. And of later yeares, in the ſame Kingdome, when *Lewis* the Eleuenth by much entreatie, aſſiſted by Pope *Sixtus* the Fourth his command, got *S. Francis of Paula* to come vnto him from the furtheſt parts of *Calabria*, how louingly and reſpectfully did he entertaine him? how much ioy did the whole Court and Kingdome of *France* expreſſe at the coming of ſo poore and contemptible

a man? So that it was apparent in him, that the excellencie of a Religious life, doth oftimes (as *S. Chryſoſtome* diſcourſeth) make people that are borne obſcurely and meanly in the world, and had remained in obſcuritie if they had not forſaken the world, by change of their ſtate of life become honourable in the ſight of them, that before did account them baſe. *S. Iohn Chryſoſtome 8. con. vitup. vi. Mo.*

9. *S. Arſenius* was ſchoolemaiſter to *Arcadius* ſonne to the Emperour *Theodoſius*, and was ſo farre out of his fauour, that he was faine to fly, becauſe he vnderſtood that *Arcadius* had plotted his death. But manie yeares after, when it was knowne that he had betaken himſelf to the ſeruice of God in the wildernes, *Arcadius* then Emperour writ an humble letter vnto him, commending himſelf and his Empire to his prayers. *Arſenius* certainly was neither more learned, nor more noble then he was before; rather al the credit and renowne which he had gotten in the world, was now forgotten. How then came he to this new honour, but by the Religious courſe which he did profeſſe? *S Arſenius.*

10. We might bring manie other ancient and moderne examples to the ſame purpoſe; but to be brief, we wil conclude this whole diſcourſe with a notable teſtimonie of *Caſſian*, who ſayth, that the promiſe which our Sauiour made of an *Hundred-fold*, is fulfilled in the reward of the preſent honour, which Religious people haue in this life. Theſe are his words: Doe not they, I pray you, that ſerue our Sauiour faithfully, moſt manifeſtly come by that Hundredfold grace by this, that for his names ſake they are honoured by great Princes? And though they ſeeke not after humane glorie, yet they are venerable, euen in the afflictions of perſecution, to al Iudges and people in authoritie, though otherwiſe their meannes might haue been perhaps contemptible euen to people of inferiour condition, by reaſon of the baſenes of their birth or ſeruil condition, if they had remained in the world? Which we may euidētly proue by the example of Abbot *Iohn*, who reſideth in the wildernes which bordereth vpon the towne called *Lycus*. For being borne of very meane parentage, he is growne ſo admirable to almoſt the whole world for Chriſt his ſake, that the Lords of this world (who by reaſon of their gouerment are terrible) euen to Kings and Princes, doe honour him as their Maiſter; and crauing anſwer from him from countries afarre-of doe commend the ſtate of their Empire, their ſafegard, and the euents of warres, to his merits and prayers. Thus ſayth *Caſſian*. To which we may adde, that this is the trueſt and greateſt honour of al the honours which are giuen in this life to men. For when others are honoured in regard of their power, or their wealth and riches, the honour is not ſo much giuen to them, as to their riches or their power, in regard of ſome commoditie or reward, which people hope frō them. But in a Religious ſtate, where there is none of al this, certainly whatſoeuer reſpect is done them, cometh wholy from the beautie and vertue of the State itſelf. In which kind there hapned a remarkable thing to *Iohn Becanus* a Frāciſcan-Friar, as we reade in their Chronicles. He was held to be the learnedſt man of his time; and reading a publick Lecture of Diuinitie in the Pope's pallace, euerie bodie had ſuch an opinion of his learning, that beſides others of al ſorts that came vnto him, manie Biſhops and Cardinals reſorted to heare him; and they were wont to riſe-vp and ſtand bare, as he paſſed through the ſchoole to his Chaire. It hapned that he was made Arch-Biſhop of *Canterburie*, and continued notwithſtanding his Reading; and then *Caſſ. Col. vlt. cap. vlt.* *Iohn Becanus.*

none of the Cardinals would ſtirre for him, becauſe before (they ſaid) they honoured Vertue in him, wherin they acknowledged themſelues to be his inferiours; but now they might be thought to honour him in reſpect of his dignitie, wherin they were aboue him.

True honour in Vertue.

11. True honour therefore is that, which is grounded in Vertue, and in the State itſelf; and this is the beſt and ſolidſt foundation. For if Religious people ſuffer ſometimes by ſlanderous and reproachful reports and ſpeaches, it is but ſeldome, and hapneth not only by malice of the Diuel, that oppoſeth them, but by permiſſion of God to exerciſe our vertue, to encreaſe our crowne, to make vs conformable to his Sonne, who foretold his Diſciples as much, and in his Diſciples al others: *If they haue perſecuted me, they wil perſecute you*; and giueth this reaſon: *becauſe the ſeruant is not greater then his maiſter*; as who would ſay, he that wil be my true Diſciple, and true ſeruant, muſt vndergoe the like.

Io. 15.

12. Wherin we may behold the wonderful wiſdome of God, and his prouidence ouer vs, diſpoſing ſo, that wheras the excellencie of this ſtate is apparent to moſt men, and honoured by them as it deſerueth, he would not but that there ſhould be ſome, who ſhould not ſee it, but be croſſe ſometimes to Religious people, to the end we and others might benefit ourſelues by it. For if al ſhould ſet Religious people at naught, no bodie could haue anie benefit by vs; if al ſhould loue and cheriſh vs, it would alſo turne to our great preiudice. In the one therefore God had an eye to our good, in the other to the good of our neighbour; and tempereth both ſo, that our life (according to the ſaying of the Apoſtle) might march, as it were, by certain ſteps and degrees, *by glorie and ignobilitie, by infamie & good report, & we ourſelues as vnknowne, and yet knowne; as ſeducers, and yet people of truth.* And yet though we ought to be thus armed on the right hand, and on the left, that, which we haue ſayd and proued, remaineth vndoubted, that euen the world doth honour this State aboue Kingdomes and Empires. *Lewis* ſonne to King *Charles* of France vnderſtood it wel, whome we mentioned before. For abandoning the inheritance of ſo rich a kingdome, and entring among the Franciſcan-Friars, as he had much and long deſired, one of the Friars of the ſame Order coming vnto him to congratulate him, among other things, ſayd, that he had that day highly honoured the Order by his entring into it; but *Lewis* replyed: *Yea rather, I am this day more honoured by this Habit.*

A notable ſaying of S. Lewis.

The end of the Second Booke.

THE THIRD BOOKE, OF THE HAPPINES OF A RELIGIOVS STATE.

THE PREFACE.

Of the pleasantnes of a Religious course of life; and the impediments, which are wont to occurre therin, by example of the Children of Israel going out of Ægypt.

IN the deliuerie of the Iewes from the Seruitude of *Ægypt*, and their long and labourſome peregrination to the deſired Land of Promiſe, God anciently ſhewed vs a perfect patterne of the whole courſe of a Religious vocation; and this our happie ſtate is ſo natiuely expreſſed, and as it were drawne to life, by that admirable and famous work of al the works, which God wrought for the benefit of that people, that ſo farre as carnal things can expreſſe the ſpiritual, & outward things, which are farre inferiour, declare the inward, it could not haue been ſet forth in more natural or liuelie colours. Which diuers of the holie Fathers, and particularly S. *Bernard* doth obſerue in one of his Sermons, diſcourſing of this whole myſterie, as if al things had hapned to them in a figure and ſhadow, & the fruit & ſubſtance had been wholy communicated to vs. There, ſayth he, the people was brought out of Aegypt, here a man is drawne out of the World; There *Pharao*, heer the Diuel, is vãquished; there *Pharao* his chariots are ouerturned, heer carnal & ſecular deſires, which warre againſt the ſoule, are ouerthrowne; they in the, waues, theſe in teares; they are brackish, theſe are bitter; and I verily think, that when the Diuels happen vpon ſuch a ſoule, they cry out: *Let vs fly Iſrael; becauſe God fighteth for them.* Thus ſayth *S. Bernard*, and much more to the ſame purpoſe. S. *Bernard ſer. 39. in Cant.*

2. Let vs therefore, following ſo good a leader, acknowledge (according to the grace which is giuen vs) in this benefit beſtowed vpon the Iewes, as in a picture, a farre greater benefit beſtowed vpon ourſelues. For if in the cleare light, wherin by the goodnes of God we now are, we behold the Secular ſtate, in which formerly we liued; what was it but a ſeruitude? And in verie deede a farre more hard and cruel ſeruitude, then that of *Pharao*; becauſe it was not our bodie that was held captiue, wherin people apprehend ſo much miſerie, but it was our ſoule, which was in captiuitie, the thraldome wherof is much more to be lamented. Beſides that, for one man to be a ſlaue to another man, is not ſo very diſhonourable; but nothing can be more baſe, then to be a ſlaue to Sinne and the Diuel; nothing more vaine, then to ſerue the World. The vileneſſe, togeather with the trouble and tediouſnes, of the works, which we were forced to vndergoe vnder ſo ſeuere a command, will lay it more plainly before our eyes. For what was our dailie occupation in the world, but to worke, as they did, in baſe and ſeruil buſineſſes, in dirt, in gathering ſtraw, in making bricks? For when people beſtow their whole time and al their labours and thoughts, as the fashion is, in heaping of honours and riches, they handle nothing day and night, but earth; their harts, their thoughts, their cares are ſet vpon nothing but earth; becauſe al theſe are earthlie things, and indeed nothing elſe but earth. And there wanted not in the world cruel extortioners, to wit, our diſordered deſires with a hard hand continually calling vpon vs, and preſſing vs, and compelling vs to double our labours, and to vndertake more then we were able to wealde, and affording vs no reſt nor reſpit; ſo that in effect we did then leade a moſt miſerable life, not only ful of trouble and preſſure, as the word *Aegypt* doth ſignifie, but a baſe and

To ſerue the world, is a cruel ſlauerie.

vnworthie kind of life, otherwise then people ordinarily take it to be, out of the foolish conceit which they haue; because it did inuolue so vile and so abiect a kinde of slauerie, as I sayd.

The Enemie's endeauour against good resolutions.

3. Out of which seruitude if by Diuine instinct a man goe about to withdraw himself, with what fiercenes, with what furie doth the cruel *Pharao*, the World, and he that domineereth in the world, the Diuel, set vpon him? Then, as it were, beating his drumme, and sounding his trumpet, he makes al the forces he can to cut-of those holesome thoughts, or to diuert them. On the one side he rankes the pleasures and commodities of this world, the sweetnes of libertie, the hope of preferment, the greatnes which worldlie wealth brings a man vnto, the loue of his kindred; and with these he bids him battail: On the other side, he layes before him the austerities of a Religious life, the incommodities of Pouertie, the trouble of Obedience, and twentie such considerations, which are apt and able to fright a man. And if these inward assaults, which he makes, haue not the effect which he desireth, he betakes himself to his outward engines; he stirres-vp friends to giue him euil counsel, he tempts his companions to laugh at him, he oftimes makes vse of the power of great men, by force to withdraw him. Among al which diuelish deuises, none are vsually so ful of venom as when he laboureth to make vs stoope to the authoritie of a father commanding vs, or of a tender weeping mother beseeching vs, or of our bretheren and kinsfolks entreating vs. These be the horse-men and chariots, with which the Enemie of mankind doth pursue them, that fly from him.

God fighteth for them, that desire to betake themselues vnto him.

4. On the other side, our Lord and God, who calleth vs out of *Ægypt* to offer a perpetual Sacrifice vnto him in the Desert, doth fight for vs, as if the cause were not ours, but his owne; and doth not only breake the wicked encounters of the Diuel, and bewray his treacheries, but commonly doth lay most grieuous punishments vpon al such, as aduenture to be his instruments in so wicked an enterprise, as he dealt with king *Pharao*; and we shal scarce finde anie one sinne so seuerely and so presently punished, as this; and not without great reason. For what greater wrong can a man offer God, then to take away his spouse from him, to prophane his temple, to raze and demolish the workmanship, of which he maketh greatest account? what greater dammage can a man doe his neighbour? or what hath a man more precious wherin to suffer? So that S. *Hierome* writing to *Eustochium* (who had shut-vp herself in the famous Monasterie of the Cittie of *Bethleem*) sayd both sagely and truly: Our Lord hath deliuered thee from the cares of this world, that forsaking the strawes and brickes of *Ægypt*, thou mayst follow *Moyses* in the Desert, and enter into the Land of Promise. Let no-bodie hinder thee, neither mother nor sister, nor cosin nor brother; and if they attempt to hinder thee, let them feare the scourges of *Pharao*, who, because he would not let the people of God goe to worship God, suffered those things, which are written. But God is not only quick in punishing those that doe oppose, but much more readie to assist the Religious themselues, and to bring them out with a powerful hand and a mightie arme; and if neede be, he diuides the sea before them, he dries-vp the waues, and breaking through al impediments, he brings them out of *Aegypt*, singing, that is, ioyful, and with a light hart, and giuing thanks to him, *that cast the horse and rider into the sea.* This is that ioyful Canticle, which S. *Bernard* describeth, speaking to his Brethren in these words: Reflect vpon that, which your selues haue experienced in the victorie, wherin your fayth hath ouercome the world; in the going-out of the lake of miserie, and of the dregs of dirt, you haue also sung a new Canticle to our Lord, who hath wrought wonders. Againe, when he first gaue you to settle your feet vpon the rock, and directed your steps, I imagine, that then also for the newnes of life bestowed vpon you, a new Canticle was put into your mouth, *a Song vnto our Lord.*

S. *Hierome Ep.* 22.

S. *Bernard serm.* 3. *in Cant.*

5. S. *Gregorie* discoursing of the Plagues of *Aegypt*, and the Benefits bestowed vpon the Children of *Israel*, doth particularly ponder, that the *Aegyptians* were punished with a multitude of flyes, the Children of *Israel* rewarded with the Rest of the *Sabbath*; because, *sayth he*, the people, which followeth God, receaueth a *Sabbath*, that is, tranquillitie of minde, not to be wearied anie more in this life, with the motions of carnal desires. But *Aegypt* being a figure of this world, is punished with flyes; for a flye is an insolent and vnquiet thing; which what else doth it signifye, but the intemperate cares of the self-same desires of our flesh?

S. *Greg.* 18. *mor. c.* 25.

6. When the Children of *Israel* were gone out of *Aegypt*, there remayned two things: A Desert, and the Land of Promise. Both signifye Religion; the Desert, the beginnings; the

the Land of Promise, the proceedings and perfection thereof, when a Soule cultiuated and manured by Rule and order, enioyeth with time the plentiful fruit of so happie a course. Religion is a Desert, because it seuers a man from companie and conuersation with Secular people, and withdrawes him from al worldlie businesses, leading him into a place, where the trouble and noyse of this turbulent world is not so much as heard of. *These be the Deserts, which those Consuls of the earth* (of whome *Iob* speaketh) *doe build for themselues*; which S. *Gregorie* construeth to be nothing else, but to expel the turbulencie of earthlie desires from the closet of our hart, & ayming only at our eternal Countrie, to pant with loue of that inward quiet. But what comfort, what ioy doth a man find in this Desert, howsoeuer in outward shew it seeme vncouth and distastful? For as, when the Iewes suffered thirst, the verie rocks furnished them with water; and when the waters fel to be bitter, they presently turned to be sweet by putting a peece of wood into them; so whatsoeuer difficultie or trouble may occurre in a Religious life, it vanisheth instantly, a man knowes not how, and is so tempered and seasoned by the power of God, that it is not felt; insomuch as fasting, and watching, and (that which is more hard then al this) the continual striuing to breake our owne wil, and whatsoeuer belongs to Religious discipline (which when a man lookes afarre-of vpon it, seemes so harsh and heauie, that the verie sight of it doth make people afrayd) when we come to act, it proues pleasant and delightful; and no labour is so hard, nor so much aboue the strayne of humane strength, but, by the grace and help of God, it becomes easie and facil, and, as the Apostle speaketh, *we can doe al things in him, that comforteth vs.*

Religion a Desert. *Iob* 3. 14. *S. Greg.* 4. *Mor.* 28. *Exod* 17 6. *Exod.* 15. 25. *Philip* 4. 13.

7. And the Diuine bountie & goodnes is not contented barely to wipe away the bitternes of this state, but seasons it moreouer with a great deale of sweetnes, in seueral kindes, very proper and peculiar vnto it, figured also in that, which hapned to the people of *Israël*. For God sent them quayles, without anie labour of theirs, brought vnto them with a blast of winde, in such infinit numbers, that al the countrie round-about was ful of them; and, that which is more wonderful, he rayned *Manna* from heauen, a food made by the hands of Angels. This doth apparently set before our eyes the heauenlie daynties, wherewith the soules, which forsaking *Aegypt* haue betaken themselues sincerely to the seruice of God, are refreshed and fatned. For as that ancient *Manna* had this qualitie, that in itself alone it had the right sauour of al kinds of meat or sawce a man could think of: so the spiritual delicacies, which Religion affordeth, doe not only goe beyond the sweetnes of al earthlie things, but containe in a more plentiful and more eminent degree al that in matter of daynties is to be found vpon earth; and as a man, that hath drunk an excellent cup of wine, lifteth not to drink water, nor anie other lickour of a sowrer grape: so Religious people are so satisfyed with this heauenlie food, that they desire no other, and experience in their owne soules that, which the Prophet sayd of himself: *He that replenisheth thy desire with good things.*

The spiritual dainties, which are in Religion. *Num.* 11. 31. *Exod.* 16. *Sap.* 16. 20. *Psal.* 102 5.

8. Besides these daynties and sweet-meates, with which God is continually feeding Religious people, he hath a particular prouidence ouer them, to leade them and direct them in their iourney with a great deale of care and loue, defending, protecting, and preseruing them in al their trauels, and, as it is sayd of the Children of *Israel*, *guiding them by a clowde in the day, and al the night by the light of fire*: which is to say, he tempereth the scorching heates of this life, and remoueth the darknes, carrying as it were a canopie ouer them against the heat of the sunne, and in the night-time going before them with a light in his hand, to preuent the incommodities and dangers, that might come vpon them.

The prouidence of God ouer Religious people.

9. We haue also our *Moyses* among vs, to wit, the gouernours and Superiours, whome God hath placed as his vice-gerents ouer vs, which is a benefit ful of comfort, in regard they declare vnto vs, what is the wil of God; they deliuer his commands, they are mediatours betwixt God and vs, and continually pray for vs; and when we are asleepe, or at our recreations, they watch in our behalf vpon the hil, and earnestly deale our busines in presence of the Diuine Maiestie. And notwithstanding (as anciently the Children of *Israel*) we want not enemies to confront vs in this our iourney, to wit, temptations, rising either from the in-bred corruption of our natnre, or from the malicious hatred of our sworne enemie the Diuel; which, if we were alone and were to fight it out by ourselues, were certainly a feareful thing; yet by the help of God, who alwaies assisteth vs, and directeth vs in al our wayes, nothing is more easie, then to goe through al, with great encrease of glorie, and much greater reward. For by his assistance and by his strength, that which was written of the people of the Iewes, hapneth also to Religious people: *One pursues a thousand, and two put to*

The benefit of Superiours. Enemies in Religion. *Deut.* 32. 30.

Ifa. 6. *flight ten thousand*; the enemie's walles and ſtrongeſt works fal downe at a fillie blaſt; and though whole armies ruſh in vpon vs, we beate them downe, and diſcomfit them, by only holding vp our hands to heauen. Exod. 17. 11.

10. But where be theſe benefits to be found? where be theſe delicacies and delights? who be the men, vpon whome they are beſtowed? They are not to be found (as I ſayd before) but in the Deſert; they are not beſtowed but vpon them, that haue wholy and vtterly departed out of *Aegypt*. Wherefore in thoſe dayes alſo the *Manna*, which was a figure of that, which heer we ſpeake of, did not come downe from heauen, before the meale fayled them, which they had brought out of *Aegypt* with them, and ceaſed againe to fal ſo ſoone, as going out of the Deſert they began to taſte of the fruits of the earth. Whereby we vnderſtand, that no bodie can taſte of this Diuine ſweetnes, but he, that doth wholy and entirely withdraw himſelf from the world and al worldlie things. Whervpon S. *Gregorie* ſayth, that this ſweet foode, which falleth from aboue, is called *Manhu*; as who ſhould ſay: *What is this?* Beeauſe, when a ſoule is entangled in inferiour thoughts, it admireth that, which is repreſented vnto it from aboue, as a thing vnwonted. S. *Greg* 27. *mor. c.* 13.

11. But if the Deſert abound with ſo much heauenlie comfort, what shal we think of the Land of Promiſe, which is the end of our iourney, & the reward of our labour ſome trauels? Heer doubtles we shal finde farre more ſolidly and plentifully al that, which did ſet ſo sharp an edge vpon the minds of the Iewes, when the promiſe was made vnto them, *a fertile ſoyle, ſtore of freſh ſprings and running waters abundance of wheate and barley, of wines, figs, and olines, and al kind of fruits, a land flowing with milk and honie*; and if from theſe groſſe and earthlie figures, wherin the myſteries of our ſoule are deliuered vnto vs, we aſcend to the ſpiritual vnderſtanding, which is hidden vnder them, we shal eaſily fal vpon the happines, which is in Religion, though we may better know, what it is, by experience and by tryal of it, then we can by hearing or reading vnderſtand it. Religion the Land of Promiſe.

12. Hauing therefore diſcourſed in the precedent Bookes, of the Commodities, and of the Excellencie and dignitie of a Religious life, in this third Booke we wil declare the Pleaſure, which is found in following it, that euerie bodie may ſee, that al kind of happines and perfection attends vpon it, as I propoſed in the beginning. And we haue ſome more reaſon to enlarge ourſelues in this ſubiect of the ſweetnes of a Religious ſtate, becauſe it is generally leſſe knowne; and Secular people hardly beleeue, there is anie pleaſure at al in it. They wil eaſily grant, that a Religious life is an excellent courſe of life, and much more eaſily, that it is a profitable and ſafe kinde of courſe for a man's ſoule; but as for pleaſure, they vtterly denye, there is anie in it, and rather apprehend it to be extreme harsh, and ful of vnſufferable difficulties. This errour we haue heer vndertaken to confute, and to proue, that this State is not only a pleaſant ſtate, but much more pleaſant then a Secular life. S. *Iohn Chryſoſtome* doth often ſpend his eloquence in commendation of a Religious courſe, and particularly in one of his Homilies vpon S. *Matthew*, he preferreth the ſweetnes of it farre before the pleaſures of the world, and before al thoſe iollities, and paſtimes, and delights, which are eſteemed greateſt among them, before the curions ſights and pageants, which were wont to be repreſented publickly in the Theaters with great coſt and ſtate, and before whatſoeuer pleaſure can be thought of in intemperate luſt; ſhewing euidently, that there is as much difference betwixt theſe two kinds of life and delights, as betwixt the harmonie of the Quires of Angels ſweetly ſinging, and hogs in their filth confuſedly grunting. And beeauſe the cruel ſtinking *Pharao*, whome I paynted out before, doth neuer ceaſe to purſue & moleſt thoſe, that flye from the feruitude of the world into the Deſert of Religion, either by himſelf or by his followers, armed with weapons of his owne forging, we wil diſ-arme him and them, and take away al the weapons we can from them, and ſhew, that the deceitpful reaſons and fallacies, with which they are wont to labour to peruert mens iudgements, are of no force or ſoliditie; to the end, that drowning our enemies againe in the *Red ſea*, al deuout ſoules, that either purpoſe to get out of *Aegypt*, or haue alreadie got looſe, and forſaken it, and arriued in the Deſert and this happie Land of Promiſe, may enioy the pleaſures therof with more ſatisfaction of minde, and more ſetled aſſurance. S. *Iohn Chryſoſtome Homil.* 69. *in Matth.*

THE

THE THIRD BOOKE,
OF THE HAPPINES OF A RELIGIOVS STATE.

That the pleaſures of the Mind are farre greater, then the pleaſures of the Bodie.

CHAP. I.

AS in the precedent Booke, to proue the excellencie of a Religious State, we firſt ſearched and ſetled, wherin true Honour and Excellencie did conſiſt; ſo heer we muſt lay the like foundation, and conſider, what is true Pleaſure, wherof we are to treate. For manie, and perhaps I may ſay moſt men, know no pleaſure, but that, which is the obiect of their taſt, or touching, or other ſenſes; and conſequently make account, that indeed there is no other, or at leaſt, that theſe are the principal, and moſt to be ſtood vpon. A perſwaſion befitting rather beaſts then men. For they ſpeake and paſſe their iudgement of things, as if they had not a reaſonable Soule, but a bodie only. If they did reflect, that they are reaſonable creatures, and haue a Soule and vnderſtanding in them, they would conceaue alſo, as the truth is, that their Soule ſo farre ſurpaſſing the other part of them, which is their bodie, hath alſo functions and pleaſures proper vnto it.

It is a beaſtlie perſwaſion, to eſteeme moſt of the pleaſures of the bodie.

2 *Ariſtotle*, though he were a Heathen, and wanted the light of Fayth, which by the grace of God we haue, was of a farre other opinion; and in his Seauenth Booke of *Morals* writeth much more aduiſedly to this purpoſe, that "al men by inſtinct of Nature deſire pleaſure, becauſe al haue, as it were, a "ſparke of Diuinitie inſtilled into them, which inclineth them to that, which is beſt. But becauſe the pleaſures of the bodie are moſt knowne, and euerie bodie hath a natural inclination vnto them, they haue in a manner engroſſed the name and title of Pleaſure to themſelues, as it were, by hereditarie preſcription; inſomuch that manie are perſwaded, that no other thing

Ariſtot. 7. Eth. c. 13.

Idem lib. 10. c. 3. 4. 5. 6. can be delightful. And in his Tenth Booke he sayth, that dishonest and filthie pleasure is not properly and absolutly to be called Pleasure, because no man takes it for such, but they that are intemperate. That is to be taken for true pleasure, which an honest and vertuous man accounteth pleasure; for such an one is the rule of al the actions and pleasures of men; and that is only true pleasure, which is an honest man's delight. That others finde pleasure in other things, comes by corruption; and consequently those things are not absolutly in al respects pleasant, but to them only, that are accordingly disposed. For as when children take a fancie to a thing and loue it, they think for the present, that it is the excellentest thing that can be; and yet when they come to be men, they make no account at al of it; so good people take delight in some things, and wicked people in others; but they only leane to the pleasures of the bodie, that haue not the right tast of sound and vncorrupted pleasure.

S. Tho 1. 2. q 13. art. 4. 3 Al this is *Aristotle's* discourse; and *S. Thomas* enlarging himself vpon the same ground, sayth, that Pleasure requires three things: first, some thing that is good, which may be conioyned; secondly, the thing, to which it is ioyned; and thirdly, the coniunction itself; and the more perfect these three things be, the greater the pleasure must necessarily also be. Now certainly a spiritual good is greater then the good of the bodie; and man naturally loues it more, and makes more account of it, as we may plainly see, because there is no man, that wil not rather choose to want the sight of his eyes, then the light of his minde, and to be as a beast or a mad man. Besides that, the knowledge of the minde is more noble and more searching, then that which we haue by Sense, as euerie bodie knowes. And as for the coniunction, it is certainly more inward, more firme, and more perfect; more inward, because Sense reacheth no further, then the outward accidents, and rests in the tast, and colour, and such like; a man's vnderstanding searcheth and diueth into the Essence and substance of euerie thing; It is more perfect, because Sense cannot be ioyned with the obiect without motion, which is an imperfect action; and therefore also no sensible pleasure can be al of it togeather, but part of it must passe away, that the remaynder may haue place; the pleasures of the minde are without motion, al wholy togeather, as the things themselues are in our minde, when we think of them; Finally it is more firme and permanent, because the things, in which the bodie taketh pleasure, are corruptible, and quickly gone, as meate, and drink, and such like; but spiritual goods remayne for euer, and waste not with age or handling.

Three things concurre in pleasure.

Pleasures of the bodie momentarie.

4. Following this ground therefore of *S. Thomas*, the pleasures of the bodie, compared with the pleasures of the minde, are apparently the worse of the two. First, because the ground of bodilie pleasure, is euer a creature; and consequently, it is subiect to whatsoeuer accident and miserie can be incident to creatures; wherof it is none of the least, that euerie creature doth naturally runne poast to an end, and in time endeth; and is euer falling away betwixt our fingars, when we most thinke to vse and enioy it; and whatsoeuer sweetnes can be imagined in a creature, is much of the nature of time, now a peece and then a peece, heer a bit and there a bit, and slideth away as fast as time itself, then which nothing can be swifter. *S. Augustin* expresseth it liuely in one of his Sermons in these words: Where are the delights, for which you walk your

S. Augustin serm. 15. de v. Ap.

wicked

wicked wayes? I doe not aske, where they wil be, when this life is past; but where are they now? This day hath thrust out yesterday; to morrow wil thrust out the day, in which now we are. What therefore of al that, which you loue, doth not poast, yea fly away from you? What part of it doth not euen slip out of our hands, before we haue it? For we cannot stop so much as one howre of the day, wherin we are. The first howre is thrust out by the second, the second by the third; so that of this one howre, which is present, nothing indeed is present, but euerie part and euerie moment of it is stil running away from vs. Thus spake *S. Augustin.*

and base.

5. Secondly, the matter of al corporal delights is base. For take a dish of meate, that is wel dressed and excellently seasoned, or anie such thing; what is there in it, that can be sayd to be worthie of a man's employment? Al things of this nature are base and earthlie; and consequently the delight, which they yeald, is neuer a whit better. *S. Bernard* obseruing it, sayth thus: The comfort of this world is base and nothing worth, and, which is more to be feared, a hindrance to true and holesome comfort. Besides that, most commonly there is some kind of vnseemelines, more or lesse, in the pleasures of the bodie; and it is easie to be seen, because (if we marke) they that are anie thing temperate, dissemble the desire, which they haue of them, euen in things, which are otherwise necessarie; an euident signe euen in Nature itself, that it is but an vnworthie thing for man to place his affection vpon them; whereas in the solaces of the minde it is quite contrarie; for naturally they quicken and cleare it vp, and are an honour vnto it. Whervpon *S. Augustin* sayth very wel, that happie is the Soule, which is taken with those delights; for it is not stayned with anie vncleannes in them, but cleansed with the clearenes of truth.

S. Bernard serm. 4. in Vig. Nat.

S. Augustin serm. de Verb. Dom.

They are but salues for our griefes.

6. If we look yet further into the nature and vse of corporal delights, we shal finde, that the reason, why they are so pleasing & so much desired, is, because they serue vs as a salue & solace of the griefes whervnto we are subiect. Which *Aristotle* also noteth, commending the studie of Philosophie as wonderful delightful, in regard of the permanencie and puritie, which it hath; because it is not mingled with those sorrowes, which accompanie the delights of sense in eating, and drinking, and the like; the pleasure wherof lasteth no longer, then we suffer hunger or thirst. *S. Bernard* sayth the same thing in farre better tearmes and more fully, shewing that al these things are not indeed to be called good, but lesser euils; and that, which we seeke in them, is but to exchange heauier irons into lighter. Thou desirest to eate (sayth the Saint) because hunger molests thee; both are troublesome; but because hunger is more troublesome, thou thinkest it is no trouble to eate. But marke, when thy hunger is past, if it be not more trouble to eate, then to abstaine. This is the nature of al things vnder the Sunne; there is nothing truly delightful in them, but a man is alwaies desirous to passe from one thing to another, that by often change he may ease himself of the trouble, which he findeth in both; as if a bodie should leape out of the water into the fire, and out of the fire into the water againe, being able to endure neither. For the remedie of euerie trouble, is the beginning of another trouble.

Aristot. 10. Eth. c. 6. & 7.

S. Bernard ser. de prim. med. & nouiss.

DDD 7. Moreouer

Mingled with sorrowes.

7. Moreouer, to giue euerie thing his due, there is none of al these corporal delights intirely and absolutely delightful, but they are stil coupled with manie inconueniences and sorrowes, and by that meanes they leese a great part of their sauour, as a smal quantitie of wine mingled with a great deale of water. Euerie one doth finde this to be so true by his owne daylie experience in al things, that we shal not neede to seeke farther proofe of it. Yet *S. Basil* expresseth it naturally in these words: *S. Basil in Psal. 33.*

„ There is more trouble then pleasure in
„ the delights of the bodie. Barrennes, and widdowhood, and iealousie wayte
„ vpon marriage; vnfruitfulnes vpon husbandrie; shipwrack vpon marchan-
„ ding; deceiptful practises vpon wealth; the pleasures themselues, the saturitie,
Iob. 30.7. the continual vse of them, bring diseases and manie distempers. *S. Gregorie*
S. Greg. 20. Mor. c.16. applieth to this purpose that, which is spoken in holie *Iob* of worldlie people: *They that reioyced in the midst of these things, and made account, that vnder thornes were riches.* Their ioy (sayth *S. Gregorie*) is most commonly mingled with vexation; and they are beaten with the things themselues, wherof they are
„ proude. For they cannot without trouble and care either get temporal things,
„ which they haue not; or conserue those, which they haue gotten. To aspire
„ therefore to honour aboue their equals, alwayes to be working some mis-
„ chief, and yet to watch with feare that they may not haue the name of being
„ wicked, certainly doth miserably gal them; but ouercome with the loue of
„ temporal things, they feele not the sting. They reioyce therefore vnder thornes;
„ they, I say, that reioyce in temporal things; and yet not being able to dispense
„ them without vexation, the care, which presseth them, galleth them. They re-
„ mayne vnder thornes, and they esteeme it a pleasure, because they suffer much
„ hardnes for the loue of this life; and yet entangled in the affection of their
ouer-greedie desire, they account the verie trouble of their suffering a pleasure.
And much more sayth *S. Gregorie* to the same effect, and particularly he likeneth these kind of people to the Children of *Israel*, that sighed after their pots
„ of *Aegypt*, and their pompions, and onyons, and chibols. For what is signi-
„ fyed, *sayth he*, by the flesh-pots of *Ægypt*, but the carnal works of this life,
„ which boyle in the sorrowes of tribulation, as in the fire? What are pompions
„ but earthlie sweetnes? What is figured by the onyons and chibols (which
„ most commonly make them weepe that eate them) but the difficulties of this
„ present life, which the louers of it passe not without lamenting, and yet loue it
„ euen with teares. Forsaking therefore the *Manna*, they desired onyons and
„ chibols with their flesh and pompions; because wicked minds contemne the
„ sweet guifts, which they may haue by grace in quiet; and for their carnal plea-
„ sures couet the laboursome iournies of this life, though they be ful of teares;
„ they refuse to haue that, wherewith they may reioyce spiritually, and desire
„ greedily that, wherewith they must lamẽt carnally. *Iob* therefore with his truth-
„ telling voice doth reprehend their follie, in that out of an erroneous iudgement
„ they preferre trouble before tranquillitie, harsh things before the milde, sharp
„ before the sweet, tẽporal before the eternal, things deceiptful before those that
„ be assured. Thus speaketh *S. Gregorie*, not only truly, as he doth alwaies, but also eloquently; whervnto we may adde another reason out of *S. Bernard*, to wit, that if our mind be sensible of the pleasures of the bodie, to which it is vnited; how much more sensible must it needes be of the pleasures, which properly belong

belong vnto itſelf, and are more neerly and truly in it? For as a man doth reliſh the buſines after another faſhion, when his horſe feedes vpon his hey, and when himſelf feedes vpon meate, that is conuenient for him; ſo it fareth with our ſoule in regarde of our bodie, which is but, as it were, the beaſt, which carrieth it. Doe not therefore miſtake (ſaith *S. Bernard*) doe not deceaue thy ſelf ſo farre, as to think, that thy Soule is not more delighted with ſpiritual then with corporal things. *S. Bernard ſerm. Ecce nos.*

8. Another conſideration to proue this, which we are ſaying, is, that the more ſutable a thing is to our nature, it is alſo the more pleaſing and delightful. For ſo we ſee, that men take delight in one kind of foode, beaſts in another; and among beaſts ſome feede vpon fleſh, others vpon corne, others graze; and euerie kind of thing findes moſt contentment in that, which agreeth beſt with the nature, which it hath. The nature of man is to be gouerned by reaſon; for though he haue alſo ſenſe, and motion, and the facultie of growing, yet theſe belong to the inferiour part of him; and are not proper to him alone, but common betwixt him and beaſts. Reaſon and vnderſtanding is that, which is peoper to Man, and belongeth ſo neare to the perfection and conſtitution of his nature, that without it he were not a man, but a beaſt; and conſequently the delights, which are conformable to reaſon, and grounded in it, are both more ſutable to human nature, and for the ſame cauſe more pleaſing; ſpecially, if we conſider withal (as we may iuſtly) that among the ſeueral qualities and powers, that are in man, the higher and the more noble the power is, it is alſo the more pregnant and effectual in operation; ſo that Reaſon being farre more noble then Senſe, it exerciſeth the functions belonging to reaſon with more perfection and vigour, then Senſe can performe the offices belonging to Senſe; and as it is more pregnant in al other operations, ſo it is more apt to take delight in the things, which are agreable vnto it. Spiritual delights proper to man.

9. Finally, whenſoeuer we compare theſe delights togeather, that, which *S. Gregorie* ſayth excellently wel of them, is very important to be conſidered. The difference, *ſayth he*, betwixt the delights of the bodie, and of the minde, is this: The delights of the bodie, when we haue them not, breed a burning deſire to haue them; and when we take greedily of them, preſently through ſatietie they breed a loathing in him, that takes them. Contrariwiſe ſpiritual delights, when we haue them not, are tedious; when we haue them, they proue deſireful; and he that feedes vpon them, hungers after them the more, by how much he feedes vpon them with the greedier appetite. In corporal delights, the deſire is pleaſing, the trial diſtaſtful; In ſpiritual delights, the deſire is cold and contemptible, the trial delightful. In the firſt, deſire breedeth ſaturitie, ſaturitie loathſomnes; in the ſecond, deſire brings ſaturitie, ſaturitie againe whetteth our deſire of them. For ſpiritual delights encreaſe a deſire in our hart, while they fil it; becauſe the more we perceaue the right ſauour of them, the more knowledge we haue of that, which we muſt needs loue more eagerly; and therefore we cannot loue them, when we haue them not, becauſe we cannot know the true reliſh of them. Nothing can expreſſe more perfectly the difference, which is betwixt the delights of the bodie and of the minde, then that, which *S. Gregorie* heer ſayth of them; The difference betwixt corporal and ſpiritual delights. *S. Gregorius Hom. 30. in Euang.*

to wit, that the vſe of corporal pleaſures breeds a loathing of them; but ſpiritual delights contrariwiſe the more eagerly we feed vpon them, the more they winne our affection to them. For as we cannot diſcerne, which is good wine, and which is bad, better, then by taſting it, and our taſt is in fine the beſt iudge of it; ſo by duly weighing the ioy, which is true and ſolid, and alſo that, which is falſe and deceiptful, and comparing them togeather, we ſhal be beſt able to diſcouer, how that in the one there is nothing but emptines and falſhood, and in the other, truth and ſoliditie euen beyond expectation, and abundantly enough to delight vs more and more without end.

10. It is therefore ſufficiently apparent both by reaſon and authoritie of the holie Fathers, that the pleaſures of the Mind are the principal and the chiefeſt of al other pleaſures; yet becauſe manie are iealous of that which the holie Fathers ſay, and think that they goe further, and ſpeake in a more ſublime ſtrayne, then humane infirmitie can ordinarily beare, I wil conclude this Chapter with a diſcourſe of *Plato* (beſides that, which I ſayd before out of *Ariſtotle*) where he clearly proueth this, wherof we are ſpeaking. As hunger and thirſt (*ſayth he*) are an emptines of the bodie, ſo ignorance & imprudence are emptineſſes of the mind; and as our bodie is filled, when we take corporal ſuſtenance, ſo our mind with ſcience and knowledge. Which repletion therefore is the more ſolid? Is it not that, which is made by things, which in themſelues are more truly ſolid? And which things are to be accounted ſuch, and of a more pure ſubſtance, meate and drinke, victuals, and whatſoeuer ſuſtenance, or perſwaſions of truth, knowledge, and, in a word, al kind of vertue? Certainly we muſt needs confeſſe, that that is moſt ſolidly and moſt truly exiſtent, which doth alwaies abide in an immortal and vnchangeable thing, and which itſelf alſo is immortal and vnchangeable (ſuch as is the eſſence of euerie thing, and conſequently alſo the knowledge of it) rather then that, which is in a changeable thing, and itſelf is changeable; ſuch as are al things pertayning to the œconomie of the bodie. Wherefore if it be a delightful thing to be filled with that, which is ſutable to our nature, the more ſolid the things be, and the more truly we are filled with them, the more true and more natural pleaſure it muſt needs be, which we enioy by them. And thus it fareth with vs, when our mind is filled. Wherefore people, that are voide of vertue, and giuen to their bellie and the like, neuer taſt the leaſt parcel of true and ſolid pleaſure; but as beaſts haue their eyes alwaies vpon the ground, and ſpend their time in doing homage to their bellies; and fight with one another with their heeles, and with their hornes, and with their nayles, for thoſe baſe and abiect things. And ſo the pleaſures, which they follow, muſt needes be mingled with manie ſorrowes, and are indeede but pictures and ſhadowes of true pleaſure, as the Poet *Steſichorus* ſayd of the *Troians*; that, not knowing at al the true *Helene*, they fought only for the imagination of her. Al this is *Plato* his diſcourſe.

Plato in Dial. de Rep.

That true content of mind is only in God.

CHAP. II.

HAuing proued, that true contentment is only to be had in the pleasures of the Mind, it remaineth to consider, wherein the Mind itself doth take most contentment, which is easie for a Christian to determine, and not farre to seeke; because euerie Christian knoweth, and doth most certainly belieue, that GOD alone is the true food and true life of a Soule. And it is so cleare and euident besides, that the best learned Philosophers among the Heathens could think no other. For *Aristotle* discoursing at large of Beatitude, wherin al pleasures are in their height, concludeth at last, that it consisteth in the knowledge and contemplation of GOD, and of Minds (as he calles them) abstracted from the bodie, and free from al composition; in regard that the function of the Vnderstanding in Man is the sweetest and pleasantest of al others, and compleat within itself, and so farre from standing in need of anie outward thing, that they rather hinder a man, that desires to giue himself to Contemplation. And wheras we must necessarily acknowledge, that God and those spiritual Intelligences are alwaies in some action or other (for no man can think that they are so dul as to be idle, and, as it were, asleepe) the noblest action, which we can giue them, is to be alwaies in perpetual Contemplation; and consequently men vpon earth, that giue themselues to such a kind of life, take the perfectest course, that can be thought of, and most like to God. This is the discourse of a man, that wanted the light of the Euangelical truth; what therefore ought we to think or say in this busines?

God is the true life and delight of a Soule. *Arist* 10. *Eth.* c 7. & 8.

2. Let vs heare a Christian Philosopher speake. *S. Augustin* beholding this thing farre more clearly and more particularly in the light, then *Aristotle* could doe in the dark, sayth thus: O soule! seeke thy owne good. For one thing is good for one, an other for another; and euerie creature hath a good by itself, the good of the integritie belonging vnto it, the good of the perfection, which is natural vnto it, and there is a great deale of difference in that, which is necessarie for the perfection of euerie thing. Seeke thy owne good. *Nobodie is good, but* GOD *alone*, the Soueraigne Good; that is thy good. What doth he want, that hath the Soueraigne Good for his good? There be inferiour goods, which are good to this thing, and that thing. What is the good of a beast, but to fil his bellie, to want nothing, to sleepe, to play, to liue, to be in health, to attend to generation? Dost thou seek such a good? Co-heyre of Christ, wherin dost thou reioyce? in that thou art a companion to beasts? Rayse thy hope to the Good of al goods. Where you see *S. Augustin* layes the likenes of a beast to them, that like beasts know no other good, no other delight, but that, which is confined within the bounds of Sense; and giueth vs to vnderstand moreouer, that such a kind of perswasion is so much the more vnworthie;

S. *August. in Psal.* 102. *Luc.* 18. 19.

vnworthie; becauſe al men are created with a poſſibilitie to be *Heyres of God, and Co-heyres of Chriſt*, that is, ſuch as may be ſtiled, and truly be, the ſonnes of God. He ſayth alſo, that meate, & drink, and ſleepe, and other more vnworthie things, are not the good of a Soule, but only God; becauſe that is the good of euerie thing, as he ſayth, by which the thing is perfected & made better; whereas theſe inferiour things doe not perfect a Soule, but rather make it worſe; becauſe they draw it frō higher things, for which it was created, & make it ſtoop to baſe and earthlie things, by the loue and vſe wherof it comes to be defiled.

God as the ſoueraigne Happines, is the End of Man.

3. Another ground of that, of which we are ſpeaking, is this. It is certain, and it cānot be denyed, that as al other creatures haue their appointed ends, ſo Man much more hath ſome end prefixed, at which he doth ayme; otherwiſe ſo excellent a nature, as his is, ſhould want ſo great a good, of which al other goods doe in a manner depend. This end of Human nature, at which al doe ayme, is Happines; and no other Happines, but GOD; which *S. Thomas* proueth, becauſe the good, wherin we place our happines, muſt be ſo great a good, that it may fil our deſire, & abſolutely ſatisfye it to the ful. For it cannot be ſayd to be our laſt end, if there remayne anie thing further to be deſired. Seing therefore the obiect of the wil of Man is al Good, & the obiect of his reaſon & vnderſtāding al Truth, nothing can abſolutely ſatisfye two Powers ſo capacious, but an vniuerſal Entitie, which alſo is an vniuerſal Good, which cānot be found among creatures, becauſe the nature and goodnes of al creatures is limited and confined; GOD therefore is the onlie felicitie of man, in whom al things are infinit.

S. Thom. 1. 2. q. 1. a. 8.

S. Auguſt. de Morib. Eccleſ. c. 1.

4. *S. Auguſtin* hath a learned and elaborate diſcourſe to the ſame effect in the Booke, which he wrote of *the Manners of the Church*. He ſayth, that euerie bodie doth naturally deſire to be happie; & that three things are required to Happines. Firſt, that the thing, wherin we place our happines, be the beſt, ſecōdly, that we loue it; thirdly, that we poſſeſſe it. For a man, that deſireth that, which he cannot compaſſe, is vexed with it; a man that cōpaſſeth that, which is not to be deſired, is deceaued in the buſines; and he that deſireth not that, which is to be ſought after, is in an il diſpoſition. Then he ſayth further, that that which is beſt for man, cānot be worſe or leſſe then man himſelf, for whoſoeuer ſeekes after that, which is worſe then himſelf, makes himſelf worſe then he was before; therefore that only can be beſt for man, which is better & more excellent then man, and withal that he be able ſo to compaſſe it, as not to leeſe it againſt his wil; for if a man be not aſſured of the good, which he hath, the feare of leeſing it, takes away the happines, which he might haue in it. And conſequently Vertue and GOD, to whome by vertue we are conioyned, is our onlie Happines; if we attend vpon God, we are wel; if we comprehend him, we are happie. Theſe are truthes, which *S. Auguſtin* deliuers, and which no man can denye.

God and Vertue, onlie Happines of Man.

In our End is our onlie reſt.

5. The nature of the End or final Cauſe & But of euerie thing, is, that whatſoeuer hath an End prefixed, it can not be at quiet, til it haue obtayned the End; and when it hath obtayned it, there it muſt needes reſt; & the nearer it comes by degrees to the obtayning of the deſired End, the more pleaſure it takes, and the more it is at quiet; the further it is from the End, the worſe & more vnquiet it is. Wherefore as it is moſt certain, that then we ſhal haue perfect ioy and reſt, *when face to face we ſhal ſee God, as he is*; ſo it doth moſt certainly follow, that the nearer we approach to God in this life, the longer we conuerſe with him, the clear-

knowledge we haue of him, the more contentment of mind alſo we ſhal enioy; and this contentment is of the ſelf-ſame nature with that, which we ſhal haue in heauen; but only with this difference, that heer our ioy and contentment is ſmal, there it ſhal be infinitly great.

A compariſon betwixt pleaſures.

6. What ſhould I ſtand making large diſcourſes vpon a thing, which is euidēt? So farre as the nature of God doth excel the nature of whatſoeuer creature, ſo much difference is there betwixt the pleaſures of the bodie, and the delights of the mind. What is there in the dayntieſt fare that is, in the fayreſt gardens, in al the pleaſures of this life, that can be compared with God? Which is better, God who is Al-Good, or a peece of veale, or a partridge, or anie dayntie diſh? If the difference be ſo great, that it is a ſhame to make ſuch a cōpariſon, it muſt neceſſarily follow, that the delight, which riſeth by enioying this Good, taſted & ſauoured in the palate of the Soule, is incomparably greater, then thoſe other delights of the bodie; which S. *Bernard* expreſſeth in theſe words: *Certainly that only is true contentment, which is taken in the Creatour, and not in the creature; the contentmēt, which once poſſeſſed, no man can take from thee, and in compariſon wherof al other mirth is ſadnes; al pleaſure, ſorrow; al ſweetnes, bitter; al beautie, il-fauoured; finally al that breedes delight, is troubleſome.*

S. Bernard Ep. 114.

Al that is good in creatures, is infinitly more in God.

7. I wil conclude with one thing more, which indeed is the ground of al, and therefore I will lay it downe as plaine as I can, but yet briefly. In creatures there is nothing, which can be truly ſayd to be, no ſparke of goodnes, no degree of beautie, which is not farre more abundāt & more perfectly in God. Firſt, becauſe the nature of God is infinit; and if anie thing were wanting in it, it were not infinit; ſecōdly, whatſoeuer creatures haue in them, they haue it frō God; & no man can giue another that which he hath not himſelf; whervpon S. *Bernard* maketh this reflection: *In the Sunne thou admireſt the light; in a flower, beautie; in bread, the ſauour; in the earth, the fertilnes of it. Al theſe things haue their being from God; & no doubt but he hath reſerued to himſelf farre more, then he hath beſtowed vpon creatures.* Which being moſt true, it doth neceſſarily follow, that whoſoeuer hath God, hath in him al other things; & cōſequently the verie ſelfſame delight, which he ſhould haue taken in other things, if he had enioyed them ſeuerally, he enioyeth it in God in a farre greater meaſure & more eleuated. For as a man, that hath a peece of coyne in gold, hath the value of manie peeces of ſiluer, as much as if he had the ſeueral peeces of ſiluer thēſelues, & ſo much the more cōmodiouſly, becauſe he is rid of the trouble, which the weight and bulk of ſiluer brings with it, ſo he that is vnited with God, hath the verie marrow or quinteſſence, as I may cal it, of al that goodnes, which, diſperſed in this great varietie of the things of this world, cannot chooſe but be mingled with manie incōmmodities & imperfections, incident to the penurious, and limited, and corporal nature of euerie thing; from which incommodities he, that hath them in God, is free.

S. Bernard Ser. 1 omn. ſanct.

S. Francis

8. Which is the reaſon, why S. *Francis*, as we reade of him, had alwaies this ſaying in his mouth: *My God, and al things*. A ſaying, which he was ſo wedded to, that he could almoſt think of nothing els, & oftentimes ſpent whole nights in this one Meditation. S. *Auguſtin* diſcourſing excellētly wel of it, ſpeaketh thus to God: What doe I loue, when I loue thee? Not the beautie of a bodie, not the comelines of time, not the brightnes of light ſo pleaſing to theſe my eyes, not the ſweet melodious ſounds of al ſorts of pleaſant ſongs, not the fragrāt ſauours of flowers or ointmēts, or delicate ſpices; not *māna* or honie; nor the limes, which

S. Aug. 10. Conf. 6.

„ fleſh doth ſo welcomely embrace. Theſe be not the things, which I loue, „ when I loue my God; and yet I loue a kind of light, and a kind of ſound, and „ a kind of ſauour, and a kind of food, and a kind of embracing, when I loue „ my God; the light, the ſound, the ſauour, the food, the embracing of my inward „ man, where that ſhineth to my ſoule, which no place is capable of; and where „ that ſoundeth, which time carrieth not away; and where I ſmel that, which „ the wind diſperſeth not; and where I taſt that, which eating diminiſheth not; „ and where that remayneth faſt vnto me, which no fulneſſe doth diuert me „ from. This is that, which I loue, when I loue my God. This is of *S. Auguſtin.*

9. Wherefore ſeing it is ſo euident by al theſe reaſons, which I haue curſorily pointed at, that God is the chiefeſt delight of euerie nature, that hath reaſon and vnderſtanding, euerie bodie muſt neceſſarily alſo ſee, how delightful a Religious courſe of life is, which is ſo wholy ſet vpon the enioying of God, and hath ſo manie eaſie meanes and wayes to enioy him. But it wil be yet more euident, when we ſhal haue diſcourſed of the ſeueral delights, which are very manie in it.

The firſt reaſon, why a Religious life is delightful; becauſe it is free from worldlie trouble.

CHAP. III.

AMong the manie pleaſures, which are in a Religious courſe of life (wherof I am now going to ſpeake) I may wel reckon in the firſt place, the freedome, which it enioyeth from the vexations and encombers, wherewith a ſecular life is peſtered. To conceaue the greatnes of this benefit, it were ſufficient to vnderſtand, that ſome ancient Philoſophers of no meane rank, were of opinion, that the Happines of man conſiſted in being free from payne and grief, and al kind of trouble. For thereby we may conclude, that it was alwayes held to be no ſmal good, to be free from al euil. But yet no man can throughly enter into the importance of it, vnleſſe he firſt vnderſtand, how infinit the miſeries and calamities of the world be, ſo grieuous, and ſo different, and ſo frequent, and obuious, that we may ſooner behold them with our eyes, then declare them by word of mouth; and in reſpect therof may iuſtly ſay, the world is another *Ægypt*, when (as we finde recorded in Exodus) there was not a houſe in it, which did not ring with moſt lamentable cryes at the death of their firſt-begotten. And though (as I ſayd) this be a thing, which we may ſooner ſee with our eyes, then learne by diſcourſe, yet manie of the ancient Fathers haue handled this point at large and very eloquently.

How happie it is, to be free frō paine.

The wōrld is another Aegypt for miſerie. *Exod.* 12.

2. In particular *S. Iohn Chryſoſtome*, to ſhew the happines of Virginitie, which he had vndertaken to commend, doth lay togeather ſo manie misfortunes of married people, that it is a horrour to reade them. For he proueth, that before

S. *Io. Chry. de Virg. c.* 57.

before their marriage, and when they marrie, and euer after, al is trouble and vexation, and ful of a world of miseries; and that, if they haue anie touch of delight, it is not comparable to their griefes; becauſe it is drowned in their preſent calamities, and in thoſe, that hang ouer their head for the future. The miſeries of married people.

3. S. *Gregorie Nyſſen* is ſo large in his diſcourſe of the ſelf-ſame miſeries, that (as he ſayth himſelf) it were matter enough to make a Tragedie. For not to repeate al that goes before, the paynes of child-bed are intollerable, becauſe not only the wombe of the mother is moſt pittifully torne in pieces, but the huſband, if he haue anie feeling, muſt needs be exceedingly grieued at it. When this is ouer, and the danger paſt togeather with the paine, and the child borne, which was ſo long deſired, the cauſes of lamenting are not leſſe, but greater. For then begins the care of bringing-vp the child, the continual feare leaſt it come by ſome miſchance (which chances al ages and ſtates are ſubiect vnto, but ſpecially the tender age of an infant) then they are iealous leaſt it catch a feuer, or fal into ſome other diſeaſe. Finally (ſayth he) « the miſeries, which come of marriage, are very manie: for children bring « ſorrow, when they are borne, and before they are borne, while they are a- « liue, and when they are dead. If a man haue cauſe to ioy in the number of « his children, he hath cauſe of ſorrow, becauſe he hath not wherewith to « maintaine them. Another perhaps hath laboured much to ſcrape a great deale « of wealth togeather, and hath not an heyre, to whome to leaue it. So that one « man's happines is another's misfortune, while neither of them would haue « that befal him, wherat he ſees an other tormented. This man's ſweet child is « dead, the other's liues deboiſht: both certainly are to be pittied, one grieuing « at the death, the other at the life, of their owne child. Who can number the di- « ſtempers, the troubles, the branglings, which riſe euerie foot betwixt them, « vpon true cauſes, and falſe ſuſpicions? This and much more to the like effect is « the diſcourſe of S. *Gregorie Nyſſen*, which almoſt word for word S. *Baſil* takes vp, and enlargeth himſelf in it with a great deale of Rhetorick in the Booke, which he wrote of true Virginitie. And S. *Hierome* no leſſe copiouſly and effectually repeates the ſame againſt *Iouinian*. S. *Greg. Nyſſ. lib. de Virg. c.* 3. S. *Baſil.* S. *Hierome.*

4. For my part, I am of opinion, that S. *Iohn Chryſoſtome* ſayd very truly of this world of miſeries, which married people are ſubiect vnto, that no man can conceaue the greatnes of them, vnleſſe he haue tryed them; and they that haue had the experience, be the onlie men, that truly find, that there is farre more ſorrow and bitternes in the delights, which people make account they ſhal haue, then pleaſure and contentment. Beſides that, it is to be obſerued as a certain truth, that both theſe and al other ſorrowes ſeeme much leſſe, when we only reade or imagine them, then when we feele them. For no grief can go ſo neare vs, when we imagine it afarre off, ſpecially if it concerne not ourſelues, as when we actually feele it in our owne perſon. S. *Io Chryſ. de Virg. c.* 17

5. Theſe therefore are the general miſeries common to al Secular people, and from which they, that liue moſt at eaſe, and meddle not with anie publick buſines at al, but attend only to the menaging of their owne priuate eſtate & bringing-vp of their children, which people commonly account a happie kind of life, are not exempt. But there be others, that labour & toyle in buſineſſes of the world like horſes. For what ſhal we ſay of the life of a Souldier, in the The troubles of the world.

Marchants. midſt of ſo manie dangers of life and limmes, and incommodities of wind and weather, heat and cold, and the like? Or of Marchants, that ſpending their whole time in thinking of their aduentures, in writing, and caſting-vp their ends togeather, take as much toyle as if they were day-labourers; and there is litle difference betwixt them, but that the one labours in the ſunne, the other in the ſhade; for as for care, and ſollicitude, and anxietie, and feare the marchant hath farre greater, ſtil taking thought, what may be come of his ſhip, whether it be caſt-away or no, whether the plentie of corne be like to pul downe the market, or leaſt ſome other miſchance of thouſands befal him, & ſweep al away in an howre, which he had ſo long ſweat for.

Ambitious people. 6. What ſhal I ſay againe of them that aſpire to preferrement? Doe they not bereaue themſelues altogeather of their libertie, and out of a greedie deſire of command ouer others (which God knowes whether they ſhal euer attaine vnto, or how long they may enioy it) make themſelues verie ſlaues in preſent to other mens humours, wayting vpon them like pages, and putting themſelues vpon a neceſſitie of obſeruing euerie turne of their head, & euerie change of their countenance? What doe they not endure by day, and what penſiue nights muſt they needs haue? What fire would they not runne-through to compaſſe their ends? And when they haue gotten that, which *S. Auguſt. Ep. 121.* they aymed at, they burne with a greater fire within them, and make *S. Auguſtin's* words good: Riches, and the ſhadowes of honour, and al other things " of like nature, wherin men think themſelues happie, being voyd of true " happines, what comfort can they bring, ſeing it is farre more honourable not " to ſtand in need of them, then to be eminent in them; and the feare of leeſing " them doth torment a man more, then the burning deſire did of getting them? " Which kind of miſerie *S. Paulinus* alſo expreſſeth excellently wel in a long Exhortation, which he wrote in verſe to *Licentius* a yong man, that followed the Court of *Rome* for preferrement-ſake, labouring to draw him from the world to the ſeruice of CHRIST; where among other things, he ſayth thus:

S. Paulin. Ep. ad Licent. vid. Ep. Aug. 36.

Vaine Rome, and powerful to deboish the ſtrong,
With diuers ſhapes ſollicites thee awry.

That which he ſayth of *Rome* in thoſe dayes, that it was powerful to deboiſh the ſtrong, that is, euen ſuch as might be grounded in vertue, and diuert them from the courſe therof, may be ſayd of al other places in the world. Then he ſhewes the vanitie and dangers of preferment:

Now hope to riſe, now feare to fal, doth throng
Thy hart. Stand ſure; 't is worſe to fal from high.

And who is there, that can ſtand ſure in ſo ſlipperie a place? who is there, that doth not rather ſtand very tickle? Wherefore he foretelles him alſo of the late repentance, which experience of ſuch things is wont to bring:

Too late, and then in vaine, thou wilt bewaile
Deceiptful hope, and wish to breake this iayle,
Which now thou buildſt.

For oftimes we ruſh into the ſnares and nets at vnawares, & afterwards would fayne breake out of them, and we cannot, vnleſſe we looke to ourſelues betimes. Wherefore hauing diſcourſed at large of the miſerie of ſuch a kind of life, he inuiteth him to the more eaſie and more happie ſeruice of Chriſt, in this manner:

Shake-of

Shake-of the yoak betimes; Chriſt's burden 's light;
His yoak is ſweet; his word is truth; his ſeruice,
Freedome; and to ſtoope to him, is, in right
Of ſonnes of God, to command ouer vice,
And proudeſt Lords and Kings &c.

And enlarging himſelf in the compariſon betweene theſe two liues, ſheweth how the ſeruice of God is true freedome, and the ſeruice of the world is verie ſlauerie, to which al ſuch are ſubiect, as (to vſe his phraſe) by

Frequenting Court
And Princelie pallaces,
And ſuffering Rome,
Make choice of miſeries.

Where, as you ſee, he tearmeth the liuing in Rome (*ſuffering Rome*) as a toyleſome & a troubleſome thing; a new manner of ſpeach, yet fitly expreſſing the matter he ſpeakes of; and yet more neatly, where he ſtileth them *voluntarily miſerable*, that leade ſuch a life; which is as much to ſay, as to be twice miſerable. For if a man ſuffer miſerie againſt his wil, yet he is ſound in his iudgemẽt, which is a great comfort, and not only a comfort, but oftentimes a remedie of his miſeries; but he, that loues the miſerie in which he is, doth not only erre in his iudgemẽt, which is of itſelf a great miſerie, but doth not ſo much as ſeek to auoid it, and conſequently there is no hope of remedie for him. People that chooſe to be miſerable.

7. A Religious life is free from al theſe euils, vexations, and miſeries, which are in themſelues ſo manie and ſo great, and perplexe people of this world ſo much, and teare their verie harts in peeces. How much this freedome from miſerie is to be eſteemed, may be partly vnderſtood by that, which paſſeth in our bodie. For though we haue no ſpecial thing to take pleaſure in, yet, if we be in health, if we haue no feueriſh diſtemper vpon vs, if the humours of our bodie be not altered and out of order, we take great pleaſure euen in that want of diſturbance; as on the other ſide, it is a great vexation to be troubled with a payne in our ſide, or in our feete, or in anie other part of vs. The ſelf-ſame effect therefore, which perfect health and that general temper of humours worketh in our bodie, the freedome from worldlie troubles and vexations, worketh in our ſoule; and is of itſelf alone a wonderful pleaſing and delightful thing. Wherefore ſeing people loue their health ſo dearly, and ſpare no coſt to get it, nor time to attend vnto it, and manie *ſpend their whole ſubſtance*, with the woman in the Ghoſpel, to purchaſe it, and abide fire and lance, ſuffering their fleſh to be cut and burnt, rather then fayle of it; who can think but the tranquillitie of a Religious life is much more earneſtly to be deſired, and al litle enough to beſtow and ſpend in the compaſſing of it? For that, which *S. Iohn Chryſoſtom* writing in defence of a Monaſtical life, ſayth, is very true: Which is eaſier and more ful of quiet? to be intangled in ſo manie and ſo pickant cares, ſubiect to ſuch watch and ward, and ſlauerie, to liue in continual feare and daylie ſollicitude, leaſt fortune fayle vs, our ſubſtance wholy periſh; or to be at liberti e, free from theſe bonds and cares? For though a man deſire no more then he hath, though he labour not to adde more weight to the burden of his wealth; though we grant al this, is it not

A Religious life free from miſerie.

Luc. 8. 43.

S. Io. Chryſ. lib. 2. contra V. imp. cap. Monaſt.

„ farre better, to discharge himself of his burden, then to be crushed by that, „ which he hath alreadie vpon his shoulders? Finally, as I sayd before, if it be „ a great happines to be content with a few things of smal value, it must cer- „ tainly needs be a greater happines, to be aboue al necessitie. And the same
Id Hom. 6. ad Pop. Saint discoursing to the same purpose in one of his Homilies proueth, that howsoeuer the world takes the life of Monks to be a distastful and burden- some life, yet in verie deed it is much sweeter, and more desireful (for al these are his owne words) then anie other life, seeme it neuer so sweet and easie; and for proof therof appeales to secular people themselues, to whome
The testimonie of worldlie people for Religion. then he spake, and sayth of them, that when they see themselues hedged-in with the trouble and vexations of this world, then they cal them happie, that free from marriage liue at quiet in Monasteries; because they haue not such worldlie sadnes & grief to oppresse them, they are not subiect to al those cares, „ and dangers, and deceitful plots, they suffer not by enuie, or iealousie, or „ phansies of loue, nor anie other thing of that nature.

Two benefits in one. 8. Where we must note, that in this one happines there be two great benefits inuolued. For first we are eased of the burden and heauie carriage (as *S. Iohn Chrysostome* calles it) of the world; secondly, being discharged of it, & as it were let loosse, we are at libertie; which libertie is accõpanied with vnspeakable delight. And God through his power and mightie hand being the sole authour of it, it is not without great reason, that in holie *Iob* he glorieth of this
Iob 29. 8. his work, and professeth, that it is himself, and no-bodie els, that *vnlooseth the bonds of the wild Asse, and sets him free, and giueth him a dwelling in the desert.*
S. Greg. 30. moral. c. 12. Which passage *S. Gregorie* vnderstands of Religious people, giuing this excellent exposition of it: The wild Asse, that abideth in the desert, doth not vn- „ properly signifye the life of them, that liue remote from the troubles of the „ world. And this Asse is fitly sayd to be free, because the seruitude of secular „ businesses, wherewith the mind is much broken, is very great, howsoeuer „ the paines, which men take in them, be voluntarie. And to couet nothing at „ al of the world, is, in effect, to be free from this seruil condition. For pros- „ perous things lye like a yoak vpon a man's neck, while we couet them; and „ things crosse and aduerse, while we feare them. But if a man once put the „ neck of his mind from vnder the command of temporal desires, he enioyeth a „ kind of libertie in this life, because he is not rackt with desire of prosperitie, „ nor straightned with feare of aduersitie. For it is a hard thing, and a heauie „ bondage to be subiect to temporal things, to be ambitious of earthlie things, „ to labour to holde that which is alwayes slipping, to stand in things that „ cannot stand, to desire that which is stil running from vs, and yet to be vn- „ willing to go with that which is alwayes going. He therefore is at libertie, „ that treading these desires vnder foot by tranquillitie of minde, is discharged „ of the loue of temporal things. Al this is of *S. Gregorie*.

9. Wherefore to conclude, as a man that hath his irons knockt off, & is let goe out of prison, or is taken out of the water, where he was half drowned, thinks he hath a great benefit in it, though nothing els be done vnto him; in like manner shal not a man, that is drawne out of the world, and freed not from one onlie euil and trouble, as they are, but from very manie great mischiefs and calamities, make account, that he hath gotten

a great

a great matter, and esteeme highly of this one thing, though there were nothing els in it? Certainly, it is reason he should. And if we beleeue *S. Bernard*, this is the reason, why the Holie-Ghost in the Canticles describeth a Religious life vnder the title of a *bed strewed with flowers*; because as a man takes most ease in his bed, so people are at most ease in Religion. I think, sayth *S. Bernard*, that the bed, wherin we rest in the Church, are Cloisters and Monasteries, where we liue quietly, voyde of secular cares, and free from the anxieties of this life. And this bed is manifestly strewed with flowers, when the life and conuersation of the Religious Brethren shineth with examples and practises of the ancient Fathers, as strewed with so manie odoriferous flowers. Thus sayth *S. Bernard*.

Cant. 1. 17. S Bernard ser. 40. in Cant.

That Religious discipline is easie.

CHAP. IV.

IT is not enough to haue shewed, that a Religious course of life is free from the difficulties and troubles, which are in the world; for a man might say, that though it haue not the troubles of the world, it hath other vexations, which make it irksome and tedious. We wil therefore heer make it plaine, that the whole order and practise of Religious discipline is easie and pleasant; a thing contrarie to the conceipt, which vsually people make of it, apprehending a Religious course to be intollerably burdensome, as if one should lay a whole hil vpon a man's shoulder; and therefore that, which we are to say of it, requireth a litle more attention. And to ground ourselues vpon the principles of Nature, we must vnderstand, that nothing is so pleasing and so conformable to Nature, as Vertue. For what is Vertue, if we consider it wel, but Reason cultiuated and perfected? Seing therefore Reason is as natural to man, as man is to himself, because without it he is not Man, Vertue must consequently be in the same measure agreable vnto him. Which may be proued also by the natural & in-bred inclination and propension, which Man hath to Vertue, manifesting itself in the ioy, which we feele within ourselues, when we doe wel, & the sadnes on the other side, & dejection of mind, when we doe amisse. If therefore Nature be so desirous of Vertue, the practise of it must needs be easie and pleasant; for so we see it hapneth in euerie thing els. Al things take most contentment in that, which is most futable to their nature, as, birds in flying, fishes in swimming, and euerie liuing creature in the food, which is most natural to it. For though this inclination to Vertue, of which we speake, be much weakned by Original sinne, and the multitude of our owne offences; yet these are but outward encombrances, as clowdes betwixt vs and the sunne, or ashes heaped vpon the embers; inwardly Nature stil inclineth to Vertue and good life, and Reason doth alwayes sway vs that way, whensoeuer these outward impediments happen to be remoued.

Vertue agreable to Nature.

The inferiour part naturally subiect to Reason. *Arist. 1. Eth. c. vlt. 1. Pol. c. 2.*

2. And thus much concerning the superiour part of our soule; let vs see how the inferiour part therof stands affected. *Aristotle* sayth, that naturally it is subiect and obedient to the vpper part, which is Reason, and that therin it differeth from the rest of our vital functions, which are not pliable to the command of Reason, as the faculties which serue for nourishment, augmentation, and the like. And though this sensual appetite of ours haue certain motions and inclinations to that which is delightful, which are peculiar to itself, yet in itself, and in euerie motion of it, it hath a reference to the light of Reason; *for otherwise*, sayth *Aristotle*, *it were in vaine for our betters to reprehend vs, or our equals to admonish vs, or inferiours to entreate vs.* And it is a strong argument, that it is so; because euerie thing doth naturally take contentment in that, which is like itself, and of the same rank and strayne. Our soule therefore being wholy spiritual, must necessarily be most delighted with things, that are spiritual. Whervpon Abbot *Isaac*, a most holie man (as *Cassian.Coll. 9. c. 4.* *Cassian* relateth) compareth our soule to a feather. For as a feather, sayth he, if it haue no water or other grosse humour vpon it, is easily lifted vp from the earth on-high with euerie litle blast of wind; so the soule of man, being a spirit, hath a natural lightnes, which easily mounteth it to things supernal and Celestial, contemning base and earthlie things, if vice and worldlie care doe not oppresse it.

It belonged to the Prouidence of God to ordaine it so. *Sap. 8. 1.*

3. Finally, we shal not neede to demurre long vpon the proof of this point, seing no man can doubt of it, vnlesse he wil wrong the Diuine Wisedome, and accuse it of imprudence. For hauing created al men to the end, they might purchase eternal felicitie by good works and vpright liuing; it belonged to the self-same Prouidence (the nature wherof is *to dispose al things sweetly*) to make them of such a mold, as might not be repugnant and aduerse to the end, for which they were created, and draw them from it, but rather further them, and put them forward, as farre as the strength of Nature can goe, howsoeuer of itself alone it is not sufficient and strong enough to beare them quite through. And I see no reason, why we should make anie question, but that God hath dealt so with vs, seing he hath dealt so with al other creatures in the world. For because the end of the Fire is to be aboue al other Elements, God hath put a natural lightnes in it, proportionable to that end; in like manner the Earth is naturally heauie & lumpish, because the Center therof is the midst of the world; & the same is in al things, that haue life, & in others also that haue no life. God therefore holding this course in things so farre inferiour to man, & ordained to ends farre vnequal in dignitie & worth; shal we think, he swarueth from it in a nature, that is the noblest of them al, & ordained to the highest End, that can be? *S. Basil* speaking of Charitie proueth by this verie argument, that it is easie and very natural for Man to loue God; and what he sayth of Charitie, may be applyed to al other Vertues.

S. Basil Reg. fusior. initio. Charitie, sayth he, towards God, doth not depend vpon precepts of learning. For as we doe not learne to looke vpon the light, and take pleasure in it; or to loue our owne life, or our parents, and those that haue giuen vs our breeding; much lesse doth anie outward learning teach vs to loue God, but at the instant that man entreth vpon his Being, he hath withal a natural instinct of reason ingrafted in him, contayning the beginning of a kind of

necessitie

neceſſitie of louing him. And proueth this his Tenet at large; becauſe God hauing giuen Man diuers other natural abilities proportionable to the performance of whatſoeuer he hath commanded, to the end he might not complaine, that his Commandments are grieuous, it was farre more neceſſarie he ſhould do the like in the Commandment of the Loue of God, it being the greateſt of al, and conſequently moſt neceſſarie we ſhould from our cradle haue an impulſion towards it, which might carrie vs vnto it. This and much more to the ſame effect is the diſcourſe of *S. Baſil*, which though it were of force only in Charitie, yet it were a great help in nature to al goodnes, in regard of the command, which Charitie hath ouer al other vertues; but indeed that, which he ſayth of Charitie, holds in others alſo: for the reaſon, which he giueth, takes place in al, to wit, it was neceſſarie, that in Nature itſelf there ſhould be ſome beginnings of vertue, which might help it, not to reſiſt, but the more readily to runne with the Commandments of God, to the end we might the more eaſily obey them.

4. That which we haue hitherto ſayd, is grounded vpon the facilitie of doing good, which God hath planted in our verie nature, which is nothing to that, which the force of Grace doth put into vs. That which is in Nature, is but a beginning, and a kind of ſeed, which of itſelf alone can doe nothing. Grace giueth the true forme and ſoule, as I may ſay, out of which vertuous actions doe procced, and, in a word, it maketh man *a new man*, as the Apoſtle ſpeaketh, *Celeſtial and Diuine*; and giueth vs a new hart, *and reneweth an vpright ſpirit in our bowels*. *S. Macarius* in one of his Homilies ſetteth forth the effect of this Grace very liuely, telling vs, that our Sauiour Chriſt came downe from heauen to change, to transforme, to renew our nature, and to new-molde this ſoule of ours, by ſinne intangled in manie euil affections and diſpoſitions, tempering it with his Diuine ſpirit. He came, ſayth he, to giue vs a new mind, a new ſoule, new eyes, new hands, a new ſpiritual tongue, and, to be ſhort, to make thoſe, that beleeue in him, new men. For he that encreaſed & multiplyed the ſubſtance of fiue Loaues; and gaue ſpeach to the Aſſe, which by nature was abſolutly dumb; & made the Fire like a wind of dew blowing, notwithſtanding that naturally it burneth; and tamed the rage of the Lyons for Daniel's ſake; he can alſo turne a ſoule into his goodnes and peace, & fil it with a good ſpirit, though of itſelf it be like a deſert growne wild with ſinne.

Grace farre more effectual.

1. *Cor* 15. 47
Pſal 50
Macarius Hom. 44.

Ioan 6.
Num. 22.
Dan. 3 & 7.

5. This *S. Macarius* ſpeaketh of the Grace, which God offereth to al; but beſides this, the peculiar Grace of a Religious vocation doth put ſo much new life and ſtrength into them, that are endewed with it, that they performe with a great deale of facilitie, and, in a manner, with no labour at al, that, which others cannot away-with, that haue not that grace, and that, which indeed themſelues could not do before. For as a beaſt, that hath no reaſon, cannot performe anie thing, that properly belongs to reaſon, as, to inferre a Concluſion, to iudge of a thing, to giue aduice, to foreſee that which is to come; but Man being endewed with reaſon, doth theſe things as eaſily as vſe his hands & feet: ſo if a man haue not the vocation and ſpirit of God, which includeth Pouertie, & Obedience, and other vertues, it is wonderful hard for him to be content to haue nothing, and to yeald himſelf ouer to an other's wil; but if he haue this vocation, he taketh great comfort in it.

The Grace of vocation

Custome of doing wel.

5. Finally, besides Nature and Grace, dailie practise breeds a custome and habit of doing wel, which is another Nature, altogeather as forcible and efficacious as Nature itself; and when it is once gotten and grounded in the mind, al vertuous actions are easie and pleasant. To which purpose *S. Leo* sayth very wel: The affection, which excludeth earthlie loue, is strengthned by custome of doing wel; because a man's conscience must ne-

S. Leo ser. 5. de ieiun. 7. mens.

„ cessarily take delight in good works, and willingly do that, which it is „ glad it hath done. Religion therefore being nothing els but a continual practise and trading in al kind of vertue, the exercise of vertue must needs grow euerie day easier then other, and in time, as so manie goodlie trees, bring forth abundant fruit, and furnish a Religious soule with plentie, and profit, and heauenlie pleasure. This is the habit, which *Cassian* describeth in

Cassian. Coll. 11. c. 9. a certain place in these words, to wit: When a soule is transformed into a habit of vertue, that is, when a man hath so accustomed himself vnto it, „ and gotten so much loue of it, that he thinks it the pretiousest thing in the „ world, and takes the transgression of vertue, or the poyson of sinne, to „ be the grieuousest torment that can be; when a man is come to this, he must needs take more contentment in his sober and continent life, then others doe in their incontinencie and riot; the flower of chastitie must needs be sweeter to him, then the filth of sensual pleasure to them that are sensual; finally, he cannot but reioyce more when he is humbled, and hapneth vpon an occasion of suffering for Christ, then worldlie ambitious people in the applause, and glorie, and preferments, which they so eagerly hunt after.

6. Vpon these and the like grounds we constantly auerre, as in the beginning, that a Religious life is so farre from being harsh and difficult, that it is rather wonderful sweet and pleasant. And we may adde the testimonie of *Reginaldus* a Dominican-Friar, one of the first and principal companions of *S. Dominick*. He was a rich wealthie man in the world, and liued daintily at ease; after he had vndertaken that rigorous and paineful kind of life, they that knew him before, often asked him (not without some astonishment) whether he were not mightily troubled with it; and he alwaies answered

Reginaldus. with a cheatful hart and countenance: I would haue you know, that al „ these things are so sweet and pleasant vnto me, that often I haue been grie- „ ued at hart, that I liue so easily; and haue thought, that I merited nothing in „ this life by reason of it. This was *Reginaldus* his answer; and manie more, yea al good Religious people, if they were asked, would answer the same. I my self haue heard manie speake to the same effect, and complaine grieuously, as if they lead an idle and lasie life; wheras notwithstanding they applyed themselues Religiously to those courses, which in a Secular eye, measuring al by Sense, seeme so harsh and rigid.

Of the

Of the pleasure, which is in a Religious life, by reason of the mortification of the Passions.

CHAP. V.

IF we looke wel into ourselues, we shal find within vs a great diuersitie of Affections, which God hath planted in our nature for good ends, that as faithful and obedient seruants, they might be readie to execute vpon al occasions the commands of Reason, and be at a beck in al things. Whereby we may also see, that nothing can be more vnseemelie or more dangerous, then to let these our Passions loose. For casting-of the yoake of Obedience, they trayle a man whither they list; and rule him, that should haue ruled them; as a horse without a bridle doth ouer-rule and endanger his rider. For this inferiour part of ours, which is the seate of anger and lust, is like to that, which is in beasts, and consequently it hath no gouernment or wisedome in it, nor anie kind of light or vnderstanding. As therefore, if it were possible for a man to walk with his head downwards and his feet vpwards, besides the incommoditie, that al the filth and ordure would light presently vpon his face, which is the beautifullest part of man, it would be an intollerable toyle, and labour, and payne to him, to suffer that alteration, so contrarie to the natural situation of his limmes; the like inconueniences doe happen in our inward man, when the order, which God hath setled betwixt the superiour and inferiour part of our soule, is turned vp-side downe. *Aristotle* himself saw the miserie of it, and describes it in these words: Vitious people cannot be at quiet within themselues, but haue their minds turmoiled and distracted into seueral factions, as in a ciuil warre: one part of the mind grieuing at that, which it wanteth; the other reioycing in that, which it is a shame to enioy, and so is, as it were, disioynted & pulled hither and thither: and though no man can grieue and reioyce al at once, yet they presently grieue, because they did reioyce; and their life is alwaies ful of repentance. As therefore they, that are continually haled and hanted with these turbulent affections, as with so manie furies, are extreamly vnhappie; so they, that are voyde of passion, and haue al things quiet within them, must needs enioy that incomparable peace, which surpasseth al vnderstanding, and leade a most sweet and pleasant life.

Passions are giuen vs for good.

Inconuenient, that Pasion should rule.

Aristot. Eth. 9. c. 14.

2. It wil not be amisse to heare, what one of the ancient Philosophers, and he that was the eloquentest among them, though a Heathen, doth speake in this matter. What (sayth he) shal we say, when we see a man burning and raging with passionate affections, mad with vnsatiable desires of euerie kind of thing, and the more profusely he followeth his pleasures in al things, the more tormented with firie thirst after them? may we not iustly say, he is a most miserable creature? what? he that set vpon a light pinne giueth himself to idle mirth and vnconsiderate gestures, is he not the more vnhappie, the more happie he thinks himself? As these therefore are miserable creatures, so they are happie, whome feare doth not fright,

Passionate men are most miserable people.

Cicero. 3. Tusul.

„ whom ſorrow doth not conſume, whome paſſions of luſt doe not diſquiet,
„ whome vaine mirth doth not diſſolue into languiſhing pleaſures. Now if there
„ be a man, that can abide the brunt of Fortune, and think al things tollerable,
„ that can anie way befal him in this life, and conſequently is not touched with
„ feare or grief, or moued with diſordered deſires, or ſet a-gog with ſome idle
„ fancie of delight, why ſhould we not account him happie? And if vertue be
„ the cauſe of theſe effects, why ſhould not vertue alone make vs happie? This is
S. *Aug. Ep.* 111. that Heathen Philoſopher's diſcourſe, of which I know not what to ſay other,
then that which *S. Auguſtin*, bringing his words vpon another occaſion, ſayd of
„ him: What doe you think of theſe words? were they not ſpoken by Truth
Tit. 1. 12. itſelf by whoſe mouth he would? And that, which the Apoſtle ſayd of the
„ Cretenſian Prophet: *This teſtimonie is true.*

3. We reade the like diſcourſe in another Philoſopher, who was alſo a Hea-
Plutarch de Virt. & Vit. then, and giueth moreouer this reaſon of his ſaying: As health and the conſtant temper of our bodie is the ground of al the delight, which our bodie feeles, inſo-much that, when our bodie is diſtempered, we loathe the daintieſt fare that is; ſo to the end, that we may taſte the pleaſures of the mind, our mind itſelf muſt be in good temper, that is, it muſt be voyd of feare, and enioy peace and tranquil-
The temper of our mind, is the ground of pleaſure. litie within itſelf; if this health be wanting in our mind, we ſhal neuer know, what belongs to pleaſure. For though we may be put in good hope for a while, and haue, as it were, a glimſe of delight; ſome care or other, ſome croſſe anxietie ruſhing vpon vs, wil ſuddenly daſh it, and amaze vs, as marriners at ſea, when ſayling with a proſperous gale, vnexpectedly they ſee thēſelues vpon a rock. If our mind be in good order, as when we recouer of a ſicknes, and our ſtomack begins to grow vpon vs, we reliſh coorſe bread & cheeſe, and feed with delight vpon ſuch groſſe fare, though before we could not looke vpō the dayntieſt fare that was; ſo if a man haue his mind purged of euil humours, he is alwaies con-tent, euen in greateſt want. Thou wilt be content, ſayth he, with thy ſelf, if thou once know what is good and vpright. Thou wilt abound in peuertie, and be a king; and a priuate ordinarie life wil be as welcome vnto thee, as to beare rule and be in office.

Religion compoſeth the humours of our mind. 4. Seing therefore there is ſo much happines, & ſo much pleaſure to be had by healing and compoſing the turbulent humours of our mind, and that it is ſo much the more to be deſired, the more agreable it is to Nature; let vs ſee, what helps Religious diſcipline doth afford towards the curing of them. Firſt, it cut-teth off the cauſes and occaſions of them. For as Phiſitians preſcribe abſtinence from certain meates that are hurtful and breed il humours in a man's bodie; ſo Religion barreth al things, by which diſorder may riſe; for that, which *S. Gre-*
S. Greg. Hom. 27. *in Euang.* *gorie* ſayth, *that al breach of charitie growes vpon deſire of earthlie things, becauſe others take that from vs which we loue*, may be applyed to manie other things. For when-ſoeuer we break forth into paſſion, and fal vpon others, the ground of it is the loue of ſome earthlie thing. This is the cauſe of ſtrife, and debate, and brang-lings, and that we runne ourſelues vpon the pikes, and diſquiet ourſelues, and aggrieue others and the like; with which diſorders the world is ſo much di-ſtracted and torne in peeces. Which made *S. Macarius* ſay, that the Sonnes of
S. *Macar. Hom.* 5. this world are like wheate in a ſiue or vanne. For being, as it were, caſt into this world, as into a vanne, they are continually toſſed to and fro with vncon-

ſtant

ſtant thoughts, and tumbled vp and downe as in a tempeſtuous wind of earthlie cares and deſires. And as the corne is neuer at reſt, but throwne now againſt one ſide, now againſt the other; and in continual motion; ſo the authour of al wickednes, the Diuel, doth continually moleſt, and trouble, and diſquiet them, hauing once intangled them in worldlie buſineſſes, and giueth them not an howres reſpit. This was *S. Macarius* his conceipt of wordlie people. And *S. Iohn Chryſoſtome* wil tel vs, what we are to think of thoſe, that liue in Religion. In one of his Homilies vpon *S. Mathew* he ſayth, that there is as much difference betwixt the moſt delightful life of a Monk (for ſo are his words) and the pleaſures of Secular people, as betwixt a quiet hauen and a boiſterous ſea; and the ground of this felicitie, which Monks enioy, is, becauſe auoyding the noyſe and diſtraction, which publick places and markets are ful of, they liue where they haue nothing to doe with things of this world, where no human thing diſquiets thē, no ſadnes, no grief, no anxietie, no hazard, no enuie, no ſinful loue nor anie thing of this nature; but giue themſelues wholy to the contēplation of the Kingdome which is to come, and whatſoeuer leades to it. This is the firſt help, which Religion affords towards the alaying of the heate of our Paſſions.

S. Iohn Chryſoſt. Hom. 69. in Matth.

5. Another medecine it hath, which takes away the verie root of the diſeaſe. Two things ſet our Paſſions on fire: the apprehenſion of good, and the apprehenſion of euil. For when a thing is repreſented vnto vs as good, the verie apprehenſion, which Nature hath of a thing ſutable vnto it, ſtirres vp loue; if we haue not the thing, loue breedes deſire; if we haue it, it breedes content and pleaſure. Contrariwiſe if we conceite a thing to be euil or hurtful; we hate it; hatred makes vs fly from it and auoyd it; if we cannot auoyd it, but that it wil come vpon vs, then comes grief and ſadnes. In like manner, in that part of our Appetite, which is the ſeate of Anger, two ſeueral motions riſe vpon the apprehenſion of good, to wit, hope and deſpaire; two vpon the apprehenſion of imminent euil, feare and audacitie; one vpon the euil which is preſent, to wit, anger, which differs from ſadnes, in reſpect it doth not yeald to the euil, that preſſeth vpon vs, but ſtriueth againſt it and reſiſteth it. Seing therefore the whole troupe of our Affections is lead by this one Apprehenſion of Good and Euil, looke what apprehenſion or iudgement we make of good and euil, ſuch ſhal we find the deſires and affections of our mind to be. Now the whole drift of Religion is to alter our apprehenſion from earthlie things, which falſly vſurpe the name of good, to ſpiritual things, which are truly good, and indeed to rid vs wholy of them, and free our hands from them, to the end we may attend the more perfectly to the purſuite and purchaſe of that, which is ſpiritual only; which whoſoeuer doth compaſſe, doth as it were at one blow cut-of al the roots and ſtrings, that feed Paſſiō. For what ſhould trouble a man, that is thus ſetled? what ſhal he need to be afrayd of? leaſt his marchandiſe periſh by ſhipwrack? or his corne & wine by hayle? or his ſonne dye vnder age? or leaſt men be offended with him? or he leeſe the fauour of his Prince? He hath voluntarily ſtolen himſelf from al theſe things, and conſequently preuented al ſuch caſualties, and made himſelf impregnable for whatſoeuer aſſault of Fortune.

Two things ſet our paſſions on fire.

Religion preuents al trouble.

The difference betwixt temporal and ſpiritual things.

6. Finally, there is this mayne difference betwixt temporal and ſpiritual things. Temporal things are eaſily loſt, and ſubiect to infinit caſualties;

and therefore the getting of them, and the holding, are alwaies ful of endleſſe care and anguiſh: Spiritual things are giuen vs by God; & no power vpon earth nor in hel can take them from vs againſt our wil; and conſequently they that trade in them, liue voyde of al feare, ſauing that which the Prophet calleth *holie feare*, which keepeth vs alwaies in ſubiection to God, acknowledging his infinit power ouer vs; and this feare is not only quiet and peaceable, but (which a man would wonder at) encreaſeth confidence and ſecuritie.

7. The endeauour of euerie Religious man in particular togeather with the aſſiſtance of his gouernours and Superiours, is moreouer no ſmal help to the rooting-out of al diſordered motions; ſpecially being a thing, which euerie one doth apply himſelf with feruour vnto, as the chief exerciſe and exploit, in which he is to play his prize. And what ſhal I ſay of the honour and pleaſure, which a man findes in following of Vertue? or of the ioyes of ſpirit, and that moſt ſweet repaſt of mind, which we enioy by conuerſing with God? Which from the Mind diffuſed into Senſe, doth ſo ſatisfye the hunger therof with food of a higher nature, that it loatheth euer after al ordinarie and vulgar meates. Finally ſobrietie and moderation in diet and apparrel helpeth to the ordering of our Paſſions. For as fulnes of meate, and drink, and dayntie fare doth dead the ſpirit, and quicken ſenſe; ſo ſobrietie tames that part of vs, which gapes after pleaſure, and makes it not ſo forward to kick; as a beaſt, that is abridged of his oates, is the tamer by it; and the other part, which is the ſeate of Reaſon and counſel, is the more quick and able; both which *S. Baſil* expreſſeth in theſe words: As a fountain of water drayned into ſeueral branches, makes the land, through which it runnes, fertil and freſh; ſo if the vice of gluttonie ſpreading itſelf through the veynes of our hart, and running from thence, water al our ſenſes, it muſt needs turne our ſoules into a wood of luſtful deſires, and make it a receptacle of wild beaſts.

S. Baſil. de abdicat. re.

7. Theſe be the helps, by which Religion brings a Soule to that quiet ſtate of mind we ſpeake of; and compoſing and keeping downe our Paſſions; deliuers the command and rule into the hands of Reaſon, which only ought to rule; and Reaſon free from the violence and encombrance of them, is willingly ſubiect to the wil of God, and conſequently, as in a wel-ordered familie, there is no diſſenſion, no diſcord, no contradiction; but euerie one attendeth to his office, and performeth his dutie with eaſe and diligence. Who therfore can doubt, but ſuch a Soule ſo ordered, is in a moſt happie and moſt delightful ſtate, taſting vpon earth the firſt fruits of the Celeſtial habitation, where euerie thing ſhal be brought to a moſt perfect peace and concord? Which I take to be that peace, and that ſitting at reſt and quiet, and that inward ſilence, which is promiſed by the Prophet *Eſay* to Vertue by the general name of Iuſtice, which giues euerie one his due. For no State doth ſo perfectly giue euerie one his due as Religion, giuing, and reſtoring, and perfectly ſubiecting vs to God, whoſe we are al of vs by right, as I ſhewed elſe-where. *And the Work of Iuſtice, ſayth he, ſhal be peace; and the performance of Iuſtice, ſilence and ſecuritie for euer. And my people ſhal ſit in the beautie of peace, and in tabernacles of confidence, and in a quiet ful of wealth.* What doth man deſire more then reſt and quiet? not that reſt which is idle and vnfruitful, ſtore wherof we ſee in idle people of the world; but ſuch as is wealthie, and profitable, and furniſhed with al ſpiritual commodities; as the holie Prophet deſcribeth it.

Eſ. 32. 1.

Of the pleasure, which Religious people take in Prayer.

CHAP. VI.

TO the delights, which we haue hitherto ſpoken of, we may adde the comfort of Prayer and Meditation, which taketh vp great part of a Religious life. How great the ſweetnes of it is, and how properly Religion may be ſayd to be the true ſeate of it, *Eſay* the Prophet wil tel vs, comprizing both in theſe few words: The ſonnes of the ſtranger, who adhere to our Lord to worſhip him, and loue his name, and to be his ſeruants, euerie one that keepeth the Sabbaoth, leaſt he pollute it, and obſerueth my Couenant; I wil bring them to my holie hil, and make them ioyful in the houſe of my prayer; their Holocauſts and their Sacrifices ſhal pleaſe me vpon my Altar, becauſe my houſe ſhal be called the houſe of prayer to al people. This is the large promiſe of the Holie-Ghoſt, which not only for the inward ſenſe, but euen for the outward ſound of the words doth ſo properly agree to euerie Religious perſon, that we may ſpare to interprete it further, leaſt (as *S. Auguſtin* ſayth in a certaine place vpon the like occaſion) *we dead the ſauour of the Propherical ſpeach.* And what wonder is it, that God ſhewing his Prophets his Church, that was to come, ſhould withal ſhew them ſo long-before the beautie of a Religious courſe, which is ſo noble a part of the Church?

Eſ. 56. 6.

S. Auguſtin 18. de Ciuit. c. 28.

2. Firſt therefore the name of *Strangers* doth fitly ſute with them; becauſe they haue nothing in the world of their owne, but, as pilgrims, vſe it as if they did not vſe it; they haue no permanent cittie or abode, but ſeeke that which is to come; they adhere to our Lord, being faſtned vnto him with the ſtrong and indiſſoluble bond of their Vow; and are truly his ſeruants, and ſo ſtiled by al, becauſe they liue continually in his ſeruice, and their glorie is, to be called as they are; they offer vnto him Holocauſts and Sacrifices, and that often, becauſe they offer themſelues wholy; and they keepe his Sabbaoth, liuing, not lazily without profit to themſelues or others, as the people of the world oftimes do, but a quiet and retired life ful of holines and deuotion, keeping holie-day from the works of the earth, and beſtowing themſelues wholy in the contemplation and loue of God.

Religious people ſtrangers in this world.

3. Now why may not Religion be called alſo the Houſe of Prayer, which God doth ſo much honour as to ſtile it His Houſe; ſeing it requireth ſo much exerciſe of prayer, and affordeth ſo much commoditie of performing it, as it ought to be performed? For firſt Religion ridderh vs of al outward care not only of following huſbandrie, or trading in marchandize, and ſuch like negotiations of greater conſequence, but of thoſe, which are of leſſe note, as the care of houſehold-buſines, education of children, finally of al. Theſe are the banes of Meditation and Contemplation, not only becauſe they take vp al our time, but much more becauſe they ſtirre vp ſo manie paſſions of anger, and feare, and ſadnes, according to the ſeueral euents which happen. Theſe

Religion the Houſe of prayer.

Passions partly disquiet our mind, that it can settle to nothing, and consequently absolutly hinder Contemplation; partly they do so ouerwhelme it, that they dead our spirits, and suck-out al the iuyce, which is in vs. For that, which Abbot *Isaac* (a great man) in *Cassian* doth deliuer, cannot be denyed: to wit, that to pray wel, it is necessarie vniuersally to cut-of al care of carnal things (for so he speaketh) Secondly, that we doe not only shut out care, but the verie memorie of al kind of busines; thirdly we must cut off al detraction, multiplicitie of idle words, and, aboue al, the passions of anger and sadnes; finally, vtterly roote-out the remaynder and occasion of auarice and carnal concupiscence. Which if it be true, certainly the true exercise of prayer is as rare in the world, as these hindrances and inconueniences are frequent in it; and contrariwise in Religion it is easie to practise it; because the state itself hath alreadie barred al these impediments.

Cassian Coll. 9. c. 3.

Other helps of Prayer: as, Chastitie.

4 Moreouer Chastitie and a single life is a great help to Prayer; which in reason euerie bodie may see to be true, and the Apostle sayth it, commending Virginitie and a single life; because (as he speaketh) *it giues a man leaue to pray to our Lord without hindrance.* The reason wherof among others, as I take it, is, because as our mind growes lumpish, and beareth alwayes downewards to base and earthlie things, by the vse of corporal pleasure: so by continencie it becomes light and quick, and able, as it were with certain wings, to lift itself vp to God; the puritie, which is in itself, furthering the coniunction of it to that puritie, which is God. The humilitie also of so poore an estate, and so farre from al human glorie, is a special disposition to Prayer. For as we reade of our Sauiour, that in his life-time he louingly embraced the little ones, that were brought vnto him, and checked his Disciples that would haue forbidden them, saying: *Let the little-ones come to me; for of such is the Kingdome of heauen.* So we haue iust cause to think, that he practiseth the same now in heauen; and conuerseth familiarly with such as be little. For if he made so much demonstration of loue towards them, that had nothing humble in them, but the tendernes of their age, how much greater signes of loue wil he shew to them, that haue voluntarily humbled themselues, and brought themselues to that excesse of Pouertie and meane estate, which the Religious liue in? So that for these and manie other reasons there can be no doubt, but that Religion is the House of Prayer, that is, the most commodious, and most conuenient place that can be, to exercise our mind in prayer, and continue our thoughts in contemplation of heauenlie things.

1. Cor. 7. 35.

Humilitie & Pouertie.

Matth. 19. 14.

The delight which comes of Prayer.

5. Now to speake of the delight and pleasure, which is in this noble Exercise, God expresseth it in the words following: *I wil make them ioyful in the house of my prayer.* He makes himself the authour of this ioy, and truly he is so; because it proceedes from him, and is of him. It proceedes from him, because he infuseth it into our soules, the beames of his light shine vpon vs, his holines and his inspirations fal vpon our harts. It is of him, because there is nothing els before our eyes to cause this ioy; neither can so great ioy and contentment rise but of God. So that we find *S. Bernard's* saying to be true: By prayer we drink the wine that reioyceth the hart; the wine of spirit, which maketh vs drunk, and bringeth obliuion of carnal

S. Bernard ser. 18. in Cant.

carnal pleasure; And *S. Augustin's*: The teares of them that pray, are sweeter then the ioyes of them that goe to playes. *S. Francis* was often wont to commend spiritual mirth and chearfulnes to his Religious, as a special defence against the temptations of the Diuel; and sayd, that the ground of this chearfulnes was puritie of mind, and that it was to be purchased by good works, but chiefly by Prayer; and therefore whensoeuer we find a storme of sadnes come vpon vs, we should betake ourselues to prayer, as to a harbour or quiet hauen. And certainly if we find so much delight in conversing with men of learning and wisedome, that we can spend whole dayes with them to our great contentment and satisfaction; what shal we think of the communication and conuersation, which we may haue continually with the holie Angels, to whome we are so manie wayes obliged for their charitie & care ouer vs? or with the other Saints of Heauen, that know by experience, what it is to carrie this burden of flesh with which we are loaded? or with the Queene of Saints and Angels, then whome vnder God there is nothing in this world more beautiful, nothing that thought or affection can fixe itself vpon, with more delight and sweetnes?

S. Augustin in Ps. 127.

S. Francis.

6. What shal I say of GOD himself? First, the infinitnes of his Nature, his endlesse Goodnes, Power, and al things of excessiue perfection conteyned in it, affordeth a Soule a boundles scope to walk in; and walking without end, it cannot but be absorpt in a bottomlesse deapth of delight. From thence againe reflecting vpon the consideration of the benefits, which God hath powred forth vpon vs, either out of the superabundant bountie of his loue and good wil, or out of the natural inclination, as I may say, which he hath to liberalitie; and much more vpon those, in which so great a Maiestie hath taken so much paynes for our sakes; calling to mind his sorrowes, his torments, the manger, his pouertie, his whipping, his crowne of thornes, his Crosse; and pondering euerie thing with attention, and seazing vpon them in contemplation, as vpon an infinit treasure of wealth and riches now belonging to ourselues, and made to our vse; what ioy, what gladnes, what contentment must a Soule needes take in it? This causeth a fountain of teares to gush forth from our eyes, this melts vs into a most sweet veyne of weeping, this maketh our hart to leape for ioy within vs, and diffuseth itself to our verie flesh; beholding such infinit testimonies of the Diuine loue towards vs, which of itself is enough to rauish vs with delight; and againe tasting so manie wayes of the fruits of this loue, by his heauenlie care and prouidence ouer vs, grace in this life, and assured hope of eternal blisse in the life to come. And though we lay aside the consideration of the profit, which comes vnto vs, the verie approaching to God by prayer and communication with him, is a thing of another world. For as they, that come neare the fire, grow warme by the heat of it, and whatsoeuer is mingled with honie, doth taste of the sweetnes of honie; so whosoeuer conioyneth himself with God, and, as I may say, plungeth himself into the fountain of al goodnes and happines, must needes be in great measure happie; as we reade in the holie Scripture, that *Moyses* by the communication, which he held with God, receaued so much light inwardly in his mind, that it was seen in his face, as two hornes in his forehead.

The delight, which is in thinking of God.

Ex. 34. 35.

7. These be the incomparable delights and daynties, which the seruants of God enioy, and the dailie food wherewith they are fatned; that we may not wonder, if ful of this spiritual marrow and fatnes, they be so strong and able, and compasse so great works in matter of vertue and the seruice of God, with ease. This enabled *S. Antonie* so farre, that, as it is recorded of him, oftentimes beginning his prayer at the shutting-in of the euening, he was found at break-of-day in the same posture; complayning of the light, that it rose too early. We reade almost the same of *Arsenius*, that setting himself to his prayer in the euening, and leauing the sunne behind him going downe, neuer stirred til in the morning the sunne shined againe in his face. *Syluanus* was euer wont to keepe his eyes shut, after he had been long at his prayers, that comming, *as he sayd*, from the wonderful sight of heauenlie things, he might not be troubled with the deformitie of earthlie obiects. What shal we say of *S. Francis*, who was sometimes lifted vp from the ground to a man's height, sometimes as high as the tops of trees, often also as high as the clowdes: Or of others without number, whose extasies, and rapes, and long prayers are ful of such like miracles: Of which kind we might find plentie in our dayes, if it were not from our purpose to stand rehearsing them al. And we that are of the manie, and cannot looke for such extraordinarie fauours at God's hands, yet in the verie mediocritie, which he is pleased to imparte vnto vs, find so much sweetnes, that the little, which we enioy, is *dispreful aboue gold and precious stone, and sweeter then honie and the honie-combe*.

S. Antonie.

Arsenius.

Syluanus.

S. Francis.

Ps. 18. 11.

Of manie other spiritual delights, which Religious people enioy.

CHAP. VII.

The comforts of a Religious life concealed; and why?

IT is recorded of *S. Laurence Iustinian* (of whose sanctitie and wisdome we haue had often occasion to speake) that he was wont to say in commendation of a Religious life, among other things; that God hath of purpose concealed and hidden the pleasure of it: because if men did know what it was, they would not be able to stay themselues from running to it, and the world be wholy dispeopled.

S. Laurence Iustinian.

2. This testimonie of so great a man is the more weightie, because he spake of his owne experience in commendation of the life, in which he had been bred vp, and continued from his youth, and was a man of so great a wit, and, which is the principal, so abundantly furnished with the light of Grace, that his verdict must needs be of great authoritie; though he is not alone of this opinion; for al men concurre in the same, and they most of al, that haue most constantly & with most feruour followed this course of life. *Palladius* reporteth of *Apollo*, who was a famous man among the ancient Heremits, that hauing fiue hundred disciples, he was wont to bid them to be alwayes chearful and merrie; And a man should not meete vpon earth such mirth and exultation as

Palladius in Lausiaca 52. Apollo.

was continually among them. For he sayd, it was an vnseemlie thing for anie of them to be sad and heavie, that had such assured hopes of eternal happines. The Infidels, and Iewes, and wicked Christians might with reason be truly sorrowful; but the seruants of God should alwayes reioyce. For if people, that trafficke in earthlie things, reioyce in them; why should not Religious people, that are in present possession of so manie good things, and doe so certainly hope for the happines of the life to come, be in perpetual gladnes? This was the saying of that ancient Father; and he sayd true. S. Aman. 2. p. 5. 15. c. 10.

3. For suft in this state people haue the comfort of a good Conscience, which, if things goe wel with vs, doth much encrease our ioy; if they happen crosse, as sometimes perhaps they will, it is a great solace vnto vs, and in fine giueth life to al the howres a Religious man doth liue. For a good Conscience is, as it were, a Maister or Tutour, that standeth at our elbow, both in regard of the light belonging vnto it, which without much adoe easily discerneth good from euil, iust from that which is vniust; and in regard of the propension, which it giues to our wil, to loue that which is good, and to shunne that, which appeares to be euil; so that whosoeuer resisteth this light, and this inclination or propension, must needs be in continual torment and vexation; whosoeuer goeth with it & obeyeth it, liues in ioy and comfort. This we haue out of S. Iohn Chrysostom, who speaketh thus; Though there be some paynes to be taken in the practise of vertue, yet it fils a man's conscience with a great deale of pleasure, and brings so much inward delight with it, that it cannot be expressed in words. For what is delightful in things present? a board wel furnished? health of bodie? riches? But al the sweetnes that is in anie of these, is bitter, compared with that delight. For nothing is more pleasant then a good Conscience, and good hope. Religious people must be alwayes chearful. S. Iohn Chrysostome hom. 63. ad Pop.

4. And this contentment of a good Conscience, which according to S. Iohn Chrysostom is so ful of sweetnes, is not alone in Religion, but bringeth manie other pleasures with it; which S. Macarius speaking of this verie abundance of spiritual comforts in one of his Homilies setteth forth in liuelie colours, and sayth thus: It fareth with the seruants of God sometimes, as with them, that sit at a Prince's table royally set-forth with al kindes of choice meates, and there they exult with a gladnes, which no man can come neare to expresse in words, and with admirable satietie and contentment. Sometimes they are like a bride melting with vnceasable heauenlie delight in the armes of God their Spouse. Sometimes they are like Angels, that haue no bodies, & arriue to such a lightnes and freedome, that the weight of their bodie troubleth them no more, then if they had none at al. Sometimes they are so ful of pleasure, as if they had drunk largely of the best wine that is; and are euen drunk with a holie drunkennes of Diuine mysteries, & are not sensible of anie thing that passeth in this life. Sometimes they are like mourners, lamenting the miseries of mankind, powring forth their prayers to God for the saluation therof, readie to lay downe their owne life and soule at stake, for the good of others. Sometimes they do so burne with this spiritual loue of their Neighbour, that, if it were possible, they would hide al men, good and bad, within their bowels. Againe at other times they cast themselues so farre vnder al mens feet, through humilitie of spirit, that they make account they are the least, and the lowest, and the worst of al men in the world. Contrariwise sometimes they resemble a stout warrier, that S. Macarius hom. de gestis Sanctor.

„ gathering his weapons to him, goeth of his owne accord into the field, and „ valiantly encountreth his enemies. Oftimes their ſoule repoſeth in profound „ ſilence, enioying moſt ſweet and quiet peace, and taking vnſpeakable delight „ in it. Finally oftimes their mind is ſo cleared by the guift of the Holie-Ghoſt, „ which we cal Vnderſtanding and Wiſedome, that in an inſtant it conceaueth „ things, which no tongue can expreſſe. Al this is out of *S. Macarius*.

5. How rare and admirable therefore muſt that courſe of life needs be, which ſwimmeth in al theſe delights, and is ſerued with ioy after ioy, and contentment after contentment, as a ſumptuous bancket with diſh after diſh? *Pſ. 30. 20.* Which the Prophet *Dauid* deſeruedly admireth in theſe words: *How great is the multitude of thy ſweetnes, ô Lord, which thou haſt hidden for thoſe that feare thee*? It is great, but hidden, and knowne to them only, that truly feare God. And they are in a great errour that think, that they that vow themſelues to God, prouide wel for the good and ſafetie of their Soules, but buy this ſafetie at a high rate of exceſſiue toyle. For it is not ſo; this ſpiritual iourney hath alſo pleaſure with it; and greater pleaſure, then fleſh and bloud is capable of; and conformably thervnto nothing is more often repeated in holie Writ, or more ſeriouſly inculcated. *Light* (ſayth *Dauid*) *aroſe to the Iuſt, and gladnes to the vpright of hart*; as who ſhould ſay: That is true gladnes, which riſeth of the light of our mind, and the vprightnes of our hart. And againe: *How ſweet are thy ſpeeches to my iawes, aboue honie to my mouth*! And: *A voice of exultation and health in the tabernacles of the Iuſt. Let the iuſt make feaſts and exult in the ſight of God. My ſoule ſhal exult in our Lord, and delight in the Sauiour therof; al my bones ſhal ſay: Lord, who is like to thee*? But he comes moſt neare vnto vs, and ſpeaketh in a manner particularly to vs, that dwel in the Houſe of God, when he ſayth: *They ſhal be drunk of the plentie of thy Houſe, and thou wilt make them drink of the torrent of thy pleaſure.* He calles it a Torrent, in regard of the plentie; and becauſe the ſource of it is not in the earth, but in heauen, and raynes downe abundantly from aboue. He likeneth it to drunkennes; becauſe they that are filled with theſe comforts, like people that are drunk, haue not only perfectly drowned and quenched their thirſt, but ſee not the things, which are vpon earth, or at leaſtwiſe take no heed to that, which is before their eyes, and inwardly burne with a ſpiritual fire and feruour, putting them vpon manie actions, which others perhaps may think fooliſh or impertinent. The Prophet *Eſay* ſpeaketh to the ſame effect in diuers places, and particularly when he ſayth: *I wil put the deſert therof as delight, and the ſolitude as a garden of our Lord. Ioy and gladnes ſhal be found in it, thankes-giuing and a voice of prayſe.* A happie Deſert, wherin ſo much ioy abundeth! And what can this Deſert or ſolitude be more truly thought to be, then Religion, which is a place ſeuered from companie, from honour, riches, and al worldlie commodities?

The iourney of ſpirit delightful.

Pſ. 96. 11.

Pſ. 118. 103.

Pſ. 117. 15.

Pſ. 67. 4.

Pſ. 34. 9.

Pſ. 35. 9.

Eſ. 51. 3.

6. Finding this and much more in holie Writ, which can not deceaue vs, though we could not feele anie thing of it by experience, it ſhould be notwithſtanding ſufficient to make vs beleeue it more certainly and more vndoubtedly then anie thing which we ſee with our eyes, or touch with our hands; becauſe our ſenſes may deceaue vs, the Word of God can not. And yet we may ſtrengthen this, which we haue ſayd, by conſideration of

Other reaſons why a Religious life muſt needs be pleaſant.

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the natural disposition, as I may say, of God, and his infinit goodnes; which hauing shewed itself so farre, as to make him come downe from heauen, and suffer himself to be bound to a pillar, and whipped, and crowned with thornes, and nayled vpon a Crosse for his enemies, what wil he not doe for his friends? what wil he not doe for his children? specially the first costing him his life and bloud, wheras in affording these comforts, he is to be at no labour, nor to suffer the least blemish of anie happines belonging vnto him. So that there can be no doubt, but that his infinit bountie wil be alwayes liberal towards his seruants, according to his wonted custome and good Nature.

7. What trouble therefore can there be in this life so great, which these comforts wil not sweeten? or what infirmitie so weake as not to be fully strengthned by these heauenlie guifts? or what other thing so hard and harsh to man, which seasoned with these delights, wil not haue a daintie relish and easie digestion? *S. Bernard* sayd wel in a long and eloquent Sermon, which he made of the happines of Religious people: It was part of the liberalitie of God, not only to lay before vs the reward of eternal life, but to promise vs spiritual ioyes euen in this life. For so also the workmen of this world are wont to haue their meat at their work, and their hire in the end. In like manner souldiers receaue their pay, because their labour requires it; and at last they are rewarded with a larger Donatiue, according to the measure of their labours. So the Children of *Israel*, til they entred vpon the Land of Promise, wanted not their *Manna* in the Desert. This double promise is euidently also expressed by the Prophet, when he sayth: *God wil repay the reward of their labours; and leade them in a wonderful way.* This way is *the way of the testimonies* (of the Commandments) *of God*; wherin another Prophet testifyeth, that *he delighted as in al the riches of the world.*

S. Bernard serm. Ecce nos. Sap. 10. 17. Ps. 118. 14.

8. We haue manie examples, which proue this abundance of spiritual comfort, of which we are speaking. *Cassian* relateth, that a holie Abbot, named *Iohn*, was wont to be filled with such wonderful inward sweetnes, that he did not remember, whether he had eaten anie thing the day before. Blessed *Ephrem* finding his hart readie to burst with heauenlie ioy, was wont to cry out: *Depart from me, ô Lord, a little; because the weaknes of this vessel is not able to abide it. S. Bernard* was so absorpt with the like ioyes, that riding al day long by the side of a lake, he did not marke, that there was anie such thing; and liuing a whole yeare in a Celle, did not know, whether it were open at top or no. And it is so ordinarie to reade of this kind of fruits in those dayes, that we way spare a labour of rehearsing them. Neither is our Age barren of them; or can they indeed be wanting in anie, because God neuer leeseth of his bountie and liberalitie, which is the stock from which they grow; though they may perhaps not be so apparent, because they are fresh, and people be yet aliue, and consequently their actions haue not that authoritie, which Antiquitie affordeth.

Examples of these delights. Cass. Coll. 19. c. 4. Ephrem. S. Bernard.

9. They that were inward with our Father and Founder *S. Ignatius*, report of him, that he had such continual abundance of spiritual teares, that his eyes decaying with it, he almost lost his sight; and had doubtles vtterly lost it, but that vpon aduice of Physicians and request of some of his

S. Ignatius Ribad. l. 5. c. 1.

Companie, he obtayned of God the fauour to haue them as it were at command, to giue them scope, or restraine them, as he thought good.

S Xauerius. Torsel. l. 4. c. 7.

10. *S. Francis Xauier* was often seen to lay his hands vpon his breast, & with his eyes lifted vp to heauen, out of the abundance of heauenlie comfort, to cry out: *It is enough, O Lord, it is enough*; as if he could beare no more, as we sayd of *S. Ephrem*. And when he was in iourney, which he alwayes made on foot, his mind was so fixed and absorpt in God, that going out of his way, he often went vpon thornes, and bryars, and stones, and heeded it not; and by reason of it, his feete and his legs were alwayes bloudie, and ful of matterie sores; and he notwithstanding did not feele it. And of my owne knowledge, I know manie of this our Societie, and haue heard of more, that haue been so familiar with God, that they haue liued perpetually in these kinds of comforts and ioyes; & could name them, but that I haue a custome (and meane to hold it) to name no man, while he is aliue. But these fauours are extraordinarie; and doubtles happen not to al.

Ordinarie comforts.

11. There be other great comforts, and of great value, which are ordinarie, & very frequent, or rather daylie, and may be and are obtayned by following the common and ordinarie manner of a Religious life, as being grounded in puritie of hart, & the practise of vertue, & mortification, which are the daylie exercises of Religion. For as the Sunne communicateth his light to euerie thing, according to the disposition, which it findeth in the thing itself; if the ayre be pure, it filleth it ful of light; if it be clowdie & ful of mists, it doth not therefore leaue it wholy destitute of light, but giues it so much, as the grossenes of the ayre wil admit of; and pearceth into a house by the passages & chinks, which it findes, as farre as the chinks wil giue it leaue: In like manner God dealeth with vs, his nature being no lesse inclinable to doe good, then the Sunne to giue light. To great men, where he findeth no hindrance, he communicateth himself largely & fully; others, that are not yet perfect, but haue certain clowdes within them, he doth not wholy forsake or neglect, but giueth them so much light, as is proportionable to their capacitie. So that though our weaknes come farre short of the height, to which the Saints are arriued, yet God stooping to our infirmitie, *neuer suffereth them that follow him*, as I sayd before, *into the Desert, to get away fasting, least they faynt by the way, but filleth them in such abundance, that manie chests of fragments remaine.* And these comforts and ioyes of themselues are so great, that the least drop of them is able to extinguish al feeling and desire of worldlie comfort.

Ioan 6.

Religious people haue pleasure in temporal things also.

12. And thus much of the multiplicitie of delight, which the vse of spiritual things affords Religious people, which is the principal; and yet they are not altogeather debarred of pleasure in temporal things; yea oftimes they are so ful of contentment in them, that worldlie people haue not more, though they be neuer so greedie of them, & runne headlong after them. I speake not of fleshlie delights, or those which cannot be had without sinne; for no man in his right wits can place true contentment in them, the first being beastlie, and the second bringing a remorse, which alone tormenteth a man more, then al the rest, which is in them, can giue him ease. Setting therefore these aside, and speaking of a man, as he is truly Man, that is, of one that gouerneth himself by reason, I may truly say, that spiritual men take more contentment in the things

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of this world, then anie carnal people whatsoeuer. For carnal people set their harts wholy vpon that, which is the least and meanest in euerie creature, to wit, vpon the outside of it only; and following that, inordinatly and too too greedily, what doe they but that which S. *Augustin* confesseth of himself? *They cast themselues deformedly vpon the beautiful things, which God created.* But spiritual men proceede farre after another fashion, and take another way more apt to breed contentment. And we may declare it by that, which S. *Bonauenture* writeth of S. *Francis*; for thus he speaketh of him: He tooke an incredible delight in the creatures themselues, and was wont to exult in them, beholding them al as the works of God; and, as it were, drinking of the fountain of his infinit goodnes in the streames of these seueral things that runne from him, and considering the natures, and qualities, and effects, which God hath bestowed vpon euerie one of them, togeather with the order, and connexion, and beautie, wherin they are ranked and set forth, it was like a heauenlie harmonie and consort of Musick to the eares of his soule; & in the beautifulnes of them he did acknowledge and loue God, who is aboue al things beautiful. This was the manner, which S. *Francis* held; and al doe imitate him, that haue not eyes only in their bodie, *as a horse and a mule, who haue no vnderstanding*, but make vse of the eyes of their mind.

S. *Aug.* 10. *Conf.* c. 27.

S. *Bona.* *in vit.* S. *Franc.*

13. Now how farre this delight doth surpasse that, which ignorant and carnal people take, S. *Cyprian* wil tel vs, if we giue eare vnto him; for he vseth this verie argument to perswade people from going to stage-playes: A Christian, *sayth he*, hath better sights to behold, if he wil: he hath delights, which are holie and truly profitable, if he bethink himself; and to omit those, which he cannot yet behold, he hath the beautie of this world, which he may worthily stand to consider and admire. He may behold the rising of the Sunne, and againe the setting, the vicissitude wherof maketh day & night; the sphere of the Moone, marking-out the times by continual encrease and decrease; the multitude of glittering starres; and the parts of the yeare diuided by seueral changes. And so discourseth at large of the wonderful works of God in Nature; shewing how a Christian may take much more contentment by contemplating these things, then anie man can doe in beholding a play or anie such idle trifle, wherewith the vulgar is so much lead away. So that if we lay al these things togeather, the outward and the inward contentments, those that are spiritual belonging to the mind, & those which I spake off last belonging to the bodie, it is euident, that nothing can be more delightful thē a Religious life, where euerie thing is so ful of ioy, and the pleasures therof so interlaced one with another, and so continual, and withal so real and solide, and (as S. *Cyprian* speaketh) so beneficial, one ouertaking another, and most commonly at one and the self-same time, one following vpon the nick of another, that we may wel think, that our Sauiour makes his word good in it, when he sayd: *He came to the end his Elect might haue life, and haue more abundantly*, that is, a more delightful and more contented life, and more ful of pleasure, then worldlings themselues.

S. *Cypr.* Ser. de Spectac.

Io. 10. 10.

Of the contentment, which Religious people take in Pouertie.

CHAP. VIII.

THere want not other fountaines of pleasure in Religion; and among them we may iustly reckon Pouertie; howsoeuer it may seeme a Paradox to them, that (to vse the words of the Prophet *Dauid*) *cal the people happie*, that abound in temporal things, and haue manie sonnes and daughters very fayre and beautiful, multitudes of flocks of fruitful sheep, granaries so ful that they need to be emptied one into another. These people in the vogue of the world are accounted happie; but the holie Prophet instantly correcteth this errour, and sheweth vs a truer and a better happines: *Blessed is the people, whose Lord is their God.* And who is there but wil grant, that Religious people haue God for their Lord and Soueraigne, and serue him alone so intirely, that they acknowledge no other Lord but him? And they are indeed a *People*, becausse they serue not God a-part, but associated togeather with certain lawes and rules, and in one place, with al things common among them, the number of them makes a familie, and, as it were, a nation of people. To this people therefore we may also fitly apply that, which the same Prophet sayth in another place: *Blessed is the people, that knoweth Iubilation.* For wheras there be diuers other spiritual Soules, that abound with heauenlie comfort and sweetnes, and in their secret retirements enioy their delights by themselues; Religious people dwelling togeather, are as a multitude that liueth in perpetual exultation, and the concurrence of so manie ioyful Soules doubles their Iubilation.

Psal. 143. — Who are truly happie. — *Ps. 88. 16.*

It is a happines to haue nothing.

2. Blessed therefore is this people, though it haue none of that temporal wealth, wherin the world placeth so much happines; yea the more blessed, becausse it hath it not; for withal it is free from the infinit troubles and molestations, which wayte vpon the abundance of worldlie wealth; and they that by the light of God's grace can discouer that, which is inward, doe plainely see, that one chief happines of Pouertie is, to be free from the vnfortunate goods of Fortune. *S. Gregorie* vnderstanding this very wel, applyed that place of holie *Iob* (*When he shal be filled, he shal be streighted; he shal be in perplexitie, and euerie grief shal rush vpon him*) to a wealthie man, that hath his fil of euerie kind of worldlie thing, and liues in al abundance. For first, sayth *S. Gregorie*, he had sorrow in the tediousnes of his desires, how

Iob 20. 22.

S. Greg. 15. Mor. c. 14.

» he might compasse his intentions, how he might come by some things by
» faire meanes, and some by fowle. When he hath his desire by possessing the
» things desired, then another grief vexeth him; he is sollicitous and feareful
» how he may keepe that, which he knowes he purchased with a great deale of
» labour. He is iealous of euerie bodie, and suspicious of deceipt, fearing that

he

he may ſuffer by another, that which he did to others. If he ſee a man more powerful then himſelf, he feares he may oppreſſe him. If he ſee a poore man, he ſuſpects him for a theef; and it is no ſmal care which he hath, leaſt the things themſelues, which he hath gathered, waſte of their owne nature, and by want of looking-to; and in al things feare itſelf being a torment, he miſerably ſuffers, whatſoeuer he feares he may ſuffer. Thus ſpake *S. Gregorie* very truly, iudicſouſly obſeruing, that though there were no danger from abroad to be feared, that which is intrinſecal and in-bred in the verie nature of euerie temporal thing, can neuer be wanting, to wit, that things of themſelues grow old and go to decay, and cannot be preſerued without exceſſiue care, but are like a houſe, that is continually panching, vnleſſe a man be alwaies vnderpropping and bolſtering it vp, and haue his eye and care perpetually vpon it. And conſequently the more wealth we heape togeather, the more we encreaſe with payne and ſollicitude; and the verie ſollicitude and labour about it, bereaues vs quite of the ioy, which is imagined in it. It is therefore no ſmal happines and comfort, to be free from ſo manie vexations, ſpecially about things, which in themſelues are ſo baſe, and indeed vnprofitable.

3. Secular people themſelues, and the greateſt louers of worldlie wealth among them, confeſſe that to be rich, is ful of trouble, but wil needs perſwade vs, that the trouble is abundantly recompenſed by the manie commodities and pleaſures, which wealth doth bring with it. Let vs therefore ſee, what kind of compenſation this is. If we looke into the grounds of Nature, as we ought, whatſoeuer is in the world, was made for the maintenance of man, to furniſh him with meate, drink, cloath, houſe-roome, and the like. As for money, the vſe of it of itſelf is impertinent to this purpoſe, but was introduced meerely for the eaſier exchange of things neceſſarie for ſuſtenance, that (as *Ariſtotle* obſerueth) *he that hath plentie of one thing, might with his money purchaſe ſome others, which he hath not.* So that money being a bare inſtrument for the getting of neceſſaries, and, as it were, a ſupply, where they are wanting, it muſt needs follow, that there can be no other end or vſe of hauing it, then that, for which we vſe al other natural things, to wit, for our bodilie ſuſtenance; that which is beyond this, is diſordered, and ſuperfluous, and vnprofitable and in verie deed a burden. For Nature is content with a few ordinarie things; and if we wil follow the rule, and exigent, and meaſure, which Nature preſcribes, it wil be very eaſie, not only to bring the deſires therof within compaſſe, and furniſh the neceſſities of it, but to ſatisfye it, and, as I may ſay, to glut it. In witnes wherof I ſhal not need to bring a *Simeon Stylites*, or *Arſenius*, or ſome *Macarius*, whoſe liues may perhaps ſeeme too-too auſtere and rigid to imitate; but we wil heare, what a Heathen Philoſopher diſcourſeth aduiſedly to this purpoſe, and very truly. I wil not haue you, *ſayth he*, denye Nature anie thing. It is ſtubborne, and cannot be ouercome, but wil haue his owne. But yet « know, that whatſoeuer is ouer and aboue nature, is of courteſie, and not neceſ- « ſarie. I am hungrie; I muſt eate; but whether the bread, which I eate, be « coorſe or fine, belongeth not to nature. Nature deſires the bellie may be fil- « led; not that it be pleaſed. I am thirſtie; Nature regardeth not, whether

The end and vſe of money. *Ariſt. Pol. c. 6.*

Nature contented with a little.

Seneca Ep. 120.

„ the water, which I drink, be taken out of the next pond, or paſſed through
„ a great deale of ſnow to temper it with a forraine coolnes. Nature requi-
„ reth only that my thirſt be quenched: It importeth not, whether I drink in
„ a cuppe of gold, or cryſtal, or glaſſe, or in the hollow of my hand. If
„ hunger cal vpon me, I reach to that, which is next at hand. Hunger giues a
„ reliſh to anie thing, that I lay hands on. He that is hungrie, refuſeth no-
„ thing.

S. Hierome. 4. *S. Hierome* in his ſecond Booke againſt *Iouinian* ſpeaketh to the ſame
„ effect in theſe words: And that which a man may iuſtly wonder at, *Epicure*,
„ the chief vpholder of Pleaſure, filleth al his bookes with hearbes and
„ fruits, and teacheth a man to liue vpon groſſe meates, becauſe it is an
„ exceſſiue trouble and miſerie, to prouide fleſh and curious fare; and
„ the care of prouiding it, ouerſwayeth the pleaſure which is in feeding
„ largely vpon it, wheras our bodie requires barely meat and drink; and
„ it is not poſſible to attend to the ſtudie of wiſedome, and buſie our
„ thoughts with a table wel-furniſhed, and with the trouble and care
„ of prouiding it. The neceſſities of Nature may be ſupplyed with anie
„ kind of meate. Cold and hunger are driuen away with ordinarie food
„ and cloathing. Whervpon the Apoſtle ſayth: Hauing food and cloa-
„ thing, let vs be content therewith. Daynties and choice of curious di-
„ ſhes are nouriſhers of auarice. It is an exceſſiue comfort to a Soule, to be
„ contented with a little, and treade the world vnder foot, to exchange
„ the power, and daynties, andpleaſures therof (for which, riches are ſo
„ greedily ſought after) with coorſe fare and a poore garment, and think
„ itſelf wel rewarded with it. Take away exceſſe of bancketting and luſt,
„ and no man wil ſeeke to be rich. Behold how *S. Hierome* teacheth vs to
make Pouertie ſweet, by rooting-out the deſire of delicacies and diſor-
der.

5. And ſeing the cauſe of Pouertie dependeth vpon this ſtring, it wil not be amiſſe to conſider, how little theſe earthlie daynties are to be eſteemed, or rather how ful they are of gal and bitternes, ſeeme they neuer ſo ſweet and ſauourie to Senſe. *S. Iohn Chryſoſtome* in the Booke, which he wrote of Virginitie, hath a large and eloquent diſcourſe of this ſubiect, wherin he ſheweth, that abundance of good meat and drink brings ſurfits, choliks, ſhortnes of breath, gyddines of the head, and diuers other troubleſome affections preſently, and in time, the gowte, hectick feauers, falling-ſicknes, palſey, and the like diſeaſes, which are ſo intollerable; that ſo ſmal and ſo ſhort a pleaſure, as is the pleaſing of our palate, cannot in anie reaſon be bought at ſo deare a rate. Frugalitie on the other ſide brings health, and preſerues it, and is not ſubiect to thoſe miſchiefs, wherof anie one is able to dead al the pleaſure, which can be apprehended in them. And he proueth further, that though none of theſe euils were to be feared, there is yet more pleaſure in Pouertie then in riches; which indeed is contrarie to the common apprehenſion; yet both heer and in another Homilie of his, he layeth it downe ſo clearly, that he puts it out of al queſtion. There is one thing, ſayth he, wherin riches ſeeme to haue the better of pouertie, to wit, that they that are rich, ſwimme dayly in delights, and haue their fil of al kind of pleaſure

S. Iohn Chryſoſt. de Virgin. c. 69.

Id Hom. 1. ad Pop.

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in their banckets; but the tables of the poore haue this alſo in a farre better manner. For it is not (ſayth *S. Iohn Chryſoſtome*) the qualitie of the meat, but the diſpoſition of the people, that brings contentment in banckets. If a man come hungrie to table, anie ordinarie diſh wil pleaſe him better, then your rare compounds and exquiſit ſawces: wheras they, that ſit downe before they be hungrie, as vſually rich people doe, though they haue verie dayntie fare before them, they find no taſt in it, becauſe their ſtomack is not in order for it; which both experience teacheth, and holie Scripture alſo in theſe words: A ſoule, that is ful, wil tread vpon the honie-combe; and a hungrie ſoule wil take bitter for ſweet. And that which we ſay of meat, holds in drink. For as hunger is better then anie ſawce for meat, ſo thirſt giueth a reliſh to anie kind of drink, though it be but a cup of fayre water. Which the Royal Prophet inſinuateth, when he ſayth: *And he filled them with honie out of the rock*; for *Moyſes* did not ſtrike honie out of the rock, but the Children of Iſrael were at that time ſo thirſtie, that the water, which they then hapned vpon, ſeemed ſweeter then anie honie. The like may be ſayd of ſleep; for it is not the ſoft bed, nor the guilded bed-ſteed, nor the ſilence about vs, nor anie thing of this nature, that brings vs a-ſleepe, but through labour & wearines, wanting it we are half a-ſleepe, before we lye downe; to which purpoſe *Salomon* ſayth: *Sleep is welcome to a ſeruant, whether he eate little or much.* This is *S. Iohn Chryſoſtome's* diſcourſe of Pouertie in general. *S. Baſil* ſpeaking particularly of Religious people, ſayth, that they feede vpon their little pittance of coorſe fare with more delight, then ſecular people doe vpon their great ſeruices and abundance of al kinds of dayntie diſhes.

Pr. 27. 7.

Pſ. 80. 17.

Eccl. 6. *iux.* 70.

S. *Baſil. Conſt. Mon.* 27.

6. Finally, it is worth conſideration, that no man ſeekes to be rich, becauſe he loues riches barely for themſelues, but becauſe he loues himſelf, & by them ſeeketh eaſe & contentment. Were it not therefore much better (if it could be done) to haue this ſelf-ſame eaſe and contentment of mind, which riches fetch ſo farre about, and through ſo manie varieties of chances, without anie trouble of being rich, and ſo eate the fruit readie dreſt and pared? Certainly it were. And this is the fruit of Religious Pouertie. For a Religious man is as wel contented, and takes as much pleaſure in hauing nothing, as anie rich man can doe in poſſeſſing al that he hath, & farre more; becauſe rich men, though they liue in abundance, and indeed though they had al that can be had, cannot haue the peace and quiet of mind, which themſelues deſire and ayme at. For the mind cannot be at quiet, vnleſſe it be filled; and it is not theſe outward things, that can fil it, becauſe they are outward, but Vertue, which is within, filleth it, and ſpecially the voluntarie and affectionate embracing of Pouertie. Wherupon *S. Iohn Chryſoſtom* alluding to a ſaying of the Prophet *Eſay*, calleth Pouertie a fournace, wherin (ſayth he) the miracle of the Three Children is renewed, when as not only the flame of the fournace did not touch them, but a coole ayre did refreſh them in the midſt of the fire. Pouertie conſidered in itſelf is a ſcorching and payneful fire; but if a man caſt himſelf voluntarily into it, and being in it giue thanks to God, his bonds fal aſunder, and the fire goeth out; or if it doe not goe out, in ſteed of the ſcorching flame, he feeleth a coole dew, which is much more wonderful. This is plainly to be perceaued in the ſeruāts of God, who vow Pouertie; for in their Pouertie, they are richer, then the rich

Contentment eaſier to be had without riches.

Eſay. 48. 10. S. *Io. Chryſ. Hom.* 4. *in Matth.*

» of the world, and in the midſt of the fire, there deſcēdeth a moſt pure dew vpon
» them. Not to deſire to be rich, is a heauenlie dew naturally refreſhing the
» ſoule; and as the Three Children by contemning the command of the King,
» grew more conſpicuous then the King himſelf: ſo they that ſet al the rich pre-
» ſents of this word at naught, are the more reſpected and honoured for it by
» the world itſelf. This is the diſcourſe of *S. Iohn Chryſoſtom.*

7. But becauſe the verie name of Pouertie is growne odious, and the onlie noyſe of it doth inſtantly bring a world of miſeries into our thoughts, let vs diue into the ground of this errour, and ſee, how people come to be ſo much deceaued. The ground of the errour is, becauſe (as we touched once before) there is a kind of Pouertie, which indeed is baſe and vnworthie, and withal very irkſome and tedious; a vulgar kind of pouertie, as we may cal it, which people apprehending, and not weighing things with their due circumſtances, but carried away with the likenes of the name, are iealous, leaſt Religious Pouertie haue the ſelf-ſame inconueniences annexed vnto it, which that other hath. But it is not ſo; for they differ in manie things, but chiefly in two. For firſt, the Pouertie of the world growing vpon neceſſitie, and not of vertue, is alwayes accompanied with a deſire of being rich; and deſiring it, they ſeeke to compaſſe it; and not being able to compaſſe it, thence comes their grief, and ſadnes, and woeful cares. Religious people voluntarily choo-ſing to be poore, and being deſirous euer to remaine ſo, are not only free from al trouble of mind, but doe not ſo much as feele the want, in which they are, becauſe they deſire and loue it. To which purpoſe *Seneca* ſayd truly: *It is much one, not to deſire a thing, and to haue it.* And conſequently this kind of Pouertie is ſo farre from bringing trouble and diſquiet, that a man hath ful as much contentment in it, as if he had al the riches in the world.

Two kinds of Pouertie, very different.

Sen. Ep. 120.

8. The other difference is, that Religious Pouertie hath a great ſtay and comfort (which other poore people ordinarily haue not) in the care and prouidence of God, and his vndoubted promiſe. For (as *S. Francis* was wont to ſay) there paſſeth a kind of couenant and bond betwixt God and Religious people; they on their part forſaking al things, and God on his part promiſing to maintayne them, and prouide for them, not only as a maiſter for his ſeruants, but as a father for his children, and ſuch children as for his ſake, and for his loue haue abandoned al human helps & comforts. Wherfore if a crow, as meane a bird as it is, haue naturally ſo much loue, that it brin-geth the yong-ones meate to the neſt, when they cal for it, and goeth for it a-farre of; ſhal we not with farre more reaſon think, that God wil haue the like care of thoſe, whom he hath begotten, and beſtowed vpon them a life incomparably more excellent?

The comfort of the Prouidēce of God.

S. Francis.

A contract betweene God, and Religious people.

9. Nay Religious Pouertie is yet more to be admired and loued, becauſe it is free from al the inconueniences of worldlie riches, as we ſhewed before, and hath notwithſtanding al the commodities, which worldlie wealth can bring a man, & neuer wanteth neceſſarie ſuſtenance, prouided by other folkes labours, and ſent-in by the bountiful goodnes of Almightie God; which addeth greatly to the pleaſantnes of this life, wherof we are ſpeaking. For when a man vnderſtands truly, that the Soueraigne King of Kings hath ſo particular a care to prouide al things neceſſarie for him, and experienceth daily

ſo

ſo manie euident tokens of this care; how can it chooſe but ſauour more ſweetly to him, then al the riches of the world beſides? We might teſtifye this by very manie examples of holie men; but *S. Francis* ſhal ſerue for al, becauſe he did particularly affect this vertue of Pouertie, and often diſcouered the manie benefits of it, and once in particular the pleaſantnes of it, by this occaſion.

10. As he trauelled into France, he ſat downe to dinner at the edge of a fountaine, with his Companion *Maſſeus*; and powring forth the peeces of broken bread, which they had begged betwixt them from doore to doore as they went, manie of the peeces being moldie and hard, the *Saint* exulting in ſpirit, and turning to his Brother, began to ſummon him to giue thanks to God for ſo exceſſiue a treaſure of Pouertie, & repeated often this word *treaſure*, rayſing his voice euerie time a note higher. His Brother *Maſſeus* asked him, what that treaſure was, ſeing themſelues in ſuch apparent want of al neceſſaries, and hauing neither meate nor wine, nor table to eate on. The Saint anſwered: This is the exceſſiue benefit, which I ſpeake of, that God hath ſupplyed al our wants, and ſent vs this bread and this water, and this ſtone to dine on. And going from thence into the next Church that was vpon the way, he earneſtly beſeeched God to giue him and al his Brethren a particular loue of holie Pouertie; and prayed with a great feruour, that his face did ſeeme to be on a burning fire. In this feruour, turning to his Brother *Maſſeus* with his armes wide open, he called him vnto him with a lowde voice. *Maſſeus* aſtoniſhed caſt himſelf into the armes of the holie Saint; but *S. Francis* did ſo burne with that diuine fire, that the breath that came from his mouth, carried *Maſſeus* manie cubits high into the ayre; in which poſture, as he often after related, he found in himſelf ſuch inward ſweetnes, as in al his life-time before, he had neuer felt the like. Then *S. Francis* ſpake thus vnto him: Let vs goe to *Rome*, to beg of the holie Apoſtles *S. Peter* and *S. Paul*, that they wil „ teach vs to poſſeſſe, as we ought, and with fruit, this ſo excellent a treaſure of Pouertie; for it is ſo rare and ſo diuine, and we ſo vile and abiect, that we „ are vnworthie to contayne it in ſuch veſſels as ours are. It is a vertue deriued „ into vs from heauen, teaching vs voluntarily to treade vnder foot al earthlie „ things, and taketh away al impediments, that the ſoule of man may freely, and „ with al expedition conioyne itſelf with his Lord and God. „

The treaſure of Pouertie

Of the pleaſantnes of Chaſtitie and Obedience.

CHAP. IX.

THE pleaſures of *Chaſtitie* and *Obedience* are not leſſe then thoſe of *Pouertie*, but rather ſo much the greater, by how much theſe two vertues are farre more noble and excellent in themſelues. Abbot *Chæremon* *Caſſ. Coll. 12 c. 13.*

The pleasures of Chastitie inexplicable.

Cheremon in *Cassian* discoursing of Chastitie, among manie other rare commendations of it, sayth very truly, that neither he that hath not tryed it, can possibly conceaue the pleasure of it, nor he that hath tried it, declare it. As, sayth he, if a man had neuer tasted honie, and another should goe about to tel him, how sweet it is, the one would neuer be able to conceaue by hearing, the sweetnes which he neuer tasted, and the other could neuer compasse to expresse in words the pleasure, which his taste tooke in the sweetnes of it; but taken with the delightfulnes of it within his owne knowledge, he must of force admire in silence within himself alone the pleasantnes of the sauour, wherof he hath had experience. But yet though we cannot so wel declare, how sweet it is in itself, there be certain wayes, whereby we may giue a guesse at it, and particularly by comparison therof with the troubles of marriage; a married life hauing no time free from grief and bitternes; insomuch that *S. Hierome* writing of Virginitie against *Iouinian* sayth: We not knowing how matters passe, did conceaue, that marriage enioyed at least the pleasures of the flesh; but if married people haue also tribulation in flesh, in which only they seemed to haue pleasure, what is there left to moue a man to marrie, seing both in spirit and in soule, and in the verie flesh, there is tribulation.

S. Hier. l. 1. cont. Iouin.

2. It were easie to reckon vp an infinit number of miseries and vexations, which partly man and wife are cause of one to another, partly come by their children, or by the charge of house-hold, and manie other wayes; but al these are too wel knowne, and I haue spoken of them before. Wherefore we wil content ourselues with one onlie famous saying of *Cato*, a Heathen, but yet a wise and aduised man: *If the world could be without wiues, our life would be like to the Gods of heauen; and consequently they are an euil, yet a necessarie euil.* Wherin he sayth truly for a man that liued in that darknes of Infidelitie, that it is an euil, to marrie, & that it is a life ful of miserie and inconueniences; but not so truly, when he sayth, it is necessatie, and not to be auoyded. For the Grace of Christ doth so blesse this infirme and corrupt nature of man, *that in the beds*, that is, in the harts, *where before dragons did dwel*, to wit, filth and vncleannes, *the greennes of the reed and rush should rise*, and the sweet odour of Chastitie and holines of life; and hath made it not so hard a thing, as that few are able to compasse it, but common and easie, to the end no age nor sexe might pleade infirmitie, or be afrayd to ayme at so high a dignitie. This is that, which our Sauiour in *S. Matthew* did intend to expresse by the name of *Eunuchs*, giuing vs to vnderstand, that as easie as it is for an Eunuch to abstaine from that, to which he is impotent, and consequently must haue no thought of it; so easie is it for them to abstaine, that are voluntarily continent; because that which Nature doth in those others, Grace doth in these: though in these there be manie more, and more efficacious things, which make Chastitie farre more easie and more delightful to them. Think with thyself, sayth *S. Iohn Chrysostome*, if either by nature thou wert an Eunuch, or were made so by violence, what thou wouldst doe, seing of necessitie thou must then abstaine from that pleasure, and haue no reward for abstayning.

The easines of liuing chast.

Cato.

Esay. 35. 7.

Matth. 19.

S. Io. Chrys. Hom. 63. in Matth.

Giue

Giue thanks therefore to God, becauſe thou ſhalt haue a great reward and a glorious Crowne, if thou liue as they doe, without anie reward, nay farre more eaſily, more ſafely, & more pleaſantly; both becauſe the hope of retribution doth ſtrengthen thee, and the knowledge, that it is an act of vertue, doth comfort thee. And truly conſidered, what effect may we iuſtly think the hope of a reward in heauen, which *S. Iohn Chryſoſtome* ſpeaketh of, wil worke in a Religious ſoule, ſeing the greedines of an earthlie recompence, or the ſerious application to ſtudie, or to anie other worldlie buſines is forcible enough eaſily to diuert a man's thoughts from al obſcenitie? Inſomuch that *Plato* himſelf (which a man may with reaſon wonder at) exhorting yong men to liue chaſte, bringeth an example of a certaine man of *Tarentum*, and diuers others beſides, whome there he names, that abſtayned from al pleaſure of that nature, to the end to preſerue their bodilie ſtrength intire and in the ful vigour, which it ought to be, for the Olympical Exerciſes. They therefore, ſayth he, abſtayned from that pleaſure, which vulgarly is eſteemed happie, that they might ouercome others in Wraſtling, & in the Race, & ſuch other exerciſes; and ſhal not our youth be able to doe the like for a farre more noble victorie? what victorie? to wit, that ſubduing pleaſure, they may liue happily; & moreouer ſhal not feare of cõmitting a grieuous offence be able to make thẽ ouercome that, which others, that are farre worſe then they, are reported to haue ouercome? What would *Plato* haue ſayd, if he could haue had experience of the force of the loue of God, ſeing he thought the loue of earthlie things to be ſo effectual? wheras the loue of God doth ſo wholy poſſeſſe a ſoule, that it taketh no delight but in things Diuine and Celeſtial, and abhorreth more then death itſelf, anie thing that ſauours of vncleannes. Which *S. Macarius* proueth in this manner: If the loue of carnal marriage ſeparate a man ſo farre from father and mother and brethren, that eſteeming them al ſtrangers, he loues his wife only, and cleaues to her and hers, as to his owne; if, I ſay, the loue of fleſh doth ſo breake with al other loue, how much more ſhal they contemne al loue and delight in other things, that haue ſo neerly linked themſelues to God, and drunk ſo plentifully of his loue?

Plato Dial. 8. de Legib.

S. Macar. Hom. 4.

3. Theſe are the reaſons, why the abſtayning from al pleaſure in this kind is ſo eaſie and pleaſant, and the ground, whervpon *S. Hierome* deliuereth theſe words in commendation of this vertue: *How great happines is it, not to be a ſlaue to a wife, but to Chriſt? not to ſerue the fleſh, but the Spirit? For he that cleaueth to God, is one ſpirit.* And *S. Bernard* accordingly ſpeaking both of Chaſtitie and other vertues accompanying it, applyeth to this purpoſe that ſaying of the Prophet, ſhort in words, but large in ſenſe: *Delight in our Lord*; auerring that al Religious people are ſo plentifully made partakers of this delight in our Lord, that none of them al can denye, but that they feele it. My Brethren, ſayth he; Secular people may ſay ſo, you cannot ſay ſo. For who is there of you, that hath not often experienced the delight of a good Conſcience, taſted the ſweetnes of Chaſtitie, Humilitie, and Charitie? This is not like the delight in meate or drink or ſuch like: yet it is a delight, and a greater delight then al theſe. For it is not carnal delight, but Diuine.

S. Hier. lib. 1. cont. Iouin.

Pſ. 36. 4.

S. *Bern. ſer. 5. in Quadrag.*

4. *S. Ephrem* alſo, as it were aſtoniſhed with the pleaſures of Chaſtitie, diſcourſeth in this manner: O Chaſtitie, mother of loue, reſemblance of an Ange-

Ephrem. ſer. de Caſt.

„ lical life! O Chaſtitie, cleane of hart, ſweet in taſt, chearful in counte-
„ nance! O Chaſtitie, which maketh men like to Angels! O Chaſtitie, reioycing
„ the hart of him, that poſſeſſeth thee, and giuing wings to a Soule to fly vp to
„ heauen! O Chaſtitie, which bringeſt a ſpiritual ioy, and takeſt away ſorrow!
„ O Chaſtitie, which doſt diminiſh the paſſions of the mind, and free it from per-
„ turbation! O Chaſtitie, a ſpiritual Chariot, lifting him on high, that poſſeſ-
„ ſeth thee! O Chaſtitie, that buddeſt like a roſe in the midſt betwixt the ſoule
„ and bodie, and filleſt the whole houſe with a fragrant ſmel! This and much
„ more ſayth this holie ancient Father. And certainly if we grant, that filthie obſceneſſe hath naturally ſo much force to allure vs, and to ſet vs ſo much on fire, notwithſtanding the vnſeemelines of it; we cannot think but that honeſtie, and puritie, and the beautie of ſo rare a vertue muſt needs be much more forcible. For what compariſon is there betwixt light and darknes? or betwixt
Can. 6. 2. dirt and mire, where hogs doe tumble? and *thoſe lillies among which the Spouſe doth ſo willingly feed*, that he refuſeth al food without them? And thus much of Chaſtitie.

Obedience delightful. 5. The delights of Obedience are ſomewhat more apparent; becauſe Obedience hath none of the incommodities of Pouertie, nor yet ſo fel an enemie as Chaſtitie, our owne bodie making warre againſt Chaſtitie, and being both vncapable of feeling anie delight in puritie of life, and carrying vs rather headlong to al kind of ſenſualitie. Obedience dependeth of the mind only; which being capable to conceaue the beautie of ſo great a vertue, may eaſily alſo perſwade itſelf to loue it; and being ſo perſwaded, there remayneth litle or no contradiction from abroad. Beſides other things, which encreaſe the ſweetnes of it, firſt that it freeth vs from the troubles and anxieties, which are wont often to occurre in ſetling or gouerning our eſtate, in vndertaking or leauing this or that buſines, & indeed, in al occaſions and howres of our life; ſecondly, becauſe it putteth vs into the hands of God, and placeth vs in his armes to be carried, and ruled, and cheriſhed by him, then which what can be more delightful or more to be deſired? For if we ayme at honour, which doubtles in itſelf is pleaſing, nothing can be more honourable then to be ſo tenderly loued, and ſo louingly dealt-with by ſo great a Maieſtie; if it be profit that taketh vs, which alſo is ful of pleaſure, nothing can be more profitable then to relye our whole life, and al that we doe, vpon ſuch a guide. Finally al manner of comforts & delights are contayned in this one, to ſee ourſelues ſo inwardly linked to him, who is the onlie *Father of mercies* (as the Apoſtle ſtileth him)
2. Cor. 1. 3. *and the God of al comfort*; which, as al other ſpiritual things, no man can rightly value, but he that hath tryed it; and they that haue tryed it, doe ſo louingly and ſo paſſionatly affect Obedience, that libertie is a croſſe vnto them, as we reade of *B. Ægidius* a Franciſcan-Friar. For when *S. Francis* by reaſon of his eminent ſanctitie had giuen him freedome to go whither he would, and dwel where he would, within leſſe then foure dayes, his ſoule finding no reſt in that kind of largenes, he returned to *S. Francis*, earneſtly beſeeching him, to appoint him ſome certain aboad; becauſe in that free and looſe Obedience, he had no contentment at al.

Of the pleasure, which Religious people take in conuersation with their spiritual Bretheren.

CHAP. X.

I Come now to a solace of another nature, grounded in the sweetnes of conuersation with our spiritual Bretheren, which rests not in the mind, but diffuseth itself to sense; & is taken in seing, speaking, & hearing; & consequently is more apparent and more vniuersal, & a man needs not take paynes to perceaue it. The greatnes of it may be easily vnderstood, in regard it inuolues not one but manie comforts. For first, to loue and to be loued, is of itself excessiue pleasing, and we shal not neede to haue recourse to grace to conceaue it; nature itself sheweth it, by the inbred propension and desire, which it hath of companie, and hatred to be alone; and an euident proofe of the sweetnes of it is, that no man to choose would abound in al kind of wealth, and be bound withal to loue no man, nor to be loued of anie. So that this drawing and cleauing of man to other men, being so agreable to Nature, the effecting of it must needs be ful of delight and pleasure.

Loue is naturally delightful.

2. *Aristotle* is of the same opinion, and sayth, that therefore Friendship is so pleasing, because it consorteth with Nature; for as the beasts of the earth, and the fowles of the ayre, and the fishes of the sea, and al kind of liuing creatures, whether they be wild or tame, take a kind of contentment, to be with others of their kind; so Man much more. For there is no man that would not choose a poore and meane estate in companie of other men, rather then a life in al other respects most happie, vpon condition, that he should see no man. And from this principle, both *Arsstotle*, and al other ancient learned writers doe deriue the chiefest commendation of Friendship, not so much in regard we stand in need of one another's help (though this be something) as by reason of the natural inclination, which we haue to loue. To which purpose *Laertius* recordeth, that *Aristotle* was wont to cal Friendship, the greatest Good of al good things. Which perhaps *Aristotle* tooke from *Socrates*, who, as the same *Laertius* reporteth, had often in his mouth, that no free-hold was comparable to a true friend; nor nothing in the world could yeald man so much profit and pleasure. Which if we grant, we may easily also discouer, how farre the comfort of Religious Conuersation doth extend itself, and how much pleasure they feele in the mutual loue betwixt them, finding themselues to loue, and to be so intirely loued; and both being so natural to euerie bodie, as nothing more.

Aristot. 8. Eth. c. 1.

Socrates. Nothing comparable to a true friend.

3. Now if we consider, that of this kind of true friends, which the Philosophers describe vnto vs, there were scarce three or foure couple to be picked out of so manie Ages, such as the bloudie Tyrants themselues did enuie,

True friendship rare in the world.

how farre more fruitful and more happie is Religion, where we finde so manie swarmes of men so intirely linked togeather in the bond of Charitie, that we may truly say, so manie persons, so manie vnseparable companions, so manie bosome-friends, so manie louing brethren both in hart, & effect, and name? If we diue to the bottome of that, which is commonly called Friendship, we shal hardly find in this world anie worthie to beare the name. For they that loue for profit or for pleasure, loue not their friend, but themselues; and such loue cannot be called Friendship; for in like manner we loue our lands & our cattle; or speaking of men, we loue a Phisician or a Marriner, when we haue vse of them, or a common Ieaster, for the pleasure we take in his wit. The grounds therefore of true friendship is Vertue and Honestie; and that, which dependeth vpon this string, is the onlie solid and constant friendship. *Aristotle* speaketh to this purpose almost word for word; and the self-same reason conuinceth, that perfect friendship is rare, except it be among Religious people, who haue no other ground of their loue and coniunction, but Religion and Vertue; and consequently hauing so perfect friendship among them, it is also euident, that they must needs enioy al the commodities, and fruits, and pleasures therof, which the ancient Philosophers reckon to be very manie.

Vertue the ground of Friendship. *Arist. 3. Eth. c. 3. & 4.*

Likenes a second ground of pleasure.

4. Another ground of pleasure in conuersation, is likenes, which doth so much the more winne men's affections, by how much Nature is of itself exceeding greedie, as I may say, and extremely passionate, where it findes that sympathie and similitude; which among Religious people is more absolute then in anie other thing. For they agree not only in nature as men, or in Fayth and beleefe, as Christians; but in life, and conuersation, and proiects, and intentions, in their endeauours, orders, and employments, in their verie habit and cloathing; which must needs wonderfully enflame their affections and their loue towards one another; and loue, the more ardent it is, the more sweetnes it bringeth with it. For as euerie bodie takes delight to liue, and to enioy himself, and cannot be truly wearie of himself; so the more inward our affections are towards other men, and the neerer they draw to this degree of vnion with ourselues, the more delightful they are. And if it be so in al men, as we experience it in our children and kinsfolke, louing them though they be wicked or deformed; and the more we loue them, the more we delight to conuerse with them; to what height wil this pleasure rise, where vertue meetes with this linck of friendship? For vertue, whersoeuer it is, doth constraine a man to loue it, as we finde in those, whome we neuer saw, or perhaps were once our enemies: for if we perceaue anie incling of vertue in them, it silently speakes to our harts, to be friends with them. If therefore it make strangers friends; how much easier and more inwardly wil it binde those vnto vs, with whome we daily conuerse, and of whose vertue and Religion we are the more assured, the more familiarly we deale with them? So manie in the world take pleasure in hunting, and horse-races, and gallant apparrel, and in their buildings, and in being popular, it were most absurd to think, that these pleasures are comparable to the pleasure; which a man may take in a soule adorned with vertue and holines of life, with ample returne also of loue for loue. *Plato* sayth truly and elegantly, that if Vertue could be

Vertue enforceth loue.

seen

seen with our corporal eyes, it would wonderfully enflame the loue of people towards it. But in Religion in verie deede we see it; for as we see not the soule, which is in the bodie, in itself, yet we see it in the effects, in the motion, in the speech, in the discourse, which it makes, and so clearely, that we can no more doubt of it, then if we saw it with our corporal eyes: so we see Vertue in the acts therof, as if it were really before vs. We see Charitie extend itself to the seruice and tendance of our Brethren; we see Humilitie stooping to seruile offices, and often humbling itself vnto them, in Religion; we see Patience in enduring hardnes and embracing the Crosse; finally we see al other Vertues of the mind, and haue them in our eyes, when they walke out before vs, about the careful performance of their seueral duties. *Plato in Phed. Cic. 1. Offic.*

5. And besides this comelines of Vertue and Sanctitie, there be manie other things in most Religious people, for which we ought in reason highly to esteeme and desire their conuersation. For some are eminently learned, others profoundly wise, others wel-spoken, a guift which the Apostle reckons among the rest. And as for the pleasure, which men take in these things, I appeale to secular people themselues, who by their often repayre to Religious houses, doe sufficiently testifye the contentment they take in their presence and conuersation, though otherwise their palate be distempered with the disordered pleasures of this world; and yet thither they come for comfort in aduersitie, for light and counsel in their doubtful questions, for aduise and holesome admonitions vpon al occasions; and they think, the world goes wel with them, if they can enioy this comfort for an hower or two, but with Religious people it is an ordinarie thing and continual, and they haue it at command as their owne, and cannot but imparte these comforts to those that liue in house with them, and are their Brethren, farre more abundantly and more confidently, then they can with strangers. Religious people eminent for their natural parts. 1. Cor. 12. 10.

6. Whence we may deduce another branch of pleasure growing from Religious conuersation, to wit, that by liuing togeather, they haue often yea continual occasion and entercourse of such friendlie offices, as must needs entertayne and encrease the brotherlie loue, which is betwixt them, as fire is nourished with wood and coale. For first they liue togeather like bosome-friends, they meete often, they speake often courteously one to another; secondly they are alwaies doing and receauing good turnes from one another, they proffer their seruice, not as worldlie people doe, idly, and for the most part for their owne ends, but are really desirous to serue them in spiritual things; and ayme at nothing else in it, but to benefit their neighbours and brethren, and aduance the glorie of God. For we must not think, that Vertue and Sanctitie is so rigid and inflexible, as if it were of iron, or that it is alwayes mute, dreaming of nothing but of doing pennance. Rather in al occasions, but specially in conuersation with others, it is pliable and affable, the sweetnes of charitie inclining thervnto, and making people to condescend, and accommodate, and enlarge themselues to their neighbours. What therefore can be more delightful, then to be thus continually endeauouring to requite one another's courtesies, and striuing to ouercome their companions in charitable offices? specially where a man cannot wel tel, whether it be better to ouercome, or to suffer himself to be ouercome in Charitie. So that that, which *Aristotle* affirmeth of Friendship in general, is much more verifyed in this holie league of friendship: that though the ground of friendship be farre more noble Frie idlie offices betwixt Religious people. *Arist. 8. Eth. c. 3.*

and honourable, then the pleasure or profit which comes of it, because it is grounded in vertue and honestie, yet hauing so noble an offspring, neither pleasure nor profit is wanting, but rather it is very profitable in regard of the manie good offices, which passe betwixt friends, and much more delightful, then anie thing grounded vpon a meaner motiue, because the vertuous actions and behauiours of our friend is no lesse pleasant vnto vs, then our owne.

Religious Friendship assured.

7. We may adde for a complement, and as it were a delightful sawce to the meate, which is heer serued in, that ordinarie friendship is subiect to manie branglings, by reason either of the difference of mens minds, or of their fashion and behauiour, or of their state and calling, or by age growing vpon them, or by desire of something, which both parties cannot enioy, and manie such like accidents, which oftimes are cause of great fallings-out and much hatred, and make an vtter breach of friendship when they happen, and before they happen breed manie suspitions and iealousies, insomuch that there can be no solid comfort almost in anie worldlie friendship, specially the world being so generally infected with the poyson of self-loue, euerie one drawing to his owne ends, which is the absolute bane of al true league and friendship. The league, which is betwixt Religious people on the other side, is ful of solid pleasure, because being grounded in charitie, and free from al priuate interest, it is not subiect to those dangers and casualties, which I spake of; but as Abbot *Ioseph* in *Cassian* sayth very wel, wheras al secular friendship (wherof there he recites seueral kinds) is fickle and vnconstant, that only is permanent and indissoluble, which is grounded in the likenes of vertue. This is not subiect to be broken by anie casualtie, distance of place, or length of time cannot shake it, nor death itself dissolue it.

Cass. Coll. 16. c. 3.

8. And this pleasure, which I speake of, occurres vnto vs by conuersation with anie particular man among vs: what then shal I say of the whole familie, or Colledge, or house-hold? & of the ioy which is to liue in such companie? For who is there, that hath not experienced in himself, that as often as he hath beheld so manie of his Brethren in that decent, & graue, and deuout manner of habit and carriage, which is vsual among them, either singing in the Quire, or going in Procession, or set at a sermon or Exhortation, or working at their manual exercises, or sitting at board in their dining-roome, who is there, I say, that hath not found himself ouerioyed at such a sight, and sayd in his mind: *These are the hoast of God, armies not of souldiers, but of sonnes of the Highest.* This made *S. Leo* say, that it did exceedingly reioyce him, whensoeuer it was his good hap to behold a companie of seruants of God, & that in so manie Saints he felt the Angels present, & made no question, but God did visit them al with more plentie of his graces, when they were al togeather, as so manie glorious tabernacles of God, so manie excellent members of the bodie of Christ, shining with one light. A saying worthie to be noted, in regard he stileth them, that are consecrated to God, *tabernacles of God*, and *excellent members of Christ*, hauing euerie one of them their particular light in themselues, but yet giuing a greater light, & much more contentment by it, when that, which is seueral in them, meetes with al the rest togeather, and diffuseth itself farre & neere by that coniunction, that next vnto the blisseful ioyes, which we shal haue in the loue and contemplation of God himself, we may truly ranke the ioy & comfort, which we finde in the loue and conuersation with our spiritual Brethren.

The pleasure of liuing in such a communitie.

Gen. 32. 2.

S. Leo ser. de sua Assumpt.

9. The Saint-like familie of holie *Iob* was a liuelie resemblance of it. For he had manie children, and they liued al in such a league of perfect loue togeather, that

though euerie one of them kept a seueral house & familie, yet they were al of them, as it were, of one house-hold, and al things were common among them, *they feasted one another* (as the holie Scripture relateth) *in their turnes, and euerie one had his day.* So that they liued alwayes togeather in mirth & iolitie, & continual banckets. The sisters could not inuite their brethren, but were euer inuited by them, & did eate & drinke with them. After this manner, euerie Religious man is, as it were, continuallymaking a spiritual bancket for the rest of his Brethrē, with whome he liues; & the bancket is not set-forth with ordinarie dishes, but with exquisite vertues, & choice actions, & speeches of deuotion; they feast one another in their turnes, because euerie one doth reciprocally serue one another in the like kind. The children of *Iob* could in one day meete but once at one of their brethren's table; we feed at euerie one of our Brethren's table, and al at once, which is farre more. And as there were sisters among them; so if among Religious people there be anie that are inferiour, and somewhat more imperfect in vertue and feruour, as they were in sexe (of which kind certainly there be few in comparison of the rest, as among the children of *Iob* there were but three sisters for seauen brethren) though they haue not so much prouision of vertue as to be able to feast others, yet by reason of the brotherlie vnion, which is among them, they haue the happines to be feasted with the rest, and enioy for the present the pleasure of the feast, & bettering themselues by litle and litle, furnish themselues with plentie, as I may say, of fat & marrow; so that at last they also grow able & sufficient to inuite others.

Of the pleasure, which Religious men take in Learning.

CHAP. XI.

THE ground of the pleasures, of which I haue hitherto spoken, is supernatural; it followeth, that we speake of one that is natural, to wit, Learning & varietie of al kind of knowledge; which how delightful it is, may be gathered by two things. First, if we consider the noblenes of knowledge, as belonging to the noblest part of man, & being the fruit of the mind & vnderstanding, & withal wonderfully enriching and embellishing it: Secondly, if we weigh, how proper and how agreable it is to the nature of man, to know & vnderstand. For (as Aristotle sayth) euerie man is naturally bent to desire knowledge; & he maketh an argument to proue it by the loue, which we naturally haue to the particular senses, which are most vseful to bring knowledge, as to the sense of Seing an Hearing. Now if a man be so naturally inclined to knowledge, it must needs be a great pleasure to be learned. For commonly euerie thing takes most contentment in that, which is most agreable to nature; as the chiefest pleasure, which birds haue, is to flye; fishes, to swimme; and in our bodilie senses, our eyes are most delighted with seing, our tast with tasting, our eares with Musical cōcent. Why therefore should not our wit and vnderstanding be farre more pleased with the search and knowledge of truth, which is the proper food of it, and the diet, which it must naturaly feed on.

The desire of knowledge is natural. *Arist. 1. Metaph. c. 1.*

2. Insomuch that *Aristotle* did not stick to say, that there was no other way to liue alwayes a contented life without sorrow, but to betake oneself to the studie of Philosophie, in regard of the abundance of pleasure, which it affords. And no *Arist. 2. Pol. c. 5.*

Commendation of Philosophie.

wonder, if we consider the number, the varietie, the extent, the rarenes of the things, which Philosophie treateth of. For Philosophie being nothing elſe, but the ſearch of Nature, as Nature extends itſelf farre and neere, & is admirable to conſider, ſo vniuerſal & ſo admirable is the ſtudie of Philoſophie, leauing nothing in Nature, to the bottome wherof it doth not endeauour to diue. Firſt it conſiders the beginnings & cauſes of euerie thing, time, motion, place, things obuious & dayly in our eyes & in our hands, and yet withal ſo obſcure & intricate, that nothing more. It ſearcheth into the compoſition of man, ſoule & bodie, & al the properties & faculties of either part. It diſputes of the earth, & of the ayre, & ſeueral affections therof, as of the windes, thunder, lightning, rayne, & the cauſes of them. It beholdeth the heauens, and whatſoeuer belongeth to the knowledge of them, their greatnes, their light, and perſpicuitie, the number of the ſpheres, the conſtancie of their motion, their power and influence into theſe inferiour things, for the continuance and preſeruation of them. Among ſo manie things therefore, and infinit more, which cannot be numbred, but are exeeedingly delightful, can anie man make anie queſtion, but that a mind, that is giuen to the contemplation of ſo manie, ſo great, ſo admirable things, ſo farre aboue the capacitie of ordinarie people, turning and toſſing them vp and downe on euerie ſide, can otherwiſe chooſe, but liue in a perpetual paradiſe? For can there be anie thing more abſurd then to acknowledge, as we muſt needs, that our eares and our eyes take pleaſure in their ſeueral obiects, and to think that our mind, by which our ſenſes come to be capable of pleaſure, hath no pleaſure proper vnto it? For if it be delightful to behold a horſe that is wel limmed, or a tree that ſpreads itſelf abroad with faire and large branches; why ſhould it not be more delightful to contemplate the nature and eſſence of the horſe or tree, ſeing in this ſecond contemplation that is inuolued, which we ſee with our eyes, and much more and more excellent conſiderations? For as a picture, that is wel drawne and liuely ſet-forth in coulours, doth naturally delight euerie bodie that beholds it, but much more a skilful paynter, that beſides the ſight of the coulours, and draughts of the penſil, is able to iudge of the reaſons of them, and the nature of the ſhadowes, and the conueniencie and proportion and connexion of euerie part of it: So in al things of this world, the vulgar ſort beholds the outſide of them, and reſts there; they that are learned, conſider that which is more inward, the nature, the properties, and ſeueral qualities, and diſpoſitions of euerie thing, which as they are in themſelues things farre more noble, ſo alſo more delightful, and indeed able ſufficiently to entertayne anie man's thoughts; and accordingly al ancient Philoſophers were ſo taken with them, that they thought no happines in the world comparable to this kind of ſtudie. But Religious people haue yet one thing more, that giues the buſines a ſweeter reliſh, which no Heathen could arriue vnto, beholding al this world of things not ſo much as they are works of Nature, but as works of God the Authour of Nature; & entertayning themſelues in contemplation of the Power, & Wiſedome, and Loue of ſo great an Artificer in his wotks, as if they beheld al theſe his admirable attributs with their verie eyes; and what can be more pleaſant or more profitable then ſuch a ſight?

The vulgar reſts in the outſide.

The ſtudie of Diuinitie.

3. And thus much of the contemplation of natural things, which wil eaſily put vs into the way of conceauing the pleaſure, which muſt needs be farre greater in the knowledge of things Diuine, layd open vnto vs by the light of Diuinitie,

Diuinitie, which we finde diuided into three parts or branches, wherof one is called *Scholastical*, comprized and deliuered in a certain Method and way, in a manner, as humane Sciences; for the honour and commendation and sweetnes wherof, what can be sayd more then that the obiect of it is Godlines? and comprehendeth al that, which the wit of man can arriue to know touching the Vnitie, Infinitie, Power, Immensitie, Simplicitie, Knowledge, and Prouidence of GOD ouer euerie particular thing of this world, but chiefly concerning Saluation of mankind; and moreouer seueral processions, either inward, constituting three Persons in one Essence, or outward, in the Creation of al things; among which the Angels being the principal, it discourseth of their Nature, their Excellence, their Order and seueral Distinctions. And Man also being a work of God next in dignitie to the Angels, hath his place and rank in this Disputation, where the End is discussed, for which he was created; and the meanes & helps ordayned for this End, chiefly the Grace of God, his Lawes & precepts, Vertues both Theological (so called, because their obiect is God) and Moral, among which Iustice and the branches therof, are disputed at large, and whatsoeuer belongeth to the dutie of a Christian in matter of Contracts.

4. But that part of Diuinitie is most copious and most delightful, which discourseth of the mysterie of the Incarnation, & of the Sacraments, as effects therof; of the matter, forme, & efficacie of them, & also of the Ceremonies vsed in them, as conduits conveying the merits of the Passion of Christ to the benefit of our soules. So that if the life of those, that are in heauen, be therefore blessed, because their mind is alwayes fixed vpon God; what pleasure must this science needs afford, which is perpetually thinking of the same God? with this difference that in heauen they cõtemplate him face to face without anie veyle before their eyes, heer they goe vpon grounds of reason & most assured principles of Christian Fayth.

5. The holie *Scripture*, a second branch of Diuinitie, is like vnto the former for pleasantnes of the subiect, & for authoritie farre aboue it. *S. Augustin* doth deseruedly stile it *the delight and riches of our soule*; the *riches*, by reason of the fulnes and abundance of al goodnes requisite for the instruction and direction of man in the course of vertue, the *delight*, in regard of the vnspeakable sweetnes, which is in it; in which respect also elsewhere he sayth: It tasteth like honie, of the heauenlie honie, and is lightsome by the light, which it partaketh of God. *S. Hierome* in his Epistle to *Rusticus* a Monk, where he giueth him instructions to good life, comparing holie Scripture to an orchard, exhorteth him to gather the seueral fruits therof, to feede himself with those daynties, to solace himself with holding them in his armes. *S. Bernard* likeneth this holie Word of God to a bancket excelling in three things, delightful to the taste, solid in respect of nourishment, & effectually medicinable: the sweetnes of the sound of his words, delights our affections; the copiousnes of their seueral senses, fattens & nourisheth the mind; the deapth of the mysteries contayned in them, exercising our vnderstanding and keeping it in awe, wonderfully alayes the swelling of puffing science. Abbot *Serenus* in *Cassian* compareth holie Scripture excellently wel to a fat & fertil peece of ground yealding varietie of fruits, wherof some are to be eaten raw from the tree, others by reason of the natural harshnes of them are not so pleasant, and perhaps are also hurtful, if they be not first set ouer the fire, & softned, and brought to a milder temper; others may be vsed both wayes, & are not distastful raw, and yet qualifyed by the heate of

The studie of Scripture.

S. Aug. in Ps. 145.

Id. lib. 9. *Conf. c.* 4.

S. *Hier. Ep. ad Rust.*

S Bern. ser. 67. *in Cant.*

Cass. Coll. 8. *c.* 8.

the fire, are more pleasant & more holesome. For in like manner the holie Scriptures containe some things which yeald good nourishment, taken as the letter sounds; others, if they be not explained by some declaration, are rather hurtful; finally others againe may be vsed both wayes. Thus sayth *Cassian*, and truly.

6. For that which men, as men, haue left written, differeth from holie Scripture, in that men declare their minds by words; but God as Authour and director of al things, & al mens actions, vseth the verie things themselues and actions to declare his secret intentions by them. Which causeth so much varietie of senses in holie Scripture; the delightfulnes wherof is excellētly wel expressed by *S. Gregorie* vpon these words of *Iob*: *Then vpon the Omnipotent thou shalt flow with delights. To flow with delights vpon the Omnipotent*, sayth *S. Gregorie*, *is in his loue to be filled at the bancket of holie Scripture. In the words wherof we meete with so manie seueral delights, as we conceaue diuersities of senses for our benefit, feeding sometimes vpon the bare historie, sometimes vpon the Moral Allegorie, which lyeth hidden, as the marrow, vnder the context of the letter; sometimes raysing ourselues in contemplation of higher things, which in the darknes of this present life giueth vs, as it were, a glimse of the light of Eternitie.*

Iob 22.26.

S. Greg. 16. Mor. c. 9.

7. This is the life, which Religious people leade in perpetual delights & pleasures, the true & solid happines wherof *S. Iohn Chrysostome* setteth forth liuely in a certaine Homilie, where discoursing at large of the cōforts of a Monastical life, & in particular of the pleasure, which they take in Prayer and Contemplation, at last he descendeth to this, which they take in the studie of Scripture. *Nayled to those sacred Bookes*, sayth he, *they take exceeding comfort in them. For most commonly, when they come out of the Quier, one betaketh himself to conuersation with the Prophet Esay, another with the Apostles; another readeth and contemplateth some thing in God or in his creatures, of things visible and inuisible, of the miserie of this life, of the happines of the life to come. They set not themselues to feede vpon the boyled flesh of brute beasts, but vpon the words of God, sweeter then honie and the honie-combe. This honie was not gathered by wilde bees, nor digested into their hiues, as their manner is; but the grace of the Holie Ghost distributed it among the minds of Saints in steed of the combe, and the hiue, and these litle toulles, that whosoeuer would, might with ease eate of it. Like bees therfore they flye about the honie-combes of the holie Bible, and receaue great pleasure in them.* Thus *S. Iohn Chrysostome.*

S. Io. Chrys. Hom 69. in Matth.

The studie of the Fathers.

8. The third branch of Diuinitie, is the studie of the holie Fathers, who, as they were eminent for learning, and holines of life, & eloquence, haue left so manie monuments of learning behind them, that a man may spend his whole life time with pleasure in turning them ouer, & find more then he can haue time to cōpasse; God hauing moreouer prouided, that, as in a great bancket euerie dish hath his seueral relish, so among these great writers euerie one should haue his particular straine of sweetnes to auoyd satietie. For if we compare the Greek Fathers one with another, we shal finde the style of *S. Basil* to sauour of learning, & abound in precepts of sanctitie: *S. Gregorie Nazianzen* more profound, entring familiarly into the deepest mysteries, & declaring them in weightie tearmes & sentences. *S. Athanasius* is more facile, yet ful, and with an equal style alwayes like himself, teaching with a great deale of authoritie. *Epiphanius* is eager against Heretick s; *Theodoret* plaine & careful in exposition of Scripture. *S. Iohn Damascen* ful of learning, & expert in explaining the hardest points of Faith. *S. Iohn Chrysostome*, as his name giues vs to vnderstand, eloquent & popular, easily insinuating himself into peoples minds; & with the copiousnes of his quaynt words, as with a torrent of Eloquence, carrying his Auditorie whither-soeuer he pleaseth.

The Greek Fathers compared among themselues

9. Among the Latin Fathers, *S. Cyprian* hath a neate & copious ſtyle, & yet nothing too much, but graue & weightie, and (as *S. Hierom's* cenſure is of him) *his ſpeech runnes ſweetly and quietly on, as a criſtal-fountaine*; and *S. Auguſtin* doth deſeruedly ſtile him the *ſweeteſt Doctour*. *S. Ambroſe* hath a peculiar manner of expreſſing himſelf, very ſententious, with choyce words knit cleanely togeather, that a bodie may iuſtly think when he reades him, that he heares a Diuine making an Oration, or an Oratour ſpeaking like a Diuine; in commendation of whoſe ſweetnes we ſhal need to ſay no more, then that God did ſeeme to foreſhew it by that ſtrange accident, which we find recorded of him, when a ſwarme of bees lighted vpon his mouth, when he was a childe. The ſtyle of *S. Hierome* is learned, ful of wit and examples of Antiquitie, expreſſing in natural colours, whatſoeuer he vndertakes, either for the litteral expoſition of holie Scriptures, or Moral precepts for al kinds of ſtates, or in commendation or diſprayſe of anie thing, or in exhortations to vertue; in al which he is ſo eminent, that his eloquence ſeemeth more Diuine then humane. *S. Auguſtin* is copious, ful of varietie, and withal facil, expert at al hands, both to diſpute the profoundeſt queſtions, and to ſpeak plauſibly to the people; and in his Sermons both inſtructeth and moueth with a great deale of grace. Who can place his words more weightily, in better order, and come off more roundly then *S. Leo*? whoſe ſpeaches are alwayes ful of maieſtie, and come, as it were, thundering out of his mouth. *S. Gregorie* is altogeather Moral, & wonderful rare in that kind, entertayning his reader with varietie of ſweet examples and ſimilitudes, and inſtructing him in the courſe of vertue with profound learning, and drawing him on to reade him by the pleaſant and copious manner, which he hath, of declaring himſelf. What ſhal I ſay of *S. Bernard*? who is worthily called the *Melliſluous Doctour*; and is ful of ſpiritual documẽts of higheſt perfection, and enterlaceth the ſentences of holie Scripture ſo naturally with his owne diſcourſe, that a man would think, he ſpeakes nothing but Scripture, or that the holie Scripture makes vſe of his tongue, as an inſtrument to declare itſelf; which is both graue, and pleaſant, and wonderful effectual. And not to hold the reader anie longer, this doth ſufficiently proue that which I ſayd before, that euerie Father hath his particular delightful manner of expreſſing himſelf, and that ſo much varietie muſt needs make the pleaſure, in reading them, the greater, as it were walking out of one garden into another; & by the often change of ſo manie curioſities as be in them, preuenting al wearieſomnes, which might creepe-in vpon vs. The Latin Fathers. *S. Hierom. Ep.* 13.

10. And certainly, if, when they liued heer on earth, it could not but be an exceſſiue comfort to deale with anie one of them, and to conuerſe with men of ſo great worth as they were, can we think, the pleaſure is leſſe now they are in heauen? Me thinks it ſhould be farre greater; both becauſe the diſcourſes, which are penned, are alwayes more elaborate & more refined then that, which is deliuered by word of mouth *ex tempore*; and the glorie, which they now enioy, doth adde weight and authoritie to their writings. To cõclude therefore this diſcourſe of the three Branches of Diuinitie, I deſire only people will reflect, that, whereas the vnderſtanding of matters ſo ſublime & ſpecially of the holie Scriptures doth come vnto vs more by being humble & long acquainted with ſpiritual things, then by ſtrength of wit & affluitie, it muſt needs be euident, that Religious people are ſo much the better diſpoſed for the comfort, which may be had in that kind of ſtudie, by how much they haue more plentie of efficacious meanes to enrich themſelues with the vertues, which prepare the way vnto it.

Of the ioy, which Religious people take in the good of their Neighbours ſoules.

CHAP. XII.

MOſt Religious men haue yet another comfort, which goeth beyond al carnal and earthlie comforts: when hauing had occaſion to labour in cultiuating of numbers of Soules, they ſee them forſake their vicious courſes, and take to vertues, or in ſanctitie of life dayly to aduance themſelues, and encreaſe in the ſeruice of God. Who can expreſſe the ioy, which this doth breed? or the teares, which it oftimes draweth from our eyes? For if, as the Prophet ſayth, *Conquerours exult, when they* Eſ. 9. 3. *haue taken a prey*, what greater exultation can there be, then in ſuch a conqueſt, & ſuch a prey? For in other victories the proſperous ſucceſſe of one partie, is loſſe to the other; heer the benefit, which comes to vs, is beneficial alſo to our neighbour; and the good of our neighbour, the encreaſe of our ioy. Witnes the labour, the ſollicitude, the care, which moſt commonly this fruit doth coſt vs; wherof the Apoſtle writeth thus to certain Diſciples of his: *My little children, whom I trauail withal againe, vntil CHRIST be formed in you*; comparing himſelf to a Gal. 4. 54. woman with child, to expreſſe the time, and labour, and payne alſo, which often accompanieth this charitable buſines. And conſequently there can be no doubt, but that, which our Sauiour ſayth in the Ghoſpel, agreeth alſo to this child-birth: *A woman, when she breedeth, hath ſorrow; but when she hath brought forth, now she* Io. 26. 21. *remembreth not the preſſure, by reaſon of the ioy, becauſe a man is come into the world.* But heer the ioy is farre greater, becauſe man is not borne into the world, but in verie deed into heauen. For the life of the bodie is ſhort, but the life of the Soule, eternal. And what ioy, think you, ſhould we conceaue of this euerlaſting fruit, ſeing we find a Heathen Philoſopher reioycing at the temporal progreſſe Sen. Ep. 34. of his Diſciples, and eſteeming it a very iuſt and reaſonable cauſe of ioy? If a tree, " ſayth he, when it is come ſo farre as to bring forth fruit, reioyceth the huſbandman; " if a ſhepheard take pleaſure to ſee the fruit of his flock; if euerie man beholding the " child, which he nurſeth, delights in the growth of his child, as in his owne; how " doſt thou think it fares with them, that haue nurſed vp wits, when knowing " the tender beginnings of them, they behold them ſuddenly flouriſh? Thus ſpake this Heathen Philoſopher of the brickle, & ſhort, & momentarie fruit, which he could arriue to know. The fruit of our labours is ſpiritual & immortal; ſo that if, as our Sauiour teſtifyeth, *there be ioy in heauen vpon one ſinner doing pennance*, is there not the like cauſe of reioycing on earth, when we ſee a man either cõuerted to do pennance for his ſinnes, or eſtabliſhed in vertue, and taking great ſtrides to perfection? Doubtleſſe there is. For certainly in this one, we haue manie cauſes of ioy & cõfort, the glorie of God, the ſaluation of our neighbour, whom we are cõmanded to loue as ourſelues; a ioyful & moſt admirable repreſentation of the Diuine goodnes, & clemẽcie, & patiẽce, not only in bearing with the loſt ſheep, but in bringing

it againe to the fold vpon his ſhoulders; of which goodnes and clemencie we are witnes and ſpectatours. Finally, it is no ſmal encreaſe of ioy, that we find ourſelues made partners in ſome meaſure, in ſo great and ſo noble a work, and able, in a manner, to glorie with *S. Paul*, and ſay: *I planted.* For it is natural for euerie bodie to loue and take delight in that, in which he hath taken ſome kind of paynes; and the more excellent the work is, the more pleaſure he takes in it. And what greater work can there be, then to make men Saints? a work not only proper to God alone, but the greateſt of al his works; a work, wherof *S. Paul* reioyced in the *Philippians*, ſaying of them: *My ioy and my crowne*; and in the *Corinthians*, ſtiling them *his glorie in the day of our Lord*; and to the *Theſſalonians*: *What is our hope, and ioy, or crowne of glorie? Are not you, before our Lord* IESVS CHRIST *in his coming? For you are our glorie and ioy.* Wherefore ſeing Religious people labour ſo diligently in this harueſt of Soules, and haue ſo manie peculiar helps towards the reaping of the fruit of it (as we haue ſhewed in the precedent Booke) their ioy and comfort in it muſt alſo neceſſarily be both moſt aſſured and continual.

1. Cor. 3. 6.

2. Cor 1. 14.

1. Teſſ. 2. 19.

Of the Hundred-fold promiſed to Religious people.

CHAP. XIII.

THat which we haue hitherto ſayd of the pleaſantnes of a Religious courſe of life, is very admirable; Yet one thing remayneth behind, more to be valued then al the reſt, as contayning indeed al other things; and hauing it, we may iuſtly make account we haue al. This is the large, and ample, and magnificent promiſe, which Truth itſelf makes vs in theſe wordes: *Euerie one that shal leaue father, or mother, or brethren, or ſiſters, or houſe, or lands, shal receaue a hundred-fold in this life.* Of which promiſe *S. Bernard* diſcourſing ſayth, and very truly: Theſe are the words, which haue perſwaded men through the whole world, to contemne the world, and embrace voluntarie Pouertie; words, that fil Cloyſters with Monks, Deſerts with Anchorets. Theſe, I ſay, are the words which put *Aegypt* to pillage, & robbe it of the beſt veſſel it hath. This is that liuelie and efficacious word, conuerting foules by a happie ambition of ſanctitie and faithful promiſe of truth. Finding therefore ſo great a promiſe vpon record, and knowing withal that he that makes vs this promiſe, cannot fayle of his word, nor forget how farre he hath engaged himſelf, it concernes vs, diligently to ſearch into the riches of it, and acquaint ourſelues throughly with the treaſure which it containeth.

Matth. 19. 29. Marc 10. 30.

S. Bernard. ſer. Ecce nos.

2. *Caſſian* in his laſt Collation relating a diſcourſe of Abbot *Abraham*, ſayth that the words of this promiſe are to be vnderſtood plainely as they ſound, to wit, that we ſhal receaue the verie things which we leaue, in quantitie multiplied. For, *ſayth he*, whoſoeuer contemning the loue of one father, or mother, or child, for Chriſt's ſake, doth paſſe into the moſt ſincere loue of al thoſe that ſerue Chriſt, ſhal receaue a hundred-fold in quantitie of brethren and parents, that is to ſay, for one

Caſſ. Coll. vltim. c. vltimo.

A hundred-fold repayed in kind.

» he ſhal find ſo manie fathers and brethren, that wil loue him with a more ardent » and more eleuated kind of loue, and ſhal be alſo enriched with poſſeſſions and » lands in like manner multiplied; that is, whoſoeuer abandoneth one houſe » for the loue of Chriſt, ſhal poſſeſſe innumerable Monaſteries as his owne in » al parts of the world, and enter vpon them as vpon his owne land of inhe- » ritance. For how doth not he receaue a hundred-fold, and (if we may be » ſo bold as to adde anie thing to the words of our Sauiour) more then a hundred-fold, that forſaking ten or twentie ſeruants that wayte vpon him by force, and are ſcarce to be truſted, is attended euer after with the voluntarie ſeruice of ſo manie men wel borne and of honourable deſcent? A notable ſaying, comprehending not only Religious people that haue reuennues in common, but al in general, euen thoſe that profeſſe the ſtricteſt Euangelical Pouertie that can be, and haue nothing either in priuate or in common; for theſe alſo haue their hundred-fold of almes, which the faithful bring-in vnto » them abundantly of deuotion. Let vs giue eare (ſayth *S. Bede* diſcourſing of » this kind of Pouertie) to the ioyful promiſes of our Lord and Sauiour, let vs » ſee how out of the ſpecial fauour of his goodnes he promiſeth them that follow » him, not only the rewards of eternal life, but excellent guifts alſo in this pre- » ſent life. *Euerie one that shal leaue houſe, or brethren, or land, for my ſake, shal receaue* » *a hundred-fold.* For he that renounceth earthlie loue and poſſeſſions to follow Chriſt, the more he profiteth in his loue, the more he ſhal find that wil be glad to embrace him with inward affection, and maintayne him with their outward ſubſtance. The firſt degree therefore of this hundred-fold in this world, is to receaue it euen in theſe outward things.

Bed. de Natali S. Benedicti.

3. But the inward treaſures which God beſtoweth vpon vs are farre greater and more to be eſteemed; to wit, a ſweetnes and ſatietie in our ſoules, incomparably better then al earthlie pleaſure. *S. Hierome* conceaued » right of it, and ſayth, that the promiſe of our Sauiour is to be vnderſtood in » this ſenſe, that he that forſaketh carnal things for our Sauiour, ſhal receaue ſpiritual, which, for the worth of them, are in compariſon of earthlie things, as a hundred for one. And what ſhal we need to ſtand alleaging manie authorities? If it be pleaſure which we ſeeke in theſe earthlie things, we ſee where it is to be had farre more abundant and more ſolid. For this is the tenure of the promiſe of our Sauiour: looke how much contentment a man receaued in his parents, and brethren, and kinsfolk, and acquaintance, or in the pleaſantnes or fruitfulnes of his lands and territories, or in the vſe and poſſeſſion of whatſoeuer other thing he was maiſter of in the world, he ſhal haue the ſelf ſame contentment in Religion, a hundred-fold more added vnto it.

S. Hierome lib. 3. in Matt.

Spiritual things a hundred times better then temporal.

4. *S. Gregorie* in one of his Homilies deliuereth this which we are ſaying, and addeth moreouer that this Hundred-fold conſiſteth in a kind of habitual ioy and contentment of mind, giuing a man as much and much more ſatisfaction in pouertie, then the richeſt men of the world can find in al their wealth and abundance. His words are theſe: Holie men do not forſake earthlie things, to the end they may haue the ſelf ſame in this world multiplyed; for » whoſoeuer doth forſake earth out of an earthlie intent, doth not forſake earth,

S. Gregorie hom. 18 in Ezech.

Perfection a large Hundred-fold.

earth, but desire it. Neither is it to be vnderstood, that he that forsaketh one wife, shal receaue a hundred; but in the name of a Hundred-fold we vnderstand Perfection, because whosoeuer despiseth earthlie and temporal things for God, receaueth heer so much perfection in his soule, that he desireth not the things which before he set at naught, and in the world to come he arriueth to the glorie of life euerlasting. He receaueth therefore a hundred times ouer that which once he gaue, because he receaueth the spirit of perfection, which maketh that he wanteth not earthlie things, though he haue them not; for he is properly a poore man, that wanteth that which he hath not. He that, when he hath not a thing, doth not desire it, is rich; for pouertie consisteth in the penuriousnes of one's mind, not in the quantitie of that which he possesseth; and he is not poore, that is not encumbred with pouertie. *Cassian* hath the like saying, and discourseth of the sweetnes of this Hundred-fold in this manner: Certainly a man shal receaue a hundred times more sweetnes by contayning himself from marriage, then people haue in the act of marriage. And for the contentment which they haue in the possession of one house, or one peece of land, he shal haue a hundred times more ioy of the riches which he shal possesse by being the sonne of God by adoption, by vertue wherof he entreth vpon al that which belongeth to his eternal Father and possesseth it as his owne, and in imitation of that true Sonne sayth with like loue and vertue; *Al which my Father hath, is mine*; and enioyeth it without paynful care, or distractiue sollicitude, quiet and secure, as it were his owne inheritance, these words of the Apostle sounding dayly in his eares: *Al things are yours, whether the world, or things present, or things to come*; and that of King *Salomon*: *Of a faithful man the whole world is his wealth.* Thou hast therefore the reward of a Hundred-fold layd downe before thee in the greatnes of the merit, and in the incomparable difference of the worth and qualitie. For as if for a certain weight of brasse, or iron, or other grosser mettal, a man should returne the like weight in gold, he might wel be sayd to haue rendred more then a hundred-fold: So when for the contempt of earthlie loue and pleasure a man is rewarded with spiritual ioy, and the pleasure of most excellent charitie, though the number were alike, yet it is a hundred times greater and better. This was *Cassian's* opinion in this busines.

He that desireth nothing, is not poore.

Cass. Coll. vltim. c. vltim.

Incomparably more sweetnes in Spiritual things.

Iohn 16. 15.

1. Cor. 3. 22.

5. And *S. Augustin* doth not only approue of it, but sticketh not to say further, that the pleasure of Religious people is more then a hundred times as great; and that the number of a hundred, being the perfectest of al other numbers, comprehendeth al that can be had or wished; and that the saying of the Apostle is verifyed in them: *As hauing nothing, and possessing al things.* And else-where he repeateth the same; and addeth moreouer, that such as were poore in the world, and had little or nothing to leaue, shal not be excluded from this happines, but al shal be partakers of so ample and so abundant a reward of pleasure, which maketh the ioy of the hundred-fold incomparably greater. And to this effect he construeth those words of the Psalme: *There sparrowes shal make their neasts*; vnderstanding by *sparrowes*, which are little birds, the poore and little ones, that hearing the words of the Ghospel (*Go sel al that thou hast, and come follow me*) embracing

S. Augustin Ep. 89. q. 4.

2. Cor. 6. 10.

S. Augustin in Ps. 103. 3.

it with al their hart, resolue neither to marrie, nor to trouble themselues with care of children, nor to tye themselues to anie certain dwelling, but to liue in common. What therefore (sayth *S. Augustin*) haue these sparrowes forsaken? what great matter haue they forsaken? One of them turnes to God; he leaues his father's poore cottage, perhaps scarce a bed in it, or a cheſt. Let vs not crowe ouer him; let vs not say: Thou hast left nothing. He that hath forsaken a great deale, let him not be prowde of it. We know that *Peter*, when he first followed our Sauiour, was a fisherman; what could he forsake? or his brother *Andrew*, or the sonnes of *Zebedee*, *Iohn* and *Iames*? for they were also fishermen; and yet what did they say? Behold we haue left al, and followed thee. Our Sauiour did not answer him: Hast thou forgotten thy pouertie? what hast thou left, that the whole world should be turned-ouer vnto thee? He forsooke a great deale, my Brethren, he forsooke very much. He forsooke not only al that he had, but al that he desired to haue. What man is there so poore, that doth not swel with the hopes of this world? who is there that doth not dayly couet to encrease that which he hath? This couetous mind is that which they cut off. It was once ayming at an immensitie of wealth; they confined it; and shal we say they left nothing? No certainly; *Peter* forsooke the whole world, and the whole world was turned-ouer vnto him, as hauing nothing, and possessing al things. Manie doe the like; they that haue little, doe this, and become fruitful sparrowes. Al this is of *S. Augustin*. So that we may iustly conclude, that Religious people haue a promise, not only of a hundred times as manie goods, and a hundred times as much pleasure and happines by these goods euen in this life, but vnder the title of a hundred-fold, they haue a promise of the whole world.

They that had nothing to leaue, receaue also a hundred-fold.

6. Which is a rare and excellent thing; and yet there is an other degree of this hundred-fold, and indeed the highest that can be thought on, comprehending not only the world, and al that is in it, but God, the Authour of the world. So *S. Ambrose* vnderstandeth this hundred-fold to be God himself; because he that forsaketh al, beginnes to possesse God. *He* (sayth *S. Ambrose*) *is the perfect reward of Vertue, not counted vnto vs one by one to an hundred, but in the value of perfect vertue*; and giueth an example in the Tribe of *Leui*. For by commandment of God himself, there being no portion of land set-out for them among the rest of the Tribes, God promised, that he would be their part and possession, and often renewed the like promise vnto them. Whereupon *S. Ambrose* speaking of this their honourable and delightful inheritance, sayth in this manner: He that hath God for his portion, is maister of al that is in Nature. In steed of land, it is enough that he enioyeth himself; that is a good reuenew vnto him, which cannot perish. In steed of seueral dwellings, it is sufficient, that himself is the habitation and temple of God, then whom nothing is more pretious. For what is more pretious then God? This is a portion to which earthlie portions cannot be compared. What is more noble then a Heauenlie gueſt? What is more happie then a Diuine possession?

God alone hundred-fold more then we forsooke.

S. *Ambr. in Ps.* 118.

Deut. 10. & 18.

7. This and much more sayth *S. Ambrose* of this Hundred-fold, and particularly that they that haue forsaken al, are farre more rich, then al the wealthie men of the world; because though their lands and dominions extend neuer so farre, yet they haue their bounds, and pay more out of them, then the profit of them

them comes to: but, sayth *S. Ambrose*, *he that hath nothing, and serueth God only, hath his inheritance aboue the earth, where land doth not confine him, nor the sea bound him.* Which being so, how can the wealth of anie King, or the earthlie riches, and commodities, and pleasures of anie man liuing, be comparable to the riches and pleasures of a Religious life?

8. We might bring manie examples to this purpose; but that which hapned to *Arnulphus* a Cistercian Monk, shal supply for al, whose wonderful conuersion is recorded in the historie of that Order. He being nobly borne, and a wealthie man in the world, bred vp in al manner of dainties, touched in a Sermon of *S. Bernard*, became a Monk in the Monasterie of *Claire-vaulx*. And in that poore and austere kind of life, among other infirmities being once grieuously tormented with the cholick, he lay for a good while togeather in a swound and speechles; and at last coming to himself, he cryed out alowde: *Al is true, which thou hast sayd, ô Lord* IESV; and repeated it very often. They that were about him, much amazed, asked him how he felt himself; but he gaue them no other answer but as before: *Al is true, which thou hast sayd, ô Lord* IESV. And some of them whispering to themselues, and saying that they feared he was distracted with his paine, and spake idely, he spake thus vnto them: That which I said, I sayd in my perfect senses; for our Lord in the Ghospel hath promised, that if a man renounce the wealth of this world, and al conuersation with his kindred, for his loue, he shal receaue a hundred-fold in this life. And this I find now by experience. For this very excessiue sharp torment is so sweet vnto me for the hope of the mercies of God which I feele in it, that I would not haue been without this grief, not only for al the world which I left, but not if it had been a hundred times as much more. And if I, that am a wicked sinner, feele that these paynes are a hundred times sweeter vnto me, then al my ancient worldlie happines, what is that which good and feruent Religious people haue in their spiritual ioyes and comforts? For it is most certain that anie spiritual ioy, though it be but in hope, is a hundred thousand times greater, then whatsoeuer secular ioy actually possessed. These were the words of this holie man: and when he spake them, al that heard him, were much astonished, specially to heare a man, that had no learning, conceaue and vtter such things so pertinently; and thereby they were the more assured, that what he sayd, came indeed from the Holie-Ghost, that dwelt in his hart.

Arnulphus

A comparison of Religion with Paradise.

CHAP. XIIII.

I Wil conclude this discourse of the pleasantnes of a Religious life with a conceit of *S. Antonin's*, who was both a very learned man, and a great Saint. He therefore in one of his Treatises, where he discourseth at large of this state of life out of the principles of Diuinitie, among other commendations which he giues it, sayth, it is like the terrestrial Paradise, a place of ioy, and pleasure, and delight, planted by the hand of God, the greatest and powerfullest Artificer that can be, and fullest

God planted this Paradiſe of Religion.

knowledge;& planted to the end that man ſhould leade a moſt blisful life in it. Religion yealdeth nothing to paradiſe, for as much as concerneth the dignitie of the Authour of it: for ſo great a thing as Religion is, could not haue been inuented but by God, nor conſerued to this day by anie other power or wiſdome. This ſo holie & wholeſome kind of life is his guift, he put it into the thoughts of men; He is the authour of this counſel and practiſe of making Vowes, and inſtilles into euerie man's mind the deſire of vndertaking ſuch a kind of courſe; he giues perſeuerance and victorie in temptations; he orders the rules and ſeueral conſtitutions and al things belonging to this Sate; and conſequently it cannot be but that the whole worke proceeding from a fountain of ſo great wiſdome and goodnes, muſt needs be euerie way perfect and compleate, and flow with ful ſtreames of happines.

Fruits of this Paradiſe.

2. In that firſt garden and orchard of pleaſure, God planted al kind of trees, fayre to behold, and pleaſant to taſt of, that no kind of delight might be wanting in it. Heer we haue plentie of ſpiritual fruits, much more delightful to the eyes and palate of our mind; to wit, the ſecuritie of a ſincere and vpright Conſcience, light of Vnderſtanding to diſcouer things of an other world, the ſolaces of Prayer and Contemplation, and manie other things which we haue mentioned before, yealding exceſſiue contentment both by the varietie & dignitie, which is in them.

The Grace of God, the Tree of life.

3. Heer wanteth not the *Tree of Life*, which *S. Antonine* wil haue to be the *Grace of God*; in regard that the State itſelf is not grounded in *Nature* but in *Grace*, & conteyneth within itſelf manie eaſie and obuious wayes both to produce and encreaſe dayly the ſelf-ſame *Grace*. And as in *Paradiſe* the ayre was alwayes of an euen temper, neuer exceſſiue hot, nor exceſſiue cold, there was neither hunger nor thirſt, nor aguiſh diſtemper, nor anie other thing that could be diſtaſtful for the bodie: So in Religion we find peace and tranquillitie of mind, free from al turbulent motions and diſtempers, and a conſtant kind of diſpoſition and euennes of our inward carriage; which if it were pleaſing to the bodie, much more to the mind. As for the foure *Riuers* that flowed out of *Paradiſe*, *S. Gregorie* telles vs, that they ſignifie foure Vertues, wherewith while our hart is watered, the heate of al carnal deſires is alayed.

S. Greg. 10. In Marc. c. 27.

The benefit of Companie.

4. Let vs ſee how that agreeth to Religion which God ſayd of Man: *It is not good for man to be alone; let vs make him a help like to himſelf.* What doth this ſignify but the help which euerie one findes in the companie of his Brethren for the benefit of his owne ſoule, and for the more profitable aſſiſtance of his Neighbour? Certainly it is not good for a man, that deſireth vertue, to be alone; rather it is dangerous and hurtful, both becauſe it is more eaſie for the Diuel to ſupplant him, and himſelf is more apt to be wearied with the labour of a vertuous courſe of life; & a man cannot but want ſometimes good counſel, and good example. Great therefore is the help which Conuerſation with our Brethren doth yeald vs; and is more like ourſelues, then the help which was made for *Adam*; becauſe that was only like in nature, heer the Sexe is the ſame, and our habit, and orders and al things els are alike.

5. If we looke alſo into the inward diſpoſition of mind, in which our firſt Father was at the time of his creation, we ſhal find no ſmal reſemblance of it in Religion. *S. Iohn Chryſoſtome* diſcourſing of the happines of Monks, and comparing them

them with *Adam* while he liued in Paradiſe, expreſſeth it in theſe words: Why ſhould theſe be in worſe caſe then he, when before his diſobedience he was buſied in working in Paradiſe? He was troubled with no worldlie care, no more are theſe; He conuerſed with God with an vpright conſcience, and ſo doe theſe, and ſo much the more freely, by how much they haue greater grace beſtowed vpon them by the guift of the Holie-Ghoſt. The inward diſpoſition of mind better in Religion.

6. Finally *S. Bernard* diſcourſing of the delights of this *Paradiſe*, ſheweth withal the way and meanes which we muſt take to come vnto it; and it is reaſon we ſhould learne of him. Do not think, ſayth he, that this Paradiſe of inward pleaſure is anie corporal place. We muſt not walk with our feete into this garden, but with our affections. It is not commended for ſtore of earthlie trees, but for the pleaſant and comelie plants of ſpiritual vertues. It is a *Garden enclo∫d*, where a ſealed fountaine is deriued into foure branches, and one veyne of wiſdom ſpreads itſelf into foure ſeueral vertues. There beautiful lillies ſpring forth; and when the flowers appeare, the voice of the Turtle-doue is heard. There the Spikenard yaldeth the Spouſe a moſt fragrant ſmel, and al other ſpices abound, while the South-wind bloweth & the North-wind is ſhut out. In the midſt is the Tree of Life, the Apple-tree mentioned in the Canticles, more pretious then al the trees of the woods; the ſhade whereof cooleth the Spouſe and the fruit is ſweet in her throat. There the brightnes of Continencie, and the knowledge of ſincere truth enlightneth the eyes of our hart, & the melodious voice of the inward Cõforter giueth ioy and gladnes to our hearing. There the pleaſant Sent of a fruitful field which God hath bleſſed, doth as it were beate into the noſtrels of our Hope. There we haue a taſt of the incomparable daynties of Charitie, and eate greedily of them; and the thornes and brambles wherewith it was pricked before, being now cut downe, and our ſoule annoynted with the oyle of Mercie, it repoſeth happily in a good Conſcience. And al theſe things are not reckoned among the rewards of the life to come, but are part of our hire in this temporal warfare; and belong not to the future, but rather to the promiſe of the Church which now is. For this is the Hundred-fold which euen in this world is beſtowed vpon thoſe that contemne the world. Theſe are the words of *S. Bernard*; the bare rehearſal whereof whom ſhould it not in reaſon moue to labour for ſo great bleſſings, and to reſolue for euer to liue where there is ſuch plentie of happines? *S. Iohn Chryſoſt. Hom 69.* *S. Ber. l. 1. de Conuerſ. Clerici. c. 21.*

7. And yet we haue no great cauſe to wonder, that Religion ſhould be ſo like the terreſtrial *Paradiſe*, ſeing it is like to *Heauen* itſelf, which is in farre greater honour. For indeed if we looke wel into the nature of a Religious life, it is a liuelie patterne of that happie and bliſſeful habitation, and reſembleth it in al points as neer as poſſibly the liuing in this world can come neere vnto it. And becauſe I wil not haue anie man think that I ſpeake this of my owne head, *S. Laurẽce Iuſtinian* ſhal ſpeake for me, who hath a long & eloquent diſcourſe to this purpoſe in the booke which he wrote of Monaſtical perfection; and among other things he ſayth thus in expreſſe words: *In al humain things, and in this pilgrimage of ours, there is no ſuch liuelie picture of our heauenlie Countrey, as is Monaſtical conuerſation, and a Congregation dedicated to the ſeruice of God.* And then confirmeth this his *Tenet* with manie ſolid & euident proofes; which whoſoeuer wil, may reade in him. And *S. Baſil* was directly of the ſame opinion; for hauing made a long diſcourſe of the excellencie of a Religious life, in the end he concludes, that vpon earth there is Religion & heauen vpõ earth. *S. Laur. Iuſt. l. de perf. Mon. c. 6.* *S. Baſil l. de Conſt. Mon. c. 16.*

not anie thing so great or so beautiful, as to deserue to be compared with it, and that therefore we must seeke to heauen to haue a likenes of it; because as in heauen al things are incorruptible, so also among Religious people; and as the Cittizens of heauen loue intirely togeather, so doe Religious people.

Matt. 22. 30. 8. The first reason therefore of similitude between Heauen and Religion, if we follow *S. Basil*, is *Incorruption*, that is, Chastitie; because as in heauen, *they neither marrie, nor are giuen in marrige*, according to the saying of our Sauiour, so neither in Religion. The second reason is *Charitie*, and that perfect loue and vnion, which is betwixt those happie Saints of heauen, grounded not in nature, or anie natural inclination or moiue, but in God alone, and his onlie loue. And what is there vpon earth that doth more perfectly resemble this loue then Religion? where people do so absolutely concurre in the self-same mind and opinions, and haue al manner of things so common among them, and loue so entirely togeather, that (as I haue often sayd, & must often repeate it) they seeme not to be manie soules, but one soule in manie bodies, knit and vnited togeather, not for natural reasons or human respects and ends, as marchants, soldiers, and the like, but meerely vpon Charitie, meerely for the loue of God. This Charitie, as the Apostle speaketh, *neuer fayling*, shal last with vs in heauen, and be the self-same there, which is heer vpon earth; and consequently while we are on earth, it liuely representeth the state which we shal inioy in heauen. *S. Iohn Chrysostom* speaking in commendation of Religious people, doth not stick to say, that they haue made choyce of a heauenlie kind of life, and *are not worse disposed then the Angels* (for so are his words) because as in the Angels there is no distemper, neither do some grieue while others reioyce, but are al of them ioyful with one and the self-same gladnes and quiet, so it hapneth for al the world in Monasteries. And *S. Basil* deliuering his mind yet more plainly, compareth the life, which Religious people leade in common, with the life of the Angels, and giueth this reason for it, because al enioy the self-same spiritual riches and treasures; which, because they are spiritual, may without diminution be equally possessed by al; and therefore, sayth he, Religion is a liuelie representation of heauen, and giueth vs a tast in this life of the happines which is to come.

Incorruption and Charitie, heauenlie properties.

1. *Cor.* 13. 8

S. Chry. Hom. Vid. Imp. Vit. Mon.

Obedience 9. What shal we say of the similitude which Religion hath with that perfect subiection, in which al that are in heauen liue vnder God, al their wils being wholy and most admirably absorpt in his wil, and holding it for the onlie rule of al their actions and motions? For in like manner Religion cutteth off and rooteth out by the vow of Obedience al wil of our owne; and by vertue of that vow, the wil of God, by the ministerie of man, swayeth and ruleth in al things.

Pouertie; 10. Pouertie also hath a hand in this resemblance; for as they that are in heauen take no thought for gold nor siluer, but mind only the spiritual treasures which they enioy: so Religious people shake off al earthlie things, and glorie most of al, that they are maisters of nothing.

And Vnitie of employment; resemblances of Heauen. 11. Moreouer in that heauenlie Palace al haue one kind of employment, and one busines, to wit, to loue God, and continually to prayse him. This is that which Religious people also ayme at, and labour for; to this end they forsake the world, *to attend & see that God is sweet*; to this they wholy apply themselues, and this is the reason, as S. *Denys* writeth, why from the beginning they were called *Monks*, to the end their name, deriued from vnitie, might signifie the vnitie of the Soule

Psal. 45. *S. Denys. Eccl. Hier. c.* 11.

with

with God, which Religious discipline worketh in vs. Wherefore, as *S. Augustin* sayth, that they that are in heauen are blessed, because they doe nothing but prayse God, they doe not plough, nor sowe the ground, nor go to mil, because they are works of *necessitie*, and there is no *necessitie*; nor they do not robbe nor steale, nor commit adulterie, because they be works of *iniquitie*, and there is no *iniquitie*: So we may say of Religion. For first, *Iniquitie* hath no place in Religion; and as for *Necessitie*, it is for the most part shut out by abandoning al desire of earthlie things; and for the rest which remayneth, it is directed wholy to the glorie of God, which of itself is to prayse God, and consequently they neuer cease praysing him. For, as the same *S. Augustin* deliuereth, Thou praysest God when thou goest about busines; thou praysest God when thou eatest, and when thou drinkest; thou prayssest God, when thou dost rest in thy bed, and when thou sleepest.

S Aug. in Ps. 148.

S. Aug. in Ps. 146.

Heauenlie conuersation.

11. Finally it is no smal resemblance of a heauenlie life, that a Religious Soule imitateth the conuersation of those that are in heauen, as *S. Bernard* discourseth in a certain place, as when it worshippeth and adoreth God alone, as the Angels; it is chast, as the Angels, and that in flesh of sinne, and this frayle bodie, as the Angels are not; finally when it seeketh and mindeth the things which are with them, and not that which is vpon earth. And the same *S. Bernard* not without great reason applying those words of the *Apocalyps* to our Sauiour (*I saw the holie Cittie Hierusalem, new, descending from heauen*) sayth, that when he came downe from heauen to teach vs vpon earth the conuersation which is in heauen, he brought in himself a perfect patterne and visible pourtraicture of that heauenlie Hierusalem; & giueth the reason, why he sayth so, in these words: The Heauenlie Man did not appeare in vaine, seing of earthlie people he made so manie heauenlie ones like himself. Because from that time we liue heer on earth after the manner of them that are in heauen; while to the likenes of that heauenlie and blisful Creature, this also which came from the vtmost bounds of the earth to heare the wisdome of *Salomon*, cleaueth to her heauenlie husband with chast loue.

S. Bernard. ferm. 7. in Cant.

S. Bernard. Ibid. Apoc. 21. 2.

S Bernard. Ibid.

Heauenlie ioy & felicitie in Religion.

13. The last resemblance which Religion hath with Heauen, is in *Ioy and felicitie*. For though there must of necessitie be great difference in the quantitie & excesse of this ioy, because in heauen we shal see *God face to face*, and heer *we see him by a glasse in a dark sort*; Yet the ioy heer is not only very great, but of the self-same nature with that which is in heauen; for they both proceed from one fountaine, and haue the self-same obiects, to wit, not flesh and bloud, or anie thing created, but God only, who is infinit, and the Soueraigne Good of al.

1. Cor. 13. 12.

14 And heer we might spinne out a long discourse concerning the abundance, and multiplicitie, and assurednes, and soliditie, and perpetuitie, of the Ioyes which are in Religion, but that we haue spoken sufficiently of them in al that which goes before. Yet vpon that which hath been hitherto sayd, we may iustly conclude, that no State can be fuller of al kind of happines then a Religious life; specially seing it so liuely resembleth the ioyes & life of heauen, that we may truly say, we are continually tasting of them, yea plentifully feeding vpon the excessiue felicities which there we shal enioy, & fitly apply to this purpose that verse of the Royal Prophet: *Blesse our Lord, al yee seruants of our Lord, who stand in the house of our Lord, in the courts of the house of our God.* Where inuiting the seruants of God to the prayses of him, he distinguisheth them into two ranks: Some he placeth in the house of God, others in the outward courts. The first are they that dwel in Heauen, which is the proper

Religious people dwel in the gates of heauen.

Ps. 133.

Mansion-house of God; Religious people are the second, that stand, as I may say, in the court-yard of the heauenlie Palace. They are not yet in the house, but next doore to it, and in a manner in the porch or entrie; where they haue two great commodities: First, that vnlesse they wil needs giue back, they may both easily & quickly get into the house, when their turn comes; and secondly, bordering so neer vpon that Heauenlie habitation, they cannot choose but haue part very often of the manie commodities and daynties, which that house affordeth, as so manie crummes falling from a table richly furnished.

An answer to certain Obiections, which are wont to be made against Religion; and first: That few enioy these Comforts.

CHAP. XV.

IF the World could speake for itself, or had Counsel that were not blind and deafe with too much loue of the World, I make no doubt, but it would yeald to Religion al that which I haue sayd, not only of the dignitie of it, but of the immensitie and abundance of the ioyes and comforts, which are in it. For it were not only impudencie, but scarce the conceit of a man, but of a beast, to value the pleasures of the bodie, and the itching delight, which growes from these base inferiour things, aboue true and solide contentment of mind grounded in God, who is the only true good, and the good of al goodnes; this contentment and delight of mind being that sauourie *Manna*, which the goodnes of God rayneth downe from heauen vpon those that he leades out of *Aegypt* into the Desert.

2. But because, as we sayd before, both in our passage out of the land of *Aegypt*, and afterwards, there want not them, that stand in our way and oppose vs, *Pharao* with his horse and his whole armie on the one side, and the *Philistians & Iebuseans* ō the other, it remayneth that we now endeauour to discouer their plots, which is half the victorie, and breake their weapons in peeces, which they arme against vs. And first we wil gee in hand with that obiection which is vsual: That al cannot be partakers of the pleasures & delights, which we haue discoursed of; a few rare men only attaine vnto them by the special fauour of Almightie God, & by long fasting and continual punishing of their bodie; the rest that are of the ordinarie sort of people, and but of a meane strayne in Vertue, are farre from feeling anie such kind of sweetnes, & neuer indeed tast of the delights we speake of. For confutation of this errour (for I can cal it no other) we must first suppose, that whatsoeuer hath been sayd in al this Treatise, either of the benefit, or excellencie, or pleasantnes of a Religious life, is to be vnderstood of the State itself, and not of particular men. For what is it to the purpose, if men be lazie and careless, and suffer themselues to want in the midst of al plentie and abundance, & to starue for hunger at a ful board of daynties? Of which kind of people the Holie-Ghost speaketh in the Prouerbs thus: *The sloathful man hideth his hand vnder his arme-pit, and doth not put it to his mouth.* For in like manner Religious people are not farre to seeke for the goods which abound in Religion, but haue them readie carued to their hand; it is their part to make vse of them, and to put them as meat to their mouthes; if they wil not take so litle paynes as is required to make vse of them, the fault is their owne, if they be

The State is happie, though men be lazie.

Pronerb. 19. 24.

in

in want, & not the State's; the State itself is ful fraught with excellent cõmodities; if they remaine emptie and naked, they must blame themselues. When Natural Philosophers discourse of the constitution of a man's bodie, they discourse of it as it is by nature, intire and perfect, with hands, & armes, and legs, and feet, and al the rest of the limmes belonging to a perfect bodie; if anie particular man want a hand, or an eye, or a foot, or anie other part, they take no notice of it, nor make anie reckoning of it, because their ayme is to teach that, which is natural to the thing they treate of: So treating of Religion, we shew what profit & pleasure the State is apt & wont naturally to produce and afford; if there be anie particular man, in whom it worketh not this wonted effect, the fault is in the man, not in the State. And yet I dare vndertake, that the number of these sloathful and lazie people is farre lesse, then the number of them that take comfort in Religion; because it is one of the happinesses and benefits of a Religious life to rowse-vp the spirits of them, that are drowsie and negligent; to put life into them, that are slow and dul; and set them on fire, that are cold and lumpish. Few that find not comfort.

3. But perhaps they that make this obiection, intend only to say, that the rapts or trances, and extasies and miracles, which they heare of, or reade in the liues of a *S. Antonie*, or *S. Dominick*, or *S. Francis*, or some other great Saints of special note, be peculiar to such rare men as they were, and happen not to al Religious people.

4. And this I willingly grant; neither was it euer my meaning to say otherwise; nor if we consider the matter right, is it anie disparagement to Religion, that al haue not these extraordinarie guifts. For as the fertilnes of a peece of ground appeares, if it naturally yeald a hundred for one; and if anie particular man reape not so much, the goodnes of the soyle is not the cause of it, but the negligence or want of skil of him that ploughes it, or tilles it not as it ought to be tilled: The same of Religion; of it self it is a fat soyle, and the goodnes of it appeares chiefly, and to the admiration of al the world, in such eminent Saints as they are, whom we mentioned; if we doe not find the like profit by it, we cannot lay anie blame vpon Religion, but the fault is in vs. And yet this verie consideration ought in reason to animate & encourage vs to be the more diligent, knowing what plentie of fruit we may reape of our labours, and what abundance others haue reaped. And no doubt but though we neuer arriue to tast of those extraordinarie and vnwonted ioyes & pleasures, which those admirable Saints did feele, we may notwithstanding find no smal comfort in Religion, and indeed abundantly enough to fil vs. For though we haue not the markes of the fiue wounds of our Sauiour printed in our bodie, as some of them haue had, or be not rapt to the third heauen, or suffer not excesse of mind in prayer, and the like; Yet it is ordinarie, and easie also to take so much pleasure in reading of spiritual books, in prayer, in contemplation of the Mysteries of our Faith, and such holie Exercises, that we would not exchange the delight which we find in them, for al the delights which are in the world, though they were ten thousand times more then they are. For these Diuine guifts & comforts of God are like the Oyle, which was multiplyed by the Prophet *Elizæus*: they runne so long as there are emptie vessels to receaue them; & though the vessels which are presented, are some of them but smal, and not so manie as might be filled, yet so long as anie are offered, this heauenlie oyle doth not cease to runne; & that which is deriued by this meanes into our soules, be it neuer so little, according to the proportion and capacitie of the vessel which we presente, is notwithstanding wonderful sweet and pleasant. Miracles & Extasies happen not to al. Yet al may haue comfort. 4. *Reg.* 4.

God is not a niggard in his spiritual guifts.

5. We may adde, that they that are so ful of these feares and doubts, least God should sel his spiritual delights at too deare a rate, haue a meane and vnworthie conceit of his infinit goodnes and bountie, taking him to be close-fisted, as I may say, & of a couetous disposition, which is farre from the bountifulnes of his nature. They should rather reflect, how freely, and liberally, and profusedly he powreth forth the rest of his benefits for the sustenance of this natural life of ours. He maketh the Sunne to rise day by day, and giueth rayne to the earth in due season; he furnisheth the world with plentie of corne, and wine, & oyle, and al other fruits, not only sufficiently to supply our necessities, but abundantly for pleasure and pastime. And vpon whom doth he bestow these things? Vpon men that blaspheme his holie name; vpon men that are wicked and vngodlie, or at least for the most part vngrateful; vpon them that receauing so manie inestimable benefits at his hands, think not once of him, and oftimes abuse his guifts to his dishonour and reproach. Seing therefore God is so large and bountiful in the goods which serue but for this natural life, why should he not be in like manner liberal and profuse in the goods which serue for our spiritual life, a life farre more noble and excellent, and for which he voluntarily descended from the throne of heauen, and dyed willingly vpon the Crosse, to the end we might be partakers of it? We see what kind of people were inuited to that sumptuous Bancket so royally & magnificently set forth in the Ghospel. Did he cal the rich and noble only, or people clad in cloth of gold and siluer? *Goe forth*, sayth he, *quickly into the streets and lanes of the Cittie; & the poore, and feeble, and blind, and lame, bring in hither.* Who be these feeble, and blind, & poore people (to interpret the Parable spiritually as we ought) but such as are imperfect, and but Nouices for matter of spirit, too weake-sighted to fixe their eyes attentiuely vpon heauenlie things, and too feebly vnderlayd to *runne* the wayes of Religious discipline, and finally but slenderly prouided of vertue, and poore in al spiritual graces? And yet these are not only not excluded from the sweetnes of this bancket, but vnexpectedly inuited, and entreated, and, as the Ghospel speaketh, *compelled to goe in*. Let no man therefore feare, when he is called to Religion, that he shal be kept fasting from those plentiful fruits, which we haue mentioned, or forced to labour too long in digging for this current of liuing water.

Luc 14. 21.

Aduantages of Religious life.

6. For a Religious life hath manie helps and furtherances towards these comforts. First it hath an aduantage ouer a Secular life, which is of no smal importance: that in a Secular life euerie one must get what he can by his owne labour & industrie; but in Religion, the State itself furnisheth vs with manie graces, and putteth them, as I may say, into our bosome, when we think not of them. And besides the good which we doe ourselues, we haue the help of the good deserts of our Brethren; which participation how beneficial it is, we haue spoken at large elswhere. The dignitie of the State, & the fauour in which it is with God, doth highly also endeere vs vnto him; and that heroical act, when we resigned ourselues and al that belonged vnto vs, into the hands of our Creatour; for this act alone is of more value & esteeme, & weighes more with God, then manie vertuous actions of a Secular bodie. And finally the promise of *Christ* is of great weight, & very cõsiderable; for he hath promised a hundred-fold not only to such as liue like an other *S. Arsenius*, or *S. Hilarion*, but absolutely to al that forsake al without addition or restriction, as we see. Which argument *S. Bernard* doth handle excellently wel, confuting this selfsame errour & the vaine feares, which they obiect, who say: He doth

S. Bernard serm. Eccenos.

so

so indeed, I perhaps doe not so: I am of a tender complexion; I am a sinner, & cannot go through with so much hardnes without a great deale of grace, and haue it not in me to deserue this grace; As if grace were not grace, but a reward of our work; as if al had not sinned, and stood in need of the grace of God. Dost thou think, ô man, that there is exception of persons with God? and that he doth not so plentifully comfort al those that haue left al? Be not incredulous; yeald at least to Truth, of whose testimonie no faithful man can doubt. He sayth: *And euerie one that shal leaue father or mother or house, or land for my name, shal receaue a hundred-fold.* Christ excepteth no man. They therefore are miserable that say: *Beside vs.* It seemes they think themselues vnworthie of life euerlasting, seing they do not hope for so much as a hundred-fold. But becausc God, who promiseth it, is true; the man is a lyar, that mistrusteth it. Thus sayth *S. Bernard.*

7. But becausc beginners are they that are most of al subiect to these feares, in regard their mind is yet dul in conceauing spiritual things, and feeble in resisting the encounters which may occurre, and clogd with the dregs of a secular life, we wil shew, that they haue least cause of anie bodie to feare, becausc the beginnings of a Religious life are alwayes most ful of comfort. For if we beleeue, as we ought, that the Diuine goodnes hath so much care ouer those that are his, that he carrieth them as it were in his armes, and in his bosome; we must needs grant, that it belongeth much more to the self-same fatherlie care and prouidence, to giue this spiritual Infancie *milk to drink*, as the Apostle speaketh. For if, as Authour of nature, he prouided so carefully for our bodie, that as long as a child wants teeth and strength to feed itself, it should be fed with milk, which is so pleasing a sustenance, and so easie to be had without anie labour of the child; shal we think that in the order of Grace, of which he is in like manner Authour, he hath not had the like care of our soule while it is weake and feeble? For this is that which he promiseth of his owne accord by the Prophet *Esay*: *You shal be carried at the breasts; and they shal make much of you vpon their knees; as if a mother should make much of one, so wil I comfort you.* How could God expresse himself in more louing or more tender tearmes, then that, as infinit as he is, he disdayneth not to stoope to the tender affections, and seruices, and assiduitie of a Nurse? Though in these words he doth not only expresse his loue towards vs, in that he compareth himself to a Mother; but comparing vs to little infants, he giueth vs moreouer to vnderstand, that we shal enioy these heauenlie comforts before we be able to deserue them. For what did a little infant, or what can it doe, to deserue the loue and good wil of a mother, but only that it is her child, for which there is no thanks due to the child, but to the mother? And if we talk of merit, what did the Prodigal Child doe, that could deserue so much cherishing at his father's hands, or so much as to be admitted to his sight? Rather he had done manie things, by which he deserued to be deeply punished; and yet what ioy was there vpon his returne? what feasting, what musick, what singing? and that which doubtles to him was sweeter then al the rest, what fatherlie compassion, what embracings, what kisses, what teares, what falling vpon his neck? And, which is the more admirable, al these friendlie offices were heaped vpon that sonne, which had so vnfriendly departed from his father's house, and lauished al that he had in riotous and vitious courses; whereas the other sonne & elder brother, that had neither in word nor deed euer giuen his father the least distast, had neuer anie thing giuen him, as himself complayned.

Beginnings most ful of comfort.

1. Cor 3. 2.

Esa. vls. 12.

Luc. 15.

8. Which makes it so much the more euident, that it is so farre from truth, that these Comforts are bestowed only vpon the perfect, that oftimes they are bestowed in farre greater abundance vpon the imperfect, and vpon them that come newly, as strangers, into the house of God. And the reason why the infinit wisedome and prouidence of God dealeth thus with man, is that which *S. Gregorie* pointeth at in these words: *It is the Diuine grace which so dispenseth, least in their beginnings* they should be danted with the roughnes of temptation: because if the bitternes of temptation should seaze vpon them in the beginning, they would the easier returne to what they had left, the lesse way they had gone from it, and suddenly againe intangle themselues in the vices which are so neere them. Whervpon it is written, that when *Pharao* dismissed the people, our Lord did not leade them by the way of the land of the *Philistians*, which was next them, forethinking least it might repent them, if they had seen warre rise against them, and so returne into *Aegypt*. The warre therefore in the confines against them, that come out of *Aegypt*, is preuented, because they that forsake the world, first meete with a kind of tranquillitie, least troubled in that their tendernes and beginning, they should returne to that out of feare, which they had escaped.

S. Greg. 24. Mor. c. 7.

9. Finally to conclude with one thing more, which may agree as wel to them that are Nouices in a spiritual course, as to al others that are imperfect, God doth deale his fauours in a different fashion from that which men doe vse. For men, both because their wealth and substãce is limited, and being communicated with others must needs grow lesse, and because themselues stand in need at other times of the help and fauour of others, neuer almost bestow anie thing vpon others, but in regard of some good office which they hope-for at their hands, or which they haue already receaued. But God standing in need of nothing, and abounding with infinit wealth, which neuer can be exhaust by giuing, hath no other motiue of being bountiful towards his creatures, but his owne louing nature and goodnes, infinitly inclined to doe good to others. This is that which drawes him to be so liberal, and so royal in his guifts, & so open-handed towards al, and not to regard so much the deserts of men in it, as his owne goodnes and bountie. This is also the ground of that other noble and more admirable proceeding of his, to wit, that oftimes he powreth forth his guifts more largely vpon them that are not so perfect, and haue not profited so much in vertue, then vpon others; not that they haue deserued better, but because they haue more need. For he dealeth with vs as a louing father, who though he tender the good of al his children, seemeth notwithstanding in a manner to take no thought for them that are in health; but if anie of them be sick, he spares neither for physick nor physicians, nor the greatest dayntie that can be gotten; Or as a husbandman, or gardener, that among the trees which he hath care of, looketh little after those that are wel growne; but is continually watering, and fencing, and vnderpropping those that are weak and tender. The like & farre greater loue and care doth God shew towards his seruants, and maketh profession of it in the Ghospel, when he sayth: *They that are in health, neede not a Physician, but they that are il at ease.*

Gods owne goodnes is the sole ground of his liberalitie.

Mat. 9. 12.

An

An answer to them that say: There be manie hard things in Religion.

CHAP. XVI.

NOT only *Sensual men*, as the Apostle tearmeth them, *that mind nothing but earthlie things*, haue a horrour of manie things which they see in Religion, apprehending them to be wonderful hard and difficult; but the verie face of Religious discipline at the first sight to the outward eye carrieth a sad and seuere aspect, and is hateful to sense to behold. Which, were it not, I am verily perswaded that few would refuse it, but rather most willingly & most greedily runne vnto it; because they cannot but see, that by vndertaking such a course of life, they purchase for the present, tranquillitie and peace of mind, they free themselues from worldlie cares and troubles, and are in a manner assured of the glorie of the life to come. But this outward shew of hardnes, which we speake of, doth so preuaile with most men, that frighted with the conceit of it, they are contented to think, that the great commodities of Religion, deserue not to be bought with so much trouble, as they imagin to be in it. Seing therefore the Diuel hath scarce a more forcible engine to weaken this wholesome counsel, then this is, it will be worth our labour to shew, how this kind of temptation, may be vtterly reuersed and defeated. *Phil. 3.*

2. And we haue two wayes to doe it: the one is, to grant, yea to glorie, that there be some things in Religion more hard and difficult then ordinarie. For what life were it, if it lay continually steeped in sensualities, if there were nothing to be suffered in it, if it had not now and then a dash of trouble, if there occurred nothing that might giue displeasure? If this were the manner of it, what commendation could a man giue of it? Where should patience, fortitude, charitie, and other vertues be exercised? What occasion should a man haue of merit, and encrease of his crowne? A Religious life therefore is the more commendable, because it hath wherin to practise vertue, and by practise to encrease it, and by encreasing it, to haue the greater reward. *Difficulties are occasion of vertue.*

3. But yet, least the imagination of this difficultie, which is so wholesome and profitable, make too much impression in our thoughts, we must vnderstand, that al the difficultie which is in Religion, is so seazoned and alayed with diuers comforts, that it is apparent enough, for as much as concernes the merit of it, but the labour is not felt. In which respect we can neuer sufficiently admire and loue the infinit wisedome & goodnes of God, that, for the benefit of our soules, hath after so incredible a māner mingled & interlaced two things so cōtrarie one to the other. For if this kind of life were a course that were slack & easie, what cōmendation or reward, as I sayd, could it deserue? If on the other side it were excessiue paynful & laborious, who would abide it, specially cōsidering the frayltie of humane nature? The Louer therefore & Preseruer of mākind hath so tempered the matter, that the self-same thing should be in itself very hard & difficult, and yet wonderful sweet and pleasant, by reason of the admirable mixture of other things, that mitigate *Difficulties not felt in Religion.*

and alay it. Which our Sauiour himself insinuateth, when resembling his seruice to a burden and a yoak, he sayth, his *yoak is sweet, and his burden light.*

Matt. 11. 30.

The seruice of God conformable to nature and reason.

4. Which notwithstanding we must alwayes beare in mind, that whatsoeuer difficultie we find in the seruice of God, the seruice of God is not the cause of it, but our corrupted flesh and affections which are alwayes repining: Otherwise the seruice of God being so conformable to reason, must of necessitie be pleasing to a man of reason. For one part of vs *taking delight in the law of God*, as the Apostle speaketh, and this being the superiour and more noble part of vs, if it applie itself seriously, and vse the diligence and endeauour which it may and ought, no doubt but it wil be maister, and keepe the other part in awe, it being both inferiour and created to obey. For first this verie industrie of ours, and diligent endeauour, which I speake of, is wonderful forcible of itself; and the ancient Philosophers doe acknowledge it, among whom one speaketh thus: Nothing is so hard and difficult, but the mind of man may ouercome it, and make it familiar by continual beating vpon it. No motions are so wild and headie, but that order and discipline wil tame them. Whatsoeuer command the mind layes vpon itself, it goes through with it. Some haue gotten of themselues neuer to laugh; others haue debarred themselues of wine and women, and al kind of lickour; others haue learned to walk vpon smal ropes, and to carrie excessiue burdens, and such as in a manner are beyond the strength of man to carrie, and to diue to an excessiue deapth, and passe the seas without drawing their breath. Another Philosopher writeth to the same purpose in this manner: They that learne to frame their manners vprightly, in the beginning fal perhaps into manie errours, and perplexities, and difficulties; as they that leauing their owne countrey, and not discouering as yet the land for which they are bound, at first are anxious; but soone after, al things grow easie and playne by practise, and by the light and cleernes which the Studie of Philosophie bringeth with it.

Seneca. l. 1. de ira c. 12.

Plutarch. de prof. virt.

The force of the Grace of God.

5. And al this, as proceeding of custome and habit, is for the most part natural; what shal we say when Grace meetes with Nature? The grace of God, I say, which is so forcible, that it makes a man quite an other man, and, as the Prophet speaketh, *powreth a new Spirit into him, and in steed of a hart of stone, giueth him a hart of flesh*, soft and flexible. Of which grace the Royal Prophet also sayth: *Our Lord giue vertue & fortitude to his people.* And againe: *Blessed be my Lord God, who teacheth my hands to warre, & my fingars to the fight.* And an other Prophet more plainly: *They who hope in our Lord, shal change fortitude; they shal take wings like an eagle; they shal runne, and shal not labour; they shal walk and not be faint.* What can we desire more? He promiseth vs not only *feete to runne*, but *wings to flie* in this course, and that *we shal not faint*, nor so much as *labour* in it. And an other Prophet doth in a manner exult & triumph, not in himself, but in our Lord. *God our Lord*, sayth he, *is my strength.* For as the light which the Ayre hath, is the light of the Sunne; & it is not much material to the Ayre, whether it haue light of itself, or borrow it of the Sunne, so it be as vseful to it, as if it had it of itself: So the power and strength of God is our power and strength, that is, we make vse of it, as if it were our owne; and therefore he is truly our strength. And what doth this strength worke in vs? *He wil put my feete*, sayth the Prophet, *as the feete of stags*; that is, he wil make vs runne with speed and facilitie, and without being wearie, not only vpon

Ps. 67. 36. Ps. 143. Es. 40. 31.

Heb. 3. 19.

euen

euen ground, and ouer the playnes, as others doe, but in steep and craggie places; for so he sayth: *And he as a Conquerour will leade me ouer high places, singing psalmes.* He will fight for vs, he wil ouercome our enemies for vs, & put them to route; he wil leade vs in this way, not only without labour, but *singing psalmes* of perpetual ioy and thanks-giuing.

6. And heer by the way I cannot but cal to mind, what effect this verie Saying of the Prophet wrought once in *Andrew Spinola*, before he entred into our Societie. For being then a man growne, and as himself was wont to moane himself in an humble iesting manner, *hauing thirtie and eight yeares in his infirmitie*, when he began to think of forsaking the world, & manie reasons thronging into his mind, to fright him, and beate him off from his purpose, as the consideration of the litle health which he had, his custome of being wel tended, & daintily fed, the noblenes of his birth, the greatnes of his place in the Church of God, the hardnes of Religious discipline, and diuers others; vpon the suddain God of his goodnes put this verse of the Prophet into his mind: *He wil put my feete as of stags*; and withal as with a cleare ray of heauenlie light, he was so inlightned, that, as himself afterwards related, al those fearful and distrustful cogitations vanished away in a moment, and he remayned resolute in his purpose, & fully armed against al the feares and incommodities which before had so possessed his imagination; and within a short time found by experience effect of it. For wheras before, when he was yet a Secular man, he came sometimes to eate at our board, as being our great friend, & manie things went against his stomack, in regard he had been vsed to a more dayntie kind of fare & to be serued in siluer, & was extraordinarie curious in his owne house. Entring afterwards into our Societie, he was no sooner set at table, but euerie thing seemed otherwise, the linnen shewed extraordinarie white, the dishes shined like siluer, & the dining-roome, as he thought, was perfumed; & he made no question within himself, but the Rector of the house had of purpose commanded things to be prouided in that manner, contrarie to our wonted custome, to help his extraordinarie infirmitie; and friendly expostulated the matter in earnest at that time with the Rector, and often afterwards was wont to speak of this his errour to his friends in familiar conuersation. *Andrew Spinola.* *Io. 5. 5.*

7. This promise therefore of the Holie-Ghost, which wrought so strongly in the hart of this good man, ought in reason to sway as much with euerie bodie els, and of itself alone were indeed sufficient to encourage anie bodie, were he neuer so infirme and weake. But to returne to our former discourse, by this we may see, that the Grace of God doth so temper the hardnes, which seemes to be in Religion, that really it is not felt, but is rather pleasant, and to be desired. And it is no such great wonder that it should be so. For if there be an art to sweeten sowre fruits, and to put a delicious tast into an vnsauourie gourd, or such like green and harsh iuycie commodities, tempering them with sugar, or honie, or the like preseruers; shal we think that in Christian Religion, there is no art to take away the difficulties, which flesh and bloud suggest? Certainly there is; and an art farre easier to learne and put in practise, then the other, in regard it wholy depends of the mind; which if it be once resolued, nothing is hard vnto it, but al things easie and obuious.

8. And to make it so euident that no bodie shal be able to denye it, let vs consider the meanes which Religion vseth, to alay these difficulties, & to sweeten

The consideration of heauen, a special sweetner of difficulties.

them; for it is a matter which doth much import. Among manie wayes therefore, which it hath very effectual to this purpose, first it sets before our eyes the immensitie of the rewards of heauen due to our labours, the eternitie of them, the infinit felicitie, which there we shal enioy; and by these considerations inflames vs with the loue of that heauenlie happines, which once enkindled, makes al labour no labour at al. *S. Augustin* discoursing at large and rarely (as he is wont) of this subiect, in one of his Sermons bringeth manie examples of men, that for human ends haue suffered inhuman and cruel things, as to be cut, and lanced, & burned, to prorogue a few vncertain dayes of this life: of souldiers, that for a smal stipend runne vpon the pikes and into the verie mouth of death: of huntsmen, that for a short pleasure put themselues to excessiue labour and toyle; and concludeth thus:

S. Aug. s. 9 de verb. D.

„ How much more assuredly and more easily shal Charitie, in regard of true Beati-
„ tude, effect that which worldlie pretences, as much as they were able, haue ef-
„ fected to our miserie? How easily may whatsoeuer temporal aduersitie be endu-
„ red, to auoyd eternal punishment, and to purchase eternal quiet? Thus sayth *S.*
„ *Augustin*, and much more to the same effect; which it seemeth that great *S. Francis* vnderstood very wel, and in one word expressed it once very liuely. For his carnal brother, and indeed truly carnal, seing him once in the midst of winter half naked, as he was, shiuering for cold, sent one vnto him with a bitter ieast (more bitter indeed then was fit to come from a brother) to aske him, how he would

S. Francis.

sel him a dramme of that sweat of his. But the Saint returned answer with a chearful countenance in these words: *Tel my brother, that I haue sold it al already to my Lord God, at a very deare price.* And after some yeares, the same Saint being much tormented with excessiue payne in his bodie, and grieuously assaulted withal by the Diuel with new strange deuises, that it was not almost possible for flesh and bloud to beare it; a voyce from heauen spake vnto him, and bad
„ him be of good cheare, because by those afflictions he purchased to himself so
„ much treasure, that though al the earth should be turned into gold, al the stones
„ into diamonds, and al the water into balsame, it were not comparable vnto it. At which voyce he was so reuiued, that he felt no more payne, but instantly calling his Brethren vnto him, for ioy related what heauenlie comfort he had receaued. What payne therefore, or what trouble can there be in Religion, which such a thought wil not easily blow ouer, seing it was able so suddenly to alay and quite take away so vnsufferable & so lasting a payne, as *S. Francis* at that time endured?

Night-feares.

9. Let vs conclude therefore with *S. Bernard*, that this feare, which, as he speaketh, is wont to shake the beginnings of our conuersion, & which the horrour of so austere a life, and the austerenes of so vnwonted exercises, thrusts vpon vs at our entrance, is that *Night-feare*, which the Royal Prophet mentioneth in his ninetieth Psalme; and is therefore called a *Night-feare*, because, if the day did shine vpon vs, & in that heauenlie light we did compare the labours of Religion with the rewards which we expect in heauen, the feare of the labour would be nothing in regard of the desire of the rewards cõsidered in a cleare light. *For the passions of this time are not condigne to the future glorie, which shal be reuealed in vs.* But *now*, sayth *S. Bernard*, *because they are hidden from our eyes, and the night is stil in our Hemisphere, we are tempted by the Night-feare, & are afraide to suffer the present euils, for the good, which as yet we doe not see.*

S. Bernard s. 33. in Cãt.

Rom. 8. 18.

Abundãce of spiritual comfort.

10. This is the first salue & remedie, which God hath prouided for vs, to alay the difficulties which occurre in Religion. Another is the abundance of spiritual comforts, whereof I haue spoken before. And it is, as if a bodie should seeke a drop of

water in a great vessel of wine; for the troubles which are incident to a Religious life, are so wholy drowned & absorpt in the abundance of the sweetnes of it, that it tastes of nothing but sweetnes. To which purpose *S. Bernard* alluding to a saying of the Apostle, & among diuers other commodities of Religion, touching briefly vpon this particular, sayth thus: *The passions of this time are not condigne to our sinnes past and forgiuen vs; nor to the present comfort of grace, which is giuen vs; nor to the future glorie which is promised vs. Finally there is no bitternes so great in it, which the flower cast-in by the Prophet doth not sweeten, which Wisdome, the tree of life, doth not seazon.* And we shal the more easily beleeue al this to be true, & not hard to compasse, if we cõsider, that the difficulties which are in Religion, are but smal, & in pettie matters, if we weigh them right. For al difficulties of greater consequence, such as are so ordinarie, and so distastful in the world, hapning between man & wife, and vpon other occasions of marriage, & sinister accidents, by losse of goods, impeachment of our credit and good name, & the like, are farre from a Religious life. And moreouer the goodnes and mercie of God is such towards vs, that the more miserie we suffer for his sake, the more spiritual ioy and comfort he sends vs; as when *Daniel* was in the Denne with the Lions without al meanes of relief, he prouided him a dinner from a farre-of, and sent it in vnto him. For it is a general rule with God, and a constant manner of proceeding which he holds, to measure comforts by tribulations; and King *Dauid* professeth that he felt it so: *According to the greatnes of my griefs in my hart, thy comforts haue reioyced my soule.*

S. Bern. de conuers. Cler. c. 30.

Difficulties in Religion are trifles.

Dan. 14.

Ps. 93. 19.

11. And it is so vsual & so setled a course with him, that he hath oftimes miraculously shewed it in diuers Religious persons; as once in one *Rabaud* a great Prince in *France*, who was cõfirmed in his resolution for Religion by this notable miracle. For hauing been accustomed in the world to an easie life & dayntie fare, being entred into Religion he began to shrink at the hardnes of that course. Whervpon the Abbot *Porcarius*, that then was, condescending to his infirmitie, caused some particular dish to be alwayes prepared for him more dayntily dressed then the rest; & yet the more he fed, the more he pined away, & grew wonderful thinne. It hapned on a time, that while the rest of the Brethren were set at board, & fel hard to their drye bread & beanes, he saw two ancient men come into the roome, the one of them was high-forheaded & had two keyes about his neck; the other was a Monk, as appeared by his habit, & had a box of crystal in his hãd. Both of them going round about the roome, gaue euerie one of the Monks a morsel of something out of that box; & when they came to *Rabaud*, they looked vpon him with a frowning & angrie coũtenance, & ouerslipt him But he stealing a litle from his neighbour's trencher, and tasting of it, found it sweeter then anie thing that he had euer tasted either in Religion or in the world. And when this had hapned thrice vnto him, he went to his Abbot, & inquired of him, who these two ancient men might be. The Abbot presently perceauing what the busines was, told him that the one was *S. Peter*, Patron of their Monasterie, & the other *Honoratus* the Founder of it; & that the reason, why he had not his part of that dish with the rest, was, because he did not obserue the rigour of the Order with the rest. Which *Rabaud* hearing, reserued to abide the vtmost of it, and found it farre lesse and easier then he thought it had been; and not long after he saw the same Saints againe making their circuit, and they gaue him part of that sweet-meate with the rest, which did incredibly animate him to goe through with whatsoeuer difficultie should occurre euer after.

A general rule with God to measure comfort by tribulation

Rabaud.

12. The like almost hapned to *Andrew* Arch-deacon of *Verdun*, a man nobly

Andrew Arch-deacon of *Verdun*.

descended, and rich; who in the beginning almost of the Cistercian Order entred into it with great feruour. But the Diuel taking occasion to tempt him by reason of his tender complexion, and pressing him so hard, that he was readie to yeald, God of his infinit goodnes sent him this remedie. When he was at board, they set before him, as they did to the rest, a dish, which of al meates he could not abide: but being very hungrie, he forced himself to take a litle of it; and as soone as he had put it to his mouth, it tasted so sweet, that to his remembrance he neuer felt the like; and eating it vp al, he afterwards went to his Abbot, thinking that they had put some particular thing into his messe aboue the rest. But when he vnderstood that the dish was the same, and was dressed but with water and salt, as the others were, he fel into the reckoning, that it was the goodnes and prouidence of God, that had so ordayned; and giuing him humble thanks, he was confirmed in his purpose of perseuering in Religion, and so much the more, because he felt the like sweetnes in those kinds of meate for diuers dayes after, insomuch that he often sayd, that now he tooke more contentment in feeding vpon beanes & pease and hearbs, then before in his wild fowle and such kind of dayntyes.

13. This hapned to these two particular men. The whole household was witnes of that which we read in the life of *S. Bernard*, when vpon the first founding of the Monasterie of *Clairvaulx*, though they did leade a wonderful auster life, & fed vpon bread that was half earth, and dwelt in a house that was marueious poore, and poorely furnished for household-stuff and victuals, yet they al liued not only without anie grudging, but with such extraordinarie delight and contentment, that they had a scruple of it; because, as they sayd, liuing with more pleasure in the wildernes, then they did before in the world, they conceaued they had cause to suspect, least they were lead a wrong way into their Countrey; til hauing opened their case first to *S. Bernard*, and then to the Bishop of *Chalons*, who then lodged in their house, they were informed at large, that it was the guift of God, and not to be reiected. Whereby we may see, what custome, togeather with the grace of God, can doe, seing it was so forcible, as to make so rigide a life seeme to such a multitude so sweet, that they had a scruple, least they liued too easily.

S. Bernard's Monasterie.

14. Who therefore can heerafter think, that a Religious life can be anie thing harsh, & that a bodie may not goe through with it with ioy & contentment, seing God doth season it with so manie helps & comforts? Though what need we stand so long vpon our defence for a Religious State in this kind? as if Secular people, in whose behalf these obiections are made against Religion, had nothing to suffer, no sorrow, no grief to struggle with; whereas indeed their sorrowes, and miseries, and afflictions are farre greater, and not only the poorer sort among them, and they that haue smal meanes to liue on, and a heauie charge of house-hold and children lying vpon them, groane vnder this burden; but they that haue the world at wil, and are generally accounted happie, though outwardly they make a fayre shew, are inwardly galled with infinit troubles & vexations. And their sorrowes are the more intollerable, because they are destitute of heauenlie comforts, without which it is a verie hel to liue. What likelihood is there of anie such thing in Religion? the causes of whatsoeuer trouble may happen being wonderful slight in themselues, and easie to take away, and sometimes such, as it is better to contemne them, or laugh at them, or perhaps to loue them, & willingly to embrace them. On the one side therefore the occasions of difficultie in Religion are very smal, and in a

The difficulties of a Secular life intollerable.

manner

manner nothing; and on the other side, the comforts so abundant in our Sauiour Christ, that they are able to sweeten a whole sea of distastes and troubles, if there were anie such in Religion.

15. Wherefore *S. Bernard* doth excellently to this purpose apply the Ceremonie of anoynting Crosses with Oyle, which is vsed in Consecrating Churches; and sayth, that the like is done in the minds of Religious people by the grace of God. It is necessarie, sayth he, that the Vnction of spiritual grace help our infirmitie, anoynting the crosses of our obseruances and seueral pennances with the grace of deuotion: because without a Crosse it is not possible to follow Christ, nor without Vnction possible to endure the harshnes of a Crosse. Hence it is, that manie abhorre and shunne pennance, seing the Crosse and not seing the Vnction. You that haue tryed what it is, know that in verie deed our Crosse is anoynted, & by the grace of the Spirit which helpeth vs, our pennance is sweet and delightful, and, as I may say, our bitternes sauourie. *S. Bernard ser. 1 de Ded. Eccl.* Crosses and Vnction goe togeather.

16. And in an other place discoursing of the same matter more at large he sayth, that the Soule of a Religious man being beautiful within, and humble and contemptible without, was figured by the Tabernacle, which was among the Children of *Israel*. For within, it was guilded al ouer; but without, there was nothing of it but couers of sack-cloth and sheep-skins; and as that kind of couering, though it were contemptible to the eye, serued to keepe the Tabernacle from the dust and the rayne: So the outward humble fashion of Religious people preserues their inward glorie; and euerie such Soule may say truly of itself: *I am black, but beautiful.* Then he brings the example of *Isaac*, who, though he came to be sacrificed, was not sacrificed, but a ramme in steed of him, and his life preserued; and he liued so much the more ioyfully, by how much the promise and hope of posteritie was now setled vpon him. For in like manner Religious people seeme to debarre themselues of al contentment, and yet their contentment is not indeed cut of, but vice and rebellion; and the hornes of this Sacrifice intangled in the thornes, shew that sinne and contumacie can neuer be without remorse and vexation. But *Isaac*, sayth he, liuing shal liue, lifted vp vpon the wood; to the end that thou also placing thy ioy on high, mayst glorie not in thy owne flesh, but in the Crosse of our Lord. This is the conuersation of the perfect, this is the life of Saints; finally, sayth one, as sorrowful, but alwayes glad; as hauing nothing and possessing al; as dying, and behold we liue. *Exod. 26.* *Gen. 22.* *2. Cor. 6. 10*

17. The Abbot *Abraham* in *Cassian* holdeth the like discourse in these words: They that serue God deuoutly and faithfully, hauing taken the yoak of our Lord vpon them, and learned of him, that he is meeke and humble of hart, as it were casting off the burden of their earthlie affections shal find by the help of God no labour, but rest in their soules. The crooked wayes shal be presently made strayt, and the rugged wayes playne, and tasting they shal see that our Lord is sweet, and hearing Christ in the Ghospel crying alowde: Come to me al you that labour and are burthened, and I wil refresh you; casting of the weight of their sinnes, they shal vnderstand that which follow es: My yoak is sweet, and my burden light. And certainly if we compare the beautiful flower of Virginitie, and the fragrant puritie of Chastitie, with the foule and stinking slowes and hogsties of carnal pleasures; the quiet and securitie which Monks enioy, with the dangers and miseries in which worldlings are ingulfed; the repose which our pouertie brings vs, with *Cass. Col. vlt. c. 25.* The yoak of Christ sweet.

the gnawing griefes and reſtleſſe cares of rich people, which day and night not without danger of their liues doe torment them, we ſhal eaſily grant, that the yoak of Chriſt is exceeding ſweet, and his burden extraordinarie light. Thus ſayth *Caſsian*.

The grace of God carries this yoak for vs.

18. Where then is that harſhnes, where be thoſe troubles, which *Satan*, to fright men, doth ſo mightily aggrauate againſt vs? Are not al things rather ſo ful of pleaſure, that they take away al feeling of difficultie and incommoditie, or in a manner al? Wherefore to conclude in brief, as if a man had a great deale of luggage, and another ſhould carrie it for him, he ſhould haue al the benefit, and the other al the labour: So in this burden of Religion, the reward is ours, and yet we haue no trouble by it, becauſe another carrieth the burden for vs. Which is not

1. Cor. 15. 10. mine but *S. Paul's* conceit; for hauing reckoned-vp the manie incommodities and difficulties which he endured through pouertie, nakednes, trauel, perſecution, and the like, he addeth: *Not I, but the grace of God with me*; acknowledging and openly proclayming, that it was not himſelf, but God that brought to paſſe thoſe great things in him.

S. Ber. Ser. Qui habit. 19. Wherefore we muſt allow of that which *S. Bernard* ſayth, when rehearſing to his Brethren the labours which they endured, and daylie mortifications, by much faſting, often ſweating, watching aboue meaſure, beſids thoſe things which are inward, contrition of hart, and multitudes of temptations, he addeth, that it

A cruel kind of compaſſion. is not for their benefit to haue theſe heauie and burdenſome things leſſened, becauſe if their pennance be leſſened, their crowne by little and little wil leeſe the pretious ſtones which are in it: and calleth it a cruel kind of compaſſion, in regard that the taking away of a ſmal quantitie of feed, comes to no ſmal loſſe in the harueſt. What remedie? The remedie is, that the labour remaine, and yet become ſauourie by the ſweetnes, which God doth giue it; becauſe if your tribulation, ſayth » he, doe abound for him, your comfort alſo wil abound through him, and your » ſoule be delighted in him, which in theſe things refuſeth comfort. For with him » tribulation itſelf may be found to be great conſolation. For is it not moſt certain,

Heb. 1. 3. that that which you endure is aboue the ſtrength of man, beyond nature, contrarie to cuſtome? Another therefore doth beare theſe things; he doubtleſſe, who ac» cording to the Apoſtle, carrieth al things by the word of his power. What therefore ſhould we feare, if he be with vs, that carrieth al things? Al this is of *S. Bernard*.

20. Let no man therefore accuſtome his eyes heerafter to behold the out-ſide only of a Religious life, which ſeemes ſomewhat harſh, but let him looke alſo into the inward ſweetnes, & acknowledge, that there is ſuch plentie of grace belonging vnto it, to qualifye and alay the harſhnes, and to ſtrengthen vs to beare it, that it

Cuſtome makes hard things eaſie goes farre beyond al the hardnes and difficultie, which can be imagined in it, ſpecially when a man is a little accuſtomed vnto it; for vſe and cuſtome doth as it were harden vs, & take away the feeling of payne, & makes vertue familiar and pleaſant. Which familiarnes *S. Auguſtin* doth fitly expreſſe by the word (*Embracings*)

S. Auguſt. Ep. 37. & layeth downe the effects of it in theſe words: When Wiſdome hath once bound » a man, & tamed him with certain laborious exerciſes, it afterwards vnbinds him, » & giues him free libertie to enioy himſelf; &, nurturing him firſt in temporal » bonds, binds him afterwards with eternal embracings, then which bonds no» thing can be imagined more delightful, or more ſolid. The firſt bonds, I confeſſe, » are a little hard; the ſecond, I cannot ſay they are hard, becauſe they are ſweet,

nor ſoft, becauſe they are ſtrong. Wheras the bonds of this world haue in them true harſhnes, falſe delight, vncertain pleaſure, hard labour, timorous quiet, the thing itſelf ful of miſerie, and a deceitful hope of happines. Beware thou thruſt not thy neck, thy hands, they feet, into theſe fetters.

An anſwer to them that obiect, that Religious people barre themſelues of the pleaſures of this life.

CHAP. XVII.

VPon the former grounds we may eaſily anſwer another imputation, which people lay vpon Religious courſes, to wit, that they depriue a man of whatſoeuer is comfortable to fleſh and bloud. For though it be true (as it hath been ſufficiently proued) that no ſtate vnder the cope of heauen is ſo capable, and ſo fruitful of ſpiritual delights as Religion is; yet it may perhaps ſtumble ſome bodie, that there is no place in it for the delights of Senſe, without which the ioy, which man hath vpon earth, is maymed, and as it were lame of one ſide. For Man being a compound of bodie & ſoule, there want not them, that think they are neuer wel, though their mind feaſt it, if their fleſh, as I may ſay, be kept faſting. And it ſticks the more in their ſtomack, becauſe the pleaſures of the mind are ayrie & ſubtil, & not ſo eaſie to be perceaued; the pleaſures of Senſe are more palpable, and plaine for euerie bodie to ſee; ſo that if a man haue the firſt only, he hath in a manner nothing: but he that hath plentie of theſe latter, is generally accounted happie.

This temptation figured in the murmuring Iewes.

2. This kind of temptation, in my iudgement, was foreſignifyed in the Children of *Iſrael*, when hauing *Manna* from heauen in that abundance, that al the countrey round about was ful of it. and they were to be at no further trouble or care, then to gather it; & it being beſids in itſelf a very ſauourie kind of ſuſtenance, as being made by the hands of Angels, what did the common-people ſay notwithſtanding of it, and how did they murmure? *Our ſoule*, ſay they, *doth now loathe ouer this light kind of meate*. For being carnally giuen, they ſighed after the fleſh-pots of *Aegypt*; & becauſe thoſe meates ſtuffed vp their bellies, they preferred them before the food of heauen, & thought this but light ſtuffe in compariſon of that other. *Num.* 21. 5.

3. For the cure of which errour, or rather madnes, we muſt conſider, that al the inconuenience which is heer obiected, depends of peoples imaginations, conceiting that he, that is barred of the pleaſures of the bodie, wants ſome great matter; and the verie name of *Want*, vpon the firſt apprehenſion, is apt to breed *Sorrow* and diſcontent; becauſe it is as much to ſay, as, I haue not that which were much to be deſired, or which is neceſſarie; which yet is not alwayes true. For it hapneth oftentimes, that we haue not diuers things, which we haue no need of, nor haue no great deſire of them. For example, a man hath not feathers like a bird, nor hornes like a beaſt, nor ſcales like a fiſh, nor diuers other things which other creatures haue; neither doe we deſire to haue them, or becauſe we haue them not, doe we think ourſelues the worſe. The matter therefore is in

A man wants not that which he deſires not.

our desire, and consequently he that desires not a thing, want it not; And so they, that are desirous of honour or wealth, if they haue it not, are troubled, because they want it: but they that desire it not, cannot be sayd to want it, because they are not sorie they haue it not.

It is more delightful to desire a thing then to haue it.

4. And further, it is much more delightful not to desire a thing, then to desire it, and withal to haue it. For so we see, that they that are mad after their bodilie pleasures, when they haue their fil of them, take much more pleasure in abstayning from them, then in continuing in them. Is it not therefore much better to doe that betimes, which time brings them to choose? and out of vertue, and vpon good aduice to resolue vpon that before hand, which disordered fulnes forceth them vnto? And yet we cannot grant, that they are both filled alike to their contentment. For if we speake of the fulfilling of our desires (in which people imagin that al happines consists) they that desire nothing, haue their desire much more perfectly fulfilled, then they that desire a thing and haue it. Which *S. Iohn Chrysostome* reckons among the rest of the commodities of a Religious life; for with these worldlie kind of people, it is, sayth he, as if a man should be so thirstie, that before he can drink one cuppe, he desires another and another, and though he drink neuer so much, cannot quench his thirst; certainly such a man though

S. Io. Chry. l. 2. contra vitup. vit. mon.

» he haue neuer so much lickour to drink, cannot be accounted happie; but he is
» rather happie, that free from this necessitie of drinking, feeleth no thirst; nor is vr-
» ged anie way to drink; for the first is like a man that hath a burning feauer, the
» other like one that is in perfect health.

5. And this which *S. Iohn Chrysostome* deliuereth vpon the point of reason, *S. Augustin* confirmeth by his owne example, relating with grief this among the rest of his errours of his secular conuersation: that while gaping after lucre & honour, he was walking one day through the cittie of *Milan*, with his head ful of an Oration, which he was to pronounce in prayse of the Emperour that then was, burning, as he speaketh, with a feauer of consuming thoughts, by chance he cast

S. August. 6. Conf. c. 6.

» his eye vpon a beggar, that was very pleasant and iocund; and at the sight of him,
» he fetched a deep sigh, and spake much to his friends, that followed him, of his
» owne follie, that haling the burden of his infelicitie after him through the thor-
» nes of his disordered desires, and aggrauating it by continually haling it, the vt-

That whi.h al desire, is contentment.

» most of his hopes and ayme was, to come to that assurednes of contentment and
» ioy, to which that beggar was already arriued, and to which perhaps he should
» neuer arriue. For that which that poore fellow had gotten by a few farthings
» which he had begged, to wit, to be ioyful and contented in mind, that he aspired
» vnto, by so manie wretched windings. This therefore which *S. Augustin* sayth of
» this poore man, may much more truly, and with more proportion, be sayd of a
» Religious state. For why doth anie man desire the pleasures of the bodie, but to
haue content and ioy in them? Religious people haue this already, and are contented and ioyful vpon farre better and more worthie grounds, then the pleasures of Sense can arriue vnto; and on the other side not desiring them, they cannot be sorie they haue them not.

Nothing in earthlie things worth the taking vp.

6. Againe; what is there in these earthlie delights, why they should be so much desired or sought for? For to say nothing of the dammages and dangers they bring a man's soule into, nor how vnworthie a thing it is for Man, that is so noble a creature, to be stil hanging after that which is common to beasts, I speake only

now

now of that itching delight, which egs a man on so much to these pleasures. What great matter of commoditie can these transitorie and perishable and earthlie things bring a man, that they should be so much esteemed? What is it to haue a board daintily serued, and curiously set-forth with excessiue cost and magnificence? or to goe to a play? What is there in a garden, or in a guilded coach, or in a long trayne of attendance, that, I doe not say a Saint, but an ordinarie man of iudgement should be taken with it? Besides that, if it be ioy and contentment which we seeke in these things, as I sayd before, contentment is not so much in fulnes, as in sobrietie and temperance; specially, when with temperance so manie other daynties concurre as Religious pouertie doth afford, and are so farre from being found in the greatest delicacies of rich men, that al their pleasures are continually mingled with infinit corrasiues; insomuch as the Holie-Ghost in the Prouerbs giues vs warning of it in these words: *It is better to be called to a dish of hearbs with charitie, then to a fat calf with hatred.* And in an other place: *A dry morsel with ioy, is better then a house ful of beasts killed, with wranging.*

Sobrietie ful of contentment.

Prou. 15. 17.

Prou. 17. 1.

12. Finally we must vnderstand, that Religious people doe not so much depriue themselues of the pleasures of the bodie, as change them for better. For when a soule meeteth with so manie fountains of heauenlie comforts, and hath so manie vessels to fil with them, as I sayd before there were heads of these comforts in Religion, the comfort and sweetnes which it feeles, remaynes not wholy in the soule, but diffuseth itself further, and redounds to sense, and to our naturall appetites, and also to our bodie, by reason of the neerenes of one to the other, and the connexion which is betwixt them. Which is the cause why the Prophet sayd: *My soule and my flesh haue exulted in the liuing God.* And the Wise-man in the Prouerbs: *A ioyful mind maketh flourishing yeares, a sad spirit drieth vp the bones.* For as we see the bodie pines away with the grief of the mind, so it hath part also of the ioyes of the mind, so farre as it is capable of them.

Religious people change for better comforts.

Ps. 83. 3

Pro. 17. 22.

13. Which things considered, who can make anie question, whether the World or Religion be the pleasanter place euen for the bodie? For though it be not, as I confesse, inuited euerie day in Religion to a bancket, to dancing, to merrie meetings, to hunting-matches, and the like; it hath that notwithstanding which is farre better, and more noble, deriued from the superiour part of the soule to the inferiour. As when in a great household the Maister of the house marrieth, the marriage concernes himself only, but the whole house and al the household-seruants, haue part of the feast and musick. In like manner therefore, Religious people, as I sayd, are not altogeather barred of the pleasures of the bodie, but make an exchange of that which is base and momentarie, and alwayes ful of remorse of conscience and excessiue care, for that which is decent, honest, permanent, and so much the more delightful, the more sutable it is to both the parts of Man, and to Nature itself.

Religion the pleasanter place for the bodie.

An answer to them, that say, there be manie temptations in Religion.

CHAP. XVIII.

THers argue against a Religious course of life out of that place of Scripture: *Sonne, coming to the seruice of God, stand in feare & trembling, and prepare thy soule to temptation.* Which warning of the Holie-Ghost doth so terrifye them, that they think, if they come to Religion, they must liue in a continual combat; and therefore conclude, that it is better to decline the battaile, then by prouoking their Aduersarie, thrust themselues voluntarily into danger.

Eccl. 2 1.

2. To which we answer; first, that holie Scripture (seing they are pleased to vse the authoritie thereof) when it giueth vs warning of the temptations, which we shal find in the seruice of God, doth not aduise vs withal to decline the seruice of God for these temptations; but rather, that foreseing the strife which wil happen, we come armed before-hand both with courage and weapons, & particularly with those weapons which are there named, to wit, *Feare and Trembling*; for these wil serue vs as a whetstone to whet our industrie, and diligence, and vertue. The souldiers of this world, though they know they shal often encounter their enemie, doe not therefore forsake the warres; rather they go to the warres, that they may meete with their enemie; because, vnlesse they fight, they cannot get the victorie; and without victorie, they shal haue no reward, nor crowne.

The Scripture doth not bid vs decline the seruice of God for temptatiõs.

3. Moreouer in the warres among men there is this difference; for if a man wil sit at home, he may be quiet and safe; for no man ordinarily fighteth, vnlesse he put himself into the field. But spiritual encounters no man can auoyd, though he would neuer so fayne. The Diuels are enemies to al mankind; they lye in wayte for al, they set vpon al, not only vpon Religious people, but much more vpon Secular people, the more their liues are open to their assaults, and they lesse warie of them. So that Religion doth not rayse an enemie against thee, that was not thy enemie before, but doth minister weapons, and courage, and counsel to withstand, and also to assault him that was alwayes thine, and euerie bodies enemie.

Spiritual encounters cannot be auoyded.

4. The reason therefore, why Religious people seeme to endure harder encounters then others, is, because when we begin first to cast-vp our Spiritual accounts, and to consider what we are, and from whence we come, and whether we are walking, and (in a word) what wounds and sores we haue in our soules, then we begin to feele we haue an enemie. Before, not because we did not feele our wounds, therefore we had none, but we were wounded, and did not reflect vpon it; which of itself was a very dangerous wound, and an euident signe not only of blindnes, but of death that had seazed vs. Though what wonder can it be, if the Diuel doe not oppose a man, when of his owne accord he giues himself bound into his hands, and without contradiction yealds himself his slaue, and doth whatsoeuer he wil haue him to doe? But when he perceaues a man go about to wrest himself out of his iawes, then he sets to him with greater furie, as a fugitiue. Which *S. Gregorie* expresseth excellently wel in these words: Our Enemie, while we leade this life, laboureth the more to ouerthrow vs, the more he sees vs

Why Religious people seeme to haue harder encounters.

S. Greg. 24. mor. c. 7.

rebel against him; for he cares not for assaulting thē, of whō he finds he is in quiet possession: But against vs he riseth with the greater furie, the more violently he is thrust out of our hart, as out of the right of his proper mansion-house. But that no man may be daunted with these his wicked attempts, let vs heare also what the same *S. Gregorie* addeth a litle after: But because our merciful God permitteth vs to be proued by temptation, and not reproued, according as it is written (*God is faithful, who doth not suffer you to be tempted aboue that which you are able, but wil make also with temptation issue, that you may be able to sustayne*) he doth speedily succour vs with the help of his comforts, & abates the edge of temptation which riseth against vs, & calmeth with in ward peace the motions of our thoughts, that beate one against an other. And presently our soule receaueth great ioy of the Celestial hope, because it hath abided the brunt; that with reason we may say of a man that is thus tempted and deliuered: *He shal see his face in exultation*; And againe: *He freed his soule, that it might not go to destruction, but liuing might see light.* Thus sayth *S. Gregorie*, excellently to the purpose. 1. *Cor.* 10. 13

5. For if temptations were gouerned only by the malice of the Diuel, that he might assault vs, when, and how often, and how violently he list himself, we had great reason to be afraid of them; but seing he cannot so much as moue his fingar against vs, vnlesse God giue him leaue, we cannot doubt but his infinit Goodnes, out of the loue & prouident care he hath ouer vs, wil so temper al assaults according to the proportion of our strength, that we shal not be tempted not only aboue it, but not so farre as we are able to abide. For, as *S. Ephrem* speaking of this busines sayth: *If men, knowing so little as they doe, can discerne notwithstanding, how great a burden a beast is able to carrie, as for example, a mule, or a cammel, and load them according to the measure of their forces; if a potter when he frames his vessel, knowes how long he is to leaue it in the fournace, that it be not burnt, if he leaue it too long, or fal in peeces, if too little, and be for no vse; How much more doth God, whose wisedome is infinit, know what temptations and trial euerie Soule doth want that desires to please him, and permits no greater to fal vpon them, then is for their profit?* Temptations gouerned by God. *S. Ephrem. de patientia.*

6. Which being so, we haue not only no cause to feare, but much reason to reioyce, because, as I sayd, there comes no harme to the seruants of God by these temprations, but great benefit. For as *Cassian* writeth, by them we find by experience, that we alwayes stand in need of the help of God, & consequently we perseuer in prayer, we cal vpon him, we giue not ourselues to sloath and idlenes, we keep our custome & practises of vertue, & of fighting against our enemies, whereas oftimes (as he speaketh) *whom aduersitie could not intercept, securitie & prosperitie haue ouerthrowne.* This is therefore the benefit which we reape by temptation, that as a horse that is strong and ful of mettle, makes notwithstanding more speed if he be spurred vp, then otherwise; So these gyrds, which the Diuel giues Religious people, serue to put mettle into them, & make them runne with more feruour to their prayers, to be more diligent in mortifying thēselues, more eager in punishing their bodies, & more perfectly to apply themselues to the practise of al kind of vertue. Temptations profitable. *Cass. Col. 4. c. 6.*

7. Which benefit being so great, what reason haue we to feare temptations, or to shunne Religiō in regard of thē? because we are in danger of yealding to thē? If we looke vpō ourselues only, & vpō our enemies, no doubt but we haue great cause to feare, but if we looke withal vpō the helps which we haue frō heauē, we haue cause to say confidently with the Prophet: *If armies stand against me, my hart wil not feare.* More for vs, then against vs. *Ps. 26. 3.*

Moyses. This was once shewed to one of the ancient Fathers, whose name was *Moyses*. For being sorely assaulted with temptation, he went to the Abbot *Isidore*, and told him of the difficulties and combats which he endured. *Isidore* being a wise vnderstanding man, first endeauoured to comfort him with reasons, and sayings out of the holie Scripture, and then leading him out of his Celle, bad him looke towards the West, where he saw a multitude of Diuels, fierce and terrible, marching as it were against him; then he bad him looke into the East, & there he saw infinit numbers of blessed Angels, as bright as the Sunne, in array to assist him. *Know then*, sayd the Abbot, *that there be more for vs* (as the Prophet *Helizeus* sayd) *then against vs*: & that that is true, which *S. Iohn* sayth: *He is greater who is in vs, then he that is in the world.*

God in person assisteth vs. 8. And we may adde, that they that are for vs, are not only farre more in number, but so farre beyond the others in strength and power, that the least of them, is able alone to defeate and put to route al the damned crew of Hel; because ours fight not with their owne strength, but with the power and strength of God. *Ps. 33. 8.* And moreouer, God doth not only send his *Angels to compasse them round about, that feare him*; but he himself descendeth to assist them, as King *Dauid* telleth vs, who had often experience of it: *He taketh his weapons and target* to fight for vs; *he shootes his arrowes and disperseth our aduersaries; he multiplyeth lightning and confoundeth them.* *Ps. 34. 2.* And yet he wil not haue vs sit stil, and be idle, and doe nothing, while he ouercomes our enemies for vs; for that were not so glorious neither for him nor for vs; But he giues vs, feeble and weake creatures as we are, power and courage to ouercome, not one, as *Dauid* while he was a little one, but manie *Giants*, which is more honourable both for him and vs. *He teacheth our hands to warre, & our fingars to the combat. He puts our armes as a bow of brasse*, and makes them that they are neuer wearie. *He gyrds vs with vertue, and dilateth our steps, that we may prosecute our enemies, and apprehend them, and not turne back, til we bruse them as dust before the face of the wind.* How easie therefore is it to ouercome, hauing so powerful a help? And what can be more to be desired, then to fight, seing the victorie on our side is so assured?

1 Reg. 17. 37. Ps. 143. 1. Ps. 17. 35. 37.

Aduantage of the place of combat. 9. But besides these strong succours, we haue also the aduantage of the ground wheron we fight. It is wel knowne what difference there is in fighting vpon euen ground, or from a higher or lower seate. Secular people that encounter the Diuel in the world, fight with a great deale of disaduantage of place; for the world is a slipperie kind of soyle, where a man can haue no footing, pestered moreouer with often gusts of wind, & other encumbrances, which make the field very disaduantagious for them. Religious people fight as it were from a high Tower; for the State itself is like a Tower, both in regard of the eminencie of it, & of the strong fortifications which are about it; so that they are both defended from the enemies shot, & haue better meanes to offend their enemies as being aboue them.

Direction of Superiours, and laying open of temptations. 10. Finally, Religious people haue an other present remedie, & a general antidote against al temptations, to wit, their Superiours & Gouernours, who not only by solid reason, & counsel, & prudence are alwayes at hand to relieue them, but oftimes it hapneth, & I may say most commonly, that no sooner can a temptation be layd open before them, but in a moment it vanisheth away, and is defeated. A wonderful thing! & doubtles if there were Physitians for the bodie, that could cure a disease with only looking vpon it, how would they be sought to, & esteemed? But that which cannot be done in the bodie, is dayly seen in the diseases of

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the minds: and al spiritual Writers are witnes of it, and particularly *Cassian* (a man very wel to be credited in this kind) sayth, that it was a general practise of the ancient Fathers, to teach their subiects and disciples, neuer to conceale the busie thoughts of their harts, but presently to lay them open to their Gouernours, so soone as they began to bud: and that whosoeuer did so, could neuer be circumuented with the craftie deuises of the Enemie. And this which *Cassian* deliuereth, daylie experience, as I sayd, doth much more proue to be true, and oftimes it hapneth, that not only by declaring the temptation, but by the verie resolution to declare it and lay it open, it is vanquished, because the Enemie is one that *doth euil, hateth light, and cannot abide light*; that is, the eye and countenance of a Superiour. *Cass. Col. 4. c. 9.* *Io 3. 20.*

11. But not to stand too long vpon a thing that is so euident, we wil shew briefly, that they that liue in the world, are farre more exposed to the assaults of the Enemie, then they that liue in Religion. For al temptations rise of one of these three causes, to wit, either from ourselues, that is, out of our owne weaknes and corruption; or from outward things, which represented to our senses, sollicite vs to desire them; or finally by the suggestion of the Diuel. Al these three must needs be farre more violent, and dangerous in Secular people, then in Religious. For if we speake of infirmitie, who can make anie question, who be the weaker? knowing that Secular people are generally vnacquainted with matters of Spirit, ful of euil habits, their passions strong in them, and they so farre from endeauouring by care and diligence to bridle them, that rather giuing way vnto them, they strengthen them dayly more and more. Al the care on the other side of Religious people, is to mortify themselues; Mortification is the first thing they begin with; Mortification is that which they plye continually al their life, & purchase by it al other vertues, which are the strength, and as it were the sinnewes of Spirit; and consequently nothing, for matter of Spirit, can be more strong then a good Religious man. Three heads of temptatiõs to which Secular people are more subiect.

12. Now what outward occasions or allurements can annoy a Religious life, where there is such continual watch & ward kept ouer vs? our eyes, & eares, and other senses, by meanes of our Rule & our Superiours, and the verie walles themselues so garded, that no hurtful thing can come neere vs. Secular people stãd continually as it were in the midst of the flames, seing, & hearing, & perpetually trafficking with those things which are euil in themselues, or prouoke a man to euil; for which reason the Prophet sayth: *Death comes in by the windowes*, & there be so manie windowes as we haue Senses. So that in this also there is no compatison. Custodie of Senses in Religion. *Hier. 9. 21.*

13. The third head is the Suggestion of the Diuel. The Diuels are like theeues; & whom doe theeues most set vpon? Vpon them that they may robbe as often & as easily as they wil; or vpon them that make head against them, & most commonly get from them without anie losse, & oftner yet with gaine & benefit to themselues? If a man haue two enemies, & one of them be a coward, & neither haue anie thing to defend himself withal, nor skil at his weapon, & consequently must needs goe by the worst at euerie slight encounter; and the other be wel armed, watchful, & skilful, and oftimes haue had the better of his enemie; who can make anie doubt which of these two is likelie to be oftner & more dangerously set vpon? And thus it hapneth with those infernal fiends; whom Abbot *Isidore* (as *Palladius* writeth) fitly likeneth to dogs, that lye about the shambles; for as long as there is anie The Diuels like dogs in the shambles.

thing for them, they haunt the place; but when the ſhambles are ſhut vp, or if they be often beaten away with good dry blowes, and that they cannot get what they come for, they appeare there no more.

14. Theſe therefore are the grounds, vpon which we may iuſtly perſwade ourſelues, that a man is with leſſe danger of his ſoule, and not ſo often tempted in Religion, as in the world; and that the temptations which doe ariſe againſt vs in Religion, are ſo eaſie to be ouercome, and withal ſo beneficial vnto vs, that if we be warie of being ouer-confident of ourſelues, we may ſay, they are rather to be deſired and wiſhed for.

An anſwer to them, that ſay: It is againſt nature, to liue vnder an other.

CHAP. XIX.

AMong al the difficulties which a Religious courſe hath more in ſhew then in ſubſtance, ſome apprehend moſt, to be alwayes at an other's command, alwayes to depend vpon another's wil; becauſe they perſwade themſelues, that libertie and freedome to doe what a man wil, is moſt agreable to nature; and to depend vpon an other, is, in a manner, to be a ſlaue.

2. This errour aymes at the verie throat of Religion, and layes ſiege to the Cittadel. Wherefore, that we may vtterly root it out, we muſt firſt conſider, what Libertie is, and how natural it is to Man. For a man that ſhal think, that men are borne ſo free, that they may doe whatſoeuer comes in their fancie, and what they liſt, and be bound to no Law nor Superiour, is mightily deceaued. For S. *Auguſtin* ſayth very wel in one of his Epiſtles, ſpeaking of the true ioy and happines of Man: Firſt conſider, whether a bodie may yeald to them, that wil haue that man happie, that liues according to his owne wil. God forbid we ſhould belieue this for truth; for, what if he wil liue wickedly? is he not vncontroulably the more miſerable, the more eaſily his wicked wil may be fulfilled? They alſo that without knowledge of the true God, haue giuen themſelues to Philoſophie, haue deſeruedly hiſſed out this opinion out of their Schooles. For one of the eloquenteſt of them ſayth: Behold others, not Philoſophers indeed, but nimble Diſputants, ſay, that al are happie, that liue according to their owne wil. But this is falſe; for to haue a mind to that which is not fitting, is moſt miſerable. And it is not ſo miſerable, not to bring thy deſire to paſſe, as to bring that to paſſe, which thou ſhouldſt not. Thus ſayth S. *Auguſtin*. And *Ariſtotle* endeauouring to ſet downe a perfect forme of a Common-wealth, doth giue ſpecial aduiſe to roote out this common errour, which raignes ſo much among men, who, becauſe they make account that libertie conſiſteth in doing what they liſt, wil haue euerie bodie liue as he pleaſeth, and doe what he thinks good; and ſayth: It is a moſt falſe ſuppoſition; becauſe to liue according to law, is not ſlauerie, but ſafetie.

What libertie is.

S. Aug. Epiſt. 131.

Cic in Hort.

Ariſt. 5. pol. c. 9.

3. *Plutarch*

3. *Plutarch*, an excellent Moraliſt, writeth to the ſame effect, that they that of children come to man's eſtate, if they be wel aduiſed, ought to make account, that they haue not ſhaken off, but changed their Tutour. For in ſteed of a man, whom they hired before with wages, or bought with their money, they haue now a Diuine gouernour of their life, to wit, *Reaſon*: and to obey it, is to obey God; and they that obey him, are the onlie free-men. For they only liue as they liſt, who haue learned to deſire what they ought. Vnreaſonable thoughts and fancies are but a ſhaddow of falſe libertie, and bring much repentance. *Plut. l. de audit.* Man neuer without a Tutour.

4. Seing therefore Heathen Philoſophers could diſcouer thus much; we haue much more reaſon to perſwade ourſelues the ſame, in regard that the properties of our nature, which they could not ſo wel diue into, doe leade vs vnto it. For if Man by nature had no Superiour, he might lawfully liue as he liſt himſelf, and it were natural for him to doe ſo; and doing ſo, he ſhould liue a pleaſant life, and without it be miſerable. But ſeing we haue *God* aboue vs, who created vs, and to whom conſequently by the lawes of Nature we are ſubiect, our owne natural inclination leades vs to ſubiection to ſo Soueraigne a Deitie, to ſerue him, and to humble ourſelues and al our actions vnder him. *S. Auguſtin* teacheth this expreſly; and to proue it, groundeth himſelf in the commandment, which God layd vpon our firſt father *Adam*, to abſtayne from the forbidde fruit. In which precept (ſayth *S. Auguſtin*) Obedience is commended vnto vs; which vertue in a reaſonable creature, is as it were the Mother of Vertues, and preſeruer of them, ſeing the nature of it is, to make it beneficial, to be ſubiect to God, and pernicious to doe a man's owne wil, and not the wil of him that created him. We are naturally vnder God. S. *Aug.* 14. *de Ciuit. c.* 12.

5. But ſome bodie wil ſay: What freedome hath Man, if he be tyed alwayes, and in al things, to doe the wil and commandment of God? This is our freedome; not to gouerne ourſelues after our owne fancie, but voluntarily to embrace the wil of God, voluntarily to performe it. Stocks, and Stones, and brute Beaſts, and al things are gouerned by God's direction, but becauſe they haue no knowledge of it, they cannot voluntarily apply themſelues to follow it, which makes alſo, that they are neither capable of merit nor reward. Voluntarily to be ſubiect to God, is true freedome.

6. This perſwaſion therefore and deſire of being Maiſters of ourſelues, and Lords at our owne pleaſure, being taken away, the matter is not ſo great, whether God gouerne is immediatly by himſelf, or by his Subſtitutes; ſpecially ſeing he alwayes gouernes vs ſo by others, as himſelf alſo aſſiſteth and directeth both them and vs, in his wil and pleaſure. So we ſee in Citties and Kingdomes, al the labour is to bring them to acknowledge the King their Soueraigne. When they haue once acknowledged him, it is al one to them, whether he deliuer his commands in perſon, or by his Officer. And conſequently it is euident, that as natural as it is for Man to be ſubject to God, and to Reaſon (which is as it were a raye of light proceeding from God) ſo natural is it for him to be ſubiect to another man in place of God; and if it be natural, it cannot be payneful or troubleſome, but muſt neceſſarily be both eaſie and pleaſant. It is much one, when God gouernes immediatly or by others.

7. And if we wil yet more particularly reflect, what it is, that caſts this miſt before the eyes of ſome, we ſhal find that it is, becauſe they cõfound ſeruile obedience or ſubiection, with this which is honourable and free, drawne into errour by an outward kind of reſemblance, which is betwixt them; and Difference betwen ſeruile and free ſubiection.

therefore attribute the difficulties and the odiousnes of the one to the other. We must therefore informe ourselues of the mayne distance which is betwixt them, in regard both of pleasure and dignitie. And we may take our information from *Aristotle*, who telleth vs, that there be two kinds of gouernment: one, *Arist. 3. pol. c. 4.*

„ of a domineering fashion, & the nature of it is, that a Lord of this humour ay-
„ mes chiefly & directly at his owne benefit, & regards the benefit of the subiect but
„ accidentally, as the benefit of the subiect redounds to him also; the other is Oeco-
„ nomical, as a father gouernes his children, a man his wife; in which contrariwise
„ the Superiour attends directly to the benefit of the subiect, & to his owne acciden-
„ tally, because it falleth out so, that the self-same is beneficial to himself; as the
„ Maister of a ship or Pilot, as such, doth first & chiefly take care for the safetie of
Plato de repub. „ the passengers, and of his owne accidentally, because he is also a passenger. These
are *Aristotle's* owne words. And *Plato* hath the like discourse of a Common-weale.
„ As a shepheard, sayth he, in as much as he is a shepheard, attendeth to the benefit
„ of his flock, and not to his owne; for his busines is to see that that, which is in his
custodie, be rightly ordered: So he that hath the gouerning of men, aymeth at no-
thing but the good of them that are vnder him. By which we may easily see, vnder
which of these kinds a Religious State is to be ranked.

The power of the Church & of Religion is Oeconomical.

8. And it is the more apparent, because not only the power, which is in force among Religious people, but al the power which Christ our Sauiour hath left in his Church, tends to the benefit, not of him that hath it, but of the subiect. Which our Sauiour himself, who is Authour of this power, gaue vs *Luc. 22. 25.* to vnderstand in these words: *The Kings of the Gentils ouer-rule them, and they that haue power vpon them, are called Beneficial; but you not so; but he that is greater among you, let him become as the yonger; and he that is the leader, as the wayter.* *S. Bern. l. 2. de Con. c. 6.* Vpon which words *S. Bernard* writeth thus to Pope *Eugenius*: This is the forme
„ giuen to the Apostles; domineering is forbidden, they are bidden to minister;
„ and it is commended vnto them by the example of the Law-maker, who pre-
sently addeth: *I am in the midst of you, as he that ministreth.* And the same *S. Ber-* *Id. l. 3. de Cons. c. 1.* *nard*, in an other place, likeneth this kind of authoritie to the power of a Steward or a Tutour. For the farme, sayth he, is vnder the Steward, and
„ the Yong-maister vnder his Tutour, and yet neither is the Steward Lord of
„ the farme, nor the Tutour Maister of his Maister. And addeth: Be thou there-
„ fore ouer others so, as to prouide, to aduise, to take care, to preserue; be
„ ouer others, to benefit others. Be ouer others as a faithful Seruant, whom
„ the Maister hath appointed ouer his familie; what to doe? To giue them food
in season; that is, to dispense, not to be imperious. If therefore this which *S. Bernard* deliuereth, or rather which our Sauiour hath left ordered in his Church, be the model of al Ecclesiastical Iurisdiction, how much more doth the same hold in the gouernment of Religious houses, seing both of them flow from the same head, and the reason, and ground, and vse of them, is equal in both, and the manner of Religious profession requireth moreouer with much greater reason, this kind of humble proceeding? He therefore that hath command ouer others in Religion, is not Maister, but Seruant; He attends vpon al their necessities both of bodie and soule; this is al his employment day and night; in this he spends al his thoughts and endeauours. And againe *S. Bernard* els-where sayth, that the busines of

spiritual

spiritual Gouernours is like to that of Physicians, wholy directed to the help of their Patientes. And in an other place he stiles them Mothers, and exhorteth them to their dutie in these words: *Forbeare stripes, lay open your teates: fil your breasts with milk, let them not swel with arrogancie.* Superiours are Physicians and Mothers.

9. Seing therefore al the power which is in Religious Orders, is intended for the benefit of the Subiect, what followes, but that it must needs be as natural, and as delightful, to liue vnder such a power, as it is natural and pleasing to euerie bodie to seeke his owne benefit? And what shal we need to stand gathering manie voyces for it, since a Heathen Philosopher, and one of the greatest wits among them, scanning the principles of Nature, auerreth it. *With this desire of knowledge of Truth*, sayth he, *is coupled a desire of Soueraignetie; so that a mind wel framed by Nature wil not willingly obey but him that instructeth, or teacheth, or commandeth iustly and legally, for the benefit of the partie.* In which sentence (whatsoeuer we may think of the first part of it) we cannot certainly but admire in the second, how a Heathen, as I sayd, & a man plunged in pride and ambition, could by the light of nature deliuer, that, when we speake of instructing and teaching, or anie other commoditie redounding to ourselues*, it is not only not repugnant to Nature for one man to obey an other, but most agreable to Nature. S. Ber. ser. 25. in Cant. & ser. 23. This kind of subiection is natural and delightful. Cic. lib. 1. Offic.

10. Al which is yet more euident in the light which we Christians haue. For we see the like order setled among the blessed Angels; for some of them haue preheminence ouer others, and their verie nature was ordained so by God, and the same confirmed afterwards in the state of Grace, which he gaue them. And Diuines deliuer, that the like had been with men, if they had continued in the state of Innocencie. Wherupon S. *Thomas* hath this discourse, that the state of Innocencie being free from al miserie & imperfection, could not haue admitted of that kind of Superioritie, by which one maketh vse of an other man for his owne interest, because it is a seruile kind of thing, and subiect to much miserie; But as for the Superioritie which is current among them that are free-borne, directed to the good and benefit of them that are subiect, there can be no doubt, but it should haue been in vse in that state, because it is a comelie and wel-beseeming thing, & good for them that obey. It should haue been in the state of Innocencie. S. Th. 1. q. 96. a. vlt.

11. Though why doe we stand reasoning the matter so long, since we find by experience so manie in the world, that for a final gaine, or in hope of some little preferment, voluntarily sel away their libertie? How manie serue for daylie, or monthlie, or yearlie wages? Others liue in a more honourable seruice, but yet serue, in hope of greater rewards, and wayte so diligently vpon some great man or other, and are so readie at euerie cal, so obsequious, so watchful, that happie were it for Religious people, if they could be as quick, and chearful, and liuelie in obeying, as they are. Shal we say, that they also doe what they doe, against nature and against the haire? If they did, they would not go so willingly and so diligently about it, nor be so ambitious of such places, nor part with so much money for the. Worldlie seruants serue with pleasure.

12. If therefore it be natural and easie for them to serue after this manner, because euerie bodie doth naturally seeke his owne commoditie; and that which is agreable to nature, cannot but be easie, why should not the case be the same with Religious people? or rather better, by how much the reward, which secular seruants hope for, is but final, and neither durable nor certain; Religious people serue vpon hopes of an eternal reward and happines euerlasting.

Religious people ſerue vpon better conditions.

13. Beſides that, they that ſerue in the World, ſerue vpon farre harder tearmes; firſt becauſe they ſubiect themſelues to an other man, who in nature is but their equal; ſecondly, becauſe mens fancies and affections are ſo vncertain and various, that oftimes we muſt labour manie yeares before we can creep into their fauour, and when with much difficultie and manie yeares wayting we haue got it, it is loſt againe in a moment, without anie fault of ours, only vpon the other's fancie. It is not ſo in the ſeruice of God. For to attend vpon God, and to be his ſeruant, is the greateſt honour in the world, an honour for Kings to ayme at; and ſeruing God, we obey Reaſon, and rule ourſelues by that Rule, which in itſelf is ſo ſtrayt and ſo conſtant withal, that we haue nothing to ſtand in feare of, but leaſt we ourſelues depart from it.

Religious people ſerue not Man, but God.

14. For this is certain, and we muſt neuer let it goe out of our thought, that Religious people ſerue not Man, as he is Man, but ſerue God, and are ſubiect to men, only as they beare the place of God. Which is euident out of the forme of their Vowes, which tyeth them, not to anie man liuing, but to God. And as we on our part doe vow ourſelues to him, ſo he for his part neuer layes aſide the care of gouerning vs, nor doth euer put vs ouer to an other ſo, as to forſake vs; but gouerneth and ruleth vs, and ſendeth vs, and calleth vs back, when he pleaſeth; according to the promiſe which he made to his Apoſtles: *He that heareth you, heareth me*; ſo that to conclude, as it is not againſt the nature of Man to obey God, but rather ingrafted and in-bred in nature; ſo neither is it againſt nature to obey that man, whomſoeuer God hath appointed in his place, and whom we haue no other reaſon to obey, but becauſe we behold God in him; and conſequently it cannot only not be hard to conforme our wils in this manner to the Diuine wil, but muſt needs be more eaſie and more pleaſant then to follow our owne wils. Which *S. Bernard* maketh account to be ſo true, that he ſaith, it is a verie ſlauerie to follow our owne wil, and a very hard task. And to this purpoſe he applyes that ſaying of our Sauiour: *Come vnto me, al you that are burdened* with the hard ſeruitude of your owne, or of an other's wil, and *You shal find rest to your ſoules, for my yoak is ſweet.* For by how much the goodnes of God is ſweeter and more affable then anie man, ſo much ſweeter alſo is his yoak, then whatſoeuer yoak beſides.

Luc. 10.

A hard thing to follow our owne wil.

S. Ber. ſer. Quamodo vol. no. vol. Diu. &c.

A Religious life true libertie.

15. And hitherto we haue held on our diſcourſe, as if in Religious Obedience there were a kind of ſeruitude, howſoeuer we pleade that it is both amiable, honourable, and ſutable to Nature. Now we wil ſhew, that there is no manner of ſigne of ſeruitude in it, but true and perfect libertie. For what is libertie? To liue as a man wil himſelf. Who therefore be they that liue as they wil themſelues? wicked people, or they that be good and vpright? Let vs heare what *S. Bernard* ſayth of a couetous man: Aske anie of them that with a hart vnſatiable gape after

S ſer. 27. in Cant.

» gayne and lucre, what he thinks of them, that ſelal & giue it to the poore, to purchaſe by their earthlie ſubſtance the Kingdome of heauen; Doe they wiſely or no? Certainly he wil ſay, they doe wiſely. Aske him againe, why he doth not himſelf that which he commends in an other? He anſwers; I cannot. Wherefore? becauſe the ladie *Auarice* wil not let me; becauſe he is not free; becauſe that which he poſſeſſeth, is not his owne, nor himſelf is maiſter of himſelf. If that which thou haſt, be truly thine, lay it out for thy commoditie; exchange earthlie for

heauenlie

heauenlie things. If thou canſt not, confeſſe, that thou art not maiſter of thy money, but a ſlaue to it; that thou art not true owner of it, but doſt wayte vpon it to keepe it. And this which S. *Bernard* ſayth of Auarice, we may ſay alſo of Luxurie, of Gluttonie, of Anger, that they that are intangled in theſe and other vices, are not free-men, but ſlaues: and moſt of al of Ambition, of which a Heathen authour writeth thus: *Take heed of diſire of glorie; for it taketh away a man's libertie, for which al noble ſpirits ought to ſtriue.* Cic. 1. Off.

16. As therefore al theſe are ſlaues, becauſe they cannot doe as they wil, but are forced to doe as Vice wil haue them, which is a more ſtearne and more diſhonourable Maiſter then anie man whatſoeuer, be he neuer ſo ſauage and barbarous: So contrariewiſe, he is truly free, that liueth according to Vertue. For the good which he doth, he doth it not vnwillingly, but willingly and cheerfully: and receaueth and performeth the commands of his Superiours, or of his Rule, as if he did it naturally. For as when a man directs a traueller in his way, no man can ſay, he forceth him to go that way, becauſe the traueller deſireth it more then he that directs him: So whatſoeuer is ſuggeſted to a Religious man in this ſpiritual way and iourney, either by word of mouth, or by writing, he taketh it as behooful for his owne good and ſaluation, of which he is infinitly tender. Which is the reaſon, why the Apoſtle ſayd: *The Law is not made for the iuſt man;* not (as S. *Bernard* explicateth it) that he muſt liue without law, but becauſe he is not vnder the law; or (as Ariſtotle writeth) becauſe he is a law to himſelf, and carrieth himſelf without law, as if he were vnder it. 1. Tim. 1. 9. S. Ber. l. de præcep. & diſp. c. 9. Ariſt 4. Eth. c. 8.

17. S. *Ambroſe* in one of his Epiſtles handling this ſubiect at large, proueth it after this manner: He is free, that doth what he wil himſelf: now a iuſt man, though he obey the law, or man, doth alwayes notwithſtanding what he wil himſelf, becauſe he deſireth the good which is commanded, and executeth it, not driuen vnto it by force of the outward command, but by his owne deſire and inclination. So that what truer libertie can there be, then that which Religious people enioy? hauing moreouer this aduantage, that al their obligation and tye (which is the chief thing that ſeemes to barre them of their libertie) comes by their owne election and free choyce? So that that, which S. *Ambroſe* ſayth els-where, may be fitly ſayd of them: Who wil ſhunne Chriſt, ſeing they follow him, that are tyed in bonds? but voluntarie bonds, which ſet a man free, and doe not reſtrayne him. S. Ambroſ. l. 2. ep. 1. S. Ambroſ. ep. 83.

18. And vpon the ſame point S. *Bernard* grounds a diſcourſe to his Monks, which I wil heer relate. For hauing layd load vpon the hardnes of this Religious captiuitie, and ſet it forth to the vtmoſt, in regard that a man haſtning, as I may ſay, to the loſſe of his owne life in this world, and to the mortifying of his owne wil, puts his neck into the collar of ſo rigid a courſe of life, and caſts himſelf into this hard priſon of Pennance, he releeueth them againe with this ſolid comfort, that this ſeruitude were indeed a moſt miſerable ſeruitude, if it were forced vpon vs, and not voluntarily vndertaken. But voluntarily ſacrificing ourſelues to God, and no violence being offered to our wils, but by our wil itſelf; whatſoeuer we doe in this manner for God, though neuer ſo hard and toyleſome, is rather to be reioyced at and welcomed, then thought on with compaſſion. S. Ber. in pſ. qui habit. ſer. 9.

S. Aug. in Pſ. 99.

19. Finally *S. Auguſtin* ſayth pleaſantly and rarely to this purpoſe. Al ſeruitude is ful of bitternes; al that are bound in ſeruile condition, ſerue and murmure » at it. Feare not, that you ſhal ſerue ſuch a Maiſter. In his ſeruice there ſhal be no » ſighing, no murmuring, no indignation. It is great happines to ſerue in this houſe, » though it be in fetters. The ſeruice of our Lord is free: The ſeruice is free, where » not neceſſitie, but charitie ſerueth. Thou art a ſlaue and a freeman both togeather: » a ſlaue, becauſe thou art created; a freeman, becauſe God, who created thee, loues » thee; ſerue not murmuring: for thy murmuring wil not make that thou ſhalt not » ſerue, but that thou ſhalt ſerue like a ſlaue. Thou art a ſeruant of our Lord, fran» chiſed of our Lord: doe not ſeeke to be ſo ſet at libertie, as to depart the houſe of » him that giues thee thy freedome. Excellently wel ſpoken by *S. Auguſtin*, and particularly where he obſerueth, that al men are ſo vnder the command of God, that though they repine and reſiſt, yet ſerue they muſt, wil they nil they, and ſhal be compelled to fulfil his wil whether they wil or no. For al things are gouerned by him, nothing eſcapes the mightie hand of his prouidence. Man therefore being by nature and of neceſſitie a ſeruant, how farre better is it to ſerue voluntarily, & ſo, that by his verie ſeruice he may be franchized to his great comfort for the preſent, and euerlaſting reward for the time to come, then by repining and ſtubbornly refuſing to obey, to be forced to that, which God out of his infinite wiſedome and prouidence hath ordayned, and haue for his reward nothing but ſorrow in his world, and torments in the next?

Men muſt doe the wil of God whether they wil or no.

An anſwer to them, that think it better to keepe their wealth to ſpend in good vſes, then to giue it al away at once.

CHAP. XX.

THE Diuel vſeth an other fallacie to diuert people from Religious courſes, and it is ſo much the more dangerous, becauſe it carrieth a colour of deuotion. For he wil needs perſwade them that it is better and more profitable for ſaluation, to keepe their wealth, ſeing God hath giuen it them, then to caſt it away al at once; that they may be alwayes doing ſome good deed or other, ſpecially for reliefe of the poore, whom our Sauiour doth ſo particularly commend vnto vs, that in the latter day of Iudgement it ſeemes we ſhal receaue our doome, according as we haue dealt with our Neighbour, and relieued him in his neceſſities, feeding the hungrie, cloathing the naked, comforting the ſick, and viſiting them that are in reſtraynt. Wheras Religion vtterly diſableth a man from doing anie of theſe good deeds; both becauſe it bringeth vs to extremitie of Pouertie, and alſo taketh away our libertie; ſo that a Religious man, though he ſhould haue a mind to doe anie thing in this kind, yet he cannot doe it, vnleſſe he firſt haue the conſent of his Superiour, and his particular Inſtitute allow of it.

Matth. 25. 34.

And

And for proof out of natural reason, *Aristotle* affirmeth, that riches is one of the best means to make a man happie, and furnisheth him with plentiful occasion of vertue. *Aristot. 1. Eth. c. 10.*

2. These kind of arguments are the strength of this partie, inuoluing doubtles manie dangerous errours. For first the administration of a temporal estate is accompanied with so manie offences of God, that the offences doe farre surpasse al the good that can be done with it. Pride, and haughtines, and freedome, and occasion and opportunitie of sinne, are alwayes waiting vpon it. And if there were nothing els, the verie distraction of mind, and the withdrawing of our thoughts from spiritual things, and the nayling of them to that which is base and earthlie, is a great misfortune. *S. Gregorie* (excellent in deliuering the Moral sense of Scripture) discoursing of the calamities of holie *Iob*, and how the *Chaldaans* diuided into three troupes fel vpon his Camels, sayth, that the *Chaldaans* signifye the Diuels, the Camels (suting in some things with the beasts that were accounted cleane, and in some things with the vncleane) signifye a wel-dispensing of temporal goods. For euerie bodie (sayth he) that hath care of administring earthlie things, doth lye more open to the darts of the hidden Enemie. He striueth to doe some things prouidently, and oftimes, while he is careful suttlely to foresee that which is to come, he ouerseeth at vnawares the harmes which are present. Oftimes being slow in performing some things, he neglecteth others which he should carefully performe. Oftimes being ouer careful in his dealings, he rather marreth the busines by his vnquiet proceeding. And most commonly so manie intricate thoughts doe intangle him, that scarce able to weald the busines which he carefully turneth in his mind, and so bringing nothing to effect, he sweateth a-mayne vnder the heauie burden of his hart. These are the incommodities which the administration of earthlie wealth bringeth with it, be it neuer so vprightly handled, without wronging anie man; for of this *S. Gregorie* speaketh; so that to buy the commoditie of being liberal towards others, with so great losse to ourselues, seemeth great follie. Manie inconueniences in administrating an estate. *S. Greg. 2. mor. 26.*

3. And yet though there were no such incommoditie in it, which can hardly be, considering how naturally these inferiour things are coupled both with danger & dammage; Yet, as I say, if there were no such thing, what comparison is there betwixt the works themselues? In the one, we bestow part of our earthlie substance; a smal matter God wot; In the other, we bestow ourselues, and giue away the freedome of our owne wil, which is the greatest thing we haue, and that which men make more account of, then of anie thing els. And heer also we may fitly apply the similitude, which we brought before out of *S. Anselme*, of the fruit & the tree. For he that remayneth with the possession of his earthlie goods, giueth part of the fruit of them; a Religious man giueth the tree, and consequently al the fruit with it. So that whatsoeuer act or circumstance of vertue & dignitie can be found in the first, is also in this, and much more then in the former; and so much indeed, that there can be nothing added vnto it; for he that giueth al, powreth forth his liberalitie to the verie bottome, & once for al; which must needes inuolue a farre greater alacritie and chearfulnes in the verie manner of giuing, then when a man parts with it by fits, and by peece-meales: and these be the *chearful giuers Whom God doth loue*, as the Apostle telleth vs. To giue al at once, is a greater guift. *2. Cor. 9. 7.*

4. But what doe we stand demurring vpon the matter? This was anciently the

S. Hier. con. Vigilan. The Hereſie of Vigilantius.

Hereſie of *Vigilantius*, ſo long agoe, and ſo learnedly confuted by *S. Hierome*, and then by the authoritie of the Vniuerſal Church condemned: of which *S. Hierome* ſpeaketh thus: To that which thou ſayſt, that they doe better, who vſe that which they haue, and diuide the fruits of their poſſeſſions by little and little among the poore, then they that ſelling their poſſeſſions giue al away at once; I wil not, but our Lord ſhal anſwer: *If thou wilt be perfect, goe, ſel al that thou haſt, and giue to the poore.* He ſpeaketh to him that wil be perfect, to him that with the Apoſtles forſakes father, and boat, and nets. This which thou commendeſt, is the ſecond & the third ſtep, which we allow of alſo, ſo that we acknowledge withal, that the firſt is to be preferred before the ſecond and the third. Thus ſayth *S. Hierome*.

Matth. 19. 21.

Teſtimonies of ancient Fathers.

5. And if we further require the teſtimonies of other ancient Fathers plainly auerring, that it is farre more beneficial to our owne ſoules, and more acceptable in the ſight of God to ſhake off al at once, then keeping our wealth in our owne hands, to beſtow it by little and little in good vſes; we ſhal meete firſt with *S. Auguſtin* ſpeaking to this purpoſe: They that miniſtred neceſſaries of their ſubſtance to Chriſt and his Diſciples, did wel; but they did better that forſooke al their ſubſtance, to the end they might be the freer to follow our Sauiour. And elſe-where he ſayth thus: It is good to beſtow a man's wealth with diſcretion vpon the poore; but it is better to giue it al at once with intention to follow our Lord, and free from care to conuerſe with *Chriſt*. He ſayth, they are free from care, that haue rid themſelues of their worldlie ſubſtance, inſinuating that Euangelical Pouertie hath no care nor anguiſh hanging vpon it, but is rather the true way to free a man from al care and trouble. *S. Ambroſe* in his Offices diſcourſing of liberalitie, & ſhewing how naught a thing it is, to lauiſh a man's worldlie ſubſtance, and that it is to be layd out prouidently, not careleſly caſt away, excepteth this caſe: *Vnleſſe it be perhaps to doe as Heliſæus did, when he killed his oxen, and fed the poore with that which he had, to the end the care of houſe-hold might not detayne him, but forſaking al, he might betake himſelf to the Prophetical diſcipline.*

S. Auguſtin de bono Coniug. c. 8.

Idem de Eccl. dog. c. 71.

S. Ambroſe lib. 1. off. c. 36.

3. Reg. 19. 21.

Diad. c. 65. and 66.

6. *Diadochus*, a graue and ancient authour, in a Treatiſe which he wrote in Greek, of Spiritual Perfection, among other things ſayth expreſly thus: It is very conuenient and very profitable, after a man comes to know what the ſeruice of God is, preſently to ſel al, and to diſpenſe the money which he makes, according to the commandment of our Lord, & not vnder colour of obeying the Commandments of God, to ſhut his eare to ſo wholeſome a Counſel. For hence wil enſue, firſt, an excellent Freedome from al care and ſollicitude; ſecondly Pouertie, ſafe and ſure from al attempts; thinking of higher things then iniurie and contention; becauſe the fewel is now taken away, which fed the fire of Auarice. Humilitie wil then aboue al other vertues make much of vs naked in her armes & boſome, as a mother makes much of her child in her lap, when out of childiſh ſimplicitie it puts off the coates, and caſts them away, reioycing more in that nakednes, then in diuerſitie of garments, being voyd of al malice. Thus ſayth *Diadochus*; and then putting this queſtion in behalf of the aduerſe partie (If we ſel al at once, from whence ſhal the poore haue releef, who were dayly maintayned out of our goods?) he anſwereth in this manner: Certainly God wil aske account at our hands of almes-giuing according to that which we haue, and not according to that which we haue not. If therefore for the feare of God I giue that bountifully away in a ſhort time, which I might haue been longer in giuing, what more wil be layd to my charge, ſeing

I haue nothing? But some bodie wil say: What then shal become of those poore people, that were wont to be maintayned by little and little with our smal estate? Let such an one learne, not to vpbraide God by occasion of his owne couetous mind. For God wil neuer want abilitie to gouerne those whom he hath made, as from the beginning he hath gouerned them; neither did the poore want food or cloathing, before this man or the other were moued to bestow their charitie. You see what *Diadochus* sayth, and discourseth yet further of the benefit which comes therof, in regard that riches make vs proude, not only when we vse them il, but though we vse them wel: because it is easie to take a kind of complacencie in bestowing dayly something in good vses, as if we did some great matter, and deserued something at the hands of God. But when we forsake al at once, & bestow nothing dayly vpon the poore, we may easily think we doe little good, and stirre ourselues to a wholesome sorrow and humilitie, and moreouer be more eager to get by prayer, and patience, and humilitie, that which we cannot now purchase by almes-giuing. God hath care of the poore.

7. *Theonas* in *Cassian* hath the like discourse; that though a man doe offer the first fruits & tithes out of his estate, & be bountiful to the poore, yet it is hard for him not to fal often into the snares of Sinne. *For while he delayeth or neglecteth the occasion, he must needs offend either in quantitie or qualitie or daylie distribution of his goods.* And a little after: *It is impossible for a man to free himself to the ful from the domination of sinne, though he dispense his wealth with neuer so great magnanimitie, vnlesse by the grace of our Sauiour, together with the thing itself he shake off the affection of possessing anie thing. But in them that haue not neglected the Counsel of our Lord, but bestowing before hand their whole estate vpon the poore, and taking vp their Crosse, haue followed the plentifulnes of the heauenlie grace, sinne can haue no power. For though afterwards a man haue charge of dispensing the wealth that is now consecrated to our Sauiour Christ, and handle in a pious distribution the money which belongs to others, he shal not be troubled with vnfaithful care of reseruing for his mayntenance, nor wil his chearfulnes in giuing almes be lost by sad delay; because that which once he offered wholy to God, he disposeth of it now as of a thing belonging to an other, not reflecting vpon his owne necessitie, nor fearing that his maintenance wil fal short, being assured that when he shal arriue to his desired nakednes, God wil take much more care to feed him, then he doth of the birds of the ayre.* *Cass Coll.* 21. c. 33. The difference of worldlie & Religious Dispensers.

8. *S. Gregorie* also wel acquainted with the craftie fetches of the Diuel, reckoneth this among other hidden snares which he layes to intrappe vs. Another, sayth he, is resolued not only not to hunt after earthlie commodities, but to renounce al that he hath, to the end he may the more freely exercise himself in the precepts of the heauenlie Teacher, the more disengaged he is from the things, which being possessed might encumber him, treading them vnder foot by forsaking them. The Enemie therefore lying in wayte for this man, and speaking to his hart by secret suggestion, sayth vnto him: Whence riseth the boldnes of this » rash proceeding, as to dare to beleeue, that thou canst subsist with leauing al? » Be there not very manie that doe not forsake their earthlie patrimonie, & yet pur- » chase with it the euerlasting goods of the supernal inheritance by works of mercie? » This is his flattering suggestion, and by the by, in the self-same things, which he » putteth him in mind to retayne, following his deceitful humour, he layeth before » his eyes the pestiferous delights of them, to draw the seduced hart to outward » allurements, and to turne it quite off from inward desires of Perfection. » S. *Greg.* 32. *mor.* c. 17. The intention of the Diuel in this temptation.

9 Behold where the fource is of this prepoſterous care of the poore, if we beleeue *S. Gregorie*. Behold alſo what the Diuel pretendeth by this his ſuggeſtion; to wit, vnder ſo faire a colour of Charitie and pittie towards the poore, to hold vs play with theſe earthlie things, that while we ſtand vpon ſo tickle a ground as the world is, he may the eaſyer giue vs a fal. For as it is hard ſo to handle pitch, but that it wil ſtick to our fingars; ſo it is hard to haue the adminiſtration of worldlie wealth and riches vpon whatſoeuer occaſion; but that our loue, and affection, and deſire wil in ſome meaſure cleaue vnto them, and as it were defile our ſoule by touching them.

10 That which *S. Hierome* therefore writeth in his Epiſtle to *Iulian*, ſtandeth with great reaſon. This *Iulian* was both wealthie and bountifully liberal towards the poore, & yet *S. Hierome* exhorts him rather to forſake al, and ſheweth plainly that it is the much more perfect courſe and more beneficial for ſaluation. Theſe are his words; I cannot ſay but thou doſt wel, in that thou doſt, as it is reported of thee, miniſter to the vſe of Saints, maintayne Monks, make great offerings in the Churches. But theſe are but the firſt eſſayes of thy warfare. Thou contemneſt gold; manie Philoſophers alſo haue contemned it; and one of them (to paſſe the reſt in ſilence) caſt the price of his manie poſſeſſions into the ſea, ſaying: Away into the deep, you euil thoughts; I wil drowne you, that I may not be drowned by you. This Philoſopher, ambitious of glorie, and a baſe ſlaue to popular rumours, caſt away al his burden at once; and canſt thou think that thou haſt attayned the height of vertue offering part of thine? God wil haue thy ſelf, a liuing hoaſt, pleaſing God; thy ſelf, I ſay, and not that which is thine. If thou giue thy ſelf to God, and perfect in Apoſtolical vertue begin to follow our Sauiour, then thou wilt vnderſtand where thou wert, and how in the Armie of Chriſt thou haſt hitherto held the loweſt place. I wil not haue thee offer that only to God, which a theef may take from thee, which thy enemie may inuade, which baniſhment may depriue thee off, which may come and goe, and which like waues of the ſea is poſſeſſed by euerie maiſter that is next at hand, and which (in a word) whether thou wilt or no, at thy death thou muſt forſake. Offer that which no enemie can take from thee, no tyrant bereaue thee off; that, which wil follow thee to thy graue, yea to the Kingdome of Heauen, and to the delights of Paradiſe. Thou buildeſt Monaſteries, and a great number of Saints are maintayned by thee; but thou ſhalt doe better, thy ſelf to liue a Saint among the Saints. Thus writeth *S. Hierome* to *Iulian*.

S. Hierome Epiſt. 34.

Religious people haue the higher place.

Hierome Epiſt. 10.

S. Hierome Epiſt. 26.

11. And the like he writeth to *Pammachius*; applying fitly to his purpoſe that which we reade of the low ſtature of *Zacchæus*: My aduiſe is that thou offer not only thy money but thyſelf to Chriſt; skin for skin, and al that a man poſſeſſeth he may giue for his ſoule. Our ancient Enemie knoweth, that the combat of Continencie is greater then that of money; that which ſticketh on the outſide, is eaſily caſt off; a ciuil warre is more dangerous. We may eaſily vnglue that which is but ioyned togeather, vnſow that which is but ſowed; *Zacchæus* was rich, the Apoſtles poore; He reſtored foure times the value of that which he had taken, and diuided among the poore the one half of his ſubſtance that remayned; our Sauiour admitted of his entertaynement; and yet becauſe he was low and could not reach the talnes of the Apoſtles, he was not reckoned among the Twelue. The Apoſtles, if we regard their wealth, left nothing; if their wil, they forſooke al the world at once.

Luc. 19. 3. Iob. 2.

And are of a higher ſtature.

once. If we offer our wealth and our ſoule togeather, he will willingly accept of it.

12. Let vs rehearſe an other teſtimonie out of the ſame *S. Hierome*, exhorting his friend *Licinius* to an abſolute renunciation of al things in theſe words: It is the part of beginners, and not of perfect people, to caſt away their money. *Crates* the Thebean did it, and ſo did *Antiſthenes*; To offer ones ſelf to God, is proper to Chriſtians and to the Apoſtles. The wants of manie haue been ſupplyed by thy abundance, to the end that their riches may rebound againe into the hands of them that want them. Thou haſt made to thy ſelf friends of the *Mammon of iniquitie*, that they may receaue thee into the eternal tabernacles. A thing worthie commendation, & to be paralelled with the vertues of the Apoſtolical times! But our Lord ſeeketh rather the ſoules of the Faithful, then their riches. We reade, that a man's owne riches are the redemption of his ſoule. By a man's owne riches we may vnderſtand ſuch, as are not gotten by pillage, or by the wrong of an other man; but yet in a better ſenſe, our owne riches are the hidden treaſure, which neither the night-theef can vndermine, nor the open robber take from vs by violence. *Ep. 28.* *Luc 16. 9.* *Prou. 13. 8.*

13. Seing therefore we haue the verdict of *S. Hierome* in ſo manie places, ſo clearly deliuering his mind on our ſide, and ſo manie other ancient Fathers beſides of the ſame opinion, the ſingle authoritie of *Ariſtotle* cannot in reaſon ſtumble anie man, though he were againſt vs. But indeed he is not. For in that which was obiected out of the firſt of his Morals, he ſpeaketh conſequently to that which there he handled; for he diſcourſeth there of the happines belonging to the Actiue life, towards which Riches are vndoubtedly a fit meanes and inſtrument; for had it not riches, it ſhould not haue wherewithal to relieue others, and ſupply their neceſſities; wheras great part of the felicitie of that life is placed in that kind of action. But towards Contemplation, wherin according to *Ariſtotle's* iudgement alſo, is the farre truer felicitie, riches conduce nothing at al, but rather hinder it; for they diſturbe the quiet of a man's mind, which is one of the neceſſarieſt things of al for Contemplation: Inſomuch that *Ariſtotle* himſelf in his tenth booke of Morals, where he treateth of the happines which is in Contemplation, ſayth, that Action hath need of manie things, but Speculation hath not need of anie thing, and that multiplicitie of things is rather a hinderance vnto it. It is therefore confeſſedly much more beneficial, and a much more noble act, to forſake al that a man hath at once, and to conſecrate his life to God in Euangelical Pouertie, then to remayne with ſome thing, though it be with intention to ſpend it vpon the poore. Which we may finally ſtrengthen with a notable ſentence of that great *S. Hilarion*, of whom *S. Hierome* relateth, that hauing deliuered a maruelous rich man called *Orion* from a legion of Diuels, not long after, the ſame man returned to the Monaſterie with very rich preſents, and vrged *S. Hilarion* very earneſtly and with teares, to accept of them, if not for himſelf, yet at leaſt to beſtow vpon the poore; but the aduiſed old man anſwered him in theſe words: The name of the poore hath been an occaſion of auarice to manie; but mercie hath no tricks with it. No man doth ſpend better, then he that reſerueth nothing for himſelf.

Riches a help for the Actiue life, and a hindrance for the Contemplatiue.

Ariſt. 10. Eth. c. 8.

A memorable ſaying of *S. Hilarion.*

S. Hierome in vita Hilar.

An answer to them that choose to remayne in the world, to do good vpon their Neighbour.

CHAP. XXI.

SOthers are withdrawen from Religious courses by a perswasion which they haue, that they may benefit their Neighbour more in spirit, remayning in the world. An errour much like to the former, which we haue confuted, but that the former taketh occasion of our earthlie substance, this latter of a good which is meerly spiritual; and consequently, as it hath the fayrer pretext, it is the more apt to deceaue. For thus they discourse, and argue as it were, against a Religious State: that in Religion we in a manner burie the Talent, which God hath giuen vs, and the zeale and good wil of aduancing others in vertue; because they that liue vnder Obedience, are not so free to make their excursions hither and thither, and sometimes, when they haue begun a good work, they are called away from it, & set about something els, or sent to another place. On the other side, they that remayne at their owne freedome, may at al times, and at al howers, assist al kind of people, and haue no bodie to hinder them, no bodie to forbid them, no bodie to interrupt them; so that whereas both of them may be compared to hounds, that are eager vpon the sight or sent of the game, the Religious are as it were in leash, and at the command of others; Secular people runne at large, & instantly make after the game without anie stop or stay. Let vs therefore consider, how little force these arguments haue, to weaken so great a Counsel of Perfection.

Charitie not ordered is not Charitie.

2. And first we must vnderstand, that Charitie, as great a vertue as it is, must be ordered; insomuch that if it be not duly ordered, it is not Charitie, but some other affection that putteth on the maske of Charitie. Order consisteth chiefly in this, that in matter of Spirit, and in things which concerne the grace of God, and our soules saluation, euerie one be first careful of himself, & preferre his owne spiritual benefit and profit, before the good of whomsoeuer of our Neighbours; and so God commandeth vs to doe. Which al Diuines with one consent deliuer as a certain truth; and *S. Thomas* in particular proueth it by this solid & substantial argument. *Because Charitie*, sayth he, *is grounded in the communication of goods that are spiritual; but after God, who is the foundation of al, euerie one is neerest to himself, and must make account to be first in the participation of this good; for we loue our Neighbours as our companions in that participation; and consequently as Vnitie is to be preferred before Vnion, so that a man enioyeth such a good, is a neerer and dearer ground of loue, then that an other is his companion in the enioying of it.* And vpon the same ground it followeth also truly & necessarily, that the habit of Charitie cannot incline a man, I doe not say to commit the least sinne, but not so much as to abide the least losse or impayring of Charitie, for an other man whosoeuer he be, no not though it were to saue the whole world, no more then fire can issue out of ice; which also almost al Diuines agree in.

S. Thom. 1. 2. q. 36. ar 3.

Charitie first inclines vs to our owne perfection.

3. If therefore we allow of this, & it cannot on the other side be denyed or anie way doubted of, but that a Religious course of life is without cõparison the most absolute course of our owne perfection, and farre more apt to furnish our owne soules with vertue, then anie Secular state whatsoeuer, it must necessarily follow, that though some particular state in the world might be more beneficial to our Neighbour, yet the benefit of our owne soules is to be preferred before the benefit, which might be deriued to others. Our Sauiour deliuereth it in these expresse words: *What doth it auayle a man, if he gayne the whole world, and suffer detriment of his*

owne soule? And because we should not think, that his words are to be vnderstood only of temporal gayne, S. Bernard doth directly apply them to this spiritual benefit of our Neighbour which we speake of, and in his book of Consideration writeth thus: *If thou wilt be wholy euerie bodie's, after the example of him, that was made al to al, I commend thy free nature; but vpon condition it be ful. And how shal it be ful, if thou shut-out thyself? for thou art also a man. Therefore that thy courtesie may be ful & intire, let the bosome which receaueth al, embrace thyself with in itself. Otherwise what auayleth it thee, according to the word of our Lord, if thou gayne al, & leese thyself alone?* & he repeateth the like saying in his second Booke, & amõg other things, cõcludeth pleasantly with these words: *In the purchase of saluation, no man is neerer of kin vnto thee, then the onlie sonne of thy mother.* Matth. 16. 26. S. Bern. 1. de Consi. c. 5.

4. Now the ground of the contrarie partie draweth these two inconueniences with it; First that while they liue in the world, vpon what cause soeuer they remayne in it, they lye open to al occasions and dangers of sinne, as much almost as anie Secular people; for sayling the self-same seas, they must needs be tossed with the self-same waues of these present allurements & baytes of honour, & riches, and beautie beating continually vpon their eyes & thoughts, that it is very hard, and a rare thing, alwayes to resist, & so to resist, as alwayes to goe away with the victorie. This is the first inconuenience, which they runne themselues vpon. The other is, that though we should grant them the victorie in al these assaults, yet they cannot but suffer losse & detriment in matter of vertue & perfection, because they depriue themselues of voluntarie Pouertie, & Obedience, & other such vnspeakable treasures, which are ordinarie in Religion, & (as I may say) common to euerie ordinarie bodie. And what follie is it, to wayte vpon others gaynes with so much losse of our owne? Wherefore we ought rather to harken to the counsel of the Holie-Ghost, & haue it alwayes before our eyes, aduising vs in this manner: *Recouer thy neighbour according to thy vertue, and take heed to thyself, that thou fal not in*; that is, thou fayle not; for he that falleth, both hurteth himself, & cannot help them to rise, that are fallen. Idem lib. 2. c. 3. Inconueniences of remayning in the world. Eccl. 29. 17.

5. We shal doe wel also, to cal to mind the Parable of the Virgins, whom our Sauiour so much commendeth in the Ghospel for their wisdome, in that when the other Virgins begged oyle of them, they answered: *Least perhaps it suffise not for vs & you, goe rather to them that sel, & buy for your selues.* Which saying S. Bernard vpon the Canticles applyeth to this which we haue in hand, & among manie other reflections which he makes vpon it, he falleth also vpon that, which we spake of before, that it is not true Charitie for a man to desire to benefit others with his owne losse; *because charitie* (as he speaketh) *wil abound in itself, that it may haue abundance for others. It reserueth to itself as much as it wants, that no man may want. Otherwise, if it be not ful, it is not perfect.* And againe: *I make account, that in matter of Saluation no degree of compassion is to be preferred before that degree, which the Wiseman setteth downe, saying: Haue mercie of thy owne soule, pleasing God.* Matt. 25. 9. S. Bern. in Cant. 5. 18. Eccl. 30.

6. And thus much vpon supposition, that though a Secular life could be more apt to doe good vpon others, yet Religion were to be preferred, because in Religion we may reape more benefit to our selues. What if we adde now, that Religion is farre more able, and sufficient, and proper to doe good vpon others? But it is so certain and euident, that we shal not need to stand long vpon proof of it; besides that, in the second Booke of this Treatise we haue playnly conuinced it, discoursing of the manifold helps, which a Religious state affordeth for the good of our Neighbour; the summe wherof is this: that God only is the cause of the conuersion of Soules, and of their progresse and aduancement in vertue. For so we find Religion incomparably more proper for the helping of others.

Pſ. 83. 12. Iob. 6. 44. it written: *Grace and glorie our Lord will giue.* And our Lord himſelf ſayth: *No man can come to me, vnleſſe the Father, who ſent me, draw him.* What then doe men in the conuerſion of other men? They are inſtruments which God vſeth, as a writer vſeth his penne, a ſawyer his ſawe. Wherefore as anie kind of inſtrument, moued of itſelf can doe nothing, but if it be moued by the crafts-maiſter, it can doe al things: So in works Diuine and ſupernatural, looke how farre a man is ioyned with God, and moued by him, ſo farre he goeth, and no further. Now let vs ſee, who is more vnited with God, a Secular, or a Religious man? But there can be no queſtion in it: for beſides the coniunction which Charitie maketh betwixt them (the force of which vertue is farre greater in Religion, & farre more meanes to purchaſe it) there be other vertues which mainly further this vnion, and chiefly thoſe two, which are ſo proper and natural to a Religious courſe, to wit, Humilitie & Obedience, the one freing vs from al worldlie pride, the other deliuering vs ouer to the Diuine Maieſtie, and putting him in abſolute poſſeſſion of vs, to rule vs and weald vs as he pleaſeth, beſides the perpetual and irreuocable bond of our Vowes, binding vs ſo inſeparably to God, that there cannot be a ſtronger tye, nor a more inuiolable coniunction imagined vpon earth. What wonder therefore, if ſuch inſtruments menaged by the hand of ſo great and ſo skilful an Artificer, and ſo fit and ply able to his hand, worke ſuch rare and admirable effects?

Coniunction with God the authour of conuerſation of ſoules.

Other helps.

7. To this inward coniunction with God, we may adde the outward helps, which in Religion are manie as the ioyning of ſo manie hands togeather, which is a great meanes to bring buſines to an end; for that which a man hath not in himſelf, he hath it in his Brother. Secondly the authoritie, which the deſpiſing of earthlie things giues Religious people aboue others; a contempt, I ſay, of the world, which lyes not hidden in euerie one's breaſt, but is apparent to be ſeen in the ſtate itſelf, and the whole courſe of a man's life. Al which and ſuch like other furtherances, they that labour for the benefit of others in a Secular life, muſt needs want. And to paſſe ouer other things; of what importance muſt it needs be, that Religious men are in this buſines of the help of Soules, as wel as in other things, wholy directed guided, and illuminated by their Superiours? For firſt the aduiſe & counſel of men that are wiſe & expert in ſo weightie a buſines, cannot but be very vſeful; beſides that, it is God that gouerneth them by their Superiours, which is al in al; for when God is the authour & beginner of that which we vndertake, it cannot but proſper, whatſoeuer it be. And to anſwer that which was obiected, by example of a hound, doth not the game goe much better forward, when the dogs are guided by a huntſman, that knowes how to rule them, when to put them on, when to take them off, and when to ſtay them from ranging about? Yea without it, the dogs of themſelues are not fit to hunt.

Experience teacheth that Religious people doe more good.

8. But what doe we ſtand diſputing this queſtion concerning the help of Soules? Let vs open our eyes and take a view of the Church of God, as now it is, and as it hath been for manie Ages. Who be they, that now adayes following the example of our Sauiour, goe about the Cities & townes & villages, inſtructing the people, and drawing men out of ſinne, and putting them vpon good courſes in the ſeruice of God, but Religious men? whom doe we almoſt ſee in a pulpit preaching but ſuch as are of one Order or other? Finally who are the workmen in this vinyard of our Sauiour, but they? and true workmen indeed, that abide the weight and the heate of the day, & doe al, that they doe, meerly for the glorie of God, & the help of

Soules

Soules, not for anie earthlie commoditie, or temporal benefit redounding to themselues. For though there be of the Secular State some, that labour in this haruest, they are so few of thē, that no mā cā attribute the general fruit, which is wrought and maintayned in the Church, rather to the Seculars, then to the Regulars.

9. Some bodie perhaps wil grant al this to be true, speaking of the general fruit which is wrought in the Church; but for his part he speaketh not of the whole Church, but is in payne only for his owne countrey, and parents, and kinsfolk; and thinketh that if he remayne with them, he shal be better able to instruct them, and help them, then if he goe into Religion. A ridiculous pretence; for that which we haue been saying al this while of the prerogatiue of a Religious State aboue a Secular in matter of doing good to others, is much more of force in this case, becausе it commonly falleth out, that a man shal doe rather lesse good among his kindred, then more; which indeed might seeme a Paradox, but that we find it by experience continually to be so; & Truth itself hath so long before giuen vs warning of it in these words: *A Prophet is not without honour but in his countrey, and in his house, and in his kindred.* And the example of our Sauiour testifieth as much, as wel as his words. For whereſoeuer he chanced to be, though it were among the Samaritans, which was a deboisht kind of people, and at variance in manie things with the Iewes, al admired his wisdome, and followed him most greedily to heare him speake; and yet in his owne Countrey he was held in contempt and derision; insomuch that it is written of him; *He could not there doe anie vertue;* and: *He wondered by reason of their incredulitie.* What then may we weake and infirme creatures hope to doe, seing the infinit Sanctitie and Maiestie could doe no good vpon flesh and bloud?

A deceipt about helping our Countrey and kindred. *Marc. 6. 4.*

10. *S. Bernard* therefore with great reason doth reckon this suttle temptation among the little foxes, which in the Canticles are sayd to *demolish the vinyard*; a temptation which doth not only hinder people from entring into Religion, but oftimes draweth some out of Religion to the world againe. I saw a man (*sayth S. Bernard*) that was running wel; and behold a thought: How great a good is this, which I enioy alone? If I were in my countrey, I might giue part of it to my brethren, and kindred, and acquaintance, and friends. They loue me, and wil easilie hearken to my perswasions. To what end is this losse? I goe thither, and saue manie of them, and myself with them. And I shal not need to feare the change of place; for so I doe wel, what matter is it, where; but only, that certainly it is better to remayne there, where I may remayne with more profit. Why should I be long? He goeth, and perisheth, wretch that he is, not so much a banished man into his countrey, as a dog returning to his vomit. Behold the vnhappie man hath lost himself, and gayned none of his. Behold one little fox, to wit, this vayne deceitful hope, which he had of gayning his kindred. *Cant. 2. 15.* *S. Ber in Cant. 5. 74.*

11. These so expresse and significant words of *S. Bernard*, togeather with the rest which hath been sayd, make it euident, that whosoeuer is moued indeed with true zeale of Soules (for there be diuers who haue not this zeale, but remayne in the world, becausе they are taken with the world, and vse reasons which sauour of zeale as a colour to shaddow their couetous mind) but if there be anie such that desireth sincerely to aduance the seruice of God, and resolueth to dedicate himself vnto the setting of it vp, he must needs acknowledge, that there is no doubt to be made, but that he may more perfectly, & more assuredly, and with more plentiful

ſucceſſe compaſſe his ends in Religion, then remayning in the world, ſpecially if he confine not himſelf to one countrey or Familie (which were a ſigne of ſomewhat a ſtreight hart, and but little courage) but offer himſelf to be alwayes in a readines for al places in general, and al ſorts of people, and as the beaſts, which the Prophet ſpeakes of, *whereſoeuer the motion of the Spirit is, thither preſently he goe.* And this he may farre eaſier and with leſſe trouble and danger performe in Religion, then in the world; becauſe, as I ſayd before, there be in Religion ſo manie helps to perfection and ſanctitie; and contrariwiſe in the world, ſo manie hindrances & rubs by the way, and allurements to ſinne. For it falleth out with vs in this buſines, as with them that wil ſaue a man from drowning; for whoſoeuer wil doe ſo, muſt firſt put himſelf in ſafetie; otherwiſe he endangers himſelf, and conſequently diſables himſelf from helping an other out of danger, and in like manner, he that wil goe about to help his neighbour out of the danger, in which he is in the world, muſt neceſſarily himſelf wade out of the world, and ſtand vpon firme ground aboue al worldlie things.

Ezech. 1. 12.

An anſwer to them that ſay: It is enough to forſake the world in affection, though they forſake it not in effect.

CHAP. XXII.

HEere we are to deale with an other obiection, not vnlike the fallacie of which we haue been ſpeaking; for ſome wil not ſtick to ſay, it is in vayne to trouble oneſelf ſo much, as to make away from himſelf al the right and poſſeſſion of whatſoeuer he hath in the world; it is enough to forſake the loue & affection vnto it. And this they vndertake to proue, becauſe the ſubſtance of perfection is Charitie; He that hath greater charitie, is more perfect, whether he liue a Secular or a Religious life. And to ſtrengthen their cauſe, they bring examples of holie Scripture, and tel vs of *Abraham*, and *Iſaac*, and *Iacob*, who liuing in the State of Matrimonie, and abounding in al worldlie wealth and plentie, were holie in an eminent degree; inſomuch that God conuerſed familiarly and friendly with them.

An errour of the learneder ſort.

2. But we muſt take heed, that this be not alſo the language of ſuch as flatter themſelues, and pretend reaſons, of purpoſe, becauſe they are loath to breake with the world, and worldlie bonds, with which they loue to be tyed. And we ſhal be fayne to ſpend the more time and care in confuting it, becauſe manie, that account themſelues of the learneder and wiſer ſort, are ſubiect to this errour.

Religion, an efficacious and eaſie meanes to perfection.

3. Though it cannot therefore be denyed, but that Perfection conſiſteth in Charitie, as they alleadge, and that Religion is not perfection, but a way and meanes to perfection; yet it is ſuch a means, as they who embrace it, may eaſily, & ſpeedily, & without fayle attaine to perfection, & they that embrace it not, either neuer come to perfection, or not without long labour and difficultie. For as at the paſſage of a riuer, euerie bodie ſeekes for the bridge, or for a boat to paſſe without danger; & if a man be to go a iourney by land, he chooſeth rather to go on horſe-back, then

on

on foot, becauſe he ſhal ſooner come to his iourneys end, and more cõmodiouſly: So in the long and hard iourney to the top of Vertue and Charitie, of which they ſpeake, what account in reaſon ought euerie bodie to make of ſuch a help, as enableth and ſtrengthneth vs not only to paſſe our iourney, but to runne with eaſe & expedition, and is indeed rather a Coach to carrie vs ſweetly a long in it? And what kind of Coach is it? We haue ſpoken ſufficiently of this point throughout the whole Firſt Booke of this Treatiſe, ſhewing that Religion affordeth two ſpecial helps to ſaluation: freing vs, by abandoning the world, from al impediments thervnto, which in the world are certainly innumerable; and furniſhing vs with ſo manie excellent cõmodities towards a ſpiritual life, as there we haue diſcourſed of.

4. Which was the reaſon, why generally al holie men, that vnderſtood very wel, that the ſubſtance of Perfection conſiſted in Charitie, haue notwithſtanding ſo earneſtly exhorted vs to abandon the world, as if without it we could not be perfect. Among whom *Caſſian* ſpeaketh thus: It is infallible, that whoſoeuer leanes to his wonted poſſeſſions & goods, doth not take vpon him intire humilitie of hart, nor ful mortification of his corrupted wil. But *S. Baſil* more copiouſly; for ſuppoſing firſt as a ground, that the abnegation which our Sauiour commanded, conſiſteth in caſting away al loue of ourſelues, and al ſollicitude either for life or death, he ſetteth downe, what is neceſſarily to be done to attayne to this perfection. And theſe are his words: This renunciation beginneth with parting from external things, from our poſſeſſions, from vayne glorie, from the cuſtomes of our former life, from affection to things vnprofitable; as the holie Diſciples of our Lord haue put vs in mind to doe by their example, to wit, *Iames* and *Iohn*, by forſaking their father *Zebedee*, and their boat, of which their whole life and maintenance depended. And a little after: Though what ſhal I need to ſtrengthen that, which I ſay, with reaſons of mine owne inuention, or examples of holie men, ſeing we may alleadge the verie words of our Sauiour, and with them animate a Soule that is Religious, and hath the feare of God? For he playnly and without al contradiction teſtifyeth, and ſayth: *So therefore, whoſoeuer of you renounceth not al that he poſſeſſeth, cannot be my Diſciple.* And in an other place, hauing vpon this condition (*If thou wilt be perfect*) ſayd: *Go, ſel what thou haſt*, he preſently addeth: *Come, follow me.* And to the like purpoſe, he brought the Parable of the Marchant, that hauing found one pretious Margarite, ſold al that he had, and bought it. For it is euident, that the pretious Margarit ſignifyeth the Kingdome of Heauen; which Kingdome, our Lord ſayth, we cannot attayne vnto, vnleſſe we contemne al that we haue at once, to the end to purchaſe it, wealth, glorie, kindred, and whatſoeuer moſt men in the world doe ambitiouſly gape after. Thus ſpeaketh *S. Baſil*; and what could be ſayd of more weight and ſtrength to our purpoſe?

Ancient Fathers & holie men held contrarie to this errour.

Caſſ. Col. vlt. c. 24.

S. Baſil. reg fuſ. c. 8.

Luc. 14. 33.

Mat. 19. 21.

S. Mat. 13. 45.

5. The like we reade in one of the Homilies of *S. Macarius*. It cannot be, ſayth he, that a man ſhould purchaſe the poſſeſſion of his owne ſoule, or the charitie of the heauenlie Spirit, vnleſſe eſtranged from al things belonging to the world, he apply himſelf to ſearch-out the charitie of our Sauiour, and ſeuer his mind from al groſſe cares, and earthlie diſtractions, that he may take his whole ayme at one marck; that forſaking al, and cutting-of al material and earthlie impediments, and ſeparated from carnal loue and affection to parents or kindred, he ſuffer his mind to attend to nothing els, nor to

S. Mac. ho. 9.

be distracted by other meanes, but be wholy occupyed in the care and search of Spiritual things. This is that which S. *Macarius* say th of this matter both truly and aduisedly, to the point we treate of.

Practise sheweth the contrarie.

6. For though, if we wil goe vpon subtilties and speake metaphysically (as they say in Schooles) it cannot be denyed, but a man may be a Saint in the midst of worldlie wealth, and practise Humilitie in the heigth of honour, and preserue Chastitie in the midst of delicacies; yet if we cast our eyes, not vpon that which might be wished or proiected, but vpon that which for the most part falleth out among men, and which we dayly see in the ordinarie course of their life and conuersation, no man can be so blind, as not to see what is best, most safe, most conducing to saluation. But to go more solidly to work, we must seuer that which is certain, from that which is vncertain and disputable.

Al things must be forsaken in affection.

Pſ. 61. 11.

Pſ. 75. 6.

Mat. 19. 27.

7. It is certain, that whosoeuer setteth his loue and affection vpon earthlie goods, is not fit for the Kingdome of heauen; and therefore they are to be forsaken, at least in affection. This al must doe at al times, and intirely, without exception. For so the Prophet telleth vs: *If riches abound, doe not set your hart to them.* And againe: *Al men of riches haue slept their sleep, and found nothing in their hands.* And our Sauiour giueth vs to vnderstand as much in that rigid sentence: *It is easier for a camel to passe through a needle's eyes, then for a rich man to enter into the kingdome of heauen.* This therefore is most certain. That which makes al the doubt, is, that some take vpon them to be confident, that they can remaine with their earthlie goods, and yet be poore in spirit, and not set their hart vpon them, or repose anie trust in them, or leese the least part of their loue towards God in respect of them. Others againe, vnderstanding how ful of difficultie al this is, and how manie hinderances of saluation there be in the world, how manie allurements to vice and sinne, choose rather quite to shake off the world, then to put their eternal saluation in such hazard, for so short a pleasure in these temporal things. Which of these, haue more solid reason for their side?

It is wisedome to be on the surer side.

8. I make no question, but as in al other things it is the part of a wise man to leane to the surer side, and if a bodie must offend in one, to choose rather, to be too warie, then to be thought vnaduised; and the weightier the busines is, the more reason we haue to doe so: so much more in this, which of al other things concernes vs most. For it is wonderful difficult, and indeed beyond the strength of man to haue manie things in possession, and to suspend our affection from them. S. *Basil* in the place before alleadged taketh it for a certaintie, that whosoeuer reserueth anie earthlie thing to himself, his mind must necessarily (for so are his words) remaine, as it were, buried in that slowe of filth, and the passage to heauenlie contemplation be shut against him, because he is so drowned in it, that he cannot think of the Supernal goods, which God hath promised vs; for we cannot attaine to those goods, vnlesse a vehement and vndistracted desire of them doe spurre vs on and inflame vs, and indeed so great a desire, that it make al things easie, to the end we may gayne them. This was S. *Basil's* opinion: and if anie man think him too strict and seuere, let him consider wel, whether he frame to himself a right conceit of Perfection, according to the nature thereof, and not rather perhaps conceaue of it according to his owne or others remissenes, and want of spirit.

To possesse things with our affection, is in a manner impossible

S *Basil reg fus. c. 8.*

9. S. *Iohn Chrysostome* makes account, that it is a much more easie way to cure

our

our corrupted affections, to haue nothing, then to haue ſomething, though it be but moderate. Nothing, ſayth he, doth ſo quench the thirſt of Cupiditie, as to ceaſe from deſire of gayne, like as abſtinence and euacuation purge bitter choler. It is eaſier for a man's bodie to flie in the ayre, then to quiet our deſire, if we ſtil adde more. And certainly we ſhal find it ſo, as the Philoſopher ſayth, that ſome things, are more eaſily quite cut off, then in part tempered. And *Caſſian* ſpeaking by experience, ſayth: We haue ſeen men eaſier abſtaine altogeather from groſſe meates, then vſe moderatly of thoſe which are granted for neceſſitie; and thoſe that denye themſelues al for the loue of continencie, then thoſe that vnder preteence of infirmitie, taking ſome, keepe themſelues within the bounds of ſufficiencie. And this which *Caſſian* ſayth of Temperance, in reſpect of Gluttonie, is true in al other obiects; which being preſent, are apt to delight either our eyes or our mind. It is eaſier wholy to abſtaine from them, then to vſe ſome with moderation. For as if a man ſhould let himſelf downe from a high tower, it is not ſo eaſie, as he may imagin, to ſtay himſelf in the mid-way at his pleaſure: ſo it is not in man's power to with-hold and preuent the violence of delight, or to aſſigne in what meaſure it ſhal preſſe vpon vs; rather our weaknes is apt to giue way vnto it, and to think it an eaſe to doe ſo; and by that meanes we are drawne further and further by litle and litle, and, which is our owne greater mis-fortune, at vnawares and vnſenſibly. Which *S. Leo* expreſſeth in theſe words: By lawful vſe we paſſe to immoderate exceſſe, while by care of health, the delight of pleaſure creepeth in, and that, which might be enough for nature, is not enough for concupiſcence,

To leaue al is an eaſier cure. *S. Io. Chryſ. hom. 43. in Matt.* *Sen. Ep. 110* *Caſſ. l. 5. de 8. princip. vitijs. c. 7.*

S. Leo. ſer. 12. in quadr.

10. That which *S. Baſil* obſerueth, how much external things conduce to the reformation of the internal, is of force alſo in this. For if a man be deſirous of humilitie, he muſt (according to the aduiſe of the Saint) practiſe humilitie in al outward things, which belong vnto him; as in his apparel, in his bed, his chayre, his table, his houſe, and houſehold-ſtuff; and finally, in al things. And the reaſon which he giues, holdeth not only in Humilitie, but in al vertues; and particularly in that wherof we are ſpeaking, that a Soule becomes like the buſines which it hath in hand, and is *wholy configured* (as he ſpeaketh) and *conformed* to that, which outwardly it doth. And no wonder, ſeing there is ſuch affinitie betwixt bodie and ſoule, that whatſoeuer is offered to our corporal ſenſes, muſt needs moue it; and we find it to our coſt by daylie experience, that the things which are repreſented vnto it by our eyes, our eares, and other ſenſes, doe make much more impreſſion in it, then that which our thoughts offer vnto it, though our thoughts be the more natural, and more proper action of our ſoules.

External things worke vpon the internal. *S. Baſil hom. de humil.*

11. Which if we conſider, it wil be no hard matter, to diſcouer the difference which is betwixt him, that leaues the world and worldlie things in affection only, and in effect retaynes them, and him that parts with them both in affection and effect. The former roweth, as it were againſt the ſtreame, and conſequently riddeth leſſe ground, goeth on with more difficultie, is much more tired with it, and farre more apt to be carried downewards againe, and moſt commonly it falleth out, that he is; for whom ſhal a man almoſt find, that is able to ſtand in ſo continual a combat, and beare vp againſt ſo manie rubbes and encounters? The other ſayleth with wind in poope, nothing lyes in his

The difference betwixt them that forſake al in affection, & in effect.

way, nothing hinders him, al things help him, al further him, the Place, the State, his Companions, his employments, his intentions, al his thoughts, and whatsoeuer he heareth or seeth.

12. *S. Gregorie* addressing himself to those that are of this confident humour, & think they can attend to the seruice of God, & keep their lands and goods, determineth the Cause for vs, as if he had been chosen Vmpire on both sides, & giueth the other partie a check in these words: Manie couet not that which belongs to others, but out of a loue to an vnperfect quiet, seuer themselues from the brãglings of this world; they desire to be instructed in holie Writ, they couet to attend to high Contemplations, but yet forsake not the care of household-busines with perfect freedome: and so oftimes, while they lawfully attend vnto it, they are involued in the vnlawful contentions of the world, & desiring carefully to preserue their earthlie things, forsake the quiet of mind, which they sought for; & labouring with continual fore-cast to saue their flitting substance, the word of Diuine knowledge, which was cõceaued in their mind, comes to naught, because according to the saying of Truth, the *thornes* ouercharge the *seed* which began to spring, & the busie cares of earthlie things, shut out the word of God out of their memorie; and while they forsake not the world perfectly, they walke stumbling on, entangling themselues in their going, that they cannot goe. What could be sayd more cleere on our side? and particularly, where stiling al earthlie things a *flitting substance*, he giueth vs to vnderstand, that the nature of them is to be alwayes either flitting from one hand to an other, or running to decay, and consequently they aske so much care, and paynes, and attention to preserue and stay them, that while a man's thoughts are busied in it, what time or meanes can he haue to think of heauenlie things?

S Greg. 7. Mor. c. 14

Luc. 8. 14.

13. Now wheras they wil needs perswade themselues, that they can keep their worldlie possessions, and not set their affection vpon them, they are certainly much mistaken, not only in my opinion, but in the iudgement of al those that vnderstand things right. For we see dayly before our eyes, how men are taken with the things of this world, before they think of it, meerly by vse and custome of handling them; and are oftimes most intangled, when they think themselues most at libertie. For as a man growes secretly in loue with the bed in which he lyes, and with the chayre in which he is wont to sit, and finds it not til he be called to rise: So the loue of these earthlie things creeps so couertly into our affection, that we think ourselues stil at libertie, & feele not the fetters, in which they haue inthralled vs; but then we feele them, when death or chance must part vs. We cãnot haue a better witnes of this, which we are saying, then *S. Gregorie*, who deliuereth it both vpon good grouds of reason, and his owne experience. For thus he relateth how he liued in the world.

Affection to earthlie things growes silently vpon vs.

14. That which I should haue sought, was euen then layd open vnto me, out of the loue of Eternitie; but my wonted custome had obliged me not to change my outward manner of liuing; and while my mind did yet vrge me to serue the world, as it were in outward shew, manie things began to rise against me, of the cares of the world, that now I was held, not in outward shew, but (which is worse) in affection. *S. Gregorie* therefore confessing this of himself, others may easily see, how much more they ought to feare, and beware of the like, knowing themselues to be so farre inferiour to *S. Gregorie* in strength and vertue.

S. Greg. Ep. ante moral.

vertue. For this is the reaſon, why holie men, as the ſame Saint obſerueth in an other place, ſtand more in feare of worldlie proſperitie, then of aduerſitie. For they know, ſayth he, that while the mind is held-on in pleaſing buſineſſes, it willingly ſometimes leanes to exteriour things; they know, that oftimes a ſecret thought doth ſo miſleade it, that it is altered, it knowes not how.

15. And thus much we haue ſpoken of Religion, as it is a fit inſtrument & meanes to Perfection, in regard it freeth the paſſage of al encumbrances, which lye betweene vs and a ſpiritual life, and in a manner ſtop-vp our way. But there is yet ſomething more in it, that of itſelf, and for itſelf, is greatly to be deſired, and they that haue it not (though we ſhould grant them al things els) muſt needs confeſſe they want no ſmal ſpiritual ornament & enrichment of their ſoules. For firſt in Religion there is the point of Abnegation of our owne wil, a point of high perfection, and properly Euangelical. For he that is free to diſpoſe of himſelf as he liſt, may often, euen in good works, mingle much of his owne wil, in prayer, in almes-giuing, and the like; and ſo much as he mingleth of his wil, ſo much he leeſeth of the value of his work. So that the happines which we purchaſe by wholy vnueſting ourſelues, and intirely caſting-of our owne wil in al things, and for our whole life-time, is a happines, that cannot be expreſſed in words, nor purchaſed but by the Vow of Obedience.

Manie things in Religion, of themſelues to be deſired.

Abnegation of our wil.

16. A man may ſay, that in the world, the ſole Wil of God may be our Guide & ayme. And it is a glorious ſaying, and carrieth a faire ſhew, & ſoundeth big as long as we ſtand in the ſpeculation of it; but when we come to the proof and practiſe, al that imagination of perfection vaniſheth into the ayre. For firſt how ſecret and vncertain is the wil of God? how manie errours and perplexities doth a man runne into in ſeeking it? Beſides that, he that followeth his owne dictamen in ſcanning it, and making his coniectures about it, putteth alwayes ſomething of his owne vnto it, which is a thing very conſiderable. And certainly he is in the farre better way, that ordereth his life ſo, as he may ſay truly, he hath nothing of his owne in it. For this is that perfect Renunciation & Abnegation, which our Sauiour commandeth, to forſake ourſelues ſo, as to reſerue nothing of ourſelues. True vertue therefore is that which *Climacus* ſayth, whoſe words I wil ſet downe, becauſe the verie ſimplicitie of them doth much pleaſe me: An humble man alwayes abhorreth his owne wil, as deceauer and erroneous: and though al his thoughts and deeds be conformable to the Diuine rule, yet he followeth not his owne wil, nor beleeueth his owne iudgemēt. For to an humble man, it is a grieuous paine to relye vpon his owne wil, as to a proud man it is a payne and burden vntollerable, to be vnder the wil of an other.

Clim. c. 25.

17. And *S. Gregorie* ſayth excellently wel: *He without al doubt mounteth vp to a higher forme in the Schoole of Chriſt, that forſaking al, which outwardly he did poſſeſſe, endeauours to breake his inward wil, that putting himſelf vnder an other's wil, he may renounce not only his euil affections, but his good deſires; to the plentiful encreaſe of his perfection, and be at an other's command in al things which he doth.*

S. Greg. 32. mor. c. 17.

18. And then ſpeaking of the reaſons which theſe men alleadge, and which we haue been hitherto confuting, he reckoneth them al for temptations of the Diuel. For thus he ſayth: The craftie Enemie ſpeaketh the fayrer to ſuch an one, by how much he ſtriueth more eagerly to ſhooue him off from a more eminent ſtanding; and flattering him with ſuggeſtions ful of poiſon, he ſayth

The craft of the diuel in this errour.

„ thus vnto him: O how wonderful strange things mayst thou doe of thy self
„ if thou put not thyself vnder an other's direction? Why dost thou lessen thy
„ profit, vnder colour of bettering it? What euil didst thou, when thou hadst thine
„ owne wil? Seing therefore thou art fully able to liue of thyself, why dost thou
„ seeke, that another should be ouer thee to direct thee? Thus he insinuateth him-
„ self by flatterie, and on the other side, layeth occasions for him to exercise pride
„ in his owne wil. Al this of *S. Gregorie*; which testimonie makes the cause
„ euident on our side, to wit, how farre more perfect, and more safe it is, to
„ forgoe our owne wil, then to retaine it, though we should vse it
„ wel.

It is greater vertue to obey God in man.

19. Besides, it cannot be denyed, but that it is farre greater humilitie, to obey God in man, then to obey when he commandeth immediatly by himself; as no man almost wil stick to obey a King when he speakes himself in person, but manie find much difficultie to obey his seruants and ministers. And moreouer, he that in effect abandoneth the world, and al that is in it, abandoneth it also in affection. For that which he did, he did it willingly, and of his owne free choyce; but he that wil leaue it only in affection, first comes short, in that he leaueth it not also in effect; secondly he may easily mistake, and think that he hath forsaken the world, when in verie deed he hath not. For in al things, but specially in such as are distastful to sense, there is great difference betwixt the wil of doing a thing, and the doing of it; nothing is more easie, then to haue a wil and desire; but to doe a thing, is hard and payneful; and the work most commonly trieth our wil, and examineth it, whether it be right; for oftimes a feruent resolution when it comes to deeds, begins to quaile at the difficultie of them.

The difference betwixt him, that leaueth the world in affectiō, & him that leaueth it in effect.

The example of our Sauiour, a pregnant argument for Religion.

20. Finally, that which ought most to moue vs in this kind, is the example of our Sauiour; for wheras his life was a most perfect and absolute model of al our liues, he that cometh neerest in imitating him, is doubtlesse to be accounted the most perfect. He therefore embracing pouertie, and humilitie, not only in wil and desire, but in effect and deed, and following it in the whole course of his life, whosoeuer shal represent in himself, the likenes of him in both those, shal deserue certainly greater commendation, then he that shal resemble him but in one. Which was *S. Bernard's* opinion, when he sayd, it was enough for the ancient Fathers to follow the Spirit of God in spirit only; but, sayth he, now the Word hath been made Flesh and dwelt among vs, in him a forme of life and sampler of perfection is giuen vs, which we must corporally imitate, that following him with both our feet, we halt not heerafter, with the Patriarch Iacob, vpon one leg. And yet we say not this, as if a man might not be saued in these dayes, if he doe otherwise; but to make him know his ranke, and that he vsurpe not the place of perfection, or the office of a disciple. Thus *S. Bernard.*

S *Bern. ser. Ecce nos.*

Gen. 32.

The anciēt Patriarcks not to be followed now in this.

21 But because in the beginning, the aduerse partie vsed the names of those ancient Fathers, *Abraham*, and *Isaac*, and others against vs, we must answer this obiection also, or *S. Bernard* for vs, who sayth pleasantly thus: What shal we answer to these new followers of the ancient Saints? And you wil, Let them put calues vpon the altar of our Lord, let them kil rammes & Sacrifice goates; because

Abraham

Abraham did ſo. And ſo goeth-on, diſcourſing how their temporal wealth was a figure of the Spiritual riches reſerued for vs; and how they are vaniſhed, & theſe to be maintayned. And addeth (that which is very true) that we ſhal find none almoſt of theſe ancient Fathers, who did not either ſuffer much by aduerſitie, or was not tried to the quick in worldlie proſperitie, & perhaps in danger by it; and that we may truly ſay of them, that they walked in the depth of the diuided Sea, & in the mire of manie waters, poſſeſſing earthlie things, & that lawfully; but we haue an other more ſtrange and more wonderful new manner of walking vpon the waters themſelues, by forſaking al things; which grace and prerogatiue was due to the State of the Ghoſpel, and to *Peter*, as the Leader and Captaine of it.

22. *S. Iohn Chryſoſtome* in his booke of Virginitie, hath almoſt the like diſcourſe; that we muſt not wonder, if thoſe ancient Patriarcks had lands, and wiues, and great wealth; becauſe God required not of them the like meaſure of vertue, that he doth of vs. For now, ſayeth he, no man can be perfect, vnleſſe he ſel al, vnleſſe he renounce al; and not his money only, or his houſe, but lay aſide al care, euen of his life. But in thoſe dayes there was no ſuch patterne of perfection. And handling this point at large, he giueth the reaſon, why we haue greater commandments layd vpon vs, then they had; becauſe the grace of the Holie-Ghoſt hath been powred forth more plentifully vpon vs, and greater guifts beſtowed by the coming of Chriſt, who of weake and feeble creatures makes vs perfect. Wherefore as men expect more at their childrens hands, when they are growne to be yong ſtriplings, then when they were children, and find fault with thoſe things in elder yeares, which it was a pleaſure to ſee in their tender age: So God in thoſe firſt times condeſcended in manie things, which now in the light of the Ghoſpel we ſee are imperfect, ſpecially, ſeing now alſo we haue a greater reward promiſed vs, to wit, for earth, heauen, for temporal things, ioyes euerlaſting.

S. Io Chryſoſt. de Virg. c. 83. God requireth greater vertue of vs.

23. Finally to conclude, though among theſe ancient Fathers, or alſo among people in theſe dayes there haue been alwayes ſome, as we know, that in the midſt of their wealth and honour, and delights of marriage, or in the degree of Kings, haue liued vertuouſly, yet what boldnes were it, or rather madnes, in anie of vs to preſume to paralel ourſelues with them, & to make account that we ſhal be able to wade through the dangers which they haue eſcaped? For as *S. Thomas* wel and prudently obſerueth, they effected it by the prerogatiue of their ſanctitie and eminencie of Vertue, which God, *who worketh al things by the purpoſe of his wil*, was pleaſed to beſtow vpon them; And yet they that are more infirme, ought not to be ſo confident of themſelues, as to think, that they ſhal be alſo able to attayne to perfection with al thoſe hinderances: as no man is ſo fooliſh as to ſet vpon a whole armie of men himſelf alone, without weapon, becauſe he hath heard, that *Sampſon* ſlew ſo manie of his enemies, only with the iawe-bone of an Aſſe.

Preſumption to think, becauſe others haue eſcaped in the world, that therefore we may. S. *Tho.* 22. *q* 186. *a.* 4. *Ep.* 5.

24. By this therefore it is euident, that it is farre better, more perfect, and more ſafe (for al theſe commodities meete togeather) vtterly to forſake the world, and al worldlie things, not only in deſire, which is alwayes vncertain, and ſubiect to manie errours and miſtakings, but in effect & verie deed; a thing which certainly bringeth to our ſoules infinit profit and commoditie.

An answer to them that say: It is more perfect to liue in the world, because it is harder to liue wel.

CHAP. XXIII.

THey must also be answered, that say, it is better & more meritorious, to leade an honest & vertuous life in the world, then to liue in Religion; because in the world it is so hard to be vertuous & deuout, by reason of the manifold impediments that be in it; and contrariwise they take occasion to slight Religion euen by that, for which we haue al this while so highly commended it, because it is so quiet a life, and so farre from al feare of danger. For, say they, what great matter is it, or what wonder, if a man, that is shut-vp in his celle, desire nothing, when he sees nothing that is worth the desiring? or that he liue in peace and quiet of mind, when he meddles with no kind of busines, feeles no losse of anie thing? or that he neuer is transported with passion, when he liues with people that are of an excellent temper, and his owne Brethren, that iumpe with him in conceit, and practise, and euerie thing? But to conuerse continually in the midst of beautiful obiects, and there to temper himself; to liue among the frie of al sorts of people, to haue his eares ful of raylings speeches, to heare and see manie forcible things to intice him to sinne, and yet alwayes to beare-vp, neuer to shrink or giue back, this is vertue. Wherof the Prophet glorieth: *With them that did hate peace, I was peaceable.* And holie Scripture doth not without cause relate of *Iob*, that *he liued in the land of Hus*; because, as *S. Gregorie* telleth vs, it is no great commendation to be good with the good, but to be good among the bad.

Psal. 119. 7.
Iob. 1.
S. Greg. l. Mor. c. 1.

2. We heare some speake after this fashion sometimes, either out of ignorance, or by mistake; some perhaps also out of a kind of malice, to dissemble their owne imperfection, and that they may seeme to haue great reason to liue in the world, when indeed they liue in it, because they loue it. But it wil not be hard, to informe the one in the right, and to confute the other. For if it were true that they alwayes had the better in their spiritual combats in the world, if they alwayes scaped without touch, if they neuer were foyled nor wounded, they might haue some cause perhaps to glorie. But it fares not so wel with them. For it is not possible, that a man without weapon, continuing alwayes in the midst of so manie thousands of his enemies, without guard, without anie special care or heed of his owne, should not dayly receaue manie wounds, and the wounds be so much the more dangerous, the lesse he perceaues them: and we need no other proof of it, then the liues of them that vse this kind of language; for we see them continually ful of vice and sinne. They therefore that are so brag, boast themselues but vpon a false ground; for this is not to fight with the enemie, but to be taken prisoner, to be defeated, to be slayne by him.

They that make this obiection, are most commonly not of the best.

It is hard to stand alwayes.

3. But let vs grant, that some one among them is Maister of the field for manie

manie yeares, that he hath manfully withstood manie encounters with the Diuels; what is this to the busines, if after so manie yeares standing, he once fal before the face of his enemie, once come into their hands? And this is so easie and so subiect to befal a man, that it can hardly be auoyded in so slipperie and so dangerous a place. But let it be so, that he neuer receaue wound: Yet a Religious State hath so manie other prerogatiues, and is in such continual practise of al kind of vertue, humilitie, obedience, fraternal charitie, and the like, that though this were true, for which they wil needs so highly commend a Secular life, as it is not, yet a Religious life doth infinitly ouertop it.

A Religious life excelleth for other things.

4. And because they speake of merit, let vs sift this point to the bottome, whether the difficultie which is in a Secular life, encrease a man's merit? *S. Bonauenture* doth learnedly answer this question to the ful, in the booke which he intitleth *The Apologie for the poore.* There he sheweth, that a man meetes with three kinds of difficultie in the performance of good works: The first riseth from the works themselues, because they are great, paynful, heroical; and this highly encreaseth our merit. And of this kind of difficultie, Religion is ful; because it contayneth manie payneful things, manie things contrarie to custome, manie things aboue the reach of man, if we regard nature. Whervpon *S. Hierome* writeth thus to *Rusticus* a Monk: If thou desire to follow that which is perfect, goe forth with *Abraham* out of thy countrie; and goe, thou knowest not whither. If thou hast worldlie substance, sel it, and giue it to the poore; if thou haue none, thou art eased of a great burden; follow naked Christ, naked. It is painful, loftie, difficult; but the rewards are great.

Three kinds of difficultie in good works. *S. Bon. in Apol paup. a 2. 1. resp. 3. p.*

And which of them encreaseth merit. S. *Hierome Ep. 4.*

5. An other kind of difficultie, sayth *S. Bonauenture*, riseth from the corruption of man, by reason either of natural infirmitie, or of euil customes, which a man hath plunged himself into. For a couetous man finds much more difficultie in giuing, then an other; a prowd man, to be vnder others; a glutton, to abstayne; but this kind of difficultie is so farre from encreasing our merit, that it doth much diminish it: because the repugnancie which is in our wil, doth abate the vigour of it, and makes that which we doe, lesse voluntarie; wherof the same *S. Hierome* speaketh excellently wel in an other Epistle of his to *Eustochium*: Thy sister *Blesilla*, elder in yeares, but thy punie in purpose, after she married a husband, in seauen months fel to be a widdow. O vnhappie state of man, ignorant of that which is to come! She lost both the crowne of Virginitie, and the pleasure of Marriage; and though she stand in the second rank of puritie, what crosses notwithstanding dost thou think she endureth euerie moment? Beholding dayly in her sister that which she hath lost, and more hardly wanting the pleasure which she once experienced, she is faine notwithstanding to take a lesser crowne of Continencie.

Difficulties rising from corruption of nature doe not encrease merit, *S. Hier. Ep. 22.*

6. The third difficultie (following *S. Bonauenture*) is that, which riseth from outward occasions; as for example, from the presence of an obiect, that moues vs so much the more violently, from the beautiful aspect of anie thing, and the like; which if we ouercome, they adde indeed sometimes by accident and indirectly to our merit and reward, but yet because of themselues and of their owne nature they draw vs to ruine, they are by al meanes to be shunned and declined by euerie bodie; & he that doth not shunne them, doth not only sinne whē he falleth, but when he layeth himself open to the danger of falling.

Outward occasions of difficultie are to be auoyded.

S. *Aug. ſ.* 250. *de Temp.* S. *Auguſt. ibidem.*

Whervpon *S. Auguſtin* reciting a ſpeech of one that ſhould ſay, he deſired ſomething that he might ouercome, becauſe it was a braue thing. *What is this*, ſayth he, *I wil haue that which I may ouercome, but I deſire to line vnder the ruines?* In few words ſhewing, that as it were follie and madnes for a man not to runne out of a houſe, when he ſees it falling vpon his head, ſo it is much greater follie not to fly preſently, ſo emminent dangers of his ſoule, as be in the world.

It is not cowardlines to flie the world. S. *Hierome cont. Vigilant.*

7. And if anie bodie think, that it is but a cowardlie part to flye in this caſe, and that to remaine in danger is rather glorious, and a ſigne of a noble mind; let him giue eare to that which *S. Hierome* writeth of this verie thing, againſt *Vigilantius* the Heretick. Thou wilt anſwer, ſayth he, that this is not to fight, but to flye: ſhew thy ſelf in the field, confront thy aduerſarie with thy weapons about thee, that when thou haſt ouercome, thou mayſt be crowned. I confeſſe my weaknes, I wil not fight in hope of victorie. And what need is there, to leaue that which is certain, and goe hunt after that which is vncertain? Thou that fighteſt, mayſt ouercome, and be ouercome. I, if I flye, ſhal not be ouercome, becauſe I flye, but I flye that I may not be ouercome. It is not ſafe to ſleepe neere a ſnake; it may be, he wil not bite me, and yet it may be, that at one time or other he wil bite me. Thus *S. Hierome* argueth, aduiſing, as he ſayth himſelf, that which is beſt for human infirmitie.

He that ſeemeth to ſtand it out, is ouercome.

8. But indeed nothing is ſtronger then ſuch weaknes, nothing weaker then ſuch boldnes on the other ſide. For the weake, when he flyeth, ouercometh; for he could not fly, vnleſſe he had ouercome firſt, and vtterly reiected the deſire of the preſent obiect; and on the other ſide, that ſtrong man, that taken with the ſweetnes of it, remayneth in the danger, is euen then ouercome, and ſheweth himſelf to be farre then weaker, becauſe he hath not ſo much power as to withdraw himſelf out of danger. And he may wel be ſayd, to be the more fooliſhly raſh in this kind, becauſe he is blind only in matter of foreſeing and preuenting the ruine of his ſoule, being otherwiſe in the dangers of his bodie but too quick-ſighted. For who is there that wil voluntarily caſt himſelf into a tempeſt at ſea of purpoſe, to ſhew his skil in ſteering the ſhip, and not rather keepe himſelf in the harbour, or put-in as faſt as he can, before the ſtorme grow too ſtrong? Which ought much more to be our practiſe in the buſines of our ſoule, becauſe that which holie Scripture ſayth, cannot but be true: *He that loueth danger, shal perish in it.*

Eccl. 3. 27.

An anſwer to that which is wont to be obiected: That Religious people are bound to more perfection.

CHAP. XXIV.

Luc. 12. 48.

THat which was ſpoken by our Sauiour, and we find written in the Ghoſpel (*To whom much is giuen, much shal be required of him*) being ſpoken indeed to put men forward, and ſtirre them vp to vertuous courſes; ſome there be notwithſtanding that make vſe of it, to hold people back, and diuert them. For they perſwade themſelues, that it is the ſafer courſe

courſe, to content themſelues with a kind of mediocritie in vertue, then by aſpiring to perfection, to take vpon them ſo heauie an obligation, as wil proue in effect much more paynful to diſcharge it, and much more preiudicial vnto them, if they acquit not themſelues of it as they ought. But how wrongfully they alleadge theſe things, we wil quickly and briefly ſhew.

Much shal be demanded of al Christians.

2. For firſt we muſt vnderſtand, that this ſaying of our Sauiour concernes not only Religious people, but al Chriſtians, that haue been enriched with ſo manie heauenlie treaſures, and honoured with ſo manie Diuine guifts, and bought with the bloud of the liuing God, and loaded with ſo manie benefits, as dayly, & howrely, and euerie moment of time they receaue. They therefore that are not Religious, muſt not think, that they haue eſcaped the rigourous doome of that Sentence, but take it for a certain truth, that as they haue *receaued much*, that is, manie vnſpeakable benefits, they wil find themſelues alſo in the number of them, *of whom much*, yea an immenſitie of correſpondance, *wil be demanded*. Wheras Religion, to our exceſſiue comfort, though it throw more benefits vpon vs, yet thoſe verie benefits are withal as manie helps and furtherances to diſcharge and re-inbourſe that, which we owe in regard of them, and of al others which are vniuerſal to al mankind. For as it is the guift of God to faſt, to be chaſt, to be obedient: ſo by the ſelf-ſame faſting, and being chaſt, and obedient, we render in a manner as much to God, as the guift is worth.

The ouerplus in Religion helps to diſcharge the debt.

To be rich, is a diſpoſition for more riches.

Matth. 13. 12. & 25. 29.

3. Beſides that, this ſtrict denunciation of redemanding that which hath been giuen vs, ought not ſo much to fright vs, as that other promiſe encourage vs: *He that hath, shal be giuen vnto him, and he shal abound*. For ſo it is in truth; and the manner and diſpoſition of Almightie God, is, ſtil more and more to enrich and fil thoſe that are ful and rich. And in ſome ſort we may ſay, it concernes him to haue an eye, that they, vpon whom he hath heaped ſo much wealth, leeſe it not, but be ſtil receauing more and more at his hands, to ſtrengthen and eſtabliſh them in that which formerly they had; as oftimes we ſee gameſters leeſe more, that they may be no looſers; and they that goe to law, the more paynes they haue taken, and the more money they haue ſpent in it, the more hot they are vpon ſpending.

Religious are only bound to aſpire to perfection.

4. Finally that which we ſayd before, is conſiderable alſo in this place, that the perfection of vertue is not ſo required at Religious mens hands, as that they are bound to be perfect. And they that are ſo much frighted with the obligation which lyes vpon Religion, miſtake the matter, if they think they are. But they diſcharge their dutie, if they aſpire to perfection, if they keepe themſelues ſtil in the way towards it. As it is not required of a Schollar, that he be inſtantly learned, inſtantly excellent at his booke, becauſe he is a Schollar, but it is ſufficient that he deſire it, and endeauour to it: and the ſelf-ſame we may ſay of Religious people, if they doe not wholy caſt aſide the thought of vertue, but with conuenient care and diligence labour for it, though they be notwithſtanding imperfect, they cannot be ſayd to fayle of their dutie; and thoſe verie ſteps, as ſhort as they are, bring them dayly neerer and neerer to God.

Who be like the vnprofitable Seruant.

5. By which we may ſee, that God deales not ſeuerely and rigidly with Religious people, but rather gently and ſweetly; and is ſo farre from ouercharging them, as he layeth rather leſſe vpon them, then they are able to goe through with. So that when we meete with one of theſe, that neglect a Religious vocation for

feates of this nature, we may wel liken him to that vnprofitable and naughtie Seruant in the Ghospel, that excused his lazines to his Maister in these words: *I was afraid, because thou art a hard man; thou reapest, where thou hast not sowed; and gathерest, where thou hast not scattered.* An allegation both false and impious. For God is so farre from demanding more then he gaue, as he requireth farre lesse. And the man was iustly conuicted and condemned by his Maister, out of his owne mouth. For if he thought he was so hard and seuere, it behooued him to be much more diligent, and watchful, and actiue in making the aduantage of his stock. And the same we may say of these. For first they erre in thinking so vnworthily of that Infinit Goodnes and bountie, and casting so greeuous an aspersion vpon him, as if he were so cruel as they make him. They should rather think the truth, that his guifts are neuer to our ruine, but for our greater benefit and saluation, and that, whatsoeuer he requireth of vs, he first voluntarily bestowes it vpon vs with a free and liberal hand. Secondly, if they feare, least they shal be seuerely punished, if admitting of such a vocation, they make lesse profit of it; how much rather ought they to feare, if they reiect the vocation which is offered them? For whatsoeuer is offered vs, is accounted among the guifts, seing it was truly giuen vs; and he that reiecteth such an offer, doth not only wrap-vp his money in his handkercher, or dig it into the ground, but, which is worse, he contemnes it, and casts it away. They should therefore stand in feare of this, and also of that terrible sentence layd vpon that lazie Seruant: *Tyed hand and foot, cast him into vtter darknes.* And this is the truth of the busines.

Matth. 25.

They think vnworthily of God.

6. But by the way, we must heer answer an other doubt, which perhaps staggers a great manie, imagining that the sinnes of Religious people are farre more greeuous, then the sinnes of them that liue in the world, and deserue farre greater punishment. Which if it were true, certainly their case were very hard. We must see therefore, how it stands with them. *S. Iohn Chrysostom* putting the question, answereth in these words: But thou wilt say: It is not a fault of like consideration, when he, that liues in the world, sinneth, and when he that hath once wholy vowed himself to God, faileth from his purpose of Religion. For they fal not from the same heighth, and so they receaue not harme alike. Thou deceauest thyself mightily, and mistakest the matter, if thou think, that one thing is required of Secular men, another of Monks. And following this argument at large with manie reasons, he concludeth thus: Therefore, that a Secular man, and a Monk, are both equally bound to the same diligence and care in their life, and to the highest top of perfection, and that both of them if they fal, shal receaue harme alike, I think no man now, though he be very impudent and contentious, wil denye.

Whether the sinnes of Religious people be greater.

S. Iohn Chrys. lib. 3. con vitup. vi. mon.

7. *S. Thomas* canuasing this self-same question, and disputing it with al the subtleties of it, according to the rigour of Schooles, in two seueral places of his Works, sheweth, that setting aside sinnes of contempt, and such as are committed against their Vowes, al other sinnes, Venial or Mortal, are rather lesse in Religious people, then greater. And because some perhaps might think it an incredible thing, that it should be so, he giueth three reasons of it. First, because the sinnes, which proceed not out of a habit and custome, as vsually those doe which Secular people commit, but of a suddain motion

S. Tho. 1. 2. q. 73. ar. vlt. 2. 2. q. 186. ar. vlt.

How the sinnes of Religious people are lesse.

motion, which comes vpon them as a great blaſt of wind, are leſſe voluntarie, and therefore happen ſeldome; and when they happen, the wil of the partie that commits them, is not ſo wholy bent vpon them. Secondly, becauſe whatſoeuer euil they commit, it is eaſier drowned in the good which they doe; and their good deeds pleade for more fauour at the hands of that infinit Goodnes, which is alwayes more inclinable to mercie, then one fact can exaſperate him againſt them; an example wherof we haue in King *Ioſaphat*, to whom the *Prophet* ſpake in this manner: *And therefore indeed thou deſerwedſt the wrath of God; but good works haue been found in thee.* Thirdly, as a Religious man hath more knowledge of God, purchaſed by long familiaritie with him; ſo he cannot ſo careleſſely caſt himſelf away, and plunge himſelf ſo deep into ſinne, as one that neuer knew, what the beautie of Vertue, or the vglines of Sinne meant. 2. Paral. 19. 2.

8. For euen ſpeaking of our bodie, when a man comes by a fal, there is great difference in falling by chance when his foot ſlips, and in caſting a man's ſelf headlong downe; for the firſt helpeth himſelf as much as he can, and riſeth preſently againe: the other cruſheth himſelf farre more, and thinks not of riſing againe, and conſequently is more apt to fal an other time, whereas the firſt growes more warie and ſtrong after his fal. Which is that which the *Pſalmiſt* ſayth in theſe words: *A iuſt man, when he falleth, ſhal not be bruſed.* Pſ. 36. 24.

9. We haue alſo the authoritie of *S. Baſil* to ſtrengthen vs in this point. For mouing the ſelf-ſame queſtion (Whether the ſinnes of a Religious man, and an ordinarie man, being the ſame, be equal?) anſwereth, that in a Religious man they are rather leſſe. For a Religious man, ſayth he, being careful in ſeeking the grace of God, and labouring wholy for it, doth not fal of purpoſe, but by chance, and againſt his wil. But an ordinarie man, regarding neither God nor himſelf, and thinking it no great matter, whether he ſinne, or liue wel, either contemneth God, or thinketh, there is no God at al, as the Scripture ſayd: *The foole ſayd in his hart, There is no God.* They are corrupted, they are made abominable in their ſtudies. And we muſt know beſides, that the ſinnes of Religious people moſt commonly happen for their good, through God's particular direction; God permitting them ſometimes to fal, to the end to cure ſome pride, which before they had in their mind, as it hapned to *S. Peter.* Theſe are *S. Baſil's* verie words. Wherefore if Religion diminiſh and leſſen our ſinnes rather then aggrauate them, what need anie man feare, leaſt by reaſon of his good deeds more be demanded of him, then he may diſcharge with eaſe? We may conclude therefore, and ſay with ioy that, which we find in holie Scripture: *Our good Lord wil be merciful to al that ſeeke with al their hart the Lord God of their Fathers, and wil not impute vnto them, that they are leſſe ſanctifyed.* *S. Baſil reg. br. c. 81.* 2. Paral. 30. 19.

Against those that obiect, that some Religious people liue not wel.

CHAP. XXV.

SOme haue often in their mouth the faults and sinnes of Religious people, who either correspond not to their dutie in Religion, nor to the sanctitie of the place, wherin they liue, or, which is worse, forsake Religion, & *hauing put their hand to the plough, looke back againe*; and for this they highly discommend Religious courses.

Hard dealing.

2. But it is very hard and partial dealing, to impute the fault of a few, to the rest that are faultlesse; and much harder, to lay it vpon the course itself, which doubtlesse is holie, and the work of God's owne hand. And indeed the truth is, that manie of those faults, which are so blazed abroad against Religious people, are false; manie of them maliciously forged against them, the Diuel labouring thereby to impaire the credit of those Seruants of God, who are his greatest enemies. And what wonder is it (sayth *S. Augustin*) if men speake il of the seruants of God, and labour to stayne their reputation, when they cannot depraue their life; seing they cease not dayly to blaspheme God our Lord, when, whatsoeuer in his iust and secret iudgement he doth against their wil, pleaseth them not?

S. Augustin Epist. 136.

In a coorse cloath, greater spots are not seen.

3. Though there be an other reason, why they talk so much of them, to wit, because the beautie and dignitie of the State maketh them easily marke the least blemish in it; as the least stayne is a disgrace to a rich garment, or to a white peece of cloath; wheras in a peece of canuas or sack-cloath no notice is taken of greater spots; not because they are not greater, but because the stuffe in which they are, is so coorse, that that new blemish is not seen in it. For so in a Secular state we let thousands of greater faults passe, and there is not a word made of them, because it is no newes in that State; but in a Religious course the least fault that is, is presently spyed, and yet they leaue not to be of the least.

S. Basil Const. Ma. c. 7. Religious men are men.

4. That which *S. Basil* sayth to this purpose, is also very true, that Secular people haue a strange conceit of Religious men, as if togeather with their State, they had presently changed their nature, and were not men, but of some other farre different mold; and consequently they wrong the seruants of God, and think sometimes, that they must scarce eate meate, as if they were not made of flesh and bloud; and if they see anie of them attend to the necessities of their bodie, they load them with reproaches and slanders, and turning their calumniations from one vpon al the rest, they cal them al gluttons and bellie-guts, and think not how themselues doe dayly feast it, and though they eate often in a day, and cram themselues with a great deale of flesh-meate, and powre downe wine by whole bowle-fuls, yet they gape after meate, as dogs that are let loose out of their chayne half-starued. Thus speaketh *S. Basil* in defence of Religious people.

5. But

5. But let vs grant, that Religious men haue ſometimes their faults, and that ſome of them haue fallen, and doe fal from Religion; muſt we therefore condemne Religious courſes? or cenſure the whole State, becauſe ſome are ſloathful and careleſſe? *S. Auguſtin* ſpeaketh wittily to them, that obiected this againſt Monks, in theſe words: And we alſo know ſome ſuch people; but the deuout Confraternitie is not loſt, becauſe of ſome that profeſſe that which they are not. There be as wel falſe Monks, as falſe Clerks, and falſe Chriſtians. And *S. Hierome* ſayth very truly, that in al ſtates and conditions the bad are mingled with the good; and ſo much the more, the higher and more perfect and more eminent the State is; for the greater the burden is, the leſſe wonder it is to find ſome in this weaknes of humane nature, that are readie to ſhake it off, or carrie it faintly; and yet their ſlacknes ought not to leſſen our conceit and eſteeme of ſo eminent a calling. When the Heretick *Heluidius* had proclaimed warre againſt Virginitie, among other things, for which he tooke occaſion to calumniate that State, he ſayd, that ſome Virgins were *tauerne-hanters*. And how doth *S. Hierome* refute him? I, ſayth *S. Hierome*, ſay more; ſome among them are adultereſſes; and, which is more to be wondered at, there be Clergie-men that are huckſters, and Monks diſhoneſt. But who doth not preſently vnderſtand, that neither a tauerne-hanter can be a Virgin, nor an adulterer a Monk, nor a huckſter a Cleargie-man? Is it the fault of Virginitie, if a counterfaiter of Virginitie be in fault?

False Chriſtians and falſe Clerks as wel as Monks.

S. Hier. con. Heluid.

6. Let vs looke vpon the whole Church of God, and argue in behalf of a member therof, from the whole bodie. For though there be manie in the Catholick Church, that liue deboiſht, yet the Church is ſtil called Holie; and their wicked liues hinder not, but that the whole companie of the Faithful, is truly ſayd by the Apoſtle to be *without ſpot or wrinkle*; becauſe we muſt not regard, how things haue been defaced by moſt, but what was the firſt inſtitution in itſelf, as God ordained it. And in like manner we may ſay of Religious Orders; they leeſe nothing of their ſanctitie, becauſe ſome among them be not Saints. And if we weigh it wel, the argument is yet much ſtronger in behalf of Religious Orders; for if the Church be ſtiled *al fayre*, and al of it the *beloued of God*, notwithſtanding that there be more bad then good in it, and more that walk the broad and ſpacious way, then the narrow; how much more reaſon haue we to giue Religious Orders the like honour, ſeing there be ſo manie good among them, and ſo few that are bad?

The Church is holie, though ſome be not holie. *Eph. 5. 27.*

Cant. 4.

7. And beſides the holines of their inſtitute, we may cleere them vpon an other ground; for whatſoeuer blemiſh may fal vpon them by the faults of ſome, it is abundantly ſtricken-out by the vertuous liues & good deeds of others. Doe not (ſayth *S. Hierome*) caſt thy eye vpon *Iudas* denying, but looke vpon *Paul* confeſſing. And we haue cauſe to be much more animated at the ſight of ſo manie *Pauls*, then to be diſcõforted with one *Iudas*. To which purpoſe *S. Gregorie Nyſſen* alſo ſpeaketh in his *booke of Virginitie*, anſwering thoſe that carped at ſo holie a life, by occaſion of ſome, that hauing vndertooken it, were afterwards ouercome and vanquiſhed. I doe not deny (ſayth he) but that it is a hard matter, and beyond the cõmon ſtrayne; neither is it anie wonder, if in ſo difficult a buſines ſome be ouercome with the toyle of it, ſome by other meanes. And yet we muſt not be ſo diſcouraged at it, as to forgoe ſo rare a thing for that feare: but rather confidently venter vpon ſo profitable a nauigation, in the Ship of Conſcience, with

The vertues of moſt, recompenſe the faults of a few.

S. Hier. ep. 34.

S. Greg. Nyſſ. l. de Virg. c. vlt.

Marchants leaue not trading, becauſe ſome ſuffer ſhipwrack.

with Chriſt our Pilot, with the ſweet gale of the Holie-Ghoſt. For neither they that go to ſea, and trade in marchandize, doe abandon that courſe, becauſe they vnderſtand, that ſometimes ſome haue ſuffered ſhipwrack. Beſides that, it is moſt abſurd and vniuſt, to condemne one that hath alwayes liued wel, for a wicked man; and to deteſt the courſe of life in which he was, for one fault into which perhaps he fel; and on the other ſide, to think that a man that hath ſpent his whole life in ſinne and wickednes, tooke notwithſtanding the beſt courſe for himſelf. For if it be a hainous matter to ſinne once, and for that cauſe thou think it better to abſtaine from thoſe more ſublime Counſels and purpoſes; in how farre worſe ſtate is he, who hath been alwayes wallowing in the filth of vice? Thus ſpake *S. Gregorie Nyſſen.*

Matt. 18. 7. He that wondereth at ſcandals vnderſtãds not himſelf. *Caſſ. Coll.* 18. c. 16.

8. This is the miſerable frayltie of this life, ſo long as we are ſtrangers and pilgrims from God; and as our Sauiour foretold vs: *It is neceſſarie, that ſcandals ſhould happen*: and he that wondereth at it, ſeemes not to vnderſtand where he liueth, and what himſelf is made of, ſeing he admireth it ſo much in others. Whervpon *Caſſian*, hauing related the memorable patience of *Paphnutius*, who being accuſed of theft by an other Monk, voluntarily vnderwent the puniſhment that was layd vpon him, though indeed he were innocent, concludeth his narration in theſe words: And let vs not wonder, that in the companie of holie men, there lye lurking ſome, that are wicked and deteſtable; becauſe while we are troden and bruſed in the floare of this world, it is neceſſarie, that among the choiceſt wheate, chaffe ſhould be mingled, which is to be caſt into euerlaſting fire. Finally if we cal to mind, that there was a *Sathan* among the *Archangels*, a *Iudas* among the *Apoſtles*, a *Nicolas* (broacher of an abominable hereſie) among the *choſen Deacons*, it can be no wonder, that wicked men ſhould be found mingled among the order of Saints. And to inſiſt a little more vpon this example of *Paphnutius*, and apply it to our times, if anie man be offended, that in a houſe of that holines, in an Age ſo ful of feruour, there was ſome one found ſo wickedly malicious againſt one of his Brethren, as to accuſe him falſely in that manner; why ſhould he not be as much edifyed at the humilitie, patience, and charitie of *Paphnutius*, who to ſaue the credit of his neighbour, and ſuch a wicked neighbour, reſolued with himſelf to abide the diſgrace of ſo fowle a fault, and to beare-out with head and ſhoulders the whole ſtorme of this infamie? Was not the vertue and ſimplicitie of this Saint much greater, then the malice and enuie of that ſinner? Beſides that, in the whole Monaſterie there was this one wicked man, and he only to be found in ſo manie yeares continuance; al the reſt were good, and lead liues worthie of ſo holie a vocation. What peruerſenes therefore is it to be more forward, to take exceptions vpon one man's miſbehauiour, then to commend and think honourably of the courſe, vpon the vertue of ſo manie?

The rare charitie of *Paphnutius.*

A memorable example in S. *Auguſtin's* time.

S. Aug. Ep. 137.

9. At *Bona* in *S. Auguſtin's* Monaſterie, there fel a great quarrel betwixt a couple, one charging another with a hainous crime, ſo that one of them muſt neceſſarily be guiltie, either of an enormous fact, or of a horrible lye. The people, that had got the voyce of it, began much to admire and complaine. Wherupon *S. Auguſtin* wrote a notable letter vnto them, firſt reprehending them, for caſting an aſperſion vpon al Religious, becauſe of one man's fact; and ſecondly he ſayth, as *Caſſian* a little before, that it is no wonder nor no newes, for ſome ſuch thing ſometimes to happen among ſuch men. What doe theſe people (ſayth *S. Auguſtin*)

ſtriue

ſtriue for, and what doe they ayme at, but whenſoeuer a Biſhop, or a Cleargie-man, or a Monk, or a Nunne falles, to beleeue that al are ſuch, though al can not be conuinced to be ſuch? And yet when a wife is found in adulterie, they neither put away their wiues, nor accuſe their owne mothers. But when either a falſe imputatiō is layd vpon thē that profeſſe this holie name, or ſome true crime of theirs diſcouered, they vrge, they beſtirre thēſelues, they glorie to haue it beleeued of al. And a little after: How vigilant ſoeuer the order of my houſe be, I am a man, I liue among men; I dare not preſume, that my houſe ſhal be better then the Arke of Noë, where among eight perſons one was a reprobate; or better then the houſe of *Abraham*, where it was ſpoken: *Caſt out the handmaid and her ſonne*; or better then the houſe of *Iſaac*, to whom, of the two twinnes, it was ſayd, and done: *I loued Iacob, but Eſau I hated*; or better then the houſe of *Iacob*, where the ſonne defiled by inceſt the bed of his father; or better then the houſe of *Dauid*, whoſe ſonne lay with his ſiſter, whoſe other ſonne rebelled againſt ſo holie a meeknes of his father; or better then the companie which our Sauiour had, where the eleuen good, tolerated the perfidious theeuing *Iudas*; or finally better then Heauen, from whence the Angels fel. And in concluſion, notwithſtanding he acknowledgeth, that theſe things cannot be auoyded, he pleadeth ſtrongly for Religion, and maintayneth the honour and dignitie of it to the ful. Though we be ſorie (ſayth he) for ſome droſſe that comes off, we haue comfort of more ornament that remaines; doe not therefore for the ſcumme that offends your eyes, loathe the oyle-preſſes, which fil the cellars of our Lord with the fruit of a more bright ſhining oyle. He calleth the Church and the Soules of the Faithful, *Cellars of our Lord*; giuing vs to vnderſtand, that both the Church and euerie particular Soule is enlightned with this oyle, that is, by a Religious State, and by the work and example of Religious people.

Gen. 9. *Gen. 21. 10.* *Mal. 1. 3.* *Gen. 28* *2 Reg. 15.*

10. Finally it is not amiſſe to reflect, that if they were Angels that obiected theſe things, they might haue ſome right to doe it, becauſe they liue without fleſh and bloud, free from ſinne; and it were to be wiſhed, if it were poſſible, that we might exchange this our life with theirs. But ſeing they be Secular people that make this buſines, and al this compariſon is betwixt their life and ours, I know not what they can pretend in al this diſcourſe, ſeing they cannot be ſo ſhameleſſe, as to preferre their State before a Religious State, finding, as they doe, in their owne, that they fal ſo often; that vertue is ſo ſcarce among them; that their rewards and deſerts are ſo ſhort in the world to come. To which purpoſe *S. Anſelme* hath this excellent ſaying in one of his Epiſtles: Perhaps ſome bodie wil ſay, that in the Order of Monks alſo there is danger. O the man that ſayth ſo! Why doth he not think what he ſayth? O reaſonable creature! Is this reaſonable counſel, becauſe there is danger euerie where, therefore chooſe to ſtay where the danger is greater? Finally he that endeauoureth to loue God only, if he keepe his purpoſe to the end, is ſure of ſaluation. But he that wil loue the world, if he doe not forgoe his purpoſe before the end, either muſt not expect ſaluation, or his ſaluation wil be doubtful, or leſſe. Thus ſayth *S. Anſelme*.

They are not Angels that make this obiection.

S. Anſel. Ep. 3.

An Answer to their Argument that say: If al should become Religious, the world would perish.

CHAP. XXVI.

This is an ancient obiection.

SOME obiect sometimes against Religious courses, as a great inconuenience, that they wil be wel-nigh the destruction of the world; because, if al betake themselues to a single life, the world must needs be dispeopled for want of posteritie. This is no new obiection, but aduanced in ancient times, and canuassed manie Ages past. For *S. Augustin* propoundeth it in a certain place after this manner: I know some that mutter: What and if al wil abstaine from al carnal copulation, how shal mankind subsist? *S. Iohn Chrysostome* doth not only propound the question, but heapeth manie inconueniences that would follow. If al should follow that good, sayth he not to touch a woman at al, al things would perish, cities, families, lands, trades, cattle, and whatsoeuer growes out of the earth. For as when a General is slayne in the field, the whole armie must needes be put to route: so if you take Man out of the way, who is the Prince of this world, nothing els can subsist, or be preserued; & consequently this Counsel would fil the whole world with innumerable calamities.

S. August. de bono Coniug. c. 10.

S. Iohn Chry de uir. c. 15.

A happie thing if al would liue single.

2. This obiection therefore is ancient, and long agoe strangled by the holie Fathers. *S. Augustin* answereth thus: *Would to God al would doe so; the Cittie of God would be much sooner filled, and the end of the world hastned on.* And his answer is good; for how much better were it, that the Kingdome of God were come, which we dayly beg, and haue been taught to doe so by our Sauiour himself, and that GOD (as the Apostle speaketh) *were Al in Al*, which shal be, when Christ our Sauiour shal haue subiected al to his heauenlie Father, then to prolong our liues in this confusion and mingle of al things? And if it should fal-out (as *S. Augustin* wisheth) that al should liue a single life and chast, it were an euident signe of the wil of God, that the world should haue end; and it can not come to a better end, then if generally al should consecrate themselues, soule and bodie, to so holie a life.

1. Cor. 15. 28.

But it is a case not to feared.

S. Hier l. 1. contra Iou.

3. *S. Hierome* answereth the same obiection after an other manner: *Feare not*, sayth he, *least al be Virgins; Virginitie is a hard thing, and therefore rare, because it is hard.* Which answer of *S. Hierom's* is the stronger, if we compare it with the saying of our Sauiour: *Not al receaue this word.* Manie there be, whom God, out of his secret iudgements, doth not vouchsafe so great a benefit; others he calles to be partakers of it, and they giue no eare to his calling, but charmed with the pleasures of this world, they cannot get their feet out of the nets, in which they are intangled; finally others vpon other motiues & hindrances, are so held back, that the truth of that, which Truth itself deliuered in the Ghospel, is very playnly to be seen: *The way is narrow, which leads to heauen; and few doe find it.* Which was spoken indeed of the ordinarie way, which al Christians ought to walke; but is much more verifyed in the way, which Religious people take; insomuch that in regard of the narrownes of it, al Secular wayes may be said to be broad.

Matth. 19. 11.

Matth. 7. 13.

broad. And not only the infirmitie of man (which taketh place in the farre greater part) doth not allow this benefit in the cõmon & ordinarie among men, but it belongeth also to the prouident wisdome of Almightie God, to haue care, that there be alwayes some to attend to posteritie, so long as his wil is this inferiour world should last; which prouidence of his watching ouer the verie beasts and wormes of the earth, and preseruing euerie thing in kind, as it was first created, no man can haue cause to misdoubt, that he wil forsake mankind.

God also prouideth otherwise.

4. *S. Iohn Chrysostome* doth laugh at these people, that are so sollicitous to vphold the world, and labouring so earnestly, that mankind fal not to decay, which concernes them not to think of, lay aside al care of their owne soule, as if it belonged not vnto them; and consequently, that they do it not out of a desire of the common good, but to colour their negligence and sloath. And telles vs withal a truth, which is worth the obseruing, that Marriage of itself doth not propagate mankind, because the parties are often barren, as it hapned in *Abraham*; but it is the blessing which God giues; and God can multiplye men as he thinks good. Then he sheweth, how there were two reasons in the institution of Marriage; the one, to beget children; the other to extinguish natural lust in that kind; and sayth, that the first now ceaseth, seing the world is so ful, that it is rather ouercharged; as for the other reason, there can be no question, but that lust is farre more perfectly extinguished by the grace of God, and by the vertue of Chastitie, then by the vse of Matrimonie.

S. Io. Chry. de Virg. c. 15. They should rather care for their soules.

Marriage not necessarie now.

5. But some bodie wil say, that the difference of Sexes, and the facultie of generation, wil be in vayne in them that doe not marrie; and yet Nature hath giuen it vs, and God hath so appointed; and no man that is wise, doth anie thing in vayne. This is the argument both of ancient Hereticks, and of those of our dayes, that maliciously oppose and cauil at the wholesome continencie, with which the holie Church is so much honoured and stored. We must therefore make the same answer, which we make to hereticks, to wit, that whatsoeuer is instituted for the good of the whole kind, is not idle or in vayne, though in some particulars of that kind it hath not the effect, if in others it haue. We see the like in most natural things; for in al kinds of fruit and herbs there comes a great deale of seed, which is neuer sowen, rather a smal deale of it is vsed to that end; and yet no man euer accused Nature for it, as if it had made it in vayne. And we may say the like of man, though in man there is yet a further thing; for Continencie in this kind, being free and voluntarie, and in euerie bodies power to practise, or not to practise it, it was not fit, that Nature should determine it, but the wil of Man; neither that we should be borne so, but that we should out of reason and iudgement embrace it. Wherefore it was fitting, that al should equally haue the power by nature, both they that would vse it, and they that for the Kingdome of heauen would refrayne the vse of it. And this is answer enough to this point.

Distinctiõ of Sexes is not made voyd by a single life.

6. But we haue an other reason stil to deale with, not altogether vnlike this, which we haue now confuted, of some that are not sollicitous for the continuance of the whole world, but of their owne House and Familie. And therefore if their onlie sonne, or onlie daughter make choice of a Religious State, they lament and mourne, and, which is worse, they repine at it, as if their whole Familie should be quite rooted out. And to say the truth, it is but a fooliish and impertinent kind of grief. For which is more to be stood vpon, the sanctitie of a Soule, or Posteritie?

The sanctitie of a soule more to be valued then posteritie.

ritie? And what good is there in posteritie? If they feare they shal want an heyre, vpon whom their lands may descend, first they haue a world of kindred, and perhaps more then enough; secondly, there wil neuer want poore people, in whom they may make Christ their heyre, vpon farre better conditions then their owne child. For one man that is heyre to an other that is dead, cannot requite him that made him his heyre; but Christ our Sauiour doth then most of al recompense a man with rewards eternal. Moreouer, what would they doe, if that onlie sonne of theirs haue no issue? For so their line would fayle, and, which is more to be lamented, without thanks and without reward. Which argument *S. Hierome* doth chiefly insist vpon, when he perswadeth *Furia* not to marrie. Dost thou feare the line of *Furia* shal fayle, and that thy father shal not haue a little one of thee, to creepe in his breast? for al that are married, haue children. It is ridiculous to hope for certain that, which thou seest manie haue not, and manie leese it, when they haue it. To whom shalt thou leaue al thy riches? To Christ, who cannot dye. What heyre shalt thou haue? Him that is thy Lord.

S. Hier. Ep. 10.

The happines of a Religious life, incomparable to that of posteritie.

7. But to grant, that it is a happines to preserue a man's Familie; how smal, how short, how farre inferiour is it to the happines of a Religious life? For not only particular men, but whole Families dye, and once come to an end; and though they continue neuer so long, yet in time they must needs decay, and at last be wholy extinguished. Seing therefore they are subiect to so manie casualties, is not he a verie foole, that shal feed himself with hope, that his issue shal alwayes continue, and moreouer striue so much, that it may continue, as to oppose himself to the Counsels of God, and endeauour to alter and hinder them?

Too much desire of posteritie is not Christian-like.

Arist. 1. Pol. c. 1.

8. Finally how doth this extrauagant desire of continuing a descent, become a Christian? for in a Heathen and Infidel it might be perhaps more tollerable. For, as *Aristotle* writeth, the reason why men and beasts haue a desire of issue ingrafted in them, is because, sayth he, al things couet to be alwayes, and alwayes to continue; but because they cannot in themselues compasse it, being subiect to dye, they labour to compasse it at least in their owne kind, in which they seeme after a manner themselues to continue, so long as a part cut of from them doth continue. What force hath this reason in the light of Christianitie, wherin we haue so certain a promise of an Eternitie in our owne persons, both in bodie and soule, that we need not seeke that in others, which we shal haue in ourselues? And this is that which Nature chiefly desires. But the miserie is, that most men doe not gouerne themselues according to this Diuine light, but suffer themselues to be lead by Sense, and their natural inclinations, which, I must needs confesse, is a most corrupt and most dangerous proceeding.

Againſt the feare of ſome, that they ſhal want neceſſaries for their bodie.

CHAP. XXVII.

LEt vs preuent, and cure, if we can, their feare alſo, that miſtruſt, leaſt if they forſake al, they ſhal not haue wherewithal to paſſe their life. Of which feare what can be ſayd more proper, then that which is in the Pſalme? *And they ſpoke euil of God, and ſayd: Can God prepare a table in the deſert?* *S. Bonauenture* in his *Apologie for the poore*, reduceth al this difference to two heads, and ſayth, it proceedeth either of Infidelitie, as in them that doe not beleeue, that God hath care of what hapneth among men, at leaſtwiſe not of them in particular; or it comes out of Puſillanimitie, which is euer coupled with a ſlacknes in the loue of God, and an earneſt loue of ourſelues; wheras they that frame a right conceit of the goodnes and prouidence of God, cannot doubt but that God hath more care of their life, then they themſelues.

Two cauſes of this feare. *Pſ. 77. 21.* *S. Bonau. in Apol. paup. 4. reſp. 3. par. 4. 2.*

2. Whervpon *S. Auguſtin* ſayth: A iuſt man cannot want daylie food, ſeing it is vritten: *Our Lord wil not kil the ſoule of a iuſt man with hunger.* And againe: *I was yong, and became old, and haue not ſeen a iuſt man forſaken, nor his ſeed ſeeking bread.* And our Sauiour promiſeth, that *al things ſhal be added to them, that ſeeke the Kingdome of God and the iuſtice thereof*; and wheras al things are God's, he that hath God, can want nothing, if he be not wanting to God. So when *Daniel* was by the King's commandment ſhut-vp in the Denne of lions, God ſent him his dinner, and among the hungrie wild beaſts, the man of God was fed. So *Helias* was maintayned in his flight, the crowes miniſtring vnto him, and the birds bringing him meate in time of perſecution. *S. Hierome* ſayth the ſame in fewer words: Let no man doubt of the promiſes of Truth. Let man be as he ought, and preſently al things ſhal be added to him, for whom al things were made. A true and ſolid reaſon! For al things in the world being made for Man, they neuer withdraw themſelues from his ſeruice, vnleſſe he firſt withdraw himſelf from the ſeruice of God. And if he returne to ſerue God as he ought, he may clayme as it were by right al other things as his owne and due vnto him.

S. Aug de Orat. Dom. Prou. 10. 3. Pſ. 36. 25. Luc. 22. 31. " *Dan. 14.* " *3. Reg. 17.* " " *S. Hier. in c. 5. Math.* If man ſerue God, God wil neuer be wanting to him.

3. *S. Ambroſe* expounding that model of an Apoſtical man, which is ſet downe by our Sauiour in *S. Luke* (*without ſatchel or ſcrip*) ſayth thus: Protected by Faith, let him make account that the leſſe he requireth, the more he may haue. Seing therefore we haue ſo manie teſtimonies both of the holie Fathers, and of holie Scripture, in behalf of this prouidence of Almightie God and the care which he hath of his, that we ſhal ſcarce find anie thing more often and more expreſly commended vnto vs, it can be no ſmal fault, as I ſayd before, to doubt therof; for it were to make God either couetous or forgetful; vnworthie things both of them of ſo infinit a Maieſtie. For we cannot poſſibly imagin,

S. Ambr. l. 6. in Luc.

how he can be either more magnificent and profuse in giuing, or more liberal of his loue, or more careful in prouiding, or more readie in doing for vs. And S. *Augustin* doth deseruedly reprehend such as haue so meane a conceit of God, in these words: Dost thou think, that anie thing shal be wanting to a Christian? to a seruant of God? to one that is giuen to good works? to one that is deare to his Lord and Maister? Dost thou think that he that feedeth Christ, is not fed by Christ? Dost thou think, that he to whom Diuine and heauenlie things are giuen, shal want earthlie things? from whence comes this distrustful thought? what maketh an vnfaithful hart in the house of God? Thus sayth S. *Augustin*.

S. *Aug. de Eleem.*

4. Al which wil be yet more euident, if we consider the peculiar right, which Religious people haue in this kind, whether we regard God, or man. For speaking of men, there be manie reasons, that oblige them to furnish Religious people with al kind of necessaries. For first, Religious people hauing giuen al they had to the poore, and brought themselues voluntarily to Pouertie, deserue likewise, that others should giue them wherewith to liue; and they are in the right that are of opinion, that in this there is not only an obligation of Charitie, but in some sort, of Iustice. An other reason is in regard of the labour and paynes, which they take for the eternal good of their neighbour: *for the work-man is worthie of his reward*, and *they that sowe spiritual things, must reape carnal things*, as the Apostle speaketh. And in an other place, he sayth: *The husbandman that laboureth, must first gather of the fruit.* The force of which reason wil be the more euident, if we consider the cause, why Prelats demand sustenance as of iustice due vnto them; for sustenance is not due vnto them, as honour is due to power and authoritie, but as wages is due for work and labour. Religious people therefore hauing their part in this work and labour, and labouring so hard as they doe, it is but reason they should haue part also of the fruit, specially so much as is necessarie to continue their labour. Which is not only of force in Preachers, and such as labour immediately for the good of their Neighbours, but in others that employ themselues in anie profitable course for them. For they that minister at the Altar, of the Sacrifice wherof al Faithful are partakers, and they that attend to Prayer and Contemplation, and the Studie of holie Scripture, and such other spiritual functions, as are for the benefit of the whole Church, al of them, as I sayd, haue right to be maintayned of the peoples liberalitie.

Men are obliged to prouide for Religious people, In regard of their Pouertie.

1. *Cor.* 9. 11. 2. *Tim.* 2. 6.

And of the paynes they take for their soule.

5. A third reason is grounded in Religious perfection. For al Diuines agreing that almes is first to be giuen to them that are better, and rather to them then to others, it followeth that they that are in a perfect State, and liue in a course that is furnished with al kind of vertue, are to be preferred farre before al others. To which purpose S. *Hierome* applyeth that which is written in S. *Luke*: *Make vnto you friends of the Mammon of iniquitie; that when you shal fayle, they may receaue you into the eternal Tabernacles*; and sheweth, that it cannot agree to ordinarie poore people. Are they poore, sayth he, amidst whose filth and nastines, firie lust doth command? Can they haue eternal tabernacles, that neither haue them in present, nor to come? For, not simply the poore, but *the poore in spirit*, are stiled *blessed*, of whom it is written: *Blessed is he, that vnderstandeth ouer the poore and needie; our Lord wil deliuer him in the euil day.* In maintayning the ordinarie poore, there needs no vnderstanding, but pittie; in the

And of their vertue.

Luc. 16. 9. S. *Hier. contra Vigi.*

Mat. 5. 3. *Ps.* 40. 1.

the holie poore, there needs the vnderstan[illegible] of Beatitude, to bestow vpon him that is ashamed to take, and when he takes, is sorie that he reapes carnal things, hauing sowed spiritual. And S. *Augustin* hath the like saying vpon the Psalme: The noble Cedars of Libanus, the lostie rich men of this world, when they heare with feare, *Blessed is he that vnderstandeth ouer the poore and needie*, they looke into their goods, their fames, al their superfluous wealth, in which they seeme so lostie, and giue them to the seruants of God, they giue orchards, they build Churches and Monasteries, they gather sparrowes that make their nests in the Cedars of Libanus. It is therefore as it were a kind of impost or custome due to Religious people from the Seculars, and Secular people vnderstand it so, and that makes them so free and open-handed, and alwayes so readie to supply al their necessities.

S. *Aug in Ps.* 105. *conc.* 3.

6. An other ground of this right (for so we may cal it) more solid then the other, is God himself; not only in regard of the general prouidence which he hath ouer al things in general, and prouideth for the birds of the ayre, and the flowers of the earth, or which he hath ouer al men, though they be wicked, *rayning*, and *making his Sunne to shine vpon them*; or ouer the iust, of whom it is written: *I saw not a iust man forsaken, nor his seed seeking bread.* But Religious men haue a particular reason proper to themselues; because, forsaking their possessions, and their hopes, they haue cast themselues wholy vpon his fatherlie charitie. So that though there were nothing els, this were sufficient to oblige, as I may say, his goodnes to haue care of them, as a father of his children. For God is not one, that wil suffer himself to be ouercome with liberalitie and munificence; and consequently, we are so farre from leesing anie thing, when we forsake al we haue, as we are rather gainers by it; the infinit wisdome of God taking vpon him the charge of prouiding for vs, so that we may be assured, that we shal want nothing. On the other side, when we wil take vpon vs to prouide and care for ourselues by our owne wit and forecast, how manie things must we needs want? For our forecast is so slender and so short, whether we be to prouide for the future, or to order things present, that we must needs often fal into manie great errours & inconueniences. Whervpon S. *Iohn Chrysostome* giues vs this Caueat: *Take no thought for thine owne, but leaue it to God. For if thou leaue it to God, he wil prouide.* And againe in an other Homilie, which is al in commendation of a Monastical life, he reckoneth this among the special benefits if God, because if God feed al flesh, much more wil he feed his seruants, that haue consecrated themselues vnto him; and consequently, al things necessarie are deriued vnto them out of the prouidence of God, as out of a fountain of running water. By which similitude of a fountain, he would giue vs to vnderstand, both the abundance and perpetuitie of these benefits, and also that we come by them without anie labour, as water springs from a fountain.

God obliged to haue care of Religious people. *Ps.* 36. 25.

Our forecast very short.

S. *Io. Chrys. hom.* 56. *ad pop.*

Id. ho. 57.

7. And it is a pleasant thing to behold the examples of this prouidence of God ouer Religious people, and to reade the manie testifications therof, which are vpon record in ancient histories almost without number. But that is singular, which *Palladius* recounteth of Abbot *Hellen*; who falling a-sleep, after he had long fasted, there came an Angel, and awaking him, bad him eate of that which was set before him. And rising he saw that there was a large fountain of water

The prouidence of God towards Abbot *Hellen.*

ſuddenly ſprung vp by him, and [illegible]ndance of green hearbs round about him, and taſting of both, he ſayd, he neuer in his life dined better. And afterwards when he wanted ſuſtenance, he euer was wont to kneele downe and offer vp his prayers to God; and preſently he was ſerued with diuers kinds of meate, with new bread, oliues, and other fruits. What can be more louing, or more pleaſant to think of, then ſuch a prouidence, which ſtoopes ſo low as to act the part of a Steward? Or why ſhould we think, he wil forſake his other ſeruants, ſeing he was ſo careful to prouide for this his ſeruant by ſo daylie a miracle, as if he had been his Clerk? But, as I ſayd, the Liues of Saints are ful of theſe kind of examples; but we wil make choyce of two eſpecially, not vnlike the one to the other, and taken out of two Religious Families very like alſo togeather.

And two Dominican Friars.

8. For *S. Dominick* in the beginnings of his Order, ſending his Religious into diuers places, two and two togeather, according to the manner ſet downe by our Sauiour, to preach pennance: it hapned that two of them being faſting and very wearie with their iourney, the ninth howre of the day being paſt, were diſcourſing ſomewhat heauily betwixt themſelues, how they might get ſome relief, in that poore and vnknowne place; and as they were talking, there came vnto them a tal comelie man in ſomewhat a ſtrange kind of habit, and gaue them a good check for their weake and ſmal faith. Could you, ſayd he, beleeue God ſo farre, as to forſake al for his ſake, and cannot you now beleeue, that he hath care of you? He that giueth beaſts their food, wil not ſuffer his children to dye for hunger, which you this day ſhal abundantly experience. And vaniſhing out of their ſight (for it was an Angel) they went a litle onwards on their iourney; and coming to the next village, while they were at their prayers, a Prieſt inuited them very kindly home; and as they were going to his houſe, a Gentleman met them, and would by al meanes they ſhould goe with him; and as theſe two were thus ſtrayning curteſie togeather, the Lord of the place ſeing them by chance, ouer-ruled the buſines, and bad both the Friars, and the Prieſt, and the Gentleman to his houſe, and feaſted them very nobly.

And two of S. Francis his Order. *Pſ. 54. 23.*

9. And it is recorded alſo of *S. Francis*, that when he ſent anie of his Friars in Miſſion, he was neuer wont to giue them anie thing towards their charges vpon the way, but that onlie verſe of the Pſalme: *Caſt thy thought vpon our Lord, and he wil maintayne thee*; the faith of which Verſe was as good to them as anie money. It hapned therefore, that two of them, hauing trauelled almoſt al the day long, what with emptines, what with wearines, began to faint; and though they begged relief, no bodie gaue them anie thing; til at laſt there met them a yong man, that vnderſtanding of them the cauſe, why they were ſo wearie and ſad, gaue them a couple of loaues; and as they ſate downe to eate them, he reprehended them ſharply in theſe words: Men of litle faith, why did you miſtruſt the Diuine prouidence? Why did you not eal to mind the words of the Prophet, which the holie Father hath ſo often inculcated to you: *Caſt thy thought vpon our Lord and he wil maintayne thee*; ſeing his goodnes is not wanting to the verie beaſts of the field? Wherefore know, that God differred his help for no other reaſon, but to punish this diffidence of

yours

yours with hunger. And hauing held this and the like discourses with them, he vanished out of their sight.

10. Let others therefore in God's name haue their lands, and possessions, and rents, and duties gathered with much toyle and labour, subiect to hayle, and drowth, and rayne, and other mischances; we haue two Lordships, as I may cal them, the rents wherof are certain, and free from al miscarrying; to wit, first the Prouidence of Almightie God, in a manner obliged vnto vs through his owne infinit goodnes, and that act of ours, when we left al for his loue: and secondly the Relief from our Neighbours, due in a manner not only of charitie, but of a kind of iustice. And this is that which the Prophet *Esay* seemeth to promise, when he sayth: *Thou shalt suck the milk of nations, and shalt be fed at the breasts of Kings.* For by *Nations*, we may vnderstand the common people, by *Kings*, rich men, and men of authoritie; whose liberalities the Prophet compares to milk and a womans breast, because milk is the iuyce of harder meate, and of meate which is not gotten but with some labour, and some work of nature in the nurse to make it; and yet the infant sucks it without labour, and with a great deale of pleasure. So Religious people haue that for nothing, which others purchase with a great deale of labour, and sweate, and trouble, and oftimes not without danger. So that they may be wel likened in this to the ancient *Hebrewes*, of whom it is written: *And they possessed the labours of people.* Two Lordships belonging to Religious people. *Es.* 60. 16. *Ps.* 104. 44.

11. We may therefore conclude, that he that misdoubteth, least in Religious pouertie, that which is necessarie, should be wanting, wants not only iudgement and consideration, but eyes to see, how manie thousands of men and women consecrated to God, haue been in al Ages, and are to this day maintayned through his goodnes and prouidence, and with such abundance and certaintie, that no Secular people can more certainly relye vpon their lands of inheritance. For they also haue their lands, to wit, those two Lordships, as I sayd, so rich and plentiful, that if our Lord should aske them, as anciently he asked his Apostles: *When I sent you without satchel or scrip, did you want anie thing?* they must of force answer with ioy and thanks-giuing, as the Apostles did: *Nothing.* *Luc.* 22. 35.

Of the feare, which others haue, least they may hasten their death, by the incommodities, which they shal suffer.

CHAP. XXVIII.

WE haue cured this feare; yet there remayneth an other, which also concernes our life, which as it is the deerest thing we haue, so naturally nothing is more hateful and more detestable then that, which either bereaues vs wholy of it, or in part diminisheth it. And to anie man's thinking, it cānot be but that our life should be in some measure shortned with the labours, and watchings, and continual paynes, and manie incommodities, which a Religious course must necessarily inuolue. Wherupon besides the hastning of our end, some may haue a scruple, least they be guiltie of their owne death, by thus

voluntarily, through corporal austerities cutting off the time, which is allotted them to liue. To answer this obiection therefore, we wil begin with this scruple; for that being taken away, the rest wil be easie to answer.

It is meritorious to shorten our dayes.

2. We must therefore vnderstand, that Diuines, who dispute this question at large, make no doubt, but that it is lawful for a man to shorten his dayes, and not only lawful, but commendable and meritorious. For though it be not lawful of purpose to kil ourselues; yet to do some good thing, whervpon it shal follow, that our life wil be in no smal measure shortned, is not only lawful, but oftimes most acceptable to God. And we may iustifye it by manie presidents, and particularly by the anciēt approued custome of the Church of God, in appointing long fasts, and laying most grieuous pennances vpon such as offended; which doubtlesse could not but cut off not a litle, but much time of their life.

Worldlie people doe the like for other ends.

3. And it is the more certain, that Religious people offend not in this kind, because whatsoeuer incommodities they suffer in Religion, others suffer as much in the world for other ends. For if Religious people watch al night, manie trades-men doe the like for gaine; if they suffer cold, and hungar, and trauel much on foot, how manie poore people be there, that are in farre greater want, both of relief and apparrel, and other necessaries, and yet liue? It is euident therefore, that it is not raśnes, and that we ought not to haue anie scruple of doing that for the seruice of God, which so manie doe for the loue of the world.

4. Wherefore this point being cleered, that we are not murderers of ourselues: If the case were so, that Religion did hasten our death, how glorious a thing were it to be of so noble a spirit, as to contemne al things, euen our owne life, for God? And if Religion did shorten our dayes, as Martyrdome doth take our life quite from vs, might we not iustly in this respect account Religion a kind of Martyrdome? For though we be not cut off suddenly, & with losse of bloud, that doth not alter the case; for we find that *S. Marcellus* is accounted a Martyr, though he lost no bloud, but dyed in a cage of wild beasts, by the continual stench of the place; and *S. Pontianus*, though banished into the Iland of *Sardinia* (which at that time was held to be a pestilent ayre) he pined away by little and little; and others, that either with labour of digging in mines, or with the weight of irons, in length of time, haue come to their end. If therefore Religion also should deale thus with vs, how much should we think ourselues beholding to it for making vs Martyrs, and bestowing so great a good vpon vs, as is Euerlasting glorie in heauen, and bringing vs so much the sooner vnto it, which of itself is generally accounted a great happines; and taking vs out of this mortal life, which is so barren of al goodnes, that in comparison of the life to come, it hath no good in it, but rather much euil? For we liue heer continually among so manie traps to catch vs, that we doe but prolong our miserie, and encrease affliction; & as long as it lasteth, we must of force abide the cruel assaults of our spiritual enemies, and stand to the continual hazard of the combat betwixt vs and the Diuel, the euent wherof is so vncertain, and withal of so mayne importance. What therefore, as I sayd, should we desire more then once to see an end of so manie euils, and such fearful dangers, and to end them in so blessed a manner as we may in Religion? For Religion, as we shewed in the first booke, affordeth extraordinarie helps in that doubtful passage; so that wheras the verie thought of it is dreadful to others, the thing itself to vs is sweet, secure, and to be desired, in regard we haue so long

Religion a kind of Martyrdome.

A happines to haue our life shortned.

before

before ſhaken off al things, which, as ſo manie fetters, are wont to hinder others, when the howre of parting cometh; and enioy moreouer at that inſtant manie comforts, and among the reſt the preſence and prayers of ſo manie of our Religious Brethren, as then flock about vs. Wherefore ſeing in this life al things are irkſome and tedious, and in the death of a Religious man al things ſo ſafe and happie, and death itſelf a beginning and entrance to a life more happie, though Religion ſhould haſten our death, what harme ſhould it doe vs? Rather if we were ſo wiſe, as we ſhould be, we ſhould euen for this reaſon deſire it.

5. But to ſay the truth, it is a falſe imputation, which people lay vpon Religion, when they ſay, it is a bloud-ſucker, and diſpatcheth men apace out of the way (for this is their meaning though they wil not ſay ſo in expreſſe termes) Rather, if we looke wel into it, it prolongeth a man's life, as we may ſee by ſo manie aged men, as Religious houſes are ful of, and we find vpon record in ancient Writers, euen among them, that haue lead moſt auſtere liues; as *S. Hierome*, who liued a hundred yeares; and *S. Antonie* a hundred and fiue; *S. Pachomius* was yet elder then *S. Antonie* by fiue yeares. *S. Arſenius* came to a hundred and twentie; and the ſame we reade of *S. Romualdus*, and he paſſed one hundred of them in Religion. *Caſſian* mentioneth manie of his owne knowledge, & writeth almoſt of none, that liued not til he was very old, naming particularly three, *Neſteros*, *Ioſeph*, *and Cheremon*; which laſt, he ſayth, he ſaw a very old man, of a hundred yeares, ſtooping, and venerable for his hoarie hayres. Now if a ſpare diet, or the continual meditation of heauenlie things, or anie paynes of this nature, would kil a man (as theſe men wil needs haue it) they being ſo wonderful temperate in their diet, and liuing ſo auſterely as they did, ſhould by conſequence haue been taken away in a very ſhort time. Men liue long in Religion.

6. But there is no ſuch thing, as both reaſon and experience ſheweth. They on the other ſide, that are rich among Secular people, and liue in al plentie and abundance of pleaſures and daynties, are almoſt continually troubled with crudities and fumes, and want of ſleepe; they are oftener and more dangerouſly ſick, and paſſe ſharper cures: and finally are ſubiect to farre more accidents, that haſten their death, both for the reaſons already mentioned, and for other cauſes, which their owne and others follie & raſhnes doth draw vpon them, by quarrels and the like; from al which a Religious life is free; Temperance and the conſtant order which they keepe in al things, drying-vp ſuperfluous humours, and ſo preſeruing health. In which reſpect *S. Iohn Chryſoſtom* ſticketh not to ſay, that Religious people, beſides the abundance of ſpiritual bleſſings, which they enioy, haue alſo better health of bodie, by reaſon of their temperance and ſpare diet. They are, ſayth he, as ſtrong as plough-men, and haue able bodies like beaſts; wheras rich people, and they that are dayntily brought vp, and commonly accounted happie in it, are, as if they were bred in a quag-mire, tender and effeminate, and more ſubiect to al kind of diſeaſes. And *S. Hierome* holds the like diſcourſe againſt *Iouinian*, and proueth out of the Axiomes of Phyſick, that a moderate diet preſerueth health; and addeth to this purpoſe: We read of ſome that being tormented with the gowte and diſeaſes in their ioynts, who by hauing their goods confiſcated, being brought to playne and hard fare, were cured; for it freed them of houſe-hold cares, and profuſe banckets, which deſtroy both bodie and ſoule. Secular people more ſubiect to ſuddain death. S. *Iohn Chryſoſt. l. 3. con. vitup. vit. mon.* S. *Hier. 2. cont. Iouin.*

ment of mind is a cause of health.

7. The constant peace and contentment of mind also, which Religious people enioy, is no smal meanes for them to liue long. For certainly as grief and passion doe waste a man's spirits, and put our life, as I may say, vpon the torture; so contentment of mind, redounding necessarily to the bodie, must also needs preserue it, and giue it much ease, by reason of the affinitie betwixt the soule and it. And though we grant, with *S. Hierome* in his discourse against *Iouinian*, that a Religious life, and such temperate courses, doe not make vs so strong as *Milo Crotoniates*, that is nothing to the purpose. For what necessitie is there, sayth he, that a wise man, and a Christian Philosopher should haue so much strength of bodie, as one that professeth himself a Wrastler, or a Souldier, seing if he had so much strength, it would but egg him on to sinne?

8. Wherefore to repeate in brief that which hath been sayd, there be two wayes to answer this obiection. First, by denying that a Religious course doth shorten our life, and on the other side maintayning that Sobrietie and continencie doth rather prolong it; Secondly, by confessing that it doth cut off part of our dayes, and taking it for the greater benefit, in regard that wheras al men, Kings, Princes, and al must necessarily dye, Religion makes this necessitie in a manner voluntarie, by going, as is were, to meete death half way, and encreasing thereby our merit and reward in the measure which I haue spoken, the few dayes which we spare of the miseries of this life being added to eternitie, and abundantly recompenced by the encrease of our euerlasting felicitie. Contrariewise, they that neglect a Religious vocation for feares of this nature, buy those few yeares, which they get, at a very deare rate; neglecting so great a good for feare of so smal a losse, and putting their eternal saluation to so great a hazard.

An answer to those, whom the loue of their bodie hinders from Religion.

CHAP. XXIX.

Our owne flesh a deadlie enemie of Religion.

AMONG al those that oppose Religious courses, we haue not a more dangerous and a more deadlie enemie, then our owne flesh. For naturally it loueth libertie and wantones, and is greedie of the pleasures of meate, drink, and sleep; it shunneth labour and paine; it is hateful to it, to be alone; it wil not fast; it flyeth pouertie & the incommodities therof as a grieuous crosse. So that whosoeuer wil hearken to his owne flesh, or cal it to counsel in this busines, shal be sure neuer to put his neck vnder the yoak of Christ, or neuer constantly to goe through with it. We must therefore at the verie first shut it out of doores, and haue no communication with it, but keepe it in order and awe, that it be alwayes submissiue and obedient, and presume not to command or giue directions. We must chastise our bodie (saith *S. Basil*)

S. Basil or. de.

and

and reſtraine the motions therof as the motions of a beaſt; and by the com- »
mand of Reaſon, as with a whip, ſtint whatſoeuer trouble it rayſeth in the »
mind, and not giue al the raines to our wil without regard of Reaſon, leaſt it »
be carried away headlong, and torne in peeces, as a coach-man with vnrulie *Pythagoras.*
horſes. Let vs imitate *Pythagoras*, who ſeing a pupil of his giue himſelf to »
good cheer and pamper his bodie, ſaid vnto him: Why doſt thou build thy- »
ſelf a priſon? And of *Plato* alſo it is reported, that vnderſtanding wel, how *Plato.*
manie hinderances came by the bodie to the mind, he choſe to place his »
Schoole of purpoſe at *Athens*, which was an vnholeſome ſeate, thereby to »
cut-of the ſuperfluous health of our bodie, as one would prune a vine. Thus ſaith »
S. Baſil.

2. And ſuppoſing (as I haue ſaid) that our fleſh is made to be ſubiect, two things are wel to be conſidered in this place, which doe neceſſarily follow. Firſt that it is not ſo hard a matter to keepe it in ſubiection, ſeing it is naturally borne to be ſubiect: Secondly if we doe not keepe it in ſubiection, our fault is the greater. For if a man be ouercome by one that is ſtronger and more powerful then himſelf, it is pittie, but yet he is to be pardoned; but the ſpirit hauing ſo much power and ſtrength to ouercome fleſh, and to maiſter the deſires therof, it is the greater ſhame if it doe not; ſpecially ſeing if it be not maiſter, it fals into a moſt miſerable ſeruitude, and is euerie foot apt to be drawne into al kind of vnworthie actions at the command of the fleſh.

It is a foule fault to yeald to flesh and bloud.

3. Wherefore if vpon the wholeſome deliberation of entring into Religion, our fleſh doe repine and draw back, as moſt commonly it wil, if it be afrayd of the hardnes of the dyet, and apparrel, and other auſterities incident to that kind of courſe, we muſt take the more courage and reſolution vpon vs, and arme ourſelues the ſtronger, againſt al the allurements and nicenes therof, and force it to doe that, be it neuer ſo much againſt it, which when it ſhal haue accommodated itſelf vnto, wil be ſo profitable both for fleſh and ſpirit, and imitate the courage of *S. Hilarion*, who in the flower of his youth, as *S. Hierome* writeth, hauing taken vpon him a hard courſe of life, when he found his bodie grudge at it, inſulted ouer it in this manner: Thou aſſe, I wil make that thou ſhalt not kick; I wil not feed thee with corne, but with ſtraw; I wil puniſh thee with hunger and thirſt, and lay heauie load vpon thee, and make thee think more of thy meate then of wantones.

The courage of S. Hilarion

S. Hierome in eius vita. »

6. But ſome bodie wil ſay with the Apoſtle: *No man euer hated his owne flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it.* And I grant, it is ſo; neither doe I deny, but that it is natural to loue our bodie. Nature teacheth vs to loue ourſelues, and whatſoeuer is part of ourſelues. Wherefore when we ſpeake of chaſtiſing and curbing our fleſh, it is vnderſtood, that we muſt doe it out of loue, and not out of hatred of it, but conſider withal, what is truly loue, and what truly hatred. If through ſickneſs a man's bodie be il at eaſe, and the Phyſician preſcribe a diet to take away the peccant humours of it, or order that it ſhal be let bloud, or that a limme ſhal be cut off, as ſometimes it hapneth, becauſe the partie is otherwiſe paſt cure; he that ſhal follow the aduiſe of the Phyſician, ſhal he be ſaid to hate his bodie, or to loue it? Rather he ſhal be ſaid to hate it, that doth not follow

Eph. 5. 29.

To chaſtize our flesh is to loue it.

aduiſe, becauſe he hurteth his bodie and encreaſeth his diſeaſe, and is oftimes cauſe of his owne death by it, which is the vtmoſt that hatred can arriue vnto. This therefore, which we doe in euerie ordinarie diſeaſe and diſtemper of our bodie, much more ought we to doe in greater and more dangerous diſeaſes of the ſame, which are the euil inclinations, which it hath. For the feauer of luſt, and whatſoeuer other exorbitant heate of deſire, is no leſſe a feauer, then when our bodie is out of order with diſtempered humours; rather it is the more dangerous feauer of the two, becauſe it pulleth vs in hazard of eternal death. Wherefore, if we be content to take a bitter potion, or apply ſome other diſtaſtful medecine to this euil affection alſo of our bodie, we cannot be ſaid to hate our bodie, but then moſt of al to loue it. To which purpoſe *S. Auguſtin* writeth thus: No man hates his bodie; wherefore, wheras ſome ſay they had rather haue no bodie, they are deceaued: for they hate not their bodie, but the corruption and burden of it; and that which they ayme at, is not to haue no bodie, but to haue a bodie intire and incorrupt. Now that ſome ſeeme to perſecute their bodie with labour and continencie, they that doe it as they ſhould, doe it not that they may not haue a bodie, but that they may haue it ſubdued, and pliable to al neceſſarie actions. For, becauſe after the Reſurrection, the bodie ſhal be in perfect quiet, altogeather ſubiect to the Spirit, and immortally flouriſh, our care in this life ought alſo to be, to change our carnal conuerſation for the better, that through diſordered motions it reſiſt not the ſpirit.

S. Aug. 1. doct. ch. c. 24.

5. We haue therefore out of *S. Auguſtin*, that, to chaſtize our fleſh, and bring it into ſubiection, is not to hate it, but truly and perfectly to loue it; not to goe about to kil it or deſtroy it, but to perfect it, and giue it a beginning of that beautie and glorie, which it expects, when it ſhal be *configured to the glorie of Chriſt*; which *S. Leo* alſo confirmes in theſe words: A man loueth himſelf ſo much the more, the more he doth not loue himſelf for the loue of God. But no man can ſpeake more plainly in this caſe, then our Sauiour: *He that loueth his ſoule, ſhal leeſe it; and he that hateth his ſoule in this world, keepeth it to life euerlaſting.* For by a man's ſoule in this place we muſt not vnderſtand the ſuperiour part, which we cal the Spirit; but that which depends vpon the fleſh and bloud, and is called life. This our Sauiour bids vs hate; and yet not properly hate it, but becauſe we muſt deale with it, as we doe with the things which we hate, that is, vſe it hardly and rigourouſly.

Philip. 3. 20.

S. Leo ſerm. vlt. de Paſſ.

Ioh. 12. 25.

Diuers conſiderations to ſtrengthen vs againſt our fleſh.

6. In this holie and wholeſome hatred therefore, we muſt ſettle and fortifye our ſoule and reaſon, that it be not drawne from the performance of that, which a Religious vocation requireth, by the allurements of the fleſh; and fortifye it, firſt, by the loue of God, which doth naturally reioyce in ſuffering hardnes for the ſeruice of God; we muſt fortifye it by the example of our Sauiour Chriſt, who ſuffered ſo much for vs, to the end we ſhould follow his foot-ſteps; we muſt fortifye it by calling to mind the Diuine comforts and heauenlie ſweetnes, which God of his goodnes is wont to mingle with the labours and difficulties of a Religious courſe, to ſeaſon the harſhnes of it. For he deales with vs, as we vſe to deale with little children, when we deſire they ſhould take a bitter potion, or ſome wormewood-drink; before and after they drinke it, we put ſome ſweet thing to it, to take away the bitternes of the potion: ſo God much more; becauſe the

the greatnes of the Diuine cõforts, drownes in a manner al the bitternes of whatsoeuer trouble of this life, and makes that we doe not feele it. The memorie alſo of the rewards of the life to come, and the hope of the recompence which we ſhal haue in Heauen, is a forcible encouragement to ouercome al trouble, which our fleſh may ſuggeſt; for if we once ſettle our thoughts vpon it, we cannot but concurre in opinion with *S. Bernard*, who likeneth al corporal auſteritie to ſeed; for when a husbandman caſts his ſeed into the ground, there is a kind of ſhew of loſſe in it; and yet we ſhould account him a foole, that for feare of that ſeeming loſſe, would not ſowe, becauſe the gaine, which he ſhal reape in the crop, is farre greater. *S. Bernard's* words are theſe: How doe carnal people ſay vnto vs: Your life is a cruel life, you ſpare not your owne fleſh? Let it be ſo; we ſpare not the ſeed. How could we ſpare it better? Is it not better for it to be renewed and multiplyed in the field, then putrifyed in the barne? doe you ſpare your fleſh in this manner? Be it ſo, that we be cruel for a while in not ſparing it; certainly you are more cruel. For euen at this time our fleſh reſteth in hope. *S. Ber. in pſ. qui hab. ſer. 10.*

7. Finally the innumerable exãples of them that we know haue lead moſt auſtere liues, muſt needs be a great encouragement vnto vs, and perhaps the greateſt that we can think of, when we repreſent vnto ourſelues a *S. Antonie*, *S. Hilarion*, the two *Macaries*, *S. Pachomius*, *S. Romualdus*, *S. Bernard*, *S. Francis* and infinit others, that haue been rare for al kind of ſanctitie, and particularly in dealing rigorouſly with their bodies. And perhaps in truth, or at leaſt if we compare their manner of proceeding, with that which is ordinarie amongſt others, we muſt confeſſe they were too ſeuere, and went beyond the moderation, which a bodie would think were reaſon. But God would haue it ſo in them, and gaue them that abundant meaſure of grace and ſtrength, not that others ſhould ſtriue to be as rigorous in that kind as they, and compare with them in it (for that were abſurd temeritie) but to the end we ſhould the more willingly and more cheerfully apply ourſelues to that meaſure and proportion, which is now vſed in Religious Orders, and not think anie thing intollerable, ſeing they went through with farre greater auſterities. What therefore need we feare in a way, which, we ſee, hath been troden by ſo manie Saints before vs; in a wãy where we meete with ſuch abundance of heaueniie comforts, as I haue diſcourſed of in ſo manie Chapters before; in a way, where whatſoeuer can be bitter, being caſt into ſuch a ſea of ſweetnes, muſt needs be exceeding ſweet? *pſ 15 9.* Examples of Saints a great encouragement.

8. But al this, which we haue ſaid, belongs to the cure of the mind, and the ſtrengthning of it. Is there no medecine for the fleſh itſelf? It is hard to find anie; becauſe our fleſh is neither capable of aduice, nor apt to taſt the ſweetnes of vertue, nor to foreſee the hope of that which is to come; ſo that properly that which it doth, it muſt doe vpon command, and be compelled vnto it, as a beaſt with the ſpurre, & ſwitch, & curbe, & ſometimes perhaps with good baſtonados, & by vſe and cuſtome be brought to that, which is reaſon, and made leſſe ſhy of good order and diſcipline. And yet not to leaue it wholy deſtitute, but by reaſon alſo to perſwade it (as much as it is capable) to be content to take paines, and liue continent, we may lay before it that daintie exhortation, in which *S. Bernard* demonſtrates, that a Religious and vertuous courſe of life, is profitable for the fleſh itſelf. Theſe are his words: Doe not, ô bodie, doe not foreſtal the time. For wel mayſt thou hinder the ſaluation of thy ſoule, but An exhortation to our flesh. *S. Bern. ſer. 6. in Adu. Dom.*

„ canſt not worke thine owne. Al things haue their time. Let the Soule now
„ labour for itſelf; or rather labour thou with it; becauſe if thou ſuffer with it,
„ thou ſhalt raigne with it. So much as thou hindreſt the reparation of it, ſo
„ much thou hindreſt thine owne; becauſe thou canſt not be repayred, til in
„ it God ſee his image reformed. Thou haſt a noble gueſt, ô Fleſh; a noble one
„ indeed; and al thy welfare dependeth of the welfare of that gueſt; yeald
„ due reſpect to ſo great a gueſt. Thou dwelleſt in thine owne country, but thy
„ ſoule lodgeth with thee as a pilgrim, and a perſon exiled. I beſeechthee,
„ what country-fellow, if a Noble-man or a man of great power would lodge
„ with him, would not willingly lodge himſelf in ſome corner of his houſe, or
„ vnder the ſtayers, or in the verie aſhes, and yeald the more honourable place
„ to his gueſt, as it is fitting he ſhould? Doe thou therefore the like; regard not
„ thine iniuries or troubles, ſo that thy gueſt may haue honourable entertainement
„ with thee. And that thou maiſt not peraduenture ſlight and contemne this thy
„ gueſt, becauſe he looked like a pilgrim and ſtranger, think carefully with thy
„ ſelf, what benefit the preſence of this gueſt doth bring thee. It is he that giueth
„ ſight to thy eyes, hearing to thy eares, ſound to thy tongue, taſt to thy palate,
„ and motion to al thy members. If there be anie life, anie ſenſe, anie beautie in
„ thee, acknowledge it as a fauour of thy gueſt. Finally his parting wil ſhew,
„ what his preſence yealded; for ſo ſoone as the ſoule is departed, the tongue lyeth
„ ſtil, the eyes ſee nothing at al, the eares are deafe, the bodie growes ſtif, the face
„ growes wanne; and after a ſhort time al wil be a ſtincking rotten carkaſſe, and al
„ the beautie of it turned into corruption. Why therefore for euerie ſmal tempo-
„ ral delight doſt thou diſguſt and hurt this gueſt, ſeing but for him thou couldſt
„ not ſo much as feele anie delight? Moreouer if being as yet exiled and an out-caſt
„ from the face of God, by reaſon of the falling-out of God and him, he be ſo bene-
„ ficial to thee, what wil he be when he ſhal be reconciled? Doe not, ô bodie, doe
„ not hinder that reconciliation; for thy ſelf mayſt come to great glorie by it. Offer
„ thy ſelf patiently, yea willingly to al; let nothing paſſe which may be a further-
„ rance to this reconciliation. O if thou couldſt taſt this ſweetnes, and value this
„ glorie! The Lord of hoaſts himſelf, the Lord of vertues, the King of glorie him-
„ ſelf wil come downe to reforme our bodies, to configure them to the bodie of his
„ glorie. How great glorie wil that be, how vnſpeakable an exultation, when the
„ Creatour of al, who came humble before and hidden, to iuſtifye ſoules, wil come
„ loftie and manifeſt to glorifye thee (ô miſerable fleſh) not now in infirmitie, but
„ in his glorie and Maieſtie? How long therefore doth this miſerable, fooliſh blind,
„ ſenſeles, and truly mad fleſh ſeeke after tranſitorie and periſhable comforts, yea
„ certainly diſcomforts, if it happen to be put by, and iudged vnworthie of this glo-
„ rie, and moreouer eternally tormented with vnſpeakable torments? Al this is of
„ *S. Bernard.*

of

Of them, whom the loue of the world hindreth from Religion.

CHAP. XXX.

NO doubt but the comelines and beautie of Religion is ſo great, that were it not, that people are as it were held in irons by the flatterie of the world, and the falſe ſhewes which it makes of deceiptful pleaſures, it were able to inuite and bring al men to embrace it. For we know there are manie, and euer haue been, that being called of God, and acknowledging themſelues to be ſo, haue made offers to follow him; and yet held back by the commodities and pleaſures of the world, haue not had the hart to diſengage themſelues, and fly out of it, but ſtil haue remayned in their former fetters entangled. What remedie, but to ſhew them plainly before their eyes, what the world is wherin they liue, that is, what miſchief lyes hidden in it vnder this ſhaddow of pleaſure, which they are ſo loath to parte with? Six kinds of miſchief we may reckon, reducing them to theſe heads: Deceipt, Shortnes, Miſerie, Danger of offending God, Blindnes, Sinne. Six euils raigne in the world.

2. Firſt therefore what is more ful of deceipt, and a more open lye, then the world? making ſo manie faire promiſes, and performing nothing; and when it makes a ſhew of performing, coming farre ſhort of what it promiſed, it telles vs, that the commodities which it offers, are ſpecial good, ful of contentment and happines, where indeed there is no true contentment, no ſolid ioy or pleaſure to be had in them. And we ſhal not need to ſtand alleadging reaſons to proue it, we ſee it with our eyes. For how manie doe dayly waite at Court, and ſpend yeare after yeare in attendance, hoping for preferment, and promiſing themſelues by certain coniectures and poſſibilities, that infallibly now they ſhal get it, and yet after ſo manie reuolutions they neither obtaine the ſuite they pretended, nor anie other reward or commoditie, but muſt giue it ouer with loſſe, dammages, and vtter ruine. Amongſt them that labour to raiſe themſelues, and their Families by traffick and marchandize, few come to that which they deſire, farre more grow banck-rout, by miſchances at ſea or otherwiſe. And to grant, that the ambitious come to preferment, and the couetous to the wealth which they aimed at; neither of them certainly doe euer arriue to that contentment of mind and pleaſure in this life, for which they ſo much coueted theſe temporal things. Deceipt.

3. *Rebecca* deſired to haue a child, and what did ſhe not to compaſſe her deſire? what meanes did ſhe leaue vneſſayed? And yet after ſhe was with child, and felt her children fighting in her womb, O, ſaid ſhe, if it had been to be thus with me, what need was there to conceaue? *Gen. 15.*

And manie there be, that dayly ſing the ſame ſong, and falling into infinit trouble by the children, which perhaps they begged earneſtly of God, wiſh they had neuer had them. And that which they doe in their children, others doe in other things; and being bitten by the incommodities of them, they loathe them, and hate them as much, as before they were hot in purſuing them. And no wonder; as long as they beheld them afarre-of, they ſeemed to be ful of ſweetnes and pleaſure; but when they come to handle them, then the vineger and gal appeares, which was in them. Which *S. Iohn Chriſoſtome* layes open before vs with his wonted eloquence in theſe words: Manie haue been deſirous of a wife; and the ſelf-ſame day that they haue had her, they haue with open mouth called them happie, that neuer married. And if they that haue been married, haue accounted it a troubleſome kind of life, what ſhal we ſay of them, that ſwallowed-vp in the gulfes of whoredome, and more ſlaues then the baſeſt ſlaue that is, haue conſumed themſelues to nothing in thoſe delights, and brought their bodies into diſeaſes without number? But ſome bodie wil ſay, that Glorie is pleaſant. Rather nothing is bitterer, then that kind of ſeruitude. For a man that is ambitious of glorie, is more ſlaue, then anie ſlaue, begging fauour of euerie bodie; but he that treadeth it vnder foot, is aboue al. But it is a louelie thing to haue money. Rather I haue often ſhewed, that they, that are quit of money, and haue nothing, liue in farre greater abundance and quiet. It is therefore more delightful not to be rich, then to be rich; not to haue a wife, then to be married; to be free from vaine honour, then to be catching after the glorie, which is but wind, and to ſhunne al pleaſures, then to ſwimme in them. Thus ſaith *S. Iohn Chryſoſtome.*

S. Iohn Chryſoſt. ho. 49. ad pop.

Worldlie pleaſures not durable.

4. A ſecond euil of the world, is the ſhortnes of al things in it. For in reaſon we muſt needs ſee, that no worldlie felicitie can be longer then a man's life is, that enioyeth it. And how ſhort is euerie bodies life by nature? how much ſhorter in manie, by vnexpected chances? We know there haue been manie Popes, that haue not held that Sea a yeare to an end; manie haue been preferred to Biſhopricks, and Cardinalſhips, and Princelie dignities, that haue been cut off in a very ſhort time, before they haue been almoſt inueſted. And though people ſhould liue a long time in them, and ſee neuer ſo manie yeares, yet at laſt al muſt come to an end; and when that cometh, al that which is paſt, being gone, and come to nothing, we diſcouer plainly, that that which ſeemed before ſo long, was but a moment, ſpecially if we compare it with the Eternitie, which followeth; which ſeemeth to be the meaning of thoſe words of *Eccleſiaſtes*: If a man haue liued manie yeares, and been iocund in them, he muſt remember the dark time, and the il dayes; which when they ſhal come, the things which are paſt, wil be conuinced of vanitie. And the Prophet *Eſay* calleth al that felicitie a *Dreame*; becauſe there is no truth, no ſolidities, no permanencie in it, but al is a meere toy; as (ſayth the Prophet) one that is hungrie, dreameth, and eateth; and when he awaketh, his ſoule is emptie; and as one that is thirſtie, dreameth, and drinketh; and after he awaketh, he thirſteth ſtil, and is weatie.

Eccleſ. 11. 8.

Eſay 29. 8.

The world is ful of miſerie.

5. And yet if in this ſhort felicitie, there were anie parcel of time, though neuer ſo ſhort, in which a man might ſay, he had his ful contentment, a man might ſeeme to haue ſome reaſon to deſire it; but it is nothing ſo. For heer comes the

third

third miſchief, that the world is ſo ful of miſerie and misfortunes, that the pleaſures of it are like a litle honie mingled with a great deale of gal and bitternes, what with the diſeaſes of the bodie, and with the vnfortunate chances of a man's eſtate, and houſehold-buſines, what with quarrels and miſchances without number. One ſuffers in his honour, another in his goods, a third in his wife, or children, or kindred; another comes by a blow in other things, which no wiſedome, or vertue, or honeſtie can preuent or hinder. So that we muſt neceſſarily acknowledge *S. Gregorie's* words to be true. The world were to be deſpiſed, though it ſhould flatter vs, though with proſperous things it ſhould inſinuate itſelf into vs; but ſeing it is loaded with ſo manie ſtripes, ouertoyled with ſo much aduerſitie, and doubleth vpon vs dayly ſo manie ſorrowes, what els doth it cry vnto vs, but that it is not to be loued? *S. Greg. 1. Dial. c. vlt.*

6. A fourth euil, is the continual danger of offending God, & the manie temptations aſſaulting vs on euerie ſide, of which I haue ſpoken ſufficiently already els-where. For in a manner there be as manie ſeueral occaſions of ſinne in the world, as there be ſeueral things in the world, al of them clawing and inflaming concupiſcence, by the beautie or pleaſure, which is in them. Our ſenſes are as ſo manie gates and paſſages to deſtruction; ſome things take aduantage againſt vs by our eyes, others by our eares, others by our taſt, others by other faculties of our ſoule, that we may truly ſay with the Pſalme: *It ſhal rayne ſnares vpon ſinners.* For theſe *Snares* hang as thick vpon the things of this world, as drops fal in a ſhower of raine ſome in pouertie, ſome in riches, ſome in friendſhip, ſome in diſtaſt with others, ſome in companie, ſome in ſolitarines, ſome in proſperitie, ſome in aduerſitie, ſome in honour, and ſome in diſgrace. Danger of offending God. *Pſ. 10. 6.*

7. And a greater miſerie vpon the neck of this; that people ordinarily are ſo blind in the world, that they ſee not, and conſequently are leſſe able to ſhunne theſe ſnares, walking as it were in darknes. Is it not great blindnes to liue as people vſually liue? To regard men more then God; to be more obſeruant of the lawes and cuſtomes of the world, then of the law of God; to be ſo very ſollicitous for that, which concernes the bodie, and ſo careleſſe of their ſoule, as if they had none at al; finally to take ſo much paines for temporal and periſhable things, and not to be willing to moue ſo much as a fingar for that which is eternal; and knowing ſo certainly as they doe, that they ſhal dye, to diſcourſe and talke and proiect, as if they were alwayes to liue. The blindnes of worldlie people.

8. What wonder is it then, if through the multitude of theſe ſnares, and this hideous darknes, and blind miſt, which hangs before their eyes, they fal into the laſt and greateſt of al other euils, an infinit companie of ſinnes and haynous offences, and bring al things to confuſion? For we ſee, that in the world al in a manner liue like beaſts; their paſſions leade them by the noſe, whither they liſt; they iuſtle and runne at one another, as beaſts with their hornes and heeles, and are readie to eate vp one another through hatred and diſpleaſure. The good are neglected, the rich only and powerful, honoured; the poore, oppreſſed; truth, ſanctitie, ſinceritie in a manner exiled; deceipt, diſſembling, flatterie, vanitie beare ſway; and, that which is the ſource of al other euils, a moſt deſperate forgetfulnes of God, and their owne ſoules ſaluation. This is the face of the world, which if anie man wil behold and view with an vnpartial eye, he wil be ſo farre from being taken with it, that I perſwade myſelf, he wil vtterly deteſt it, and Infinit offences in the world.

think himself neuer at quiet til he haue gotten out of it, as out of a stincking prison and euer-winding labyrinth of errour; which is that which the Prophet *Hieremie* wished: Who wil giue me in the wildernes an Inne of trauellers, that I may forsake my people, and depart from them, because al are adulterers, a companie of transgressours?

Hier. 9. 2.

Some saued in the world.

9. But some bodie wil say: Are al wicked that liue in the world? and is there no hope of their saluation? God forbid; some there be amongst Secular people, whom God doth preserue from bowing their knee to *Baal*; but they are few in compatison of others; and they that are, goe on but slowly, and with much difficultie, and easily get a slip, and fal back againe. Now when we aduise vpon anie thing, we alwayes regard that, which most commonly hapneth, and that which is natural to the thing, which we aduise vpon, and not that which hapneth to one or two. The nature of fire is to burne, & of water to drowne, whosoeuer goes into it: and yet the three Children had no harme in the fire, nor *S. Peter* in the Sea; and manie others haue escaped both without hurt. And is there notwithstanding anie man so mad, as to cast himself wilfully into the sea, or into the fire, because they escaped? For, as I sayd, we must regard the nature of the thing, not that which falleth out sometimes contrarie to the ordinarie course, by the particular prouidence of God. And the same we may say of the world. For seing the natural disposition of it is so euidently deceiptful and malicious, and the pestilent infection of Sinne so generally spred al ouer it, that it is hard to auoyd it, and few escape it; seing also there be so few in it, that find the narrow way to saluation, though some doe, in al reason it is to be shunned, as I sayd of fire and water.

That which hapneth to most, is to be regarded most.

10. For who can warrant thee, that thou shalt be one of those few? And what follie is it, to put a busines of so great cõsequence as thy eternal saluation or damnation in so great a hazard? or to imagine thyself so fortunate, that the poyson of the world shal haue no force vpon thee alone, though thou cõfesse, it generally infecteth others? This were madnes indeed, & a signe of litle care of saluatiõ, specially beholding before our eyes so manie, that suffer ship-wrack; and holie Scripture so seuerely thundreth in our eares so manie feareful sayings, and amongst the rest that of *S. Iames*: *Adulterers, doe you not know, that the friendship of this world is enemie to God? Whosoeuer therefore wil be a friend of this world, is made an enemie to God.*

Iac. 4. 4.

Against the feare, which some haue, that they shal neuer be able to shake off their euil customes.

CHAP. XXXI.

THere be others, whom neither the loue of the world, nor of their owne flesh doth hinder from Religion, because it is too open, & too palpable a temptatiõ to yeald vnto: But they are held back by another more suttle deuise & feare, least the euil habits which they haue gotten in the world, wil be stil hanging vpon them, stil confronting them; and haue not so much confidence as to hope to roote them out, because by long custome they are so deepely setled and ingrafted in them; & vnlesse they doe roote them out, they think they shal not be at peace and quiet, nor be able to perseuer in a course so contrarie

trarie to their wonted ſtrayne.

2. But they that buzze vpon theſe thoughts, firſt, in my opinion, feare where there is no feare; for there is no reaſon at al, why they ſhould doubt, but that in Religion they ſhal ouercome al theſe euil cuſtomes whatſoeuer they be; and ſecondly, I doe not wel vnderſtand the ground & drift of their diſcourſe in it. For if they conceaue, that a bodie muſt continue to liue a ſecular life, and that it is better to doe ſo, becauſe they think they ſhal neuer ſhake off their euil habits; me thinks it fares with them, as if a man finding himſelf in a long iourney, quite out of his way, ſhould chooſe to goe on in his errour, rather then go back againe, becauſe of the labour & difficultie which he apprehēds in it; wheras he knoweth moſt certainly, that the farther he goes on, the farther he goes out of his way, & conſequently ſhal either neuer come into the right way againe, or, if he reſolue euer to come into it, muſt take much more paynes and labour to effect it; for ſo theſe kind of people wil either be continually heaping one vice on the back of another, *deſpairing* (as the Apoſtle ſpeaketh) *of themſelues*, or, if at anie time they think of reforming themſelues, and returning into the way of vertue, it wil be the harder for them to compaſſe it, the longer they continue their wonted cuſtomes. A feare without ground. *Eph.* 4. 18.

3. But the principal meanes to breake the neck of this temptation, wil be to ſhew euidently, what a groſſe errour they are in, that think it ſo impoſſible a thing to ouercome their euil cuſtomes, wheras indeed in Religion they may be eaſily ouercome; which we ſhal quickly demonſtrate, if we conſider the nature of the cuſtomes themſelues, & the grace of God. And from the nature of the euil cuſtomes I argue thus: Euil cuſtomes are habits; and the nature of al habits is, that as they are gotten by vſe and often acts; ſo if we ceaſe from theſe acts, by litle and litle the habits themſelues vaniſh away and periſh. As for example; if a man be skilful in muſick or in picture-drawing, or if he write a faire hand, or haue anie other art or ſcience, as he got it by vſe and practiſe and often endeauour, ſo if he neuer exerciſe it, or, which is more, if he practiſe it but ſeldome and careleſly, it decayes of itſelf, and at laſt he quite looſeth it. And no doubt but we ſhal find the like in al euil diſpoſitions of the mind alſo; as if a man be cholerick, or intemperate in his diet, or other pleaſures, and ceaſe from the acts of theſe vices, as before they grew & waxed ſtronger and ſtronger by being fed with daylie offences, ſo if we take away their former allowance, they muſt needs grow weak, & leſſen in vs. Al habits periſh by ceſſation from the act.

4. Beſides that, as thoſe euil diſpoſitions were bred by euil actiōs, ſo the practiſe of vertue breeds cōtrarie habits of vertue; as when a Religious man doth not only ceaſe from acts of pride and vanitie, but practiſeth humilitie, & embraceth al occaſions of contempt of himſelf from his verie hart; when in ſteed of the loue of worldlie wealth, & his wonted pleaſures he begins to loue the hardnes of pouertie and the like, in al which a Religious ſtate doth incōparably help him, miniſtring daylie occaſions of theſe & other vertues, & in a manner forcing them vpon him. And by contrarie practiſe.

5. And what need I be long? Not only the endeauour & application of a man's mind is thus effectual, but the verie ſight of ſo manie good men as are in Religion, & the daylie conuerſing with them, is able of itſelf to alter a man, be he neuer ſo rude and vnciuil, and by litle and litle to inſtil goodnes into him. If we take a beaſt out of the woods or forreſts, and bring him vp at hand, he leeſeth after a while his wildnes, and becomes as tame and gentle as a whelp. Sight and conuerſation with good people, alter a man

And this we see effected not only in deere, and wild goates, which are naturally timorous, but in lions and beares, which are otherwise of themselues fierce and cruel; and yet these beasts can adde nothing inwardly of themselues, nor vse anie endeauour to ouercome their nature, but the bare custome of being among men doth silently worke vpon them, and by degrees giue them another nature and fashion, and make them tame. What effect therefore must the self-same needs haue in men, who haue iudgement moreouer and vnderstanding, & can inwardly apply themselues, and labour their owne reformation and polishing.

The force of the grace of God.

6. And if nature, and industrie, and application be thus forcible, what shal we say of the Grace of God? It must certainly needs be much more powerful and more effectual, and in a short time worke a perfect cure vpon whatsoeuer in vs. For, as the Wise-man sayth: *It is easie in the eyes of God, suddenly to make a poore man rich.* And by his holie Prophets he often promiseth, that he wil help & assist vs forcibly in this kind; as when in *Esay* he saith: *Feare not, because I am with thee; decline not, because I am thy God; I haue strengthned thee, and holpen thee, and receiued thee in the hand of my Iust.* And then giuing vs to vnderstand, that we haue no cause to doubt of the victorie, he addeth: *Behold, they shal be confounded, and ashamed al that fight against thee; they shal be, as if they were not; and the men shal perish, that contrad & thee. Thou shalt seeke them, and thou shalt not find them; men that are rebellious against thee, and they shal be as if they were not.* Who be these, *that are rebellious against vs*, but euil customes, and sinful motions of the mind, which wil not hearken to Reason, and obey it? such as we cannot haue at that command, but that sometimes they wil be stirring against our wil. These habits therefore & inclinations remaine in vs, *as if they were not*; that is, they remaine in vs not to our destruction, but for exercise; to put life into vs, not to take away our life from vs; finally as occasions of a greater crowne, not as snares to our ruine. Which is the reason, why *S. Paul* tearmeth the contradiction of his flesh, not a sword, or a lance, but a prick; because a prick cannot runne through a man to wound him, but only prick him, and serues meerly to awake vs, and stirre vs vp to runne, & be more quick and careful in the performance of vertuous actions. This is the effect, which the Grace of God works in vs: It reformeth our vnderstãding, our wil, our sensual appetite, and al the powers of our soule, and putteth it, in a miraculous manner, in another kind of hue, which is that *New creature*, of which the Apostle so often speaketh.

Esay 41. 10.

2. *Cor.* 12. 7.

Proued by experiẽce.

7. And we should hardly beleeue, that it were possible there should be such a sudden alteration in the seruants of God, but that we find it by experience in ourselues, and see it with our verie eyes in others, and haue for it the testimonie of al such men, that haue written of spiritual things and Religious courses. *Cassian* applieth those words of the Psalme (*Wonderful are thy works, and my soule shal know them exceedingly*) principally to the works, which God, as he saith, ordereth by his Saints of his daylie operation. For who, sayth he, wil not wonder at the works of God in himself, when he seeth the admirable rauening of his bellie, and the costlie and pernicious lauishnes of gluttonie suppressed, and brought to take a litle coorse fare, seldome, and against his wil? Who can but be astonished at the works of God, when he feeles the fire of lust so cooled, that he finds scarce the least motion in his bodie? wheras before, he esteemed it altogeather natural, & in a manner vnquenchable. How can he but tremble at the power of God, when

Psal. 138. 14.

Cass. Coll. 12 c. 2.

when he sees people of a rough and firie disposition, that were apt to be put into raging choler by the friendliest seruice a man could doe them, to arriue to such mildnes, that they are not only not moued at al with iniuries, but reioyce in them with a noble courage, when they are offered? Who certainly can choose but admire the works of God, and with great affection cry out: *Because I haue knowne, that great is our Lord*; seing himself, or another, from being extremely couetous, become liberal; from being prodigal, become sparing; from prowde, humble; from being nice and effeminate, austere and careless, and voluntarily to embrace and reioyce in pouertie, and want, and penurie of things present? These are certainly wonderous works of God, which particularly the soule of the Prophet, & of such as are like to him, acknowledgeth with admiration by the light of extraordinarie contemplation. These are wonders which he placeth vpon the earth; which the same Prophet considering, calleth al people to admire them, saying: *Come and see the works of God, which he hath placed wonders vpon the earth, taking away warres to the end of the earth; he wil bruse the bowes, and breake the weapons in peeces, and burne the targets with fire.* For what wonder can be greater, then in a moment of time to make Apostles, of couetous Publicans; patient preachers of the Ghospel, of cruel persecutours? Insomuch that with the shedding of their owne bloud, they haue dilated that Faith, which before they persecuted. These are the works of God, which the Sonne professeth, that he dayly worketh with his Father, saying: *My father to this day worketh, and I doe worke.* Al this is *Cassian's* discourse. *Psa.* 135. 4. *Psa.* 45. 9. *Ioh* 5. 17.

8. *S. Bernard* goeth farther, and sayth, that a soule by reason of this grace of God, is in a manner omnipotent, though not by the strength which it hath of itself, but of God. And interpreteth to this effect those words of the Canticles: *Who is this that ascendeth from the desert, flowing in delights, leaning vpon her beloued?* Truly (sayth *S. Bernard*) leaning in this manner, she wil grow strong against herself, and more powerful then herself wil bring al to reason; anger, feare, desire, and ioy; and gouerne like a good coach-man the charriot of her soule, and bring into captiuitie al carnal affection, and the inclinations of the flesh, to the beck of reason, in seruice of vertue. How possible are al these things to her that leanes vpon him, who can do al things? what a confident speach is it? *I can do al in him, that strengthneth me?* Nothing doth make the omnipotencie of the Word more euident, then that he maketh al omnipotent, that confide in him: So a soule, if it presume not of itself, if it be strengthned by the word, wil easily haue ful command ouer itself, that al iniustice shal haue no command ouer it. So, I say, him that leaneth vpon the Word, him that is cloathed with vertue from aboue, no force, no fraud, no allurement can pul downe from his standing, nor bring in subiection from the command, which he hath. If therefore this be true, which *S. Bernard* sayth, how can we feare, least our crooked inclinations should be more kept downe with the weight of them, then relieued by the sweetnes of his grace? For really it concernes no man so much as it concernes God, to cure the wounds and sores of a soule, that hath put itself wholy into his hands to be cured, and to thrust out old customes with new, as we beate out one nayle with another; as *S. Bernard* also speaketh. A soule omnipotent by the grace of God. *Cant.* 8. 5. *S. Ber. ser.* 85. *in Cant.* *Psa.* 4. 13. *S. Ber. ser.* 20. *in Cant.*

9. Let vs heare, what *S. Augustin* sayth in this busines; for his testimonie is of great weight, as deliuering for the common good that, which himself experienced in the change, which he made of the course of his life. These are his words:

S. Aug. 8. Conf. ca. 11. Meere toyes and vanities of vanities held me back, my ancient houſe-wiues, and ſhooke me by the coat of my fleſh, and ſecretly mutteted: doeſt thou leaue vs? and » from this inſtant ſhal we not be with thee anie more for euer? and from this inſtant » muſt it not be lawful for thee to doe this and that anie more for euer? And a litle » after: They held me back while I yet was ſlow in breaking away, and ridding » my ſelf of them, and paſſing thither whither I was called, my violent cuſtome ſayd » vnto me: Doſt thou think thou canſt be without theſe?

10. And thus it paſſed with him in that ſtrife and great quarrel of fleſh & ſpirit, as he calleth it; but when he had once broken priſon and ſhaken-of the bands in which he was intangled, and giuen himſelf ſo wholy to the ſeruice of God, that he neither looked after wife, nor anie worldlie hopes, how was it with him then, and what did he find in himſelf? How ſweet, ſayth he, was it preſently vnto me, to want the ſweetnes of thoſe toyes? Now it was a comfort to forſake that, which » before I was afrayd to looſe. For thou, ô true and ſoueraigne Sweetnes, didſt caſt » them out of doores before me, and entredſt thyſelf in lieu of them, ſweeter then » anie pleaſure, but not to fleſh and bloud; cleerer then any light, more priuate » then anie ſecret, more loftie then anie preferment; but not to them that are loftie » in themſelues.

Aug. lib. 9. c. 1.

11. We haue S. *Cyprian* alſo, that can witnes the ſame out of his owne knowledge, ſetting downe the two ſeueral ſtates of his mind in theſe words: While I » lay in darknes, and in the dead of the night, while in the ſea of this wauering » world I was tottering, and perplexed, and floating with wandring ſteps, that » which the Diuine commiſeration promiſed me for my welfare, ſeemed hard and » harſh vnto me, as the world went with me then, how a man could be borne » againe, and alter his mind and ſoule, the frame of his bodie remayning as before. » How is it poſſible (ſaid I) to make ſuch a change, and ſo vpon the ſuddain and ſo » ſpeedily to ſhake-of that, which being bred in vs, is growne hard by the ſetling » of that natural matter, or by long vſe made a cuſtome, through ancientnes of age » and time? Theſe things haue taken too deepe roote in vs. When ſhal he learne fru- » galitie, that hath been accuſtomed to long ſuppers and curious banckets? or he » that hath ſhined in his ſilkes, and been glorious in his rich garments and cloth-of- » gold and purple, when ſhal he ſtoope to plaine and ordinarie apparrel? He that hath » been compaſſed with troupes of clients, and countenanced with a long trayne of » officious followers, wil think it a torment to be alone. It cannot be otherwiſe, but » that cuſtome of drinking wine wil be alwayes calling vpon a man with tough » perſwaſions; pride wil puff him vp; wrath wil ſet him on fire; couetouſnes wil » diſturbe him; cruelty wil egg him forward; ambition wil flatter him; luſt wil caſt » him headlong. This diſcourſe I held often with myſelf. For as I was entangled » with diuers errours of my former life, which I did beleeue was impoſſible to » ſhake-of; ſo I yealded to the vices, which did then cleaue vnto me, and out of » deſpayre of being better, I fauoured my euils, as mine owne, and borne in my owne » houſe. But when by help of the Regenerating water the fowlnes of my former life » was waſhed away, and the light from aboue ſhined vpon my pure and ſanctifyed » breaſt, when receauing from heauen, the ſecond natiuitie had repayred me into a » new man; preſently, after a ſtrange manner, things which were doubtful, appea- » red certain; that which was ſhut-vp from me, was layd open; dark things became » lightſome; that which was hard, was eaſie; & that poſſible, which before ſeemed

S. Cypr. lib. 2. Ep. 2.

impoſſible

impossible to be performed. Al this, and much more is out of *S. Cyprian*; which euerie Religious man may see and acknowledge in himself. For that, which *Baptisme* wrought in him; *Religion* worketh in vs, dying to the world and our former conuersation, and being new-borne in it to God and a spiritual life. And Religion is so much the more able to worke this alteration in vs, because it doth both help vs manie wayes to encrease the inward grace, which we receaue in Baptisme, and furnisheth vs besides with manie outward meanes and instruments speedily and easily to, to attayne to al perfection.

An answer to them that feare, that they shal not perseuer in Religion.

CHAP. XXXII.

HAuing shut-out this feare, which tooke occasion of the corruption of our former life, it wil not be hard to cure another feare not vnlike vnto it, and most commonly caused by it, to wit, least our resolution howsoeuer it be feruent in the beginning, in time growing cold, we looke back, and be swallowed vp againe in the world. This feare riseth first by consideration of our owne infirmitie, man by nature being wonderful weake, specially when he meetes with hard encounters; and then the lamentable ends of those, that began to runne wel, & in the midst of their course haue sunck and fallen back, worke forcibly vpon our apprehension; insomuch that some think it wisdome, to learne by others perils, and to looke to themselues betimes. But *S. Gregorie* doth excellently discouer this kind of temptation and deceit of the Enemie, and conuinceth it to be no other, in these words: Oftimes we see manie that desire the life of holie conuersation, but haue not the power to vndertake it, because they feare suddain chances and disasters that may befal them, who while like prouident men they take thought to preuent vncertain euils, are vnprouidently detayned in the bonds of their offences. For they lay manie things before their eyes, which if they happen in their conuersation, they feare they shal neuer be able to subsist. Of whom *Salomon* sayth wel: *The way of lazie people, is as hedges of thornes*; For while they loue the way of God, their fearful suspicions meeting with them, prick them as thornes of the hedges that are in their way. This is *S. Gregorie's* opinion of this busines. And in my iudgement, that saying of *Iob* may be fitly applied vnto them: *They that feare the white frost, snow shal fal vpon them.* For while they giue way to feare of vncertain dangers to come, they remaine for the present in great and most certain euils.

The causes of this feare.

S. Greg. 30. Mor. c. 12.

Pro. 15. 19.

Iob. 6. 16.

2. But to lay open the roote of this distrust, let vs consider, what may be the causes of so foule a breach betwixt God and vs, after we haue plighted our troth and bound ourselues by Vow vnto him. There can be no other ground of it, but if either God depart from vs, or we frō God, that is, if either God forsake vs, & withdraw his holie spirit frō vs, or we suffer ourselues to be ouercome with tediousnes, or labour, or inconstancie, & so forsake him. As for the first, it cannot enter into anie man's thought to think, that the infinit goodnes of God wil at anie time take

God wil not forsake vs.

from vs the guifts, which once he hath bestowed vpon vs. And *S. Paul* assureth vs of it when he sayth: *The guifts of God are without repentance*; and God himself by his Prophet in these words: *I am God, and am not changed*; & consequently that which *S. Augustin* sayth to God, is true: *No man leeseth thee, but he that leaueth thee.* God therefore neuer reiecteth them that seeke him; *he neuer casteth them forth, that come vnto him*, as himself professeth; and heauen and earth shal first passe away, *before anie change or shadow of vicissitude come vpon him.* Seing therefore there can be no danger on this side, al the danger is in ourselues and our owne infirmitie.

Rom. 11. 29. *Mal. 3. 6.* *S. Aug. 4. Conf. c. 9.* *Io. 6. 37.* *Luc. 1. 17.*

13. But yet because no bodie is il for nothing, and there is hardly anie to be found so malicious as to delight in sinne, because it is sinne, but that some other cause drawes him into it; let vs see, what cause there may be to disioynt and break this league of societie and friendship so inuiolably and religiously sworne betwixt God and vs. In humane friendship manie things of this nature may happen; for in time we may discouer some flaw in the league itself, or some wrong may be offered, or one partie may be damnifyed in his state, or we may think we haue enough of it, as oftimes it falleth out. Nothing of al this can be sayd of God; for we cannot feare, least the continuance of our loue with him be preiudicial vnto vs, seing we haue al that we haue, of him, and he most bountifully makes vs partakers of al that is his. Neither can we feare, least his conuersation grow tedious, seing we find written of the Eternal Wisdome: *Entring into my house I wil rest with it; for the conuersation with it, hath no bitternes; nor the liuing togeather with it, anie tediousnes, but ioy and gladnes.* And therefore that also is true, which the same Wisdome reporteth of itself: *They that eate me, shal stil hunger; and they that drink me, shal stil thirst.* So that by enioying God, we shal be so farre from hauing our desire of him quayled at anie time, as rather it wil be daily more inflamed, the more degrees of his infinit beautie and goodnes we shal dayly discouer, and the better and cleerer insight we shal haue into him. And if, while we were as yet in the world, a smal raye of that beautie, which is in Religion, shining vpon vs in that darknes, was so powerful as to bring vs vnto him, as it were, out of a farre countrey, and to draw vs with such a violence as was able to breake through al the snares the Diuel had to hold vs back; what wil not the sunne-light and excellencie of Religion doe, when we shal haue had leasure to enter more into it, and by the knowledge and possession of so great a good, be more taken and enamoured with it. And if it were able to force vs to loue it and embrace it, while we were free and vnconstant, how much more wil it hold vs in loue of it, when we shal be obliged and bound vnto it with that *triple cord, which is hardly broken.*

His friendship cannot be preiudicial or tedious.

Sap. 8. 16. *Eccl. 24. 29.*

14. What ground therefore can we imagine, that we can haue, to alter from our purpose, with so great losse and shame to ourselues? Shal we alter in regard of the rigour and austeritie of that kind of life? Wherefore then haue we spoken so much of the commodities of it (which alone were sufficient) and of the sweetnes besides and pleasure which is in it? Rather seing we are naturally so much taken with pleasure, & follow so greedily the bare shadow of it in the idle toyes, which the world doth shew vs, we haue no cause to feare, but that meeting with the verie fountain of pleasure, which is God, we shal stick the faster by it, and drink with more contentment of it. For our part therefore, we haue no cause, why we should euer repent ourselues of a thing, which hath been inuented and commended vnto vs by God, so carefully practised by so manie holie men, so earnestly desired

Austeritie not to be feared.

desired and embraced by ourselues, and found by our owne experience to be much more beneficial and delightful, then we could either hope or imagine.

15. What is it then that we feare? the secret vnderminings, or open assaults of the Diuel? But of them also much hath been sayd before, to shew that we must wholy contemne them, considering the manie helps which we haue to ouercome them; as the State itself, in which we liue as in a Castle; the custodie of the holie Angels; the care and watchful eye of God to defend vs; and infinit other things, which of themselues are powerful and strong helps; but much more the Grace of God diffused in our harts by the Holie-Ghost, which is giuen vs, and which doth so cloathe vs with vertue and strength from aboue, that if inconstancie come vpon vs, it setleth vs; if we be weake and feeble, it strengthneth vs; if we faint and languish, it puts life into vs; and taking vs as it were out of the hands of the theeues (which are the Diuels) half aliue, and placing vs in the humble, but wholesome stable of Religion, it cureth vs with wine and oyle. The wine (as the sharper of the two) is Religious discipline, and the incommodities which are incident vnto it; but this wine is alayed with oyle, that is, with an admirable kind of sweetnes, which giues a pleasant taste to al the incommodities which are in it. And therefore though we bring to Religion a nature cut, and mangled and weakned with manie wounds and sores, we haue no reason notwithstanding to misdoubt our perseuerance, hauing so manie gentle, but yet efficacious medicines of the Grace of God, to cure it. Nor the temptatios of the Enemie,

16. But al acknowledge, that the grace of God is powerful, and it cannot be denyed; yet some stil feare, least through their owne fault and offences they make themselues vnworthie of this grace, and so leesing it and forsaken by it, they fal into their ancient errours. But they that lodge this feare in their breasts, and in regard of it forbeare to put themselues into the seruice of God, are farre wide of the mark, and know not indeed, what Grace is, which is therefore called Grace, because it is giuen freely, and not for anie desert of ours. And we shal not need to looke so farre back as to the example of *S. Paul*, who was a persecutour, or of *S. Matthew*, who was a publican, or of *S. Marie Magdalen*, who was a sinner, to iustifye it, seing we haue proof and example cleer enough of it in ourselues. For if when we were yet enemies, when we fed hogs in farre countries, when we wandered like the lost sheep, God of his owne good wil sought vs out, followed vs when we were flying from him, compelled vs when we striued against him, expected vs when we sought delayes and held back, and in the end brought vs home vpon his shoulders; what wil he not doe for vs now we liue in his house, and in his seruice? The grace of God is giuen freely.

17. Let vs compare one time with another, and that state we were in, with that in which now we are; then liuing in extreme darknes, there was no goodnes at al in vs, al was sinne, al was earthlie, al tending to the seruice of this world, our thoughts, our words, our deeds, al bending that wayes, we liued in perpetual forgetfulnes of God, in loosse careles of al heauenlie things. But now we spend al our dayes in the practise of vertue, in the seruice of God, in the denyal of ourselues; and though we offend sometimes, our faults are but smal and venial, and easily ouermatched and couered with the abundance of the good deeds which we doe. If therefore the goodnes of God were so great towards vs in that first state, that our ancient deformitie could not hin- His goodnes towards vs while we liued in the world.

der him from taking vs out of that mire, and placing vs in his armes and bosome; now that we are washed (though perhaps our feet need stil some washing) wil he shake vs off & cast vs out of his armes againe? He that dealt so louingly by strangers, yea by his enemies, as to adopt vs his children, & take vs into his house; now we are his children, & haue done him so much seruice, & liued so manie yeares in his house, wil he thrust vs out, and casheer vs from among the rest of his children, among whom he had ranked vs? O absurd suspicion, & feare vnworthie of such a father, vnworthie of children that haue been so nobly brought vp! How much better & more truly doth *S. Bernard* iudge of this loue of God towards Religious people, expressing himself in these words? He, He, I say, gathereth you togeather, " that loueth you as his owne bowels, as the most pretious fruit of his Crosse, as a " most worthie compensation of the bloud which he shed. He sayth, that Religious people are the fruit and worthie recompence of the Passion of Christ, because the vertue therof is chiefly seen in them, and because, though no other fruit had come of it, this alone had been enough for the Sonne of God, to think al his labour and sufferings wel bestowed. Wherefore if no marchant be so mad, as to cast away the Iewels which he hath bought at an excessiue rate, when he may keep them; what shal we think of him, that feares, least God cast vs off vpon the suddain, whom he hath bought with the pretious bloud of his only Sonne, and enriched with such inestimable guifts and treasures?

S. Ber ep. 109.

The difference betwixt a seruant & a sonne.

18. Besides, we must consider the difference, which is betwixt a seruant and a sonne. If a seruant offend, or become vnprofitable, he is put away, because he is a seruant, and, as our Sauiour sayth, *remaineth not in house for euer*; but though a sonne be sick, and able to doe nothing, yea though he offend and displease his father, he shal be corrected with *the rod*, perhaps with *a stick*, and yet they wil be rather *a comfort* to him (as the Prophet speaketh) then an affliction, but it is not the fashion to banish him out of his father's sight; it cannot sinck into the hart of a father to do so; the loue wherewith he entertayned him in his house with musick, when he returned from a farre countrey, wil not suffer him to vse such rigour, much lesse thrust him out of doores.

Ioan. 8. 35.

Psal. 22. 4.

Luc. 15. 25.

God is of a louing disposition.

19. If we were to deale with a man like ourselues, we should doe him wrong, if we should think him so vnciuil and froward, as to fal-out with vs vpon euerie slight occasion, and neuer be friends with vs anie more. How much greater wrong therefore shal we do to the infinit goodnes of God, if we take him to be of so harsh a disposition, notwithstanding that we see before our eyes dayly, how he beares with an infinit number of most greeuous sinnes, and *dissembles their offences, because of repentance.* Rather as we are confident of our owne brother, or of our father, or of anie man, that we know doth entirely loue vs, or (why should we speak of others?) as if perseuerance in vertue & Religion were in our owne power, our hart would be at rest & ease; so must it be now it is in the hand and power of God; and so much the more, the greater we know his loue is towards vs, louing vs more then we loue ourselues, and desiring with so much affection our eternal welfare and perfection, as the Apostle sayth of him: *His wil is your sanctification.*

Sap. 11. 24.

1 Thess. 4. 3.

20. What therefore is our dutie to doe? That which *S. Augustin* did, when he found himself in the like fearful humour, least he should not haue strength and courage enough

enough to goe through with that new courſe of life, which he was then reſoluing vpon. For he writeth of himſelf, that he heard as it were a voyce ſpeake within him: *Caſt thyſelf vpon him; feare not; he wil not withdraw himſelf, that thou mayſt fal; Caſt thyſelf ſecurely; he wil receaue and cure thee.* For if no man was euer ſo barbarouſly hard-harted and cruel (ſo he were a man) as to withdraw himſelf, and ſuffer another man to be daſht and hurt againſt the ground, if he ſee that in his fal from ſome high place he is willing to ſaue himſelf in his armes; rather the more truſt and confidence a man puts in vs, committing himſelf and his life into our hands, with this hope, he obligeth vs the more not to forſake him, or ſuffer him to periſh for want of anie thing, that we can doe for him. If therefore the nature of man euen among thoſe, that are none of the ciuileſt, goe againſt ſuch barbarous proceeding; who can ſuſpect anie ſuch thing of that bottomles pit of clemencie and goodnes, that he wil forſake vs, hauing relyed ourſelues wholy vpon his goodnes, and prudence, and vndoubted promiſes?

We muſt follow the example of *S. Auguſtin.*

S Aug l. 8. Conf. c. 11.

21. Finally we muſt conſider, that wheras the works of God pertayne partly to Nature, and partly to Grace; no man euer had the leaſt feare, leaſt in his natural works he ſhould breake the vniforme order and conſtant courſe of his Diuine beneficence. No man euer doubted, leaſt the Sunne ſhould not riſe euerie day, and with the vſual proportion, according to the times of the yeare, giue light to the earth; or that it would not rayne according to the ſeaſons, ſo that the fruits of the earth ſhould fayle: we plough, we ſow, we plant, we prune our trees and vines, as if we were aſſured of al thoſe things; which notwithſtanding if they ſhould fayle, al our labour and charges were quite loſt. We make great vaults and conduits to conuey the water to manie mils with exceſſiue coſt and expence, which al were in vaine, if the head of the fountain ſhould decay; but it is ſo certain, that it wil not decay, that no man euer ſpared coſt for that reaſon. If therefore it neuer comes into our thought, to miſdoubt theſe natural things; why ſhould we not in ſpiritual things hope, that the fountain of the Grace of Heauen wil continually flow? And if it were fooliſh for a man to forbeare to ſow his ground, or plant trees, or follow anie ſuch kind of work vpon ſuch a kind of idle feare, how much more fooliſh is it to omit our ſpiritual work, and ſuch a work as is the vndertaking of a Religious courſe of life, for the like feare, leaſt forſooth the Sunne leaue ſhining vpon vs at noone-day, or the fountain of Diuine grace dry away in the midſt of the current of it? Yet ſome bodie wil ſay: We ſee diuers fal; who knowes whether I ſhal at laſt be one of them? *S. Iohn Chryſoſtome* propoundeth this verie doubt in his *Apologie for a Monaſtical life*; where arguing againſt parents, that hinder their children from embracing Religious courſes, he bringeth them making this obiection: How ſhal I know that my ſonne ſhal perſeuer, and neuer fal from his purpoſe? for manie haue fallen. To which *S. Iohn Chryſoſtome*, and I anſwer: How doſt thou know, that he ſhal not perſeuer? for manie haue perſeuered; yea manie more, then haue fallen; ſo that we haue more cauſe to truſt in regard of them, then to diſtruſt in regard of theſe. And then he cõuinceth them by that, which they doe themſelues; for they ſend their childrẽ to ſchoole, & are at charges with them, & yet few come

God is conſtant in the works of nature.

The fal of ſomeought not to diſmay vs.

S. *Io. Chry. con. vit. vitæ Mon. c. 3.*

to be eminent in learning, becauſe it depends of manie things, wheras in Religion a man needs not anie great wit or ſtrength of bodie to perſeuer, & to arriue to perfection, but willingnes and endeauour; and concludeth thus: How vnreaſonable therefore and vnworthie is it, to runne into feare and deſpayre, where for the moſt part there be manifeſt tokens of certain hope and ſaluation at hand; and where there is leſſe hope, & ſubiect to ſo manie impedimēts, there not to deſpayre, but rather to be greatly and certainly in hope of a thing, which is moſt difficult?

Worldlie chances do not dant vs.

22. And this which, *S. Iohn Chryſoſtome* ſayth of learning, is of force in al ſtates & employments in the world; for people ceaſe not to traffick, becauſe manie in traffick haue become bank-rout; neither doe they forbeare to goe to ſea, becauſe manie haue periſhed by ſhip-wrack, nor they leaue not the warres, though infinit periſh in them, ſome with one kind of death, ſome with another. And yet euerie one of theſe kinds of life are dayly ſubiect to ſo manie dangers & hazards, that we haue much more reaſon to feare misfortunes, then to hope that we ſhal goe proſperouſly through with them; eſpecially conſidering, that no human wiſdome or forecaſt is able to preuent al miſchances. But in Religion theſe accidents happen ſeldome, & to very few, in compariſon of the reſt; and by moderate care & diligence they may be preuented & eſchewed; & are alwayes preuented, if we be as we ought, & haue but a wil to vſe thoſe helpes, which the ſtate itſelf affordeth vs. Wherefore let vs hearken to *S. Gregorie*, who like a maiſter-workman very handſomely cuts off this temptation with the knife of Reaſon, and the authoritie of the holie Scripture. Another, ſayth he, ſetting the deſires of the fleſh at naught, is thinking to forſake al, and to betake himſelf to the ſeruice of Almightie God; he purpoſeth to curbe himſelf with the raynes and bridle of Continencie & Chaſtitie: but ſeing others that haue fallen euen after Chaſtitie, he is afrayd to doe that which he hath a mind to doe, and turneth back in his thoughts, when looking before him, he was with the ſteps of his mind euen now mounting on high. Of whom *Salomon* ſayth wel: *He that obſerueth the wind, doth not ſowe; and he that conſidereth the clowdes, ſhal neuer reape.* By the wind we vnderſtand the malignant ſpirit, that blowes vpon our mind with temptation; by the clowdes we vnderſtand a ſinner, that is carried away by the violence of temptation. He therefore that obſerueth the wind, doth not ſow, & he that conſidereth the clowdes, neuer reapeth, becauſe he that feareth the temptations of the malignant ſpirit, and conſidering the falles of the wicked, deſpayreth of himſelf, doth neither in preſent exerciſe himſelf in the ſeed of good works, nor ſhal heerafter be refreſhed by reward of iuſt recompenſe. Thus ſayth *S. Gregorie.*

S. Greg. hom. 3. in Ezech.

23. The ſumme therefore of this whole diſcourſe is this: If the reſolution of following a Religious courſe were to come of ourſelues, or if it were ſo to come of God, that it were neceſſarie we ſhould deſerue it, we had reaſon doubtles to feare our owne frailtie & inconſtancie. But ſeing it comes ſo from God, that on our part it requireth no deſert, but giueth vs al the deſert we haue; as the grace of God from the beginning worketh it in vs, ſo it alwayes euer after worketh it, preſeruing vs. We haue an excellent example of it in *S. Peter* the Apoſtle, when inuited by our Sauiour, he walked vpon the water, and was held vp aboue it by his holie hand, when for feare he began to ſink. This doth liuely repreſent vnto vs a Religious ſtate. For as it is a great miracle for this heauie and lumpiſh bodie of ours to walk vpon the water, ſo it is no leſſe a miracle, when

S. Peter vpon the water, a pattern of this kind of feare.

Matt. 14.

our

our corrupted nature (which of itſelf is alwayes bearing downewards to earthlie things, to the workes of the fleſh, to libertie and licentiouſnes) by the vertues of Pouertie, Chaſtitie and Obedience breaketh through al theſe wicked inclinations, & walketh aboue them, as a bodie aboue the water. And cõſequently we cannot bring this to paſſe by our owne natural ſtrength, but by the power of God; and it is the effect of his voice, when he ſayth vnto vs: *Come*; as he ſayd to *S. Peter*, & by it giueth vs the like admirable power, as he gaue to him, & as long as the force of this voyce laſteth, ſo long we remaine with this power, & performe it with the ſelf-ſame facilitie & agilitie as we did at firſt. How comes the vertue of this voice to decay ſometimes in vs, & to grow faint? By Diffidence, as it hapned to *Peter*, when letting our thoughts runne more vpon the winds & the waues, that is, vpon the difficulties & temptatiõs which ſometimes ruſh-in vpon vs, then vpon the grace of God & the vertue therof, we begin to feare our ſelues, and by fearing ſink. Yet if ſometimes through frailtie we chance thus to ſtagger, we haue at hand a preſent remedie and refuge, to wit, God himſelf, who ſtretching forth his hand wil inſtantly hold vs vp, and ſtay vs, &, as the Apoſtle ſayth: *He that gaue vs to wil, wil giue vs alſo to accomplish and confirme vs to the end, without crime, in the day of the coming of our Lord* IESVS CHRIST. *Philip. 2. 13. 1. Cor. 1. 8.*

Againſt the temptation of delaying our entrance into Religion.

CHAP. XXXIII.

AS in warre it is the faſhion of the weaker ſide to be asking truce; & in euerie troubleſome thing that cannot be wholy auoyded, we labour at leaſt, that it be differred as much as may be; ſo it is one of the Diuel's cunning tricks among the reſt, when he cannot wholy remoue people from their reſolution of entring into Religion, to pretend diuers cauſes, why they ſhould delay their entrãce. To ſome he layes before thẽ their tẽder yeares, as not ripe yet for the yoak of Chriſt; others he perſwades, that they muſt take longer time of deliberation, aske aduiſe of their friends, haue ſome trial of their ſtrength, ſome experiẽce by the practiſe of good works before hãd, that ſo they may prepare their way for greater & harder matters. Let vs ſee therefore, what force & reaſons theſe pretences haue. Diuers preteces of delay.

2. And to ſpeake firſt of age; It is ſo farre from being true, that a man's youth is not a fit age for the ſeruice of God, that it is the fitteſt time of al others to ſerue him. Which the Prophet telleth vs, when he ſayth: *It is good for a man, when he shal haue carried the yoak from his youth*; & inſinuateth what commodities come of it: *He shal ſit* (ſayth he) *ſolitarie, and hold his peace; becauſe he hath lifted himſelf aboue himſelf.* The meaning of which words, as *S. Thomas* interpreteth, is, that they that take the yoak of Religion vpon them in their youth, lift themſelues with much more eaſe & to better effect, aboue their nature & natural inclinations, & leade a moſt quiet life, free from al worldlie cares & troubles; and ſtrengthneth this his explication with the authoritie of *S. Anſelme*, who likeneth thoſe, that are brought vp in Monaſteries from their childhood, to Angels; and thoſe that enter in elder yeares, to men. A man's youth the fitteſt time to begin to ſerue God. *Thren. 3. 27.* S *Thomas opuſ. contr. retr. a reg. c. 3.* S. *Anſelme.*

3. The commodites of entring in our youth are theſe. Firſt, youth being naturally vnprouident, and by reaſon of our weaknes pliable, as wax, to whatſoeuer vice, if we paſſe our youth in the world, amidſt ſo manie ſnares and occaſions of

Diuers commodities by entring into Religion in our youth.

sinne, how easie is it for vs to entangle ourselues in manie errours, which wil afterwards hinder vs from taking a course of vertue and saluation? or if at last we resolue vpon such a course, wil as so manie wounds make vs runne the slower & the weaker in the spiritual course we shal vndertake? Wheras on the other side, if we consecrate the flower of our youth and life to God, we shal find the quite contrarie, and preuent those dangers and misfortunes.

Youth apter to learne.

4. Secondly, youth is apteſt to receaue good impressions, & is most disciplinable, while the mind is yet emptie, &, like a peece of white paper, fit to receaue whatsoeuer a bodie wil write in it; or like a yong tree, which a man may bend & leade which way he wil. And we see it euidently, for example, in most beasts, as in horses and dogs, and some kinds of birds; if we teach them while they are yong, we find by experience that they are apt to take, euerie one according to their seueral kind; but if we let that time passe, they grow so stubborn, that we can neuer bring them to anie thing. It is true, that al times with man are in season for vertue; but if we speake of a facilitie and a kind of nimblenes in it, we find it certainly farre greater in that tender age before a man be hardned in vice and vanitie.

And we are apter to hold that which is learned in those yeares.

S. *Hierome Epist. 1.*

Arist. 2. Eth. c. 1.

Arist. 7. c. vlt.

5. Thirdly, that which we learne in our youth, sticks faster by vs, and can very hardly euer be blotted out. So sayth S. *Hierome* in one of his Epistles: *It is hard to raze that out, which an vnwrought mind hath drunk in; a new earthen vessel keepeth a long time the sauour & smel, with which first it is seasoned.* *Aristotle* also conceaues, that it doth much import what custome a man takes in his youth; and sayth, that al in a manner lyes in that. And in another place he sayth: The first things doe euer take possession of a man's mind, and preiudicate it; and therefore he ordereth that in a Common-wealth wel gouerned, al obscene things be put aside from children, that they may not so much as see the picture of anie such thing, nor a Comedie or Tragedie. Which care can neuer be had of them in the world, nor can it be expected or hoped for; but in Religion it is constantly and most certainly obserued.

A man's spirits are more liuelie.

Seneca Epist. 110.

Virg. in 3. Georg.

6 Finally, it is no smal commoditie, that in yonger yeares a man's mind is liuelie & ful of vigour, it is not diuided, nor distracted with businesses or affections of seueral natures, so that if we apply it wholy at that time to God, and bend our spirits, before they be tainted, to heauenlie things, our progresse in vertue must needs be the greater, and our course the swifter. Which the graueſt of the Heathen Philosophers expresseth excellently in these words: *As that which is first powred out of a vessel, is alwayes the cleereſt, the heauie and muddie stuff sticks to the bottome: so in our yeares, that which is best, is first; shal we suffer that rather to veat itself among others, and keepe the lees to our selues? Let this stick fast in our mind, & let vs esteeme it as spoken from an Oracle: The best day of the age of each mortal wight, flyes first abroad. Why the best? Because that which remaineth, is vncertain. Why the best? Because, while we are yong, we may learne, we may apply our mind to that which is best, while it is yet pliable and tractable; because the time of our youth, is fittest for labour, fittest for the whetting of our wits in learning, fittest for corporal exercises in al kind of works; that which is behind, is more dul, more feeble, neerer to an end.* Thus *Seneca.*

A vision declaring this point.

7. Al which commodities we may see euidently expressed in a heauenlie Vision, which *Humbertus* (a famous man, & General of the *Dominicās*) was wont to recount of a certain Religious man, that after his decease appeared in the night-time to one

of

of his fellow-brethren, compaſſed with a great light; and leading him out of his Celle ſhewed him a long ranck of men clad al in white, ſhining wonderful bright; & they carried moſt beautiful Croſſes vpon their ſhoulders, marching al towards heauen. Soone after, there followed another ranck farre more comelie to behold & more glorious, and euerie one of them carried a daintie Croſſe, not vpon their ſhoulders, but in their hand. After them againe appeared a third ranck more beautiful & more gallant then the other two, & their Croſſes alſo ſurpaſſed the others by farre, both in workmanſhip and comelines, & they did not carrie them themſelues, but euerie one had an Angel marching before him, & carried his Croſſe for him; & they followed cheerfully, & as it were playing. The man being aſtoniſhed, & muſing much at this ſight, his companion that had appeared vnto him, told him, that they of the firſt ranck were Religious people, that had entred in their old age; the ſecond were ſuch as had entred at man's eſtate; the third and laſt, whom he ſaw ſo lightſome and cheerful, were they that entred into Religion in their youth.

8. And as this, which we haue ſayd, ought greatly to encourage and comfort people of yonger yeares, ſo they that are men already growne, ought not to be diſmayed. Firſt becauſe, as the common ſaying is, It is better to turne back, though with ſome difficultie, then ſtil to runne on in an errour. Secondly, if we wil ſpeake of facilitie & eaſe, they that are elder in yeares, want not their comforts alſo, and their helps and furtherances towards the leuelling and the taking downe of the ruggednes of the way they walke in, & towards the ſweetning of their ſorrowes & troubles; of which kind of comforts and the plentie of them, I haue ſpoken at large in this third booke. And we cannot alſo deny, but it often falleth out, that though *S. Iohn*, as the yonger, runne before, more ſpeedily then *S. Peter*, yet *Peter* the elder entreth firſt into the monument, that is, comes firſt to perfect Mortification, & perfect ſimilitude with our Sauiour Chriſt. And the workmen, that were called at the Sixt and Ninth howre, though they wrought but one howre, receaue the ſame reward with them that were hired early in the morning. For it is neuer too late to returne to God; rather it is alwayes time, and we are alwayes welcome, at whatſoeuer howre we come to him, who alwayes expecteth vs, alwayes knocketh at our doore, alwayes embraceth and entertaineth thoſe, that come vnto him, with ioy.

People of yeares ought not to be diſcouraged.

Ioan. 20. 6.

Matth. 20. 10.

9. But it is time we ſay ſomething of the other pretences, which the Diuel is wont to ſowe, as cockle, vpon the good ſeed, which God caſt into our mind; either to choak it vp, if he can poſſibly, or at leaſt to hinder the growth of it. And briefly to anſwer al theſe temptations in one word; there is one excellent remedie for them al, to wit, throughly to perſwade ourſelues and acknowledge as a certain truth, that whatſoeuer delay we make in ſo profitable, ſo wholeſome, ſo important a thing, and ſubiect to ſo manie deceipts and couſenages of the Enemie, is not only to no purpoſe, but infinitly dangerous. This is the reaſon, why al holie men, knowing too wel, how manie wicked ſnares lye hidden vnder theſe deceitful deliberations, cry vnto vs with one voyce, with one conſent, to breake off al delayes, and not to differre it by anie meanes. Make haſte, I beſeech thee (ſayth *S. Hierome*) and ſeing thy ſhip ſtick in the ſuds, cut the rope in ſunder rather then vnty it. *S. Iohn Chryſoſtome* in one of his Homilies to the people, hauing ſet forth to admiration the

Al delay is dangerous.

S. Hieronie Epiſt. 103.

S. Chryſoſt. hom. 57. *ad pop. Antioch.*

beautie and chiefly the pleasure, that is in a Religious life, concludeth thus: *Perhaps manie of you now are warme at hart, and burne with a great desire of so beautiful a conuersation. But what doth it benefit you, if while you are heer, you haue this fire; & as soone as you goe out, you quench it, & the flame & heat vanisheth away? What remedie? While thy loue is yet hot, goe presently to those Angels, & there inflame it more. Doe not say: I wil first speake with my friends; I wil dispatch my businesses. This delay is a beginning of shrinking away. The Disciple would haue buried his father; and Christ would not let him. Wherefore? because the Diuel is at hand eager to insinuate himself into our mind, & if he get but a smal respit or prorogation, he bringeth vs to great coldnes. Therefore one doth aduise vs: Differre not from day to day.*

Matt. 8. 22

10. We may learne of what opinion S. *Augustin* was in this busines, by that which he sayth of himself, bewayling his owne dulnes & lingring fashion, when it was past, in these words: *I had not what to answer thee, when thou saydst vnto me: Rise thou that sleepest; and Rise from the dead, and Christ wil enlighten thee. And shewing me on euerie side, that thou saydst true, I had not anie thing at al to answer, being conuinced by the truth, but words only slow and sleepie: Now, and Behold now; let me alone a little. But Now & Now had neuer enough; and Let me alone a little, grew to great length of time.* And as heer he acknowledgeth his owne fault in seeking so manie delayes, so he highly commendeth the two brethren, that vpon reading the Life of S. *Anthonie* were so hot vpon imitating him, that at the self-same instant, and in the self-same place, when they had read it, they consecrated themselues to the seruice of God. And vpon the same groundsels where he exhorteth al in this maner: Behold the Giuer of mercie openeth the gate vnto thee. What dost thou stay for? Thou shouldst be glad, if he should open vnto thee at anie time vpon thy knocking. Thou didst not knock, & he openeth; & dost thou remaine stil without? O differre not. The holie Scripture sayth in a certain place of the works of mercie: *Doe not say, goe and come againe, to morrow I wil giue*, when thou canst presently doe wel; for thou knowest not what may happen the day following. Thou hast heard the commandment of not differring to be merciful towards another, & art thou cruel towards thy self by delayes? Giue almes to thy owne soule. We doe not say, thou shouldst giue it anie thing, but doe not put aside the hand of him that giueth.

S. *Augustin* 8. Conf. c. 5.

Idem ca. 6.

Idem ser. 59. de verb. Dom.

Prou. 3. 28.

11. S. *Anselme* also sayth excellently wel to the same purpose in one of his Epistles: Make hast to so great a good, because thou canst not by anie other good more effectually come to the Soueraigne Good. I haue seen manie that haue promised, & then differred, whom death so preuented, that they could neither dispatch that in which they had engaged themselues, nor begin that for which they had passed their promise. And againe: He that differreth til the time to come, & perhaps til the time, that wil neuer come, to reforme his life, leaueth vndoubtedly a certain good, and contemning that which he leeseth, he sheweth that he loueth not that which he expecteth, and deserueth not to haue it.

S. *Anselme* Epist. 1.

12. The iudgement of S. *Thomas* in this point (being so great a Diuine as he was) is not a little to be regarded. He therefore both in one of his Opuscles, & in his Summe of Diuinitie proposing this question (whether long deliberation vpon this counsel be commendable?) proueth that which we are saying, by manie weightie reasons, that we must obey God in it out of hand, and diligently put in execution that which he speaketh vnto vs. Though what doe we stand picking reasons heer and there out of Authours, seing we haue the

S. *Thomas* op. 17 c. 9. & 10. 2. 2 q. vlt. ar. vlt.

Long deliberations in this, not to be commended.

authoritie

authoritie of the Ghospel for vs? We see *Peter* and *Andrew*, so soone as they were called by our Lord, presently obeyed his calling, forsaking their nets and their boate. The like we reade of *Iames* and *Iohn*, and in a more difficult and weightie occasion, of *S. Matthew*; who, besides the general obligations of brethren and kinsfolk, set light (as *S. Chrysostome* obserueth) by al the human dangers, which might haue befallen him from the Princes of the land, leauing their seruice before he had cast-vp and made euen his accounts. *Mat.* 4 20.

13. But nothing doth more euidently confirme that which we are saying, then that wheras he that was inuited by our Lord to the Apostleship, did not refuse it, but craued respit, for a pious end, to burie his father; the Diuine Wisedome notwithstanding answered him: *Follow me, & leaue the dead to burie their dead.* Which *S. Iohn Chrysostom* expoundeth in this manner: This he sayd not bidding vs to neglect the loue of our parents, but shewing, that nothing must seeme more necessarie, then the businesses of heauen, though the rubs which are cast in our way, seeme great, necessarie, and insuperable. This therefore is that which al must think and doe, that heare the voice of our Lord calling, inuiting, and perhaps drawing them. And *S. Thomas* to this purpose doth iudiciously among other things applye an opinion of *Aristotle's* in his bookes of Morals, where putting this question: What it is in a soule, that first and principally moueth it? he answereth, that Reason first moueth al other parts and powers of it, and that which moueth reason, is something better then reason; not knowledge or learning (for these are not better then it) but God, and a litle after he addeth, that they whom God moueth, need not take further aduise vpon the busines, because they are led by a better principle then either Reason or Counsel. And *S. Bernard* rarely and eloquently sayth thus: How manie doth the accursed wisedome of the world supplant, and extinguish the spirit conceaued in them, which our Lord would haue vehemently enkindled? Doe nothing, saith it, rashly; take time enough to consider of it, looke more diligently into the busines: the thing which thou goest about, is great, and needeth much deliberatiõ: Try first, what thou shalt be able to doe; aduise with thy friends, least after thou hast done, thou happen to repent it. This is the wisedome of the world, earthlie, sensual, diabolical, an enemie to saluation, a choaker-vp of life, mother of tepiditie, which is wont to prouoke God to vomit. It sayth: looke to thy self. And wherefore? what needes there anie consultation, seing thou makest no doubt but the word comes from God? The Angel of Great Counsel calleth, what dost thou wayte for the counsels of others? who is more faithful, who more wise then he? Leade me, ô Lord, and I shal be led; be thou more strong, and ouercome. I know what those things are which ought to be done quickly. I am saued from the mouth of the pit of hel; and shal I seeke respit, and hold back, and delay to be gone, if perhaps something may be effected in the meane time? I did hide fire in my bosome, and hauing burnt my side, and my verie bowels lying naked, and the corruption running downe, shal I stand deliberating, whether I shal awake, whether I shal shake it off, whether I shal cast it from me? A great matter in verie deed is offered me; so much therefore the more willingly, and the more speedily is it to be admitted of, and embraced with open armes, with feruour and ioy. Let him proue himself, that confideth in his owne strength; for the strength of God is already sufficiently proued. Let him aduise with his friends, that hath not read: *The enemies of man, are his domesticals.* Why do I he, that obeyeth not the Ghospel, *Matth* 8.22. S. *Io. Chrys. ho.* 27 *in Matth.* S. *Tho.* 1. 2. *q.* 68 *art.* 1. *Arist.* 7. *Mor. ad Eudem. c.* 18. S. *Ber. ser. Ecce nos.* When God calls there needs no deliberation. *Mat.* 10. 36

„ vſe the Ghoſpel ſo often ? For there certainly we reade, that to one that
„ promiſed to follow our Lord, but deſired firſt to burie his dead father, it was
Mat. 8. 22. anſwered by our Lord, that he ſhould *ſuffer the dead to burie their dead* ; and
„ to another that asked only, that he might bid them farewel, that were at home,
„ he ſayd : *No man putting his hand to the plough and looking back, is apt for the*
„ *kingdome of heauen.* Al this of *S. Bernard.*

Diuers inconueniences of delay.

14. Moreouer, the better to breake with the delayes, which the Diuel puts in our head, we ſhal doe wel to think, firſt, that (as *S. Thomas* aduiſeth) ſeing al the treaſures of wiſdome and knowledge of God are hidden in Chriſt, we offer him wrong, when hauing had his counſel, we goe afterwards to take the aduiſe of anie mortal man. Secondly, that though there were no other harme likelie to befal vs, the verie delaying a buſines of ſo great weight, is a great harme and hinderance vnto vs ; for it bereaueth vs of the vſe and benefit of ſo manie good things as are in Religion ; a loſſe which can neuer be repayred ; for, ſo manie dayes, yea ſo manie howres, as this demurring taketh vp, ſo much gaynes and profit doth it take from vs ; becauſe in Religion no day, no howre paſſeth without exceſſiue gaynes. Thirdly, we runne hazard of inconſtancie ; and as we are al mutable, frayle, infirme, we put ourſelues in danger of yealding in the meane time, either to the importunate ſollicitations of the Diuel, or the flattering ſhewes of the world, or to our owne fleſh, that ſtil repineth and laboureth to ſlip the collar. A ſhip out of the harbour, is alwayes in danger, and ought to deſire nothing more, then ſpeedily to put into the hauen.

Delayes in other things are hateful.

15. How ſpeedily doe we deſire, that al other buſineſſes ſhould be diſpatched, euen thoſe that are of greateſt weight and conſequence, though they bring a heauie obligation vpon vs for tearme of life ? Who doth admit of ſo manie delayes, if he pretend for a Biſhoptick or other promotion, or if he be to marrie ? and yet who knowes not, what a heauie burden the one is, and how ful the other is of troubles and inconueniences ? In Religion we tye ourſelues to God, and know that his nature is gentle, affable, louing, liberal in his guifts, patient in bearing our imperfections. When we marrie, we tye ourſelues to a woman ; a woman, I ſay, of as frayle a nature at leaſt as ourſelues, in ſexe inferiour, moſt commonly inclinable to manie vices, to anger, pride, head-longnes, pratling, and ſome yet greater ; and it is a wonder if we light not vpon ſuch a one. The yoak of Religion hath been long tryed before by as manie as are, or euer were Religious. What therefore ſhal we need to feare paſſing at ſuch a foard, where ſuch an infinit companie haue paſſed before vs with happie ſucceſſe ?

Death may preuent vs. *S. Aug. ſer. 16. de verb. Dom.*

16. And finally, we muſt remember, how death continually hangeth ouer our head, and the manie chances that may bring vs vntimely vnto it ; of which *S. Auguſtin* ſpeaketh thus : Who hath promiſed thee to morrow ? Where
„ thou readeſt, that if thou reforme thyſelf, thou ſhalt haue pardon ; reade me,
„ if thou canſt, how long thou ſhalt liue. Therefore thou knoweſt not, how
„ long it wil be. Reforme thyſelf, and be alwayes readie. Wherefore differreſt
S. Ber. Ep. 9. thou til to morrow ? And *S. Bernard* in an Epiſtle to certain Nouices of his,
„ commendeth them highly, becauſe they were ſo forward to put their purpoſe of Religion in execution. The Croſſe of Chriſt, ſayth he, wil not anie

more

more appeare emptie in you, as in manie ſonnes of diſtruſt, who delaying from day to day to be conuerted vnto our Lord, taken away by vnexpected death, in a moment deſcend to hel.

17. Theſe are the points, which they that by the inſtinct of God are called out of the boyſterous waues of this world to the quiet hauen of Religion, ought ſeriouſly to conſider. For what is the drift of this pretence of taking aduiſe, or making ſome trial of ourſelues, but a colour and ſhadow to cloake and hide the ſnares which the Diuel layes for vs, and the ſecret loue of the world, which we are loath openly to acknowledge, to the end we may be long in leauing that, which we leaue vnwillingly? which is ſcarce credible, how dangerous a thing it is; for nothing is more eaſie, then at laſt neuer to forſake that, which we are ſo loath to part with. And they that doe ſo willingly accept of delayes, let them giue eare to *S. Bernard*, a man of no meane vnderſtanding and experience in theſe things. Let them hearken to what he ſayth to one *Romanus* a Subdeacon of the Court of Rome, and make account, that he ſpeaketh to themſelues: Why doſt thou delay to bring forth the ſpirit of ſaluation, which thou haſt ſo long agoe conceaued? Among men, nothing is more certain then death, nothing more vncertain then the howre of death; for it wil come like a theef in the night. Woe to them that ſhal be great with child in that day. If it come vpon them, and preuent this wholeſome childbirth, alas! it wil break through the houſe, and extinguiſh the holie yong impe. For when they ſhal ſay, *Peace and ſecuritie*, then ſuddain ruine wil come vpon them, as the paynes of a child-bearing woman, and they ſhal not eſcape. O therefore make haſte, get away, depart, let thy ſoule dye the death of the iuſt, that thy latter things alſo may be like to theirs, *O how pretious in the ſight of our Lord is the death of his Saints*! Fly, I beſeech thee, ſtand not in the way of ſinners. How canſt thou liue, where thou dareſt not dye? And againe the ſame *S. Bernard* writing to another, that had asked a yeare's reſpit to make an end of his ſtudies, ſpeaketh thus vnto him: I beſeech thee, lay thy hand vpon thy hart, and reflect that the terme of thy yeare, which to the iniurie of God thou haſt taken reſpit in, is not a yeare pleaſing to God, nor to pleaſe him in, but a ſower of diſcord, a feeder of anger, and a nouriſher of Apoſtaſie, a yeare to extinguiſh ſpirit, to ſhut out grace, to bring thee into that luke-warmnes, which is wont to prouoke God to vomit.

Delay is but a cloak for our vnwillingnes.

S. Bernard Ep. 105.

Id. Ep 108.

Of a temptation riſing from our Parents and Kindred.

CHAP. XXXIV.

BEHOLD an other engine which the Diuel makes vſe of againſt a Religious vocation, grounded in the tender affection which euerie one beares naturally towards his kindred; which *S. Hierome* fitly tearmeth the *Ramme*, or a warlick inſtrument to batter downe *Pietie* and deuotion; for it hath two parts, as it were two horneſ, wherewith it endeauoureth to ſhake and beate downe this rampire of Saluation. The one is the natural loue, which they of whom we are borne, and they that are borne with vs of the ſame Stock, doe clayme as it were by right. The other comprehendeth al the wayes which Kindred is wont to vſe, to turne a man's reſolution from ſo holie a purpoſe, by praying, by entreating, by teares, by argument, by laying load vpon reaſons concerning their houſe, and familie, and twentie ſuch other deuiſes.

S Hierome Ep. 1.

2. Againſt this ſuttle and withal vehement and ſtrong temptation of the Enemie (for both concurre in this, which is ſeldome ſeen in others) it behoueth vs to be armed, and firſt to be throughly poſſeſſed, and to hold it as an infallible Maxime, that when once we are aſſured, that it is the wil of God that calleth vs to Religion, what way ſoeuer we come to be aſſured of it, whatſoeuer afterwards offers itſelf vnto vs to diuert vs, or draw vs from that vocation, cannot come but from the Diuel. Wherefore whatſoeuer our parents, friends, or kinsfolk, or anie bodie els (for it is al one who they be) ſay or doe in this kind, we muſt giue them the hearing, and make account of al, as coming out of his ſhop, that layeth wayte for al; but as a cunning theef, is there moſt watchful and diligent, where the bootie is greater, and of whom it is written: *His food is the elect.* For oftimes whom he hath not been able by himſelf to conquer, he hath conquered by theſe kind of ſmoother inſtruments, as making their way more eaſily into our breaſts. And it is an ancient deuiſe of the Diuel, which fel too wel out with him in our firſt father *Adam*. For what importeth it (as *S. Auguſtin* ſpeaketh to this verie point) whether in a wife, or in a mother, ſo that *Eue* be ſhe that we muſt beware of in euerie woman? For this ſhaddow of pietie comes from the leaues of that tree, with which our forefathers did firſt couer their nakednes out of a moſt damnable pietie. *Climacus* therefore is in the right, when he ſayth: It is better to contriſtate our parents, then to contriſtate our Sauiour IESVS. He created vs, he redeemed vs; they by their loue haue often been the deſtruction of their beloued. The loue of God, and the holie deſire of him, extinguiſheth in a ſoule the carnal loue of parents: but he that imagineth that both theſe loues can be ſhut-vp togeather in one hart, deceaueth himſelf. Let not the teares of thy kindred moue thee, leaſt thou bring vpon thyſelf euerlaſting teares, while thy parents and kinsfolk compaſſe thee round like bees, or rather like waſpes, weeping and lamenting, that ſo thou mayſt ouercome grief with grief. Thus ſayth *Climacus*.

Whatſoeuer holds vs from following God, muſt needs be temptation

Hab. 1. 16.

S. *Auguſt. ep. 38.*

Clim. grad. 5. It is better to contriſtate parents then Chriſt

3. Yet becauſe they, that are ignorant and vnlearned, pleade in this caſe the

the law of Nature, and the commandment of God, willing vs to honour our parents, let vs see, what force this their argument hath. And first, we must suppose as a principle of Diuinitie, in which al agree, that in this kind of busines we owe no obedience at al to our Parents; and Diuines giue three reasons of it. The first we may take out of *S. Thomas*, where he sayth, in that which belongs to the nature of the bodie, al men are equal among themselues; a seruant is not inferiour to his maister, nor a child to his parent, meaning, for example of corporal necessities, generation, and the like; from whence he concludes, that no man can in reason be compelled either to marrie, or to liue a single life, for other mens, or his owne father's pleasure And *Aristotle* deduceth the same out of the grounds of nature; for hauing disputed at large the obligation which children haue towards their parents, in the end he putteth this question: whether in al occasions they must so liue in obedience to them, as it can neuer be lawful for them to depart from it? and answereth, that they are not bound in al. For if a child be sick, he must obey the Physician rather then his Father, in that which concernes his health; and in like manner, the General of the field, in that which belongs to the lawes of armes.

Exod. 20. Parents not to be obeyed in this case. *S. Th. 22. q. 104. a. vlt.* *Arist. 9. Eth. c. 2.*

4. If anie bodie alleadge the commandment of the Law, willing vs to honour our Parents; we answer as *S. Augustin* did to the Heretick *Adamantius*, who grew to that heighth of impietie, that he was not ashamed to slander the Ghospel, as if it were contrarie to the Old Law in this point. For he answereth, that we must both honour our parents, and yet without anie impietie may contemne them, to preach the Kingdome of heauen, because we must honour them in their rank and degree; but when that honour stands in competencie with the loue of God, specially if Parents hinder that loue, then we must neglect it and shake it off.

This is not contrarie to the commandment. *S. Aug. cont. Adamant. c. 8.*

5. A second reason is, because the power which parents haue ouer their children, being a participation of the authoritie which God hath ouer them, *from whom*, as the Apostle speaketh, *al paternitie* is deriued, it is but as the power of a deputie or delegate. Wherefore if God command one thing, and a Parent an other, who can make anie question, but the power and iurisdiction of a parent ceaseth, because it is contrarie to the wil of him that gaue that power? For it is as if a King should place a Steward of his house-hold, or a Gouernour in a towne, and that Officer should command one thing, and the King the contrarie, by obeying the King's Officer, a man should be a rebel and disloyal to the King. Vpon which ground *S. Bernard* in the Epistle which he put his hand to, for one *Helias* a Monk of his Monasterie, to his parents, sayth thus: The onlie cause, why it may not be lawful to obey our parents, is God. For he sayth: Who loueth father or mother more then me, is not worthie of me. But if as good and vertuous parents you loue me, if you carrie towards your sonne a faithful pietie, wherefore doe you disquiet me, when I seeke to please the Father of al, who is God? why doe you labour to with-draw me from the seruice of him, whom to serue, is to raigne? Truly now I know that the enemies of man are his domesticals. In this I ought not to obey you; in this I acknowledge you not to be my parents, but my enemies.

The power of Parents is as of a deputie. *Eph. 3. 15.* *S. Bernard Ep. 111.* « *Mat 10. 37.* « « « *Mat. 10. 36* «

In comparison of God, it is litle which we haue from parents.

6. A third reason is, because if we cast our accounts right, and summe vp al duties and the heads of them, which we owe to our parents, we shal find, that in comparison of God, we haue receaued litle or nothing from them. For wheras Man is a compound of soule and bodie, parents haue no hand at al in bestowing our soule vpon vs, which is notwithstanding the best part of vs, and in a manner al in al. For our soule is wholy created by God, and neither man nor Angel can possibly come neer the effecting of it, by al the power they haue. As for our bodie, if they had the whole framing of it alone, yet we should not owe them much more, then if they had bestowed a garment vpon vs, or some kind of instrument to worke with, or a vessel to hold something in; for these are the seruices which the bodie doth for the soule, and truly not much more; rather in manie things it hindereth it, it troubleth it, it dulleth it; so that it hath not al that belongs to a perfect instrument, in the functions for which a soule needs it. Wherefore, as I sayd, though our parents had been the sole framers and giuers of our bodie, what were it? But indeed how litle of the bodie itself doe our parents giue vs? For if a man should spit vpon the ground, and God should presently of that spittle frame an image or some other thing, who should be sayd to be authour of that image? God, or he that by chance spet vpon the ground? For in like manner, God vseth the vnfashioned matter which falles from man, to fashion a bodie out of it: He frameth it, he orders it, he makes the sinnewes of one part of it, the bones, the bloud, and the rest of the members, of another: and man is so farre from hauing anie hand in it, that he knowes not how, nor whether anie such thing be done at al; as we see euidently, because oftimes when they most desire children, they are fartheſt from hauing them. Which *S. Augustin* expresseth pleasantly in these words: While men beget, God createth. For if thou createst, tel me what thy wife shal bring forth? and why doe I say: tel me thou? let her tel me, that knoweth not what she goeth with.

S. Aug. in Ps. 70. con. 2.

That which they giue, is much more the guift of God.

7. Moreouer that litle which parents giue of their owne, they cannot absolutly by right cal it their owne, because they haue it from God; and it is more God's then theirs. Holie *Iob* sheweth, that he vnderstood this very wel to be so, where he attributeth the framing of his whole bodie, and euerie part of it, so wholy to God, as if man had no hand in it, but that it was wholy round about, as he speaketh, formed by the hand and fingar of God. *Hast thou not*, sayth he, *stroked me like milk, and curdled me as cheese? with bones and sinnewes thou hast ioyned me togeather, and thy visitation hath preserued my spirit.* And an other Prophet: *Thou art our father, and Abraham knew vs not*; as who should say: what did *Abraham* giue vs, that we should owe him the name of a father? But our Lord and Sauiour himself doth expresse it in the fittest and weightiest tearmes: *Doe not cal to yourselues a father vpon earth; for one is your Father, who is in heauen.*

Iob 10. 8.

Is. 63. 16.

Mat. 23. 9.

8. And though parents were the authours and giuers of al this, it reacheth no farther then this natural life, which scarce deserues the name

name of life; and if there were no other but it, were not to be called life but death. The grace of God is that which giueth vs true life; and what hand had father or mother in giuing vs the grace of God? Did not *our mother* rather *conceaue vs in sinne*, as the Prophet *Dauid* complayneth, men condemned, before we were borne? Which seing we can not deny, he alone is our father, of whom we haue both our liues; him only we must thank for it, him only we must obey and hearken vnto, & to our father. Which is the ground of the aduise which *S. Hierome* giues to *Furia*, a noble Matron, in these words: Thy father wil be sorie, but Christ wil be glad. Thy familie wil lament, but the Angels wil giue thee the ioy. Let thy father doe what he wil, with his goods. Thou art not his, whose thou art by generation, but whose thou art by regeneration; his, who redeemed thee at a deare rate, with his owne bloud. And it is not only lawful, but fitting, that euerie Religious man say to his parents that, which *Helias* (whom we mentioned before out of *S. Bernard*) sayd to his, that were against him: What haue I from you but sinne and miserie? I acknowledge and confesse, that I haue this corruptible bodie from you, which I carrie with me, and this alone; can you not be contented, that yourselues being miserable, you haue brought me a miserable wretch into this miserie of the world? that being sinners, you haue begot me in sinne a sinner? that as I was borne in sinne, you haue bred me vp also in sinne? but enuying me also the mercie which I haue obtayned of him, that wil not the death of a sinner, you wil make me ouer and aboue the sonne of hel and perdition.

And but for this life, borne in sinne. *Ps. 50.*

S. Hier. Ep. 10.

S. Bernard Ep. 111.

9. If we turne these things seriously in our mind, we shal easily maister that tendernes of affection, which is so natural towards flesh and bloud, whensoeuer it shal stand betwixt vs and so great a good; but much more, if we duly consider that rigorous saying of our Sauiour: *He that loueth father, or mother, more then me, is not worthie of me.* Which, if we beleeue *S. Bernard*, is to be vnderstood thus, that to loue our kindred more then Christ, is for our kindred sake not to fulfil that which Christ, when he was in flesh, taught vs both by word and example. And it is not without great reason, that the infinit goodnes of God passeth so seuere a doome vpon this fault. For we must imagin, as if there were two that did cal vpon vs both at once, Christ on the one side, our parents on the other: both of them lay before vs, what they haue deserued at our hands, but their cause is farre vnequal. That which God hath bestowed vpon vs, is infinitly of greater value, then that which our parents haue giuen vs, besides that they had it of God to giue vs, and so it falles out to be more truly indeed the guift of God. Both of them therefore inuite vs: God promiseth heauenlie things, things of inestimable weight, things that are most assured; they proffer earthlie things only, which indeed are of no value, neither is it in their power to giue them vs when they wil. God, though he should promise vs nothing els but himself, is himself beautie, goodnes, happines, honour, & worth itself, and of himself a large reward for al the paynes we can bestow. Wherefore, when we turne our backs to God, when we preferre the wil of an other before his wil, we doe him infinit wrong. And what doome, what punishment doth he deserue, that is

Mat. 10. 37.

S. Bern. ser. 20. in Cant.

Christ and our parets calling vs seueral wayes, who is to be obeyed?

not ashamed, that is not afraid to preferre a mortal man before God immortal, darknes before light, durt and ashes before heauen? A punishment doubtles then which there is none greater, a punishment most iust and most sutable to the fault committed: *He is not worthie of me.* Nothing can fal more heauie vpon man then to be reiected as vnworthie of the companie of his God, no punishment be more iust, then that he should be reiected, seing he had so litle respect, as to preferre a creature before his Creatour, specially being inuited by him, and God offering himself so louingly vnto him.

S. Gregorie's iudgmēt in this case.

10. Let vs see therefore, what *S. Gregorie* prescribeth for the care of this so preiudicial an affection, and the euils, which, according as he declareth, rise of it. There be manie, sayth he, that doe not only not couet other mens goods, but forsake also whatsoeuer they possessed in the world; they contemne themselues, they seeke not after the glorie of this present life, they keep themselues off from these affections, and treade vnder foot almost al the prosperitie that smileth vpon them. And notwithstanding intangled yet in the bond of carnal affinitie, while they yeald indiscreetly to the loue of their kindred, oftimes they returne through affection to their alliance, to the things which they had ouercome euen with contempt of themselues. And while they loue their carnal friends more then needs, drawne to outward things, they become diuided from the parent of their hart. What doe those therefore but walk in a net, hauing been loosened from this present world by the perfection of life which they had begun, but intangled againe in it by the inordinate loue of earthlie consanguinitie? This is the reason, why Truth itself saith: If anie one come to me, and doe not hate his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, and moreouer his owne life, he cannot be my disciple. In which saying when after the hatred of our kindred he inferreth the hatred of our owne life, he euidently sheweth, that we are commanded to hate our kindred, as we are to hate ourselues; that drawing them to eternal things, and neglecting their carnal fauour, when it hindreth vs, we may learne to loue them with the art and temper of discretion, as it is fitting, and wholesomely to hate them, to the end hatred may learne so to rise by loue, that we may more truly loue them by hating them. For this cause it is sayd by Moyses: *He that shal say to his father and to his mother, I know you not, and to his brethren, I am not acquainted with you, and haue not knowne their children; these haue kept thy speech, and thy couenant, and obserued thy iudgements.* For he coueteth to be more familiarly acquainted with God, who for the loue of pietie desires not to know those, with whom he was before carnally acquainted. For the knowledge of God is to our great preiudice much diminished, if it be diuided by carnal acquaintance. A man must therefore seuer himself from his kindred and alliance, if he wil be truly vnited with the Father of al; to the end that whom he couragiously neglecteth for God, he may loue them the more solidly, the more he is vnacquainted with the soluble affection of carnal coniunction. Al this is out of *S. Gregorie*, and much more to the like effect, concluding in the end, that though this natural affection tempts vs and presse

S. Greg. 7. mor. c. 14.

Ioh. 18. 8.

Luc. 14. 26.

Deut 33. 9.

vs

vs hard sometimes, it is notwithstanding to be kept downe, and the way of vertue not to be forsaken for it. And to expresse it, bringeth a similitude out of holie Scripture of the two Cowes, which drew the wayne, in which the Arke of God was carried home; for they lowed after their calues which were shut vp at home from them, and yet went on, declining neither on the right hand nor on the left. So, sayth he, it is necessarie, that they march, who hauing put their neck vnder the yoak of the holie Law, carrie now the Arke of God by internal knowledge, condoling the necessities of their kindred, and yet not declining from the way of vprightnes which they haue begunne. 1. *Reg.* 6. 12.

11. We must needs grant, that al this is both truly and excellently wel spoken by *S. Gregorie*; yet because the temptation is violent and dangerous, and we see that manie runne hazard in it, and some also sometimes doe fal, let vs heare some more quick admonitions concerning it, not of our owne, but of such authours as haue been both admirably eloquent, and are to this day venerable for sanctitie and authoritie in the whole Church of God. *S. Hierome* shal be the foremost, who in his Epistle to *Heliodorus* hath this weightie saying: Hearken to the proclamation which thy King doth make: *He that is not with me, is against me: and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth.* Remember the day of thy inrolment, when buried with Christ in Baptisme, thou tookest thy oath in the Sacrament, that thou wouldst not spare father, nor mother, for his name. Behold the enemie laboureth to kil Christ in thy breast. Behold the camp of thy aduersarie sigheth after the pay which thou receauedst, when thou wert pressed. Though thy litle nephew hang about thy neck, though thy mother with her hayre loosse about her eares, and tearing her cloathes, shew thee her breasts at which she nursed thee, though thy father lay himself downe vpon the threshold, passe by them, treading on thy father, with drie eyes, escape to the standard of the Crosse. It is the onlie kind of pietie, to be in this cruel. There wil come, there wil come heerafter a day, when thou shalt returne conquerour into thy countrie, when thou shalt enter the heauenlie Hierusalem crowned like a man that hath been valiant. I know wel enough with what kind of fetters thou wilt say thou art hindered. I haue not a breast of iron, nor a hart that is hardned. I also haue passed by these things. Now thy forlorne sister hangeth vpon thee with her tender armes; now thy home-borne seruants with whom thou hast been bred til this day, say vnto thee: To whom dost thou now leaue vs to serue? Now she that was thy nurse, loaden with yeares, and thy foster-father next in natural pietie to thy owne father, cryeth: To whom dost thou leaue vs now, we are readie to dye? The loue of Christ, the feare of hel fire doth easily breake these irons. But the Scripture on the other side commandeth vs to obey our parents. But against whosoeuer loueth them aboue Christ, he setteth his owne soule. My enemie holdeth his sword at me to kil me, and shal I think of my mothers teares? Shal I forsake the warre-fare of Christ for my father, whom for Christ I owe not so much as the burial, which I owe vnto euerie bodie for Christ? *Peter* by his feareful manner of aduising, was a scandal to our Lord when he was to suffer. *Paul* answered his Brethren, that with-held him from going vp to Hierusalem: What make yee weeping, and troubling my hart? For I am readie not only to be bound, but to dye in Hierusalem for the name of our Lord IESVS CHRIST. This warlike ramme of pietie, by which Faith is shaken, must be

An exhortation of *S. Hierome.*

S. Hier. ep. 4.

Mat. 16. 23.

Act. 21. 13.

deaded with the rampire of the Ghospel: *These are my mother and my brethren, whosoeuer do the wil of my Father who is in heauen.* If they beleeue Christ, let them be on my side, when I am to fight for Christ; If they beleeue him not, let the dead burie their dead. Iudiciously spoken by *S. Hierome*, and specially in that he concludeth, that they that beleeue in Christ wil alwayes be readie to fauour anie bodie, that is going to the seruice of Christ: and consequently they that do not only not fauour such a busines, but hinder it, and diuert and stay people by al the deuises they can from it, what followeth, but that they do not beleeue at al, or scarce beleeue in him?

Mat. 12. 50.

S. Aug. ep. 38.

S. Augustin's discourse.

Luc. 12. 25.

12. Let vs heare, how *S. Augustin* with no lesse eloquence, and with equal weight of reason doth presse his friend *Laetus* to the contempt of the world. For after a long discourse he sayth thus: Let not parents be angrie that our Lord commandeth vs to hate them, seing the like is commanded vs of our owne life; for as heer it is commanded of our life, that we hate it with our parents, for Christ, so that which the same our Lord sayth in an other place, of our life, may fitly also agree to parents. *Who loueth*, sayth he, *his life, shal leese it.* For I wil also boldly say: Who loueth his parents, shal leese them. Behold the desire of the knowledge of truth, and of learning the wil of God in the holie Scriptures, hath seazed thy hart; the office of preaching the Ghospel doth draw thee. Our Lord beateth vp the drumme to the end we should watch in the camp; to the end we should build a towre, from which we may ouerlooke, and chase away the enemie of life euerlasting. The heauenlie trumpet calleth the souldier of Christ into the field; and shal a mother stay him? And what doth she say, what doth she alleadge? Perhaps the ten months, in which thou didst burden her womb, and the paynes of child birth, and the labour of bringing thee vp. Kil with this wholesome word, kil and destroy the faire speeches of thy mother, that thou mayst find her in life euerlasting. Remember that thou hate this in her, if thou louest her, if thou be a yong souldier of Christ, if thou hast layd the foundation of the towre; for this is but a carnal affection, and soundeth yet of the old man. The seruice of Christ exhorteth vs to kil this carnal affection in ourselues and in our kindred: and yet not so, that anie bodie ought to be vngrateful towards his parents, and scorne the benefits, by which he was borne into this life, and bred vp and maintayned, when they are reckoned vp vnto him: Let him obserue rather pietie euerie where. These take place, where greater things cal vs not away. The Church our Mother, is mother also to our mother. The Church conceaued vs of Christ; she was in labour with vs in the bloud of Martyrs she brought vs forth into euerlasting light; she nursed vs with the milk of faith, and doth stil maintayne vs, preparing more solid food for vs, and trembleth to see that you wil be yet crying like little ones without teeth. This mother spred throughout the whole world, is molested with so manie seueral annoyances of errours, that her children, now abortiues, stick not to wage cruel warre against her. By the rechlesnes also and sluggishnes of some that she holds in her bosome, she greeues to feele her limmes grow cold in manie places, & to be lesse fit to cherish her little ones. Frō whence therefore shal she looke for such help as is due and reasonable, but frō other children, from other mēbers of hers, of which number thou art one: Wilt thou therefore turne to carnal words, forsaking her necessities? doth not her complaint sound more lamentably in thy eares? doth not she shew thee bowels that are more deare,

deare breasts that are heauenlie? Thus speaketh *S. Augustin*, and much more to the same effect, which whosoeuer desireth to reade, may find in him.

S. Bernard admonitio S Bernard. epist. 104.

13. We wil passe to *S. Bernard*, as copious and eloquent as the former two, vpon the like subiect. For thus he writeth to one *Gualterus* a famous learned mā. What shal I answer thee to this? that thou leaue thy mother? it seemes to be vnnatural; that thou stay stil with her? but neither is this good for her, that she should be the destruction of her owne sonne. Perhaps, that thou serue the world, & Christ also? *But no mā can serue two maisters.* Thy mother desires that which is cōtrarie to thine, & consequently to her owne saluation. Choose therefore which thou wilt of the two either to stand for the wil of one, or for the saluation of both. But if thou loue her dearely, forsake her rather, least if thou forsake Christ to stay with her, she also perish for thee; other wise she that brought thee forth, hath deserued little at thy hands, if she perish for thy sake; doth she not perish for thy sake, if she kil him whō she brought forth? And this I say to condescend in some measure, & to haue some respect to thy carnal affection. But it is a faithful speech, and worthie of al acceptance, that though it be impious to contemne thy mother, yet to contemne her for Christ, is an act of greatest pietie. For he that sayth: *Honour thy father and mother*; he also sayd: *Who loueth father or mother more then me, is not worthie of me.* And thus much out of the ancient Fathers.

14. But no exhortation can be of more force, nor more worthie to be hearkned vnto, then the exāple of our Sauiour Christ, who though he had so worthie a mother, would notwithstāding remayne three dayes without her in *Hierusalem*, to execute that which was his Father's. This was a preamble to that which afterward he did in elder yeares, when he left to dwel and conuerse with her, that he might wholy giue himself to the seeking of mens saluation; wherin when once he was employed, and word was brought him, that his mother was without, expecting, he answered: *Which is my mother, and who are my brethren?* Finally, which is most considerable of al the rest, he chose to suffer death before her face; to teach vs by al these passages of his life, that we must not for respect to our carnal kindred, forgo the studie of vertue and perfection.

The exāple of our Sauiour.

Matt. 12. Iohn. 20.

15. And how forcible this his example ought to be with al, hath been particularly declared vnto vs, by that which hapned to one *Albertus*, a yong man borne in *Germanie*, of noble extraction, for he was sonne to the Count of *Falkenburg* & allyed to the King of *France*; and being sent vnto him, to be brought vp at *Paris* with the sonnes of that King, he chose rather the heauenlie warrefare, and caused himself to be inrolled into the Order of *S. Dominick*, which was then in a manner newly begun, about the yeare of our Lord One thousand two hundred & thirtie. When this newes was brought to his father, though he were now an ancient man, he could not contayne himself, but came instantly post to *Paris* with a great retinue, & vsed al the endeauours and al the art he could, to shake his resolution of his sonne (for he was his onlie sonne) but al in vayne, the loue of God hauing hardned the hart of the yong man against al carnal loue, and al the fayre promises and allurements his father could inuent. But heer was not an end: for he had yet a stronger combat with one *Theodorick* a cosen German of his, who pearced with greef vpon this accident, vsed al meanes possible to weaken the purpose of his yong cosen, by teares, by entreaties, by argument, by putting him in mind of his mothers loue and greef, telling him that she was now either dead, or vpon

the point of death for sorrow. It hapned that they were sitting right before an Image of our Sauiour Crucified, his mother standing on the one side, and *S. Iohn* on the other. *Albert* therefore fixing his eyes vpon that picture, and pointing at it with his fingar, spake thus to *Theodorick*: Behold Cosen, the Sonne of God, when he saw his mother and his cosen German, both of them so deare vnto him as you know they were, pearced with the sword of greef, would not yet come downe from the Crosse, though he could easily haue done so, but to his owne and their exceeding torment remayned in it til death. Wherefore, I also wil neuer forgoe this Crosse of a Religious life to which I haue climed, though I should see both my mother whom you tel me of, and you my Cosen german to fal downe dead at my feete: Rather, Cosen, come you also vpon this Crosse with me, and shake off the snares and fetters of this world, in which you stand intangled with such infinit danger. What hapned? This feruent speach of the yong man struck so deep, that *Theodorick* resolued presently to forsake the world, and entred into the same Order of *S. Dominick*, the whole cittie standing amazed at it, so much the more, because he was wonderfully giuen before to the humours of this world, and al kind of vanitie.

S. Anto. p. 3. hist. Tit. 24. c. 9. §. 7.

16. That which *S. Antonine* relateth in this kind is no lesse admirable. In the same cittie of *Paris*, a famous Doctour entred into the Order of *S. Francis*. His mother, that was a very poore woman and in no final want, among other good offices which she had done him, had maintayned him at his booke by the labour of her hands. She therefore with manie teares, and much crying-out, began to lament her losse, and the miserie she was brought vnto by the entrance of her sonne into Religion, and stuck not to taxe her sonne, and al the Fathers of that Order, as people that dealt vnnaturally, and very vniustly with her. Her sonne being troubled with these her clamours, began to stagger in his resolution; and praying before a Crucifix, and as it were asking leaue that he might go out againe to releeue his mother, he saw as it were the bloud springing out of our Sauiour's side, and withal heard this voyce: *I maintayned thee at a dearer rate then thy mother; wherefore thou must not forsake me for thy mother.* Wherewith astonished, and withal strengthned, he quite stopped his eares to al the entreatings and complaints his mother could euer after make.

An other example.

Against them that hinder their children or kinsfolk from Religion

CHAP. XXXV.

HItherto we haue done our best endeauour to encourage them that are called to a Religious course of life, and to put hart into them to withstand the importunitie of their kindred. It remayneth that we say something, whereby parents and kinsfolk on the other side, may be kept off from vsing such importunitie. For so, as in a battaile, the one armie being

weakened, and the other reinforced, the victorie wil be the more assured. And what can anie man say more forcible to keepe them off, then that wittingly, or vnwittingly they fight in verie deed against God himself; a warre both impious, and that which must needs follow, fatal to themselues: For without al doubt to impugne the counsel of God, to destroy that which he doth build, to scatter that abroad which he doth gather, to cut off the souldiers which he doth muster vnder his Colours, is nothing els, but to ioyne in league with the Diuel, and to wage warre against God; which, as I sayd, is both an enormous offence, and to them that are so bold as to attempt it, infinitly preiudicial. And accordingly God doth very often shew, how highly he is displeased with this sinne, by strange and most euident punishments. The fight against God.

2. *Pontianus* bondslaue to a cruel barbarous maister, as *S. Gregorie of Tours* recounteth, inflamed with the loue of God, fled into a Monasterie. His maister redemanded him with wonderful importunitie, & he could not be denyed, because he challeged that which was his owne, but suddenly he was strucken blind; and acknowledging the hand of God in it, was maruelously sorie for his fault, and easily gaue his consent, that though the man was his slaue, he might remaine where he was in the seruice of God; yet notwithstanding receaued not his sight againe, til *Pontianus* had layd his hands vpon him, that the cause of his blindnes might be the more apparent: And yet, as I sayd, the man required but that which was iust and reasonable. For as *S. Thomas* and Diuines agree, a slaue cannot be taken from his seruice without his Maister's consent; yea though he make his profession in Religion, it is voyd and of no force, how soeuer inuiolable that bond of vow is in other cases. If therefore God were so much offended, for the redemanding of a slaue, and shewed his anger by so greeuous a punishment, haue we not reason to think he wil be much more offended, if a man hinder his kinsman, or his brother, or a father his owne child from Religion, hauing, for as much as concernes this point, no power at al ouer him? And are seuerely punished. *Greg. Tur. de vita Pont. c. 5.* *S. Thom. 2. 2. q. vlt. art. 6.*

3. *S. Ambrose*, so worthie an authour, relateth of a yong Gentlewoman (that was then yet liuing when he wrote the relation) noble, as he sayth, in the world, but much more noble in God, that flying to the Altar, out of the desire she had to liue a Religious life, her kindred were much against it, and pressed her to the cõtrarie, offering her a great marriage, and promising mountaines of wealth and worldlie commodities; but she remayned constant and vnmoueable. Wherupon one of them more bold then the rest, spake ruffly vnto her in this manner: *What? if thy father were now liuing, dost thou think he would suffer thee to liue vnmarried? Perhaps*, sayth she, *he therefore dyed, that he might not hinder me.* And not long after, this man dyed, and euerie one was so fully perswaded, that he was taken away for this his importunitie, that the rest fearing what might happen to themselues, began to farther her in her request, though before they had laboured so much against it. *S. Ambr. l. 1. de Virgin.*

4. But that which *S. Hierome* recounteth in his Epistle to *Læta*, is yet more terrible; and these are his verie words: *Prætextata*, in her time a noble Matron, by commandment of her husband *Hymetius*, who was vncle by the father's side to the Virgin *Eustochium*, changed her apparel, and wearing, and kembed after the fashion of the world her hayre, which she had neglected, coueting to ouercome both the resolution of the Virgin, and the desire of the mother. And behold the same *S. Hier. epist. ad Læta.*

„ same night she sees in her sleep an Angel, that came vnto her, threatning with a „ terrible voyce to punish her, and breaking forth into these words: Were thou „ so bold as to preferre the commandment of thy husband before Christ? How „ durst thou handle the head of the virgin of God with thy sacrilegious hands? „ which euen now shal wither, that thus tormented thou mayst feele what thou „ hast done, and the fift month being ended thou shalt be carried to hel. And if thou persever in thy wicked fact, thou shalt be bereaued both of thy husband and of thy children. All this in order, as it was told her, was fulfilled, and speedie death signed and sealed the late repentance of the miserable woman. So doth Christ reuenge the profaners of his temple; so doth he defend his iewels and precious ornaments. This is the relation of *S. Hierome*.

5. And we might bring manie like examples of later yeares; but what can we bring more substantial to our purpose then this which we haue sayd, or out of a more substantial authour? Wherefore it cannot be denied, but this kind of sinne hath been alwayes almost reuenged by God with present and greeuous punishments. So that we see the saying of the Apostle fulfilled also in this: *If anie one violate the Temple of God, God wil destroy him.* For if this be true of a temple of stone, dedicated to his Diuine Maiestie, how much more true wil it be in a deuout Soule, which is a Temple farre more holie and more deare to God? Wherefore if parents be so eager vpon this businesse, because they loue their children, and think it hard to want them, they must consider that they cannot doe their children, whom they loue so deerly, more harme in anie thing, and consequently that it is not loue but hatred; and if they doe it for their owne comfort and solace in this life, they haue iust cause to feare, first least they offend God, and secondly least they fayle of that comfort and benefit which they seeke.

2. Cor. 3. 17.

How greeuous an offence it is to hinder people frō Religiō *S. Anſel ep. ad Godef.*

6. And we shal not greatly wonder, that God doth so seuerely punish this offence, if we consider the greeuousnes of it, which *S. Anselme* layeth open before vs in one of his Epistles in these words: If he that separateth the pretious from the base, that is, a soule from the world, be as the mouth of God: he, whose mouth and hand draweth out a soule, that adhereth to God, to the world, what shal he be? Shal not that fal vpon him: which our Lord sayth: *He that gathereth not with me, scattereth: and he that is not with me, is against mee?* And *S. Chrysostom* laying load vpon this offence, reckoneth how manie degrees of malice this one sinne contayneth. The first degree of malice against our neighbour, sayth he, is to neglect the beast or cattle of our enemie, if they chance to stray, or fal into the mire; and this careles nes was forbidden by the law of God. The second, not to releeue our enemies themselues, if they be in want. The third, to contemne our neighbour, if he be a stranger. The fourth, to contemne those that are of our acquaintance. The fift, to neglect not the bodies only, but the soules of our Brethren that are perishing. The sixt, to neglect our children that are in distresse. The seauenth, neither to looke after them ourselues, nor to get others to doe it. The eight, to hinder them that offer themselues to help them. The ninth, not only to hinder them, but voluntarily to oppose their saluation. Behold to what height of malice and crueltie in *S. Iohn Chrysostom's* opinion, this prepostrous loue of parents doth bring them, that thinking to doe their children a pleasure, they become parricides, and cōmit

Luc. 11. 23.

S. Iohn Chryſoſt. l. 3. cōtra vitup. vita Mon.

Exod. 21. Matt. 22.

so much

so much the more barbarous murther vpon them, as the life of the soule is better then the life of the bodie. Against which crueltie *S. Bernard* doth deseruedly exclaime in this manner: O hard-harted father, ô cruel mother, ô barbarours & impious parẽts, yea not parents but perẽptorie man-killers, whose sorrowes are the safetie of their children; whose comfort, their destruction; who had rather I should perish with them, then raigne without them. ô strange abuse! The house is on fire, the flame singeth my back; and when I am flying, I am forbidden to go out; when I am escaping away, they perswade me to returne. And they perswade me that remayne in the fire, and out of obstinate madnes, and mad obstinacie, wil not shunne the danger. O furie! fye vpon it. If you slight your owne death, why do you desire mine? If, I say, you care not for your owne saluation, what auayleth it you to persecute mine? why do not you rather follow me that am flying, that you may not burne? doth it ease your payne, if you kil me with you? and is this your onlie feare, least you perish alone? What comfort can he that burneth, afford them that burne? What comfort, I say, is it to the damned, to haue fellowes of their damnation? or what remedie is it for them that die, to see others dying? *S. Bernard epist. 111.*

7. Parents therefore, to the end that by opposing the wholesome counsels of their children, they may not fal into these mischiefes which *S. Bernard* layeth before vs (and that which I say of parents, al friends, and kinsfolk, and al others must take as spoken to themselues) let them duly weigh these considerations and arme themselues with them, as also by the heroical examples of such as haue not only couragiously borne the losse of their children, but reioyced in it for the loue of God. Let them set before their eyes first that noble mother of the Macchabees, which in one howre lost not one or two, but seauen sonnes; and did not leese them so as they stil-remayned aliue, though separated from her, as in Religion, but saw them torne in peeces before her eyes, and taken from her by most barbarours torments. And yet what sayd she, what manner of exhortation did she vse vnto them? *She exhorted euerie one of them*, as the Scripture speaketh, *flourely, in her countrey-language, filled with wisedome, and instilling manlie courage to her womanish thought, sayd vnto them: I know not how you appeared in my womb*, and as followeth, al ful of noble aduertisements. The example of the mother of the *Maccabees*. *2. Macth 7.*

8. *S. Felicitas* in the New Testament patterned her vertue; and as *S. Gregorie* discourseth, hauing as manie sonnes as the other, *She did feare to leaue them behind her in flesh, as much as carnal parents are wont to feare, least by death they should send them before them.* And the mother of *Melithon* may be ranked with them; for he being one of the fourtie Martyrs, and the yongest among thẽ, in the prime of his youth, she seing him lye with his thighs broken in peeces and yet aliue, exhorted him to cõstãcie; & moreouer when the rest were carted away, she tooke him vp vpõ her shoulders, & following the cart, put him with his cõpanions when he was dead. *S. Felicitas. S. Greg. hom 1. in Euang.* The mother of *S. Melithon. S. Basil or. de 40. Mar.*

9. What shal I say of *Abrahã*, who did not, as these women, not hinder the putting to death of his sonne by the hand of another, but vpon the commandment of God did not stick with his owne hands to put his sonne to death, and the sonne which was al the hope he had of posteritie? This is a resolution which beseemes a faithful man, specially a Christian: This is constancie required in the Ghospel, to desire rather that our children obey God then ourselues; not, as we see now the fashion is, to diuert them, and by al the craft and deuises possible to peruert them, when they are going, not to death, but to life, and to a farre more *Abraham Genes. 22.*

pleasant

pleasant life, and to think they haue done a great exploit, if by what meanes soeuer they can, they ouerthrow a man's resolution, that is aspiring to Religious perfection.

Anna Samuels mother. 1. Reg. 1.

10. *Anna* Mother to *Samuel* did not so, but after manie yeares of sterilitie hauing receaued a sonne, offered him glad and ioyful in the Temple when he was but three yeares old. And God did not suffer himself to be ouercome by her in liberalitie, but for one sonne gaue her manie, as it were the interest-money of that one which she had lent him.

Paula. S. Hierome, ep. 27.

10. *Paula* that famous Roman Matron, was in the light of the Ghospel not inferiour vnto her. *S. Hierome* doth highly extol her, because the desire which she had to see her country, was only to the end she might see her sonne, her daughter in law, her grandchild that had renounced the world, to serue Christ, which in part she obtayned. Such also was (as we read) the mother of *S. Bonauenture*; for she vowed him to the Order of *S. Francis* when he was yet but an infant, and he fulfilling that vow of hers, became so great a man as we know he was. The like hapned to *S. Andrew* Bishop of *Fiesoli*, a very holie man: for his parents hauing no children, had made a vow that if God would send them a sonne, they would offer him to the Order of the *Carmelit-Friars*; and they had this *Andrew*; but when he came to yeares, misled by the libertie and licentiousnes of this world, he had quite other thoughts in his head, but that his mother, beyond her sex and the affections of a mother, wonne him by her counsel and earnest exhortations, to dedicate himself to God in the flowre of his youth.

The mother of S. Bonauenture.

S. Andrew Bishop.

S. Bernard's mother. Guil. in vita Ber. l. 1. c. 3.

11. I must confesse there be but few examples of this nature (men are so weake in this point) yet those that are, are sufficient to moue anie man liuing: and particularly that which we read of *S. Bernards* mother, which also in reason ought to weigh the more with vs, because she was dead, and in heauen, and could not be deceaued in her iudgement. It is recorded therefore, that when he began to think of leauing the world, and laboured withal to draw as manie of his brethren and kinsfolk as he could to the same resolution, a yonger brother of his called *Andrew*, of a fierie spirit, as yong souldiers vse to be, shewed himself wonderful backward in it, til altered vpon a heauenlie Vision, he cryed out: *I see my mother.* For he saw his mother, with a pleasing and cheerful countenance, giuing her children the ioy vpon so wholesome a deliberation; and he was not alone that saw her, but *S. Bernard* also. And if she had been aliue at that time she would haue done no lesse; for they write of her that she was so deuout a woman, that she did alwayes presently offer her children to God in the Church, so soone as they were borne, and brought them vp euer after as if she had not bred them for the world, but for Religion. And yet parents may learne by her, of what opinion they shal be in this matter after death, when they shal see playnly before their eyes the eternitie of the life to come, and how quickly al things passe away in this world. How wil they then lament and bewayle themselues, if they haue been the cause that a sonne or daughter of theirs hath fallen from so great a good into so great miserie? Let them therefore do that now while they are heer, which they would certainly do, if they were suffered, as she was, to returne from that life to giue aduise to their children, since they must as certainly beleeue the things of the other life, as if they had seen them with their eyes.

12. Finally, if they desire that we apply some kind of cure to themselues; to

strengthen

strengthen them on this opposition of the flesh against the spirit, they may consider these few things following; First that when they offer one or two or more of their children to God, in truth they giue him nothing of their owne, but make restitution vnto him of that which was his before. For as we aduised children before, to the end to ouercome the natural loue to their parents, to think with themselues, how smal a thing it is which they receaue from them, so, to the end that parents also be not ouercome with too much affection towards their children, and that they may with more ease and more cheerfully offer them to God, it behoueth them to remember, that they are not theirs, but God's, in a māner almost, as an image of stone, or wood, is not the grauing-iron's, nor a picture, the pencil's, but both the artificer's. So that when God redemandeth them, he vseth his owne right, and challengeth but his owne; and whosoeuer wil retayne them, retayneth an other's goods, which is a kind of theft, or rather Sacriledge, because that which he takes, is from God. For that which *S. Gregorie* sayth, he takes, is true; While vnaduisedly we hold them back, that are making hast to the seruice of Almightie God, we are found to denie him some thing, who grants vs al things.

Parents must consider that their children are more God's thē theirs.

S. Greg. 4. regist. Epist. 44.

13. This is that which the mother of the Macchabees, whom we spake of not long since, had before her eyes and made open profession of, when she encouraged herself and her children in these words: *I did not giue you spirit, and soule, and life; nor did I knit together the limmes of euerie one of you; but the Creatour of the world, who framed man's natiuitie, and found the beginning of al, and wil restore vnto you againe spirit, with mercie, and life, as now you neglect your selues for his lawes.* And the same account al parents must make in the like occasion. For so they wil find that they wil leese nothing, by leesing their children for the seruice of God. For thus they must reason with themselues: What should I do, if this child of mine should be taken from me by sicknes, or in the warres, or by some other accident of manie, which the life of man is dayly subiect vnto? Should I then also storme against God, by whose appointment al things happen? How much better is it for him and me, that he liue in the house of God, in seruice of so great a Prince?

2. Mach. 7.

VVhat vvould they doe, if their child should die.

14. If it be the absence of their children that troubles them so much, that they enioy not the companie of them, whom they loue so deerly, first this is too effeminate and too womanish a kind of loue, not to be able to endure their absence: when it is so beneficial vnto them. Secondly, how manie be there, that vpon diuers occasions neuer see their children in manie yeares, either because they are marchant-venturers, or serue some where in the warres, or beare office in the Common-wealth: and their parents are content they should be from them, preferring the benefit and commoditie of their children, before their priuate comfort?

Absence of children cannot in reason trouble them.

14. Finally, the admonitions which *S. Iohn Chrysostom* giues vpon this subiect, are worthie to be considered, that seing people do, and suffer, so manie diuers things to purchase great estates for their children, and to leaue them rich, they cannot leaue them better prouided, nor more wealthie, then if they bring them vp to Religion and true deuotion; for these are the riches which stick by a man al his life-time, and after he is dead, and put their possessours in safetie and beyond al dāger. Besides that, a man is then most maister of his children, when he

They cannot prouide better for their children. *S. Iohn Chry. c. 3. cont. vitup. vit. Mō.*

giues them to God; for God is better able to gouerne and order them, and wil haue greater care ouer them. Wherefore if we make account that when a Prince takes one of our children from vs, and placeth him in some great office in the kingdome, it is a farre greater aduancement for him, then if he had been bred al the dayes of his life at home, and parents ordinarily do think themselues honoured by it, and are glad of it; much more when God calleth anie of them to his seruice: And consequently parents ought to be very willing that anie of their children may serue in so heauenlie a seruice, not bringing them vp into the temple, as *Anna* did her *Samuel*, but as it were into heauen itself, there to be dedicated to the diuine seruice with the Angels. For Religious people wayte vpon God with the Angels; in which respect also their parents themselues haue greater honour and happines by them, then if they had remayned in the world. Thus sayth *S. Iohn Chrisostome*, and is certainly in the right.

The greatest preferment that can be, to serue God.

15. For if Christians haue that Faith and light in them, which their name makes shew of, they should not only not be sorrie, but greatly reioyce both in their sonnes behalf, and their owne, that God doth vouchsafe to do them so great a pleasure, as to take a child of theirs into his seruice, seing to serue him, is to raigne. For to seeke no further, wheras the AEgyptians anciently did worship a Crocodile for their God, if it had hapned at anie time, that anie of their children was deuoured by a Crocodile, they thought it a heynous offence, to shead so much as one teare for him, rather they made great signes of ioy, and were wont to make it a Holiday, as if they had receaued in it a great benefit. In what blindnes therefore is that Christian, that shal mourne if a child of his be called to the seruice of the true and liuing God, being called not to death, and so miserable a death, but to the happiest and pleasantest life that can be?

16. Wherefore let vs giue eare to the wholesome and reasonable aduise of S. *Basil*: Seing, sayth he, so great rewards are offered them that follow the warfare of Christ, let fathers willingly permit their sonnes, and mothers their daughters, to come to him, and bring their children cheerfully themselues vnto him, and let them reioyce at the hope of immortal goods, wherof they shal be partakers togeather with their children, and endeauour to haue them their patrons in the sight of God. Let vs take heed, I beseech you, least we shew ourselues to be too streight-harted in this vnseasonable loue of our children; and let not the labours fright vs, to which they seeme to go, but rather reioyce that they shal meete with so great glorie. Let vs offer to God, that which we haue receaued of him, that we also may haue part of the glorie and commendation of our children, offering ourselues togeather with them. For, they that proceed in this cheerful manner, and persener thus constantly, may haue that of the Psalme fitly sayd of them: *Blessed are you of our Lord, who made heauen and earth*; and may pray as Moyses; *Lord blesse their works; breake the pride of them, that haue resisted them.*

S. *Basil prefat. in Asceti.*

Ps. 113. 15. *Deut.* 33. *secund.* 70.

An answer to them that say, they cannot know when it is a true vocation of God.

CHAP. XXXVI.

HEre remayneth yet a question and doubt, not vnlike to that which we find propounded in the Psalme: *Manie say who wil shew vs good things?* And we may answer with that which followeth in that verie Psalme: *The light of thy countenance, ô Lord; is signed vpon vs.* For we shal meete with some, that while they are breeding these wholesome purposes of a Religious life, perswade themselues that they are inwardly so disposed in mind towards God, that if they knew certainly his blessed wil, they would readily follow it; but they pretend, it doth not cleerly appeare vnto them, what his wil is. And some indeed say so from their hart, others take it as a colour to shadow their imperfection; because in verie truth it goes against the hayre with them, to breake with the world, and forsake the pleasures therof. Both must be informed, that the calling of God is not so secret and hidden a thing, but rather playne and easie to be vnderstood, wherof *S. Bernard* is witnes, who sayth thus: Most certainly the conuersion of soules, is the work of the voice of God, and not of man; and there needs no great labour to come to heare this voyce: It is rather a labour to stop thy eares that thou mayst not heare it. For this voice offereth it self vnto vs, it presseth in vpon vs, and ceaseth not to knock at euerie man's doore. For it is not only a voice of vertue, but a ray of light, shewing men their sinnes, and togeather lightning the hidden things of darknes. *Psal. 4. 6.*

The vocatiõ of God is playne. *Bern. de Conuers. ad cler.* and 2.

2. Which testimonie of *S. Bernard*, is seconded by playne and euident reason; because God calling vs to the intent we should come vnto him, his calling were in vaine, vnlesse he called vs so, as we might vnderstand him. For what Maister, doth euer giue order to haue a thing done by his seruant, but he deliuereth his mind so, that he may be vnderstood by him? And they that teach in schooles, their busines being no other but to instruct and informe their schollars; must not only deliuer such things as their schollars may be capable of, but also in the manner of their deliuerie, they must frame themselues to their cõceit and abilities, and if need require, often repeate the same things ouer and ouer againe, & explicate that which may seeme obscure vnto them; and if they proceed not in this manner, it is a fault in them, which fault cannot be in God. And though this be most certain, yet I wil heer set downe certain rules and directions, which may leade vs to the truth of this busines, without danger of mistaking, if first I declare, what errours and dangers are to be auoyded in it.

Rashly to runne vpō a fetled course of life, is a great abuse.

3. First therefore, wheras the setling of a man's self in a course, which must last al the dayes of his life, is one of the greatest businesses, which a man hath in this world, and which needeth best aduise, we see notwithstanding that commonly men carrie themselues more carelesly and negligently in this, then in anie other thing; though in anie other busines, if through negligence or ignorance the matter be mistaken, the losse reacheth no farther then that particular thing; wheras if we erre in this, the whole course and frame of our life must needs hang awry, this being as it were the hinge vpon which it must beare. And yet commonly men are so careless of this point, that they rush into what course of life soeuer comes next at hand by chance, or fal presently vpon that which the least occasion or hope of commoditie presents vnto them. Some carried with the streame of the world, take the way which seemeth to leade most directly to honour or wealth, perswading themselues that, that is best, because commonly people are so perswaded. Others taking example by their parents, and following the principles which they instil into them, take the same course, which they haue done before them, and in that which they are borne, in that they continue al their life time; Which is al the reason which most men haue, why they apply themselues, some to the Law, others to the studie of Physick, others to serue at Court, or in the warres, or to traffick and marchand it; and to be short, there is so litle choice made, or aduise, and counsel taken in this busines, that it is an vsual thing among al sorts of men, to leape into that which is next, or which they take a phancie to, be it what it wil, or which some chance, or accident or other hath cast vpon them. Which rash and casual manner of proceeding makes that it is no wonder, to see most men repent themselues of the course of life which they haue vndertaken, or if they doe not repent themselues, yet they fal into infinit errours by reason of it. Wheras if they would vnderstand what reason is, first when they come to yeares of discretion, or not long after, they should take leasure, to bethink themselues, and seriously to consider, what is the end of man for which he was created, to wit, for eternal glorie, and how this glorie is the thing which we must al seeke after; and wheras the seueral courses and occupations of this life, are not only necessarie for the vpholding of this common wealth of the world, but are wayes also to that eternal glorie, for which we are made, euerie one must make choice and enter vpon that way, which may best leade him to the final end of that eternal Beatitude, and may be most pleasing to our soueraigne Lord and God, which is the cheefest thing we ought to ayme at, and indeed the vpshot of al. For it is not the part of a seruant, such as we al are, nor can it belong vnto him, to enter vpon what place or office in his maister's house he wil himself, but to take that which his maister ordaineth for him. And this which euerie man ought to doe when he first comes to yeares, and in that crosse-way, as I may say, at which he then arriues, if he haue not done it then, and consequently haue fallen into some errour in the choice which he made of his course of life (if it be not such a state as matrimonie, or some other which cannot be altered, by reason of the obligation annexed vnto it) he must proceed, as in al other

The grōdes vpon which we should settle our resolutiōs.

other errours, rather to correct them, then to goe further on in them: for it is better to be at some losse by going back againe, and sit downe with it, then by stil going forwards in our former errours, be farther and farther from remedying them.

4. Wherefore, to the end we may at first settle our estate as it ought, or afterwards take the right course in altering it, if anie alteration be to be made in it, first we must bring ourselues to an Indifferencie, and so quiet our mind, that we hang not more after one thing then after another, but desire meerly to fulfil the wil of God, what soeuer it be. For so it is the dutie of a good seruant to doe, as I sayd before; and if he carrie not himself in this manner, he cannot be sayd to seeke the wil of God, but his owne. But whosoeuer doth this, shal quickly see the heauens cleer of al cloudes, and receaue the light from God, which he desireth. And this is a rule which *Climacus* also prescribeth in these words: In searching the wil of God, we must needs dispose ourselues so, as al our owne wil cease, and leane on neither side; for when it shal be wholy purged of al self-affection, then it wil be fit to receaue the inspirations of God. Indifferencie necessarie before we choose. *Clim. grad. 26.*

5. Another rule is, that we must not in this business desire or expect Reuelations or Miracles, or anie extraordinarie signe or token aboue the course of nature; because God hauing giuen vs by nature an vnderstanding and the light of Reason, which togeather with Faith and the Grace of God doth sufficiently shew vs, what is fitting for vs to doe for saluation, his pleasure is, that we make vse of that light, and by it he speaketh and manifesteth vnto vs, what he wil haue vs to doe. Wherefore they mightily mistake themselues, who, when they aduise vpon these things, would haue an Angel come to them from heauen, or at least require some such signe of the wil of God, as may be altogeather vnquestionable. For we ought not to doe thus, nor desire anie thing beyond the ordinarie custome and manner of proceeding of God with men. And the manner of proceeding of God is, that though he assist vs with his light, it is the light of Faith, not of cleer sight, and consequently there remaineth something that is obscure in it. And *S. Ignatius*, the Father and Founder of our Order, was wont to say a thing which is both true and prudently obserued by him, and worthie to be noted, that, if we were to aske signes of God, we should rather aske them and desire more euident signes of his wil, to remaine in the world, then to embrace the Euangelical Counsels. For our Sauiour himself hath euidently exhorted vs to his Counsels, and on the other side layd before vs as euidently the excessiue dangers and difficulties which are in a secular state, and in wealth, and honour which the world is so greedie of; so that, if we wil conclude right, reuelations and extraordinarie tokens of his wil, are to be required rather for a man to venture vpon the world, then to enter into Religion. VVe must not expect Miracles or Reuelations. Reuelatiõs rather to be desired for to remayne in the world.

6. Moreouer, as our soule hath two powers; *Wil* and *Vnderstanding*, so commonly there be two kinds of vocation; The one, when our wil is inflamed with the loue of a Religious life, and a man finds himself carried vnto it without stop or stay, or making any question of it, but goes on Two kinds of vocations.

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with exceeding pleasure in thinking of it. The other, when our *Vnderstanding* is enlightned, and therin we discouer the vanitie and dangers of this world, and see cleerly on the other side the quiet, the safenes, the vnualuable treasures of a Religious life, though perhaps our affection be somewhat dul, and not so readie to follow that which reason shewes vs. This second manner of vocation, to say the truth, is the better of the two, and more generally approued by those that are wise and experienced in these businesses, then the other which consistes only in a feruent motion of our wil; for being grounded in the light of Reason and Faith, it is lesse subiect to errour, and more like to last; and as they also obserue, more noble; because Reason and Vnderstanding, is that wherin man differs from a beast, and excelles al corporal creatures: Wheras the slownes and barkwardnes of our wil may be holpen diuers wayes, and manie motiues and incitements there are to quicken it, if we reflect vpon them, and cast them seriously in our mind.

A man may be truly called, though he find no violent motion.

7. By which also we may see, that they are likewise in an errour, that think they are neuer called of God, vnlesse they feele such extraordinarie motions towards Religion in their minds, that they burne with desire of it, and find themselues carried towards it, without anie trouble or difficultie. For the lumpish and earthlie condition of our nature, wil not suffer vs to mount so high, without labour and difficultie; and the Diuine wisedome, is not wont to destroy nature, but to help it; nor to kil our enemies outright, that we may haue no bodie to fight withal, but to giue vs grace and strength to ouercome by fighting, because this is more beneficial for vs manie wayes, and more wholesome.

Particulers about our choyce.

8. Agreed therefore, that we must vse the discourse and iudgement which God hath giuen vs, thereby to find out his wil; the way and meanes which directours of spirit, tel vs we must take in it, is this: First, as I sayd, we must lay before vs the end, for which we were created, which is but one, to wit, by louing and seruing God, to come to euerlasting happines. Secondly, we must present to our consideration, al the courses of life which are fitting to be aduised vpon, and examine and search diligently into euerie one of them, what help, what inconuenience is in it, compared with the final end we ayme at, and resolue vpon that, which both in it self, and for vs, is absolutly the best; as they that are to take a iourney, choose the easiest, the shortest, and the most commodious wayes. Thirdly, we must beare in mind, that most certainly the day wil come when we shal die, and giue a strict account to God of al our negotiations; and consequently in reason we must now doe that, which then we would wish we had done; and choose that, which then we would giue anie thing we had chosen; For what follie were it, in a busines of such weight, to carrie our selues so, as we know we shal repent it at last in vayne?

Retirement necessarie.

9. A third thing, which they that desire to know the wil of God, and hearken to what he calleth them vnto, must vnderstand, is, that they must not think to come to the knowledge of it, in the midst of the vanities, and distractions, and multiplicities of busines of the world. But let them withdraw themselues a litle out of that noyse, that they may haue their eares free, and heare what their Lord, their God, speaketh to them; and first of al, if there be no reason to the contrarie, let them purge their soule by a general confession

And a general confession.

of al

of al their sinnes, for that wil be a great help for the light of God to come more freely into them, al cloudes of darknes being dispersed. Then let them giue themselues somewhat more then ordinarily to prayer and meditation, to rayse their harts from earthlie, to heauenlie things, and finally present themselues before the Throne of God, as a schollar before his Maister, pliable, attentiue, desirous of this heauenlie doctrine. For what wonder is it, if we heare not the voice of God, when our mind and soule is otherwise busied, and taken vp with the cares, and delights, and loue of earthlie things buzzing continually in our eares. To which effect, *S. Bernard* writeth to one *Thomas*, that was in the like consultation about leauing the world: "O deerely beloued, if thou prepare thy inward eare to the voyce of God, sweeter then honie and the honie-combe, fly the cares which are without, that hauing thy inward senses free and vacant, thou also mayst say with *Samuel*: *Speake, ô Lord, because thy seruant heareth.* This voyce doth not sound in the market-place, it is not heard abroad. A priuate counsel, requireth priuate audience; it wil certainly giue ioy to thy hearing, and gladnes if thou harken vnto it with a iudicious eare."

And prayer.

S. Bernard epist. 107.

10. And yet we must adde one thing more, to wit, that whosoeuer desireth this light, must not only, as *S. Bernard* aduiseth, come neare to God, but come with a mind resolued absolutly to do whatsoeuer God shal say vnto him. For there be those that do not deale vprightly and sincerely with God, but desire of curiositie, to know his wil, not to performe it, but to know it, and to be thought in some sort to haue done their dutie; but they are so farre wide from being discharged of their dutie by it, as they incurre a greater fault, as a seruant that knoweth his maister's wil, and doth it not. And moreouer this verie thing, is a meanes that God doth not giue them that light which he would, because he sees, that it wil be in vayne to giue it them, and to their preiudice; which is that which we reade in the Psalme: *Good vnderstanding to them that do it*; because God giues a good vnderstanding, to them that do, or are resolued to do, that which they vnderstand, as *S. Gregorie* noteth in these words: He that wil vnderstand what he hath heard, let him hasten to fulfil by work, that which hitherto he hath been able to heare.

And a resolution to doe that vvhich God shal tel vs.

Psal. 110. 10.

S. Greg. hom. 23 in Euāg.

10. A fourth thing, which we must beare in mind, and must needs be a great setling and comfort vnto vs, in this consultation, is, that euerie instinct which moues a man to a Religious course of life, cannot be, but of the Holie-Ghost. This is a position of *S. Thomas*, both in the booke which he writ against them, that withdraw people from Religion, and in the second part of his summe of Diuinitie, where he sayth that he that cometh to Religion, cannot doubt but that he is moued therunto by God, *whose it is* (as the Prophet speaketh) *to leade into the right way*, supposing he knowes in his cōscience, he hath no finaller end in it, but comes out of a desire of vertue, and of the seruice of God. Wherefore when the scripture saith vnto vs: *Try the spirits if they be of God*, it is to be vnderstood of spirits, that be doubtful, & is to be practised by them, that haue the charge of admitting others into Religion; for they not knowing with what mind and intention people offer themselues, do well to try their myrits. And he saith further, that if it should happen that Sathan transfiguring himself into an Angel of

A motion to Religiō cannot but be of God.

S. Tho. ep. 17 c. 10. 2. 2. q. vlt. ar. vlt. Psa. 142. 10

1. Io. 4. 1.

light should moue vs to Religion, we haue no cause to be afraid; first because as long as he suggesteth that, which is common for good Angels to put into our mind, there is no danger; for we are not forbidden to benefit ourselues by our enemie, specially when we know not that it is our enemie; secondly because though the Diuel should moue vs to Religion, he alone could neuer moue vs so effectually, vnlesse God did inwardly draw vs; and concludeth, that a thought of entring into Religion euer comes from God, by what meanes soeuer it come into our mind.

...om it ...oth belõg ...o, to try ...pirits.

11. This is the doctrine of *S. Thomas*, and that his onlie authoritie may not carrie it, we may confirme it by reason; because, as *Cassian* writeth, wheras our thoughts rise from three heads or fountaines, to wit, either from a good spirit, or from an euil spirit, or from our owne spirit; We may easily vnderstand, that thoughts of mortifying our flesh, of forgoing our freedome, of taking vp our Crosse, cannot be from our owne spirit, because nature doth abhorre and shunne all austeritie; much lesse can they be from the Diuel; for what hath he to do with perpetual Chastitie, with Obedience, with the voluntarie humiliation of ourselues, he being the Prince of pride, and nothing more hatefull to him, then these vertues? And if this wicked spirit cannot moue vs to anie particular vertue, as to the loue of God, to a greater faith, or hope in him, or to true and solid humilitie, no more then ice can be cause of fire, or fire of ice, much lesse can he moue vs to that vertue, which in a manner comprehendeth al vertues.

Cass. coll. 1. c. 19.

Three spirits that may moue vs.

If anie bodie feare, lest the Diuel do it out of craft, and for some sleight which he hath in it, that he may afterwards worke vs some greater mischief; this is also a great errour, much like to that, in which the Iewes were, that absurdly and impiously obiected to our Sauiour: *In the Prince of diuels he casteth out diuels*: And they must be answered with the answer which our Sauiour gaue: *That Satham cannot diuide his owne kingdome*; for so he should do in this, if he should go about to thrust some out of a man's soule or, which is al one, bring a man to a place where he may easily get out of it. He is not such a foole, nor so little skilled in this warre against soules, as to let go the prey which he hath in his clawes, and to suffer it to saue itself in so strong a hold, and a place which doth so much annoy him, and he himself to help him forward to that place, vpon hope that he shal recouer him afterwards with greater gayne. Seing therefore this is but an idle and foolish feare, and of such only as know not the deuises which the Diuel hath, it remayneth necessarily, that it must be the good spirit to whom we owe the beginnings, and the proceedings, and perfection of so great a work.

It can be no sleight of the Diuel, to moue vs to Religion. Luc 11. 19.

12. If anie man obiect, that some fayle and go back from the course which they haue begunne, and therefore they were not called of God, because *the counsel of God remayneth for euer*, S. *Thomas* shal make an answer for vs; whose words are these: Not al that is of God, is eternal: for if it were so, God should not be the Creatour of things corruptible; which was the heresie of the Manichees. And as it is in nature, so it is in grace; for grace is giuen vs so, as while we liue in this pilgrimage, we may leese it, because we haue freedome of wil, which as it might haue receiued the beautie gift, when it was

It importeth not, that some fal. Psal. 32. 11. S. Thom. 2. 2. q. 18. art. vlt.

first

first offered, and so not receaued it, so it may cast it away when it hath receaued it. And therupon *S. Thomas* concludeth, that the thought of entring into Religion needeth no probation, whether it be of God or no; but whosoeuer feeleth such a motion in his soule, must admit of it, as of the voice of his Lord and Creatour, and a voice which tendeth wholy to his good and benefit.

13. I haue been the more willing to enlarge myself in this matter, because if it be once agreed, that these holie and wholesome thoughts cannot proceed from the craft of the Enemie, nor from our owne natural inclinations, but of the sole goodnes and liberalitie of our Sauiour IESVS, it cuts off a great part of the occasion of feares, and doubts, and demurres in the busines. And that which I sayd before, followeth euidently, that long consultation about it, is not only vnprofitable, the thing being so cleer in itself, but very dangerous, because it giueth scope to the Diuel to play vpon vs the longer. It followes also, that when we are in deliberation about this busines, we must not cal our carnal friends and kindred to counsel (which both *S. Thomas* and al others with ioynt consent deliuer) both because the natural affection which they haue, hinders them that they cannot see truly, how things stand; and because, as our Sauiour himself sayd, *not al receaue this word*; that is, al are not capable of it. And what aduise can they giue in a busines which they doe not vnderstand? Wherefore, as if a man be to build a house, he doth not cal paynters or gold-smiths to counsel, but maister-carpenters or masons; and if a man be sick, he doth not send for Lawyers to aduise with, but Physicians, and those of the best; and as in al other things we take the opinion of such men as are most versed in the thing we aduise about, so in this great work, being to build a spiritual house, which may stand against al winds, and weather, and flouds, and to attend to the cure not of our bodie but of our soule, shal we goe and aduise with them, that either haue no iudgement at al in these things, or are preiudicated with the seueral affection wherewith they are corrupted? It is therefore to be imparted only to vertuous men, and, to speake truly, to them principally that haue gone the way before vs, that is, to Religious men, who hauing had experience of it, are the better able to direct others vnpartially in it, and shew them how to proceed without errour. For were it not wonderful follie and madnes, if a man had a iourney by sea, or land, to take such a guide as neuer went the iourney in his life, when he may haue his choice of manie, that haue done nothing els al their life-time?

Carnal friends not to be called to counsel.

Matt 19.11.

14. A fift rule in this busines is, that al vocations of God are not alike, and that there cannot be one rule giuen to measure them al by, so as a man may say, it is not a good vocation, because it agrees not with this rule. God is richer then so, and more plentiful in his counsels ouer the sonnes of men, and drawes them vnto himself seueral wayes; and men themselues being of such seueral dispositions and natures as they are, and hauing so manie different exercises and customes and fashions, it agreeth best with them to be brought to God by different meanes. For as fowlers haue not one kind of net, nor one kind of bayte, to catch fowles, but some for one kind, and others for others, as they know the humours of the birds are: so God bendeth and applyeth himself to the seueral natures of men, both for their benefit, to winne them the easyer to

Al vocations of God are not alike.

himself, and to keepe the sweetnes which is fitting in his fatherlie prouidence ouer al. Wherefore as he called *Peter* and *Andrew* from their boates, and *Matthew* from the Custome-house, becausethe one was a Publican, the others fishermen; and tooke *S. Paul* in the heate of his zeale of persecuting the Church, becausе that was then his humour: so in al Religious vocations, one is called vpon one occasion, and others vpon others, and some also out of the midst of their sinnes. Which manifold wisedome of God, *Cassian* among others admireth, dispensing (as he speaketh) the saluation of men with different and vnsearchable pietie, and bestowing the largesse of his grace, according to euerie one's capacitie, diuers, & innumerable, and vnsearchable wayes; while he quickneth the course of some, that goe willingly and silently on, to greater feruour; some that were vnwilling, he compelleth against their wil; heer he helpeth to fulfil that, which we profitably desired; and there he inspireth the verie beginings of a holie desire; which manifold largesse of the Diuine dispensation the Apostle considering, cryes out: O height of riches of wisedome and knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are his iudgements, and his wayes vnsearchable!

Cass. Coll. 13. c. 15. & 17.

Examples of seueral vocations.

15. And it is easie to see, that this which *Cassian* saith, is true, if we consider what occurrences of place, and time, and other circumstances God hath made vse of, to bring people vnder this his blessed yoak of Religion. As that which *S. Hierome* writeth of *Paul* the first *Hermit*, that going by chance into a denne or caue of earth to hide himself from the rage of *Decius* and *Valerianus*, that persecuted the *Church* of God, after he had been there a litle while, began to take a delight in that solitude; and that which he began of necessitie, he continued willingly, and perseuered in it al his life-time. The angrie humour of the yong Prince *Arcadius* was the occasion, why that great *Arsenius*, who afterwards was so great a Saint, then Maister to the yong Prince, forsaking the world gaue himself wholy to the seruice of God; for while he sought to put his bodie in safetie, he found the much more deceitful safetie of his soule. What shal I say of *Paul* surnamed the Simple, who taking his wife in adulterie, forsooke wife, and house, and al, and went strayt to *S. Antonie*, in whose schoole he came in a short time to great perfection of sanctitie. That which we reade of Abbot *Nutius*, a famous holie man, is yet more admirable; for while he was yet a Heathen, and a notable theef, he went on a time to robbe a Monasterie of Nunnes; and getting vp to the top of the house, there he fel asleep, and saw in his sleep a King admonishing him to desist from his wicked courses; wherupon he presently desired to be Baptized, and betooke himself to a Religious course of life, and therin came to that sanctitie, that besids other miracles, like another *Iosue*, he caused the Sunne to stand. The like is recorded of *Moyses* a Blackamoro, a notable cutter and murtherer, that being once in danger of his life, he fled into the next Monasterie to saue himself, and there strucken with remorse of conscience and feare, tooke vp his rest, and neuer parted thence. An accident also brought *S. Romualdus* to a Monastical life, wherin he so much flourished. For his father *Sergius* (who afterwards became a Monk vpon his sonne's example) hauing killed one of his kinsmen vpon a deadlie quarrel, which he had against him, lay close for some dayes in the Monasterie of *Classis*; where *Romualdus* partly by the

S. Hierome in vita Pauli.

Paul the first Heremit.

Arsenius.

Paul the Simple.

Nutius.

Moyses.

S. Romualdus.

the good admonitions of one of the Monks of that houſe, partly by the aduiſe of *S. Apollinaris* that appeared twice vnto him, reſolued to forſake the world; ſo that the murther which his father had committed, in which he alſo had ſome hand, was the occaſion of ſo great good.

16. But nothing is more admirable in this kind, then that which *Sophronius*, a graue and ancient authour, recounteth of a yong man, that ſeing a noble Ladie buried in rich attire, out of couetouſnes attempted the next night to breake open her graue, and ſteale away her apparrel; but the woman riſing-vp ſuddenly, layd hold of his hand, and rebuking him very ſharply, threatned him withal, that ſhe would neuer let him goe, but there he ſhould dye with the ſtench and ordure of the place; yet at laſt vpon the wonderful earneſt ſute he made vnto her, ſhe told him, ſhe would let him goe, vpon condition he would promiſe her faithfully, to enter preſently into Religion; which he both willingly promiſed, and ſpeedily performed; for from the graue he went ſtrait to a Monaſterie, where the Abbot, whoſe name was *Iohn*, admitted him, and related this whole ſtorie to *Sophronius* not long after it hapned; adding moreouer, that the man wept ſo bitterly, when he came vnto him, that his teares were witnes ſufficient of the truth of ſo rare a miracle; and the happie ſucceſſe declared, that this alſo was a true and wel grounded vocation. A yong theef.

17. What ſhal I ſtand recounting the infinit multitudes of them, that haue been brought to Religion by houſhold-afflictions and calamities, by ſicknes, by ſome wrong or other receaued in their eſtates, or in their perſons and good name, and by other inconueniences which haue hapned vnto them in the world? People commonly are wont to cenſure them, as if they entred out of deſpaire, and not as moued of God. But they ſpeake ignorantly, fixing their eye vpon that which is without, and not ſeing the inward grace of God. For in truth, neither pouertie, nor ſicknes, nor anie worldlie affliction is ſtrong enough to pul a man out of the world, and bring him to Religion: But if a man enter, and enter in that manner, and with thoſe intentions as he ought, it is certain, that the wiſedome of God doth outwardly indeed vſe that as an inſtrument, ſprinkling worldlie things al ouer with gal, to withdraw a man's hart from them; but inwardly he giues him his light and the knowledge of his truth, which pulles him from his former eſtate, *and brings him vnto his holie Mountain*, and into *his tents*. And we proue it euidently thus. For how manie be there and haue alwayes been, that oppreſſed with like pouertie, ſicknes, and calamities, haue neuer had notwithſtanding the leaſt thought of entring into Religion, but rather haue ſtuck the faſter to the world? What is the reaſon therefore, that they ſaued not themſelues out of that ſhip-wrack, and theſe eſcaped, but that theſe had the help and hand of God to draw them out? *S. Hierome* vnderſtood the truth of this point very wel, and vſeth this argument among the reſt to *Iulian*, in his long and eloquent Epiſtle, which he wrote vnto him, to perſwade him to forſake the world. For whereas he had buried two of his daughters almoſt at a clap, and beſides loſt his wife, and ſuffered much in his temporal eſtate by inrodes which the enemie made into the countrey, *S. Hierome* maketh vſe of al this, and telleth him, that they are warnings from God, who as It is not deſpaire but God that cals people by afflictions. *S. Hierome Epiſt. 34.*

Macarius Hom. 31.

it is written of the children of Israel, instructeth him with stripes and sorrow. And *S. Macarius* also in one of his Homilies obserueth, that it doth often happen, that God handles a man roughly with miseries and afflictions, that being otherwise too much wedded to the loue of earthlie things, and seing al things fal crosse vnto him, he may beginne a discourse thus within himself: Since I cannot haue my wil in the world, behold I quit the world, and betake myself to God, wholy to serue him; and at last he thanks his il fortune, because by that occasion he was drawne to the sweet yoak of our Lord.

Cass. Coll. 3. c. 4.

18. And *Cassian* reckoning three kinds of vocations, placeth this in the last place, when by losse of goods or by death of friends, or by other such accidents, they that refused to follow God in prosperitie, are compelled to follow him by aduersitie, against their wils, as the Hebrewes, of whom it is written in the Psalme: *When he killed them, they sought him, and returned vnto him; and early in the morning*, that is, speedily, without delay, *they came vnto him*. And addeth, that though this kind of vocation seeme to be the meanest and of least esteeme, yet men of great perfection, and great feruour of spirit, haue been called by it, and haue been nothing inferiour to others, that entring vpon the seruice of God vpon nobler principles, haue brought their life to an end with great commendation. *Climacus* sayth excellently wel, that it is the fashion of God sometimes to catch men by an honest kind of craft, and draw them in by a wile, to saue their soules. His words are these: Let vs not contemne some that renounce the world without anie great consideration, becaus the spirit doth sometimes piously deceaue soules. For oftimes such a renunciation hath better successe then another which came vpon more aduise; as the seed, which fals from the hand of the husbandman where he doth not desire it should, groweth sometimes better, then where it was sowed of purpose. I haue seen some, that haue gone into a Monasterie with no holie intention, but driuen by necessitie, who afterwards were taken with the great wisedome of the Abbot, and the milde conuersation of the Monks, and God giuing them the light of grace, they arriued to an eminent state. Thus saith *Climacus*.

Ps. 77. 34.

God sometimes catcheth men by a holie craft.

Clim. gra. 1.

19. The last rule, which we haue to set downe, is about the comparing of Religious Orders among themselues, so to make a right iudgement of them; for this also is necessarie, and requires an vnderstanding that is iudicious. For though in embracing a Religious course in general, we cannot erre, as I haue shewed, yet in choosing this or the other particular Religion, we may erre, & the Diuel may put manie mists in our way. For oftimes when he sees a man desirous of perfection, he puts a course in his phancie, where perfection is not followed, as it should be, that the good desires, which he had, may come to nothing; oftimes with preposterous feruour he egs him on to take more vpō him then the strength of his bodie is able to beare; and finally al his deuises tend to bring a man to doe either too much, or too litle. Wherefore that in the choice of a particular Institute we be not drawne into errour, two things are to be discreetly weighed. First, whether the Institute itself be perfect; and secondly, whether it be perfectly and carefully obserued. For though a Religious Familie haue neuer so holie Rules and orders in it, if they be not kept, or if few doe keepe them, the holines of their

Which Orders are to be preferred.

Rule

Rule is to litle purpose; and no man ought to be so confident of himself, as to hope to beare himself vp against the multitude, and to keepe the right way where the rest goe wrong. And consequently a man must not so much consider, which Order is most renowned for antiquitie, or for memorable acts in times past, or for the members of holie men that haue been in it; but which now at this present is more holie, more obseruant of Religious discipline, and more ful of that first spirit wherewith the Order was begun and founded.

What particulars are to be considered.

20. And if we be desirous of some signes to direct our iudgement in this kind, we may consider these things following. First, if there be an exact order obserued, that no bodie haue anie thing in priuate to himself, neither money nor anie thing els, but al things be kept and serued out in common. Secondly, if there be charitie, no contention, no hanging off from one another. Thirdly, if ambition be wholy excluded, and al pretences and proiects for preferment and honour, and rather such employments declined, as carrie a shew of greatnes and authoritie. Fourthly, if obedience to Superiours be kept entire & inuiolable without exemptions. Fiftly, if the Religious be seldome permitted to deale with their carnal friends and kindred, and not but vpon some spiritual occasion. And finally, if they be zealous of the good of soules, and for that end spare no labour or paines that is requisite. These are the chiefest and most important things, which are to be looked into. Other things, though of lesse moment, are not also to be neglected; as the greatnes of the Order, if it abound in good subiects, if it be spred farre and neere, if it haue people in it of diuers nations. For so it must needs abound likewise in learning and wisedome, and haue greater helps to effect that which it doth vndertake, and more store of good works, by the communication wherof euerie particular man of the Order hath the greater benefit. As a fire is the greater, the more store of wood is layd vpon it, and the wood itself takes the easier, and burnes the faster, and makes the more lightsome fire, when there are manie sticks togeather, then when they are layd one by one. Though al this is but extrinsecal; that which I sayd before of the perfection of euerie Institute, belongs to the essence and substance of it. And because in Perfection there be manie degrees, if we wil know how to compare them one with another, we must take *S. Thomas* in our way, who answereth the question in these words: *The greatest perfection of a thing, consisteth in attayning to the end, which it hath.*

S. Th. opusc. con. impug. relig. c. 1.

21. Wherefore, to value the perfection of euerie particular Institute, we must weigh two things: First, whether it haue a nobler end; and secondly, whether it haue meanes accordingly more proportionable for the attayning of that end; because the more perfect the work is, to which a course of life is ordained, the more worthily we must esteeme of that course; and likewise the more effectual and abundant meanes it hath for the effecting of those works, the better is the Institute, and the more to be preferred. But because no man can begin a new life, vnlesse he repent himself of his old, and consequently euerie Religious Order, in that it enters a man vpon a new course of life, is a state of pennance, therefore we may make a third comparison of Religious Orders among themselues, in matter of pouertie, austeritie of life, and al kind of corporal afflictions; though the two first comparisons belong more to the nature and essence of Religion, and by them we must iudge of the greater or lesser perfection which is in them; both because perfection consisteth more in inward iustice, then in outward restraint; & because

The nobleness of the end, and the proportion of the meanes chiefly to be considered.

outward auſteritie may vpon occaſions hinder ſome greater good, ſpecially for the help of our neighbour. And al this in a manner is *S. Thomas* his diſcourſe, which for theſe generalities may be applyed to find out the true value, and make a true iudgement of the dignitie of euerie particular Order.

S. Greg. lib. 6 in lib. reg. c. 6.

22. And that which he ſayd laſt, concerning auſteritie of life, may be confirmed out of S. *Gregorie*, where he ſayth: It is of farre higher deſert, to keepe our wil alwayes ſubiect to the wil of another, then to weare away our bodie with great faſtings, or to ſlay ourſelues by compunction in a more retired ſacrifice. But to returne to the rule which *S. Thomas* giues for the valuation of Religious, that which he writeth in another place, is alſo to be conſidered as pertayning to the ſame rule: that the Religious which are ordayned to teach & preach, are the firſt in rank among the reſt; becauſe theſe workes proceeding from the abundance of Contemplation, comprehend both Action and Contemplation. In the ſecond rank he placeth thoſe, which attend only to Contemplation; and in the third, thoſe which are altogeather in Action. And among thoſe of the ſame rank, they are more excellent, that haue more vniuerſal employments, and better rules and orders; as for example, if they haue more and better meanes to aſſiſt their neighbour, and ſo of the reſt.

S. Thom. 2. 2. q 188. ar. 6.

Three rāks of Religious Orders.

Another errour.

23. Finally, we muſt alſo apply a cure to their errour, that when they are in deliberation about the choice of a Religious courſe, decline of purpoſe thoſe Orders, in which they ſee there be manie rare men of excellent parts, becauſe forſooth they ſhal be no bodie, and leane to thoſe courſes, where there are but few men of learning or other qualities, thinking that there they ſhal be in their kingdome. Which, to ſpeak the truth, is but an abſurd and fooliſh kind of ambition, ſpecially in a buſines which ſhould be fartheſt off from it, and therefore alſo we ſhal not need to ſpend time in confuting it, but content ourſelues with mentioning it; only I thought good to relate what paſſed with *S. Anſelme* in this kind. For when he was thinking what place he might beſt chooſe for the courſe of Religion, which he intended, two Monaſteries offered themſelues to his conſideration: that of *Cluni*, where there was no practiſe of learning, and that of *Becque*, which was famous for learning. He was loath to put himſelf into that of *Cluni*, becauſe hauing beſtowed ſome time in ſtudie, he ſaw al would be loſt; and on the other ſide, in *Becque* he feared that among ſo manie learned men he ſhould be of no eſteeme. And theſe were his thoughts at that time, when, as afterwards he was wont to ſay of himſelf, he was not yet tamed, nor had not the contempt of the world grafted in his mind. But reflecting vpon himſelf, he ſayd thus to his owne ſoule: What? Is this to be a Monk, to deſire precedencie of others; to be ambitious of honour & renowne? Chooſe therefore rather that place, where for the loue of God thou mayſt be behind al, where thou ſhalt liue in obſcuritie, and be the laſt and loweſt of al. And with this reſolution, which doubtleſſe was from God, he choſe the Monaſterie of *Becque*; but the euent was farre beyond his expectation. For his liuing among ſo manie learned men, was not only no hinderance to his learning and fame, but growing dayly in learning, he grew alſo more famous then he was in the world; which hapneth alſo moſt commonly to others.

S. Anſelme.

S. Anſor. 2. part hiſt. ui. 16. c. 11.

The Concluſion of the whole Work, to Religious people.

CHAP. XXXVII.

HAuing now diſcourſed at large of the riches and manifold commodities of a Religious courſe of life, and taken a ful view of the worth, and dignitie, and beautie of it in the ſight of God and man, and ſhewed withal, that no earthlie thing for pleaſure and ſweetnes is comparable vnto it; It is time to conſider, what effect al this togeather ought to work in the mind of him, that findes himſelf inuironed with ſuch a world of bleſſings, powred forth ſo largely vpon him by the bountiful hand of God, who is ſole Authour of them. For if profit alone, or in matter of profit one ſingle benefit, one point of gayne, ſpecially if it be eternal, ought to be aboue meaſure eſteemed; what ſhal we ſay of ſuch an infinit number of ſpiritual commodities, and togeather with theſe commodities, ſo manie noble and vndoubted titles of true honour, and finally ſuch abundance of ſolid ioyes and cõforts? For God in this great work of Grace hath proceeded as in the principal operations of Nature, vpon which the conſeruation of euerie particular thing in his kind depends; for beſides the neceſſitie which is of them, he hath plãted an itching pleaſure in them, to draw his workes neuer to ceaſe, neuer to be wearie of that kind of operatiõ. And in like manner hath he contriued this wholeſome forme of liuing, that though it be in itſelf ſomewhat auſtere and bitter, yet the wonderful benefit which comes of it, makes it worthie to be deſired, as a medecine in ſicknes; and againe he hath ſo ſeaſoned it with ioyes and comforts, that though it were not ſo profitable, it is notwithſtanding to be infinitly loued for the ſweetnes which is in it, and to be preferred before al mortal comforts.

The benefit of Religion to be highly eſteemed.

2. Which ſeing we haue made plaine to euerie bodie in the diſcourſe of theſe three Bookes, with what diſpoſition of mind is it fitting we ſhould entertaine and make vſe of ſo great and ſo vſeful a bleſſing? In my iudgement three things may be required of vs, which are heads and fountains of manie others. Firſt, thanksgiuing for ſo great a benefit; ſecondly, a careful endeauour dayly to encreaſe in perfection; and finally a diligent and watchful cuſtodie of ſo ample and ſo rich a treaſure. Firſt therefore, as I ſayd, the greatnes of the benefit requireth a thankful mind. For if in euerie litle curteſie, which one man doth another, it is held a kind of inciuilitie, not to returne a man thãks for it; how much more vnciuil muſt it needs be, not to be thankful to God, for ſo rare & diuine a thing? ſpecially ſeing the Maieſtie of God is ſo great aboue man, that the leaſt thing which we receaue of him, muſt needs be an ineſtimable curteſie. And this thankful mind includeth manie things; it includeth knowledge, it includeth memorie, it includeth loue and good wil, it includeth finally ioy euerlaſting. For vnleſſe a man know and vnderſtand, what is giuen him, he cannot be thankful for it; if he know it, and quickly forget it, he is equally vnthankful: but if a man know it and remember it, he cannot but be inflamed with exceſſiue loue of God, becauſe he cannot but loue him that is ſo good, and ſo manie

ſeueral wayes good to him, and finally ſeing himſelf ſo loaded, ſo enriched, ſo adorned with his liberalitie, he cannot but reioyce, and exceſſiuely reioyce at it. But becauſe al depends vpon the knowledge of the greatnes of this benefit, the firſt thing that we muſt perſwade ourſelues of, is, that this vocation to Religion is abſolutely the greateſt and the ſoueraigneſt benefit, which God can beſtow vpon man in this life.

Religion the greateſt benefit that God can giue vs in this life.

3. For what can a man deſire more? Honour, or wealth, or learning, or eloquence, or to be ſoueraigne Emperour of the whole world? But al this is corporal, and conſequently periſhable and litle worth. That is only great, which is great in the ſight of God, ſuch as ſpiritual things are: Now of theſe ſpiritual things, of vertue, or whatſoeuer other goodnes, what is there that aboundeth not in a Religious ſtate? ſo that he that hath that ſtate, hath al. Which is that which *S. Bernard* ſo much extolleth in one of his Sermons in theſe words: And firſt he created thee with the reſt, and among the reſt he created thee not without a ſingular prerogatiue of honour. After this againe, that infinit Maieſtie inflamed with exceſſiue loue of thee, redeemed thee. So eaſily with a word, as he created thee? No, but he wrought thy ſaluation in the midſt of the earth thirtie yeares, was nayled to a Croſſe, condemned to die, adiudged to be a mockerie. But towards vs he hath added another ſpecial benefit, in that from the broad and ſpacious way which leadeth to death, he hath drawne vs with his finger, & placed vs in the counſel and Congregation of the Iuſt. What ought he to haue done more which he did not? Whoſe breaſt is of ſo hard a ſtone, as not to melt at the multitude of ſuch and ſo great benefits, powred out vpon vs by ſuch and ſo great a hand? With reaſon therefore doth *S. Bernard* require of Religious people a grateful remembrance of ſuch wonderful guifts, and a memorie inflamed with wonderful loue.

S. Bernard l. 2. de verb. Apoſt. Non eſt Regnum Dei.

God exacteth gratitude.

4. Let vs remember, how mindful God did require the ancient Iew ſhould be of the benefit of their deliuerie from the ſeruitude of *Aegypt*, ordayning the yearlie ſolemnitie of the Paſchal Lamb in memorie of it, to be performed with ſo manie rites and ceremonies; and he did almoſt no ſpecial thing in fauour of them, for the remembrance of which he did not appoint ſome certain day in the yeare to be ſolemnized. We therefore, we, I ſay, hauing been deliuered out of the land of *Aegypt*, that is, out of the dark and toyleſome priſon of this world, hauing been fed in the Deſert, as I haue ſhewed, with the moſt delightſome *Manna*, hauing receaued the Law by the miniſterie of Angels, to wit, our written Rules, and the wil of God made knowne dayly vnto vs by the light and conduct of our Superiours; how much more iuſt and reaſonable is it, that we ſhould keepe a continual and liuelie memorie of this benefit? And as God tyed the memorie of thoſe ancient benefits, not to euerie ordinarie day, but to dayes that were holie & feſtiual, to ſignifie that the remembrance of them muſt be feſtiual & ful of ioy: ſo the conſideration of this our vocation muſt be alwayes accompanied with cheerful hart, alwayes ful of ioy and mirth. For what is there that can contriſtate a Religious man, if he know his owne happines? for the incommodities which he may ſuffer, are nothing to the comforts which abound in this ſtate. When *Anna* bewayled her vnfruitfulnes, her huſband *Helcana* cheered her vp in this manner: *Anna, why weepeſt thou? and wherefore is thy hart afflicted? Am not I better to thee, then ten ſonnes?* If one of vs may ſay thus to another, certainly God may with much more reaſon ſay it; for if we haue God, as doubtleſſe in Religion

1. Reg. 1.

we haue him, it is more to be valued, then if we had al the creatures in the world; and the losse of al creatures, is abundantly recompenced by only possessing God. Besides that, in Religiō the noblenes of our spirit purchased by forsaking al things, and consequently contemning them, and liuing continually in the contempt of them, makes that there is nothing vpon earth, that can either seeme so beautiful as to deserue our loue, or so harsh and hateful as we should be afrayd of it. Wherefore, to conclude, if we wil shew ourselues to be what indeed we ought to be, and what God desireth we should be, we must neuer cease from giuing thanks to God, neuer slack or relent in it; and though we can neuer returne him so manie thanks as he deserues, nor beare him that true affection for his benefits, which the thing itself requires, let vs notwithstanding employ vpon him as manie, as our weaknes is capable of; and acknowledge at least & confesse, that he hath so gone beyond vs with the immensitie of his guifts, that we shal neuer be able so much as to think sufficiently, what thanks is fitting to giue him.

5. But if we know the true value of this benefit, and esteeme it as we ought, it must needs produce in vs the second thing which I spake of, to wit, an excessiue and euerlasting desire of attayning to perfection; so that al our thoughts, al the powers of our soule, wil be continually bent vpon it. For first, this is that which God requires at our hands, *whose wil is our sanctification*. This his loue demandeth of vs; for it hauing been towards vs so profuse and without stint, we cannot better, nor in a more bountiful manner correspond to his loue, then if we loue him againe, and adorne and set forth ourselues in that manner, that we may truly deserue to be loued by him. The state itself in which we are, demandeth it, because it is nothing els but a profession of vertue and perfection. Wherefore, as it is a shame for a souldier to be a coward, and for a student to be no scholler, and men take it as a disgrace to be thought so; so in Religion, where the studie of vertue & sanctitie is only in request, it is a shame to be imperfect, and to follow that busines but coldly, it being the thing which our Lord in the Apocalyps so much complaineth of. Desire of perfection. *Apoc. 3. 16.*

6. Finally, two things, wel considered, wil greatly encourage Religious people in that which they haue in hand. First, that al the commodities and pleasures which I haue discoursed of in al this Treatise, are certainly in Religion, & much greater also, then was possible for me to describe; yet they are as gold-oare in the veynes of the earth, which by labour and industrie is to be digged out. For what peece of ground is there, be it neuer so fat & fruitful, which wil bring forth fruit, vnlesse a man til it, and sow it, and bestow labour vpon it? So these treasures and commodities of a Religious life are great, yet they require a man that knowes them wel, and makes great account of them, and, which is consequent, makes the best vse of them he can, & labours dayly to encrease them. The other thing which is to be considered, is the easines of the busines, and the commoditie which a man hath of getting perfection, euerie thing being taken away, that may anie way hinder him, and on the other side, al helps concurring to further him, plentie of inward grace, and so manie influences & assistances from heauen, that nothing can be sayd to be wanting but ourselues, if we be not holie and perfect. Wherefore we must make account, that the Apostle speakes to vs when he sayth: *The earth drinking-in the raine often coming vpon it* (for where doth the heauenlie deaw & raine fal oftener then in Religion?) *& bringing forth grasse, commodious for them that* The riches of Religiō not to be got without labour. The labour not great. *Hebr. 6. 7.*

til it, receaueth blessing of God; but bringing forth briars and thornes, it is reprobate, and a verie curse, whose end is to be burnt. Where, both our happines if we doe wel, and our extreame miserie, if we doe not wel, is set before our eyes. But God forbid such a curse should fal vpon vs; rather he wil giue vs abundance of his holie grace, that, as the same Apostle exhorteth els-where, *because we were sometimes darknes, but now light in our Lord, let vs walke like sonnes of light, and bring forth fruits of light in al goodnes, and iustice, and truth.*

Ephes. 5. 8.

Care of keeping ourselues in Religiõ

7. The third effect, which we spake of, was care, and diligence, and earnest endeauour to preserue so great a good. And we need not stand prouing, that it is fitting for euerie bodie to haue this care; the knowledge of the greatnes of the benefit doth naturally put it into vs; for he that doth throughly know it, wil rather dye a thousand deaths, then let it goe out of his hands, or suffer anie bodie to take it from him. And certainly nothing is more terrible, more lamentable, more horrible, more detestable to Religious people, then to fal from such an estate, to be shut out from so great a happines, to be as Adam cast out of Paradise. For it were, as *S. Bernard* discourseth, to be drawen againe into the wrack at sea, from whence they crept out naked; to fal againe, where they had been half-burned, and hardly escaped; to light againe among the theeues, by whom they were left but half aliue, and by the mercie of God were now recouered; and for the souldier of Christ almost in the sight of heauen triumphing, from the gates of that glorie, to returne as a dog to his vomit, & as a sow washed, to her wallowing in the mire. Wherefore the same *S. Bernard* doth fitly apply to this purpose that which is spoken in the *Canticles* to the Spouse in a threatning manner: *Get you forth, and goe*; and sayth, that God cannot speake to a Religious soule a harsher word then this, nor anie thing that can strike more terrour into it. Which thou also, sayth he, mayst perceaue, if thou consider wel, from whẽce, and whither thou art bid to goe. From whence, and whither dost thou think, but from spirit to flesh, from the goods of the mind to the desires of the world, from the inward quiet of the mind to the noyse of the world, and vnquietnes of outward cares? in al which there is nothing but labour and affliction of spirit. For a soule that hath once learned and receaued of our Lord to enter into itself, and within itself to sigh after the presence of God, such a soule, I say, I know not whether it would think it more paineful or more horrible, to suffer the verie paines of hel for a time, then after hauing once tasted the sweetnes of this spiritual studie & exercise, to goe out againe to the allurements or rather to the troubles of the flesh, and seeke after the vnsatiable curiositie of sense. Thus sayth *S. Bernard*, and al spiritual authours with one consent agree in the same.

From whence, & whither they fal, that neglect it.

S Bernard Ep. 111.

2. Pet 2. 22.

Cant. 1 8.

S. Bern ser. 38. in Can.

8. For as he that falles headlong from anie place, the higher the place is from which he falles, the more he bruseth himself; so he that casts himself out of a Religious state, which doubtles is an eminent high estate, must needs breake himself al in peeces, and crush, and disioynt, and put out of order al the powers of his soule. For, this is that *Salt which hauing lost the vertue and sauour* which it hath receaued for the seasoning of itself and others, *is now good for nothing anie more*, and therefore nothing remaineth, *but that it be cast forth, and trodden vnder foot by men.* A iust and worthie punishment, that whom the dignitie of this state before had placed aboue other men, and made him venerable vnto al, hauing lost this ornament, should first become as other men, and then baser then they,

Matt. 5. 13.

by

by how much greater his offence is, and therefore be contemned by euerie bodie, and made a laughing-ſtock, and a verie foot-bal to mens tongues.

9. And what doe they, that enueigled with the looſſe and fickle pleaſures of this world, turne their backs to ſo great a benefit, which God had beſtowed vpon them, but that which that wicked & reprobate *Eſau* did, when he ſold his birth-right, & moreouer went his wayes contemning that he had ſold it? And for what did he ſel it? for one diſh of pulſe. O blindnes of a reachleſſe man! that could entertayne ſuch a thought in his mind, as for, & togeather with ſo baſe, & ſo ordinarie a diſh of meate, to conſume & deuoure in a moment ſo rich an inheritance, to caſt away his father's bleſſing, & al the right of his *primogeniture* in an inſtant. But he that at that time made ſo ſlight of it, afterwards lamented his loſſe, roaring out with a great voice, but when it was too late, & in vaine to repent. In like manner, if we compare ſecular people with Religious, they are indeed both ſonnes of God, but Religious are the firſt begotten, and haue receaued already greater ſpiritual bleſſings in the ſtate itſelf, & if they liue according to their ſtate, they ſhal receaue a larger portion of the heauenlie inheritance. What madnes therefore is it for a diſordered deſire of one vnfortunate and baſe bit of pleaſure, to ſlight & vtterly to caſt away ſuch hopes, ſuch preſent and future entertainements, ſuch commodities, ſuch delights, ſo manie, & ſo rare bleſſings, as if another would goe about to take them from vs, they were worthie to be defended with the loſſe of our liues. What teares, what lamentations, euen in this life wil this ſhort & momentarie delight, bought with eternal torment, bring vpon vs? A miſerable exchange.

10. And what ſhal we ſay of the wrong which we doe to God, when we breake couenants with him, when we forſake his ſeruice, runne away out of his Camp, when to his face we make more account of the friendſhip of the world, and the loue of earthlie things, then we doe of his familiaritie and acquaintance? This is the reaſon why, though God is wont to reſerue the puniſhment of other offences to another world, moſt commonly he reuengeth himſelf of this baſenes preſently; & we ſee, that ordinarily they that fal from Religion, either liue afterwards in perpetual miſerie, or dye ſuddenly a moſt miſerable death. As one of whom we reade in the Hiſtorie of the *Franciſcans*, about the yeare. 1260. who by the Diuel's inſtigation hauing forſaken his Order and Monaſterie, two of the Friars of that Order moued with cõpaſſion, went after him to perſwade him to returne againe, but he obſtinately reiected their wholeſome aduice; they ſaw an vglie black dog make at him, and affrighted with the ſight of him, they cryed out to the miſerable wretch, to take heed of that infernal fiend; but he being with that more enraged, pluckt off his Habit, and caſt it from him, and ranne his wayes. And behold, he had not runne farre, when that monſter, which, as long as the man kept on his Habit, had not power to annoy him, leaped vpon him, pulled him to the ground, and throtled him ſo ſuddenly, that the two Friars, though thay made ſpeed to reſcue him, found him dead when they came. And infinit ſuch accidents haue hapned in al Orders, inſomuch that *Dionyſius Carthuſianus* hath written almoſt a whole booke ful of ſuch lamentable and admirable misfortunes; and if we would vndertake to ſet downe al that haue fallen out in our Order, they would make a Volume by themſelues, which perhaps may be ſome bodie's work. Wrong done to God. Seuerely punished.

11. And yet I wil not omit to mention some few, that haue hapned lately within these two yeares, or litle more. For first it is certain of two, that left our Societie, wherin they had spent some yeares, that one of them was not long after wounded to death, and the other, though he were a strong healthful man, in the prime of his youth, was suddenly taken away with a feauer; whervpon an other of ours, whom the Diuel at that instant was soliciting also to reuolt, meeting his corps, as they were carrying it to be buried, was so danted with it, that shaking off the temptation which hung vpon him, he resolued to remaine in Religion. A third was a Nouice, who deboshd from that course by a kinsman of his, after a few dayes, which (blinded with the world) he spent in tauernes, in drinking, and al manner of licentiousnes, he and his kinsman, that had deboishd him, with manie others in companie, met with the partie with whom they were at variance, and among so manie swords drawne, these two only were hurt; and the wounds at first seemed but slight; but rankled, and brought them both to their graue in one day, though not with like euent. For he that had forsaken his vocation, as that man that was more guiltie of the two, lost his speech and senses vpon a sudden, and so dyed, without either Confession (which doubtlesse he needed) or anie other Sacrament. And almost at the same instant, the other wasted with a strong feauer, in the midst of his youth, though he had al the Sacraments, yet cryed out continually, that he was damned, and could not by anie meanes be drawne from that note. A fourth was as miserable, if not more miserable then he; for not a ful yeare after he had forsaken the Order, he was shot dead with a pistol. And that which hapned to a Priest was as lamentable; for hauing left the Order, he was killed with a mattock by one of his Tenants, for certain iealousies. And an other fel mad and cast himself into a cesterne, from whence being two dayes after taken out and knowne, al the Citie was in a maze, no bodie making doubt, but that hapned so vnto him, because he had left his vocation. Finally about the same time, another that had left the Societie while he was a Nouice, gaue himself ouer so farre to al kind of wickednes, that at last he came to be put to death for it; and when he was to goe to his execution, after he had made his Confession to one of our Fathers, he fel into a great passion of grief, exceedingly blaming himself for leauing this Paradise, as he called it, and protested, that when he put off the Habit of Religion, it was as if he had put off *Christ*, and set open the gates to al vice. And al this, as I sayd, hath hapned so lately, & to people that are so wel knowne, that of purpose I forbeare to name them, not to vpbraid the dead. It is to no purpose therefore, to search ancienter records for the like lamentable accidents, seing we haue so manie feareful ones before our eyes. I omit diuers others, because I wil not be too long in so vnpleasing a subiect. These shal suffise, to shew, how neer this iniurie doth touch God, and how highly he is displeased with it, seing he doth reuenge it with so suddain and so grieuous punishments.

The enormousnes of the offece.

12. Though we haue no great cause to wonder at it, if we consider, how great a sinne it is to forsake God, when once we haue obliged ourselues vnto him by Vow, and as it were sworne our allegeance, and yet turne to the vanities and seruices of the world. Of which sinne *S. Basil* hath this excellent discourse: He that hath once vowed himself to God, if afterwards he passe to another kind of life, committeth sacriledge, because he stealeth

S. Basil. in reg fus. c. 14

ſtealeth himſelf from God, to whom he was conſecrated. And els-where more at large thus: This is moſt certain, that he that hath once obliged himſelf to liue in a ſpiritual Societie with his Brethren, cannot ſeparate and cut himſelf off from thē, without a great offence. For if men, when they haue ōnce entred into a ſocietie togeather in matters concerning this mortal life, cannot goe from it, by reaſon of the couenants which are betwixt them, & he that ſhould attempt it, ſhould be ſubiect to the penalties of the lawes; without doubt much more he that hath ētred couenant of a ſpiritual conuerſation (this vnion being inſeparable & perpetual) cannot parte and breake off from them, with whom he was as it were one bodie; and if he doe, he is liable to moſt heauie puniſhments appointed by God. For if a woman taken into the companie of man by the lawes of marriage, and linked with him by carnal copulation, be to dye for it, if ſhe be found to haue broken her faith; how much more grecuous puniſhment ſhal be inflicted vpon him, that diuideth himſelf from the ſpiritual cohabitation, to which he is tyed before the Holie-Ghoſt, as before a witnes and mediatour of it? As therefore the members of a man's bodie knit togeather by the bond of nature, cannot be pulled aſunder from the bodie, or if they be pulled aſunder, death muſt needs follow; ſo a Monk that is vnited to the bodie of his Religious brethren, and tyed vnto them by a ſtronger knot then the bond of nature, to wit, by the couenant which he hath entred with the Holie-Ghoſt, it cannot be thought, that he can anie way withdraw himſelf from them, with whom he is thus linked: and if he doe, he leeſeth the life of his ſoule, and togeather with his life, the grace of the Holie-Ghoſt, as one that hath broken the couenant, which vpon his aduiſe he made. Thus ſayth *S. Baſil*, and much more to the like purpoſe, and concludeth with this obſeruation: Wherefore, he that is ſuch a one, is to be eſteemed as condemned by the ſentence of Truth itſelf, as one that giueth great occaſion of ſcandal to others and by his euil example draweth others to imitate him. He becomes heire to that terrible woe: *It is expedient for him that a mil-ſtone be hanged at his neck, and that he be drowned in the deapth of the ſea.* For a ſoule that ſhal haue once caſt itſelf headlong vpon this reuolt, ſoone filled with al kind of vice, intemperance, auarice, gluttonie, falſhood, and al looſſe behauiour, and finally plunged in extreame wickednes, ſincks headlong into the deapth of malice. Behold that which we ſayd before; he that falleth from ſo eminent an eſtate, muſt needs bruſe himſelf in al parts of his ſoule, and conſequently runne into al manner of ſinne, as *S. Baſil* witneſſeth in this place.

Idem. Conſ. Mon. c. 12.

The ſcandal of it.

Mat. 18. 7.

13. *S. Auguſtin* auoucheth theſame in this heauie ſentence: I plainly confeſſe before our Lord God, who is witnes ouer my ſoule, from the time that I began to ſerue God, as I haue hardly found better men then they that haue profited in Monaſteries, ſo I haue not found worſe then they are, that haue fallen out of Monaſteries: ſo that I think it was for this cauſe written in the Apocalyps: Let the iuſt be more iuſt, and he that is in filth, become more filthie. *S. Ephrem* alſo in one of his Sermons ſetteth forth very liuely this general looſe both of ſpiritual and temporal goods, which they incurre that fal from Religion; and thus he ſpeaketh: If after the renunciation, and the giuing-ouer of our former courſe of life, a man beginne to halt in his endeauour to vertue, and by litle and litle depart from the right way, and looke back againe, he ſhal be an example to others in this life, and after this life ſhut out of the kingdome of heauen, vnworthie of the companie

S. Auguſt. Conf. 37.

Apo. 22. 11.

S. Ephrem. ſer. Non decet nos.

» of Saints, yea and to his parents thẽselues his reachlessenes wil be a confusion, » his friends wil fal away for greef, and his enemies reioyce at his slothfulnes and » ruine. His kinsfolks and allyes wil wish him dead, because naked of earthlie » things, he hath not layd hold of heauenlie things, but vnder pretence of Pietie » stooped to the yoake of the Diuel; His parents, lament the losse of his soule; he » himself, that is thus seduced in hart, and hath corrupted his wayes, shaking off » vertue, becometh impudent, and is not ashamed to doe shameful things; for he » neither feareth men, nor weigheth with himself the wrath of God. And as *the im-*
Prou. 18. Marc. 2. Mat. 9. » *pious, when he shal come into the deapth of sinnes, contemneth*, so falling into this great » rashnes, he is afraid of nothing; but like him that sold al his substance, selling » his garment of inestimable price, vpon a furie, filles it with patches of coorse and » filthie cloth; which if he vse againe, he cannot vse it with honour and commen- » dation, but to his reproach and disgrace. For who wil not laugh him to scorne, » seing him that yesterday in a Monasterie had gyrt himself to the seruice of his » *Brethren dwelling in one* (after the example of our Lord Iesus Christ) to day walking » with a company of seruants? or who wil not blame him, that yesterday of his owne » accord, cast away al temporal things, embracing pouertie, and to day sits vpon » the bench in iudgement, and earnestly recalles that which before he had condem- » ned, and transferres his mind againe from heauenlie things to earthlie? Al this & » much more is of *S. Ephrem.*

14. *S. Gregorie* also in his Epistle to *Venantius*, that was become an Apostate, and a vagabond, describeth at large the greeuousnes of this sinne, and among the
S. Gregorie Ep. 33. lib. 1. Reg. rest sayth thus: Bethink thy self what habit thou wert in, and acknowledge to » what thou art fallen, by neglecting the punishments which threaten thee from » aboue. Consider therefore thy fault, while thou hast time. Tremble at the rigour » of the Iudge that is to come, least then thou feele it sharpe, when by no teares » thou wilt be able to escape it. *Ananias* had vowed his money to God, which af- » terwards ouercome by perswasion of the Diuel, he withdrew againe; but thou
Acts. 5. » knowest with what death he was punished. If therefore he was worthie of the » punishment of death, that tooke away from God the money which he had giuen, » consider what punishment in the iudgement of God thou shalt be worthie of, that » hast withdrawne, not thy money, but thyself from Almightie God, to whom » thou hadst vowed thyself in the habit of a Monk.

Cæsarius hom 3. ad Monachos. 15. And *Cæsarius* in one of his Homilies to his Monks: What can be more greeuous then suddenly to be rooted out of the place, to which thy Lord God had called thee, where he first enlightned thee, into which after the miseries of this » world he brought thee as to the hauen, out of a terrible tempest? To forget vpon » the sudden thy brotherhood, thy societie, thy comfort; to forget the place where » thou hadst put off thy ancient habit, and thy secular behauiour? Birds loue their » neasts; wild beasts loue the places, where they haue been bred, they loue their » dennes and pastures. And thou that hast vnderstanding, that art endued with » reason, wilt thou at anie time be so voyd of sense, as to preferre thy owne plea- » sures and intentions before the benefits of God, and follow thy owne phancies, » which to whatsoeuer hard labour, to whatsoeuer wrack of saluation, and losses » of thy soule, they draw thee, thou feelest not al this, by reason of the extreame » basenes of thy hart.

16. *S. Iohn Chrysostome* also writ a long and eloquent Epistle of this subiect, to *Theodore* a Monk that was fallen, and beginneth it in this mourneful manner:

Who wil giue water to my head, and to mine eyes a fountaine of teares? and as followeth, expreſſing great greef; and againe ſpeaketh thus vnto him: Thou reiecting the commandment of our Lord, a Lord ſo meeke and humble, doſt ſtoope to the cruel command of a Tyrant, that oppugneth our ſaluation, without anie feeling of compaſſion; Thou breaking the ſweet yoak, and caſting away the light burden, inſteed of them, haſt put thy neck in iron-chaines, and, which is more, haſt of thy owne accord hung about thy owne neck a mil-ſtone. Where therefore doſt thou think thou canſt ſtay thyſelf, that haſt drowned thy miſerable ſoule in ſo great a gulf, and brought thyſelf to an exigent, which driueth thee alwayes further and further into the deepe? The woman in the Ghoſpel when ſhe had found her groate, called her neighbours togeather to be partakers of her ioy, ſaying: *Reioyce with me.* But I calling friends togeather for a quite contrarie cauſe, wil ſay vnto them: Lament with me, mourne, and crye-out pittifully with teares; for a great loſſe is come vpon vs, not of gold, or ſiluer, or pretious ſtones, but of him that is more pretious to vs then al theſe; of him that ſayling togeather with vs, this great and vaſt ſea, being caſt ouer board, I know not how, is fallen into the deapth of perdition.

S. *To. Chr. Ep. 6.* » *Luc. 15.*

17. But *S. Bernard* ſpeaketh heavieſt of al the reſt, not to one that was fallen from Religion to the world, but gone only out of one Religion to another more looſely gouerned, & had for it leaue frõ the Pope; & yet he ſayth thus vnto him: O ſenſeleſſe child, who hath enueigled thee not to performe thy Vowes, which thy lips haue vttered? and what doth anie man flatter thee in vaine with the Abſolution from the Pope, ſeing the ſentence of God doth bind thy conſcience? *No man*, ſayth he, *putting his hand to the plough and looking back, is fit for the Kingdome of heauen.* Looke into thy hart, examine thy intention, aduiſe with truth. Let thine owne conſcience anſwer, wherefore thou wentſt away, wherefore thou forſookeſt thy Order, thy Brethren, thy place? if to liue more auſterely, more vprightly, more perfectly, thou art ſecure, becauſe thou haſt not looked back; if otherwiſe, doe not mind high things, but feare. Thus writeth *S. Bernard* in that Epiſtle, which is famous for the notable miracle which hapned in the writing of it. And his words ought to make the greater impreſſion in vs, becauſe, as I ſay, the man whom he blameth ſo much, returned not to the world, but went only to an inferiour ſtate of perfectiõ, & yet ſo great a man as *S. Bernard*, and ſo ful of the light of heauen as he was, doth not ſtick to condẽne him as one that had looked back. And being asked the queſtion at another time, he anſwereth not in his owne, but in *S. Gregorie's* words: *For ſo*, ſayth he, *writeth the holie Pope Gregorie in his Paſtoral: Whoſoeuer hath reſolued to vndertake a greater good, hath made the leſſer good which he might haue done, vnlawful vnto him. And to proue it, he bringeth the teſtimonie of the Ghoſpel ſaying: No bodie putting his hand to the plough & looking back, is fit for the Kindome of heauen; & thereupon concludeth: He therefore that purpoſed in ſtronger endeauour, is conuinced to locke back, if forgoing the greater, he bend himſelf to the leſſer. And the ſame S. Gregorie in his third Homilie vpon Ezechiel: There be ſome that performe indeed the works which they know, and performing them, purpoſe better things; but vnſaying themſelues againe, they alter from the better which they had purpoſed. They doe the good things which they had begunne, but faint frõ the better which they had thought to doe. Theſe men certainly ſeeme in the iudgement of men to ſtand, but before the eyes of Almightie God they are fallen from their purpoſe.* Al this *S. Bernard* brings out of *S. Gregorie*; & the authorities of two ſo great Saints meeting togeather, make that which they ſayd, the ſtronger.

S. Bernards opinion about going from one Order of Religiõn to another leſſe ſtrict.

S. *Bernard Ep. 1.* » » »

S. *Bernard Ep. 94.*

S. *Greg. 3. p. paſt. c. 28.*

Luc. 9.

S. *Greg. ho. 3. in Ezech.*

18. And we may euidently conclude vpon it, that if it be a wicked thing to goe from a Religion that is perfect, to one that is leſſe perfect, and he that doth ſo, ſhal not eſcape the iudgement of God; how much more wicked is it, to fal from Religion into the dirt and mire of the world? Some labour to excuſe their inconſtancie, pretending that they returne not to the world, to returne to their ſinnes, but are reſolued to liue vprightly and leade a vertuous life, which by the grace of God (which forſaketh no bodie) they hope to doe, & that it importeth not where they liue, ſo they liue wel. Againſt which fooliſh and pernicious errour we might ſay manie things; but one word of *S. Baſil* is ſufficient to ſtop their mouthes: Whoſoeuer, ſayth he, forſaketh the Colours of Chriſt, becauſe he thinketh he may notwithſtanding practiſe vertue, and pleaſe God, is wonderfully deceaued. For he that in a courſe of life, not cumbred with diſtractiue cares, and therefore leſſe ſubiect to ſinne, could not withſtand his aduerſarie, how can it be thought, that in a life, in which there be ſo manie gates open to ſinne, and where it is in his owne power freely to vſe his libertie, he wil doe anie thing that is vertuous? And yet though we grant he may, he can neuer eſcape the infamie of hauing reuolted from Chriſt, as thoſe Diſciples whom the holie Euangeliſt openly reproueth when he ſayth: *And manie of the diſciples went back, and now did not walke with Ieſus, ſaying: This word is hard.* And then alleadgeth manie arguments, to ſhew how damnable this inconſtancie is, and particularly, that they that ſuffer themſelues to be thus put by their place, and leeſe their footing, become a laughing-ſtock and mockerie to al, and togeather with the loſſe of their owne ſoules, ſcandalize al kind of people, giuing them occaſion to think, that the ſeruice of Chriſt is intollerable.

S. Baſil de abdic. ſec.

Ioh. 6. 66.

19. But enough of this hideous offence, and perhaps more then enough, conſidering the matter is ſo fowle and deteſtable. Wherefore let vs returne to our former diſcourſe of the ſweetnes & happines, which God hath ſo abundantly heaped vpon this eſtate; for there can not be a greater incitement and encouragement to perſeuer in it, then if we know truly what it is, and how great a guift of God. Let euerie one make account, that thoſe heauenlie words of the Apocalyps were ſpoken to himſelf: *Hold that which thou haſt, that no man may take thy crowne.* For the ſeruice of God may be truly called a *Crowne*, which ſignifyes honour and dignitie, and a Princelie ſtate. This is the *Crowne* which we muſt *hold, that no bodie take it from vs*; that is, endure whatſoeuer payne, trouble, labour, auſteritie, yea parte with our verie liues, rather then parte with it.

Apo. 3. 11.

The exhortation of *S. Anthonie*

20. But what can we alleadge more effectual to encourage al Religious people in that which they haue in hand, then that diſcourſe, which (as *S. Athanaſius* recordeth) *S. Anthonie* was wont to hold to his followers? And becauſe it is the diſcourſe of ſo rare a man, and ſo vniuerſally agreeth to al Religious people, and layeth liuely before vs the happines which we enioy in Religion, I haue made choice of it, as the fitteſt to conclude therewith this whole Treatiſe of a Religious State. And this it is: In this preſent life the prices are equal with the things which we exchange; and he that ſelleth, receaueth not things of greater value from him that buyeth. But the promiſe of euerlaſting life is purchaſed at a low rate. For it is written: *The dayes of our life three-ſcore and ten yeares.* When therefore we ſhal haue liued foure-ſcore, or a hundred yeares, labouring in the ſeruice of God, in the life to come we ſhal not raigne iuſt ſo much time, but for the yeares which I haue ſayd,

S. Atha. in vita Anto.

Pſ. 89. 10.

ſayd, the kingdome of al ages ſhal be giuen vs. We ſhal not inherit earth but heauen, and leauing this corruptible bodie, we ſhal receaue it with incorruption. Therefore, my Children, let not tediouſnes wearie you, nor the ambition of vaine-glorie delight you. *The ſufferings of this time are not condigne to the future glorie, which ſhal be reuealed in vs.* Let no man, when he lookes vpon the world, think he hath left great matters; for the whole earth compared with the immenſitie of the heauens, is litle. If therefore renouncing the whole world, we cannot ſay, we giue a iuſt value for thoſe heauenlie habitations, let euerie one reflect vpon himſelf, and he wil preſently vnderſtand, that hauing contemned a ſmal treaſure, or a litle houſe, or a ſmal portion of gold, he hath neither cauſe to glorie, as if he had forſaken great things, nor to repent himſelf, as if he were to receaue but litle. For as a man fets litle by one peece of braſſe to gaine a hundred peeces of gold, ſo he that hath forſaken the Empire of the whole world, ſhal receaue a hundred-fold of better rewards in that ſublime Throne. Finally we muſt conſider alſo, that though we would keepe our wealth, we ſhal be taken from it, whether we wil or no, by the courſe of death. Why therefore do we not make a vertue of neceſſitie? why doe we not voluntarily forſake that, to gayne the kingdome of heauen, which we muſt leeſe when our life is at an end? Let vs conſider that we are ſeruants of our Lord, and owe ſeruice to him that hath created vs; let no man by looking back imitate the wife of *Loth*, eſpecially ſeing out Lord hath ſayd, that *no man that putteth his hand to the plough and looketh back, is worthie of the kingdome of heauen.* To looke back, is nothing els, but to repent ourſelues of that which we haue begun, and to entangle ourſelues againe in worldlie deſires. Be not, I beſeech you, afrayd of the name of vertue, as if it were impoſſible; let not this exerciſe ſeeme ſtrange vnto vs, or hard to come by; it dependeth (the grace of God preceding) of our free wil; Man hath a natural inclination to this work, and it is a thing which expecteth only our good wil; wherupon our Lord in the Ghoſpel ſayth: *The kingdome of God is within you.* This we haue culled out of a long diſcourſe of *S. Anthonie's*, which euerie one muſt take, and ponder, as ſpoken to himſelf, that ſeing by the grace and goodnes of God we are entred into this holie *race* of Religion, we may continue to *runne* ſo in it, as we may one day happily *obtayne.*

Rom. 8.

Gen. 19. 26.

1. Cor. 9. 24.

The Conclusion of the whole Work, to Secular people.

CHAP. XXXVIII.

WE muſt now at laſt addreſſe ourſelues alſo to Secular people; though not to al, but to whom God hath vouchſafed from heauen ſome rayes of a Religious vocation. Others that haue receaued no ſuch light, it is neither lawful for me to moue them in it, nor am I willing to meddle with admoniſhing them; but for that which belongeth to their dutie, other diſcourſes are more fitting for them.

Mat. 9 9. 2. But they whom God hath vouchſafed ſo great a benefit, as to caſt his eye
2. Cor. 4. 6. vpon them, *and behold* them *ſitting*, as it were, *in the Cuſtome-houſe*, and *ſhining in their harts*, hath inuited them, from earthlie thoughts, & worldlie faſhions, to this heauenlie manner of liuing, ſtand in need of ſome bodie to admoniſh, to exhort, to help them forward in this happie courſe. For manie encounters ſtand expecting them, partly from the Diuel their forrain Enemie, partly from their owne fleſh, an Enemie more dangerous, becauſe the warre is within the land. And though euerie one, by that which he findeth by experience within himſelf, may eaſily vnderſtand, what kind of aſſaults theſe are, yet it wil not be amiſſe to heare what *S. Gregorie* ſayth of them in theſe words: In the firſt beginning of our cõuerſion we haue great ſorrow; for when a man conſidering his owne offences, deſires to breake in ſunder the fetters of worldlie cares, & walke the way of God by the path of a ſafe conuerſation, & caſt off the heauie burden of temporal deſires, to carrie the ſweet yoak of our Lord in a free mãner of ſeruitude: while he hath this in his thoughts, the carnal delight, which was familiar with him, meeteth him in the way, & being frõ a long time growne in cuſtome, the longer he hath vſed it, the ſtreighter it cloſeth with him, and ſuffereth him to parte the flower from it. And what ſorrow is there, what anxietie of hart, when on the one ſide the ſpirit calleth, and on the other ſide the fleſh draweth back? on the one ſide the loue of a new conuerſation inuiteth, on the other the cuſtome of our ancient wickednes reſiſteth; on the one ſide, his hart burnes with deſire of the heauenlie Countrey, on the other ſide he endures in himſelf the payne of carnal concupiſcence; which alſo doth in ſome ſort delight him againſt his wil. This is *S. Gregorie's* diſcourſe of it; and yet that freſh ſouldiers eſpecially may not be diſhartned, let vs ſee further, what ſuccours and ſupplyes God ſends them, and how eaſily they may goe away with the victorie. For this is that which followeth in him: But becauſe the Diuine grace doth not ſuffer vs long to be moleſted with theſe difficulties, breaking the fetters of our ſinnes, he quickly bringeth vs to the libertie of this new conuerſation, by comforting vs; and the enſuing ioy ſolaceth our precedent ſorrowes, inſomuch that the ſoule of euerie one that is cõuerted, doth ſo much the more reioyce, when it obtaineth what it deſired, by how much it remembreth the greef was greater in the labour to obtaine it. His hart is exceſſiuely ioyful, becauſe now through hope of ſecuritie he approacheth to whom he deſired, and rightly we may ſay of him:

They that think of entring into Religion, muſt expect encounters.

S. Greg. 24. 24. Mor. ca. 7.

But al is eaſie to be ouercome.

He

He wil beſeech God, who wil be pleaſed with him, and he shal ſee his face in iubilation; or: *He hath deliuered his ſoule, that it should not goe to deſtruction, but liuing should ſee light.* *Iob. 33.*

3. If therefore the caſe be thus, as *S. Gregorie* telles vs, who can be afrayd of ſuch skirmiſhes as are, as we ſee, both ſhort, and ſeconded on our ſide with ſo manie helps towards the victorie? But firſt of al, for the better ſucceſſe in it, we muſt weane ourſelues from a conceipt, which is wont to be a great rub in this kind of deliberation, as if they that forſake the goods of this world, loſt ſome great matter, wheras in truth there is no great thing in them, nothing that can be truly called good; & though there were, they that doe forſake them, doe not indeed looſe them, but exchange them for that which is better, and of farre greater value. Which is that, of which *S. Bernard* putteth *Sophia*, a noble and rich Ladie, in mind, vpon a reſolution which ſhe had to forſake the world, and conſecrate herſelf to God. The things, *ſayth he*, which thou abandoneſt, are ſmal, earthlie, tranſitorie. That which thou deſireſt, is great, heauenlie, eternal. I wil ſay more, and yet ſay but the truth: Thou forſakeſt darknes, thou entreſt into light; from the deapth of the ſeas, thou riſeſt to the harbour; from a miſerable ſlauerie, thou art reſcued into a happie freedome; finally from death thou paſſeſt to life. For hitherto liuing after thine owne wil, not after the wil of God, liuing at thine owne direction, not according to the law of God, liuing thou wert dead.

The goods of this world are nothing.

S. Ber. Epi. ad Soph. 1. n.

4. *S. Ambroſe* for this reaſon likeneth the voluntarie renunciation of al things to a thing depoſited; becauſe when we depoſitate anie thing with a friend, we receaue the ſelf ſame thing againe at the time agreed on, and haue this commoditie, that in the meane time it is ſure vnto vs in a ſafe hand. Thus he ſpeaketh to vowed Virgins: Let vs grant, that you muſt ſit downe with loſſe of your patrimonie; doe not the kingdomes of heauē hereafter recōpēſe the loſſe of ſuch fickle goods? Though, if we beleeue the words of Heauen, there is no bodie that ſhal haue left houſe, or parents, or brethren, for the name of Chriſt, that ſhal not receaue much more at theſe times, & in the world to come life euerlaſting. Put thy truſt in God; thou that truſteſt man with thy money, put it into God's hands. He like a good keeper of the hope, which we depoſitate in him, wil repay the talent of his truſt, with multiplied vſe. Truth doth not deceaue, Iuſtice doth not circumuēt, Vertue doth not beguile

That which we renounce, is but depoſited.

S. Ambr. l. 1. de virg.

5. The force of which reaſon of *S. Ambroſe* was declared by a heauenlie viſion which hapned to *S. Laurence Iuſtinian*. For it is recorded of him, that when he was about nineteen yeares of age, at which time youth is moſt ſlipperie and moſt in danger, as being then vpon the bending, our Sauiour appeared vnto him, in the ſhape of a Virgin, brighter then the Sunne, and with a louing contenance ſpake thus vnto him: Why doſt thou, my yong man, thus waſte thy hart, & ſeeking peace, powre out thy ſelf vpon manie things? that which thou ſeekeſt, is in my power to giue thee. If thou reſolue to haue me for thy ſpouſe, I promiſe thou ſhalt moſt certainly haue this peace. The yong man taken with ſo admirable beautie, & ſo large a promiſe, craued her name, and her deſcent. She anſwered: I am the Wiſedome of God, which tooke the ſhape of man vpon me to reforme man-kind. *S. Laurence* therupon replying, that he moſt willingly tooke her for his ſpouſe, ſhe kiſſed him, and with great expreſſion of ioy, as he conceaued, went her way. And not long after, he betaking himſelf to a Monaſterie to effect the marriage which was offered him, found by experiēce, as we haue ſayd, that he was not only no looſer by it, but got much more then he had in the world, and things of incomparable price.

The Wiſedome of God to *S. Laurence Iuſtinian.*

...difficulties of Religion are not vnsupportable.

6. This conceipt therefore of the greatnes of earthlie things being remoued, we must also banish a certain feare, which some people haue, least the difficulties of a Religious life be vnsupportable, and more then the forces of our frayle nature are able to beare; or at least, that if a man haue so much hart as to abide them, he must needs liue a heauie vncouth life; which, to say the truth, is but an idle childish feare. For, as I haue shewed at large before, we must not so wholy fixe our eyes vpon that which we see outwardly of Religion (which I must confesse is somewhat seuere) but that withal we must looke into that which is inward, which alayes al the seueritie, and indeed takes it quite away, and giues a man such inward sweetnes, as nothing can be more pleasant then a Religious life, which is one of the arguments, which *S. Hierome* vseth to *Heliodorus*, writing thus vnto him: Dost thou feare pouertie? But Christ sayth, *the poore are blessed*, Doth labour dant thee? But no Chãpion is crowned without sweating for it. Dost thou take thought for meate & drinke? but Fayth feeleth no hunger. Art thou afrayd to bruse against the bare ground thy hollow limmes with fasting? But God lyeth with thee. Doth the il-fauoured hayre of thy neglected head affright thee? but thy head is Christ.

S. Hierom. ep. 1.

7. But what need we stand vpon force of reason in a thing, which we may see with our eyes? For partly we reade, partly we dayly see before vs, so manie examples of them, that forsaking the world, haue liued, and doe this day liue in Religion with excessiue ioy and contentment, as it is wonderful. Had they not bodies and soules such as we haue? If watching therefore and fasting, the yoak of Obedience, the incommoditie of Pouertie, finally al kind of labour and paynes that can be taken by man, were to them light and delightful, what weaknes is it for vs alone, to imagine euerie thing so burdensome, and so intolerable? Had not they the same nature, the same God, no acceptour of persons, father to al, comforter of al? This is the consideration, which in the like exigent holp that great *S. Augustin*, and absolutly thrust him vpon the resolution, which he tooke of abandoning the world, and of al those that haue been reclaymed from the broad and spacious way to the narrow path of Christ; for ought we find written, none euer went so fearfully to work, and hung vpon so manie delayes, as he did, according to his owne relation, writing of these his difficulties and demurres, and of the horrour which he had of a new life, in regard of his old customes, which had taken so deep root in him; And yet he ouercame thẽ al, as I sayd, with this thought, how manie without number, not only like to himself, but farre weaker then he, in regard of their age or sexe, went chearfully through with this kind of life. And these are his words: On that side that I had bent my face to goe, and where I trembled to passe, there was layd open before me the chast worthines of Continencie, chearful, and not dissolutly merrie, honestly enticing me to come, & that I should not misdoubt, reaching forth, to receaue me & embrace me, her pious hands ful of whole troupes of good examples. There I saw so manie boyes and gyrles; there a great deale of youth, & al ages, graue widowes, & ancient maydes; & amidst them al, Continencie itself, not barren, but a fruitful mother of sonnes of ioyes, of thee, ô Lord, her husband. And she laughed at me, with a kind of laughter that exhorted me, as who should say: shalt not thou be able to doe that which these & these? Or could these and these doe it of themselues, and not rather in their Lord their God? Whosoeuer therefore shal find himself in this kind of wandring mind, let him set before him, as *S. Augustin*, this pourtraiture of Continencie and Religion, and

Experiẽce shewes that it is easie, to liue in Religion.

S. August. 8. Conf. ca. 11.

vnder

vnder the wings therof so manie thousands of men and women, some of yonger, some of elder yeares, that in the world for the most part liued richly, commodiously, deliciously; and yet afterwards embracing Religious pouertie, liued in that strict course of life with great feruour and contentment, and with no lesse feruour haue persеuered in it to the end. Whom would not such a sight encourage? yea, whom would it not prouoke to put himself also into companie to be one of so deare a flock of our Lord, and be glad of it?

8. We might heer lay togeather manie other incitements to this purpose, as the shortnes of the life of man, the vanitie of al temporal things, the feare of death, the danger of hel-fire, the hope of euerlasting rewards in Heauen, the beautie of a Religious course, appearing in the verie outward habit, and gate, and behauiour of Religious people, wherof sometimes one, sometimes more of them togeather, haue been forcible meanes to draw people, as in reason they may, from the loue of the world to Religion; but I passe to a few exampies of them.

Rowland of the Order of S. Dominick.

9. We reade in the historie of the Order of *S. Dominick*, of a rich noble man, whose name was *Rowland*, that hauing spent vpon some festiual occasion, the whole day in feasting, sporting, and dancing, and other vanities, himself glorious in new and costlie apparrel; at night reflecting vpon it, he began to think: Loe, what is become of al this feast we haue been at? where is al the iolitie of this day? whither is it gone? And weighing with himself, that as that day was gone and past, so al the rest of our life would passe togeather with al the happines and pleasures of it, and that nothing would remaine but sorrow and repentance, he betooke himself the verie next day to Religion; and seruing God manie yeares in it, was famous for sanctitie & learning. And in the same Order about the same time one *Peter Gonzales* was renowned both for holines of life, and learning, who was conuerted vpon a smal occasion in shew, yet such an one as might plainly shew the vanitie of the world. For being nephew to the Bishop of *Valentia*, and holding manie fat Benefices by his meanes before he was of yeares for it, and spending the profits of them in vaine pleasures and pride; it hapned that as he was one day riding like a yong gallant with his consorts about the Cittie, he fel into a filthie slowe, and being taken-vp al wet and mirie, the boyes of the street laughed at him, and derided him bitterly; and the man was so ashamed, and so angrie with himself withal, that he presently sayd within himself: Seing I haue serued the world, and it hath dealt thus with me, I wil deale with it accordingly as it deserues. And at the instant resolued to put himself into the seruice of God, which not long after he did, to the astonishment of al the Cittie, in the Religious Familie which I sayd. Another was moued to the like course by the feare of hel-fire. For liuing loosely in al kind of pleasure, and suffering no man to open his mouth vnto him about the reforming of himself; a Religious man going once to see him vpon curtesie, at their parting spake this onlie sentence of the Prophet: *Vnder thee the moath shalbe strewed, and wormes shal be thy couering.* Which saying struck so deepely into him, that he could think of nothing but wormes and moathes, and labouring to put so irksome a thought out of his head, by play and other pastimes among his companions, he was rather worse; and therupon reflecting, that if the bare thinking of that punishment was so vnsupportable, how much more vntollerable would the punishment itself be? and yealding the field to God, he consecrated himself vnto him in Religion.

The vanities of the world.

Peter Gonzales.

The deceitfulnes of it.

Hel-fire.

Esa. 14. 11.

The ioyes of heauen.

10. At *Bologna* vpon the first beginning almost of the Order of *S. Dominick*, a great learned man was drawne vnto it by consideration of the immensitie of the ioyes of heauen. For *Reginaldus* a principal man of that Order preaching with great concourse and great applause; this man, whose name was *Monetus*, was wont alwayes to shunne his conuersation and Sermons, much fearing he should be catched by him. Yet vpon a *S. Stephen's* day being drawne by importunitie of some of his acquaintãce to a Sermon, he was taken instantly with the verie first words. For his text being: *Behold, I see the heauens open*, he began to discourse vpon it to this effect: That now the gates of heauen were open, and anie man might enter it that would, & be happie; But they that should neglect this occasion, & shut their harts to God, should find also the gates of heauen shut against them, and would neuer be able to get in. The man needed no more; for his hart being changed suddenly, though before he was much auerted from a Religious life, he purposed to enter into Religion; and when the Sermon was ended he went to *Reginald*, & opened his mind vnto him, and moreouer made a vow, that he would effect it.

Andrew Archdeacon of *Virdun*.

11. No lesse admirable was that which hapned to one *Andrew*; who, as we reade, was famous in the *Cistertian* Order. For, being Archdeacon of *Virdun*, nobly borne and wealthie, he came to *Claireuaux*, that he might be an eye-witnes of the vertues of that house, of which he had heard so much, it being then but newly begun; not hauing the least thought himself to take vpon him anie such course. But entring into the Chapter-house (where al the Religious were met) to the end to commend himself to their prayers, and beholding the order, and silence, and as it were the Angelical, habit of that holie assemblie, he was very much moued at it; & the spirit of God seazing his heart, was wholy changed into another man, & inflamed with such a desire of embracing that course, that he resolued not so much as to delay time to goe home for a while, either to bid his acquaintance farewel, or to dispose of his meanes, but presently breaking with al the world he forsooke al instantly to adhere to Christ.

Beautie of Religion.

S. Nicolas Tolentin.

12. *S. Nicolas Tolentin* was in like manner changed vpon a different occasion. For an *Augustin-Friar* preaching in the open streets vpon those words of *S. Iohn*: *Doe not loue this world, nor the things which are in the world*: and discoursing at large, and with much vehemencie, of the vanitie and dangers of the world, this *Nicolas* being then a yong man, and standing there by chance, was so inflamed with this discourse, that resoluing to leaue the world, he went presently to the Monasterie with the Preacher, so soone as he had ended his Sermon.

Dangers of the world.

1. *Iohn* 2. 15.

13. Manie like effects hath our Lord and Sauiour wrought in our dayes, & doth dayly worke among men. One of our Societie was moued to forsake the world, to which he was much engaged in affection, by a thought of Eternitie. For thus he discoursed with himself: Betweene that which is limited, & that which is infinit, there is no proportion; & consequently not only one life which a man hath, but, though he had manie liues, if it were possible, it were nothing in comparison of the eternal rewards.

Eternitie.

Difference of rewards.

14. Another, that while he liued in the world was a great Lawyer, & tooke much paynes in his Clients causes, at last resolued thus with himself: Seing a man must labour and take paines in this life, it is much better to take paynes for God, who rewardeth his seruants so bountifully, then for the world, where oftimes we haue no reward at al, or a very smal and short recompence. Vpon which consideration he presently entred into our Societie.

15. But that which hapned to Father *Claudius Aquauiua*, General of the Societie, was more notable. He was moued to forsake the world by those words of our Sauiour: *My sheep heare my voice*; for withal he was seazed with a holie feare, least if he should not giue eare to the heauenlie counsel, he should not be one of Christ's sheep; and therefore came the same howre, and almost at the same instant, to our Fathers, and gaue himself wholy vnto them. No lesse remarkable was the motiue, vpon which *Francis Borgia*, another General of our Order, came to the Societie. For while he was *Duke of Gandie*, and in great credit with euerie bodie, it hapned, that he was appointed by the Emperour *Charles* the Fift, to accompanie the bodie of the Ladie *Isabel* lately deceased, wife to the said Emperour. In which iourney there falling out some occasion to haue the coffin opened to view the dead corps, he seing it now turned to corruption, and the wormes swarming about it, and gnawing it, presently began to reflect with himself, to what al the power and glorie of that woman was come, whose verie countenance, while she liued, kept the world in awe, and how little difference death makes betwixt a Prince and the poorest creature that is. And this consideration of the ficklenes of al flesh wrought so in his mind, that he left his Dukedome, & embraced an humble Religious life.

Claudius Aquauiua. *Io.* 10. 16.

B. Fa. Borgia.

16. Al these and infinit more, whom it were long to rehearse, both of late yeares and ancienter times, some for one cause, and some for another, haue been moued to Religious courses: But al the motiues, which they haue had, may be reduced to two heads, which it is fit we should know, and haue alwayes before our eyes, to wit, the miserie of this world, and the happines of a Religious life. And what infinit miseries doth the miserie of this world inuolue? On the other side, this one happines of Religion, what number of happinesses without number doth it comprehend? The world & al the hopes & proffers of it passe away, & we from them. What greater madnes therefore can there be, then to resolue to perish with that which perisheth? What greater wisedome, then betimes to forsake that which sooner or later must be forsaken? specially seing, if we forsake it voluntarily of our owne accord, we shal haue the honour of hauing forsaken it, and inestimable rewards besides for doing so; wheras if we attend til it be taken from vs, we may wel looke oftimes for punishment, but certainly shal haue no rewards. Which blindnes of ours *S. Gregorie* taxeth in these words: Our proud mind wil not yet willingly parte with that, which daily it leeseth, whether it wil or no.

Two generall motiues.

S Gregorie hom. 5. in Euang.

17. For the time wil come, and it wil not be long, when thou that art now a yong man, in the flower of thy yeares, strong and able of bodie, and, as thou conceaueſt, happie, drunk (as I may say) notwithstanding with ambition, with desire of honour & preferments, with the fauour & good wil of men, with the swetnes of earthlie pleasures, shalt lye nayled to a couch, scorched with a burning feauer, consumed to the bone with greef & payne, in the midst of the teares of thy kindred, of the sorrowes & lamentations of thy wife & children, which now thou takest so much pleasure in thinking to get, euerie moment expecting the last howre, when bodie and soule shal be separated one from the other. Of what opinion dost thou imagin thou wilt then be? what greef, what anguish, what torment wil possesse thee, when thou shalt see, that heauen is vtterly lost, because in this life thou didst neglect it; and now must leese this world, which thou didst so much affect? Think therefore betimes of that howre, set that day often before thine eyes, and doe now that, which at that time, which possibly cannot be auoyded, thou wouldst wish thou hadst done.

Ier. 2. 18. What wilt thou (sayth the Prophet) in the way of Aegypt, to drink muddie water? and what hast thou with the way of the Assyrians, to drink the water of the riuer? What is this way of Aegypt, or of the Assyrians, but the way of the world? where pleasures slide away like the current of anie riuer, and are moreouer dirtie & muddie, choaked with earth, and grounded but in earthlie things. How vnworthie a thing is it for the soule of man, descended from heauen, and borne to heauenlie things, a soule bought and washed with the sacred bloud of the liuing God, & made more white then snow in that heauenlie bath, to plunge itself in such muddie streames, hauing at hand such fountaines of liuing water, springing to life euerlasting? the pleasures, & delights, I say, of a Religious life; pleasures that are chast, vnspotted, vndefiled; pleasures which heer delight and spring-vp to life euerlasting, because the delight which we haue in them, doth not diminish but encrease our reward in the life to come, in regard it makes vs more chearfully apply ourselues to the seruice of our God. It hath at hand the Hundred-fold promised vs by our Sauiour, as the prouision for our charges, during this our pilgrimage, the solace of our present labour, the earnest-pennie and pledge of our future rewards. And what hath the world comparable to this Hundred-fold, seing certainly this is a hundred times beyond it, be it neuer so great? Wherefore, if to liue contentedly, to liue pleasantly, to liue happily, be our desire, why doe we seeke it elswhere, but where Christ our Sauiour, where Truth itself doth tel vs, it is to be had? If a man should promise vs of worldlie gayne, twentie or somewhat more for one, it would not be long before we should put al the money we haue, into his hand, & moreouer sel al to make money of it, to the end to place it so profitably; and yet the man in whom we repose our trust, is a man, and may deceaue vs, he may alter his mind, he may leese al & become banck-rout; But whom did God euer deceaue, or how can he possibly deceaue anie man, or grow lesse then his word? sooner wil he leaue to be God, then one iot or one tittle of his promises shal be voyd.

The difference of the pleasures of the world, and of Religion.

The greatnes of the Hundred fold.

S. Ber. hom. Ecce nos. 18. S. Bernard therefore had great reason to say: In the meane time, from whence soeuer they are to receaue a hundred-fold, so it be a hundred-fold, so it be worth
" a hundred times as much, let it please, let it delight, let it comfort, and be loued
" a hundred times more then anie thing els. What madnes is it for men to be backward in forsaking one for a hundred? where is the couetous? where is the ambitious? where is the disputer of this world? what? Is the couetousnes of men
" asleepe, and growne cold in matter of assured negotiation, and most gaineful
" marts? what lew wouldst thou refuse in this kind, ô man, that hast receaued
" the name of our Lord IESVS CHRIST in vayne? To what sacrilegious per-
" son, wouldst thou refuse to giue al that thou hast, for a hundred times as much?
" Strange newes! but coming from him, that makes al things new; A man takes vp
" a yoak, and findes rest; leaueth al, and hath a hundred-fold.

People doe not beleeue the promises of our Sauiour. 19. And doubtlesse, the true consideration of this hundred-fold, and of the immensitie of the rewards which we report, were able to make a man runne into the fire to purchase it, much more to Pouertie and Obedience. But if people, notwithstanding such gaynes and such rewards as are offered them vpon the forsaking of their worldlie wealth and substance, wil choose rather to remayne with it, what followes? but that either we must say, they care not for gayne, which cannot be, seing naturally men loue themselues and their profit excessiuely, or cal this recompence of a hundred-fold in question, which is the onlie thing which can be

ſayd, and which *Ægidius* (that famous man, one of the firſt diſciples of *S. Francis*, and one whom he loued entirely for his great ſanctitie) charged a ſecular Doctour with. For, putting this queſtion vnto him: Doſt thou beleeue, that the rewards are great, which God hath prepared for them that loue him and ſerue him? And the Doctour anſwering, that he did beleeue it: But I wil ſhew thee, ſayth *Ægidius*, that thou doſt not beleeue it. How much art thou worth? A thouſand crownes, ſayd the man. If therefore (replyed *Ægidius*) thou couldſt place theſe thouſand crownes ſo as preſently to haue a hundred thouſand for them, wouldſt not thou inſtantly employ thy money that way? ſeing therefore thou doſt not employ it ſo, it is euident, that thou doſt not beleeue Chriſt's promiſes. Thus did *Ægidius* argue to the point. *Ægidius.*

19. And thus much of the loſſe and diminiſhing of our gaines; which, conſidering the buſines concernes *eternitie*, is of great importance. But it is much more important, and more heauie, and miſerable, that beſides the loſſe they runne hazard of eternal damnation; firſt by reaſon of the general danger, which al men are in, that liue a ſecular life, as I haue ſhewed at large in the courſe of this Treatiſe; and ſecondly, by reaſon of the particular hazard, which this man or the other may be in, in regard that perhaps for his particular there is no way to be ſaued, but in Religion; and vnleſſe he take that courſe, he ſhal vndoubtedly periſh; which I doe not ſpeake of my owne head, but it is a document of *S. Gregorie's* in his Epiſtle to the Emperour *Mauritius*, where reprehending him for a Proclamation which he had cauſed to be ſet forth, forbidding certain kind of people to become Monks, he telleth him, his law is vniuſt, becauſe manie may be ſhut out of heauen by it; and giues this reaſon: for though manie may liue vprightly in the world, yet (ſayth he) there be manie, who vnleſſe they forſake al, cannot by anie meanes in the ſight of God be ſaued. Which ſaying of ſo holie and ſo aduiſed a man, as *S. Gregorie* was, ought in reaſon to make great impreſſion in vs; for euerie one may iuſtly feare himſelf, and hath no cauſe, why he ſhould not feare, leaſt he be of the number; and ſpecially they that either admit not of the vocation of God, or hauing entertayned his holie inſpirations, fly off agayne from them. For this ingratitude towards ſo good a God, is that great offence, which *S. Bernard* termeth a Scorching wind, drying vp the fountain of pietie, the deaw of mercie, the ſtreames of grace. And if we conſider the manner of proceeding, which God is wont to hold, as himſelf giueth vs to vnderſtand, we ſhal thinke no leſſe; for he doth not only with-hold his bountiful hand from them, that doe not encreaſe and multiplie that grace which they haue receaued of him, but taketh from them that which he had giuen them before; and maketh good his owne ſaying in the Ghoſpel: *To him that hath, it ſhal be giuen, and he ſhal abound; and from him that hath not, euen that which he hath, ſhal be taken from him.* Manie cannot be ſaued, vnleſſe they enter into Religion. *S. Greg. lib. 2. regiſt. Ep. 6.* *S. Bern. ſer. 51. in Cant.* *Luc. 19. 26.*

20. But the beautie and dignitie and comelines of a Religious life, is of farre greater conſideration, and ought much more to moue vs to embrace it: ſpecially if we compare it with the crookednes, or (as we may wel ſay, conſidering moſt mens behauiours) the fowlenes and il-fauourdnes of the world, as light with darknes. For Religion, as it profeſſeth and maketh a Al men deſire perfection.

ſhew, is indeed a ſtate of perfection: And what is better, and more ſought after in the world, then perfection? We make ſo great account of a compleat houſe, of a horſe that is perfectly wel made, of a tree that is finely growne, that we are neuer wearie of looking vpon it, neuer think we can ſufficiently commend it. How much ought we in reaſon admire the ſoule of man, which of itſelf is ſo perfect a thing? But adding moreouer the perfection of vertue and ſanctitie, which it hath in Religion, it is doubtleſſe ſo perfectly beautiful, and ſo comelie, that nothing vpon earth can be compared with it, nothing deſerue more loue and eſteeme. In which reſpect *S. Hierome* had reaſon to ſay, as he did, to a noble man, whom he laboured to perſwade to forſake the world, and preſſed him in theſe words: But thou wilt ſay, this is an Apoſtolical dignitie, and belongeth to him that wil be perfect. And why wilt not thou alſo be perfect? why ſhouldſt not thou be the firſt in the familie of Chriſt, that art firſt in the world? And indeed it is a wonder, how men that ſo much deſire to haue al things, which are without them, of the perfecteſt and compleateſt that can be gotten, ſhould notwithſtanding not only not deſire the perfection of their owne mind, which doth ſo farre excel the other both in worth, and profit, and importance, but neglect it, and oftimes not ſo much as looke after it, when they may eaſily purchaſe it. When thou art to buy a farme, ſayth *S. Auguſtin*, thou ſeekeſt a good one; to marrie a wife, thou chooſeſt a good one; when thou wouldſt haue children, thou wouldſt haue them good; If thou be to buy hoſe and ſhoes, thou wilt haue no il ones: and doſt thou loue an euil life? What hath thy life offended thee, which alone thou wilt haue to be il, that among al thy goods, thy ſelf be only euil?

S. Hierome Ep. 34.

S. Aug. de verb. Dom. ſer. 16.

21. By which alſo we may ſee, how litle ground they haue, that witling to decline a Religious vocation, excuſe themſelues by ſaying: God hath commanded no ſuch thing, but left it free to euerie bodie's choice; if he embrace it, it is wel; if he do not, there is no offence committed. Which fooliſh and inconſiderate kind of Argument, a father of our Societie, wel experienced in ſpiritual things, once anſwered home, and to the purpoſe. For aſſiſting a Doctour of Diuinitie in the Spiritual Exerciſes, and the Doctour feeling himſelf called by God to Religion, and labouring notwithſtanding to auoyd it by this kind of fallacie, the Father put him this caſe: Tel me, ſayth he, if you were of force to ſayle into the Indies, and among manie ſhips that were readie to goe the voyage, ſome better, ſome worſe, the Admiral of the Fleete ſhould inuite you into his owne ſhip, new, ſtrongly built, wel prouided of al things, ſayles, cables, Pilot, marriners of the beſt, would you refuſe his curteſie, and caſt yourſelf into a weather-beaten veſſel, rotten, and vnprouided of tackling and al other furniture? or would you not rather with manie thanks accept of it, or perhaps yourſelf entreate him, and preſſe him to admit of you? Much more therefore, to auoyd the ſhip-wrack of your ſoule, which is a loſſe eternal, ought you to chooſe that ſtate, which may carrie you ſafe, and with the more aſſurance, through the dangerous and rockie

Another fallacie anſwered.

ſeas

feas of this world. Nothing more cleare and euident ; and accordingly the Doctour conceauing of it, and conuinced with the truth, without further demurre, put himſelf into our Societie.

22. But let vs ſuppoſe for a while, that there is no ſuch danger in the world, as we ſpeake of ; ſuppoſe a man be certain to goe to heauen, is it not better notwithſtanding to labour not only to come to heauen, but to haue as much glorie in it as poſſibly we can ? For if, for example, a man ſhould offer thee pewter or ſiluer, or ſiluer and gold, to chooſe what thou thinkſt good, wouldſt thou make anie queſtion what to chooſe ? or wouldſt thou content thy ſelf with a reuennue of two or three hundred yearely, if a hundred thouſand were preſented thee ? Seing therefore there is no gayne ſo ſmal, which men doe not make great account of in the world, and greedily lay hold of it when it is offered ; what blindnes is it, when thou mayſt be rich in that heauenlie glorie, that is, purchaſe manie degrees of it, great meaſure of ioy, plentie of eternal felicitie, to chooſe, as I may ſay, rather eternal pouertie ? and *ſowing heer ſparingly*, order thy buſines ſo, as when thou comeſt to heauen, if euer thou come thither, *thou reape alſo ſparingly* ?

They that ſowe ſparingly, ſhal reape ſparingly.

2. Cor. 9. 6.

23. Let vs giue eare to what the Apoſtle, or rather our Lord by the Apoſtle ſpeaketh to al : *The time is short ; it remayneth that they alſo, who haue wiues, be as though they had not ; and they that reioyce, as though they reioyced not ; and they that buy, as though they poſſeſſed not ; and they that vſe this world, as though they vſed it not : for the figure of this world paſſeth away.* What doth al this meane, but that, though it be free for euerie bodie to keepe what he hath, it is not free for euerie bodie to vſe it as he liſt ? He muſt vſe it ſo, as his hart be not ſet vpon it ; he muſt vſe it, as a meanes only to paſſe this life ; ſo as to be content to parte with it, if God be pleaſed to take it from him ; and alſo readie of himſelf to caſt it away, when the glorie of Almightie God ſhal ſo require ; to be ſhort, *he muſt vſe it as if he did not vſe it.* This is the manner ſet downe by the Apoſtle, and extendeth itſelf to al things, to wife, children, lands, goods, money, honour, and al things. If therefore the caſe be thus, if theſe be the conditions, vpon which we may poſſeſſe the goods of this world, how much better is it not to haue them, then to haue the vſe of them with ſo manie reſtraints ? For firſt, it is much eaſier not to ſet our affection vpon them when we haue them not, then to haue them and not to affect them. Secondly, there is alſo more contentment in it ; for to be alwayes curbing our affections in that which we haue alwayes before our eyes, is extreme violent, and conſequently cannot laſt long ; and for the time that it doth laſt, it muſt needs bring vs into a continual warre and debate with ourſelues, wonderful difficult & laborious to goe through with ; which difficultie they doe not find, who free themſelues from the matter that feeds this contentment.

1. Cor. 7. 29.

It is better to be without the things of this world, ſeing we cannot vſe them as we wil.

24. And al this belongs to the loſſe which they that refuſe to yeald to God, when he calleth them to Religiõ, & offereth thẽ ſo manie treaſures as a Religious vocation containeth, draw vpon themſelues, meerly becauſe they wil follow the vanities & libertie of this world. Let vs conſider now, what wrong, what offence it is to God. Firſt, they draw back from God, whoſe they are wholy, al that they are ; He created & made them for himſelf ; *he bought them*, as the Apoſtle ſayth, *at a great*

The offence and affront which is in refuſing God when he calleth

price; finally, not to repeate al titles, they ſtand engaged vnto him by the promiſe which they made in Baptiſme, when they were deliuered ouer into his ſeruice, and, as it were, ſworne his ſouldiers. To withdraw themſelues therefore from him, and reſolue to be at their owne diſpoſe, is as it were to take away a ſlaue, or anie thing els from another man; which at leaſt is theft.

24. And though the caſe were not thus, yet doubtleſſe it is an affront, when inuited ſo often and ſo earneſtly to his friendſhip and familiaritie, we refuſe it, and neglect his proffers and promiſes, as if they were not worth the taking vp, or were vncertain. Great men of this world think themſelues much wronged, if vpon their entreatie they ſhould be refuſed. But there is no danger in it, they ſeldome preſſe a curteſie ſo farre vpon any man; people muſt rather ſeeke to them for fauour, and entreate hard to be admitted in their ſeruice, and vſe al the meanes they can to inſinuate themſelues into their good wils. God only is left alone, and neglected, with al his promiſes and inuitations, though he be farre greater then anie Prince, and make larger offers. A thing to be lamented in the higheſt degree! And what then ſhal we think of the offence which is in it? As before I ſhewed, that it is a haynons ſinne, to goe back from Religion, when we haue once vndertaken to follow Chriſt in it: ſo they come not farre ſhort of it, that contemne the voyce and counſel of God, when he calleth them to Religion. For, ſetting aſide the obligation which Religious people haue aboue others by the vow and promiſe which they make, the iniurie (which is that which we now ſpeak of) and the affront, is in a manner alike, to breake friendſhip, and to refuſe to be friends, when friendſhip is offered: as there is not much difference in the diſobedience, when a man leaues to doe his Prince's wil after he hath begunne to doe it, and when he reſolues neuer to begin. And conſequently, as there we ſhewed, how God doth in a manner alwayes manifeſt his high diſpleaſure againſt the firſt, that forſake him, the like we may expect and make account of in this. And that which we reade in the Pſalme, doth iuſtly and in verie truth fal vpon them, that becauſe they would not bleſſing, it ſhal be ſet farre from them; and becauſe they loued maledi-ction, it ſhal befal them, and ſhal be put vpon them like a garment, and enter like water into their inner parts, and as oyle into their bones. That

Pſ. 108. 17. „ alſo which the Iuſtice of God threatneth in the booke of Wiſedome, is ful-
„ filled in them: I called, and you refuſed; I held out my hand, and there
„ was not he that would looke; you deſpiſed al my counſel, and neglected
„ al my rebukes. What puniſhment therefore belongeth to ſuch a fault? It

Pro. 1. 24. followeth: I alſo wil laugh in your deſtruction, and ſcorne, when that ſhal
„ happen, which you feared.

Exãples of them that haue been punished for refuſing to anſwer

25. The effect of which rigorous denunciation appeareth in that which *S. Antonine* recordeth of one that had made a vow to be a Franciſcan-Friar; but afterwards changing his mind, became a *Prebend*; and not manie moneths paſſed, but he fel deadly ſick; and being put in mind by them that belonged vnto him, to think of ſetting his ſoule in order by a good Confeſſion, he anſwered: There

was

was no need, becauſe it was ſhewed vnto him that he was damned; & therefore they ſhould trouble him no more, becauſe he could not Confeſſe. For our Lord, fayth he, appeared vnto me very angrie, ſaying: I called thee, and thou refuſedſt; therefore get thee gone to the torments of Hel; and with that he gaue vp the ghoſt. A woeful and moſt lamentable end.

their tion. S. Anton. 3. part. 24. li. 9. §. 7.

26. With another in like danger, it fel out better. For hauing had a purpoſe, while he was a yong man, to enter among the Monks of the *Ciſtertian Order* (and yet he had made no vow) differring it from day to day, he grew cold in it; and returning home from a pilgrimage which he had made to *Compoſtella*, that verie night our Sauiour appeared vnto him with his two Apoſtles, *S. Peter* and *S. Iames*. *S. Peter* held in hand before our Sauiour a daintie booke open, in which the name of the yong man, which was *Iohn*, was written; our Sauiour therefore ſayd to *S. Peter*: *Blot this man out of my booke*. *S. Iames* began earneſtly to beg for him, as for a Pilgrim of his, and tooke vpon him, that the youth ſhould reforme himſelf. The youth ſeing that the matter concerned himſelf, was in a great agonie; and trembling with feare, made great promiſes, that he would begin a new life. But our Sauiour ſeeming not to truſt him by reaſon of his former inconſtancie, asked, who would giue his word for him? and *S. Iames* offered himſelf. With which the youth awaking, and being much aſtoniſhed at it, yet fel aſleepe againe, and the ſame viſion appeared the ſecond time vnto him, and moreouer he ſpyed in the booke this inſtruction out of the Canticles: *We wil make thee chaines of gold enameled with ſiluer*. Hartned therefore on the one ſide with this ioyful promiſe, and frighted on the other with thoſe threats, he preſently went to *Ciſteaulx*, where profiting exceedingly in vertue, he was created Abbot of *Bonavalle*, and afterwards Biſhop of *Valence*.

A youth repreued by the interceſſion of S. *Iames*. *Anton. 2. part. tit. 17. c. 1. §. 2.*

Cant. 1. 11.

27. In the Chronicles of the *Franciſcans* we reade, that about the yeare 1350. a Schollar of *Paris* hauing purpoſed to enter into that Order, and gone ſo farre as to cauſe his Habit to be made readie, altered his mind. Not long after in the night, he ſaw as if our Sauiour were ſitting on a Throne of great maieſtie to iudge; whervpon with remorſe of conſcience he began to crye out: *Haue mercie vpon me, ô Lord*; and our Sauiour anſwered: *I wil haue mercie, ſo as thou performe what thou didſt intend*. And he moſt willingly promiſing that he would, he was notwithſtanding by the Diuel caſt into a Copper ful of boyling oyle and pitch, and felt himſelf in ſuch grieuous torment with it, as if his fleſh had been torne from his bones; and awaking with the anguiſh, he inſtantly with great zeale betooke himſelf to a Religious life. What ſhal I ſay of *Gerard* brother to *S. Bernard*, whoſe fact was in two reſpects very memorable? For obſtinately reiecting the good admonitions, which *S. Bernard* gaue him about forſaking the world, as being in the flower of his youth, and hot vpon the warres where he had new begun to ſerue, *S. Bernard* pointing at his ſide, ſayd vnto him with a Prophetical ſpirit: *The day wil come, and that quickly, when a ſpeare thruſt into this ſide, wil open thy breaſt to the wholſome counſels, to which now it is ſhut*. And it hapned ſo. For within few dayes after, wounded in that verie place of his bodie, and taken by the enemie in a skirmiſh, remembring what his brother had foretold him, he cryed out, that he was a Monk of Ciſteaux. They

Another taken to mercie, and yet chaſtized. S. *Anton. 3. part. tit. 24. c. 2. §. 7.*

A brother of S. Bernard. *Vit. S. Bern. l. 1. c. 3.*

carrie him notwithstanding away, and put him in prison; where tormented with greef, that he could not goe to *Cisteaux* with the rest of his Brethren, one day he saw his irons were fallen off, and the prison-gates were open: and euerie bodie fled, that might either haue stayed him or discouered him; whereupon he fled to the next Church, and from thence to the Monasterie, desirous of that holie course, and confirmed withal in his desire by so late and so strange a miracle. By which example, as I sayd, we see, both how deere it costs them, that resist the Holie-Ghost, and how easie al things are to them, that resolue to follow his Diuine instinct.

A vision of his concerning two of his companie. *In vit. S. Bernard.*

28. I cannot omit that which was shewed to the same *S. Bernard*, concerning two of his Companions about the same time. For hauing by his exhortations encouraged manie of his brethren, and friends, and kindred, to forsake the world; before that holie troope met togeather at *Cisteaux*, he thought one day he saw them al sitting in one roome, and euerie one in their turne eating of one kind of dish of meate, which was white and wonderful sauourie; and while the rest fed vpon it with great contentment, two only of the whole companie fasted; one of them did not eate at al of it, the other eate a litle, but presently cast it vp againe. The euent shewed the meaning of the vision; for one of the number withdrew himself from among them, before they brought their purpose to effect; the other began with the rest, but continued not long: and it was particularly obserued, that though the man was wel borne, and had good friends, al forsooke him, and he came to great miserie, *wandring about the world, like another Cain, cast forth from the face of God.*

Another that delaied his entrance.

S. *Bernard Ep.* 108.

29. The same *S. Bernard* relateth another terrible example in this kind, in an Epistle which he wrote vnto one *Thomas of S. Omers*, who was delaying his entrance into Religion, because he would make an end of his studies. To put him off therefore from this delay, he telles him, how another was punished for the like fault. Alas, alas, sayth he, thou seemest to walk with the like spirit, as thy name is like to another *Thomas*, anciently Prouost of *Beuerlee*, who hauing vowed
" himself with al his hart to our Order and to our House, began to take time,
" and so by litle to grow cold, til suddenly taken away with a fearful death, he
" dyed a secular man, and a transgressour, and doubly the sonne of Hel-fire.
" Which, if it be possible, God, who is merciful and ful of compassion, preserue
" him from.

30. Examples of this nature are frequent in al ages, and in these our dayes; and we ourselues haue seen diuers with our owne eyes, and doe at this houre see manie, that reiecting the good purposes which God put into their mind of entring into Religion, haue themselues been reiected by God, and fallen into extremitie of miserie, and a world of misfortunes. Wherefore though we cannot propose a more forcible consideration to them that are inclining this way, or taking aduise in it, then that which we haue hitherto discoursed, of the dangers which they see they may fal into; yet to draw to a Conclusion, we wil set downe a few passages of the holie Fathers, exhorting such people to their duetie; for not only the solidnes of their discourse, but the bare signe of their iudgement and inclination in this kind, ought greatly to sway with euerie bodie.

Exhortations of holie Fathers to Religion

31. Let vs therefore see, how *S. Fulgentius* did animate himself to renounce the

the world. He was descended of a worshipful familie, and being in his time held one of the fortunatest men that were for wealth, learning, dignitie in the Common-wealth, multitudes of Clients, flourishing yeares, and the like, amidst al these prosperous windes, he began first, as it is related of him, to think the burden of those secular businesses extreamely heauie, to distaste the vanitie of that kind of happines, to repayre oftener to Religious houses, to take pleasure in conuersing with the seruants of God, to frame himself to their behauiour and exercises. He saw they had no worldlie mirth among them, and yet were free from the troubles and tediousnesses, which are so frequent in the world. They liued louingly like brethren togeather, no debate, no misreport, no contention was stirring among them; and so manie yong men in the flower of their age liuing chast and pure. Which when he had often reflected vpon, and duly weighed, he brake forth into these words worthie of eternal memorie: Why, I beseech you, doe we labour in this world without hope of the goods to come? what can the world finally doe for vs? If we desire mirth (though good teares be better then euil ioyes) yet how much better doe they reioyce, that haue a quiet conscience in God, that feare nothing but sinne, that doe nothing but what God commandeth? They are not toyled with common businesses, nor haue cause either wofully to bewayle, or basely to feare losse of temporal goods; and hauing forsaken their owne, they practise not for that which is another's; among themselues they liue peaceably, sober, meeke, humble, louing; there is no thought of lust, but care and continual custodie of chastitie. Let vs imitate therefore men that are so worthie, and take vpon vs this constant kind of good life; let vs make vse of that, which by the instinct of grace we haue deserued to acknowledge to be the better; let vs shake off our wonted behauiour, and make an exchange of our paynes and labours. We striued before among noble friends to be thought more noble; let vs now endeauour among the poore seruants of God to be the poorest. So he sayd, and so he did, al *Carthage* admiring and extolling his fact, manie also imitating him and filling Monasteries with the abundance of them that were conuerted.

The conuersion of S. Fulgentius and how he encouraged himself. *Vid. Sur. in eius vita. To. 1.*

32. Thus *S. Fulgentius* animated himself. *S. Augustin* held the like discourse to *Licentius*, a wittie yong man, inuiting him to the sweet yoak of CHRIST, and among manie other things he speaketh thus: I see, what a disposition and what a wit, it is not in my power, to apprehend and sacrifice to my God. If thou hadst found a golden cup vpon the ground, thou wouldst giue it to the Church of God; thou hast receaued of God a wil spiritually golden, & dost thou serue thy lusts with it, and drink thyself to Sathan out of it? Giue eare to this, you that bestow your wits and learning, and other natural parts in secular vanities, in hunting after the honours and vaine-glorie of the world, and know, that it is to employ the guifts of God in the seruice of the enemie of God. Giue eare to this eloquent discourse of *S. Basil* vpon the same subiect: O man! we inuite thee to life; why dost thou shunne this inuitation? to the participation of good things, why dost thou neglect the offer? The kingdome of heauen is open; he that calleth thee, is no lyer; the way is easie; there needs no time, no cost, no labour to passe it. Why dost thou stand? why dost thou hold back? why dost thou feare the yoak, as a yong steer that hath not been broken? It is good, it is light, it doth not gal the neck, but honour it; put thy wild head vnder it,

The exhortation of *S. Augustin* to *Licetius*. *Epist. 41.*

S. Basil's exhortation. Hom 52.

» become a beast of Christ, least leauing this yoak, and liuing a loose life, » thou expose thyself to be torne by wild beasts. *Taste, and see, that our Lord is » sweet.* How shal I be able to expresse the sweetnes of honie to them, that know » it not? Taste of it, and see.

Greg. 6. Ep. 109 33. *S. Gregorie* also hath a fine exhortation to one *Andrew*, a nobleman, to draw him to the seruice of Christ, from the seruice of the Emperour, to which » he was pretending: Why dost thou not consider, my noble sonne, that the world » is at an end? Euerie thing dayly hastneth away: we are going to giue-in our » accounts to the eternal and terrible Iudge; what therefore should we think of » els, but of his coming? For our life is like to one that is at sea; he that is at sea, » stands, and sits, and lyes, and goes, because he is carryed with the motion of the » ship: So are we; whether we wake, or sleepe, or speak, or hold our peace, or » walke, wil we nil we, by moments dayly we go to our end. When therefore » the day of our end shal come, where shal we find that, which now we seeke for » with so much care, that which we gather with so much sollicitude? We must » not seeke after honours and wealth, which must be once forsaken; but if we » seeke good things, let vs loue them, which we shal haue without end; and if » we feare euil things, let vs feare them, which the reprobate suffer without end. » The verie being in a Prince his seruice, what busines doth it draw the mind into, » for the desire which we haue of earthlie fauour? and into what feares, least » we leese this fauour when once we haue got it? Consider therefore, what tor- » ment it is, to be moyled now with desires of prosperitie, and then to be appa- » led with the feare of aduersitie. Wherefore I would rather aduise, that your Ex- » cellencie would endeauour to liue in your ancient purpose, for this final time, in » some delightsome retirement of this peregrination, and leade a quiet & peace- » able life, attend to the reading of holie bookes, meditate vpon the heauenlie » words, inflame yourself with the loue of Eternitie. To liue thus, is euen now » to be partaker of the eternal life. This I say vnto you, my noble sonne; because » I loue you much. And because you are putting yourself into that, which wil be » like waues and tempests to your hart, I labour to draw you back to the shore by » the cables of my words: and if you vouchsafe to follow him that draweth you, » you wil see when you be on the shore of the quiet, what dangers you haue esca- » ped, what ioyes you haue met with.

S. Bernard's admonitiõ. 34. Let vs adde an excellent saying of *S. Bernard.* For speaking of the dignitie of *Powertie*, which maketh vs *Kings*, which receaueth others into the *eternal tabernacles*, and doth not only not seeke that others should patronize and defend it, but defendeth others, speaketh as followeth of the vani-

S. Bernard Ep. 103. tie of this world: But would to God thou wouldst attend without dissembling, with what manner of things thou dost hinder thyself! Woe, woe. That which » shutteth vp the passage to eternal felicitie, that which hideth the boundlesse » claritie of euerlasting light, that which deceaueth thee of the knowledge of al » things, that which depriueth thee of the honour of highest preferment, is a » vapour appearing for a while. How long wilt thou preferre before such a glorie » the hay, that to day is, & to morrow is cast into the ouen? flesh (I say) and the » glorie therof. For al flesh is hay, and al the glorie therof as the flower of hay. » If thou be wise, if thou haue a hart, if thy eyes be in thy head, leaue to

follow

follow that, which to ouertake, is miserable. Were it not better to contemne it with honour, then leese it with greef? Is it not more wisedome to yeald to the loue of Christ, then to death? A theef lyes in ambush, from whose hands thou canst not steale thy self, nor thine. He cannot be fore-seene, because like a theef in the night, so he shal come. Thou broughtst nothing into the world; doubtlesse neither shalt thou carrie anie thing away. Thou shalt sleepe thy sleep, and find nothing in thy hands.

35. Thus saith S. *Bernard* in that Epistle; but he layeth yet more load in a sermon vpon the *Canticles*, shewing that al delay in this kind, is a kind of Infidelitie: I say, that al they know not God, that wil not be conuerted to God; for doubtlesse they haue no other reason to refuse, but because they imagine he is sterne and seuere, who indeed is gentle: they imagine him hard and implacable, that is merciful; fierce and terrible, who is amiable; and iniquitie lyeth to it self, framing an Idol to it self, for that which is not he. What is that which you feare, you of little faith? that he wil not forgine sinnes? But *he hath nayled them to the Crosse with his owne hands*. That you are yet yong and tender? But *he knowes our mold*. That you are il-bred, and bound in customes of sinnes? But *our Lord looseth them that are in fetters*. Perhaps least prouoked with the enormitie and multitude of sinnes, he be slow in reaching out his helping hand? But *where sinne aboundeth, Grace also is wont to more abound*. Are you sollicitous for apparrel, or foode, or other necessaries for your bodie, and therefore loath to forsake that which you haue? But *he knowes that you stand in need of al these*. What wil you more? what doth now hinder you from saluation? Thus farre *S. Bernard*.

Idem. ser. 38. in Cant.
Coloss 2. 14.
Psa. 102. 4.
Psa. 145 8.
Rom. 5. 20.
Mat. 6. 32.

Finally let vs heare how *S. Laurence Iustinian* doth labour to draw al men from the vanitie of this world, to the quiet of Religion; these are his words: O preuaricatours, returne to your hart; reclaime your selues from your wayes, least after a while you perish for euer. Restrayne your harts that they go not after their concupiscences, least at some time or other death seaze vpon you, and there be no bodie to rescue you; sel that which you possesse, that with this happie exchange you may purchase heauenlie glorie. Giue Christ that which you must leaue to the world; send your goods before you, that in time of necessitie they may be restored vnto you multiplyed. Renounce the world voluntarily, least you be constrayned to go out of it with sorrow. Make a vertue of necessitie; and after this life you shal receaue an eternal kingdome. Consider their end, that haue gone before you, and would needs liue as you do: They flourished in the world, they abounded in wealth, they gaue themselues to al kind of pleasure, *they led their dayes in good things, and in a moment they descended to Hel*: They reioyced for a short time, and are condemned to eternal death. It hapneth not so to them that serue God, that haue giuen their soules for Christ, and vnder the command of their teacher, haue crucified their wils without respit. *Rich men*, sayth the Prophet, *haue wanted and been hungrie; but they that seeke God, shal not faile of al good*.

S. Laur. Iustin. de perfect. Mon. Can. 2.
Iob. 21. 13.
Psal. 33. 11.

The inuitation which our Sauiour makes.

But if there be anie whom so manie reasons, so manie authorities of holie Fathers, so manie examples are not forcible enough to conuince; let them giue eare to the sweet exhortation which our Sauiour himself makes vnto thē, that if they stoope not to men, they may yeald at least to God. What therefore doth he say?

11. 28. *Come vnto me al you that labour and are loaden, and I wil refresh you.* These words
de sayth *S. Basil*, are the wordes of God, which whether they signifie the refreshing
ult. in this life in which now we are, or in the life to come, it is euident, they exhort
" vs, that casting off the burden of riches, and distributing it among the poore, to
" the end to blot out by almes-deeds and Confession, the innumerable multitude
" of sinnes, which lie heauie vpon vs by the desire of riches, we betake ourselues to
" the life of Monks, to carrie our Crosse. Wherefore he that hath resolued to
" obey Christ, & maketh hast to a life naked of the possession of al things, and not
" distracted with the cares of this world, he is truly admirable and to be accounted
" happie. Thus sayth *S. Basil* vpon those words of our Sauiour.

It behoueth vs therefore diligently to ponder this heauenlie Oracle, as spoken to ourselues, and of ourselues; and that we may do it to the greater comfort of our soules, let vs take it, not as out of a dumb paper, but as it fel from his Sacred mouth that was Truth and Loue itself; and represent to our Consideration his most sacred person, infinitly worthie of al loue and veneration, as anciently he was seen vpon earth, and conuersed with men, poore, and humble in outward shew, contemptible, and the sonne of a Carpenter: yet truly the sonne of God, and himself true God, *supporting al things with the word of his power, in whom are*
Heb. 1. 3. *al treasures.* It is he, that like a louing father burning with true loue of our soules, inflamed with desire of our eternal welfare and saluation, crieth out alowd to al, and as it were mounted vpon a high chaire, preacheth vnto vs in these words:
Mat. 11. *Come vnto me al you that labour, and are burdned, and I wil refresh you: Take vpon you my yoak, and you shal find rest to your soules: for my yoak is sweet, and my burden light*; as if he should say in larger termes; sonnes of men, how long wil you be heauie-harted? how long wil you haue your eyes vpon vanities and false madnes? Wherefore consume yee yourselues with foolish labour, seeking ioy and content of mind in false riches and vaine honours of this world? Al this is but a *burden* and affliction of spirit, not *rest* and *refreshing*. The effect of al, is *anguish* while you desire them, *labour* while you seeke them, *care* and infinit sollicitude, while you possesse them. You that *labour* vnder this heauie charge, and are *loaded* with this dangerous *burden*, cast it off *and come to me.* For when was it il with you, while you were with me, or wel without me? Behold the diuel and the world cal vpon you; I on the other side do inuite you. The world calles to infect you, the diuel to kil you, and as a *Wolf* to *worrie* and *destroy* you. Where do I cal you, but to *refresh you*? *I wil refresh you* with that inward food that shal fil your desires, quench your thirst, and giue your hart that ease, that you wil desire no more. For with me are the *pastures of life*, in me true pleasure, and the *delightful refection of the mind. Come* therfore *to me*, and *take my yoak* yourselues *vpon you*, I say, *take* it yourselues; I command no man, I force it vpon no man; It must be *taken* voluntarily: and *Humilitie* and *Obedience* are the vertues which make men stoope vnto it.

Luc. 14. 19. The world also hath a *yoak*, and not one only, but *fiue yoakes*, rugged and heauie, and voyd of the rewards of eternitie. Wherefore do you rather make choice of this seruitude, so hard, so vnsufferable, so manifold, then in my *seruice* which is true freedome, to swimme in al plentie of delights and comforts? *My yoak*, I confesse, is a yoak, but *sweet*; a *burden*, but, *light*. Without a *yoak*, without a *burden*, you cannot come to the ioyes which are euerlasting; *The way is*

narrow

narrow which leadeth to life, and it *behooued* the king of glorie *to suffer, and so to enter into his glorie*. But whatsoeuer this *tribulation* be, it is *momentarie*, and the *plentifulnes of my house* makes it light and *sweet*. Theſe are the works which *I dayly work*. I bring *water* out of the *rock*, and *oyle* out of the *hardeſt ſtone*; I make this *yoak rot from the face of oyle*, the oyle of that *gladnes*, with which my ſelf was annointed before al *my Conſorts*. *This oyle, I powre forth* largely vpon them that are *partakers* with me. Heer therefore you ſhal *find reſt to your ſoules*, and aſſured comfort. Heere I *wil lead* you into that heauenlie *wine-cellar*, where you ſhal *exult*, and drink the *wine that reioyceth the hart of man*. And yet this is not an *end*, but the *beginning* of your ioyes. For after this life, there attendeth you a *life* and reward, which *eye hath not ſeen, nor eare heard, nor hath it aſcended into the hart of man*. Becauſe if anie man *miniſter* to me, my *Father* wil *honour* him; and the honour is, that *where I am, there my miniſter be*. Then he wil giue you a *Crowne*, for aſhes: the *oyle* of ioy, for mourning: a *cloake* of prayſe, for the ſpirit of ſorrow; and your *hart* ſhal *reioyce*, and no man ſhal take your ioy from you.

Mat. 7.
Luc. 24.
Deut. 32.
Eſa. 10.
Eſ. 64. 4.
Io. 12. 26.
Eſa. 61. 3.
Io. 16. 22.

FINIS.

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Pag. 9. lin. 3. for Sauiour. *VVho ſayth, were, reade* Sauiour, who ſayth: *VVhere &c Pag. 21. in the Title of the Chapter in ſome Copies, reade* Chaſtitie *for* Charitie.

FINIS.