

asked to say a Mass petitioning favors from Heaven, but how seldom one of thanksgiving for benefits received !

Yet we know well how odious ingratitude is. It is the one vice of which men never boast. It is the injury they find it hardest to forgive. We are aware, for instance, how we would eventually act towards a person who day after day received from us manifold kindnesses, yet never made us the slightest acknowledgment of them. Why, the baseness of man's ingratitude was one of the few things that seemed to surprise even the all knowing Son of God Himself. For example, after He had completely restored to health ten wretched lepers, whose loathsome, incurable disease had made them shunned by all, and when but one, and he a Samaritan, came back to thank the Divine Physician, our Saviour asked in pained wonder : "Were there not ten made clean ? Where are the nine ?" so deeply was He wounded by their ingratitude.

Now, we all owe God a debt of thanks like that of the lepers, since our life, health and happiness, every gift and blessing, indeed, whether of soul or body, that we enjoy are free gifts from His bountiful hand. Even the misfortunes, so called, that God has permitted to befall us, we should really thank Him for, since they have purified our souls, detached us from creatures and drawn us nearer to Him. How mercifully God has dealt with others we cannot always determine, but as regards our own selves, when we remember how often we have offended Him by sin, all must own that we have been treated far better than we deserve, since even His chastening hand has ever been that of a compassionate Father.

But if, though keenly realizing our indebtedness to Almighty God, we despair of making Him any adequate return, Zachaeus will teach us how to show our gratitude fittingly. For after surmounting the first difficulties in seeing our Lord, by getting up for Mass, we must then, like the little tax-collector, receive our Lord into the house of our hearts "with joy." If it is a pleasure to our Lord to enter even a cold heart, provided only it is clean, how delighted He must be to receive a warm and joyful welcome when He visits us !