

A TREATISE
OF PRAYER.
AND OF THE
FRVITS AND MANNER
OF PRAYER.

By the most Reuerend Father in
God IOHN FISHER Bishop
of Rochestre, Preist and most
eminent Cardinall of the most
holy Catholike Church, of the
title of S. Vitalis,

Translated into English by R. A. B.



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TO THE VERY
HONORABLE
AND VERTVOVS
LADYE THE LADYE
ELIZABETH
HERBERT,

wife to the honorable Sir
Percy Herbert, of Powis
Castle in Montgomerie
shire.



ADAME,

The noble
favours I have received

ā ij

from your Ladishipp
have not onely made
me studious to preserve
a gratefull mind in my
selfe, But also encoura-
ged me to vndertake
these smal paines in your
Ladyshipps behalfe. I
know good M A D A-
M E, that by your day-
ly exercise in prayer,
you have attained to
a great perfection in
that art: Yet with all,
I know your Ladif-
hipps humilitie to be
such, as you will not
scorne nor disdeigne

to better your know-
ledge from the instru-
ctions of the most able,
and most pious vn-
derstanding of the age
in which he lived.
M A D A M E, I pre-
sent heere vnto your
Ladyshipp a Treatise of
the most Reuerend Fa-
ther Iohn Fisher Bishop
of Rochester, Preist &
most eminent Cardinall
of the holy Roman Ca-
tholike Church; as you
see, M A D A M E, suf-
ficiently recommended
by those titles he deser-

vedly obtained, correspondent to the vertues of his most holy and blessed life. My care hath onely been to render him faythfullie and for your Ladishippes benefitt, as the gravitie of the argument requires, not giuing him any other ornamēt the that of truth, which I suppose makes it more agreeable to your Ladyshipps vertues, and with all I desire, it may be accepted from him, who glories in nothing mo-

re then the title of beinge

MADAME,

Your Ladyshipps
most humble ser-
vant and bea-
d-
man.

R. A. B.

ā iiij

APPROBATIO.

NOS Frater Clemens Raynerus Congregationis Anglicanae Ordinis Sancti Benedicti, Presbyter & Monachus eiusdemque Congregationis Praeses Generalis: per praesentes facultatem concedimus typis mandandi deuotum Tractatum Reuerendissimi in Christo Patris Iohannis Fisheri Episcopi Rossensis, & Romanae Ecclesiae Cardinalis Eminentissimi, de Oratione à Reuerendo Patre R. A. eiusdemque Ordinis & Congregationis nostrae in idioma Anglicum traductum. In cuius rei fidem his subscripsimus, sigillumque nostrum apposuimus die sexto Februarij, anno Domini 1640.

FR. CL. RAYNERVS
Praeses Generalis,
Locus † sigilli.



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OF PREMEDITATION, before Prayer.

When you intend to offer the Sacrifice of prayer, & prayles, to almighty God, and prepare you to prayer.

First, recall your Sences, and gather together your wittes, & with an humble, attentive, and deuout minde, lift vp your heart to almighty God: Reuerently standing vpright, with your hands ioyned before your brest, and lifted vp.

Pause then a little while, and aduisedly consider with

your selfe wherefore you come, whereabout you goe, & what busines you now take in hand.

Also, before whom you are present, the petitions you wil aske, and the offering you meane to make.

Remembre you are nowe, before a most mighty & diuine Maiestie; The Creator and Redeemer of your selfe, and all Mankinde, whom infinite number of Angels, and al the Celestial multitude do continually adore and worship, with feare and trembling.

And your selfe, a most wretched & vnworthie creature, fraile, vnstable, falling from him: dull, and

vnapt to calvpon him. And yet his mercie is so much, and his goodnesse so great, that he is euer, readie to heare, and gratiouſlie to graunt, your lawfull requestes, and to receaue you when you come vnto him: and also to forgiue you all your offences, when you are heartelie sorie and aske mercie for them.

Likewise, he is one that hath, and doth most bountefully bestowe vpon you, all things necessarie for bodie and soule: and hath and doth defende and keepe, feede and nourish you, and all creatures.

Then thinke, that it is before this diuine Presence,

before the which you presume to enter, and to present your selfe: to intreate, beseech, and require mercy, and forgiuenesse of sinnes, for your selfe and all others: and to offer the sacrifice of Praise, and Thanksgiuing vnto him.

Therefore with all humilie and reuerence prostrate your selfe at the feete of his mercie: and indeuour with deuotion, to accomplish that you come for. But before you begin your prayers, that you may the rather offer them with cleanes of heart, and giue thanks to God, not onely for his benefites, but chiefly for his goodnesse in himselfe, make it fully

knowne to your heart, as true, that it is vncertaine whether you shall liue to the end of your Prayers or not: Indeuour therefore that they may be such, as if it should so happen before you had ended the, that so, through the mercie of God, they may be acceptable vnto him, for the full forgiuenes of your offences, and the receauing you into his grace and fauour.

And that you may the more perfectly beginne, continue, and end, all your prayers, and other good actions, in the Name, and to the honour, and glorie of God, the most holie and blessed Trinitie: and haue

in minde his great goodnesse
 towards you , and giue
 thanks for them : and also
 that the Passion of our Lord,
 may take the more effect,
 the benefite of it may be
 imparted, the fruite there-
 of inioyed : and in all spi-
 rituall practises , remem-
 bred : You may , if it please
 you , begin your Prayers,
 in maner as followeth. Me-
 ckely falling on your knees,
 your heart and ioyned han-
 des being eleuated to God.

FOR



A TREATISE
 OF PRAYER,
 AND OF THE
 FRVITS AND
 maner of praying.

THE FIRST PART.

How we may alwaise pray.

CHAPT. I.



OR as much as that
 which Christ our
 Saviour affirmeth in
 the ghospell of Saint Luke
 to witt *that, we ought alwaise*

A

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to pray, cōcerneth all Christians, who seeth not how much it doth awayle every Christian to apply himselfe most diligently to prayer, and in no wise to neglect so necessarie and profitable a thing, for any vaine and hurtful pleasures: wherefore that wee may feele the more sweetnesse in prayer. *First*, it will be profitablie to haue at hand some motieues, by which as with certaine spurrs (so oft as we grow could) we may stirre vp our selues to prayer.

Secondly, it wil not meanelly helpe vs, if we consider the excellēt fruits and commoditie that many haue obtained by prayer, for by

of prayer. 3

that meā also wes hall easily stirre vp our selues to that exercise. And *lastly* it will proffitt much to know the manner which every one ought cheifely to obserue in praying: seing that in every worke the maner of doeing beinge knowne, is of no small moment to perfect the work it selfe that we goe about.

Of these three things therefore in order we purpose ^{Three} by Gods assistance to speake ^{prim-} of the necessitie, ^{cipall} of the fruits, and of the man- ^{poines} ner of praying. But because ^{rand-} the foresaid words of our Saviour moue some scruple ^{ised in} in many, it will not be amiss ^{this tre-} if we first declare in what ^{atise.}

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manner they may be vnderstood.

Lu. 18. First assuredly it is most true, which Christ our Saviour said *We ought alwayse to pray.* For there is no moment of time in which prayer is not necessary for vs. Neuerthelesse God almightie is not so seuerely exactor, as to oblige vs to continual prayer of the lipps, which certainly no man euer did or could observe. But because there neuer passeth any moment of time wherein we doe not exceedingly stand in neede of his diuine assistance, Therefore our great necessitie enforceth vs, by continuall prayer alwaise to implore his ai-

of prayer. 5
de. For who Knoweth not (if he diligently consider) that if God should withdraw his helping hand from vs, we should instantlie then returne into dust and ashes; neyther is there any man, who of hymselfe can continue the least moment of time, for as holy Iob sayth, *In his hand is the soule* ^{Iob 12} *of euery living thing.* For soe it is with euery one of vs, as ^{A simile.} *as* if one should hang by a rope in a coffine ouer a deepe pitt, for he doubtlesse standis in great neede of his helpe who holdeth the rope in his hand and keepeth the other from falling in to the pitt. For so soone as he withdraweth his hand from the rope, he that

before was held vp, doth instantly fall healdlōg into the pitt. Neyther would it be otherwise with euery one of vs, if God should not incessantly susteine vs With his hād. He holdeth the cord in his hād, least wee instātly be brought to nothing, to omitt many other eminent dangers, v which euery moment hangouer our heads. Who therefore is so grosse and blind, as not to consider, that there is no time, yea no moment of time, wherein it is not necessarie for vs, to call on God, and to implore his gracious helpe, and assistance. And this is the meaning of those words, that *we ought alwayse to pray.*

But because according to this sence there is no man that doth fulfill this saying of our Saviour by actuall prayer, as they call it, that is, who doth alwayse euery moment pray, therefore an other sence is to be found out. Wherefore this saying of Christ may be vnderstood an other way, to wit, that which wee shall now declare.

One of the ancient Monkes being demāded in what maner he did satisfie that saying of Christ, *we ought alwayse to pray*, answered forthwith That after he had ended his dayly prayers, the rest of the time, according to the abilitie of his body,

The first way how we may alwayse pray The l. 6. Each is in the is-nes of holy sa-

8 *A Treatise*

thers al- he spent in manuell labours,
phubeto by which meanes it came to
26 part. passe that he dayly gaigned
sa litera somethinge, & hereby he
6. not only susteined himselfe,
 but also in some sort other
 poore people, and those he
 sayd did pray for him, so of-
 ten as the care he was bound
 to take of his bodie, would
 not permitt him to doe it
 himselfe, whose opinion is
 agreable to holy Scripture
 Eccl. which Sayth, *Hide thy almes*
29. *in the bosome of the poore, and*
it shal pray for thee Lo heere
 how the Scripture confir-
 meth that our almes pray for
 vs, If therefore any one shal
 diligently imploy himselfe
 in the workes of mercy, if
 he defend the fatherlesse

of prayer. 9

and orphans, if he comfort
 poore widowes being desti-
 tute of all consolation, if he
 protect from iniuries those
 that are violently oppressed.
 And lastly if he administer
 helpe to those are in want,
 soe that in the meane time
 he neglecteth not, the times
 of prayer instituted by the
 Church, he also shall fulfill
 the sayd words of Christ,
 for he alwayse eyther pray-
 eth himselfe, or hath his al-
 mes praying for him, which
 will supplie what is wan-
 ting of his owne prayers (we
 ought alwaise to pray.)

In this sense also may the *the sa*
 afore sayd saying of Christ *cod-vray*
we ought alwayse to pray, be vn- *horu*
 derstood that is we ought al- *vvem-g*
sepe

waife to liue well and dowell,
 which, we may doe, euē when
 we sleepe. For whensoever
 we sleepe or wake, when wee
 walke, or sitt, when we eate or
 drinke, when we are mole-
 sted or comforted; lastly w-
 hatsoever we doe or suffer, if
 they be referred truly to the
 glorie and honour of God,
 doubtlesse they belong to a
 good and vpright life. Othe-
 rwise Saint Paul would not
 haue commanded the Co-
 rinthians that whatsoeuer
 they did they shoud doe it
 to the glorie of God, saying,

1. Cor. *whether yee eate or drinke or*
 10. *what else yee doe, doe it to the*
glory of God. And truly
if God be moued by our
words, to be beneficiall vnto

vs, questionlesse he is much
 more moued thereto by our
 good workes, seing that wor-
 kes doe supplie the place of
 words. And therefore the
 diuine benignitie is moued
 with our workes, which we
 doe with a desire to please
 his diuine Majestie, seing
 they doe expresse the force
 of our prayers, yea, and
 much more forcibly, then
 doe the words themselues.
 Whosoever therefore doth
 referre to the glorie of God
 all that he doth and suffe-
 reth; prayeth euery moment
 and alwayse satisfieth the
 afforesayd saying of Christ.
 For he that alwayse dire-
 cteth all his actions to the
 glorie of God may be sayd

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not vnworthely alwayse to pray. But although these words, *we ought alwayse to pray*, may be vnderstood according to this sense, yett bycause Christ maketh a difference betwixt prayer and workes, and maketh almes, prayer, and fasting as distinct things, therefore we wil now sett downe the third way how this saying may be vnderstood.

The third way Foru we may alwayse pray. Saint Paul therefore admonisheth the Thessaloniās that they should incessantly pray. *Pray yee* (sayth he) *without intermission.* And in so. 1. Thes me other places of his epistles he affirmeth that *he was mindfull* (of some) *in his prayers without intermission.* Besides in
1. Thes
1. Thes
1. Thes

of prayer.

13

the acts of the Apostles it is Act. 12 sayd that whilst S. Peeter was kept in prison *Prayer was made by the Church without intermission to God for him.* By which words it doth clearly appeare that a true Christian in euery worke, euen when he sleepeth, doth alwayse pray: which cannot be true, vnlesse by prayer, we vnderstand the continuall desire of the mind, which is alwayse flourishing, and mouing in the heart: For euen as one in prison bound with iron fetters of great weight moued with the irksomnesse of the miseries and affliction which he suffereth, doth vehemently desire and seeke his libertie; and, if he shal conceiue any

Prayer a conscience of the mind. A similitude.

hope of his deliuey he incessantly wisheth and desireth to be freed from that imprisonment: So doubtlesse euery Christian who is not ignorant, how vehemētly he is incited to sinne by the flesh, the world, and the diuell, and how many, and various kinds of troubles he suffers in this vale of miseries, and to how many and how great perills and dangers of this life he is exposed, is dayly forced and cōpelled euery moment to desire the ayd and assistance of gods diuine grace. Whereby he may att length freed from these euills fly vp to the most cleere sight of God, and to the fruition of æter-

nall happinesse. And this desire is oftentimes in holy writt vnderstood to be as a certeine crye in the eares of God, *Our Lord*, sayth the Prophet David, *hath heard the crye of the poore.* For the desire of those who are troubled and afflicted doth quickly come to the presēce of God, and makes a great crye in his eares. And because in the hearts of the godly this desire doth neuer cease, but is incessantly moved, and stirred, and alwayse seeketh and imploreth the diuine assistance, euen whether they are then a wake or sleepe, or cate or drinke or what else so euer they doe, they are rightly sayd alwayse to

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pray and without intermission. Which moveth S. Augustin to say, *Pray yee without intermission, what other thing doth it meane, then desire without intermission aeternel life? let vs desire this of our Lord, and we alwayse pray.* Thus S. Augustin: without this desire noe muttering of words though neuer so prolix can open the eares of his diuine Majestie. But this desire of it selte if it be fervent, although there be no noyse at all of words, doth most easilie penetrate, and without any delay obtaines a present hearing, as we shal declare more plainely heereafter.

Whosoever therefore shal vnderstand this saying of

of prayer. 17

Christ according to this sense, shal in my opinion rightly vnderstand it, neyther can wee otherwise easilie conceiue any man alwayse to pray to God, and to spend both night and day without intermission in prayer: But by this *desire* which in the heart of holy men is neuer extinguished God is alwayse and incessantly prayed vnto, and by it wee knoke perpetuallie at the gates of his diuine mercy for the obtaining of his grace and assistance. Therefore it is most true which Christ sayd, *we ought alwayse to pray and not to giue ouer* But not soe that any sett prayer formed by words must alwayse be vttered by

Lu. 18.

vs eyther by our mouth or mind, but that no moment of time doe passe vs where in we doe not desire the ayde of his grace and euerlasting happinesse. But because we are to speake somewhat more heereafter of this matter. Therefore we will now produce some reasons, which if we shal diligently obserue they will both encourage vs to shalke of sloath and with more diligence and facilitie stirre vs vp to pray.

The first reason why God is to be prayed vnto.

CHAP. II.

THIS ought first of all to moue vs, that prayer is like to a certein golden rope or chaine lett downe from heaven, by which we endeavour to draw God to vs whereas in deed we are more truly drawne by him. For so it is as if one standing in a higher place and wold draw another from below he letteth downe some cord or line vnto him, on which he laying hould, and with all his forces drawing is att last elevated to the topp. This rope

A simile.

or golden Chaine holy S.
 Cap.3. Dionisius calleth prayer,
 de di. which truly is let down to vs
 uinis from heauen, and by God
 nomi- himſelfe faſtened to our
 bus. hearts: for no man truly and
 heartily prayes, if he be not
 2. Cor. inspired by God, *Seing we are*
 3. *not of our ſelues*, as Saint Paul
 ſayth, *Sufficient to thinke any*
thing that is good, but our ſuf-
ficiency is of God. This line the-
 refore is let do ne vnto vs,
 that we continually hanging
 at it may at laſt be liſted vp
 to heauen to the fruition of
 God. But let vs lay open this
 matter yett more at large.
 When one conſiders deeply
 on the one ſide the infinite
 goodneſſe, pietie, and beni-
 gnitie of God, and on the

other ſide his owne pouer-
 tie, want, and miſerie, then
 is he preſently forced to ſee-
 ke after the ayde, comfort
 and preſence of God his
 moſt beaigne Creator and
 Protector, as the kingly Pro-
 phet Sayth, *I haue ſought after* Pſalm.
thy countenance, O Lord I will 26.
ſeeke after thy countenance. And
 when he beleives that he is
 truly preſent, then he expo-
 ſeth and diſcouereth his mi-
 ſeries and neceſſities, then
 he doubleth his deſires, then
 with many teares and ſithes
 he imploreth the diuine
 goodneſſe, that he would be
 graciouslie pleaſed to helpe
 him in his neceſſities, and
 not to forſake him in theſe
 his afflictions, and to aſſiſt

him with his helping grace,
 by which he may in all things
 best please his diuine Maje-
 stie. And whē the soule doth
 this, what other thing doth it
 but seeme to be drawne vp
 to God by this line or cord
 of prayer? What els doth it
 but stricue to be sweetly
 bound vnto hits Creator?
 What doth it, but labour to
 conioyne its vnderstanding
 with the incomprehensible
 light of his diuine Majestie?
 What els doth it, but vnite
 its affections, with his vn-
 speakeable goodnesse? La-
 stly what other thing doth it,
 but elevates the mind aboue
 all things created, soe that
 att last it is made one spirit
 with God, fast bound vnto

him with this golden line or
 chaine of prayer. Behold
 now what kind of bond this
 prayer is. O line more then
 golden! O chaine aboue all
 iewells to be desired! O most
 sweet bond of loue; who
 would not most willingly be
 bound with this most soft,
 and silken cord? Or lastly
 who doth not desire from
 the bottome of his heart to
 repose himselfe in the armes
 of so loving a Prince, so po-
 tent a King? Verely this
 onely cogitation if it were
 deeply considered, might
 suffice to inflame the most
 frozen heart, and to stirre it
 vp to frequēt this holy exer-
 cise of prayer: And the ra-
 ther, for that euery one, how

miserable a sinner so euer-
 he be, may, and ought with-
 out all question to hope,
 that his diuine Majestie
 though incomparablie high
 and supereminēt, yet neuer-
 thelesse is so loving soe
 sweet, and so mercifull, that
 he doth not disdeigne to in-
 cline his most sacred cares
 vnto our prayers, so that we
 haue a purpose heereafter to
 resist sinne. For almightie
 God is soe willing and pro-
 pense to forgiue our sinnes,
 and loueth our soules so dea-
 rely, that though he be the
 supreme Lord Paramount,
 and gouernour of the world,
 and see nothing but vnclae-
 ne durt and ashes, yet doth
 he not contemne our mise-
 rie,

rie, nor keepe in memorie
 our old sinnes be they neuer
 so great; but presently being
 attentiuē vnto our grifes,
 and moued with our teares,
 grants our desires, and par-
 dons our offences: and which
 is more, preuents vs so with
 his grace, that wee are by
 him stirred vp to pray befo-
 re we beginne to pray. O in-
 estimable loue of God! O in-
 comparable clemencie! So
 deeply is God almightie in
 loue with our soules, that he
 doth as it were studie sweetly
 t'intice and allure vs, and en-
 deavoureth by all meanes to
 draw vs to meditate and con-
 template the splendor of his
 glory, to imbrace the large-
 nesse of his bounty, to tast of

his pleasing sweetnesse, and lastly to kisse the vnspokeable delights of his mouth. O miserable and unhappie men, who doe not strive with all their force to be drawne with this silken cord! But more miserable they, who doe not follow so sweet a draught, but of all, most miserable and unhappie are those, who being so drawne doe wittingly refuse, and spurne against this ineffable clemency of almightie God. And this may suffice for the first reason or motive to prayer.

The second reason why God is to be prayed unto.

CHAP. III.

BVt now let vs come to the second reason which may edge vs to this exercise of prayer. It is most certaine that mans cheifest good, is beatitude, which is constituted, and ordeined by God as the last end of man. To this end no man can attaine, but by fitt meanes conducing thereunto. And these (among many others) be two, which whosoever hath shall neuer want any thing necessarie for the obtaining of this happinesse. These two

are prayer and good workes. In these two as we reade in the Acts of the Apostles, Cornelius the Centurion was very well exercised, and by them, did so please God, that though he were yet a heathen or Ethnicke, it was sayd vnto him by the mouth of an Angell, *Thy prayers and thy almesdeeds haue ascended into remembrance in sight of God.* whosoever then shal exercise himselfe wel in these two, that is, prayer and good workes, shall not be destitute of any thing that may helpe him to obtaine this end of his saluation.

But God will also further haue vs to humble our selues in the sight of his diuine Maje-

stie, acknowledging our selues not to be able of our owne forces to doe any thing worthy of his acceptance: but that a good life, that is, the life of good workes is to be obtained from him by prayer, and by this meanes to come to our last end, which is æternall happinesse: Bycause therefore no man can come vnto this end without the grace of good workes, and man obtaines not this grace but by prayer; It followeth that if we will escape æternall miserie, and possesse æternall ioy in heauen we must dayly exercise our selues in prayer.

Let no man here object vnto me that absurd and ri-

diculous reason of the foreknowledge of God, which cannot be frustrated or deceived: God, say they, in his knowledge seeth all things shall be before they come to passe. For example, without all question he knoweth, whether I shall be saved or adjudged to perpetuall torments: and if he knoweth me to be saved, I haue no need to pray, by cause without any prayer of mine I shall be saved, to wit, by vertue of his foreknowledge, which cannot be deceived: But if he knowes me to be damned, no prayers of myne can helpe or avayle me, being Gods foreknowledge cannot be frustrated. This very dilemma

hath indeed seduced many: But how deceipt full it is, we shall presently perceiue, if we make a litle tryall, how small force it hath in other things: For example sake, he that is sicke of any disease, by this reason shall take noe phisicke, for God knowes whether he shall liue or die of this infirmitie: But if he foreknowes him to liue, then he hath no neede of medicine at all, for without all question he shall recouer without it, for the diuine foreknowledge cannot be deceived: But if God foresees that he shall die of this disease, no phisicke can helpe him, for that he foreseeth shall be, and can by no meanes be avoy-

ded. So by this reason you see, the Commodious art of phisicke is quite taken away. But let vs trye in another. The husband man may say, I will not plough my land, for God fore seeth whether it will bring forth fruit or no this next yeare: if he foreseeth that it wil bring forth fruit, it will doe it without any labour: If he know also it will not, my labour will be in vaine. And thus you see all husbandrie is to delayd aside. And soe will it fall out in other things if we examine them. Thus is the weakenesse, and the wickednesse of this former discourse made euident: by cause by it neyther the sicke man shall

take any phisicke, nor the ploughman till his land. Wherefore as the husband man can expect no fruit from the earth, vnlesse he shall plough and sowe the same, nor the sicke man expect health, vnlesse he shall vse the art of phisicke, and obey the precepts of the phisitian. So no Christian can euer come vnto æternall happinesse, but by leading a godly life, which he cannot attaine vnto but by prayer. And we see by experience, that sicke people would die, if they did not vse the art, and follow the counsell of their Doctor, and seilds without plowing. And good seede would bring forth no fruit: Soe can we

neither euer thinke of expect without prayer and good pious worke to obtaine eternall ioy, and happinesse. For although God almightie hath ordeined this eternall beatitude for mans last end, yet he will not that we attaine vnto it without the proportionable meanes which he hath appointed for it. For vnlesse a man heere beginneth a good life, lett him neuer expect the glory which is in the other: and good life let no man looke for, vnlesse he beggeth it att the hands of God by dayly prayer. We must therefore beginne with prayer, from whence proceedes good life, by which at last, we are brought vnto

the heavenly glory, which is the most cleere vision of almightie God, of which whilst we are deprived, we must needes thinke our selues most miserable and vnhappie men.

And this most manifestly appeares, by the vnsatiable desire of ovr soules, which neuer are quiet, but still labouring and endeavouring to find out some thing that might satiate and fill vs. And this we thinke to find, eyther in having riches, or pleasures, or honours, or in all of them together; and yet it will not be. From hence proceedes that there is neuer an end of desiring these things, and for the obtai-

ning of these things all good order is broken, and a generall confusion of all things brought into the world. Yet nothing of all these can satiate our desires, which are of so large an extent and capacitie, that they cannot be satisfide, but with the cheifest good which is God himselfe. The contemplation therefore and fruition of this good, is aboue all things to be desired, this onely satisfieth, this banisheth all longing. But this cannot be obtained but by good life, nor good life without prayer, where by it appeares that whosoever desires to inioy this happinesse, must cheifely aboue all things be in-

tent to this holy exercise of prayer. Thus much for the second reason.

*The third reason why God is
to be prayed vnto.*

CHAP. II.

IN this third place it will not a litle stirre vs vp, that Christ Iesus himselfe hath warned vs with his owne mouth to be sedulous in prayer: *we ought alwayse to pray.* For who knowes better how to instruct vs in those things that belong to our eternal saluation, then the sonne of Almighty God, in whome God the father placed the treasures of his wise-

dome and knowledge, and who for that purpose descended into this world, to show vs the right way to our heavenly countrie. Or who will endeavour with more efficacy to teach vs the way, then hee, who for the loue of vs hath vndergonne the most troublesome, most ignominious, and most painfull and contemptible death of the Crosse

Neyther hath he onely admonished vs of the necessitie of praying continuallie; but he hath likewise promised, that we shall obtaine any thing we desire of him in prayer saying: *Aske, and yee shall receiue, seeke, and yee shall find, knocke and it shall*

be opened vnto yee. This, Iesus Christ the sonne of God, who is truth it selfe, hath promised with his owne mouth. Let vs therefore flie vnto the throne of his clemency, and lett vs there continuallie pray, for the grace of good life and perseuerance in good workes, nothing doubting but he wil more willingly and liberallie grant our requests, then we know to begg or demãd them at his hands.

Therefore seing he hath taught vs the necessitie of prayer, and that we ought alwayse to pray, it cannot be doubtfull to any, but that aboue all things, it is dayly and houerly to be practised; And especiallie of vs Chri-

stians, who wander in the miseries of this world exiled from the face of our heavenly father, it is so necessarie for vs to obey this wholesome counsell of Christ, that if any one shall determinately resolue with himselfe not to pray, he sinneth mortally, And which is more, whosoever shall maliciously neglect to pray, having time and opportunitie, and chiefly; when he seeth himselfe in danger to fall into sinne: such negligence may likewise be mortall, although the negligence of its owne nature be but a venial sinne, greater or lesser according to the greatnesse of the negligence.

But if wee shall more diligently discusse the words of our Saviour, the necessitie of prayer will yet more manifestly appeare. The saluation certainly of euery Christian depends of God, whom we must dayly implore for obtaining of the same, and because this saluation of ours is in continual danger, and that euery one is bound to procure it with all the care and diligence he can, hence is it that euery moment, we are bound to pray to God for it, alwaies to lift vp our eyes to heauen, alwayse to lift vp our hearts to God, seing it is not to be obtained by any other meanes then from him and by him.

Neyther must we onely pray for our owne saluation, but also for the saluation of our neighbours For as euery one is bound to succour and releiue him when he seeth him in corporall and temporal necessitie: soe is he much more bound, when he seeth him in any spirituall danger of his soul, to releiue him. And at this present time we haue most neede to pray, seing the times be such, and so dangerous, as they now be, sinners being so multiplied vpon the earth, and sinne it selfe so dayly increased as we see it is. Now adayes sinne is applauded and commended as iustice, and good workes reputed

sinnes. Now to sim is to doe well, and contrary wise, to doe well, to sinne. Woe be vn- to vs that are borne in these miserable times! In which (with teares I speake) who- soeuer indureth with the zeale and feare of God, beholdeth the manners and con- uersation of the people, he will presently be moved to greife and teares. This ve- ry consideration ought iust- ly to moue vs, that being humbled and truly sorrie for our sinnes, we should by prayer lyc continuallie knock- ing at the Gates of Gods mercy and clemency, not onely for our owne safety, but also for the recovery of our neighbours, whome we

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see in so miserable and extreame danger of their souls, from whence they cannot arise, but by continuall prayer, and imploring of Gods diuine assistance.

*The fourth and last reason
why God ought to be
prayed vnto.*

CHAP. V.

THe fourth and last reason may be gathered after this manner. There is no man, clothed with this mortall flesh, who hath not sometimes sinned, and highly offended the Maiestie of God, nor that hath any warrant or securitie, heereaf-

of prayer. 45
ter not to sinne. And in this respect it is most necessary for vs by dayly prayer, not onely to seeke, that he would graciously pardon and forgive our former sinnes: But also that he would be pleased to prevent vs with his grace, lest we fall againe into other sinnes, through which we may incurre eternal punishment.

And first there is no man whose soul hath once been infected with sinne, that certainly knowes, whether he be in the grace of God or noe, vnlesse it be reuealed vnto him. Wherefore Salomon sayth in his booke of Ecclesiastes *There be iust, and wise men and their workes*

be in the hands of God, and yet man knoweth not whether he be worthy of loue or hatred, but all things are kept vncertaine vnto the last, that is, all things are left to the last examine, where nothing shall be hidden, not the least thought that hath entered into mans heart shall be concealed from the most strict iudge.

But, although no man in this estate of life knowes certaintie whether he be in state of grace or noe, yet by certeine coniectures he may vndoubtedly beleue it: and especiallie, when he knowes not that his conscience is charged with any mortall sinne, of which he hath not heeretofore repen-

ted, or which he hath not discouered to his ghostly father, or doth intend to discouer at his first opportunitie: And if moreouer he finds himselfe inclined to doe and put in execution, those things which belong to the honour of God, if he be delighted to heare holy scriptures, to be often present at diuine seruice, and be resolute by Gods grace, so much as is in his power to abstaine from all contagion of sinne. This man doubtlesse may beleue that he is in the state of grace, but as I sayd before, no man can certainly know this, vnlesse he be speciallie illuminated from aboue. And for

this cause it is necessarie for all men to cōteine themselves within the limitts and bounds of feare, and to be perseuerantly knocking at the gates of gods mercy. To this feare doth the holy scripture perswade vs saying *Be not without feare of the forgiveness of thy sinns.* And truly this feare will so much helpe and avayle vs, that if the greife before taken for our sinns were not sufficient, Almighty god now approving of this feare, and will accept of the prayer, which this feare begetteth, it wil satisfie Gods wroth, and obtaine mercy and pardon of all his sinnes before committed.

Moreo-

Moreover if we grant there be any man that knowes he hath full remission of all his sinnes, and that he be wholly reconciled to God, and certainly in his grace: yet may such an one very well doubt, whether he may not fall from this so happie estate; seeing that there is no man so confirmed in grace, but that he may fall from it: wherefore S. Paul giues this counsell to the Romans: *Thou standest by faith, be not Overwise but feare as* Ro. ii.
if he should say, if thorough fayth any one be in state of grace, let him not therefore presume of himselfe, but let him rather feare, seeing he may so easily

C

fall. No man can be secure in this world as S. Paul likewise sayth to the Corinthians : *He that thinketh*
 2. Cor. *himselfe to stand, lett him take*
 10. *heed he fals not.* wherefore it is most necessarie for vs to lift vp our eyes and hands to heaven, and with most humble & heartie prayers to intreate of God, to grant vs the grace of perseverance; least we fal from this happie estate we are in by his grace: For we reade of many, whoe haue stood vp like pillars a long time in the Church of Christ, and haue shined like as burning lamps of sanctitie, yet because they haue not contained themselves within the limitts of this

humble feare, they haue fallen headlong into the bottomlesse pitt of hell, not onely to their owne ruine and infamie but the ruine of many others, which, here but that I feare to be tedious, I could confirme by the authoritie of holy doctors, and indubitable histories of the Church.

Now out of this we haue heere sayd, it appeares to euery man that *we ought alwayse to pray*, as well for the obtaining pardon of our sinns, as also to avoyde the imminent dangers we may so easily fall into. And thus having treated of these foure reasons, so much (I hope.) as is sufficient, I will

now speake something of
the fruit of prayer which I
promised to doe in this se-
cond part.



THE SECOND,
PART
OF THE THREE
CHIEFE FRVITS
of prayer.

CHAPT. I.



ALTHOUGH the
a foresayd reasons
may seeme more
then sufficient to
stirre vp mens minds vnto
prayer, yet not with stāding
there be many very slow
and dull to this exercise, be-
cause forsoth they doe not

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tast that inward sweetnesse,
which many devout souls
doe oftentimes find in them-
selues. They would willing-
ly, they say, pray, if they
could in ioy that such inward
comfort and content, which
others doe. But withall they
then doe not consider, that
prayer must goe before, and
sweetnesse and delight will
come after. For as in the bo-
die by long motion and agi-
tation of it, heate comes and
increaseth, euen so by long
vse and perseuerance in
prayer, beginneth and in-
creaseth that sweetnesse and
comfort in the soul, which is
most pleasant and aboue all
measure comfortable. And
although euery one tas-

of prayer. 55
teth not this sweetnesse in
prayer; yet there be other
fruits which we reape by
praying, which be of three
sorts. The first is the meritt
it selfe, which God hath pro-
posed to giue vnto vs for
praying. The second is the
obtaineing of the thing we
pray for. The third is the
tast of that wonderfull sweet-
nesse, which we find in our
selves in the time of prayer.
Which three kind of fruits,
are so different in themsel-
ues, that one may attaine vn-
to the first without the other
two. For one may by prayer
meritt, yet not obtaine that
which he prayeth for as saint
Paul did, whome sayth that, *2. Cor.*
He prayed to God three times 12.

that the sting of the fleshe; with which he was very much troubled might be taken from him. Yet he did not obtaine what he prayed for, but for all this, it is most certaine he did not loose the meritt of his prayer. And the two first may be obtained without the third, which questionlesse dayly happens vnto many, who begging pardon of their sinns, doe obtaine it, and besides this, they are not frustrated of the meritt of prayer, yet they are not refreshed with that inward ioy and spirituall sweetnesse. For the Publican, which Christ speaketh of in the gospell, when he begged pardon of his sinns saying,

God haue mercy on me a sinner, Matth.
obtained bothe the meritt 18.
of his prayer, and the forgiveness of his sinns, for it followeth in the gospell, *He* ibid.
went away iustified into his owne house. But we doe not read that he receiued any spirituall sweetnesse or delight in his soul. Whereby it is most apparant that these three fruits are so different. that happen not all to euery one. But that we may more cleerely see the excellency of each of them we will treat of them in order apart, and first of the meritt of prayer.

*Of the first fruit of Prayer that
is of the meritt.*

C H A P. II.

VVe haue before sayd
that meritt is the first
fruit of prayer, which we
will not haue vnderstood of
any meritt, but of that one-
ly to which a reward in hea-
ven doth correspond, and is
due, which diuines call es-
sentiall. For it is certeine,
that there is no man, with
how great sinns focuer he be
charged, that shal be de-
prived of all meritt of his
prayer: for he shall eyther be
rewarded in this world with
some temporall reward, or at

*Wicked
men ha-
ue some
meritt
of their
prayers.*

best his paines shalbe some-
what mittigated in the next,
but in respect of such prayer,
he shall neuer obtaine any
the least portion of hea-
venly glory, for that is not
obtained by any, but those,
whose prayer springeth from
the roote of charitie, that is,
who are in the state of grace
when they pray.

Whosocuer therefore desi-
reth not to be depriued of
this meritt, must first indea-
vour to haue charitie deepe-
ly planted and rooted in his
heart: and so, not onely his
prayer, but all his workes
shalbe meritorious. And the
greater that the charitie is,
the more meritorious will the
worke be, whence I gather

*What
prayer is
most
efficacious*

that they meritt most, who heartily pray for their enemies, because that kind of prayer proceedes from the highest degree of charitie. And therefore it is requisite for euery one that will inioy the benefitt of his prayer, that he indeavour by all meanes not to want charitie, that is, that he be in the state of grace. Which saint Chrysostome vpon the gospell of saint Iohn doth affirme to be a very easie thing, euen for him whoe is laden with great sinns. Oncly lett him heartily repent him of his sinns, and resolute to leade a new life in Christ, to get his grace. Which saying is confirmed by the Prophet Eze-

In. 1. 10.

chiell, whoc from the mouth of God almightie promisseth, *Ezech.*
that *In what houre soeuer a sinner shall repent, all his iniquities shall be forgotten I will not saye he remember all his iniquities :* But sinns are not thought to be blotted out of the memorie of God by any other way then by the gift and infusion of grace and charitie. By which meanes it comes to passe, that a sinner whoe giues ouer sinning, that is, whoe is truly sorrowfull for his former life, and is become obedient to Christ, is esteemed to be in the state of grace and charitie. And for so much as the leaving of our former sinns, and changing our old life depēdeth partly

of our owne free will, which is free to euery man, and life dependeth partly of the helpe of diuine grace, which is wanting to no man, that is not wanting to himselfe, it is not very hard for a sinner in a short time to become a iust man, so that he effectually desires it, and haue a great confidence in almighty God. Who so then, going about to pray, renews his sayth in Christ Iesus, by a new act, and detesteth the impuritie of his former life, and resolueth heereafter to abstaine from sinne, and to doe according to the decrees and ordinances of the Church, without all question, such an one is in the state of grace

and charitie, and shal not be frustrated of this fruit of his prayer, that is of such meritt to which a reward in the kingdome of heauen belongeth. And thus much of the first fruit of prayer.

*Of the second fruit Which is
the obtaining of the thing
We pray for.*

CHAP. III.

THe second fruit we sayd to be the obtaining of the thing we aske in prayer. This fruit whosoever will inioy, it is not sufficient for him that he be in charitie, also he must stand firmly vpon the foundation of pro-

*How
prayer
may be
impetra-
tory*

found humilitie, so that
from the bottome of his hart
he must thincke himselfe
most vnworthie that God
should bestow vpon him any
grace or benefit, or inspire
him with any good at all.
And yet let him not cease
still to thanke god for what
he hath already receiued,
attributing nothing to him-
selfe, if any thing be well
donne, but referring all to
God, what he hath donne
good, and to himselfe all
that is euill. For so oft as
we doe any thing well, we
are in the hands of God, as
the mallett is in the hande
of the carpenter, and as one
shold say as the carpen-
ter in working vseth the

*A simi-
brude.*

mallet as an instrument,
even so doth almightie God
vse vs as his instruments, so
oft as we doe any thing well.
For whatsoeuer seemes to
be well donne by vs, it is
not wee of our selues, but
God that worketh in vs.
Wherefore as the mallet
cannot boast it selfe against
the carpenter, nor ascribe
vnto it selfe, that it hath
framed this or that worke
(for the hammer or mallet Ro. 2
doth nothing of it selfe, but
the carpenter that worketh
with it as his instrument.)
So likewise it is not lawfull
for vs to say against God, or
to thinke, that we of our sel-
ues or by our owne forces
onely, haue done these good

workes, but by the assistance of Gods grace, by which he moues vs, and by vs as by his instruments produceth good workes. Wherefore we ought with all the humilitie we can to render thanks vnto God who hath vouchsafed graciously to vse vs as his instruments, when (if it had so pleased his goodnesse and benignitie) he might haue vsed others, and perhaps with so much more fruit, by how much they should haue better cooperated with his grace, then we haue donne.

And when one by this consideration hath humbled himselfe in the sight of his diuine Majestie; yet must he

further diligently examine whether that which he is about to pray for, be against his soules health or not, if it be, he must not expect to obtaine any such thing at the hands of God. For God, being of his owne nature most good, most bountifull, cannot grant vnto his petitiones, that which he knowes to be pernicious, and hurtfull vnto him. And he knoweth long before we demand it, whether it will damnishe or profit vs. Hence it is that we doe not presently obtaine that which we aske for, because God seeth it will be a hinderance to our soule.

But there is yet a third thing required to the ob-

*'We ob-
taine not
for others
as for
our sel-
ues'*

teining of this fruit of pray-
er, that is, that it concer-
nes our selues that we pray
for: For although we be
bound to pray for our ne-
ighbours, yet are we not
alwayse heard, praying for
them, especiallye for so
much as apparteines to this
fruit. For perchance eyt-
her they are not worthy to
haue that granted vnto them
that we pray for, or perhap-
ps it is not profitable for
theire souls health.

And in case we doe not
obtaine the thing for whi-
ch we pray; yet shall not
our prayer be in vaine and
frustrate of all reward: for
he whoe prayeth for his ne-
ighbour, and obtaiyneth

not for him, yet he meri-
teth for himselfe, *My pra-
yer* saythe the prophet, *shall
be turned into my owne bosome:*
as if he had sayd, my pra- *Psalm*
yer when I praye for others, 34.
if it profiteth them not, yet
shall it not want its reward,
because I know it will be
turned to my good, the prof-
itt will redound to me, it
will be turned into my owne
bosome with advantage.

If therefore the prayer of *Three*
any one be grounded vpon *things*
this profound humilitie, and *requi-*
for himselfe, and demand- *sthat a*
ing nothing preiudiciall to *prayer*
his souls health; let him pro- *best,*
ceede in Gods name who so- *174501*
euer he be, not doubting
but that he shall obtain what

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he prayeth for, not doub-
ting I say, be cause saint Ia-
mes promisseth saying *let*
him aske in fayth, nothing doub-
ting and it shalbe granted unto
Iac. i. *him.* And our lord also in
the gospell sayth *what soeuer*
praying yee shall aske, beleue
that yee shall receiue, and it shall
Marc. *be donne unto yee:* And let this
ii. suffice concerning the se-
cond fruit of prayer and how
we may attaine vnto it.

*Of the third fruit of prayer
which is spirituall
sweetnesse*

CHAP. IIII.

THe third fruit of prayer
we haue sayd to be a

of prayer. 71

certaine Spirituall sweet-
nesse, with which our soule
is maruelously affected and
delighted in praying. Of
this fruit whosoeuer desi-
reth to tast and to be perta-
ker off, it is not sufficient
for him to haue charitie,
and humilitie, and the other
things aboue rehearsed: but
he must also haue a vehe-
ment attention vnto the pra-
yer he hath in hand, and
not to suffer his mind to wan-
der abroad at all.

And although attention Cōtinual
attention
necessa-
rie to at-
taine vnto
the spiri-
tuall
vve/fo-
ne.
be most necessarie to euery
one who desires to attaine
vnto the two former fruites
aboue here mentioned, that
is meritt, and the gayning
of the thing we pray for; yet

neuerthelesse it will suffice to the gaigning of them, if in the beginning of our prayer, the mind be truly serled and attentiuē, soe that we suffer it not willfullie afterwards to wander: for though after out of humane weakenesse and frayltie one be some what distracted, or grow cold thorough some small negligence and forgetfulnesse; he shall not yet loose the benefitt of his prayer, but by vertue of his first intētion, gaigne both the meritt of his prayer and the thing so prayed for, which may easily be made apparent by this example. If

*A simile
likenesse* aman hath a mind to throw a stone to any distant place, it is not necessarie that the hand

hand of him that cast eth the stone should still be carried with the stone, but the first vertue or force, which the thrower impressed into it, will be sufficient to conuey it to the place intended. Euen so it is with him that goeth to pray to almighty God: it is sufficient for him, if at the beginninge he be very attentiuē, and haue a desire and good will so to continue vnto the end. For though his mind be a litle afterwards caried away, yet shall he not want eyther of the two former fruits.

But he that will inioy this third fruit, to wit, be refreshed with the consolation of this spirituall sweetnesse, it

is not sufficiēt for him when he beginneth first to pray, to be attentiuē and recollected, but he must perseuere so to the end, not suffering his mind to be distracted or carried away, but still directing it, with all possible care, to him, to whome he prayeth. Wherefore it is fitting for him who desires to tast this spirituall sweetnesse in prayer, before he beginneth his prayer to cast out of his mind all idle and vaine cogitations, and diligently to prepare his mind, and with all the strength he may, to direct all his intentions to almighty God, least thorough his negligence in successe of prayer, he be transpor-

*The way to
attaine
vnto
sweetnesse in
prayer.*

ted, and his intention lost by distraction. Wherefore the Ancient indued with great vertue and sanctite of life, so of as they went to pray, studied and indeavourcd by all meanes stirre to them selues vp to deuotion, some times Kneeling downe, some times lying prostrate on the earth, now with extended armes in forme of a Crosse, now lifting their hands vp to heaven, sometimes sitting solitarie, musing and full of thoughts, sweetly conferring and talking with God, and presently againe deuoutly singing some psalme, canticle or himne. By these and many other meanes, as seemed fittest for

themselves they were accustomed wonderfullie and most efficaciously to stirre vp themselves soe to deuotion and contemplation, so farre that they oftē found in themselves, such an inexplicable and delicate sweetnesse as no tongue is able to expresse. For indeede one only tast of this sweetnesse, incomparably surpasseth all worldly delight whatsoever, for from it there groweth such ioy and comfort in the soule that exceeds all ioy and cōtētmēt that cā be imagined. And no mervaille, for it proceedes from the very fountaine of all goodnesse, to which no worldly ioy or delight may be compared. For

it is God himselfe, who very often by a speciall grace shewes himselfe present to those that devoutly contemplates him. By which it comes to passe, that so soone as this most excellent goodnesse doth relish in our spirit or mind, forthwith an admirable sweetnesse is diffused through our soule, so much surpassing al humane cogitation, that mortall tongue is not able to expresse, or vnderstanding to apprehend it. But this sweetnesse is not vsuallie att all times nor by all persons perceived and tasted, but then onely when almighty God doth see it will be most profitable vnto vs. For as the phisitian doth not

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*A simile
include.*

alwayse giue phisicke, nor so oft as the patient desires it, but doth some time deferre it to a time more fitting and commodious for his patient, and when it will doe more good. Euen soe doth our most benigne God with vs. For he doth oftentimes deferre to giue vs this spirituall consolation till a fitt time, when he knowes that the giift of this sweetnesse will bring more proffitt, or be more conuenient for our soules good.

*'By
we doe
not alway
ob-
taine his
seruet-
nesse.* And this is the reason why many, although they dayly and heartilie pray to God, that they may be refreshed with this heavenly sweetnesse, obtaine it not so soone as

of prayer. 79

they desire, be cause God as a skilful and learned phisitian, expects his owne time and a fitter opportunitie. For peradventure he seeth now, that if he should grant our desire, we would grow proud, or beleeve we can obtaine his grace whensoever we please; and by our owne forces and strength. Therefore doth he in his diuine wisdom, deferre the granting of our request, vntill he seeth our heart more humbled, and better confirmed in good purposes, and lastly more diligently addicted to holy exercises, that soe he may make vs partakers of more ample fauours of his diuine sweetnesse and consolation.

D iij

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The meanes by which this sweetnesse is gotten.

1.

In summe therefore who-
soever desires to be partaker
of this sweetnesse must first
and aboue all haue a most
lowly and humble conceipt
of himselfe, that he is not-
hing at all in the sight of
God, and esteeme himselfe
to be of noe accompt, and al-
together vnworthy not one-
ly vpon whome almightie
God should bestow a tast of
this vnspeakeable sweetnes-
se, but also vnworthly of the
very least giuft att his hands,
vnworthie of the meate he is
fedd withall, and the very
earth on which he treads. He
must further hold a strong
guard vpon his tongue, spea-
ke sparingly, rather keepe
silence, then exercise the li-

2.

of prayer. 81

bertie of language, vnlesse
charitie vrgeth, necessitie
inforceth, or that some com-
moditie will probablie re-
dound, eyther to himselfe,
or to his neighbour by spea-
king. Moreouer he must en-
deavour so much as in him
lyeth, to be continually mind
full of God, imagining him
to be continually present,
and to behold his actions
whatsoever he goeth about.
Lett him lastly haue in con-
tinuall memorie the Incar-
nation of Christ, the proces-
se of his life, his Passion, and
his death. Lett him often
meditate of the heavenly
glory, which the Angells,
and blessed soules now in-
ioy, abandoning from his

3.

4.

D v

thoughts so much as in him
lyeth all vaine and fruitlesse
cogitations. Alas poore mi-
serable wretches that we are,
that for the most part pesterr
our thoughts and mind (that
most admirable creature of
God) not only with such
fruitlesse and vnprofitable
thoughts, but with such as
are most odious, and bring
damnation to our soules,
whereas the memorie of
those things we spake of be-
fore; were an imployment
farre more aduantageous and
profitable for vs, farre more
pleasant, and the most excel-
lent studie that mortall man
can enterteine himselfe
with. For it is as it were a
twinkling or a small glimps

of prayer. 83

of Gods heavenly light, it is
a sparke of our future happi-
nesse, it is a pledge or car-
nest penny of eternall life.
And if any man in this dy-
ing life may be termed hap-
pie and blessed, it is onely
he whoe hath his mind con-
uersant in the memorie of
these holy thoughts, it is he
who wholly giues himselfe to
prayer and contemplation.
But having as I hope spo-
ken sufficiently of the three
fruits of prayer, I will now
att length come to treat of
the manner of prayer.

D vj



THE THIRD
PART,
OF THE MANNER
OF PRAYER.

CHAP. I.

IT will not be very hard for vs to know which way of prayer is most profitable, if the three things wee presently shall treat of be once rightly vnderstood. The first is, to what thing we should cheifely be attentiu in

- our prayer, whether to the words, or to the sense of the words, or whither rather to him to whome we poure forth our prayers. The second is how long or short a time it is conuenient for vs to spend in prayer, to witt, whether we should make long or short prayers. The third and last is, whether to pray in mind onely, or to pray both in mind and speech be more auailable to our soule, and more acceptable to God, which three wayes, when we haue examined, it will easilie appeare which is the most excellent, and to be preferred before the rest. Wherefore we will a part speake something of

each of them, that is, of attention, of prolixitie or length, and of pronuntiation.

*To what thing we ought cheifely
to attend when we pray.*

CHAP. II.

LEt vs now examine whether the force of our intention is to be directed, whether to the words, or to the sense, or rather to him whome we pray. And first of all I affirme that if there be any man of such dexteritie in praying, that he can at one and the same time attend vnto them all together, so that his attention to the

words, or to the sense of the words, diminisheth nothing of the attention of his mind to God: that way of prayer is most powerfull. But because it cannot be, or very hardly, but that one of these attentions must needs hinder the other, let vs particularly see which of the three is most perfect. No man (who will diligently examine this businesse) can doubt, but the attention which is directed vnto God considered in it selfe is the most perfect, and that most meritorious, that is, if it be not more remisse, then that which is directed to the words, or the sense of the words before God. And this I will not haue vn-

*One attention
common
to both
directed
another.*

derstood, in those prayers only which we voluntarily say and of our owne accord, but in all others, euen those to which we are bound, cyther by vow, or by the constitutions of the Church.

There be many doubtlesse whoe haue so weake and scrupulous consciences, that for feare least they should overslipp any litle word, or passe any sillable in the diuine office, they bend all their forces and strength of their mind to the distinct pronuntiation of the words. And such I doe verily beleue doe seldome or never tast the sweetnell of prayer, for which the ancient fathers first ordained the diuine of-

*Why the
canoni-
cal bou-
res were
instituted.*
fice, which we call the cano-
nicall howres. For these an-
cient and holy men had this
theire prefixed end, and it
was theire studie and inten-
tion, that the minds of the
Preists (who are the media-
tors betwixt God and the
people) should by these offi-
ces, be more stirred vp to
the contemplation of God,
and be more inflamed with
his love. Wherefore if any
one shalbe so farre forth at-
tentive, to expresse his
words, that he doth not come
vnto the end and scope,
which those holy fathers
proposed vnto them selues
in theise diuine offices, I
cannot approue of such prayer
as the best, or iudge it more

fruitfull or meritorious then
the other.

But I would not heere by,
that those, who so hastily
huddle ouer theire prayer,
that they scarcely vnderstand
themselues, not considering
eyther the excellency of him
to whome they pray, nor the
sense of the words: I would
not I say, that by these my
words such negligent people
should pretend vnto them-
selues any the least defence
of theire sloath and negli-
gence. For I doe not speake
this with any intention to
condemne them, whose at-
tentions are transported to
the words, (because I doubt
not but that they satisfie the
precept) but rather to per-

*Atten-
tion to
the
words
satis-
fies
the
precept.*

swade them to the other way of prayer, which is more excellent and more profitable.

But they who cheifly attend to the sense of the words, may sometimes perhaps receiue some little sweetnesse, and spirituall comfort in their souls: But surely they doe not receiue that most excellent comfort and sweetnesse which ariseth from the vnion and coniunction of our soules with God. For it may sometimes also happen, that by one pleasing sentence of holy scripture, being deeply ruminated, one may attaine vnto some small sparkle of this most excellent sweetnesse: but that which proceeds out

*The
sweet-
nesse
which
comes
from
the sense
of the
words
is farre
lesse the*

of the consideration of any part of scripture, is farre more weake, farre more remisse, then that which proceeds from the fountaine it selfe of his diuinitie. For Gods holy writt though it proceeds from himselfe, yett it is notwithstanding a creature, and what creature, or what created thing soeuer possesseth our minds, be it neuer so excellent, that thing is interposed betwixt God and vs, so that it is but a lett vnto our minds, that we cannot so inwardly be vnited with God, and therefore diminisheth that admirable sweetnesse which proceeds from that fountaine it selfe wherefore although

*that
comes
by a
thought
vpon
God.*

they who attend onely to the sense of the words perceiue or find a litle sweetnesse, yet are they farre short of that pure sweetnesse which those onely tast, who thinke of nothing but God himselfe and haue nothing interposed betwixt God and their minds, but are vnited wholly to him, which can neuer be, vnlesse the mind relinquish the cogitation of euery imaginable thing or fantasie, and presenteth nothing to it selfe but God only, for then are we most perfectly vnited and immediatly conioyned to our heauely Creator. To whome when we find our harts so to adhere, and be as it were firmly fi-

xed, presently beginneth to be pleasant a tast of sweetnesse, as no man can expresse, but he only to whome it hath pleased almightie God to grant it.

But obserue this, that that thought or cogitation which the mind formeth or shapeth to it selfe of God, must not be vnder any colour or light or figure or any other corporal likenesse: for all these things are created and so not God, whereas we seeke the vnion and coniunction of our selues with God only, and not with any other thing distinct from him.

If therefore one goeth about to thinke of God himselfe, let him with his vnder-

*How
we may
attaine
to the
concei-
ving of
God a-
lone.*

standing he above all things created, conceiving in his mind a thing most high, most excellent, and by infinite degrees surpassing all other things imaginable. This if he can doe without the apprehension of any light, colour, figure or likeness, as I sayd before, then hath he apprehended God himselfe. In which affaire if thou wilt continue and diligently employ thy selfe, thou shalt at last attaine to that unspeakable sweet ness and withall obtaine the three fould fruit of thy prayer.

*The
meditation* But if in the beginning this way seeme difficult to any one, let him first exercise himselfe in thinking
vpon

vpon Iesus Christ, who is *tion of
the hu-
manitie
of Christ
leaderh
to higher
contem-
plation
of God.* both true God and true man; let him therefore fix the eye of his vnderstanding vpon him as true God, calling to remembrance his holy Incarnation, birth, painfull labours and cruel death: Let him consider likewise his heavenly glory, where with he now shineth, sitting att the right hand of his father. Whosoever shall diligently exercise himselfe in these or any other meditation of Christ. Or more proportionable for him, shall easily from his most sacred humanitie, mount to the contemplation of the most unspeakable inscrutable diuine Majesty

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of God. For this is the nee-
rest way that leadeth vs to
the tast of that most pure and
diuine sweetnesse.

And if perchance he can-
not yet atteine vnto this in-
ward comfort and sweetnes-
se, almightie God withdra-
wing himselfe, cyther be-
cause as yet, he seeth it will
but litle proffitt him, or
because he is not fervent
enough, or sufficiētly atten-
tiue, considering the great-
nesse and dignitie of the
thing he desires, yet for all
this he shall not loose the re-
ward of his prayer.

*The most
perfect
way of
prayer.* The best therefore and
most pure way of prayer is,
if one after he hath most se-
riously recollected himsel-

of prayer. 97
fe, and directed his mind
with all his force vnto God
himselfe, (who is verely the-
re present) doth offer vnto
him from the bottome of his
heart, and with a pure affe-
ction, the prayers which he
is about to say, whether he
vnderstand them or not, it is
not materiall, and shal soe
fix his mind vpon God, that
his imagination wāders not:
Such an one shal proffit mo-
re in the love of God (which
is the end of prayer) then if
he were never so attentiueto
the words, or sense of them.
For this setting of his mind
vpon God, is for the most
part accompanied with such
an eleuation of heart that,
the mind, having forgotten

all earthly things, many times knoweth not where it is, or what it doth, as if a man were become a mere stranger to himselfe; and the spirit is sometimes soe greatly moved, that vnadvisedly it cryes out, or doth some other action, which immediately after a man remembers not, because the spirit worketh so mightily in him, that he can by no meanes suppress those actions in himselfe. And as the holy fathers (whoe in this art were very expert and skilfull) affirme, there is oftentimes so great sweetnesse tasted in prayer, that it even redoundeth to the flesh, so that the flesh is made partaker of

so great sweetnesse, and such as it never tasted before. To which the Prophet David accordeth saying, *My heart and flesh have exulted in the living God*, as if he should say, my heart through the bounteous overflowing of my spirit, hath received so wonderfull a sweetnesse from God, that my very flesh through delight of it is overcome with ioy, and such, as I am not able to cōtaine my selfe. This very exultation is as it were a sparkle of eternall life, which we shall in ioy after the vniuersall resurrection of our bodies, for then the glory of the soule shall so exceedingly abound, that it shall flow into the bo-

die, and both soule and bodie with this abundāce shall be fullie satisfied.

Out of what hath heere been sayd before in this chapter it may easily be gathered, that the cheifest attention to be vsed in prayer is to have continuallie in our memorie the presence of God, to whom we pray, and to fix him immoueable before the eyes of our heart: which to doe, though in the beginning of this exercise, it be somewhat difficult and troublesome, yet by successe of time and vse of prayer, it will become more easie and more pleasant: but to them cheifely, whoe are most inflamed with the spirit of de-

uotion and contemplation. Now let vs passe to the next question

How long our prayer ought to be.

CHAPT. III.

NOW in the second place we must inquire how long our prayer ought to be, for being it may be longer or shorter as we please, therefore to know of what length or how short it must be, belongeth to the manner of prayer. I say therefore, that although Iesus Christ admonisheth vs *alwayse to pray*: it is not so to be vnderstood (as we have declared in the first chapter) that we

ought alwayse actuallie to pray, for no manisable so to continue, our weaknesse and frailtie being such: that it will not permitt vs to be still intent eyther to vocall or mentall prayer, without any intermission: yet notwithstanding doth Christ admonish vs rightly, for that we are in continuall neede of Gods aide and assistance, which we must continuallie begge and intreate at his hands.

It hath pleased therefore some grave Authors to giue vs this rule, that we should so farre prolong our prayer, vntill we have attained the end for which it was first instituted. For as the phisitian ap-

plieth no greater or stronger medecine to his patient, then will serue to cure his disease, which is the end of the art of phisicke: Even soe must our prayer be, soe long till wee have attained to the immediate end for which it was instituted. But the first, and cheifest end of prayer is the fervor of charitie, which is the healeth of our soules. It is fervor then of charitie that God requireth of vs, for he doth despise the lukewarme, and in the Apocalyps he preferreth the key cold before him saying, *I would thou wert hot or cold, but because thou art luke-warme, I will beginne to vomitt thee out of my*

Apoc.

2.

mouth, See heere in how great hatred almightie God hath those that are luke-warme. Wherefore we must labour by all meanes possible to procure in our selves this feruency of charitie. For the obtaining of which fervour, prayer is of all things most necessarie; which feruor so soone as we have obtained we are exceedingly enabled, with great alacritie to undertake any worke whatsoever we thinke to be most gratefull vnto almightie God, and for which at last we shal be rewarded with æternal happinesse. We see then that our cheifest labour in prayer must be to inflame and sett our hearts

on fire, with this fervency of charitie, and then, as it were, to spinne out our prayer so long vntill we have attained vnto this our end. But when through the wearinesse of our frayle bodie we find this heate or fervour in vs to grow cold, then must we desist and pray no longer, but presently applye our selves to some other workes of vertue. For if we shall suffer this fervour to be altogether extinguished in vs, we doe not onely not obtaine our end intended in prayer, but also we giue no smal occasion to inducethe contrarie. For so soone as this fervour by our overlēgh of prayer shall wax cold or

remisse, we are presently destitute and forsaken of all inward comfort, whereby many times it comes to passe, that our minds are wandering abroad, seeking something pleasing and delightful to our senses, which doth often introduce a dissolution most pernicious to our soules, and drawes vs by litle and litle into many evils and inconueniences, which had not happened, if we had risen from prayer before, and not have suffered that burning fervour to have been vtterly extinguished in vs and therefore saint Augustine commendeth certaine Monkes in Egypt, for that they vsed short prayer,

The brothers in Egypt, sayth he, Epist. are sayd to have often prayers 121. de but very short, and as it were iaculatoire. Therefore doubtlesse they vsed often, that they might often renew this fervor; and short, for no other cause, but that the fervour which they had gotten in prayer, should not grow cold or remisse through length of prayer.

The cheifest care therefore of him that prayeth must be to nourish, and mainteine this fervour inkinled in his soul, and not to suffer it to die, nor to desist frō prayer, so long as it may be maintained or increased, vnlesse some great wearinesse of the bodie, and soe allwais by

Deum
orādo

this end we ought to measure the length or shortness of our prayer. For as the physician (having regard to the end of his art, which is the health of this bodie) tempers his medicine and giues it to his patient, not in so great a quantitie as he can, but in such as is convenient, eyther for gaigning or conserving the health of his patient. So he that prayeth must not prolong his prayer as long as he can, but so long as it is conuenient eyther for the getting or preserving of this fervour. And when he finds himselfe through this vnion with God so gently inflamed, and sweetly affected,

let him then goe in silence with sighes, and teares full of ioy and loue, and accomplishe the remainder of his deuotions, according as the holy Ghost shall inspire him. For I would counsell no man to giue over his prayer, so long as this fervour and heate indureth, vnlesse there happens something which may be more to the honour and glorie of God, or of more necessitie to him that prayeth, or more profitable to our neighbour: But soe soone as he finds himselfe through the weakenesse, and wearinesse of his body to be come cold and dull and drie, let him forthwith give ouer, and

content himselfe with what he hath already gained, and apply himselfe to some occasion or other, fitt for his state and calling, vntill some other opportunitie. But if that he be stirred vp againe by some new affection, let him by no meanes suffer it to die; but at least with some short and iaculatorie prayer, let him offer it, and himselfe vp to God, and desire his clemency towards him. For seeing this affection, as we may very well imagine proceeds and is stirred vpp in him by the holy Ghost, he may in no wise refuse it without great ingratitude

de vnto almightie God. Wherefore all businesse layd aside (so farre as necessitie will suffer) wee must follow and cherish this motion, and not suffer it to perish, and die in him by his negligence.

But heere some may say *Seculer* vnto me, how can he, possibly who is in this life so troubled with cares, so perplexed with worldly occasions, and full of businesse, how can he attend so strictly to prayer? Harken a litle to Saint Chrysostome, and he will answere, *He may Chrysostome* and that very easily, *may* *so* *fast* *l.* though he were in publick court, *5. ho.* or if he were present before *79. de* any tribunal, we have not, sayth *orat.*

the such need of our speech as of our thoughts not of the lifting up of our hands as of our hearts. If thou hast thy mind inflamed thou hast the perfection of prayer: thus he. Thou mayst pray therefore where-soeuer thou art, though thou beest in companie, thou mayest for à moment of time withdraw thy selfe, and by stealth offer to God some litle prayer as the Scripture sayth *stolne waters are the sweeter*. And truly prayers thus on the suddaine, and by stealth, as it were darted vp to heaven, doe oftentimes stirre vp our minds more vigorously, and more ardently inflame our hearts, with that most excellent

Iaculatores pro-
geri.

Prou.9

loue of God, and are indeede (as they affirme whome experience hath taught) most acceptable to our heauenly spouse Christ Iesus: but if thou canst by no meanes withdraw thy selfe from their sights with whome thou doest conuerse out of the respect thou bearest to them; yet mayest thou in their presence lift vp thy heart to God, whoe, thou art sure, is present with thee, and in a few words say vnto him with the Prophet David, *Intend vnto my ayde; O Lord God of my salvation!* Or this, *incline vnto my ayde o God.* Then which words Cassianus affirmeth, there can be none

Psa.37.
Psa.63.

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more powerfull and efficacious. If thou shalt but in thy heart repeate these words, thy prayer shal peirce the heavens, and thus much thou maicst doe wheresoever thou

Lib.1. beest, *Wheresoever thou art,*
collat. sayth S. Chrysostome, *thou*
Patrū *mayest erect thy altare, no place*
collat. *can hinder thee from dedicating*
10. *thy selfe to God,* if thou wert mending thy shoes or washing dishes or what els soever, thou mayest pray: it is lawfull for the servant what business soever he is about of his masters, to pray. In the court, in the market place, in the midst of never so great a multitude of people a man may pray. Saint Paul prayed in the prison,

of prayer. 215

the Prophet Hieremie in the A&16
durt, Ezechias against the Hier.
wall, Daniell in the lions 38.E-
denne, Ionas in the whales zech.
bellic, the theife on the 38.Da.
Crosse, and all theise w^c niel.9.
re heard praying in very &13.
few words. All this out of Ionæ 2
Saint Chrysostome in seuerall Lu.23.
places.

Whosoever therefore shall exercise himselfe from time to time after this manner, that is, now praying, then doing some other good worke, still employed cyther to gett this fervour of charitie, or in increasing or nourishing the same, never suffering it (so farre as he is able) thorough his negligence or fault

to be extinguished, or to grow cold, nor suffers the good motions and inspirations of the holy Ghost to die in him without some fruit, he without all doubt in short time shal come vnto that vnspcakble tranquillitie of mind, and to such a pleasant ioy in heart as incomparablie surpasseth all wordly solace and contentment, all ioy all laughing and meriment, all pleasure that heere can be afforded or expected. And thus let vs come to the third question.

*Whether the prayer of the heart
only is more aduantageous then
that which is made both with
heart and speech*

C H A P. I V.

IT remaineth now that we treat whether prayer of the heart only, or prayer which is made with the heart and lipps together be most profitable vnto him that prayeth I doe protest heere, that it is not my intention, to affirme any thing in derogation of vocall prayer, such as is cyther receiued by custome, or ordeined by the constitutions of the Church, or in-

flitted by way of pennance,
 or assumed by vow or any
 other promise whatsoever,
 by which a man hath bound
 himselfe to vocall prayer.
 But my opinion is, that w-
 hosoever is free from these
 bonds, and in possession of
 his absoluteliberitie, and de-
 sires to serve God after the
 best purest and most pleasing
 way vnto him: it is farre mo-
 re profitable for such an one
 to pray with his heart only,
 then with his tongue and
 heart together: Because as
 Saint Augustine in a certai-
 ne Epistle of his to Proba,
 speaking of the fruit of
 prayer, affirmeth, saying *The*
office, of praying, is better per-
formed by sighinge and moorning
then

then by speech of lipps, better by Epist.
weeping then speaking. Which ^{111.}
 if it be so, verily the prayer
 of the heart, from whence
 the sorrow breaketh, is much
 more availcable then the
 wordes, which proceede
 from the lipps. And rightly
 bycause as saint Cyprian te-
 stifierh, *God is the hearer of the* De o-
heart not of the voyce, he is not ratio-
to be moved by clamour or noyse, ne pau-
who sees the inward thoughts of lo post
the mind. Wherefore a poore ^{princi-}
 Wretch who casteth himsel-
 fe prostrate on the earth,
 with great humilitie ack-
 nowledging himselfe to be
 a sinner, and laying open his
 miseries, pouring forth the
 bottome of his heart before
 God, not vttering words,

but pittifull groanes : this poore soule without all question shall soone obtaine what he requireth att Gods hand. Which appeares plainly to be true in Anna, the mother of Samuell. For she being barren earnestly desired att the hands of God, that he would giue her a sonne, for which cause she often frequented the temple, imploring his diuine goodnesse by dayly prayer, that he would be pleased to be propitious, vnto her in this her suit, yet did she not forme any one word att all, but prayed in hart only, as the Scripture sayth, *She prayed in her heart and no voyce was heard, for her lipps onely moved.* Why

doe I vse many words? By this only prayer that is of her heart she obtained what she asked; for she brought forth a sonne, whome she with so many teares and soe much sorrow had begged att the hands of God, and not with the noyse of her lipps and tongue. To this also doth saint Hierome agree explicating that of S. Mathewe, *But thou when thou prayest enter into thy chamber, and having shutt the dore pray to thy father.* It seemeth to me, sayth he, we are rather commanded to pray vnto our Lord, with our thoughts in our breast, then with our lipps, as we reade in the booke of Kings, that Anna did, her lipps, sayth the Scripture were moved, and

her voyce was not heard. Thus S. Hier. in this way of prayer vehemently moves his diuine Majestie; and powerfullie inclines him speedily to heare vs.

Ro.8. Moreouer the holy Ghost is our teacher and aduiser to this way of prayer as S. Paul testifieth, who sayth, *what we should pray, as we ought we know not; but the spiritt himselfe asketh for vs with groanings in speakeable.* As if he would say, we know not after what manner to aske any thing, but the spiritt of God inwardly stirring vp our hearts, makes vs with vnspeakeable groanings to aske, what is most fitting for our soules health.

Yet notwithstanding I doe not denie, but that some deuout person may beginne his prayer with what wordes he pleaseth, from his lipps. But soe soone as ever he shall find himselfe a litle enkindled, and as it were set on fire with that sweet flame of the holy Ghost, then it will be fitt for him to leaue of vocall prayer, and follow the leading of the diuine spiritt, and in silence to permit himselfe to be wholly gouerned by it. For as I sayd a litle aboue, the end which we should prefix to our selues in our prayer, is cheifely the fervour of charitie, with which we begin to be possessed, and inflamed when by de-

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vout prayer our minds are
stirred vp and elevated vnto
God on high. As soone there-
fore as we find our selves
to have attained to this end,
then must we strue by all
meanes to continue it in vs:
which to doe, without all
doubt we have no better
way, then to follow the lea-
ding of the holy ghost, who-
se conduct farre more ad-
uanceth our affaire, then any
words we can invent or
bring forth. Wherefore must
wee with all our might fol-
low the instinct and motion
of the holy spirit, whether
soever it shall leade vs, nei-
ther neede we from thence
forth vtter any words of our
owne. Not vnlike vnto him,

of prayer. 225
who after great labour and
long travaile hath passed the
sea, and is arrived at his desi-
red haven, then he forsaketh
the shipp that brought him,
and applieth himselfe wholly
to the end and purpose for
which he came, and is no
more sollicitous for the poore
vessayle that brought him
thither: So also he that by
the helpe and vse of vocall
prayer, as by a shipp hath
attained vnto the inward
consolation of his soule, and
to this fervour of charitie in
God, must then make it his
cheifest care and study, that
this fervour by no meanes
grow cold, but then leaving
of his vocall prayer, he must
follow this holy spirit, who

*A shipp
inside:*

hath brought him to this fervour, wither soever it shall leade him: then he must not vse his owne words: but whatsoever the holy Ghost shal suggest vnto his heart, that let him desire, not with words, but with burning signes of ioy.

But that thou mayst more certeinly know that this manner of prayer to wit, which is offered in spirit and mind, is more excellent then that which is performed with speech and words, listen to that which Christ
 Ioā.4. sayth in the ghospell, *God is a spirit, and they that adore him, must adore him in spirit and veritie.* Behold as God is a most spiritual thing, so doth

he require a sacrifice most spirituall, therefore the prayer offered to him in spirit and mind is more acceptable then that, which is offered with the grosse pronountiation of words, which cannot be formed without corporall ayre. And let it not trouble thee that it is said in saint Iohn, *adorare* to, *adore* and not, *orare* to *pray*, for the one of theise cannot be donne without the other, for when God is prayed vnto, then is he truly adored, and when he is adored, then is he also prayed vnto. God then requires, you see, to be adored in spirit and mind, of the most spirituall and elevated minds, for such as

these he seeketh after, as S. Iohn sayth to adore him. Wherefore I feare not to say, that spirituall men, who have carefully exercised themselves in this manner of prayer, and have had their hearts alwayse lifted vp to God, and have tasted of the sweetnesse of this fervour, (I feare not I say to affirme) that they have much more profited by this prayer of the heart, then if they had repeated innumerable psalmes and prayers, as very many doe, overburthening their minds, and by that meanes so excluding themselves from the end of their prayer, that they never tast any spirituall sweetnesse at all.

And without all question, the desire of running over such a multitude of prayers, doth oftentimes hinder and divert Gods holy visitation from their hearts, which otherwise he would be very readie to give them. Forlikeas the sunne sends forth the beames of light to euery place, so is almightie God most readie to powre into euery one of vs this bounteous sweetnesse, if the passages into our minds be not with our multitude of words, as with certeine thicke and condensed clouds, hindered and blockt vp; whereas we should be intent to nothing at all but God, and that with all our desires, and minds, if

we wilbe pertakers of this sweetnesse. But such persons attend not to God, but to the quicke pronouncing of a great many words, neyther doe they consider the presence of his diuine Majestie, but with how great celeritie, and speede they can runne over such a number of psalmes, and prayers, with which studie and desire, they doe so busie and ouerwhelme their minds, as not one dropp, of this sweetnesse can fall vpon them: and yet they perswade themselves that they please God most, in somuch that they cannot satisfie their consciences, vntill they have prayed their stinted number of deuotiōs.

And if by chance any part of them (I doe not meane of such as are commanded by the Church, but which they have vndertaken of their owne accord to say) be left vsayd, alas poore soules, how great a scruple doe they forme in their consciences? How miserablie doe they torture their minds? Not marking that saint Hierome sayth, *The saying or repeating of five psalmes with puritie of heart, and spirituall ioy, is better then the repeating of the whole psalter, with a troubled and distracted mind.* And it is much more to be wondred at, that they will not marke what Christ sayth in the ghospell admonishing them that pray,

*Cites by
Gratians
in cap.
nōme-
diocri-
ter de
consecra-
tio-
ne dist.*

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Mat. 6 *When ye are praying, speake not much: yet must you not thinke, that Christ is displeased with long prayer* seing it is read of himselfe

Lūc. 6. *that He was long in prayer, but that we should not trust in the multitude of our prayers, and especiallie the affection of the mind being not present, nor that we should thinke him to be more moved with the multitude of words, then the affection of the heart. But contrary, he is more moved with one only true affectionate and inward lifting vp of the mind, then with all the prayers we can say, voyd of affection. Whereupon saint Augustin sayth,*

Epist. 121. ad *It is one thing to speake much, it*

of prayer. 233

is another to be well affected. He Probā cap. 10
speaketh much to God that sure thinketh he can move his clemency by a long and a numerous company of words, by which God is not moved at all; but with the sincere affections of the soule. For the clamour or noyse of the tounge maketh a very dull sound in his eares, and the vehement burning of the affection moveth him instantly, because God is more delighted with our affections then voyces, and them most that are accompanied with sighes and teares. For this manner of praying doth as it were overcome God, who otherwise is invincible, and this doubt-

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lesse is better performed
and offered to God in spirit
and mind, then with any
words formed with the
mouth. For the spirit soe
soone as it is moved and a
litle sett on fire, executeth
its office with farre more ce-
leritie, then the motion of
the lipps, or the corporal for-
ming of words is able to doe.
By which that is made appa-
rent, which we have so long
discourfed of, to witt that
the prayer of the mind and
spirit onely is more power-
ful with God, and more to
be esteemed and practized
by vs. For the motion and
agitation of the lipps is flow-
er, and the corporal weight
of the tongue pronouncing

of prayer. 235
the words is lesse apt for the
purpose. And not onely this,
but the now opening now
shutting of the mouth is mo-
re laborious, then that it can
assist the spirit or mind in
any thing, especiallye it
being once inflamed and set
on fire by this diuine love.
For then it is caried with so
great celeritie and swiftnes-
se, that neyther the lipps,
mouth, or tongue are able
to follow it, and if they doe
follow, they helpe it in no-
thing, but are rather trou-
ble some and full of molesta-
tion.

I could wish therefore that
who are delighted in prayer,
and willingly spend their ti-
me in it, and cheifely such

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as haue both time and leysure enough to imploy therein, I could wish, I say, they would not see vnprofitably burthen themselves, with so great a multitude of vocal prayers; but that time (which they spend in them) to so little profit, they would spend in setting their affections on fire towards God, that so at last they may attaine to some taste of that vnspcakable sweetnesse, which God questionlesse will powre vpon their soules. which will easilie be brought to passe, if that they doe worthily prepare themselves, and proceed to the manner we haue before set downe. That is, first, that they offer themselves in all

of prayer. 237
humilitie to God, then diligently performe their prayers with a true and iust attention of mind; and lastly doe their best indeavour to finish their prayers with all attention of heart. They may also beginne their deuotions with some vocall prayer, such as they haue heeretofore been accustomed to be inflamed with; but then finding themselves thus inflamed, sweetly affected, and drawne by almighty God, in Gods name leaving off their vocall prayer, let them with teares and sighes follow the tract of the holy ghost, whither soeuer it shal leade them, then begging instantly at the hands

of almightie God whatsoeuer the holy spirit shal inspire them, but cheifely that it would please, his diuine Majesty not to forsake them, but that he would graciously grant them what in his diuine knowledge and wisdom, he seeth most necessarie for their soules health. And if they proceede according to this manner, they shal not only grow and become more acceptable to God, but shall also dayly profit more and more in fervour of charitie, and become like vnto those most heavenly and angelicall spirits, which dayly behold and contemplate the face of God. And why should they


not (though heere lying vpon earth and couered with this corruptible flesh) be sayd to be like Angells? Seing they pray as the blessed Angells doe, that is in spirit, seing also they tast the same sweetnesse which the blessed Angells doe, and seing lastly they doe heere on earth find in themselves a pledge or earnest peny of their future happinesse, which these blessed Angells doe now inioy? In soe much that there is nothing waiting to them but the beatificall vision of Gods glory, which so soone as they haue shaken of this vayle of mortall flesh they shall inioy in heaven.

FINIS.



THE ARMOVR

OF S. EPHRÆM.

 E who resolveth to fight courageously for Christ Iesus, must possesse himselfe of this armour, with which being guarded, he may both resist his aduersarie the devill, and be more pleasing in the sight of God our Saviour. What this Panoplie or armour is listen (my brother) and I will tell thee. For thy breastplate or doublett take fayth,

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*How
saye his
compara-
red to a
graine o'
mustard
seede.*

Matt.
16.

but as a graine of mustard
seede, beleeving in the con-
substantiall and individuall
Trinitie: For the graine of
mustard seede is very light
and round, having neyther
cracke nor corner: but (as I
sayd before) is altogether
round, which being pounded
or bruised hath in it a mer-
vailous great heate. The
Prince of the Apostolicall
order S. Peter, when he con-
fessed Christ Iesus to be son-
ne of the living God, he re-
ceived the keyes of the
Kingdome of heaven, and
obtained power ouer all hea-
venly and earthly things
this harnesse or armour
(deare brother) challenge
to thy selfe, that thou for
also

of S. Ephraim. 243

mayst receiue grace from
God, for whosoever hath but
so much perfect fayth and
charitie shall without que-
stion promerit grace from
God. Which our Lord insi-
nuating sayd.

If you have fayth as a
graine of mustard seede, say
to this montaine, remoue
fro hence thither and it shall
remoue. Doe you not see *The pro-*
that fayth promerits grace? *fit and*
Vnto it is giuen the spirit of *comeda-*
vnderstanding, truly a most *rious of*
singular gift for when one
beleueth, then also he vn-
derstandeth: It is giuen him
to vnderstand, that he should
not iudge his neighbour:
then is given to him the
speech of wisedome, then

G

244 *The armour*

the grace of curing, for he doth cure the weake in fayth, and bringeth to right, those that are fallen: for one and the same spirit worketh all these things. But there be many who have fayth, but are destitute of workes: But that is no fayth, for it is dead: for fayth without workes is dead. He that hath fayth and worketh the workes of fayth: he hath fayth burning as the mustard seede. Possesse thou this my brother, and be sound and firme in fayth: and fervent to put in execution the precepts of our Saviour, that thou mayest deserue to heare that voyce of his. Welfare thee good and faythful servant, enter into

*Iac. 2.
25.*

of S. Ephram. 245

the ioy of thy Lord. Our Lord calls him good for his works, faythfull for his fayth. Take the helmet hope of the future good, which neyther eye hath seene, care hath heard, nor hath entred into the heart of man, vpon which the Angells desire to looke. For this hope is the most powerfull consolation of the soule, amongst the thornes of her afflictions and molestations, and the memorie thereof will replenish thee with ioy. To this being intent the holy Martyrs of Christ amidst their various and most horrible torments, a midst bales of iron, suffered all, most readilie and willingly, being strengthned

25.

*Hope the
helmet.*

246 *The armour*

ned with this most eminent vertue of hope. Moyſes pre-fixing before his eyes the reward of this hope, refused to be called the ſonne of the Queene, eſteming and preferring it before all treaſures of Egypt wherefore he made rather choyce to be afflicted with the people of God then to haue any temporall fruition of ſinne. Place this hope my brother dayly before thine eyes, that affection to it may not permit thee to eſteeme any whit of temporal and corruptible things, and not onely this, but that it may make thee more prompt, and ready to aduance thy ſelfe to any good worke. For thy girdle

of S. Ephram. 247

girt thy ſelfe with perfect charitie to God and thy neyghbour, and this will make thee runne forward without any impediment at all. For if he whoe is girt with his girdle, doth ſoe eaſily paſſe with the burthen he vndertaketh, with how much more facilitie ſhal he who is girt with this diuine charitie overcome all things? For charitie ſuffers all things, beareth with all things, charitie is the fulneſſe of the law. Saint Paul being poſſeſſed of this charitie, ſayd, who is weake and I am not weake? Who is ſcandalized and I am not burned? Haſt thou ſcene the pittie and compaſſion of charitie? O

*Charitie
the gir-
dle.*

248 *The armour*

bleſſed ſaint Paul, why art thou ſo afflicted for me? Shalt thou ſuffer torments for me? Thou haſt once conſummated thy courſe, thou haſt kept thy fayth, and there is a crowne of iuſtice layd vp for thee, what wouldeſt thou haue more? Why doeſt thou afflict thy ſelfe? And why ſhouldeſt thou become weake for me? Alas ſayth he it is charitie that vrgeth me. Haſt thou now ſcene the heighth and eminencie of charitie? He who through charitie had fulfilled the law, being yet couered with his mortall and corruptible fleſh, deſerued to be rapt vp to the third heauen, and to heare ſuch words, as are not

of S. Ephram. 249

lawful for man to ſpeake. Now forthy ſhoes take vn-
to thee humilitie; foras the
ſhoe is continually ſpurned
and trodd vpon: even ſo
he that is replenished with
humilitie, ſtudyeth to betro-
den on by all men. Therefo-
re thou (o my brother) fur-
niſh thy ſelfe with this ver-
tue of humilitie, for it is tru-
ly a ſhoe, not corporal, but
ſpirituall, and it ſhall preſer-
ue thee that thou ſhalt not
ſtrike they foot againſt the
ſtone. For Chriſt is the ſto-
ne, and humilitie ſhal ſo
preſerue thee, that thou of-
fendeſt not Chriſt. The Pro-
phet Dauid abounded in hu-
militee, when he ſayd: I am
a worme, and not a man,

*Humili-
tie the
ſhoe.*

*Psal
90.*

250 *The armour*

Psal. Doeſt thou ſee this royall
21. humilitie of this King and
 Prophet? He alwayſe ſawe
 our Lord before him, be-
 cauſe he was in his ſight
 keeping him, that he ſhould
 not be moved that is, not fall
 into ſinne. By this thou ſeeſt
*Humi-
 litie
 moſt gra-
 ue ſ. 11. to
 God.* (moſt deare brother) how
 highly almighty God lo-
 veth humilitie, who is alw-
 ayſe neere at hand to him,
 that is indued with it, and
 all wayſe looketh vpon him.
Psal. For it is written. He who
112. dwelleth on high, reſpecteth
Psalm. the humble, and againe his
10. eyes lookes vpon the poore.
 But my deare brother when
 thou heareſt this word poore;
 doe not apprehend one
 that wants worldly fortune.

of S. Ephraim. 251

For many Kings haue highly
 pleaſed God, and many beg-
 gars have periſhed. But poore
 here, is poore in ſpirit: ac-
 cording to theſe words:
 Blessed are the poore in ſpi-
 rit becauſe theirs is the
 Kingdome of heaven: Soe
 dearly beloued, humble
 thy ſelfe vnder the mightie
 hand of God, that he may
 exalt thee in the Kingdome
 of heaven, which our Saviour
 hath promiſed vnto the hum-
 ble. For thy Target or Buc-
 kler, arme thy ſelfe with
 the ſigne of the Croſſe, ſig-
 ning therewith all thy body
 and thy heart, and not onely
 with thy hand, but euen with
 thy very mind, all thy ſtu-
 dies and endeaours, thy en-
*rehois
 truly
 poore.
 Mat. 5.
 1. Pet.
 2.
 Matr.
 18.
 The
 Croſſe
 the bu-
 ckler*

252 *The armour*
 trance into any place, and
 thy going forth, thy sitting
 downe also and thy rising
 vp, thy bed, and whatsoe-
 ver thou doest, signe it first
 in the name of the father
 and of the sonne and of the
 holy Ghost: for this is a most
 strong armour or defence,
 and none can ever hurt thee,
 if thou beest signed with it.
 For if one that carieth the
 protection of an earthly
 King, noe man dareth af-
 front him, how much more
 ought we not to feare, bea-
 ring the protection of our
 heavenly Emperour? Vse
 therefore (deare brother)
 these armes in all thy ac-
 tions they are preualent
 against the enimie; yea

of S. Ephram. 253
 against the sword, which is
 bitter and malevolent an-
 ger. For this two-edged ^{Anger}
 sword killeth in a moment ^{the sword}
 it striketh, as it is written ^{ord of}
 a moment of wrath, is his ^{the eni-}
 ruine. Therefore my dea- ^{mie.}
 re brother never neglect to ^{Eccl. 1.}
 signe thy selfe, and thou
 shalt breake the netts the
 devill layeth to ensnare
 thee, as it is written, in
 the way that I walked in
 they haue layed a net for
 me. Be therefore dayly si- ^{Psal.}
 gned with the Crosse, ^{139.}
 and noe evill will come nee-
 re thee.

For thy bowe lift vp thy ^{Prayer}
 hands in prayer as it is writ- ^{the bo-}
 ten. And thou hast made my ^{we.}
 armes as a bowe of Steele.

G vj

254 *The armour*

For verily the hands of him who prayeth in Knowledge are as a bowe of Steele against his enemies, or as an arrow directly and forcible shott by the bowbender. For if in prayer you suffer your mind to wander: you wilbe iust as he that holdeth a bow in his hand, but cannot direct his arrow against his aduersarie, shooting it att Randome and without ad vice. Yet sometimes it striketh some feare in thy enimie, when he seeth thee bend thy bow, though the arrowe come not so neere him, but a distance of: Soe I say my bretheren, when one prayeth with devotion, and suffers not his thoughts

of S.Ephram. 255

to be wandring abroad, but vnderstands to whome he prayeth, that this such prayer tendeth to God himselfe, then is the enimie most vehemently contristated, as being peirced through the heart with a sharpe dart. For how much more the soule profiteth in grace, so much further of doth he flie, as psal. the dust before the face of 34. the wind, for the Angell of God doth persecute him; see in what thing he wounds 1. Cor. him thus, because he prayeth in devotion and knowledge, and he is more strengthened, because he restrayneth his thoughts and suffers them not to wander abroad. And thou O my bro-

ther powre forth thy prayers in knowledge But if whilst thou prayest thy mind be distracted, eyther by the wandering of thy eye, or the catching of thy care, or evagation of thy thoughts, or by any other cause, know this to be his working: yet make not to much hast to end thy prayer, but rebuke thy selfe, and recollect thy spiritts, and then againe pray in knowledge that thou mayest know for whome thou prayest vnto God, and for what thou prayest; and vse not many and superfluous words. For it is the worke of the devill to scatter our thoughts vpon many impertinent things, and

he doth not willingly suffer vs to persist in the intention we first made. For he knoweth full well, that if a man persecereth, he that made him will heare him, not with standing he hath committed innumerable sinnes. wherefore he suggesteth many idle and superfluous words and thoughts, that the mind being repulsed from her first intention, may wander through various distractions and our first intention of prayer be diuerted to some other thing. wherefore my brother, demand ^{vs} of god, what vrgeth thee most ^{musta/ke} and for those things thou ^{of God} hast most neede of. Remem- ^{what is} ber those two blind men ^{most ne-} ^{cessario} ^{for us.}

258 *The armour*

crying after him: Haue mercy vpon vs (sonne of David)

Mat.9. what sayd our lord vnto
20. them? but, what will you
Marc that I doe vnto you? And
10. they according to the greife
Lu. 18. and affection of their heart,
requested that their eyes
might be opened. Did they
aske any other thing, of which
they stood in very great
need? Did they say, giue
vs a garment to couer vs, for
we are very poore? Noe cer-
tes, but they asked God,
that, of which they stood
most in need. Behold the
Mat. 15 woman of Canaan crying
Mar. 7. and saying vnto him: lord
haue mercy vpon me for my
daughter is sore vexed with
a deuill, and sayd nothing

of S. Ephram. 259

els, but vttered the greife
and affection of her heart:
in fine all that euer came to
our Lord and Saviour, what
did they but lay open before
him the afflictions and greife
of their hearts? Did not alsoe
that woman, which was
troubled with the bloodie
flux, come vnto him, and
desired him to stopp it?
who I pray you going to
the phisitian or chirurgian,
doth not forthwith open the
very bottome of his disease
or wound? Doe thou also
my deare brother, offer vn-
to him the greife of thy
soule, behold him with thy
spiritual and intellectuall
eyes of fayth, sitting vpon a
most high and eleuated thro-

Mat.9.
Mar.5.
Luc.8.
Esa.6.

ne, and troopes of Angells
and Archangells assisting round
about him, and casting thy
selfe before the sight of his
goodnesse, powre forth thy
prayers before him, first con-
fessing thy sinns, then in hu-
militie and deuotion, vrging
thy necessities vnto him, and
the sorrowes of thy heart, vn-
till he shall in his goodnesse
and clemencie haue mercy
vpon thee, saying, O faithfull
soule, be it vnto thee as thou
desirest. But withal take
this councell, my bro-
ther, if he shall delay, and
not forthwith grant thy peti-
tion, yet desist not to crye
vnto him. Remember the
Cananean, and imitate her
perseuerance, for she suffe-

red short delay, and had
not her petition so quic-
kely granted, in so much
that the Disciples came
vnto our Lord and intre-
ted in her behalfe, and
sayd, Dismiss her for she
cryeth after vs. Let vs by
example learne to persist in
prayer, if we doe not spee-
dily obtaine what we aske.
And our Saviour sayth which
of you having a freind, and
he shall come to him by
night and say, Freind lend
me three loaves, because my
freind is come vnto me, and
I have none to put before
him, and he answereth from
within, and sayth, good
freind, doe not trouble me,
my doores are shutt, and my

262 *The armour*

children are in bed with me, I cannot rise to giue thee: and he still knocketh on, I say vnto you, that although he doth not rise and giue him as his freind, yet for to avoyd his importunitie, he will giue him so many as he hath neede of. And I say vnto you, aske and it shall be giuen vnto you, as likewise it is sayd in the psalme, *Expecting I haue expected our Lord, and he hath attended vnto me, and hath heard my prayers.* Wherefore my brother, grow not in thy prayer slacke and dull, but expect, request, knocke hard, and thou shalt haue, soe much as thou hast neede of. Listen vnto me deare brother, and

Psal.
39.

of S. Ephrem. 263

imbrace my counsell. If thou askest any thing at Gods hands, doe not request it presently, and prefix him not a time when thou wouldest haue it, but leaue it wholly to him and to his diuine will. As for exāple, thou art many times vexed and perplexed with euill vncleane thoughts, at which thou art much afflicted, and thou prayest God that he would free thee from this conflict, yet, my brother, it is many times expedient for thee to be thus tryed. Looke vpon that most excellent pillar of the Apostles, how for his profit and aduantage the sting of the flesh the very Angell of Sa-
1. Cor.
than, was giuen him, which 12.

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1. Cor. beate him and boxed him
 12. least he should grow proud.
 If then he which was of soe
 excellent and great meritts,
 was thus exercised, least
 he should grow proud; how
 much more neede haue we
 poore weake ones whose still
 thinke our selues something
 to be thus beaten and cuffed,
 Gal. 6. that we growe not insolent
 and proud in heart. And if
 againe any other tribulation
 fall vpon thee, doe not in
 thy prayer limitt a lime whē
 he shall precisely free thee
 from it; for it is many times
 expedient that thou suffer
 this also. For it happens ma-
 ny times when thou prayest,
 that thou doest not see - el-
 know what is good for thy

of S. Ephram. 265

soules health; as Israëll suf-
 fered. For *Israel did eate and* Deut.
was filled, and my beloued kic- 32.
ked backe, he grew e fatt, he
waxed ouer lustie, he grew proud
and forsooke God his maker. If
 thou againe prayest to obta-
 ine any thing doe not desire
 it to be immediately granted
 thee, For it falls out many
 times that thou being a man,
 thinkest this thing expediēt
 for thee, when indeede it is
 not: But if forsaking thyne
 owne will, thou resigne thy
 selfe to the will of God, and
 according to that, goe on,
 thou art secure. For he who
 knew all things before they
 were and are, gouerneth and
 disposeth all according to
 his owne benignitie and

266 *The armour*
 pleasure. For we know not
 whether that we aske at
 Gods hands be expedient
 for vs or noe, seinge that ma-
 ny, whē they haue obteyned
 what they haue asked of God,
 afterwards haue been very
 sorry, and haue oftentimes
 fallen into great defects and
 euills, because they did not
 diligently search, whether
 that which they desired was
 agreeable to the will of
 God; but thinking it soe,
 haue been deluded by the
 devill, and vnder the shape
 and pretext of vertue and
 iustice haue been seduced
 and cast into many dangers,
 and such petitions are many
 times wayted one by greife
 and repentance whilst euery
 one

of S. Ephraim. 267
 one followes the desire and
 concupiscence of his owne
 heart. Harken vnto the
 Apostle, saying, *For we know
 not what we should pray for as
 we ought*; and againe *All* ^{Rom.}
things are lawfull for me, but 8.
all things are not expedient for 1. Cor.
me. All things are lawfull for 9. 10.
me, but all things doe not edifie; ^{Ibid.}
he onely knoweth, what is expe-
dient for vs, and what doth edi-
fie vs. And this I doe wish
 should beleft and referred
 to his will, not that I pro-
 hibite thee to aske what-
 soeuer thou desirest from
 him, for I rather pray thee
 and admonish thee, that
 thou shouldest aske all
 things from him from the
 least to the greatest; but
 H

that when thou doest pray
and lay thy heart open be-
fore him, thou shouldest say.

*But let not my owne will, but thine
be donne; if what I aske be ex-
pedient doe as thou knowest: for
soe the scripture adviseth vs
saying. Reueale vnto our Lord
thy way, and hope in him, and
he will doe it.* Behold our
Lord Iesus-Christ praying in
our flesh, which he assumed,
and saying: *Father if it be
possible, lett this chalice part
from me, but not as I will, but
as thou wilt.* Wherefore (*deere*

*A short
prayer
for the
obey-
ning of
things
necessa-
rie.*

brother) if thou doest aske
any thing of God, persist,
in thy petition, saying: Lord
if it be thy will I shall ob-
taine what I demand of thee;
doe thou permitt it to prof-

per, and be effected, but if
it be not thy will and plea-
sure permitt it not O my
God, to come to passe. I
humblic besecch thee not to
deliuer me to my owne con-
cupiscence, for thou know-
est my follie, but preserue
me vnder the shadowe of
thy protection, as thou best
knowest, and gouerne me,
and direct me, O my God,
for thy owne mercyes sake.
But if thou doest pray aga-
inst any tribulation or vn-
cleane thoughts say with the
Prophett. Lord rebuke me
not in thy furie, nor chastise
me in thy wrath: Lord haue
mercy vpon me for I am
weake, but looke, vpon me
O Lord, and see that I am

270 *The armour*
earth and dust and ashes,
and can beare nothing. De-
liuer me not O Lord to my
sinns, for then I shalbe like
vnto those that descend into
the lake: But forgetting my
wickednesse giue glory to
thy owne name, And doe
not remember I beseech
thee my sinns, but thy owne
mercy towards me, and
hearken vnto my prayer:
And if it be possible lett this
tribulation passe from mee;
but not as I will O Lord,
but as thou pleasest, Only
strengthen my soule and de-
fend me, that I may beare
it patiently, and find grace
before thee in this world
and in the next. And cast
thy thoughts vpon him and

of S. Ephram. 271
he will doe what is fitt for
thee. For know this that he
being good and full of be-
nignitie, willet all things,
that are for our soules health,
for he, the good shepheard
layed downe his soule, for
all vs his sheepe. To him
beglory world without end.
Amen.

FINIS.

