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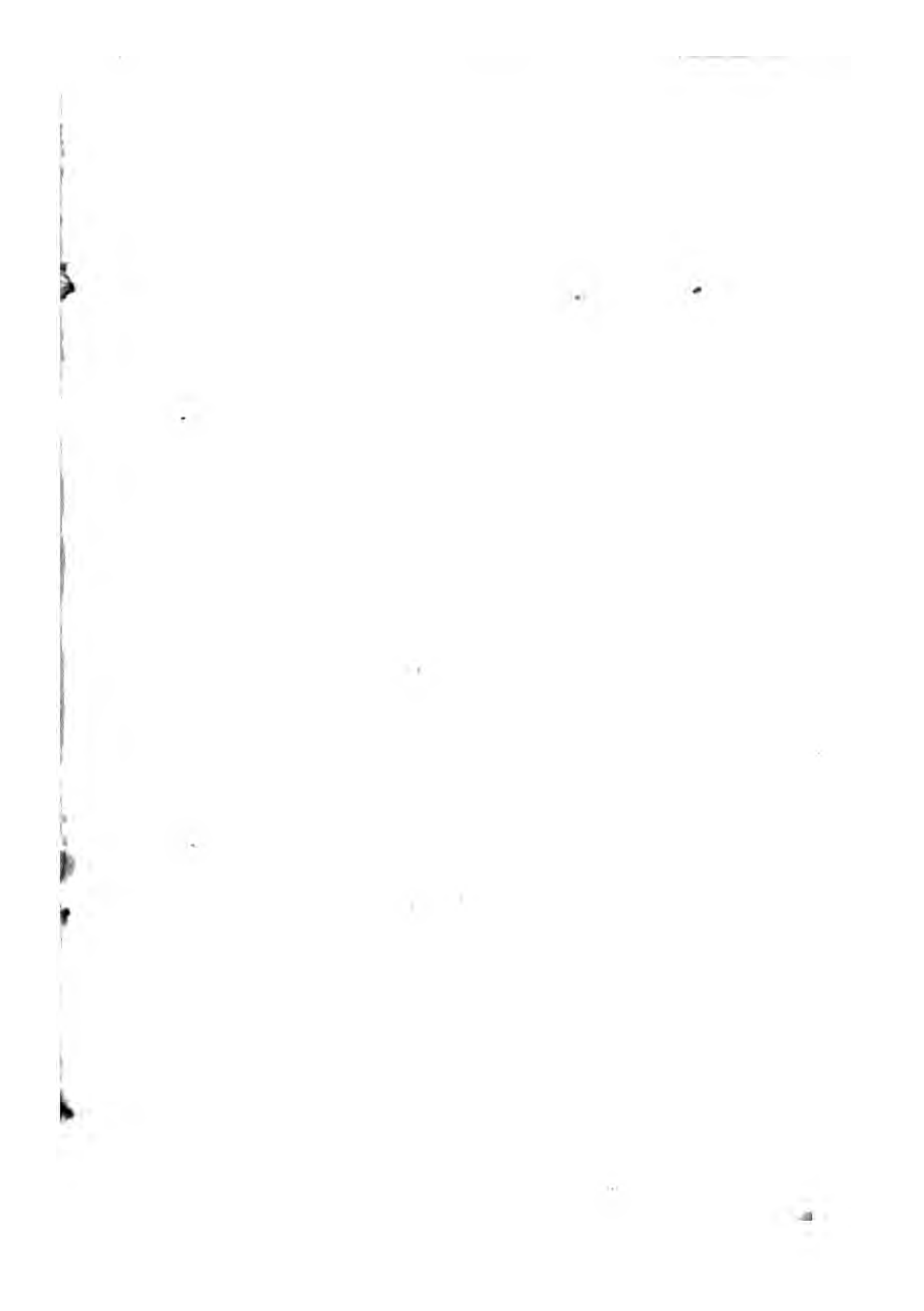
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THE
GLORIES OF MARY,
MOTHER OF GOD.
TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN
OF
BLESSED ALPHONSUS LIGUORI,
AND CAREFULLY REVISED
BY A CATHOLIC PRIEST.

CONTAINING A BEAUTIFUL PARAPHRASE
ON THE
"SALVE REGINA."

Hail Mary! full of grace! the Lord is with thee!
Angel Gabriel in St. Luke.

DUBLIN :
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Faint, illegible text, possibly bleed-through from the reverse side of the page.



TO
MARY EVER VIRGIN ;
THE MOST HUMBLE AND MOST EXALTED OF ALL
PURE CREATURES ;
THE QUEEN OF ANGELS AND OF MEN ;
THE MOTHER OF GOD !
OF WHOM WAS BORN JESUS WHO IS CALLED
THE CHRIST,
WHO SHALL BE STILED BLESSED BY
ALL GENERATIONS ;
WHO DESTROYS ALL HERESIES
THROUGHOUT THE WORLD,
And through whose powerful intercession the
sacred deposit of the faith once delivered to
the Saints, has always been preserved
IN SUFFERING IRELAND ;
THIS VOLUME,
Designed to increase the number and fer-
vor of her Clients in this Island,
IS WITH ALL VENERATION AND RESPECT
MOST HUMBLY DEDICATED BY THE MOST
UNWORTHY OF HER SERVANTS,
THE TRANSLATOR.



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A
CONCISE EXPOSITION
OF THE
TENETS OF THE
CATHOLIC CHURCH,
CONCERNING THE
INVOCATION OF SAINTS.

THE Doctrine of the Catholic Church with respect to the honour which is due to the saints, and especially to the blessed Virgin, is founded on the most obvious principles of reason; and expressly sanctioned by numerous and explicit warrants of Scripture.

We are inclined by the impulse of nature, to be pleased with objects that are beautiful, and the best feelings of the human heart prompt us to do homage to goodness and virtue. Those feelings are in perfect accord with the principles of right reason, for it cannot be wrong to admire excellence, nor unreasonable to esteem what is worthy of veneration. God commands us to "render to all men their dues, tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, and honour to whom honour," Rom. xiii. 7, and thus expressly sanctions our doing homage to the exalted dignity and transcendent splendour of his holy servants in heaven, who, "having overcome, are clothed in white, and walk with him because they are worthy," Rev. iii. 4. Jesus Christ declares that to those "that shall overcome, he will give to sit with him on his throne," Rev. iii. 21. "and they shall be like to the angels of God in heaven," Mat. xxii. 30, "and shine like the sun in the kingdom of their father," Mat. xiii. 43, "that they shall see God face to face." 1 Cor. xiii. 12,

“and beholding the glory of the Lord with open face, they are transformed into the same image, from glory to glory, by the spirit of the Lord,” 2 Cor. iii. 18, “and they shall reign for ever and ever.” Rev. xxi.—xxii. 5

Such is the dignity which the Lord God confers upon his servants. He exalts them to a fellowship with himself, and makes them partakers of his throne and glory. It is an imperative duty therefore to honour the saints, and in doing so, we follow the example of God himself.

But while the dignity of the saints claims our respectful homage, their ardent charity demands the warmest affection of our hearts. Seeing God face to face, they cannot cease to love him, and loving him, they must also love all the members of his mystical body here on earth, and earnestly desire their eternal happiness; for “there is joy before the angels of God upon one sinner doing penance,” Luke xv. 10. It is therefore a portion of the happiness as well as of the duty of the saints to pray to God for their brethren on earth. “And the four living creatures, and the four and twenty ancients fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps and golden viols full of odours which are the prayers of the saints,” Rev. v. 8. “and another angel came and stood before the altar, having a golden censor, and there was given to him much incense, that he should offer the prayer of all the saints, upon the golden altar, which is before the throne of God. And the smoke of the incense of the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God, from the hand of the angel.” Rev. viii. 3. And the angel Raphael speaks as follows to holy Tobias: “when thou didst pray with tears, and didst bury the dead, and didst leave thy dinner, and hide the dead by day in thy house, and bury them by night, I offered thy prayers to the Lord,” Tob. xii. 12. and in Zach. i. 12, we read that “the angel of the Lord answered and said, “O Lord of hosts how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem; and on the cities of

Juda with which thou hast been angry? This is now the seventh year, and the Lord answered the angel, that spoke in me, good words, comfortable words."

Here then is evidence that the angels and saints offer up their prayers to the throne of grace on behalf of their brethren on earth, and that God responds to them "good words, comfortable words." It is absurd therefore to deny that it is lawful to ask for the prayers of the blessed in heaven. Such prayers are evidently agreeable to God, and must be profitable to man. For as "the Lord accepted the face of Job." xlii. 8, who was still in this state of probation, how much more the face of those who "have proved themselves worthy" — "who are made to their God a kingdom and priests, Rev. v. 10—" "who shall judge nations and rule over people," Wisd, iii. 8—"and shall reign upon the earth." Rev. v. 10.

In conformity with the evidence of the foregoing, and numerous other express warrants of holy writ, the Catholic Church teaches that "The saints who reign with Christ, offer up their prayers to God for men, and that it is useful and good to invoke them, and to have recourse to their prayers help and assistance, in order to obtain blessings from God, through his son Jesus Christ our Lord, *who alone is our Redeemer and Saviour.* Conc. Trid. Sess. 25. In the catechism of the Council of Trent, the infinite difference between the worship which is due to God, and the honour which, on his account, may be given to the saints, is so strongly marked; and so fully and clearly, explained as to obviate all the cavils raised against Catholics on that subject. A catholic child acquainted with the first outlines of the christian doctrine, will commit no mistake on that point, and the most rude peasant in the most remote part of Ireland, is quite aware that it would be idolatry to give to the saints the honour which he owes to God, from whom alone he hopes for mercy. while he looks for nothing from the saint

but the assistance of their prayers, and hence it is that he always concludes his supplication to the saints, with the words "through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Catholics in every age of the Church had a special devotion to the blessed Virgin. They venerated her more than the other saints, because her sanctity was far superior to theirs. They believed her to be *full of grace* and *blessed amongst women*, and to hold a relation to God as the Mother of Jesus Christ, to which no other creature could lay claim. They have recourse to her intercession therefore with the utmost confidence; knowing that her Divine son was obedient to her, here on earth, and that, in his last agony on the Cross he committed the children of his church to her care in the person of St. John his beloved disciple.

But notwithstanding the profound veneration in which Catholics hold the blessed Virgin, and the precedence which they justly give her above all God's creatures, they limit their respect within proper bounds, and stop infinitely short of paying her that honour which is due to God, and which it would be idolatry to give to any other being. To God they offer supreme homage as the great creator and preserver of the universe. They adore, honour, and love him for his own sake, and on account of his own innate perfections. From him they ask for grace and mercy, and deliverance from spiritual and temporal evils, because he alone is omnipotent—he alone can forgive and relieve them. From the blessed Virgin however, they expect no more than her intercession, and the homage which they pay her, is for the sake of God is directed through her to God, and ultimately terminates in God.

Whatever therefore may be the terms used by Catholic writers, or in Catholic books of devotion relative to the blessed Virgin, they are all to be understood as limited to the genuine sense of the catholic doctrine; no language however strong or metaphorical must be supposed, for it is not

meant, to confer upon her any attribute or privilege which is peculiar to God. If she is invoked to *assist, defend, deliver us, &c.* it is always understood by her prayers and intercession, and if she be stiled *the hope of sinners, the mediatrix, the refuge of the afflicted, the help of christians, the merciful, the all-powerful Virgin*, all those terms are to be understood in the same limited sense, and to mean no more than that God, in his infinite goodness and mercy, is ever willing to grant her petitions.

The holy fathers and other spiritual writers, seem to have exhausted the powers of language, in celebrating the virtues of this august Virgin Mother of God; and full of tender devotion towards her, they have sometimes used expressions so strong and metaphorical, that the enemies of Catholicity, either from ignorance of its real principles, or through invidious motives, have imputed doctrines on this subject to catholics, which they abhor and utterly disavow: and as the little book now presented to the public, was principally compiled by its venerable author, from the writings of the saints and holy fathers, it has been considered prudent to prefix the foregoing observations, in order that the enemies of the blessed Mother of God, may not affect to discover new grounds for calumny and invective.

With regard to the histories or miracles recorded in this or any other book of devotion, it may be useful to remark that no histories or miracles except those recorded in the holy Scriptures are proposed to catholics as parts of Divine revelation or articles of faith. All others rest on their own bare historical authority, and the credit due to their narrators.

In conclusion, it may not be amiss to observe, that the reasonableness of the Catholic Doctrine with respect to the invocation of saints, is so obvious, and accords so fully with the whole tenor of the Scriptures, and the constant belief of the primitive church, that very many learned protest-

ants have acknowledged it. Bishop Montague, writes as follows in his Antidote page 20 "I do not deny but the saints are mediators, as they are called of prayer and intercession. They interpose with God by their supplications, and mediate by their prayers." And again in his Treatise invocation of saints, page 118, he says. "I see no absurdity in nature, no incongruity unto analogy of faith, no repugnancy at all to sacred Scripture, much less impiety for any man to say, as they of the Roman Church do, "Holy Mary pray for me," and he adds "Indeed I grant, Christ is not wronged in his mediation by such invocation of the saints," and this he continues, "is the common voice with general concurrence, without contradiction of Rev. and learned antiquity, for aught I ever could read or understand, and I see no cause or reason to depart from them, touching intercession in this kind."—*Invocation of saints, page 103.*

A SKETCH
OF THE
LIFE OF BLESSED ALPHONSUS LIGUORI.

Alphonsus Mary de Liguori, was born of a distinguished family, at Naples, 26th September, 1696. In his infancy, he evinced the happiest dispositions for Piety and Learning, and in his youth he became a model of fervour and every virtue, to all of his age. He was yet very young, when the blessed Francis Jeronimo predicted that he would not die before he had attained the age of Ninety; that he would become a Bishop, and render very important services to the Church. Nevertheless, he embraced the profession of a Lawyer, at the age of Sixteen years, after having succeeded to admiration in his studies. He pursued this career with great applause, until having met an unforeseen disappointment in one of his pleadings, he determined, in spite of the brilliant advantages held out to him, to embrace the Ecclesiastical State. In pursuance of this resolution, he took the Clerical Habit, the 31st August, 1722, and

thenceforward his greatest delight was found in the Church, at the Hospital, and in practising the rudest austerities.

Ordained Priest in 1726, he became almost immediately a man truly Apostolic. His time was divided between the Confessional and the Pulpit, and his labours were crowned with abundant fruit. When he gave a mission, the reputation of his sanctity and miracles, attracted a crowd of auditors, who showed the wonderful effects his preaching produced in them by cries and tears.

Inflamed with zeal for the glory of God and salvation of souls, and afflicted beyond measure at the ignorance of the country people, our Saint in 1732, laid the foundation of his Institute, under the title of *The Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer*. Despite of numberless contradictions, this New Society was soon established in different countries, and approved of by Pope Benedict, 14th, in a Brief, dated 25th Feb. 1749. In the midst of so many labours and multiplied practices of devotion, and penance, Alphonsus, who had made a vow hitherto perhaps unknown in the Church, *never to lose a moment of time*, composed many books of Theology and Devotion: Old age and infirmity diminished not his zeal. Cle-

ment 13th, made him **Bishop of St. Agatha of the Goths, Suffragan See of Benevento**, much against his will; knowing the obligations of the Episcopacy, he had more than once refused it; an express command from his holiness, alone induced him to accept the Mitre. His promotion took place 14th June, 1762. It did not cause him to mitigate his austerities, nor alter his rigid mode of life. He continued to practice poverty; redoubled his efforts for the salvation of his brethren, and the relief of the poor; confirmed Ecclesiastical Discipline; founded new Asylums of charity, and in fine, sanctified his whole Diocese, by his preaching and example. After thus spending about thirteen years, weakened by labours, mortifications and ill health, he obtained of Pius 6th, leave to resign his Bishopric, much against the desire of his holiness; this occurred in July, 1775, when Alphonsus instantly retired to a house of his dear congregation, at **Nocera de Pagani**, where he spent the rest of his days in prayer and penance, and died August 1st, 1787, aged Ninety years.

It would be tedious to detail the austerities by which this great servant of God afflicted his body, and the privations he imposed on himself, either to practise penance

or to exercise more abundant charity towards the poor. In a time of great scarcity, he sold for their use, all his plate, the buckles of his shoes, his ring even, and pastoral cross, replacing the latter, with one of brass. But nothing can give a more perfect idea of the eminent sanctity of this great saint, than the testimony of his confessors. They declared that he had not only preserved his baptismal innocence, but even that he had never *deliberately* committed a venial sin.

“That which most of all contributed to preserve his innocence,” says the Author of *Reflections on the Doctrine and Sanctity of the B. Liguori*, “was his tender devotion to the B. Virgin, to whom he was specially consecrated. Replenished with love for, and confidence in Mary, he addressed himself to her in all his wants, and felt quite assured of obtaining all he asked through her intercession.” This blessed Virgin, whose praises he was never weary of recounting in the Pulpit, and in his writings, loaded him with the most signal favors. She often appeared to him in his most tender infancy, and deigned to become his instructress. *She told me admirable things*, said he to his confessor, the day before his death. “We may” continues the

same Author, "compare Alphonsus to St. Bernard, by the sweetness of his expressions, and the abundance of his sentiments, in celebrating Mary's greatness, by word and writing. When he preached in her honor, his auditory was most numerous; the most obstinate were converted, and several times he was seen so transported by his subject, as to be raised in extacy from the earth."

His most usual practices in honor of this August Mother, were to pray every day prostrate before her image, to fast on Saturdays, and vigils of her feasts, on bread and water; to wear the Scapular of beads round his neck, and another at his cincture; to recite often the Hail Mary, and recommend to others the devotion of the Rosary. He moreover made in her honor, and under her patronage, the vow we have spoken of, never to lose time, as also those of, to preach her glories, to recite her Rosary, to approach the tribunal of penance on Saturdays, to succour those afflicted by pestilence, and to do always that which he believed most perfect.

These facts were so public, his reputation for sanctity was so general, that persons of the greatest distinction, after his death, were most urgent with Pius 6th, in soliciting his canonization. The holy Father himself

in his Brief for commencing the proceedings said, that he loved Liguori during his life, and remarked in him the most extraordinary piety and devotion.

The Sacred Congregation of Rites having made the most rigorous examination of the writings of the Saint to the number of a hundred, or more pronounced that there was nothing in them worthy of censure, and this sentence was approved by Pius 7th, in 1803.

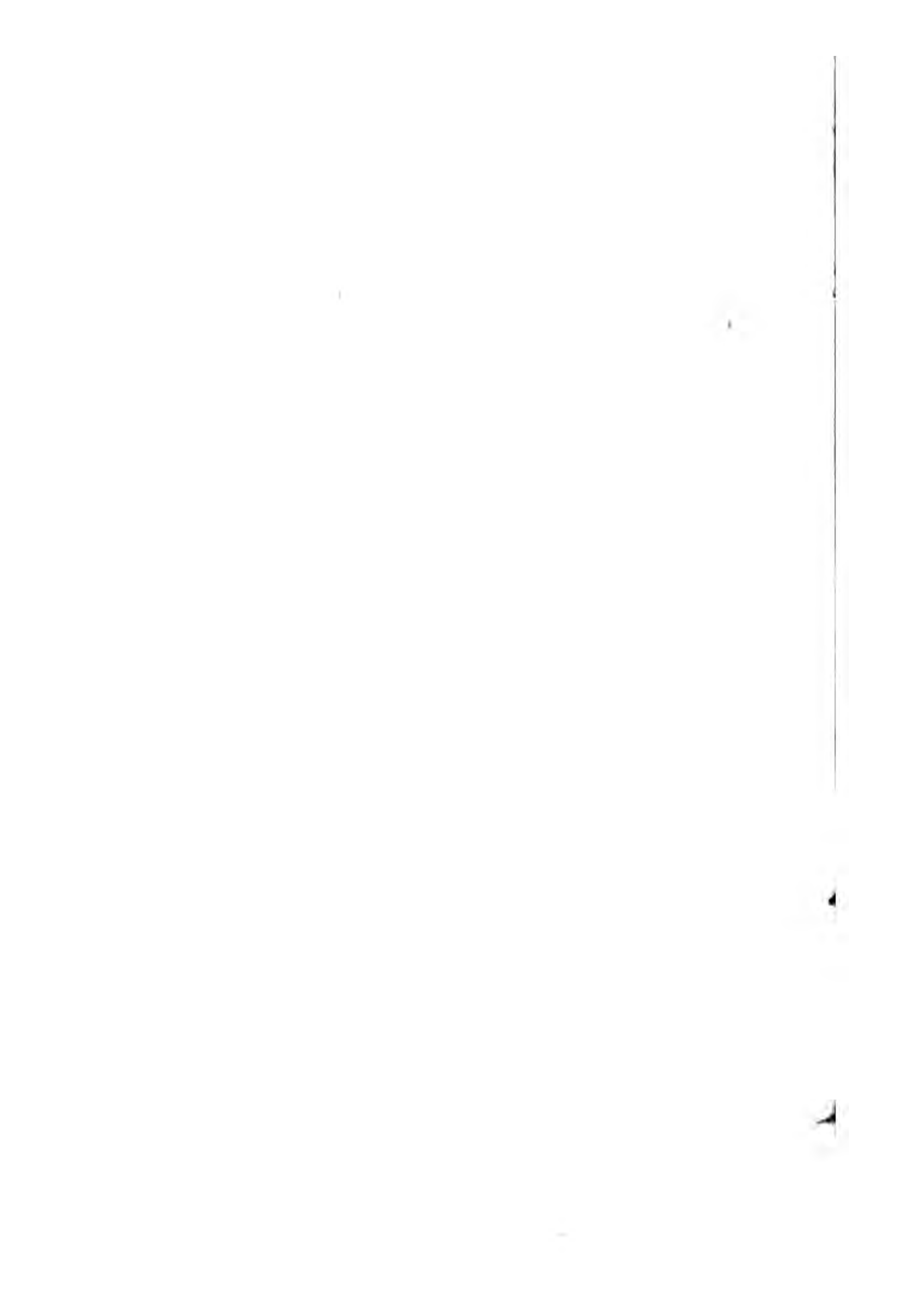
His Successor, Leo 12th, accompanied his Brief to the Editor of the Works of the Blessed Liguori, by a golden medal.* To this examination, succeeded that of the Virtues of Liguori; the goodness of the cause appeared at once so evident, that the Pope dispensed with the decree of Urban 8th, which forbade this special scrutiny to be made until after the expiration of Fifty years from the death of the person in question. The Cardinals were *unanimous*, (a thing very uncommon) that the virtues of the deceased had attained the heroic degree, which the Pope confirmed by his solemn decree, of the 7th of May, 1807.

The process of his beatification, specifies more than a hundred miracles performed

* This Brief is dated 19th February, 1825.

Alphonsus Liguori. 11

by the Saint during his life! and twenty-eight after his death! The Brief declaring him blessed, dated September 6th, 1816, authorised the celebration of a Mass in his honor, for which the Pope prescribed suitable prayers every year in the Dioceses of Nocera and St. Agatha. In consequence of numerous solicitations, his Holiness was induced on the 28th February, 1818, to sign the decree, which introduced the cause of this blessed man for canonization, so that we may hope to see his name at no distant day, solemnly inscribed in the catalogue of the saints.



THE
GLORIES OF MARY,
IN A
PARAPHRASE ON THE SALVE REGINA.

CHAPTER I.

*Salve Regina, Mater Misericordiæ, Hail
Holy Queen, Mother of Mercy.*

1 Section—How great should be our confidence in Mary, Queen of Mercy.

THE Virgin Mary having been elevated to the dignity of Mother of the King of Kings, the holy Catholic Church gives her the title of Queen, and wishes that all her children should salute her in that quality. "If the Son be King, says St. Athanasius, why should not the Mother be Queen?" "From the moment that Mary consented to become the Mother of God," says St. Bernardine of Sienna, "she merited to receive Sovereignty over all creatures." "Mary and Jesus having but one same flesh," says

14 *The Glories of Mary.*

St. Arnand, Abbot, "why should not the Mother enjoy, conjointly with the son, the honors of Royalty; nay this glory of Jesus Christ is not only common to his most holy Mother, but it is the same for both."

Mary is then Queen of the universe, since Jesus is its King; thus as St. Bernadine again observes, "as many creatures as obey God, so many obey the glorious Virgin, every thing in heaven and on earth, which is subject to God, is also under the empire of His most holy Mother!!"

"Reign, O Mary," says the Abbot of Gueric, "dispose at pleasure of the goods of your son; power and dominion belong to the Mother and Spouse of the King of Kings."

Mary is Queen, but let us tell Christians for their consolation, that she is a Queen full of clemency and Sweetness, and only occupied in assuaging the miseries of her subjects. "The word Queen" says Albertus Magnus, "signifies compassion and care of the poor, whereas the word Empress means rigour and severity." "Kings and Queens, says Seneca, "manifest their greatness in succouring the unfortunate, hence it is that at their coronation, oil, the symbol of mercy is diffused on the head.

However, there must be a co-mixture of

justice, since they are obliged to punish the guilty. Yet this is not the case with Mary; she is Queen of mercy alone; she is a Sovereign, not to punish sinners, but to pardon and forgive them. Writing on those words of the Psalmist: "I have learned two things, power belongs to God, and mercy to the Lord; Gerson observes, that as the Kingdom of God consists in Mercy and Justice, the Lord has as it were divided it, reserving to himself, the dominion of justice, and yielding to His Mother that of mercy. St. Thomas confirms this explanation, when he says in his preface to the Canonical Epistles, that one half of the Kingdom of God was given to Mary when she conceived and brought forth the eternal Word, so that she became Queen of mercy, as her Son is King of justice.

A learned interpreter, writing on this verse of the Psalm, "Lord give thy judgment to the King, and thy justice to the King's son" says to God, "Lord you have given justice to the King your Son, because you have reserved mercy for the Queen his Mother. St. Bonaventure, and Ernest, Archbishop of Prague, explain this verse in nearly the same terms. "The Lord has anointed you with an oil of gladness" says David, speaking prophetically of Mary.

16 *The Glories of Mary.*

The holy Virgin has indeed then received from God, a sacred unction to heal the wounds of the guilty sons of Adam.

Albertus Magnus says, that Mary was prefigured by Queen Esther, of whom we read in the holy Scripture, that she had been raised to the throne for the preservation of her brethren, the Jewish people. What Mordechai said to this woman, poor sinners may address to Mary. Imagine not omnipotent and ever glorious Virgin, that God has elevated you to the dignity of Queen, merely for your personal honor and advantage, but rather that you may mediate, and obtain pardon for men, your offending brethren: and if Assuerus heard the petition of Esther through love, will not God who has an infinite love for Mary, fling away at her suit the thunderbolts which he was going to hurl on wretched sinners? When coming before the throne she says, my King and my God, if I have found favor in your sight, (and she well knows that among all the children of Eve, she is the only one who has found the grace forfeited by our first parents,) give me the life of my people; save those sinners whose cause I advocate. And will God reject her prayer? Is it not of her it was said, "*the law of clemency is on her lips?*" Indeed every

petition she offers is as a law emanating from the Lord, by which he obliges himself to be merciful to those for whom she intercedes. St. Bernard asking the question, why the Church calls Mary Queen of mercy, answers himself by saying, it is because she opens at pleasure the abyss of the divine mercy, so that no sinner, however enormous his crimes may be, can perish if he is protected by Mary.

But perhaps the immaculate holiness of this Virginal Queen terrifies you and hinders you from approaching her, sullied as you are with innumerable crimes. Ah no says St. Gregory, fear nothing, the more holy is Mary, the more elevated in glory, the more sweet and merciful she is towards the sinner who wishes to be converted.

Earthly Monarchs by the display they make, render themselves formidable to their subjects, but the Queen of heaven has nothing terrific; nothing awful nor austere in her appearance, on the contrary, she shows in every feature, her mildness and benignity towards all.

Mary not only gives, but offers to all men without exception milk and wool; the milk of mercy, and the wool of her intercession, the former to reanimate our confi-

18 *The Glories of Mary.*

dence, and the latter as a rampart against the thunders of Almighty Vengeance.

Suetonius recounts, that the Emperor Titus never refused any petition presented to him, and when reproached for it by his courtiers, he used to say, that a Prince should not dismiss any one dissatisfied. This at most was but a vain show of clemency, for often he could not keep his word from inability, or unwillingness to grant the desired favor. But it is not so with Mary, she disappoints no one; she can do all she promises, and she does not want the will; none depart from her presence discontented. "Mary," says St. Bernard to her, "how can you refuse to assist poor sinners, since you are a Queen of mercy? Who are the subjects of mercy but the miserable? Hence being the most miserable of all sinners, I am the first of your subjects, and you should take more care of me than the rest.

Pity us then Queen of mercy, and think of our salvation: say not (that I may use the expression of St. Gregory of Nicomedia,) that our sins render us unworthy of your aid, for your clemency surpasses our malice. Nothing resists your power, because the Creator of all, honors you as his Mother, making your glory his own. Mary

The Glories of Mary. 19

owes her Son an infinite gratitude, for choosing her, for his Mother, but it is not less true to say, that Jesus Christ has contracted a species of obligation towards her, for the human existence he received from her, and in recompense of this benefit, he honors her by hearing her prayers.

From all we have said, let us now conclude how great should be our confidence in Mary. There is not a being on earth who has not some time or other, experienced the compassion, and shared in the benefit of this all merciful Queen. "I am" said she herself, to St. Bridget, "The Queen of heaven, and Mother of mercy; I am the joy of the just, and the gate through which sinners go to God; to no one on earth have I refused my clemency; there is no one who has not obtained some grace through my intercession, though it were no greater than that of being less violently tempted by the Devil; in fine, unless a person be absolutely cursed (this should be understood of the irrevocable malediction of the damned) how wicked and reprobate soever he is, he may obtain grace and mercy through me: and hence, "woe, eternal woe to him who, having it in his power to profit of my commiseration, does it not, but is lost through his own fault."

20 *The Glories of Mary.*

Let us go then, Christians ; let us go to this most gracious Queen, and crowd around her throne, without being deterred by our crimes and abominations. Let us be convinced that if Mary has been crowned Queen of mercy, it is in order that the greatest sinners may be saved by her intercession, and form her crown in heaven. "Come" says the Spouse in the Canticles to her, "come from Libanus to be crowned, the summits of Amana, the craggy tops of Sanir and Hermon ; the caverns of Lions and mountains of Leopards shall form your diadem." In effect, the souls of sinners where sin resides in all its frightful deformity, may be justly compared to the haunts of these ferocious monsters. "O great Queen" exclaims the Abbot Rupert, commenting on this text, "it is by you the miserable are saved, and because their salvation is your work, they shall form your crown in heaven."

EXAMPLE.

During the Pontificate of St. Gregory the Great, the people of Rome experienced in a most striking manner the protection of the Blessed Virgin. A frightful pestilence raged in the city to such an extent, that

thousands were carried off, and so suddenly, that they had not time to make the least preparation. It could not be arrested by the vows and prayers which the holy Pope caused to be offered in all quarters, until he resolved on having recourse to the Mother of God. Having commanded the Clergy and People to go in general procession to the church of our Lady, called *St. Mary Major*, carrying the Picture of the holy Virgin, painted by St. Luke, the miraculous effects of her intercession were soon experienced: in every street as they passed, the plague ceased, and before the end of the procession, an Angel in human form was seen on the Tower of Adrian, named ever since, the Castle of St Angelo, sheathing a bloody Sabre. At the same moment, the Angels were heard singing the Anthem "Regina coeli, &c. Triumph O Queen and Alleluia. The holy Pope added the words, "Ora pro nobis Deum." pray for &c. The Church has since used this Anthem to salute the Blessed Virgin in Easter time.—*True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary.*

PRAYER.

Queen of heaven and earth! Mother of God! my sovereign mistress! I present myself before you as a poor mendicant before a mighty Queen. From the height of your throne deign to cast your eyes on a miserable sinner, and lose not sight of him, till you render him truly holy.

O illustrious Virgin! you are Queen of the universe, and consequently mine; I desire then to consecrate myself more particularly to your service, dispose of me according to your good pleasure; direct me, I abandon myself wholly to your conduct, never more let me be guided by myself; chastise me if I disobey you; your correction will be sweet and agreeable; I am then no longer mine; I am all yours, save me O powerful Queen save me!

SECTION II.

*How great our confidence should be
in Mary as our Mother.*

It is not without reason that the servants of Mary denominate her *Mother*. Yes she

is truly our Mother, not according to the flesh, but according to the spirit? not by giving us the life of the body, but that better one of the soul. Sin deprived us of grace, which is the life of the soul, and Jesus our Redeemer in the excess of his love and mercy, came to restore it to us, "*I am come*" said he "*that they may have life and have it more abundantly.*" More abundantly, since as Theologians teach, the redemption of the Saviour conferred on us more benefits, than the sin of Adam had caused us evils. This Prince of Peace, as he is stiled by Isaiah, in reconciling us to God, has brought us forth to him in baptism, and is thereby become our Father, and as it is Mary who has given him to the world in Bethlehem, and offered him for its redemption on Calvary, we can truly say that she has given us life, and that she is our Mother.

Mary then became our spiritual Mother at two different periods; first, when she consented to be the Mother of God. St. Bernard says, the Blessed Virgin contributed most efficaciously to our redemption, by her consent to the Angel's proposal: and thenceforward bore all men in her womb, by her thirst after their salvation. St. Luke writes in his Gospel, *Mary brought forth her first born Son*: these words one day troubled

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St. Gertrude ; she could not comprehend why the Evangelist wrote, "Mary's first born," Jesus Christ being her only Son, until the Lord removed her perplexity by assuring her, that though Jesus had been Mary's only Son, according to the flesh, he was still her first-born, for all men were her children according to the Spirit; again, commenting on this verse of the Canticles, "*Your fruitful womb is like a garden of wheat environed with lilies.*" St. Ambrose says, "In the most pure womb of Mary there were sown, one sole grain of wheat, yet it may be called a garden of wheat, because all the elect were included in this chosen grain." "*The first-born among many brethren;*" and that she who gave him life by bearing this only seed, became the Mother of a great multitude.

The second circumstance in which Mary became our Mother, is when on Calvary, with a heart rent with sorrow, she offered this only Son to his Father as a holocaust for our sins." Her charity, which made her co-operate in the establishment of the Church, established her mother, according to the spirit of the members of the Saviour. I have not preserved my own vine says the Spouse, that is, says St. William Abbot, Mary has not spared her own Son, her

own soul, for the salvation of many. Beholding Jesus expire in torturing agony, her soul was pierced with that sword of sorrow, predicted by Simeon; she consented to the stroke, knowing that God required it for our redemption, and thus brought us forth anew.

Hence although it be true, that in the work of redemption, Jesus wished to tread the wine press alone, it is not less true, that in consideration of Mary's thirst for our salvation, he was pleased that she might co-operate with Him by the generous sacrifice of His life. This is what the Saviour himself gave us to understand, when before he expired, looking from the summit of his Cross on his Mother and his beloved Disciple he said first to Mary, *behold thy son*, as if he had said, behold the man that is born to grace by the sacrifice of my life which you now offer; afterwards he said to his Disciple, *behold thy Mother*, words which rendered the blessed Virgin, the Mother not only of St. John, but of all men; for as Silveira observes, the Evangelist uses the expression *he said to his disciple* and not *he said to John*, in order to shew that Jesus has given Mary as a Mother to all those who being Christians, bear the name of *Disciples*.

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Mary then is our Mother, and what a Mother! Happy, thrice happy are they, who enjoy the protection—who live under the guardianship of this most blessed and amiable Mother.

Who will dare snatch from her the Children of her womb? What passion too strong to be vanquished; what temptation too violent to be overcome, if they place themselves under the protection of such a Mother?

Naturalists say of the Whale, that when her young ones are tossed about by a storm, or pursued by the fishermen, she opens her mouth and receives them into her bowels, as a place of security: thus when Mary sees her children pursued by, and ready to sink under temptation, she hides them in the womb of her motherly protection, nor does she let them forth, until they arrive at the gate of Salvation. O tender, O compassionate Virgin, be thou blessed, and may He be eternally praised who has given thee to us as our Mother. We read in the revelations of St. Bridget, that Mary one day said to her: "If a mother saw her son on the point of being killed by an enemy, do you not think she would use every effort to save him? Such is my conduct towards my children, however wicked, when they have recourse to me." Fear not then in all

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your combats against the powers of hell, if you invoke Mary; you will always be victorious if you say to her these words of the Church, *We fly to thy patronage, &c. Sub Tuum Præsidium, &c.* Oh how many victories have been gained over hell by this short prayer! A great servant of God, Sister Mary of the Cross, Benedictine, used no other to put the devils to flight.

Courage then, child of Mary! know that she considers as children, all who are ambitious of the title. Rejoice, says St. Bonaventure, the process of your salvation cannot miscarry, because the sentence depends on Jesus, who is our brother, and Mary who is our Mother. This same idea caused St. Anselm to leap for joy, "Precious confidence! secure refuge!" says he "Since the Mother of my God, is *my* Mother also. How well founded is not the good Christian's hope of salvation, since it depends on the best of Brothers, and the tenderest of Mothers. Let us hearken to the invitation of this amiable Mother, who calls us, in this passage of the Book of Wisdom: *Si quis est parvulus veniat ad me, Let little ones come to Me.* Children have ever on their lips the name of their mother; the least danger that appears, causes them to exclaim mother! mother! O Mary the most

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amiable of all Mothers! behold our desires; they are, that in all dangers, on all occasions, we may fly to you as your children, and that you, clasping us to your maternal breast, may "*shew yourself our Mother.*"

EXAMPLE,

The Emperor Leo, surnamed the Isaurian, having raised a persecution against the worship of Holy Images, met a most formidable antagonist in St. John Damascene. Though out of the empire of this impious Prince, he thought himself obliged to assist his Brethren, in so pressing a necessity, and being well skilled in theology, he wrote three solid discourses so eloquent and conclusive, that they at once confounded the heretics, and confirmed the Catholics in their faith. This so irritated the Greek Emperor, that he determined on the destruction of the saint; if not by open violence, at least by the base manœuvres of calumny, and deceit. He therefore caused a letter to be addressed to himself, as if from St. John, who then governed the City of Damascus, for the Caliph, inviting him to come before the City, and that he would cause the gates

to be opened to him. The signature of the Saint was so well counterfeited, that when presented to the Caliph, together with another Letter from the treacherous Leo, as a proof of his fidelity to the treaty, he instantly sends for St. John, reproaches him with his treason, and without giving him time to prove his innocence, he in a fit of rage orders his right hand to be amputated, and nailed to a stake, which was exposed in a public part of the City.

The evening of the same day, thinking that the Caliph's anger was now cooled, the Saint sent to beg that his hand might be restored him: the Prince consented, seeing already that the whole was but a forgery of the Greek Emperor. As soon as St. John received the amputated limb, he went and prostrated himself before an image of the Holy Virgin, and said to her with a lively faith and confidence: Mother of my God! assured refuge, and sweetest consolation of all the faithful, you know that it is for having defended the worship of your images, and those of your divine Son, together with his Saints, that I have lost this hand; confound to day error, refute calumny, by joining it to the arm from which it has been severed, that it may ever more be employed but in com-

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bating your enemies, and those of Jesus Christ; in saying those words, he placed his arm near the hand, and they were instantly joined; no mark of separation remaining, except a red circle, as if to render the Miracle more certain. Full of gratitude and devotion, the Saint spent the rest of the night, in singing the praises of the Lord, and his blessed Mother, in concert with his domestics.

The Miracle was too extraordinary not to make some noise. It soon reached the ears of the Caliph: and after having ocular demonstration of it, he embraced the Saint, begged his pardon for being too rash, and swore to grant him any request he wished to make, by way of reparation. St. John who had all his life sighed after holy solitude, availed himself of this promise, to beg leave to resign his Government. This request much afflicted the Prince, being unwilling to lose so worthy a viceroy, but in consideration of his oath, he suffered him to retire.

PRAYER.

O Mary my most amiable Mother! How is it that I your child so little resemble you? You so perfect, and I so perverse,

you all inflamed with divine love, and I wholly alive to creatures : you so rich in grace, and I so poor in virtue ; O how unworthy I am of my Mother ; but do not forbid me to call you Mother, in punishment of my ingratitude, this amiable title consoles me, it redoubles my tenderness for you ; animates my confidence in you, and reminds me of my obligation to love you. May I then invoke you during life, and die while calling on Mary my Mother, O blessed amiable Mother.

SECTION III.

*The great love borne us by Mary
our Mother.*

MARY being our Mother, it is easy to conceive how dear we are to her heart. The love of parents for their children is a necessary love, so that as St. Thomas remarks, if the Divine law makes it obligatory on children to love their parents, it is no less binding on parents to love their children ; even the law of nature inspires this love. We find it evinced by ferocious beasts. Naturalists say, that if attracted by the cries of her young, which the hunters often carry off, the Tigress

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will plunge into the Sea, and pursue the vessel in which they are embarked, until she overtakes it. What then must Mary's tenderness be for her children? Alas does she say, "Though a mother should forget the child of her womb, never, never will I forget my children."

I am the Mother of beautiful love, says the Book of Wisdom, speaking in the person of Mary; yes since it is Charity that has rendered her our Mother, according to a learned Writer, she glories in being all love in our regard. Who can comprehend the ardour and liveliness of this sentiment in Mary? Inflamed with Charity, this holy Virgin burned with a desire to die for us with Jesus Christ; whilst the Son offered himself for our Redemption on the cross; the Mother immolated herself at his feet, "in the preparation of her heart."

To appreciate more closely the ardour and extent of this love, let us examine it in its motives. The first of these is the love of God. St. John says, that love of God, and love of the neighbour, are indivisible, it must be then concluded, that a person cannot increase in one, without augmenting in the other. It is because the Saints loved God, that they did so much for their brethren; fortune, liberty, repu-

tation, life itself, all were sacrificed for the interests of the neighbour. Read the life of a St. Francis Xavier; you behold him braving every danger, surmounting every obstacle, to convert a savage people; a St. Vincent of Paul takes the place of a poor prisoner on board the galleys, to restore him to his family; and a St. Fidelis, joyfully sacrifices his life, for the conversion of an idolatrous City.

If the love of God led the Saints to these great things, what must it not have operated in Mary, who from the moment of her conception loved him more than all the Angels and Saints together? The divine flame which consumed me, was so intense, says she herself to sister Mary, of the Cross, that it would in an instant consume heaven and earth if allowed to operate upon them: the ardours even of the Seraphim, were but a chilling blast, in comparison of mine. If Mary has so far surpassed the Saints, in love of God, how far must she exceed them in love of the neighbour. If you reunite the love of the tenderest Mothers, says F. Nieremberg, S. J. all together, it cannot be compared with Mary's affection for only one soul.

The second motive of the love of this Blessed Virgin for us is, that Jesus has

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given us to her in charge, in the person of St. John. The last words he addressed to her were, "*Woman behold thy Son;*" and who can say how deep must be the impression of the last words of a person so dear. Indeed Mary loves us even because of the immense price we cost her, as Mothers have a particular tenderness for those children whose birth or preservation have caused them most pain. If to evince the love of God the Father, for men, it is said, that he delivered up his own Son for them, may we not use the same terms, to express the love of Mary? Yes, says St. Bonaventure, Mary has so loved us, that she has given us her only Son: she gave him to us says F. Nieremberg, when in virtue of her jurisdiction over him as Mother, she permitted him to deliver himself up to the Jews; she gave him for us, when she silently listened to his accusers without saying a word in his defence, though there was every reason to believe that the advocacy of a Mother so wise and prudent, would have made a strong impression, at least on Pilate, who was already conscious of the innocence of Jesus; in fine, she has given us this well beloved Son, a thousand times during the three hours she spent at the foot of the Cross, St. Anselm and Antonius, even

assert, that to accomplish the will of the Eternal Father, she would, despite of natural tenderness, have immolated him with her own hands. For if Abraham was so obedient, how much more so was Mary? But to return to our subject: what should be our gratitude to her for such a testimonial of love! God could, and did recompense Abraham's generosity, but what can men render Mary for immolating Jesus? Ah may we not truly say with St. Bonaventure, that we were never loved so much by any creature as by the Blessed Virgin.

The third and last motive of Mary's love for us, is, that we are the price of the blood of Jesus Christ. If an only son redeemed his servant by twenty years of slavery, would not his Mother hold this Slave in great esteem, seeing he had been so dearly bought? It is just so with Mary, her love and desire of man's salvation, is proportioned to the price of the blood which purchased it. It was revealed to St. Elizabeth of Hungary, that while the holy Virgin was yet in the temple, she ceased not to pray fervently for the coming of the Saviour of men. If our salvation was then so near her heart, how much closer must it be, when

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she saw her son the eternal wisdom, make so much account of it?

It is then because Jesus has redeemed all, that Mary loves and protects all. Albertus Magnus, applies to her this text of wisdom, "*I love those who love me*" If she is so clement towards the ungrateful what must be her tenderness for those who love her? O how easy it is, says the same Author, to find Mary when one loves her! If Mary loves all says St. Bernard, she has a more than ordinary love for those who are devout to her. The servants of Mary are not only loved but even served by her, writes another, Father. Happy are those who love you O Queen! says Berchman of the Society of Jesus. If I love Mary, continues he, I am sure of obtaining perseverance and every grace I ask of God.

Children of Mary, though you love this admirable Mother as much as you can, yet she will still surpass you in tenderness. Love her as a St. Stanislaus Kotska, who could not speak of his love for her, without communicating his ardours to his hearers; he who invented new names to honor her; who asked her blessing at the commencement of each action, who prayed to her as devoutly as if he saw her with his eyes;

who was transported out of himself by the chaunt of the *Salve Regina*, who when interrogated how much he loved Mary; answered, "*sure she is my Mother, and that is enough, you may guess the rest.*" He pronounced these words in such a manner, that he seemed more like an Angel sent from heaven to preach the love of Mary, than a human being.

Love her as much as the blessed Herman Joseph, whom she honoured with the name of her Spouse, as much as a St. Philip of Neri, who styled her *his delight*; as a St. Bernard, who denominated her, *ravisher of hearts, raptrix cordium*, as a St. Aloysius, whose heart leaped, and whose cheeks glowed at the sole mention of her name; as a St. Francis Solano, who in the holy folly of love, took an instrument of music and came to play and sing before an image of Mary; love her as much as a F. Diego Martinez, S. J. who in recompense of his singular devotion to her, merited to be carried by the Angels into heaven, on all the feasts of the holy Virgin, that he might witness the glory and pomp by which the inhabitants of the heavenly Jerusalem solemnise them: he used to say, "*I would wish to be possessed of the hearts of all the Angels and Saints, in order to love Mary as*

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much as they love her ; I would desire to have at my disposal, the lives of all men, that I might consecrate them to her service."

Love Mary as a St. Bridget, who used to say, that nothing in the world gave her so much satisfaction, as to know that Mary was so loved by God, and that there was no torment to which she would not willingly expose herself for the preservation of the least degree of the glory she enjoyed.

Shall I say more? Let us imagine with ourselves, all that love can invent, to testify its love, let us wish to give our life for the love of the Queen of heaven ; as the blessed Alphonsus Rodriguez, let us engrave on our hearts, the amiable name of Mary, as did St. Radegonde, Spouse of King Clotaire, a Francis Binantius, a Baptist Arquenta, and an Augustin d'Espinosa, S. J. ; let us in fine, exhaust all the inventions of love, yet, after all, we shall never be able to love Mary as she loves us, we will still be obliged to confess with St. Peter Damian, " I know blessed Mother, that it is impossible to exceed you in love." It is related of the blessed Alphonsus before mentioned, that being one night prostrate before an image of the holy Virgin, he exclaimed in a transport of devotion, "*My most amiable*

Mother I know you love me, but not as much as I love you," whereupon this blessed Virgin, seemingly offended, said, "what dost thou say Alphonsus? Know that thy love is as remote from mine, as heaven is from earth."

With good reason then does St. Bonaventure say, happy are the true lovers and faithful servants of Mary, since like our Lord Jesus Christ, she will not let any one exceed her in love. May my heart, then, do I say with St. Anselm, burn with love for you, Jesus my Saviour, and Mary my tender Mother; may I through your merits, love you as much as I can love you. Can you refuse me this grace, O divine lover of our souls, who died even for your enemies?

EXAMPLE.

We read in the life of sister Catherine of St. Augustine, that in the town where her monastery was situate there dwelt a woman named Mary, who from her infancy, led a very irregular life; she was not corrected by time, but continued the same vicious course, until disgusted with her wickedness, they drove her from the city, and confined her in a cave in the suburbs. There eaten up by a frightful disease,

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which caused her flesh to fall off in pieces, she soon died, without spiritual or corporal aid. This death was regarded as a just punishment from the hands of God, and undeserving of the ordinary rites of burial, so that the poor corpse was interred in some high way or common, like a beast of the field. Sister Catherine, who was in the pious custom of praying for all whom she learned departed this life, thought not of recommending this old sinner to God, supposing her lost for ever. It happened about four years after this woman's death, that Sister Catherine being one day in prayer: a soul from Purgatory appeared to her and said "Sister Catherine, how unfortunate, am I not? You pray for every one, but never prayed for me." "Who are you?" said the Religious, "I am" replied the soul, "That poor Mary that died in the Cave." "What" said Catherine with amazement, "is it possible that you are saved?" "I am indeed" replied the soul, "through the charity of the blessed Virgin Mary. In my last moments, abandoned by all, and seeing myself loaded with sins, I addressed this prayer to the Mother of God; 'O thou the refuge of the forsaken! have pity on me. Hope of the universe, my only hope, come to my

assistance.' This little supplication was not made in vain. Mary obtained me the grace of *true* contrition, by means of which, I escaped hell. She moreover procured me the abridgement of my torments in Purgatory, the divine justice at her suit, causing me to suffer in intensity, what I should suffer in duration. A few Masses would now release me, cause them to be offered for me, and I promise not to forget you in Heaven. Sister Catherine lost no time in complying with this request, and some days after, the soul of Mary again appeared, shining like the Sun, and testifying her gratitude. 'Paradise is opened at length to me,' said she, 'I am now going there to celebrate the mercies of my God, and be assured Sister Catherine, I shall not forget to pray for you, to him and his ever blessed Mother.'"

PRAYER.

O Domina qui rapis corda, O you who win all hearts, my Mistress, do I say with St. Bonaventure, win my poor heart, which desires to love you. No, like your devout servant John Berchmans, I am determined not to rest until I obtain of God, a tender, faithful and constant love, for you my

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sweet Mother, who even loved me when I was ungrateful to you. *Non quiescam donec habuero tenerum amorem erga Matrem meam Mariam.*

SECTION IV.

Mary is the refuge of repentant sinners.

MARY declared to St. Bridget, that she is not only the Mother of the just, but even of sinners, if they have but a will to amend. When a sinner comes to throw himself at her feet, with a firm resolution of changing his life, she receives him more affectionately than his natural Mother could do. But he who aspires to be a child of Mary, should instantly renounce sin; this is a necessary condition to be recognised by her. Richard of St. Laurence, on these words of the Prophet, "*Surrexerunt filii ejus, risen are her sons*," remarks that it is first said *surrexerunt, they are risen*, afterwards *filii ejus, her sons*, to show that one cannot be a child of Mary, until he is first *risen* from his sins. He is unworthy of being a son of Mary, who is buried in sin. To do the things that displease her son, is to renounce her. The children of Mary adds

he, should imitate her in chastity, humility, sweetness, and mercy." A certain sinner said once to this blessed Virgin, *Monstra te esse Matrem, show yourself a Mother*, to which she replied *montra te esse filium show that you are a son*. Another sinner having invoked her as Mother of mercy, she answered, you sinners, in your wants, call me Mother of mercy, but by your sins, you render me also Mother of sorrows, *maledictus a Deo qui exasperat matrem suam*, that is according to the above Author, he is cursed by God, who by his wickedness and obstinacy, afflicts Mary, his tender Mother; I say by his obstinacy, for if he be willing to return to God, and has recourse to Mary, she will obtain his reconciliation. St Bridget heard Jesus say to his blessed Mother, "you offer your hand to those who wish to amend their lives, there is no one sent from you without consolation."

It is deemed heresy by the Council of Trent, to assert that prayers and good works performed in sin, are but so many new sins.

Although prayer in the mouth of a sinner may not be so excellent, because it is unaccompanied by charity, it is nevertheless useful and salutary, being fit to obtain pardon for sin, and grace to rise from it, the

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efficacy of the petition, as St. Thomas teaches, being founded not on the merits of him who prays, but on the goodness of God, and the merits of Jesus Christ, who assures us, that all we ask in his name shall be granted. It is just the same with our petition made in the name of his most holy Mother. If he who prays merits not to be heard, the merits of Mary will pray for him, says St. Anselm, exhorting all sinners to address themselves confidently to the Mother of God, St. Bernard says, that the graces they are unworthy of obtaining, are given to Mary, that they may receive them through her. If a Mother he continues, who has two Sons, learns that a mortal enmity subsists between them, what will she not do to reconcile them to each other. Now Mary is at the same time, Mother of Jesus and Mother of sinners ; when she sees that sin has destroyed, the love that united them, she leaves nothing undone to reunite them. All she requires of the sinner, is, that he recommend himself to her, and have a will to be converted ; then, though he were sullied with all crimes she disdains not to touch his wounds, and effect their cure.

It would even seem, that Mary considers the evils of those who wish to be converted, as her own. When the Cananean prayed

for her daughter, the terms she used, seemed to imply, that she herself was the sufferer, "Lord have pity on me" said she, and why, but because Mothers feel the evils of their children as deeply as their own. Thus it is, that Mary exclaims in behalf of the sinful soul, *miserere mei*, have pity on me. And O would to God, that all sinners might recur to this tender Mother; there is not among them, even one, who would not obtain her favor. "Mary," cries out St. Bonaventure with admiration, "you throw open your arms, and clasp to your Maternal heart, the sinner abandoned by all. In effect, when he is an object of hatred and aversion to the whole universe, and that the fire, the air, the earth, the water, all creatures would wish to revenge upon him the insulted Majesty of their Almighty Creator, Mary is his refuge, she receives him into her bosom, and never rests until she reconciles him with his God."

We read in the second book of Kings, that a Woman of Thecura, (and she is praised for her wisdom,) having once presented herself before David, said, my Lord, I had two sons, both quarrelled, and one of them killed the other, the Officers of Justice have seized on the former, and after having lost one, I see myself on the

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point of losing the other, have pity on me and do not permit them to take his life? David greatly affected, caused the aggressor to be set at large. This is precisely Mary's language to the Sovereign Judge, when she sees him irritated against sinners, who fly to her for protection, Lord, does she say, like Thecura, I had two Sons, Jesus and Man, Man nailed Jesus to the cross, his blood loudly demands your vengeance, can you deprive me of the second after, I have already lost the first? Ah no certainly, God will not condemn the sinner who has recourse to Mary. Having given her to him for Mother, he is quite willing she should exercise the duties of a Parent, and this, she does with a goodness, fidelity, and love that cannot be expressed. Let every sinner then, address himself to this blessed Virgin, in these words of St. Bonaventure: "O my Mother and Patroness! my sins render me unworthy of approaching you. I should expect nothing but chastisement from your hands, but though you were to deprive me even of life, I cannot doubt of your will to save me. I place in you all my confidence, and provided I may be happy enough to die before your image, and implore your mercy, I shall firmly hope to join in heaven, that innumerable multitude who have been saved by your intercession."

EXAMPLE.

About the beginning of the 17th Century, there lived at Paris, a most holy Priest, named Father Bernard. He was of a distinguished birth, but despising all its advantages, he embraced so far, the poverty of Jesus Christ, in the Ecclesiastical State, that he was generally called the *poor Priest*. He might be numbered with the most faithful servants of Mary. He believed himself indebted to her for his vocation, and lost no opportunity of inspiring others with the sentiments of respect and confidence which he felt for her; his exhortations in fact, were but a tissue of wonders effected by the blessed Virgin's intercession. He always styled her his good Mother, and had caused to be printed in every language, the prayer drawn from St. Bernard, which begins "*Memorare Optissima Virgo Maria, remember O most pious and clement Virgin,*" which he had learned from his Father during his life. Father Bernard distributed more than 200,000 copies of this little prayer; by the bare recital of which, he operated most striking miracles. As he was one day going to the little chatelet, (for with the exception of Friday, which was reserved for the Hotel

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Dieu, he spent all his time in visiting the Prisons of Paris. Monday at the great chatelet; Tuesday at the little chatelet; Wednesday at the conciergeri; Thursday at the Galeriens, and Saturday at Fort l'Eveque) for the discharge of his ordinary functions, he met on the Petit Pont, two religious of a very strict order: running to the younger, he embraced him saying, rejoice my dear brother, for you will owe your salvation to the blessed Virgin. The young religious who had no knowledge of him, took him to be a fool, but his companion said he was a holy man, called F. Bernard, and that he ought to rejoice, for what he told him was not without mystery. They then proceeded on their way, and F. Bernard went to the chatelet. Several years after, being one day entering the same prison, he was told, that a prisoner who had just then been condemned to the torture, could not be induced to make his confession. Doubly afflicted at this news, he went to the dungeon where the culprit was confined; after embracing him, he exhorted him to be reconciled with God; he menaced him with his wrath, he threatened him with his vengeance, but all in vain, the criminal would not even answer him. The good Father then begged him at least, to recite a

short prayer to the blessed Virgin, the *memorare*; with great difficulty, he prevailed on him to do so, and wonderful to relate, he had no sooner pronounced the first words, than he found himself quite changed; a torrent of tears flowed from his eyes, and regret for his sins, caused him to send forth sighs that seemed to rend his very heart. Transported with joy, Father Bernard embraced him saying, your conversion my dear brother is the work of the blessed Virgin. True my Father, replied the prisoner, with a voice half broken with sorrow, it is a long time since you told me so; would to God, that I had never forgotten it. "What" said Father Bernard, "have I ever seen you before, my child," (for he remembered nothing of him) "Alas Father!" said the prisoner, "I am that religious whom you formerly embraced on the Petit Pont." "But how came it to pass," enquired the Father, "that you fell into this misfortune." "Ah my Father" said he, I embraced the religious state without a vocation, I abandoned it, after having worn the habit for some years, and returned to my friends. These received me coldly; every day I met some new subject of chagrin, so that in a fit of desperation I associated with a troop of banditti. I lived with these some

time, but heaven weary of my crimes, has at length delivered me to the arm of the law, and I am condemned to expire on the wheel. But I am still happy, if by this torment, I can avoid the flames of hell." Here his sighs increased to such a height, that Father Bernard, greatly, affected said, "Be consoled my child, since the holy Virgin has obtained for you the grace of true contrition, she will obtain your salvation. Prepare to make your confession at once, I will go and bring a Confessor to you." Father Bernard departed, and before he returned, the poor penitent breathed his last with gratitude and contrition.

PRAYER.

O worthy Mother of God! how dare a sinner so unworthy as I, appear before you? I am the last of sinners, I have offended the divine Majesty more than any other; since I cannot recal the past, help me to amend the present. "Have pity on me O Jesus my Redeemer. Holy Mother of this God, implore him for me. If you do not wish to hear my prayer, say, tell me in whom else I can place more confidence, to whom I should go to find more mercy."—*St. Anselm.*

CHAPTER II.

“*Vita Dulcedo,*”

Our Life ! Our Sweetness !

SECTION I.

Mary is our life, since she obtains us the pardon of our sins.

To understand well, why the Church styles Mary, *our life*, we should know that grace is the life of the soul, as the soul is the life of the body, and that the blessed Virgin in obtaining sinners the grace of conversion, restores them to this life. The Church puts in her mouth these words of the Proverbs: “Those who find me, shall *find grace*, and he who finds me, shall find life and salvation.” And commenting on this last passage, St. Bonaventure exclaims, “Hearken all you who desire the kingdom of God, honor the holy Virgin, and you will find life and salvation.”

St. Bernardine of Siena, asserts, that if God has not destroyed man after his sin, it was in consideration of the blessed Virgin,

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and out of the singular love he bore her ; he even doubts not, that all the mercies granted to sinners in the old law, have been given in consideration of Mary.

With good reason then does St. Bernard exhort us to seek grace through her, since she has found the grace which we have lost. *Ne timeas invenisti gratiam* “*Fear not for you have found grace,*” said the Angel to her. But how can we say that Mary has *found* grace, she who in her conception was full of grace, and continued in it as long as she abode on earth? One is only said to find that which he possessed not before. “It is for sinners,” says Cardinal Hugo, “that Mary has found grace, which they had irretrievably lost. Hence let them come, he continues, and say to her with confidence, render us what belongs to us. The blessed Virgin herself in this verse of the Canticles, says, that she has been established by God for our defence. ‘*I am like a wall, and my bosom is a strong tower,*’ and hence it has been given me to appease the Lord. Commenting on this, St. Bernard takes occasion to encourage the sinner. “Go” does he say, to him “go to, find the Mother of mercy; discover to her the wounds of thy soul, and Mary

showing to her Son the breasts whence he drew life and nourishment, will mollify his anger and appease his wrath.”

She is justly compared to the Aurora, “because” says Pope Innocent, “as this star is the termination of the night, and the commencement of the day; thus Mary’s appearance, announced to the world the end of the night of sin, and the dawning of the day of grace.” And this effect which the birth of Mary produced, is every day produced anew in the souls of the faithful. Scarcely does any one begin to honor her, than he is rescued from the obscurity of sin, and conducted to the bright path of salvation. “Hence” cries out St. Germanus, “O Mother of God! he who pronounces your name with devotion, has life already, or is on the point of receiving it.”

“*All nations shall call me blessed,*” says this august Spouse of the Most High, in her sublime Canticle. “Yes my Sovereign” says St. Bernard, “All generations shall call you blessed, because it is by you, your servants obtain the life of grace, and the gift of glory; through you it is that sinners obtain pardon, and the just, perseverance.

Be not discouraged sinners, says the

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pious Bernardine, of Bastia; though your sins were beyond number, recur to this more than magnificent Queen; her hands are all full of mercy; she is more anxious to bestow her favors, than you are to receive them.

St. Andrew of Crete, styles Mary the guarantee of pardon, and the pledge of reconciliation." "*Fidejussio divinarum reconciliationum quæ dato pignore fit,*" and this because sinners have in her, an assurance of forgiveness. The Lord himself, has given them a pledge thereof in rendering her intercession all powerful. An Angel told St. Bridget, that the Prophets of the ancient law, leaped for joy, when they foresaw that in consideration of Mary's purity and humility, God would be appeased and turn away his wrath from those who had most irritated him. She is that privileged Ark, where all who shelter themselves are saved from eternal shipwreck; and as the Ark of Noah, not only preserved man, but even irrational creatures; thus Mary the Ark of the new Covenant, indiscriminately saves the just, that is to say, rational beings and sinners, figured by creatures void of intelligence. Our Lady one day appeared to St. Gertrude, covered with a Mantle, under which, as if in a place

of refuge, were a troop of ferocious beasts, as lions, tigers, bears, and leopards. She was so far from driving them away, that on the contrary, she patted them with her hand, and received them with great pity and commiseration. By this vision, the Saint understood that the greatest sinners when they recur to Mary, are saved from eternal destruction. Let us then enter this Ark ; let us conceal ourselves under the mantle of Mary ; we there shall find life and salvation.

EXAMPLE.

Father Bovius relates, that a woman of bad life, named Helen, having by chance, heard a Sermon on the devotion of the Rosary, immediately purchased a copy unknown to any one, and began to recite it, not indeed through devotion ; but she found in it such satisfaction, that she was never tired repeating it. By this good custom, she in time began to conceive a horror of her past life, so that her conscience gave her no repose. Compelled in some manner, to have recourse to the sacrament of penance, she made her confession with such marks of contrition, that the confessor was amazed. The confession being finished,

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having cast herself at the altar of the holy Virgin to thank her, and recite the Rosary, our Lady spoke to her thus, "Helen you have sufficiently offended my son and me, change your life and I will share my graces with you." Full of confusion, the poor penitent said, "Alas holy Virgin! it is true I have been hitherto a monster of iniquity, but your power is great, help me to amend. I give myself to you, and resolve to spend the rest of my life in doing penance." In those sentiments, Helen distributed all she possessed to the poor, and embraced a most austere life. Temptations the most frightful assailed her, but Mary procured her a complete victory over them. She was favoured by many supernatural graces; as visions, revelations, and even with the gift of prophecy in the course of her life, and some days before her death, of which she was advertised from heaven, the Mother of God came to visit her in company with her son, and her soul was seen ascending to the realms of bliss, in the shape of a white dove.
—*Example of the holy Virgin's Patronage.*

PRAYER:

○ Mother of my God! you whom the Church styles the refuge of sinners, behold

one at your feet, imploring your compassion. Be moved at my miseries I conjure you by the inestimable price of our redemption, and in the name of all it has cost your son to rescue us from the captivity of the Devil. I offer you all this man—God has suffered from the moment of his incarnation in your chaste womb, until that of his death on the Cross, the poverty and humiliation of his birth, the inconveniences of his flight into Egypt, the fatigues, labours and contradictions of his life, all the pains of his soul, and torments of his body, during his passion; the treason of Judas, the ingratitude of the Jews, the flight of the apostles, the grief your affliction caused him blessed Mother, the contempt, the blows, the whips, the thorns, the nails, the cross, the effusion of all his blood, and entreat you by the love you bear this divine son, and in consideration of all he has endured to extend a protecting hand to a criminal, who has deserved the fire of hell, and draw him from the abyss of sin.

SECTION II.

Mary is again our life, because she obtains us perseverance.

FINAL perseverance is so great a gift, that we cannot, as the Council of Trent teaches, merit it by any exertion of ours : “however” says St. Augustin, “it is given to those who ask ;” “and provided,” teaches Father Suarez, that we persevere in demanding it, we are sure of being heard. Now if, (as I hold for certain, according to the common opinion of Divines,) if I say every grace we receive, passes through the hands of Mary, it is certain that this of final perseverance, is also her gift. She herself, promises this grace to all her faithful servants, “*They who work with me shall not sin, they who make me known will have life everlasting.*” To preserve the life of grace, we stand in need of spiritual strength, which will enable us to withstand all the attacks of our enemies ; and this strength is only obtained by Mary, “*Mine is strength, by me Kings reign.*” “Strength is my portion” says Mary, “God has imparted it to me, in order that I may bestow it on my servants. It is by me they govern their senses and rule over their

passions, that they may render themselves worthy of reigning eternally in heaven."

Mary is that tower, whence it is said in the Canticles, a thousand bucklers are suspended with all the arms of the valiant men. To all her servants who have recourse to her in their combats, she is as it were an impregnable tower fortified with arms of every description to enable them to fight against hell.

It is for this same reason, the holy Virgin is likened to a plane tree: *quasi platanus exaltatasum*; the leaf of this tree, remarks Cardinal Hugo, has the form of a shield; thus Mary is the shield of all who place themselves under her protection. The blessed Amedée explains this name of plane tree given to the blessed Virgin after another manner. "As the plane tree" says he, "by its foliage shelters travellers against the chilling blast, and the burning sun, thus men find under the mantle of Mary, a secure retreat against the heat of the passions, and the force of temptations.

Poor souls, what are you thinking of when you abandon Mary, when you cease crying to her for protection? "Take away the sun" says St. Bernard, "and what does the world become? An abode of horror, a chaos of confusion; thus let a soul

abandon Mary, and she is seated in darkness, that darkness which the Holy Spirit says, '*favours the passage of the beast of the forest.*'" "Woe to him" says St. Anselm, "who despises the light of this sun, that is, who neglects Mary; it is soon night with him, and his soul becomes a haunt of sin and of devils." St. Francis Borgia doubted, and with reason, of the perseverance of such as had not a special devotion to Mary. Enquiring one day of the Novices, to which Saint each one was most devoted, he perceived, that some among them were wanting in devotion to the blessed Virgin, whereupon he noticed the master of Novices, and desired him to have a particular watch on these young people. The event justified the Saint's fears, all those who had not honoured Mary, lost the grace of their vocation and quitted the Society.

St. Germanus then had reason to call Mary "the respiration of christians;" for as the body cannot exist without breathing, so the soul cannot live without recurring to the Mother of God. The blessed Alain being once assailed by violent temptations, was on the point of yielding for want of recommending himself to Mary. Being always devout to her, this holy Virgin appeared suddenly, and striking him on the

cheek, said "If thou hadst invoked me Alain, thou wouldst not be now in this imminent danger.

"*Happy is the man who hears my voice*" says the Queen of heaven, "*who rises early to seek me, and who watches at the door of my mercy.*" Yes, Mary will obtain for such a person, strength to rise from his sin, and light to walk in the way of perfection. Hence it is, according to the beautiful expression of Innocent 3rd that she is called *Luna in nocte, aurora in diluculo, sol in die*: Moon, for him who is in the night of sin, aurora, morning star, for him who already enlightened, is trying to advance in his course; sun infine, for him who is confirmed in grace, that he may fall no more into the precipice.

Theologians apply to Mary these words of Ecclesiasticus, "*her chains are chains of salvation.*" "What are these chains" says St. Laurence Justinian, "but the fetters with which Mary binds her servants, that they may not escape from her service." St. Bonaventure gives a similar explanation to these words which occur in the office of the holy Virgin "*My abode is in the full assembly of the saints,*" for he says, "that not only is Mary established in the plenitude of charity, but that she therein retains the saints."

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Of her servants it is said, "*they are doubly clothed.*" This double garment, according to the interpretation of Cornelius a Lapide, are her own virtues and those of her son : with these she covers her faithful servants, that provided against the cold blast of sin, they may persevere to the end. Hence St. Philip Neri, used to say to his penitents, "*My children, if you wish to persevere, be devout to Mary.*" The venerable Berchman, S. J. said also, "that he who loves Mary, will persevere to the end," and Abbe Rupert, draws from the parable of the prodigal, a very ingenious reflection to the same effect. "*If this libertine child*" said he "*had his Mother, he would never have abandoned his paternal home, or he would have returned sooner :*" thus he who has Mary for Mother, never abandons God, or if he does, he soon seeks him again.

Oh if all men loved this most merciful Mother, and had recourse to her in the hour of temptation, we would seldom see any one lost, or suffer shipwreck. We fall, and we are lost, when we fail to invoke her assistance. St. Laurence Justinian applies to the blessed Virgin these words of Ecclesiasticus, "*I walked on the waves of the sea,*" For he makes her say : I walk on the waves of the sea with my servants, in

order to save them from a melancholy shipwreck.

St. Thomas of Villanova says, "when the birds of prey (meaning the Devils) pounce on us, let us imitate the chickens, who when the hawk appears, fly for refuge under the wings of their Mother; let us fly to Mary without losing a moment, and she will secure us in her maternal bosom. O Mary, continues the Saint, addressing the Queen of heaven; it is for you to defend us, since you after God, are our refuge, our protectress, our sweetest hope." We shall conclude with the words of St. Bernard; "Christian whoever thou art, thy life on earth, is a perilous navigation. If thou dost not wish to be drowned, turn not away thy eyes from this brilliant star, look up at the star of mariners, invoke Mary, In occasions of sin; in the struggle of temptation; in doubt; in the midst of danger call Mary to thy aid; let her powerful name be ever in thy heart, and on thy lips, to inspire thee with confidence: trust in Mary, and thou wilt not fall into despair; follow her and thou wilt not stray, let her hand support and protect thee, and thou wilt have nothing to fear; let her be thy guide, and thou wilt infallibly arrive at

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the haven of salvation, *Sic fac et vives.* This do and thou shalt live.”

EXAMPLE.

In the lives of the fathers of the desert, we read that Mary, surnamed of Egypt, at the age of twelve years, through a spirit of licentiousness, fled from her paternal home, and came to Alexandria, where her debaucheries were the scandal of the inhabitants. After sixteen years spent in crimes and disorders, she one day took a fancy to embark with some pilgrims who were going to Jerusalem, to celebrate the festival of the exaltation of the holy cross. When she had arrived in the city, a pure sentiment of curiosity led her to the church of the Solemnity, but as she was going to enter, she found herself repulsed by an invisible hand. Again and again she tried, to mingle in the throng, but in vain, she was not able to pass the threshold. Struck by the event, the poor sinner entered into herself, and being suddenly illumined from on high, she felt that God refused her admission to his house, because of her wickedness. At this moment, happening by chance to raise her eyes, she perceived painted on the wall of the church, an image

of the holy Virgin ; she prostrated herself before it, and bursting into tears said in her heart, “ O Mother of my God ! have pity on a miserable creature ; as you are the refuge of sinners, do not refuse me the consolation of seeing and adoring that sacred wood, on which my saviour, your son, has shed his blood to redeem me : after doing so, I promise you to go wherever you please, to weep and bewail the rest of my life, the follies and disorders of my ill-spent youth.” After saying this, she felt an interior assurance, that she could now enter, whereupon she tried, and finding no opposition, she paid her homage to the sacred instrument of redemption with great sorrow and compunction. On coming out, she again went to the holy image, saying “ O Mother of God, my protectress, what shall I do ? whither do you wish me go ? ” On which a voice answered, “ Go beyond the Jordan and thou shalt find thy place of abode.” The poor sinful Mary, then made a general confession of her whole life, and after having received the holy communion, bent her course as directed by the holy Virgin, to the place of her penance. During the first seventeen years she spent in this place, she had combats, the most violent to sustain against the enemy ; her only shield

was to invoke Mary, and by this simple means she remained victorious, and spent the last thirty years of her life in great peace and tranquility. The year before she died, by a particular disposition of divine Providence, she was discovered by Abbot Zozimus, a holy solitary, who had gone into the desert to spend the Lent in greater solitude. After relating her history to him, she begged that when he came next, he would bring her the holy communion. He did so, and when separating, she invited him to return the following Lent to the spot where he had first seen her; but what was his astonishment to find her dead, and her body environed with celestial light. These words were written near her in the sand, "Abbot Zozimus, bury here the body of poor Mary, the sinner, and pray for the repose of her soul." Having interred the sacred remains, he returned to his monastery, and related to his brethren the wonders of the Divine mercies towards this happy penitent.

PRAYER.

O holy Virgin ! deign to manifest your generosity towards this miserable sinner. If you grant me your aid, what can I fear ?

No, I shall no longer apprehend either my sins, since you can repair them; or the devils since you are more powerful than hell, or your son justly irritated, since one word from you will appease him. I shall only fear myself, and that forgetting to invoke you, I may be lost. But this will not be the case, I promise you to-day, to recur to you in all my wants, and that during life, and at my death, your name and remembrance shall be the delight of my soul. *Amen.*

SECTION III.

Dulcedo—Our Sweetness.

*Mary renders death sweet to her
Servants.*

HE that is a friend loveth at all times, and a brother is proved in time of need. True friends and devoted parents are known rather in adversity than in prosperity. False ones are most assiduous when fortune smiles, but if we fall into disgrace, if we are sick, and above all, when we are dying, they forsake us. Mary never treats her servants thus; she has never abandoned her friends in their misfortunes, still less in the

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agonies of death, the greatest misery incident to humanity ; she is our life in the place of our exile ; she is our sweetness at the hour of death, in rendering this dread moment happy and serene ; since that eventful day, when this blessed Virgin had both the grief and consolation to assist her Son, the chief of the predestined, at his last hour, she has been deputed to assist his members, when in like circumstances, and hence the church says, “ *Pray for us sinners, now, and at the hour of our death.* ” What dire anguishes fill poor dying creatures, when remorse of conscience, a fear of the Divine judgment, and an uncertainty of their salvation, combine to torment them. Hell which then “ *has but a little time,* ” redoubles its rage, and makes one desperate effort to seize that prey, of which it has been always in quest, and which is now going to escape it. To this last combat, the devil who has ever been setting snares for the soul, comes not alone ; he brings with him innumerable legions of wicked spirits ; witness what we read of St. Andrew Avellinus, at his death, whose bed was encompassed by more than ten thousand devils. During his agony, he had so terrible a combat to sustain against them, that all the religious who attended him, were seized with fear and consterna-

tion. The countenance of the saint became livid; he trembled all over; he gnashed his teeth, and tears flowed in abundance from his eyes. Such a spectacle caused all the assistants to weep; each one trembled for himself, seeing a saint die in such a manner; one thing alone consoled them; it was, that the dying person often turned his eyes towards a picture of the holy Virgin, as it were to implore her aid; and remembering to have heard him say more than once during life, that Mary would be his refuge at the hour of death. Nor was he disappointed, his agitations soon ceased, his countenance resumed its wonted calm; keeping his eyes still fastened to the image of his Protectress he bent his head in token of gratitude, and sweetly rendered up his soul into her hands. It is supposed she then manifested herself to him and conducted him to heaven; It is certain at least, that a Capuchin Nun who was just then at the point of death, turning towards the Religious who assisted her, said, *Recite the Ave Maria, for a Saint ascends just now into Heaven.*

Oh! how these rebellious spirits fly at the sight of our Queen! If Mary be at our side, what can all the powers of hell avail against us? David reflecting on this

formidable moment, says, "*If I shall walk in the shades of Death, thy rod and thy staff shall uphold me.*" Cardinal Hugo says, that by the staff we are to understand the Cross of Jesus, and by the rod, the intercession of Mary, who is the rod of the root of Jesse. The Divine Mary, writes S. Peter Damian is that powerful rod, which puts to flight all the infernal host. When F. Emanuel Paldial, S. J. was on his death bed, Mary appeared and spoke to him these consoling words: *The Hour is at length come, in which the Angels rejoicing with thee are going to exclaim: O happy labours, O Mortifications abundantly recompensed!* at the same moment a troop of Infernal spirits were heard to exclaim: *Alas we can do nothing against this man because she who is without stain protects him.*

St. Bonaventure says, that Mary sends the blessed spirits with the Archangel Michael at their head, to the succour of the faithful in their last hour, that they may protect against their enemies, and conduct to heaven, such as have been faithful in invoking her during life.

When a man is at the point of death, all hell is in commotion, says the Prophet Isaias, *and raises up against him the giants, that is the most formidable demons, in order*

that they may seduce his soul into sin, and afterwards accuse it when it shall be presented before the tribunal of Jesus Christ; But if this soul be defended by Mary, the devils will not dare to accuse it, because they know the Sovereign Judge has never condemned any of those who were protected by his Mother.

St. Jerome assures the virgin Eustochium in his Epistle, that Mary, not content with assisting her servants at their last hour, comes also to meet them and presents them herself before the Judgment seat; This agrees with what she herself taught St. Bridget; speaking of those who have been devoted to her during life, "*My well-beloved daughter*" said she "*I as their Mistress and Mother, go to meet my servants, in order to be their strength and consolation.*" A Son of this great Saint named Charles, happily experienced this truth; he had embraced the dangerous profession of Arms, and dying in the field of battle, his Mother never ceased to sigh and weep before God, fearing for his eternal salvation; until the holy Virgin compassionating the afflicted mother revealed to her that she had assisted her son in his last moments, and that he was saved in consequence of his devotion to her; afterwards St. Bridget saw Jesus Christ on

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his throne, and the devil presenting him two accusations against the holy Virgin; the one was, that she hindered him from tempting Prince Charles at his death, and the other that she had carried his soul to judgment without giving him time to assert his claims to it. Jesus Christ then chased away the infernal fiend, and Charles was carried into Heaven.

“ Her bonds are bonds of Salvation ;” in the last hour you will find rest in her ; O dear Christian ! what shall be your joy at the last hour, if you have lived in the sweet service of Mary. Happy chains ! precious slavery ! which will infuse into your soul a sweet calm, the foretaste of eternal peace. F. Suarez, S. J. a great servant of Mary, was so replenished with consolations at his last hour, that he exclaimed, “ *No I never could believe it was so sweet to die.*” You too will experience a like sentiment, if you shall have loved this good Mother ; she is faithful to her children, when they have been faithful to her ; and when they have venerated her through life, in visiting her Churches, reciting her rosary, fasting in her honour, and above all, in uniting to these pious practices, a homage much more agreeable, which is to thank her for her benefits, and to render themselves more and

more worthy of her powerful protection.

Though you may have hitherto lived in sin, you will not be deprived of this consolation, if to-day you begin to change your life and enter into the service of the Queen of Heaven. The brother of St. Peter Damian, is an example of this truth : this man whose name was Martin, having had the misfortune to commit a most grievous sin, entering into himself, prostrated before an Altar of the holy Virgin, to bewail his fate, and repeated this Prayer : O my Patroness, mirror of Chastity, I have by my impurity sinned against God, and against thee ; miserable wretch that I am, I have no other resource but to make myself thy slave, deign to accept me in that quality ; then taking off his cincture he placed it round his neck in token of slavery, and laid on the Altar a certain sum of money, which he promised to pay his divine Mistress every year by way of tribute. In a short time after he died. During his illness, he one morning said to his attendants, *Rise, rise, salute my Mistress* ; then he added, from whence comes this favour O Queen of heaven, that you condescend to visit your poor slave ? At that moment Peter his brother having entered the room, he related to him how the blessed

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Virgin had visited him, and complained that his servants remained sitting in presence of the Queen of Heaven: shortly after he peaceably slept in the Lord.

But if in this dread moment my dear reader, your past sins come to trouble you and cast you into despair, Mary will come to re-animate your confidence, as she did to Adolphus Count of Alsace; this good man who quitted the horrors of the world, to embrace the humiliations of the Cross, in the order of St. Francis, was very devout to Mary. In his last illness, the recollection of the life he had lived in the world, made him greatly apprehend the Divine judgments, and tremble for his salvation; till Mary who never sleeps in the necessities of her servants, suddenly presented herself before him, and addressed him in these consoling words, "Adolphus, my dear Adolphus, thou art devout to me and dost thou fear death? Their effect was most powerful, all apprehension immediately ceased, and Adolphus expired in the greatest peace and confidence.

Although we are sinners, let us animate our confidence, since Mary will not forget us at our last hour. She once told St. Matilda, that she never absented herself from the death-bed of such as had served

her faithfully during life ; we would never finish, if we recounted all the Examples we have of this truth : we shall content ourselves with the following :

EXAMPLE.

When St. Dominic laboured in Carcaissone, against the Albigensian heresy, they brought him one possessed, to be exorcised, whence he took occasion to make the devil confess by the mouth of him whom he possessed, a truth that cannot be too often inculcated, to excite all to confidence in the Mother of God ; for forced by the command of the Saint, the enemy said in presence of an immense concourse of persons, who ran to the spectacle : that she upset his designs, and rendered his measures abortive, that she every hour snatched souls from him, (this he thought himself assured of) that several at the hour of death, obtained salvation by her intercession, and in fine that not one of those who faithfully served her, had ever been lost.

Thus did the force of truth, compel even the father of lies, to testify this for our instruction and consolation.—*True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin.*

PRAYER.

O my tender Mother! what shall be the end of the miserable sinner that is before you; when I think of the terrible moment, at which I shall have to render to God an account of my conduct, and when I remember how often I myself have, by my sins, written the sentence of my own condemnation, fear penetrates my bowels, and dries up the very marrow of my bones. **O** consolation of the afflicted! have pity on me; remorse of conscience gnaws me, my best actions are imperfectly performed, hell awaits to carry off my soul, Divine justice must be satisfied, what then shall become of me? What shall be my eternal lot? **Alas** without you I am lost, obtain for me a true sorrow for my sins, grace to amend and persevere during life, but above all in the agonies of death. **Mary** my hope, henceforth more than ever, do not abandon me, but support my confidence lest I fall into despair. **Amen**

CHAPTER III.

Spes nostra Salve.

Hail our hope.

SECTION I.

*Mary is the hope of all the Children
of Adam.*

Heretics cannot bear to hear us style Mary our hope ; they pretend that we cannot hope but in God alone, from this text of Scripture, “ Cursed is the man who trusts in Man.” Mary, say they, is a creature, and how can a creature be our hope ? Thus heretics argue : but in spite of their accusations, the Church wishes, that Priests and Religious in the name of all the faithful, should every day raise their voice, and invoke Mary, under that title so sweet : *Hope of Christians.*

Saint Thomas, the Angel of the Schools, teaches, that we can hope in a person after two different ways ; either as a principal or intermediate cause. When one solicits a favour from a King, though it is expected

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from him, because the only dispenser ; it is hoped from his Minister as intercessor or mediator ; undoubtedly it is the King who bestows the favour, but he does so at the prayer of his favourite ; and the suppliant has reason to say that he hopes in the minister who presents his suit. Now the King of Heaven whose bounty is infinite, desiring nothing so ardently as to confer his favours on us, in order to increase our confidence in him, has given us his Mother for our mother, and in her hands resigned, (if we might say so,) His Omnipotence in the sphere of Grace, that we might place in her the hope of our Salvation : and all the help necessary to attain it. Those indeed are cursed by God who hope in the creature, without reference to God, as certain sinners do who think nothing of forfeiting the friendship of the Most High, for that of man ; but those are blessed, truly blessed, who hope in Mary as being the Mother of God ; He himself being pleased in seeing this blessed woman honoured, from whom alone he has received more glory, than from all men and Angels together.

Mary is our hope, since, as Cardinal Bellarmine says, we may hope to obtain by her intercession, what we could not flatter ourselves to obtain by our own prayers ; and to

recur to the holy Virgin in this hope, says St. Anselm, is not to distrust the Divine mercy, but to fear our own unworthiness.

With reason then does the Church style Mary, "*Mother of holy Hope*;" it suits her admirably well, since it is not the vain hope of perishable passing goods she creates in us, but the blessed hope of eternal treasures. I salute you, hope of my soul, says St. Ephrem to this blessed Mother; I salute you the Protectress of sinners, the rampart of Christians, and the Salvation of the world. The same Saint considering that by an admirable disposition of his Providence, God has willed that all who are saved may be saved by means of Mary, says to her, "*Queen of Heaven never cease to protect us, since after God, you are our only Hope.*"

God commanded Moses to make the Propitiatory of most pure gold, because it was from thence he wished to speak to him. A learned writer says, that Mary is the Propitiatory of the Christian people; whence our Lord gives them answers of pardon and forgiveness, and dispenses to them his gifts and graces. Why, asks St. Irenæus, was not the mystery of the Incarnation accomplished without the consent of the Virgin? It is he replies, because God wishes she may be the principal of all good,

in the law of Grace: "O Mary" exclaims the devout Blossius, "Who could avoid loving you? You are our light in the obscurity of doubt, our Consolation in grief, and our hope in danger. Hail! hope of those who have no resource! Hail! you to whom the Son of God has given such influence, that whatever you wish is executed instantly.

St. Germanus also recognizes Mary as the source of all good, the deliverance from all evil, "*O my Sovereign!*" says he to her, "*you are my guide in the pilgrimage of this world, the strength of my weakness, the riches of my misery, the balm of my wounds, the soother of my pains, the deliverance from my bonds, hear the humble prayers of your servant; be moved by his tears, O my Patroness! my refuge, my life, my hope, my Salvation, my Support.*"

St. Antoninus applies to the holy Virgin, these words of Solomon, "*All good things came to me with her.*" All good comes to us with Mary, he who has found her, has found all graces, all virtues; since there is no good which he does not obtain through her intercession. She herself warns us, that she has at her disposal all the treasures of the Divinity; *with me are glory and riches that I may enrich them that love me; hence*

St. Bonaventure wishes us, ever to keep our eyes on the hands of Mary, to receive from them all that is necessary for our true welfare. O how many proud have found humility by their devotion to Mary? How many choleric have found sweetness? How many blind have found light, how many desperate have obtained Salvation? The pious Lanspergins, represents to us Jesus Christ thus addressing all men: "Children of Adam, who abide among such powerful enemies, and are subject to such woes; honour my Mother as I do, I have given her to the world as an example, as an impregnable fortress, that you may learn from her all the virtues, and that she may be your asylum in all tribulations."

O my God what amiable confidence does not St. Bonaventure manifest in Jesus our Redeemer, and Mary our Advocate, "Although our Lord had withdrawn himself from me," he says, "Knowing that He is found by him who seeks, I would continue to search after him, and when I found Him, I would not suffer him to depart, until he gave me his benediction. I shall enter into the precious caverns of his wounds, and there conceal myself from his fury; but if my Saviour drive me off be-

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cause of my sins, I shall go and cast myself at the feet of his Mother : thence I shall not rise until she has obtained my pardon, for she does not know what it is to be insensible to the voice of misery, and her pity will soften the anger of her Son. Regard us then O Mary most merciful for we your servants place all our hope in you.”

EXAMPLE.

Tancred, a great favourite of the Emperor Frederic II., considering the many dangers to which his Salvation was exposed in the world, had recourse to the holy Virgin, that she might point out to him in what state of life, he could with most facility save his soul, and at the same time disposed himself to be faithful to the call of God ; he now approached oftener the Holy Sacraments, prayed more, performed more good works, and in fine omitted nothing to know the Divine will. After some time the holy Virgin appeared and said to him, “ Tancred, you ask me to teach you to what state God calls you, I have heard your prayer, go and enter my order and you will find what you desire.” Tancred lost no time in following his vocation, he at once re-

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nounced his honours and distinctions, and having embraced the order of St. Dominic, lived and died holily therein.

PRAYER.

O Mother of holy love! as your divine Son has established you after him, "Our Advocate with the Father," and given such efficacy to your prayers, that nothing is refused to them, I recur to you, hope of the miserable; my confidence in you is so great, that if my salvation was in my hands, I would place it in yours, for I would depend more on your protection and your mercy, than in all my works. He who is protected by you, cannot be lost, heaven and earth confess it. Hence, though all creatures forget me, though the whole world abandon me, provided you forsake me not, I should think myself secure. I hope, I trust, I confide in you, holy Virgin, thus, I desire to live, thus I wish to die, saying in heart and mouth, *Única spes mea Jesus : et post Jesum Virgo Maria.* Jesus is my only hope, and after him, you O Virgin Mary.

SECTION II.

Mary is the Hope of the Sinner.

God having created the heavens and the earth, made two great luminaries, the Sun to rule the day, the Moon to preside over the night. "The former" says Hugo, "is a figure of Jesus Christ, whose splendid rays illumine the just who live in the day of grace, the latter is typical of Mary, whose mild lustre illumines sinners mid the dreary night of sin." "Towards this propitious orb, it is" says Innocent 3d, "he should look, who is buried in the shades of sin and iniquity. Having lost divine grace, the day disappears; there is no more sun for him, but the Moon is still in the horizon; let him address himself to Mary; under her influence thousands every day find the way to God."

Among all the titles under which the holy Church wishes the faithful to honor the Mother of God, one of the most consoling for us, is, that of *the Refuge of Sinners*. In the law of Moses, there were some cities, into which, if certain criminals fled, they were screened from the pursuits of justice; now in the law of grace, there is

one sole city of refuge, of which "*great things have been said,*" but there is this difference, that whereas the Jewish cities only afforded refuge to certain persons, Mary the city of God, is open to all sinners; all crimes are therein pardoned.

He who finds admittance into this city, needs say nothing in order to be saved. *Haste let us enter into the place, and there we shall keep silence.* "This Strong hold" says Albertus Magnus, "is the sacred Virgin established in grace and glory. Once introduced to her, let us be silent, for it does not become us to open our mouth before the Lord whom we have so much offended; but leave Mary to speak and intercede for us. Hence it is, that another pious Author exhorting sinners says, *Children of Adam, go and conceal yourselves in the bosom of your Mother, the new Eve. This is your city of refuge, your only hope.* Is it not to this city, David alludes, When he says in the Psalms, "*The Lord has protected me in introducing me to the secret of his sanctuary.*" What is this temple of the Lord, if it is not Mary, "a living tabernacle, whose builder and maker is God, into which no one enters, save he himself, to operate the great mysteries of salvation; St. Ephrem salutes Mary as the

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asylum of sinners, which is not shut either day or night ; and the great St. Basil likens her to one of the hospitals which charity rears for suffering indigence, where all are welcomed without exception ; and as those who suffer most, have the best right to be admitted to such places, he who is most destitute of the gifts of grace, and most overwhelmed by the evils of the soul, should say to Mary, *Great Queen, you are the salvation of poor infirm creatures, and hence no one has a stronger claim on your mercies than I have.*

In the Revelations of St. Bridget, this blessed Virgin is called the star which precedes the sun ; this intimates that when a soul begins to feel devotion to her, God will soon enrich her with his grace. The glorious St. Bonaventure to animate our confidence in Mary, represents to us a raging sea, in which sinners already fallen from the vessel of divine grace, are tossed about by the billows of temptation, torn by the gnawings of remorse, and horrified by the terrors of divine justice, without light or guide, are ready to be swallowed up in the gulph of despair : but just then, the Lord shews them Mary, the star of the sea, and seems to say to them, sinners ! unfortunate sinners ! despair not, fix your eyes on this

briliant luminary, its lustre will save you from the tempest, and conduct you to the port of salvation. Blosius figures Mary to us, as the only refuge of those that have incurred the divine indignation, and the asylum of all in affliction or temptation, as the well beloved of the most High, whom he has rendered so sweet, so mild, so amiable, that no one fears to approach her; she is says he Mother of mercy, sweet and mild not only to the just, but to sinners; she despises, she rejects none; her unspeakable sweetness is the bait she uses to take sinners, and when they are caught, she fashions them with her own hands for the kingdom of heaven.

The Prophet complained in his day, that no creature was to be found who could appease the wrath of God. "Lord" said he, "we have sinned, and there is none to restrain your arm from falling heavy upon us;" but now Mary presents herself between God and his offending creature, and no person is so fit, says St. Bonaventure, to avert the sword of Divine wrath and indignation. Richard of St. Laurence, also observes on this subject, that in the old law, God often complained that there was none to interpose between him and sinners, but since Mary the mediatrix of peace has

appeared on earth, she restrains his arm, and averts his wrath.

St. Basil encouraging sinners, says to them, "Do not fear, in all your necessities seek Mary and call her to your aid, invoke her power, for by divine appointment she is a universal succour. The Mother of mercy has such a desire to save poor creatures, that she herself goes to seek them, and when she has found them, she well knows how to render them agreeable to God.

We said before, that the Ark of Noah which has been the refuge of all the beasts however wild and ferocious, was a figure of Mary, since she is the asylum of all sinners, however wicked and disorderly; but says a learned Author, there is this difference, the Ark of Noah did not change the animals who were received in it. The tiger and the wolf came forth as untameable as they entered, whereas under the mantle of Mary, the wolf becomes a lamb, and the tiger is changed into a dove.

As Ruth, the daughter-in-law of Noemi, found so great favour with Booz, that he permitted her to collect the sheafs which fell from his reapers, thus Mary has found such grace before the Lord, that he has appointed her to gather up the blades which

resist or escape the evangelical scythe of the preachers, and missionaries, who labour to fill his granaries. There are some souls so rebellious, that it is impossible to convert them, by any efforts on the part of God's ministers; it is left to Mary alone, to save them by her powerful intercession. But woe to the sheaves which would escape the hands of this amiable gleaner, they shall in time be gathered up and cast into the eternal flames.

The Saints and Fathers seem to vie with each other, in seeking to make sinners comprehend what a *refuge* they have in Mary. St. Laurence Justinian calls her "*the hope of the guilty, spes delinquentium;*" St. John Damascene, "*the hope of the desponding;*" St. Augustin, "*the only hope of sinners, unica spes peccatorum;*" St. Ephrem "*the surest port of the shipwrecked, the protectress of those who have a foot in the abyss;*" St. Bernard, "*the ladder of sinners, scala peccatorum, by which they ascend to God;*" St. John Chrysostom, in fine, addressing her in the name of all sinners, says, "*Hail Mother of God, our Mother also; heaven where God makes his abode! throne whence the Lord dispenses his favours! intercede with Jesus for us, that by your prayers we*

may obtain pardon here, and eternal salvation hereafter.

EXAMPLE.

One of the most distinguished preachers of the last century, was once called about midnight, to administer the last sacraments to a young nobleman, who had just been seized with apoplexy. When he arrived, he found the house all in confusion, the wife distracted, and the Physicians vainly employing all the resources of their art, on an invalid, with no more than the semblance of life. This was the state of things during the night; when day appeared, the churches being opened, the Priest went to offer a votive Mass of the holy Virgin, for the sick person in the next chapel; and glory for ever be to God and his blessed Mother; it was scarcely finished, when a servant came to tell him, that his master had now the use of his faculties. The surprise of this good priest was greatly increased, when on revisiting the gentleman, who had been too well known by his scandals and debaucheries he found him penetrated with the liveliest sorrow and compunction, imploring pardon of God, more by tears than

words, and offering his life for the expiation of his sins. In these dispositions he made his confession, and received the last sacraments. The confessor edified and amazed at such a change, when all was over, asked the dying person if he had any idea of the cause of such a miracle of the divine mercy in his favour, "Alas Father" he replied, "what other cause could there be but this, divine mercy itself, moved by your prayers, and perhaps by those of my deceased mother.

"This good woman was a model of piety to the court, and to the city. I was her only son; after being married but a few years, her husband died, and unfortunately for me, she survived him but a few months. When on her death bed, she caused me to be brought to her, and spoke nearly in the following words: 'I leave you my son an illustrious name, and riches in abundance, but I intreat you to prefer to both, the sacred character of christian, you are exposed to great dangers my child, to what jeopardy perhaps will not your best possessions expose you; I die alas too soon for you! but may the will of God be accomplished! I leave you under the protection of the holy Virgin, and intreat her to shew herself your mother. If you my child wish to

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give your affectionate parent some mark of attachment and recollection, promise me the only thing I am going to ask of you ; it will cost you little, it is to recite the Rosary of the blessed Virgin every day. I promised her most readily, said the invalid, and never failed to keep my word, amid all my debaucheries, nay, I confess, that for the last ten years it is the only act of religion I have performed.”

The Confessor now saw clearly, that the conversion of this young man, was owing to the special protection of Mary. He exhorted him to redouble his confidence, in his powerful Benefactress. He did not leave him until his death. He received his last sighs, which were poured forth in the same penitential spirit,

PRAYER.

O purest of Virgins ! I venerate your most holy heart, which is the delight of the Lord, the sanctuary of purity and humility, the abode of divine love. My heart, which I present to you, is all of clay, sin has therein made most dreadful wounds ; Mother of mercy, cure it, sanctify it, refuse not your pity to him for whom Jesus has not refused his blood.

CHAPTER IV.

“ Ad te clamamus exules filii Hevæ.”

To thee we cry poor banished sons of Eve.

SECTION I.

*Mary's readiness to assist those who
invoke her.*

UNFORTUNATE Children, of an unfortunate Mother, guilty of the same fault, and condemned to the same punishment, we wander in this vale of tears, exiled from our country, and bending under the weight of afflictions, grief of mind and evils of soul and body. Happy is he who amid all these miseries, often turns his eyes towards Mary, the refuge of the miserable. The Church assiduously instructs her children in their duty to this tender Mother. She has established throughout the year, a number of festivals in her honor; she has consecrated to her, one day in the week; she has declared that Ecclesiastics and Religious should every day salute her in the name of all Christians, and she wishes that the faithful themselves, may give her daily proofs

of their respect and love. In all public calamities, this holy Church recurs to Mary, by prayers, novenas, processions, visits to her altars, &c. And Mary is pleased with this homage ; not that she needs it, for it is infinitely below her worth, but because by our increased devotion and confidence, she is enabled to do more for us. St. Bonaventure says " that Ruth is a figure of Mary," for the name of Ruth signifies *seeing and hastening*, and this blessed Virgin seeing our miseries, hastens to succour and relieve them : her desire to do us good, suffers her not to delay, and this Mother of mercy being most lavish of her gifts, pours them upon us with the utmost profusion. Richard of St. Laurence assures us that the compassion of Mary extends to all who solicit it, even though it be only by a simple *Ave Maria*. Novarin asserts, that Mary not only runs, but even flies to assist us. She is that woman in the Apocalypse, to whom two wings were given, like those of the Eagle, to fly to the desert. Ribera says, that these wings signify the ardent love by which Mary is elevated to God. But the holy Amedee gives it an explanation more suitable to our subject ; he says, that the Eagle's wings signify the rapid flight with which Mary comes to help her children.

When she went to visit Elizabeth carrying into her family all the benedictions of heaven, she made the journey promptly. "Mary went with haste" says the Gospel, it is not said she returned with haste. Well then, does St. Bonaventure style her the *Salvation of all who invoke her.*

I again affirm, that the enormity of our sins should not diminish our confidence in Mary, for as a tender mother has no horror of cleansing the leprosy of her son, thus whatever be the evils of our souls, Mary will not be deterred from curing them. She proved this to St. Gertrude, when she appeared to her, extending her mantle over all who came to her. It was then revealed to this great servant of God, that the angels preserved the servants of Mary from the pestilential breath of hell.

This blessed Mother's compassion is so great, her tenderness is so lively, that she does not wait till we invoke her. "Mary" says St. Anselm, "prevents those who desire her protection, and obtains graces for them before they ask them." Of this we have a strong proof at the marriage of Cana. Mary no sooner perceived that the wine failed, than without waiting to be asked, she relieved the embarrassment of the parties,

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by drawing a supply from the omnipotence of her Son.

Will any Christian then, doubt the veracity of these words of St. Bernard to the holy Virgin. "*O Mary*" said he, "*I consent that every tongue may be silent in your praise if any one ever invoked you in vain.*"

Holy Virgin who ever recurred in vain to your powerful protection? Heaven and earth will sooner be destroyed, than you will cease to help those who humbly invoke you. St. Anselm to increase our confidence in Mary, assures us that our prayers will often be more speedily heard in invoking her name, than in calling on that of Jesus Christ; and the reason he gives is, that Jesus being no less our judge than our Saviour, he must avenge the wrongs we do him by our sins, while the holy Virgin being solely our advocate, is obliged to entertain only sentiments of pity for us. We are far from insinuating nevertheless, that she is more powerful than her son. Jesus Christ is our only Mediator; he alone has obtained our reconciliation with God, his Father, but as in recurring to him whom we must necessarily consider a judge who will punish the ungrateful, it is probable a sentiment of fear may lessen the confidence necessary for being heard, it would seem that in

applying to Mary, whose office is that of mercy, our hope would be so strong as to obtain all we ask for.

How is it, that whereas we ask many things of God without obtaining them, we no sooner ask through Mary, than they are granted us? "It is not indeed," says Nicephorus, "that she is more powerful than the Lord, but he has thus decreed to honour his Mother.

St. Bridget says, she one day heard the divine infant, Jesus, promise the holy Virgin, that all who asked grace through her, would be most assuredly heard. Another time, this blessed Lord said to Mary, in presence of St. Gertrude, *I know that in virtue of my Omnipotence, I have invested you with power to deal out mercy in such a manner as you find good to all sinners who invoke you.*

Let each one of us then say to Mary, with St. Bernard, *Remember O most clement Virgin, that no one has ever yet invoked you in vain, do not permit that I may be the first to be excluded from your pity, &c. Memorare O piissima, &c.*

EXAMPLE.

St. Francis de Sales experienced in the most signal manner, the efficacy of this pray-

er, Memorare, &c. At the age of seventeen years, being studying at Paris, he was afflicted by a violent temptation to despair. To try his virtue, and to render him more worthy of divine favours, God permitted the devil to persuade the holy Student that all he did for eternity was useless and unavailing, for that his reprobation was resolved upon. Thus tormented, and without any relish for a sentiment of God, Francis lost his appetite; sleep fled from his eyes, his health began to decline perceptibly. Sometimes his mental agonies made him speak thus: "I shall then be eternally deprived of the friendship of my God, with whom I hitherto enjoyed the sweetest intercourse. O love! O beauty! to whom I would willingly consecrate all my affections, I must now behold you only in your rigors. O Virgin, Mother of God! the most beautiful of the daughters, of the celestial Sion, I shall never see the place of your abode and triumph. Ah if I am not destined to behold the beauty of your countenance, do not permit at least, that I be condemned to blaspheme you for ever in hell."

In this distressed state, Francis remained about a month, when it pleased our divine Jesus, who never abandons his servants, to deliver him from it, and by the agency of his

blessed Mother, under whose auspices, the Saint had already made a vow of perpetual chastity. Returning home one night, he chanced to enter a church on the way, and seeing there a tablet appended to the wall, on which was written the Memorare, &c. he prostrated himself before the altar of the Mother of God, recited this prayer, renewed his vow of chastity, and promised to recite the Rosary every day, in her honour, "O my Sovereign!" said he to her, "be my advocate with your son, I dare not recur to him. If I am unfortunately destined not to love him in the next world, obtain at least, that my heart may beat only for him, while here on earth. This prayer was followed by an act of confidence in the divine mercy, and submission to the divine will. He was not long without receiving its happy fruits; peace soon returned to his desolate heart, and he again resumed his wonted vigour. In gratitude to the blessed Virgin, he was ever after specially devout to her, and ever sought to make others so, by his sermons and writings.

PRAYER.

O Mother of God, hope of mankind one of the strayed sheep, whom the eternal Word

came to seek on earth, demands entrance again into his blessed fold. The price of its admittance is already paid, viz: all the blood of his veins, one drop of which, would suffice to cancel the sins of ten thousand worlds. No more is necessary than to apply to my soul, the merits of this redeeming stream, and that is your province holy Virgin: dispensatrix of the divine grace, you save whom you please, to you then I commit myself, that the enemy may not destroy me.

SECTION II.

The power of Mary to defend those who invoke her in temptations.

MARY, Queen of heaven, is also Queen of hell; the devils themselves bend under the yoke of her sovereignty, for, from the beginning, the Lord said she should crush the Serpent's head. "I will place," said he to him, "a mortal enmity between thee and the woman." Yes, this "woman" who was so long promised, was no other than Mary the Mother of Jesus, who, by her purity and humility, brought Satan's

pride to nought. St. Cyprian observes on this passage of Genesis, that God does not speak in the present tense, but in the future. He does not say to the serpent I *put* enmity between thee and the woman, but, “ I will put enmity.” This, says the Saint, is to prove that it was not of Eve he spoke, who was then living, but of another woman of her race, and who was to procure even a greater good to mankind, than what had been lost by the first sin. Some doubt if these words of Genesis, *Ipsa conteret caput tuum*, she shall crush thy head, relate to the holy Virgin, or to Jesus Christ, for the Septuagint translates it *ipse* he, but our Vulgate which is the only translation approved of by the council of Trent, has it *ipsa* she, and it is thus St. Ambrose, St. Jerome, St. Augustin, and St. Chrysostom, understood it. But in whatever manner we explain this text, whether that the Son may have vanquished by the Mother, or the Mother by the Son ; it is certain that Mary has overcome the proud spirit, and like slaves captured in war, he ever since, groans under the yoke of heaven. If Eve entailed on us darkness and death, Mary brought us life and light ; the one suffered herself to be conquered by the devil, the other vanquished him, and bound him up

in such a manner, as that he can no more hurt her servants.

It is said of the strong woman in the Proverbs, *the heart of her husband trusteth in her, and he shall not want spoils.* Richard of St. Laurence, beautifully explains this passage, in reference to the holy Virgin. "The heart of the man of God" says he, "trusts in Mary, he shall not want spoils, for she has snatched from hell its prey, to enrich with spoils, our Lord Jesus Christ."

The Palm is the symbol of victory, and it is said of our blessed Queen, that before all the princes of the people, she governs as a beautiful Palm Tree, because of the victory those gain who place themselves under her protection. "My children" says she, "when the enemy attacks you, look on me, and take courage, for in acting thus, you are sure of victory." Recourse to Mary is an assured means to overcome temptations, for says St. Bernardine, of Sienna, *she is the Mistress of the Devils*; she is against them as an army ranged for battle; this army is made up of her virtues, her power, her mercy her goodness, her prayers, which as an experienced Commandress, she disposes for the confusion of her enemies, and the safety of her friends. "I, like the Vine, have brought forth fruits of

sweet odor," says Mary in Ecclesiasticus, "As serpents" says St. Bernard, "flee from the Vine when in blossom, so the devils are obliged to quit those happy souls who diffuse the good odor of devotion to Mary. Mary is also likened to the Cedar in Scripture. "I am exalted as a Cedar in Libanus," not only because the wood of this tree being incorruptible, it is symbolic of Mary's exemption from sin, "but also" says Cardinal Hugo, "as the fragrance of the Cedar puts venomous reptiles to flight, so the sanctity of Mary is the terror of the devils.

In the old law when the Jews went to battle, they carried with them the ark of the Lord, and raised it up in the sight of their enemies, in order that they might obtain victory. *When the ark was lifted up, Moses said: Arise O' Lord and let thy enemies be put to flight.* It was thus the walls of Jerico fell, and in the same manner the Philistines were defeated. Now the ark in which the Manna was preserved, was a figure of Mary, whose most pure womb was found worthy to enclose the Manna of heaven, Jesus Christ, true God and true Man. It is through her that the Lord enables us in the law of grace, to triumph over our spiritual enemies, and when this glorious ark

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of the new covenant was assumed into heaven, the infernal powers saw their lances broken, and their forces dispersed.

O how formidable Mary is to the devil! like that enemy in Job, who profits of the midnight gloom, to steal into a house, but who flies away with terror when the day appears, "thus the infernal foe" says St. Bonaventure, "penetrates into the soul in the darkness of ignorance, but when the grace and mercy of Mary illumines the horizon, then he flees horror-stricken into the bottom of the dark and dreary abyss." "Such is the empire which our Lord has given Mary over these infernal fiends," says St. Bridget's Revelations, "that if they attack a person, and he implore her assistance, they fly away in fear and trembling, the torments of hell being a thousand times less painful to them than the effects of her power."

As the lily among thorns, so is my beloved among Virgins, says the spouse in the Canticles. On this passage, Cornelius a Lapide observes, that as the lily is an antidote against the sting of serpents, so the invocation of Mary is an excellent specific for all temptations, particularly those of the flesh, as several persons have happily experienced.

There is no servant of Mary who cannot

say with St. John Damascene, O Mother of God, my hope in you renders me invincible ; fortified by your protection, I shall pursue my enemies and gain a complete victory over them. We read in Exodus that our Lord, conducted his people by a pillar of clouds during the day, and a column of fire during the night. This marvellous pillar, was a figure of Mary, and the double office, she fulfils in our regard ; a beneficent cloud, she intercepts the too ardent rays of the divine sun of justice, a terrible fire, she repels, and keeps off the devils. "As wax melts before the fire," says St. Bonaventure, "these wicked spirits lose their energies in presence of souls truly devout to Mary," and again, "the numerous squadrons of an enemy in the field, are less feared by man, than the powers of darkness apprehend the protection of Mary.

O glorious virgin it is not your protection alone, your very name causes hell to tremble. This formidable name is a thunderbolt to the devils, it is like the voice of thunder which strikes men with dismay, and deprives them of feeling.

EXAMPLE.

There lived at Reisberg, a Canon, regular called Arnould, who was extremely devout to the holy Virgin. When at the point of death, he devoutly received the last sacraments, and having caused his brother Religious to be assembled, he prayed them not to abandon him in his last moments. Scarcely had he made this request, than it seemed he had some pre-sentiment of what was to happen, for he began to tremble frightfully. A cold sweat, and convulsive throbs, sufficiently indicated what passed within him; but it was more manifest, when in a faltering voice he said to those present, "do you not see those who surround and wish to carry me into hell! Brothers, invoke Mary for me; I have great confidence in her." The Religious immediately began the Litanies of the holy Virgin, but when they came to the words holy Mary, pray for him, the dying man interrupted them, by saying, "repeat the name of Mary, for I am already before the judgment seat of God." Then after a short pause, he said, as if replying to his accuser, "Yes, I have done that certainly, but I performed penance for it: afterwards, ad-

dressing the holy Virgin, he said, O Mary ! I shall vanquish my enemies, if you come to my aid." The night passed in these terrible assaults, to which he ceased not to oppose the crucifix and the holy name of Mary, but at break of day calm was restored, and Arnauld, with a serene countenance, manifested his transports, since Mary had obtained him eternal salvation. Then turning towards the holy Virgin, who invited him to follow her, "I come my Mistress," said he, and in his effort to rise, he sweetly gave up the ghost, and followed Mary, as we trust, into the mansions of the blessed.

PRAYER.

O Mary my refuge ! how often have I not rendered myself the slave of hell ! you have broken my bonds, and snatched me from the hands of my enemies, but I fear falling again under their dominion, for they continually seek to carry off my soul, and flatter themselves it shall become their prey. Holy Virgin, defend me ! protected by you I am sure of victory, but grant that I may never forget to invoke you, especially during my last combat, the most terrible of all. Place then your holy name with that of

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your divine son on my lips, and in my heart, and grant, that expiring while invoking Jesus, Mary, I may find myself at thy feet in heaven. *Amen.*

CHAPTER V.

*Ad te suspi ramus gemente et flentes
in hac lachrymamur valle.*

To thee we send up our sighs, mourning
and weeping in this vale of tears.

SECTION I.

*Necessity of Mary's intercession in
order to Salvation.*

It is an article of holy faith, that the invocation of Saints is not only a thing permitted, but that it is holy and useful to salvation. The church has so declared against heretics, who pretend that the worship of those holy persons, was injurious to that of Jesus Christ. But if Jeremy after his death, prayed for Jerusalem, if the Elders in the Apocalypse, present to God the prayers of the Saints; if a St. Peter promised his disciples to remember them after his death; if a St. Stephen prayed for his

persecutors, and St. Paul for his companions in the apostleship, why should we not invoke the saints for obtaining divine grace and mercy?

Undoubtedly, "the only mediator between God and Man, is Jesus Christ, who by his merits, has reconciled us with his Father, but, it would be impious to deny that God does not grant graces through the intercession of the saints, and especially through that of Mary, Queen of saints, so dear, so cherished by our Lord Jesus Christ. Do not the honours conferred on a Mother, reflect on her children. "Let no one think," says St. Bernard, "that the glory of Jesus Christ is diminished, by increasing that of his Mother; for the honour of the Queen Mother, reflects on the King her Son.

We indeed, must be void of faith, if we doubt the utility of Mary's intercession, in order to salvation, since her prayers are not only useful, but necessary for this great end; not of an absolute necessity it is true, but of a moral necessity, which has its source in the divine will. That God has constituted Mary the ordinary dispensatrix of his graces, was the opinion of St. Bernard, it is now the common opinion of all Theologians, and all Doctors. It is taught

by Tega, Mendoza, Poire, Pacciuchelli, Segneri, Crasset, and a crowd of others. Even F. Noel Alexander, so reserved in his propositions, says, "that God wishes that all the favours men expect from him they should be indebted for, to the intercession of Mary."

This is also the opinion of Father Contenson : explaining the words of Jesus, on the Cross, "Behold thy Mother," he makes him say, "no one shall be made participator in the merits of my blood, but by the intercession of my Mother. My wounds are fountains of grace, but Mary is the canal through which they flow ; John my disciple, the measure of my love for you, will be proportioned to my love for her.

But this Doctrine does not please a certain modern author; this person who otherwise speaks with much piety and learning of true and false devotion, is very parsimonious when there is a question of the worship of the holy Virgin, refusing her that glory, and those privileges, which a St. Germanus, a St. Anselm, a St. John Damascene, a St. Bonaventure, a St. Antonius, a St. Bernardine of Sienna, and innumerable other holy Doctors, made no difficulty to grant her. He pretends that the aforesaid proposition, God confers no grace,

but through Mary's intercession, is an hyperbole which fervour caused some saints to utter, and that it is only correct in this sense, that "Mary has given to the world, Jesus, the author of grace," for, adds he, "the Apostle, formally teaches, that we acknowledge but one sole mediator between God and Man, viz. the Word made flesh."

But with his permission, I reply that the mediation of justice, in virtue of merits, is one thing, and that the mediation of grace by means of intercession is another: there is a great difference between asserting that God *cannot*, and that God *will not* grant us graces through the intercession of Mary. We recognise God for the source of all good, we confess him to be the absolute master of his gifts, and that Mary is only a mere creature, who is indebted to his pure bounty for all that she obtains.

This sentiment is by no means contrary to Catholic doctrine; no, far from it, the church in her public service, teaches us to recur to Mary under the titles of *health of the sick; refuge of sinners; help of christians*. In her offices for the Festivals of Mary, she applies to her these words of wisdom, *In me is all hope of life and virtue; again, he who finds me shall find life and obtain salva-*

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tion from the Lord: they who work in me shall have life everlasting. Now what do all those texts go to prove but that the intercession of Mary is necessary for us?

Such is the opinion held by most Theologians, and confirmed by many Fathers of the church, and it is neither respectful nor just to say, as this author has done, that they have dealt in hyperbole, exaggeration. The Saints inspired by the spirit of truth, are extremely cautious of exaggeration, which belongs to the father of liars. And here we shall take the liberty to say, that when an opinion honourable to the holy Virgin is discussed, if this opinion be neither repugnant to faith, nor to the decisions of the church, and that it has some foundation, some support; to reject, to combat it, merely because the other sentiment may be also true, demonstrates very little love or respect for the Mother of God.

We would not wish to be of the number of such persons, nor our readers either, on the contrary, we would have them firmly believe all that can be said without erring, of the glorious privileges of Mary: and in this we imitate the Abbot Rupert, who placed among the homages most pleasing to the Mother of God, that of believing in her grandeurs. Though there was no

other authority than that of St. Augustin, it should calm all fear of exceeding in this point. Now this holy Doctor assures us, that all that we can say in praise of the holy Virgin is beneath what her eminent dignity deserves and requires. Does not the Church say in the Mass of the blessed Virgin, "You are happy O holy Virgin, and most worthy of all praise."

But let us resume, and see what the Saints write in support of our proposition. We read in St. Bernard, "that God has filled Mary with all graces, that men may receive them by her, as by a canal." "Before the birth of this blessed Virgin." he adds, "mankind had not the abundant supply of graces which we have, because God had not yet built the aqueduct destined to convey its waters. As when Holophernes wished to destroy Bethulia, he commanded that the public fountains which supplied it with water, should be diverted from their course, thus when the devil wishes to subdue a soul he first endeavours to destroy its devotion to the Mother of God, that the channel of grace once destroyed, it may with more facility fall under his yoke. Consider then christians, continues the Saint how ardent, how tender should be your devotion to the Queen of heaven, since the

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Lord has placed in her the plenitude of all good gifts. As the moon placed between the sun and the earth, renders the earth all it receives from the sun, thus Mary the beautiful moon, in the order of grace, receives the influences of the divine sun of justice, to communicate them to the inhabitants of our globe. She is the *happy gate of heaven*, for as the letters of grace, after receiving the king's signature, must necessarily pass through his palace gate, so no grace, no pardon emanates from the throne of the King of Kings, without passing through the hands of Mary." *according to St. Bernard.*

"Mary" says St. Bonaventure, "is called the gate of heaven, because no one enters this blessed abode without first passing through her."

St. Jerome confirms our argument: he says, "that the plenitude of grace is found in Jesus Christ, as in the head, whence it flows to Mary, who communicates it to all his members." St. Bernardine of Sienna, explains this idea more clearly, when he says, "that as christians are the mystical body of the man God, Jesus Christ, all the graces of the spiritual life which flow from the head, are transmitted by Mary. St. Bonaventure says, that God, the source of

all grace, having been pleased to dwell in the womb of the blessed Virgin, she has acquired a species of jurisdiction over all graces, and that the floods of these celestial gifts issued from her virginal womb, as from a divine ocean, when the eternal Word came forth therefrom."

F. Crasset explains in nearly the same sense, this passage of Jeremy, where the Prophet perceiving through the vista of ages, the incarnation of the divine Word, says, *that a woman should encompass a man.* "As a line proceeding from the centre of a circle," says this Father, "cannot go out from it, without passing through the circumference, thus no grace can come to us from Jesus Christ, the centre of all good, without passing through Mary, who was the circumference as it were of this man God, while he was in her womb.

What do the Fathers, the Doctors of the Church, teach us, by texts so strong and so precise? Do they intend to prove, that all graces come to us through Mary in this sense only, that she has given us the author of grace, as our adversary would fain persuade us? Far from it, they on the contrary, give us clearly to understand, that every grace given to man in virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ, is conveyed to him

by the hands of Mary. This is the conclusion of the venerable F. Suarez, S. J. He writes, "It is now the general sentiment of the Church, that the intercession of the Mother of God, is not only useful, but even necessary to salvation; "for the Lord" says St. Bernard, "wishes to grant us nothing, without the agency of Mary." Before him, St. Ildephonsus said to the holy Virgin, *O glorious Lady! the Lord has confided to you all the gifts he wishes to dispense to his creatures; all the treasures of grace are committed to your care.* St. Peter Damian, goes still farther, asking himself this question, "why has God before he became incarnate in Mary's womb, applied for her consent? For two reasons, he replies, first to oblige us to be very grateful to her, and secondly, to teach us that our salvation depends on the will of this blessed Virgin.

St. Bonaventure, on these words of Isaiah, *A rod shall come forth of the root of Jesse, and a flower shall bud out of its root,* makes an ingenious reflection, "whoever" says he, "desires the grace of the Holy Ghost, let him seek the flower on the stem, that is to say, let him go to Jesus by Mary, for the stem shall give us the flower, and by this flower, we shall find God. "If thou wishest to possess this flower, try to

make its stem incline towards thee." The great St. Francis of Assisium, in his sermon on the Ephiphany, remarks on these words of the gospel for that feast, "they found the child with Mary his Mother," that Jesus is never found but with Mary, and by Mary, and he concludes, that in vain is the divine infant sought, if we seek him not with his Mother. "I wish" says St. Ildephonsus, "to be the servant of Mary, that I may be the servant of her son."

EXAMPLE.

In the year 1683, the Turks elated with their victories in Germany, formed the design of pushing their conquests beyond the Rhine, and menacing all Christendom with destruction, came with an army of 200,000 men, to besiege Vienna. The inhabitants struck by the terror of their arms, fled on every side. The Emperor himself, Leopold, the first, not being in a condition of opposing these victorious Ottomans, was obliged to depart precipitately from the palace, and got out of the city at one side with all his family, at the moment the enemy laid siege to it on the other. On the Vigil of the Assumption, the Turks opened

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the breach, and pushed forward with alarming rapidity. To increase the misfortune of the citizens, a church took fire, and the devouring element gained the arsenal: but by the visible protection of the holy Virgin, on the feast, the fire miraculously ceased, and afforded time for drawing from the magazine the necessary ammunition. So marked a protection of the Mother of God, re-animated the courage of the besieged; neither the continual fire of the assailants, nor the bombs which threw down the houses, prevented them from imploring in the churches, night and day, the divine aid. The preachers ceased not exhorting them to confide in Mary their powerful protectress. The 31st August, the Turks had gained so far, that Vienna, the bulwark of Christendom, was almost entirely reduced to ashes, but the Nativity of the holy Virgin, 8th September, the Christians having redoubled their prayers, miraculously received notice of prompt assistance, and the second day, in the octave of that feast the whole mountain of Kalemberg, was seen covered with the troops of the great Sobieski, king of Poland: his army it is true, was small, when compared with the Ottoman forces, but it was strong with the divine help. The 12th September,

Sobieski, with prince Charles of Lorraine, heard Mass in the chapel of St Leopold : he himself served it, kneeling at the foot of the altar, with extended arms, except when the priest needed his ministry. Having communicated, and the sacrifice finished, he placed himself and his whole army under the protection of the Mother of God, and then receiving the benediction given in the name of the Pope, this pious prince rose, and full of holy confidence, exclaimed, *Let us march now under the all powerful protection of the Mother of God.* When his little army beheld the numerous forces of the infidels, they felt that victory on their side should be miraculous. It indeed was so, for after the first shock which was on their side a little violent, the Kan of the Tartars fled ; the grand Vizier, foaming with rage, was drawn along by the torrent in spite of him, leaving in the field all his baggage, his ammunition, and his artillery, which amounted to one hundred and eighty pieces of cannon, together with the great standard of Mahomet, and ten thousand slain. After this signal victory, Sobieski and the emperor Leopold, entered Vienna, the former intoned the *Te Deum*. Thenceforward, this religious prince, caused to be carried with him, a tablet of our Lady of

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Loretto, which had been found by miracle : two angels were represented thereon, as placing a crown over the head of the holy Virgin, and each holding a parchment, on which was inscribed in Latin. *By this image of Mary, I John shall conquer.* And we likewise despite the fury of the enemies of our salvation, will be always victorious, if we have recourse to the Queen of heaven.

PRAYER.

“ Rejoice O my soul,” for the prospect Mary’s intercession affords thee of being saved. O powerful Queen, from how many perils have you not delivered me ! how many lights and graces have you not obtained me ! How have I deserved that you should labour so ardently for my salvation. Ah it is your clemency alone that has interested you in my favour, and if in return for your gifts, I gave my blood and life, it would be nothing. As I can only offer you the weak tribute of my praise and love, deign O most amiable Virgin graciously to accept it. *Amen.*

SECTION II.

Continuation of the same subject.

A man and a woman having proved our destruction, it was befitting that another man and another woman should unite to save us. No doubt Jesus the man God, alone sufficed to effect our redemption; but it was more convenient that both sexes having concurred to our ruin, both should conspire to save us. Albertus Magnus, styles Mary the *Coadjutrix of our redemption*, and the holy Virgin herself, told St. Bridget, "that as Adam and Eve had sold the world for an apple, thus she and her son had redeemed it with one heart." God has been able to create the world, but he has not been pleased to redeem it without the co-operation of Mary.

"The blessed Virgin," says Father Suarez, "has concurred in three ways to our redemption: first in meriting, *by congruity*, as Theologians say, that the Word should become incarnate in her womb. Secondly, by the continual prayers she offered to God for us while on earth; thirdly, by her consent that Jesus might sacrifice himself for our redemption, and hence it is, that the

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Lord ever equitable in his decrees, has ordained that she should become for all, the mediatrix of salvation.”

Mary is called the co-operatrix of our justification, because God has confided to her care, the graces he wishes to impart to us, “so that” says St. Bernard, “all who ever existed, or ever shall exist, should regard this blessed Virgin, as the means of their salvation.”

Jesus says in the gospel, *no one can come to me, if my Father does not draw him by his grace*, he says also of Mary, “no one can come to me, if my Mother does not attract him by her prayers. When St. Elizabeth saw the holy Virgin enter, she exclaimed in her humility, *whence is this to me, that the Mother of my Lord should visit me?* Here it might be asked, did she not know that Jesus also was in her house, and why then should she not suppose herself, as unworthy, of seeing the Son as the Mother? But the saint well knew that when Mary comes, she always brings Jesus with her, so that it sufficed her to thank the Mother, without naming the Son.

She is like a Merchant's Ship, carrying bread from afar, says the Holy Ghost, of the strong woman. Mary is this privileged vessel, who has brought us Jesus Christ,

“the living bread descended from heaven.” Those who are not in this Vessel, that is, those whom Mary has not under her protection, will be infallibly swallowed by the waves. When, therefore the winds blow, and the floods of temptation rise, let us say to Mary, what St. Peter said to Jesus Christ, “save us, we perish.” But here the above author will object that salvation can only come from God. Well, but let us ask him, if a criminal condemned to death, may yet ask some favourite of the king to save him by his intercession, why may not Christians implore the Mother of God, who I think has some influence with him, to obtain their pardon? We hear St. John Damascene, say to her, “immaculate Virgin, deliver me from eternal damnation.” And St. Bonaventure calls her “the salvation of those who invoke her.” The Church also addresses her, as *health of the Sick*, why then should Christians feel any scruple in saying to her with the Church and the Saints, *Save us?*

But I shall adduce the testimony of other writers in support of our argument. The glorious St. Gatian affirms, “that though we may ask as many graces as we please, yet that we cannot obtain them, but through the intercession of Mary. St. Antoninus says, that “to ask favours,

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without interposing Mary, is to attempt to fly without wings:" as Pharoah said to the Egyptians, when in want of bread, "go to Joseph," so when we ask some grace of God, he says to us, "go to Mary." "Christians" says Richard of St. Laurence, "can say to Mary, as the Egyptians to Joseph, "our salvation is in thy hands," and Cassian, that "the salvation of all men is in the protection of Mary."

As a rock when it loses its support, rolls from precipice to precipice, till it falls into the abyss, so a soul who loses Mary's protection, falls from one crime into another, until it is lodged in hell. God will *never* save us, says St. Bonaventure, without Mary's intercession: *as a little Infant cannot live without the care of a nurse, so no Christian can be saved except Mary protect him.* Keep fast hold of her garment therefore little children of Jesus Christ, and never let it go until you receive her benediction in Heaven; "Who could know God except by you, O holy Virgin," says St. Germanus: "Who could be saved O all-powerful Virgin, except by your intercession." In another place he says: "If you O blessed Virgin did not point out the Way, no one would escape the dangers to be met with therein." As we have not access to

the Father, says St. Bernard, but by Jesus Christ, we have not access to Jesus Christ but through Mary, that this divine Saviour whom she has given to the world, may receive us from her hands. “*What shall become of us, what hope remains to us, O Mary, says St Germanus: if you abandon us, who are the life of Christians.*”

But if all graces come to us through Mary say some, it must follow, that when we pray to the Saints they must employ her mediation with God, for the obtaining our requests, and this is what no person ever believed or advanced: for my part, I confess that this sentiment does not appear strange to me; what more natural than that the Lord who has crowned his Mother Queen of Saints, may wish that the Saints recur to her intercession in favour of their Clients? As to the objection that this opinion has never been supported, I say that St. Anselm, St. Bernard, St. Bonaventure, as well as F. Suarez, and many others maintained it: “*In vain*” says St. Bernard, *would a Person ask some favour of the Saints, if Mary did not endeavour to obtain it.*” It is in this sense that a modern Author understands this verse of the 42 Psalm, “*All the rich of the People intreat thy countenance.*” The rich of the people says

he, are the Saints; when they wish to procure some favour for their suppliants, they address themselves to Mary. "We should intreat the great ones of the Heavenly Jerusalem," says F. Suarez: "to be our intercessor with their Mistress and Queen," "You alone, O Mary," says St. Anselm: "can do as much with God for us as all the Saints together: How is that, still demands the Saint? Because you are the Mother of our Saviour, and the Spouse of the Holy Ghost, the Queen of Heaven and earth: if you are silent, none will speak in our behalf, if you intercede for us, all in concert join in your petitions. When Mary prays for a soul, says F. Segari, all Paradise seconds her prayer, or rather *in her quality of Queen, she then commands the Angels and Saints to accompany her to the throne of God to join in her supplications.*

O Mary our faithful Mediatrix! Virgin full of Grace! Ladder of Jacob! Gate of Heaven! Treasury of Divine Grace! May all Christians honor you with all their hearts: to use the beautiful expression of St. Bernard, and cling to you with the utmost fidelity. Let us implore Grace, but let us do so through you; in fine, let us present to God through your sacred hands, all the prayers and good works in our power,

if we desire that this our incense may be acceptable to the Lord.

EXAMPLE.

The following Story is related by Eustachius, Patriarch of Constantinople, an eye witness of the fact : it is confirmed by Sts. Peter Damian, Bernard, Bonaventure, and many others. Theophilus, the subject of it, was Archdeacon of the Church of Adanas : his great virtues had acquired him such esteem, that the people wished to raise him to the Episcopal Chair, but his humility opposed it. It happened that some enemies of his, charged him with a great crime, and the calumny bearing all the resemblance of truth, his Bishop in consequence deprived him of his Charge. This so displeased Theophilus, that for the recovery of his reputation, he consulted a Hebrew Magician, who placed him in communication with the Devil, to be succoured in his disgrace ; the wicked spirit agreed to re-establish his ruined character, on condition that he would renounce Jesus and Mary, and give him in writing the act of renunciation, to which the unhappy man agreed. The following day the Bishop was informed (no one knew how,) that

Theophilus had been calumniated : so sending for him, he asked his pardon, and reinstated him in his dignity. But struck with remorse at the remembrance of his perfidy, the Archdeacon knew not what to do : at length he goes into a Church, and seeing there an image of the holy Virgin, he said : "O Mother of God ! I cannot abandon myself to despair because you are my refuge, and your clemency is unbounded ;" for forty days he persevered in tears and prayers, reflecting on his sin, in the bitterness of his soul : at the end of this term the Mother of mercy appeared to him one night, and spoke in these terms : *O Theophilus what hast thou done ? Thou hast renounced me and my Son, and given the pledge of thy Apostacy to our mortal enemy. My Patroness* he replied, *I have been very wicked it is true, but it belongs to you to obtain my pardon ;* seeing his confidence, Mary then said : *Take courage I shall intercede for thee.* Animated by this promise, Theophilus redoubled his prayers and austerities, remaining continually before this image of the holy Virgin, until she again appeared, and with a serene countenance said to him : *Rejoice Theophilus I have presented to God your sighs and prayers and he has been pleased to grant your pardon. But my Mistress* replied he, *the enemy has*

still in his possession the abominable act, by which I renounced Jesus and you : I shall never be easy until I get it again. Three days after, he found the Paper lying on his breast after awaking ; the following day he went to the Church, and in presence of all the assembly, related the whole affair to the Bishop, with many tears, and finished by consigning to him the act of Renunciation. The Bishop caused it to be burned before all the people, and all present celebrated together the praises of Jesus and Mary. Theophilus then returned to the Church of the holy Virgin, and at the end of three days, expired in the peace of the Lord.

PRAYER.

Blessed Virgin who in your double quality of Queen and Mother, dispense your favours with such magnificence and love, I who am so poor in merit and virtue, and greatly indebted to the divine justice, humbly recommend myself to you ; you have the keys of the Divine mercy, draw on this inexhaustible treasure, and dispense its riches to this poor sinner, in proportion to his immense wants. Amen.

CHAPTER VI.

“ *Eja ergo advocata Nostra.*”

Turn then most gracious Advocate.

SECTION I.

Mary is a powerful Advocate.

MATERNAL authority is naturally so strong that a son if he be a Monarch, and possess most absolute sway over every individual in his dominions, cannot treat his mother as a subject; it is true that Jesus Christ in virtue of the Hypostatic union of the Divine and human nature, possesses even as man, supreme authority over all creatures, and even over Mary herself: yet it is not less true, that during his mortal life he wished to be subject to her. St. Ambrose says, that Jesus having chosen Mary for his Mother, was obliged to be subject to her. We can say of the Saints, says Richard of St. Laurence, that God is with them, but to Mary it has been given, not only to conform herself to the will of God, but that God himself has been conformed to hers: and while we say of vir-

gins, that they follow the Lamb, we can say of Mary on earth, that the Lamb followed her.

Although the holy Virgin no longer commands her Son, yet her prayers being the prayers of a mother, never meet a refusal: hence St. Peter Damian says, "All power O' Mary has been given you in heaven and on earth; nothing is impossible to you, for you can render hope to the desponding." When Mary, he continues, presents herself before Jesus, the altar of reconciliation, to mediate for us, she rather seems to dictate than to supplicate, and has more the air of a Queen than of a subject.

Imperio Virginis, omnia famulantur etiam Deus. That all is subject to Mary's empire, even God himself, St. Bernardine of Sienna, does not fear to advance; the Saint wishes to insinuate thereby, that God, hears Mary's prayers as if they were commands. The Lord, O Mary, says St. Anselm, has so exalted you, that his favour has rendered you omnipotent. Yes says Richard of St. Laurence, Mary is Omnipotent, for according to all Laws, the Queen enjoys the same privileges as the King, and that power may be equal between the Son and the Mother, Jesus has rendered Mary

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omnipotent : the one is omnipotent by nature, the other is omnipotent by grace ; that is to say, as it was revealed to St. Bridget, Jesus has obliged himself to grant all the desires and requests of his blessed Mother, not willing to refuse her any thing in heaven, since she had refused him nothing on earth.

With great reason then, O blessed Mother, does St. Bernard and St. Anselm say, that it suffices for the accomplishment of any work, that you desire it : hence it is that you can raise the greatest sinner at pleasure, to the most eminent Sanctity, and that Albertus Magnus makes you say : “ It suffices to entreat me to desire a thing, for whatsoever I wish is necessarily accomplished.

Considering this immense power of Mary, St. Peter Damian thus addresses her, “ O holy Virgin ! do not fail to plead our cause ; be governed by your heart, exert for us your great influence, you who are as rich in mercy as in power.”

While Mary abode on earth, after zeal for the divine glory, nothing was nearer to her heart, nothing so occupied her mind as to succour the unfortunate. That she even then enjoyed the privilege of obtaining what she wished, we have a proof in the

change of the water into wine at the marriage of Cana. Why does Jesus perform this miracle, since in the divine councils which are immutable, his "hour was not yet come?" It is because the decree which fixed this epoch, was subject to another decree by which from all eternity, this Lord obliged himself to grant the requests of his Mother: and Mary knew well the extent of her privilege. Hence, although Jesus appeared by these words, "my hour is not yet come," to reject her suit, she doubted not for an instant, the grant thereof. By saying, "my hour is not yet come," observes St. Thomas Aquinas, Jesus wished only to insinuate, that if any one else besides his Mother asked him, he would have deferred the miracle.

It is indeed a certain truth, that no creature can obtain for poor sinners, so many, and such abundant graces, as our most clement advocate; for she is less regarded by the Lord as his servant, than honoured by him as his Mother. The Spouse in the Canticles, says to his beloved, "you who dwell in the gardens, our friends are attentive to your voice; let me hear it." These friends are the Saints, who, when they wish to obtain some favor for their suppliants, turn their eyes on the Queen, knowing that

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she needs only let her voice be heard, and all their desires are granted.

We read in the history of Rome, that when Coriolanus besieged the Capital, neither the prayers of the citizens nor the requests of his friends could soften him, but the moment his Mother Veturia raised her voice, he laid down his arms, and sacrificed his resentment. If a Pagan shewed such respect for his Mother, what will not Jesus the Man God, evince for his Virgin Mother? Father Justin, assures us, that one sigh from Mary, can do more for us with God, than all the prayers of the Saints united together; the devil himself acknowledged the same to St. Dominic, by the mouth of a possessed person.

St. Germanus says to Mary, "You O holy Virgin, have over God the authority of a Mother, and hence, you obtain pardon for the most obdurate sinners. St. Bridget heard the Saints say to Mary, Queen of Heaven! elect of the Lord! what is impossible to you? To this corresponds a celebrated adage, of a certain Father, *you holy Virgin, can effect by your prayers, all that God can operate by his power.* What says St. Augustine, is not the dignity of Jesus, connected with the honour of his Mother? Does he not assure us in the

Gospel, that he is come to fulfil the law and not to destroy it. St. George, Archbishop of Nicomedia, goes still farther; he says, that Jesus Christ has imposed a law upon himself, to grant the requests of his Mother, to satisfy his obligations to her for giving him existence as man. Rejoice then O Mary, since he who is liberal beyond measure towards us, to whom he owes nothing, considers himself indebted to you.

It is a reflection of St. Augustine, that as Mary merited to give human flesh to the Son of God, and thereby prepared the price of our redemption, she is consequently more enabled to obtain our salvation, than all the redeemed together. "You then can entirely save us, O Mary," says St. John Damascene to her, "for your authority of Mother, gives an irresistible force to your prayers. O admirable goodness of our God, who to effect our future happiness, has given us an advocate that gains every cause in which she pleads! O ineffable mercy, who lest we might be deterred from approaching, by reason of the formidable sentence he is to pronounce, has ordained that his Mother the mistress of grace should intercede for us!

EXAMPLE.

Surius relates, that it was through the holy Virgin, the blessed Elzear, Count of Arian, received his great spirit of prayer. His Governess being a very pious woman, says this historian, was anxious that her pupil should be so too, and hence she was desirous to see him pray devoutly, and continually asked this favor for him of God. One day at mass, while recommending him earnestly to God, she heard a voice say to her, that the Queen of Heaven instructed him in the holy science of prayer. Lest she might be deceived by the father of lies, she mentioned the circumstance to a holy Priest, who at once examined the young Count as to the method he followed in prayer. Elzear ingenuously said, that he began his meditation by recommending himself to the holy Virgin, beseeching her to suggest to him the petitions, and to engrave in his soul, the sentiments with which the Holy Ghost might inspire him. That he then recited the Ave Maria, and after this little tribute of homage to his blessed Mother, the time of prayer passed in pious thoughts and affections, without his ever experiencing dryness or disgust.

Behold an effectual means to learn the holy art of praying well.

PRAYER.

O Mother of God, permit me to say to you with St. Bernard, speak O my mistress for your Son hears you. In taking flesh in your chaste womb, a God has been pleased to become your debtor, in order to place afterwards at your disposal, all the treasures of his unbounded mercy. All men without exception, experience your clemency; if you heap benefits on those who outrage and dishonor you, what have not those who glory in being your servants, reason to expect? We holy Virgin hope for grace and salvation from you, and since you need but say the word, ah do so, you shall be heard, and we shall be saved. *Amen.*

SECTION II.

Mary is a compassionate Advocate.

WE have so many motives to love our great Queen, that if every sermon spoke of her, if all the earth resounded with her praises, if all men gave their life for her,

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it would be little in return for the tender affection she bears them, or to the obligations we have towards her. The blessed Raymond Jourdan, who through humility, called himself the Idiot, said of Mary, "she loves those who love her, she goes so far as even to serve those who serve her, using all her power if they be sinners, to obtain their pardon from her son." As the Son mediates with the Father, so Mary ceases not to treat with both, the great affair of our salvation.

Sinners, whosoever you may be, if the enormity of your crimes causes you to doubt, not of the power, but of the goodness of Mary, know that she herself assured the venerable Sister Villani, that after the title of Mother of God, there is not one in which she more delights, than in that of advocate of sinners. St. Bonaventure says, that one of Mary's greatest privileges, is that of being omnipotent next her Son. But as this would avail us nought, if she were not interested for us; he has given her a heart so tender and compassionate, that no Mother ever loved her children as this blessed Mother loves us.

Who continues the Saint, has, had more solicitude for us, than you O Mother of mercy? Who supports us like you, in the

afflictions we meet? Who intercedes for us more efficaciously, than you? Your protection is more powerful, and your love more warm, than all that the human understanding can conceive, for as the learned Idiot says, if the other saints succour their clients, the Mother of God in her solicitude is the advocate of all.

“Mary,” says the blessed Amedée, “assists continually near the throne of God, to intercede for us; as she beholds in the light of God all our miseries, she has for them all the commiseration of a truly maternal heart.” Hence, Richard of St. Laurence, encourages all to go with confidence to this clement advocate, assuring them, that she is always ready to speak in their behalf.

With what efficacy, with what tender charity does not Mary plead our cause. From the consideration thereof, St. Augustine says to her, “men have but one sole advocate in heaven, and it is you holy Virgin.” Indeed although the saints try to procure our salvation, the charity of Mary surpasses theirs by so many degrees, that we may truly stile her our only advocate. According to the beautiful expression of St. Germanus. *Non est satietas defensionis ejus*. She is never tired in defending us.

A person plunged in all kinds of dis-

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orders, had once a vision, in which he seemed to stand before the tribunal of Jesus Christ? The devil was his accuser, and Mary his advocate. The enemy presented against him the catalogue of his sins, which being placed in the scale of divine justice, weighed much heavier than his good works. But what did his powerful protectress? Extending her hand, she inclined the light side of the balance in favor of the criminal, giving him thus to understand that if he changed his life, she would obtain his pardon. He did repent in consequence, and persevered to the end of his life.

Poor sinners! how lamentable would be your lot if you had not this powerful advocate, this advocate so wise, so prudent, and so tender; that her Son cannot condemn those whom she defends. St. Bonaventure, calls her the prudent Abigail, for as this woman by her prudence, saved her husband Nabal, from David's indignation, thus Mary knows so well how to appease the divine justice, that God himself blesses her and in some manner seems to thank her, for hindering him from punishing sinners, and consigning them to their unhappy fate. It is because the eternal Father wishes even to exhaust his mercies in our favor, that after having given us

Jesus for mediator with him, he has given us Mary for advocate, next to Jesus. "Undoubtedly," says St. Bernard, "Jesus Christ is the only mediator between God and man, but because men fear that divine person who is destined one day to judge them, it has been necessary to give them a mediator with the mediator, and none was so fit for this office as Mary his Mother. It would be injuring this most gracious Lady, to fear to come to her throne. Read the holy gospels carefully; peruse all that the sacred penmen have said of Mary, and if you find one single word, one sole trait of harshness, or even severity in her life, I shall permit you to fear. But in vain will you seek it; hence, dry up your tears afflicted souls; take courage ye fearful and pusillanimous, the Mother of your Judge is the advocate of sinners, a most powerful advocate, who knows how to appease the Lord; an universal advocate whose credit the whole world has experienced.

We shall conclude this section by the eloquent apostrophe which William of Paris puts into the mouth of the sinner, who has recourse to Mary. "I come to you glorious Mother of God, whom the Church stiles Mother of mercy: you O Mary, never met a refusal, and your intercession

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you have not refused to any. Is it in vain that the Church proclaims you the advocate of the miserable? God forbid O mediatrix of men, and their only hope after Jesus, that my sins may be an obstacle to your mercies, for all that you possess of grace and glory, even your divine maternity itself, if I may say so, you owe to sinners. Far then be from me the thought, that you can refuse your clemency to those who implore it: come then to my aid O "mediatrix of peace between God and his people," in the name of that clemency, which is peculiar to you, and which infinitely surpasses my sins and iniquities.

EXAMPLE.

The Venerable Mother Catherine of Bar, called in religion, Sister Mectilda, of the holy Sacrament, foundress of the order for the perpetual adoration of this divine mystery, relates, that in her first noviciate at Bruyeres, her community was afflicted with an epidemic disease, which rendered spiritual and temporal succour so rare, that they could scarcely procure mass on a Sunday. To complete her afflictions the poor novice fell into a state of great interior desolation; every thing disgusted her with

her state, she lost all relish of spiritual things. Having no person to console her, she was on the point of sinking under the trial, when she went and prostrated herself at the feet of the holy Virgin, her ordinary resource. There melting in tears, she said in a spirit of humble confidence, "O most holy Virgin, my Mother and patroness, have you then conducted me hither to perish? I have not the means of serving God, or of knowing my obligations; I am lost if you yourself do not condescend to exercise towards me the office of mistress, as you have hitherto performed that of Mother. Wonderful to relate, her prayer was instantly heard, her troubles calmed, and Mary, so instructed her in all her duties, that she feared not to say afterwards, whatever I know I learned it from the holy Virgin.

PRAYER.

Advocate of all men! can I flatter myself, you will become mine, after having deserved on account of my sins to be abandoned by you? But what will be my lot, if you forsake me? Who will undertake my cause, if you refuse to plead in it?

O Mary, whose bounty exceeds my malice and ingratitude! you who were born

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for the salvation of sinners, behold my repentance and my confidence, and receive into your maternal arms the guilty child that rushes into them, with this prayer in his mouth, *Take pity on me.*

SECTION III.

Mary is Mediatrix of peace between God and sinners.

THE grace of God is a treasure above all price: there is nothing so desirable. The Holy Ghost calls it an infinite treasure, because it is by the grace of God we are elevated to the dignity of friends of God, so that Jesus Christ our Redeemer, hesitates not to address, by the title of friends, those who are in grace. *You are my friends.* O accursed sin, which destroyest this precious friendship, and renderest the soul an object of hatred, instead of love. What should the person do then, who by sin has lost this precious gift? He should seek a mediator who will procure his pardon, and put him in possession of the forfeited blessing. "Console yourselves then sinners," says St. Bernard, "since God has given you his Son as mediator. But what!

you imagine that this merciful Saviour is harsh and rigorous, you obstinately figure to yourselves as terrible, amiability itself. Ah people of little faith, learn that Jesus has nailed your sins to his cross, and redeemed you in his blood. Well, if the majesty of Jesus terrifies you, because he is God as well as man, remember that Mary a pure creature, is your advocate with him; recur to her, she is, my dear children, the ladder of sinners by which they ascend again to the height of grace. Mary is all my confidence, Mary is the foundation of my hope."

Hear how the Holy Ghost makes Mary speak in the Canticles; "I am the defence of those who recur to me, my mercy is to them an impregnable tower, and hence the Lord has established me" a mediatrix of peace, between him and sinners. "This powerful mediatrix" says Cardinal Hugo, "procures peace for those who are at war; by her, pardon is granted to the guilty, salvation to the lost, mercy to those who are in despair. Mary is also compared to the pavilions of Solomon, where they only spoke of peace, in preference to the tents of David, where there was only question of war, that we may learn, she never treats of ven-

geance against sinners, but of reconciliation and pardon."

The dove which returned to the ark with the green olive branch, was a figure of Mary. "O blessed Virgin," says St. Bonaventure to her, "you are that faithful dove, who after the sad shipwreck of the universe, have borne our Lord Jesus Christ, the sacred olive branch, the sign of mercy; and as peace was given to earth by you, it is through you that sinners continue to be reconciled with God."

The rainbow which St. John saw encompass the throne of the Eternal, was also an emblem of the holy Virgin, as she is always present to mitigate the sentences pronounced against sinners. It was Mary God had in view, when he said to Noah, *I shall place in heaven a sign of peace, and in beholding it, I shall remember the perpetual alliance I have made with men.*

The principal office given to Mary, when she appeared on earth, was to raise man from sin, and to reconcile him with God. *Pasce hædos tuos.* "Feed your goats," said the Lord in creating her. We know that sinners are designated by the goats, as the just are by the sheep. "The goats" says William of Paris, "are confided to you O Mary, that you may transform them

into sheep ; thus, whilst they deserved to be sent to the left hand, they shall through your intercession, be placed at the right ! Here we may observe, that God does not command Mary to feed all the goats indiscriminately, but *her own goats* ; *Pasce hædos tuos* ; for she does not save all sinners, but those who serve and honour her ; as to those who are not devout to her, who never beg her aid to arise from their sins, she will not recognise them as her flock, and the left hand will be their station, on the great day of the Lord.

A gentleman whose sins were so enormous, that he despaired of their remission, was advised by a good religious man, to recur to the blessed Virgin. In compliance with this advice, he went to a celebrated oratory in the city, consecrated to our Lady, and had no sooner cast his eyes on the image of the holy Virgin, than he felt a great sentiment of confidence. He prostrated himself then to kiss the feet of the image, when lo ! the hand was moved towards him, and on it, he saw engraved these words, *I shall save thee from those who afflict thee.*” The heart of the poor sinner was so filled with contrition for his sins, and love for Jesus and Mary, that he died on the spot.

“ I am the loadstone of hearts,” says

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Mary to St. Bridget; "as the loadstone has the property of attracting iron, thus I attract hearts hardened as adamant, to give them to God." This prodigy, we daily witness : we often see in our missions, that many sinners who remained insensible at other sermons, become moved at that on the clemency of the holy Virgin.

"Mary" says St. Chrysostom, has been elected from all eternity as Mother of God, that she may save by her mercy, those to whom her son in justice, cannot grant pardon." "Yes," adds St. Anselm, Mary has been raised to her eminent dignity, rather for sinners, than for the just, and since she is indebted to the guilty for her glorious maternity, how can I despair of pardon, however enormous my crimes may be.

The Church in the prayers for the Vigil of the Assumption, teaches that this glorious Queen, has been assumed into heaven, to intercede confidently for us, *fiducialiter*, hence she is styled by St. Justin, the arbiter of our lot; "as an arbiter decides" says he, "between two parties, thus Jesus permits his Mother to decide between him and us."

"What !" says Abbot Adam, "can he fear to perish, who has Mary for his Mother and advocate? Will you holy Virgin,

adds the same Saint, refuse to implore your son for another son, or to demand of the Redeemer, the pardon of the redeemed? No certainly; for you are not ignorant that the same God who has rendered his son a mediator between him and man, has made you advocate between the judge and criminals.

EXAMPLE.

In the time of St. Dominic, there lived at Florence, a young girl named *Benedicta*, the scandal of the city, by her vices and disorders. God who had over her, peculiarly merciful designs, permitted, that when the Saint came to preach there, *Benedicta* might be led to hear him. Though it was mere curiosity that conducted her to the church, she was so moved by the discourse, that entering into herself, she went to the Saint, and having made her confession, received the holy absolution at his hands; but soon after, the force of habit and very dangerous occasions, led her into her former excesses: when St. Dominic was made acquainted with her relapse, he sought her out, and persuaded her to return to God by a second confession. To confirm her repentance, God then permitted

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her to be transported into hell, where she saw the souls of many who were damned through her means, and a list of her crimes and scandals. Full of terror and alarm, the poor penitent invoked Mary, and instantly she heard a voice tell her, that the Mother of God had succeeded in procuring the prolongation of her life, to expiate her crimes. The vision then disappeared, and *Benedicta* was entirely converted. But the terrible register of her sins was continually before her eyes. One day as she was wishing to be delivered from the pain it caused; she asked the blessed Virgin that her sins might be entirely effaced. The Mother of God appeared, and promised that her request should be granted, on condition, she would never forget the great mercy of God towards her, the enormity of her sins, and the sufferings they occasioned Jesus Christ, and secondly that she would consider how many were damned who deserved it much less than she; *Benedicta* obeyed most exactly her powerful Patroness, and in some time after, our Lord shewed her the formidable register saying, "behold thy sins are effaced, write in their place acts of all the virtues." This the holy penitent continued to do, till by a happy death, she terminated her mortal life.

PRAYER.

O my clement Mistress! since you are our advocate, plead our cause, fulfil your office. Do not say my cause is too bad; however precarious, it cannot be lost in the hands of such an advocate as you. The greatest sinner is saved if you undertake his defence, and sure you are too merciful not to undertake mine. Mary, my hope and refuge, increase my confidence in your intercession, which is to me the surest pledge of recovering the friendship of my God. *Amen.*

CHAPTER VII.

*“Illos tuos misericordes oculos ad nos
converte.”*

“Thine eyes of mercy towards us.”

SECTION I.

*Mary is ever watchful to succour our
miseries.*

ST. EPIPHANIUS, calls Mary multoculam, of many eyes, and indeed with reason, for

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the compassionate eyes of this Mother of mercy, are always opened on us, and seem to be multiplied for the relief of our wants. A possessed person replied, when the exorcist demanded what the blessed Virgin did, that she ascends and descends, that is to say this gracious Queen descends to earth, to bring grace to man, and ascends to heaven to present man's petitions to God. St. Andrew Avellino, styled Mary the negociatrix of Paradise. Indeed, she is always exercising works of mercy, always obtaining favours from the king in behalf of the distressed. The Lord according to the royal Prophet, has his eyes always on the just, "but the Virgin" says Richard of St. Laurence, "has her eyes on the just and sinners; for says he, the eyes of Mary are maternal eyes, and a mother is not content with preserving her child from falling, but raises it the moment it comes to the ground."

St. Bridget one day, heard Jesus say to his Mother, "ask what you please," to which she replied, "I implore mercy for the miserable." "O Mary," says St. Bonaventure, "you have such a care of the unfortunate; that one would think you have no desire, no occupation but that of succouring them."

"What!" says St. Peter Damian to the

holy Virgin, "is it because you are raised to the dignity of Queen, that you would forget your unfortunate brethren? Ah no he continues, such is not the case, the only use you make of your influence, is to succour the miserable, to save the sinner; we may say to you with more reason than Ruth said to Booz, "Be thou blessed, for thy last favor surpasses the first." Indeed as St. Bonaventure observes, "if Mary's compassion was great while she abode on earth, it is much greater since she reigns in heaven, where she has a much more extensive knowledge of our wants and miseries; as the splendour of the Sun surpasses that of the Moon, so does Mary's present mercy exceed her former. Who is there among men, that has not enjoyed the light of the Sun, and what individual is there, who never felt the beneficent rays of Mary's mercy? In the Canticles she is compared to this burning luminary, *electa ut sol*, because as nothing created, can conceal itself from the warmth of this beneficent and regenerating Orb, and as all bodies, celestial and terrestrial are illumined by its rays, so all the inhabitants of the earth are vivified by the clemency of the august Virgin. It is related of a man in the kingdom of Valentia, that having committed great crimes, and

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fearing the pursuit of justice, he determined to become a Turk, and was going to embark for Barbary, when chance conducted him into a church, while F. Lopez of the Society of Jesus, was preaching on the divine mercy. The impression made on the guilty man was so great, that he was converted, and made his confession to F. Lopez. The good Father was so struck with the suddenness of the change, that he asked him if he had not retained some pious practice, which drew on him the effects of divine mercy. The penitent replied, that he practised no other devotion, save that of praying to the blessed Virgin every day, never to abandon him. The same Father, one time heard in an hospital, the confession of an invalid, who had not confessed for fifty-five years. During all this time he practised no devotion whatsoever, except that whenever passing before the image of the blessed Virgin, he took off his hat, and begged her to obtain that he might not die in mortal sin. He said, that at one time in a quarrel, he was in danger of being slain, but when he cried out, O! I am a dead man, and I shall be damned, Mother of sinners help me! he found himself transported without knowing how, to a place of security.

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“Mary,” says St. Bernard, “makes herself all to all; she opens to all men the treasures of her mercy, and each one there finds what he wants; the slave his ransom, the infirm, health, the afflicted, consolation, the sinner, pardon.” “Who in the world,” says St. Bonaventure, “would refuse to love this amiable Queen? She is more beautiful than the Sun; and sweeter than honey. She is a treasure of bounty, clemency, affability itself. I salute you, continues the Saint in the same impassioned strain; I salute you my Mother and Mistress; what do I say, the soul of my life, the treasure of my heart. Pardon me if I say I love you, for if I am not worthy of loving you, you are most worthy of being loved by me.”

It was revealed to St. Gertrude, that when a person devoutly pronounced these words: “Turn then most gracious advocate, thine eyes of mercy towards us,” Mary graciously looked upon him, and heard his petition. This tender Mother, has such a desire of benefiting mankind, that she considers it a great injury, not to demand some favour from her.

The Prophet Isaiah, predicted, that the threshold of the divine mercy, would be prepared for men, by the redemption.

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“What is the threshold of mercy, asks St. Bonaventure, “it is Mary replies he, since it is by her, that sinners and just have access to God. Our Lady, like our Lord, is full of mercy; the Mother like the Son, refuses not her pity to those who invoke her. The Abbot Gueric, thus represents Jesus addressing Mary, “I have placed in you, O Mother, the throne of my grace; it is by you I shall hear the prayers of men, as you have clothed me with your humanity, I shall invest you with my divinity.

One day as St. Gertrude most devoutly pronounced these words of the *Salve Regina*, *turn then most gracious advocate, thine eyes of mercy towards us*, the holy Virgin appeared, and shewing her the divine infant, whom she held in her arms, said, “behold the merciful eyes that I can at pleasure, turn upon those who invoke me.” As a sinner was one time weeping before an image of the holy Virgin, and intreating her to obtain his pardon of God, he heard her say to the divine infant, *my son, will these tears be shed in vain?* And Jesus immediately replied, that he forgave the delinquent.

“O Mother of grace,” says the Abbot Adam, “your compassion is equal to your

power : when is it that you did not compassionate the miserable, O Mother of mercy? When have you refused to succour them, Mother of Power? Ah you are as prompt in succouring, as in hearing us. Sate yourself then, O great Queen, with the glory of your Son, and for pity's sake, let the crumbs fall to your children.

EXAMPLE.

Nothing more contributed to extend the devotion of the holy Scapular, than the prodigies which were wrought in favour of those who practised it. The following is not the least remarkable. At the siege of Montpellier, a Soldier who wore this badge of devotion to Mary, received a musket shot as he mounted a battery, but the ball after perforating his clothes, stopt when it came to the Scapular, and he remained unhurt. Lewis XIII. himself, who was at the siege, was so struck by the miracle, that he became a member of this holy Sodality.

PRAYER:

O holy Virgin, the most sublime of all creatures, cast on me one of those favourable looks which impart life. If you say

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my sins are great, I shall aliege, that your mercy is unbounded. No it never shall be said that your clemency which, fills all the earth, found limits in my crimes.

CHAPTER VIII.

“ Et Jesum benedictum fructum ventris tui, nobis post hoc exilium ostende.”

“ And after this our exile, shew unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus.”

SECTION I.

Mary preserves her servants from hell.

It is impossible that a true servant of Mary should be damned. This assertion may seem hazardous, but before it is condemned, let us see how it is supported ; by true servants of Mary, we do not mean certain devotees, who seem to take advantage of some pious practices in honour of the Mother of God, to sin with more freedom ; these are presumptuous persons who occasion some to condemn us, for boasting of the clemency of Mary, as if thereby we encouraged vice, deserve chastisement instead of mercy. It

is not then, of such we speak ; but rather of those, who, to the homage they render the Mother of God, join a sincere desire of being converted ; and we again affirm, that they cannot be lost. Father Crasset, Vega, Mendoza, and many other Theologians, are of the same opinion. But to prove that they have not lightly advanced it, let us see how far they are supported by the Doctors of the Church.

“Blessed Virgin,” says St. Anselm, “as it is impossible, that he who neglects and despises you, can be saved, so it is impossible, that he who has recourse to you sincerely, can be lost.” St. Antoninus says, “as those from whom Mary turns her merciful eyes, cannot be saved, it necessarily follows, that those on whom she looks with benignity, will share in eternal glory.”

And here let us ask, if the words, “it is impossible that he who is not devout to Mary,” should not make those tremble, who despise or neglect her ? Let all such, hear the anathema pronounced against them by Albertus Magnus : “the people who will not serve you shall perish,” *Gens quæ non servierit tibi, peribit.* And St. Bonaventure, “He who neglects Mary, shall die in his sins ; he who does not invoke her shall have no share in the kingdom of God ;”

and again, "there is no hope of salvation for those from whom Mary turns her face." Before him. St. Ignatius Martyr, had pronounced, that a sinner can only be saved by having recourse to the blessed Virgin, whose infinite mercy obtains salvation for those who are condemned by infinite justice. Some pretend, that this text is not taken from St. Ignatius, but we know, that St. Chrysostom, attributes it to him: and is it not in the same sense, the Church applies to Mary, these words of the Proverbs: "All who hate me, love death."

On the contrary, Mary assures us, that "he who hears her, shall not be confounded." St. Bonaventure says, "great Queen! he who perseveres in your service, is far from damnation." "No," adds St. Hilary, "he will not be lost, although he might have hitherto, grievously offended his God."

Behold the reason, that when the Devil has deprived the soul of the grace of God, he uses every effort to destroy in it, all devotion to the holy Virgin. Sarah said to Abraham, "send away this slave (Agar), with her son," for she feared that if the former was retained, she might succeed in recalling the latter. Thus the Devil, not content with depriving the soul of Jesus,

wishes also to send away Mary. *Ejice ancillam hanc et filium ejus.* Dismiss the Mother and the Son, does he say, for fear that the Mother by her prayers, may reinstate the Son in his former possession! And the wicked fiend acts wisely; "for," says F. Pacchinechelli, "he who is faithful in honouring the Mother of the Lord, will very soon receive by her means, the Lord himself." St. Ephraim styles devotion to our Lady, the charter of freedom from the slavery of hell, &c. He calls her the protectress of those who are running to their damnation; and if it is true, (and St. Bernard affirms it;) that the Blessed Virgin wants neither will nor power to save us, both, because her prayers must be heard, and that she is more interested for our salvation than we ourselves, are we not warranted in concluding, that a true servant of Mary's cannot perish? What Mother is there, who if she could save her Son's life, by petitioning his judge, would refuse to do it? And how then, can we suppose that Mary, the tenderest of all Mothers, will not save one of her children from eternal death, when it is so easy for her to effect it?

Ah my dear reader, if you feel within you, a sentiment of true respect and love

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for the Queen of heaven, thank the Lord; for according to St. John Damascene, he only grants this grace to those whom he designs to save. "Mother of my God," said this great Saint, "if I trust in you my salvation is certain, if I am under your protection, I have nothing to fear, for your devotion is a shield which God places only in the hands of those whom he designs to save." Erasmus also styles the holy Virgin, the terror of hell. *Salve inferorum formido.*

How great is the rage of Satan, when he cannot deprive a soul of devotion to the Mother of God. We read in the life of the blessed Alphonsus Alvarez, a great servant of her's, that being one time greatly tormented in prayer, by temptations, to impurity, the Devil said to him, *cease to honor Mary, and I shall cease to tempt thee.*

Blosius recounts, that our Lord revealed to St. Catherine of Sienna, that in consideration of his incarnation in the womb of Mary, it was decreed that whosoever recurred to her, although he might be a sinner, would never, if he was disposed to amend, become the Devil's prey. David already prayed the Lord to preserve him from hell, because of his zeal for the honor of Mary. "Lord" said he, "I have loved the beauty of thy house, let not my soul perish with the

impious." He says "of thy house," because Mary is that house of the purest gold, that God himself erected to be his habitation on earth, and his place of repose when he came to dwell amongst us. "Those who love you O Mary," says St. Bonaventure, "will enjoy a profound peace, and their souls shall not see death for ever." "No," said Blossius, "an humble servant of Mary's never perished."

O how many sinners would have persevered in their wickedness and in consequence, be eternally damned, but for Mary's intercession? It is the opinion even of many Theologians, and of St. Thomas, particularly, that the Blessed Virgin has obtained for several who died in the state of mortal sin, the suspension of their sentence, and their return to life, that they might do penance. Some authors relate many examples of the like: among others, Odoard, who lived in the ninth century, relates, that Ademan, a Deacon, came to life as they were going to bury him, and told all at his funeral, that he had seen hell, and the place therein prepared for him, but that the Mother of God had obtained his resurrection, that he might expiate his sins. Surius relates a similar case, of a Roman, named Andrew; and Pelbart states, that

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in his time, the Emperor Sigismund, in crossing the Alps with his army, met in his way, the skeleton of a man, whence a voice issued, which demanded confession. It was a soldier he said who had been slain in the state of mortal sin, and that Mary, for whom he entertained a special devotion, obtained, that his soul might sojourn in his remains, until he could confess his sins; immediately after receiving absolution, it ceased to give signs of its presence.

We do not cite these examples as an encouragement to sinners, to persevere in their crimes; this would be as great extravagance, as that of a man, who from mere levity, would cast himself from a precipice, under pretence, that the blessed Virgin could preserve him unhurt; but rather to excite our confidence in the Mother of God, since as they demonstrate that she can save, even those who died in mortal sin, with how much more certainty can those count on her intercession, who during life, are sincerely converted. "Yes," as St. Anselm, says, "he for whom Mary prays even once, will be exempt from eternal evils, and again, who will dare tell me, I shall not find my judge favourable, if the Mother of mercy advocates my cause? "My soul" says the blessed Erric Suzon, "is in the

hands of Mary, so if the judge wishes to condemn me, the sentence must pass through this clement Queen, and she well knows how to prevent its execution." We have the same hope as this great Saint, and shall not cease to say with St. Bonaventure, "O Mary, I have hoped in you, and shall never be confounded."

EXAMPLE.

Monsieur Beauveau, Marquis of Novian, and afterwards a religious of the society of Jesus, owed his conversion to a tribute of respect which he once paid the holy Virgin. In the year 1649, when the German troops were quartered in Lorraine, it happened that some Soldiers at Novian, after having drunk to excess, began to play at dice: one of them having lost all his money, rose up from the table in a great fury, and perceiving a picture of the blessed Virgin, hanging in the room, advanced towards it, and as if it had been the cause of his loss, gave it several strokes, and uttered against it a thousand blasphemies, but no sooner had he done so, than the divine vengeance visibly fell upon him, for he was seized all over with a violent trembling, accompanied with such torturing agonies, that he could neither

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take food nor rest. The troops being ordered to leave Novian, they tied him on a horse, as he was unable to walk; but the violence of his pain, caused him to throw himself off, and he died gnawing the earth, and foaming with rage, to the great terror of his comrades, who witnessed the frightful scene.

This visible punishment was spoken of at Novian, with fear and alarm, and they resolved after some time to repair the sacrilege. For this end, the parish Priest, the Chaplain of the Marquis Beauveau, some Missionaries and the Priests of the neighbourhood, went in clerical costume from the church to the place where the outrage had been committed. But when the procession arrived, though the parish Priest gave the signal for some one to take the image, no person obeyed him. The Marquis who was present, felt indignant at this insensibility, for the honour of Mary, and despite of human respect, took it up himself, and respectfully bore it to the chapel of his chateau, where it was placed by the command of the Bishop, and ever since honoured in a particular manner. The holy Virgin speedily recompensed this triumph over worldly pride gained in her honour, for this good gentleman avowed, that he felt such an extraor-

inary change in his sentiments, that he was thenceforward determined to live as a perfect christian. To know how faithful he was to this grace, it suffices to say, that sometime after he renounced all his titles and distinctions, to become an humble Religious in the holy Society of Jesus—*Life of F. Beauveau.*

PRAYER.

Hail Mary, the hope of Christians! receive the humble request of a sinner, who loves and honours you. It is from you I hold my life, you are the pledge of my salvation. I entreat you then to free me by your prayers, from the burthen of my iniquities; dissipate the darkness of my mind, destroy the inordinate affections of my heart, repress the temptations of my enemies, and so regulate my life, that by you, and under your protection, I may arrive at eternal beatitude.
Amen.

SECTION II.

Mary succours her servants in Purgatory.

HAPPY, thrice happy are the servants of this Mother of mercy! for not satisfied with protecting them through life, her maternal cares are continued towards them, even in the flames of purgatory. The more pitiable the case of these poor souls, the more compassion they experience on the part of Mary. St. Bernardine of Sienna, assures us, that the Queen of heaven has a certain dominion over the prison wherein the souls of God's servants are purified; and applying to Mary, this of Ecclesiasticus, "I walk amid the waves of the sea;" he says that the blessed Virgin descends into the gloomy abyss of purgatory, and walks amid the waters of bitterness that encompass her children, to assuage their torments, and alleviate their woes. "See" said Novarin, "how important it is to serve this great Queen faithfully, since she does not forget her subjects when suffering in flames: and again, if Mary succours all the souls in purgatory, she affords particular aid to those who have been most devoted to her during

life. This blessed Virgin once said to St. Bridget, "I am the Mother of all the souls in purgatory, the pains they suffer are every moment lessened by my prayers." Indeed the name of Mary alone echoed in this place of woe, assuages the torments of the poor sufferers: it is a balm for their sorrows, a celestial dew which tempers the ardors of their flames.

But Mary does more, she releases the faithful from purgatory. It was a pious tradition, and is mentioned by Gerson, that on the day of her assumption, purgatory was emptied, all its captives being freed by her prayers. Novarin affirms, what many grave authors assert, that the moment the blessed Virgin ceased to live, she obtained of her Son the release of all the souls then in purgatory, that they might accompany her to heaven. From this moment she was privileged to obtain not only the alleviation but even the abridgment of the torment of these poor souls.

St. Peter Damian relates, that a certain woman appearing after death, said that she with such a number of souls, as exceeded the population of Rome, had been released from purgatory, on a feast of the assumption of the blessed Virgin. St. Dennis the Carthusian, assures us, that the like occurs

at the feasts of Christmas and Easter, that on these solemnities, Mary accompanied with several legions of angels, descends into purgatory, and delivers numbers of souls. Novarin declares, that this takes place also on all the festivals of the Blessed Virgin.

And why should we not hope for the same favours if we are truly devout to this Blessed Mother? Nay, why should we not expect, if we render her a special veneration, to escape even these purifying flames, and go straight to heaven, as did the blessed Godfry. Mary one time dispatched the brother Abbond to this holy man, saying "go Abbond, tell brother Godfry to advance in virtue, then he will belong to me and my Son, and when he dies I shall preserve him from purgatory." If we desire (as we indeed should) to assist the souls in purgatory, we should interest the Blessed Virgin in their favour by our prayers.

EXAMPLE.

A religious man of the order of St Bernard, used to say the rosary every day, before dinner. Once it happened, that being at table, he remembered he had not paid his accustomed devotions to Mary; he immediately withdrew, and no sooner began

his prayer, than the Mother of God appeared, clothed in a mantle all ornamented with *Hail Marys*, except one little corner. "Complete the few Aves which remain unfinished," said she, "and I will conduct you to heaven." He redoubled his devotions, and in a few days, this good Mother, after consoling him on his death bed, introduced his soul into the kingdom of her divine Son.

PRAYER.

Mother of God! Mary sublimest of all creatures! it is but too true, that many on earth neither love nor honour you, but I am consoled that you are glorified in heaven, by the angels and saints, and that even here you still have many faithful servants. Ah that I had in my heart, the love which is entertained for you, by all these together. Ah that I could command the hearts of all, I would consecrate them this moment to your honour and service. Your beauty has attracted the Son of the Eternal Father, and will you continue to have no charms for us wretched mortals. Ah no; we love you Blessed Mother, and every day, wish to love you more; not alone because your intercession will procure us a happy death,

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and the abridgment of our sufferings in purgatory, but also because from your connection with the adorable Trinity, you are, after God, the most worthy object of our love and praise.

SECTION III.

Mary conducts her servants to Heaven.

THE sign of predestination appears on the heads of the servants of Mary. Commenting on this verse of Ecclesiasticus, which the Church applies to Mary, "In all things I sought rest, and I shall abide in the inheritance of the Lord." Cardinal Hugo says, "Blessed is he with whom Mary abides. Her love for us, incites her to wish to see us devout to her, several refuse to gratify her desire, but those in whom her devotion subsists, are the inheritance of the Lord." Yes truly, this Lord who has made of her womb his habitation, desires that she might dwell in the midst of Jacob, that is, that devotion to, and confidence in her, might be rivetted in the hearts of all his elect.

Of how many souls would not heaven be deprived, but for Mary's intercession? "I make lights in heaven which shall never be

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extinguished." These eternal lights, are the servants of Mary. "All who trust in Mary," says St. Bonaventure, will see heaven's gates open to receive them after death. *Qui speraverint in illa porta cæli reserabitur ei.*" St. Ephrem calls devotion to Mary, *the Key of Paradise*. Let us beg of her to unlock to us the gate of this celestial abode, since she has the key, what do I say? She is herself the gate of heaven, since the Church styles her *Janua Cæli*. This holy Church also styles Mary *the Star of the Sea*, for as mariners are conducted in their course by the light of the stars, so christians by looking on Mary, are guided to the port of eternal salvation.

St. Peter Damian, for the same reason, calls her the "ladder to heaven," for as God descended from heaven by her, so man by her means, deserves to ascend from earth to heaven. "You have been filled with graces, Queen of the universe," says St. Athanasius, "that you might become the way of our salvation, and the road by which we ascend to our celestial country. St. Bernard calls Mary, a "vehicle to heaven," and another saint says, "Hail noble Chariot, by which your servants are conducted to the end of their course." "Happy are they who know you, O Mother

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of God," says St. Bonaventure, "for to know you, is the way to eternal life, and to celebrate your praises is the high road to heaven.

We read in the Chronicles, of St. Francis, that brother Leo, once saw in a vision, two ladders, one red, at the summit, of which, was Jesus Christ; and the other white, at the top of which, presided his blessed Mother. He observed, that many who endeavoured to ascend the first ladder, after mounting a few steps, fell down; and on trying again, were equally unsuccessful, so that they never attained the summit; but a voice having told them, to make trial of the white ladder, they soon gained the top, the Blessed Virgin having held forth her hands to help them up. Who then, does Denis the Carthusian, say with reason, "who will be saved, if not he for whom Mary prays?" "By me kings reign," does she say, "by me christians rule their passions on earth, and reign as kings with God in heaven." "Mary is the mistress of paradise." says Richard of St. Laurence; "she there admits whomsoever she pleases, and no wonder, since she is Mother of the Lord of paradise." "He for whom Mary pleads," says Abbot Gueric, "is as sure of being saved as if he were already in heaven."

“To be of her court, is the greatest honour to which we can aspire,” says St. John Damascene, “to serve her is to reign; but those who neglect and despise her shall perish for ever. Wherefore all you who will have life eternal; serve and honour Mary, for she is as it were the bridge of salvation, which God has prepared for us in order to pass securely over the troubled waters of this life.

Those even who have deserved hell, should not despair for a moment, provided they recur to Mary. “Sinners” says St. Germanus, “have sought God by you, and been saved holy Virgin.” Richard of St. Laurence, remarks also, that whereas in the Apocalypse, Mary is represented as crowned with stars, she is shewn in the Canticles as crowned with wild beasts; and the reason he assigns for it, is, that these ferocious animals which are emblematic of sinners, are by the intercession of Mary, changed into most brilliant stars, and give more lustre to her crown, than material stars could bestow. Sister Seraphina, of Capri, a great servant of God, prayed to the Blessed Virgin, in the Novena, or Nine Days’ Devotion for her Assumption, for the conversion of a thousand sinners, but afterwards feared she had asked too much; whereupon

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Mary appeared and said, "believest thou that I have not sufficient influence with my Son, to obtain the conversion of a thousand persons? Behold thy request has been granted. Saying this, she shewed her in heaven, the souls of many, who through her intercession, did penance, and were thus preserved from hell.

It is true that no man on earth knows whether he be worthy of love or hatred, but to this question of David. *Lord who shall stand in thy holy place?* St. Bonaventure replies, "he who will devote himself to Mary: if she wills our salvation, it is already secured."

"Very justly" say St. Ildephonsus, "did Mary predict, that all nations should call her Blessed, since it is by her the elect are crowned." "O Mother of our God," says St. Methodius, "you are the beginning, the middle, and the end of our felicity."

The beginning, obtaining us the remission of our sins; the middle, in procuring us perseverance in grace; the end, in opening paradise to us. "By you Mary," says St. Bernard, "heaven has been opened, hell has relinquished its prey, the celestial city has been peopled, and eternal life given to those who deserved hell."

Do we desire more assurance of Mary's

power and will to obtain us paradise? We have it in the words which the church puts into the mouth of this holy Virgin: "Those who work with me" says she, "will not sin, and these who glorify me, shall have eternal life." "Blessed then, and thrice blessed are they," says St. Bonaventure, "who enjoy Mary's favour; the saints already regard them as their companions in bliss; whoever bears the livery of the Mother of God, he continues, will have his name inscribed in the book of the elect." To what purpose then do we trouble ourselves about scholastic disputes on predestination? Let us rather endeavour to become true servants of Jesus and Mary, and we shall infallibly be of the number of the elect. "I shall write" says the Lord in the Apocalypse, "I shall write on the foreheads of the conqueror, the name of my God, and the name of my holy city." "Now this city of God, of which such glorious things are said, is no other than the most pure Virgin," says St. Gregory.

We may say with St. Paul, God will recognise for his own, those who bear this sign, and not only will he pour on them more abundant graces in this life, but he will still more exalt them in glory; "they will be recognised by distinctive marks in

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heaven," says F. Nieremberg, "as the servants of this great Queen.

St. Magdalen of Pazzi, in a vision, saw a bark in the midst of the sea, which served as a refuge for the children of Mary, this glorious Queen herself appeared at the helm; from this she understood, that those who are protected by the blessed Virgin, will be saved from the double shipwreck of sin and death. Let us enter into, and abide in this fortunate bark of devotion to Mary, and we may be sure of a prosperous voyage, since the Church says to her, "The habitation of all who rejoice, is in thee, O holy Mother of God,"

EXAMPLE.

A child of ten years old, wonderfully experienced at death, the protection of the blessed Virgin. During his life he had often heard his Tutor say, that if a person honoured Mary every day, she would be propitious to him at his last hour. Though according to the course of nature the boy might expect to live many years longer, he was so affected at this assurance, that he resolved to say often for this end, *Hail Mary, Mother of mercy!* He was very faithful to this practice; at rising, lying down, going

to class, or playing with his companions, he never forgot to salute his good Mother. By a special favour of the blessed Virgin, who wished without doubt to withdraw her little servant from the dangers to which his innocence was exposed, he was attacked with a mortal distemper. When in his agony she appeared to him and said, "don't you know me my child? I am the person you have so often saluted, I am the Mother of mercy," at these words, the child raised his head, and extending his arms, flew to heaven in company with this ever blessed Mother. What advantage did he not reap from a little pious instruction? How much more useful was this lesson to him, than any he received in earthly sciences.

PRAYER.

Draw me after you, O holy Virgin, that I may run in the odour of your perfumes. Draw me for I am withheld by the weight of my sins, and the malice of my enemies. As no one can go to your Son unless the heavenly Father draw him, so I presume to say in same manner, that no one can go to the Father unless you attract him by your prayers. It is you who obtain pardon and grace for sinners, you are the teacher of

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true wisdom, and the repository of the treasures of the Most High. You have found favour with God, being preserved from original sin, filled with the Holy Ghost, and selected as the Mother of his Son. All these graces you have received O most humble Mary, not alone for yourself, but also for us, in order that you might be able to assist us in all our wants. You succour the just by preserving them in grace, and you help the wicked by disposing them to receive the divine mercy; you aid the dying, preserving them from the snares of satan, and conducting them after death to the mansions of the blessed.

CHAPTER IX.

“ O Clemens O Pia.”

O Most Clement O Most Pious.

SECTION I.

*The greatness of Mary's clemency
and goodness.*

“ MARY” says St. Bernard, “is indeed that land promised by the Lord, where milk and

honey flow. Her pity is so great, that even for a moment she ceases not to bring forth fruits of mercy; she not only deserves to be denominated merciful, but mercy itself. What can spring from a fountain of mercy, says St. Bernard, but waters of salvation. Behold why Mary is compared to the olive tree; for as oil, the emblem of mercy, proceeds from this tree, so nothing can emanate from Mary, but acts of mercy and benevolence; and when we petition her for this oil, we need not fear the refusal which the five foolish virgins met from the wise. No, for this *most prudent Virgin* as she is styled by the Church, has oil enough, not only for her own lamp, but for those of all others.

But why is this beautiful olive said to be planted in the fields, *quasi oliva speciosa in campis*, and not rather in a garden environed with walls, or encompassed with hedges, "It is," replies the Cardinal Hugo, "in order that all who pass by, may have access to it." Explaining this passage of Ecclesiasticus, St. Antoninus adds, "Mary is easy of access to all the world, that both just and sinners may be able to gather with facility the fruits of mercy. What more assured refuge for sinners, than the compassionate bosom of Mary? There it is

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that the poor find relief, the sick, health, the afflicted, consolation, the destitute, succour, and those who are in perplexity, counsel. How pitiable would be our lot, if we had not this Mother of mercy always ready to aid us in our miseries? "God" says St. John Damascene, "wishing that all his graces might pass through Mary, there is no hope of mercy but through her intercession."

Nor are any among the Saints affected with our miseries like this ever Blessed Virgin: wherever she sees her aid wanted she instantly flies, and in proportion to our necessities, her succours are more abundant: she will never cease to exercise these good offices, *Et usque ad futurum, seculum non desinam*, until time shall be no more, says Cardinal Hugo. Mary will not cease to intercede for man, and to succour sinners; this blessed Virgin was prefigured by Rebecca, when she said to Eliezer, on his asking her for some water, "I shall not only give you to drink, but I shall even provide for the refreshment of your Camels. "Yes blessed Mother," says St. Bernard, 'you are that generous and compassionate Rebecca, who not only benefit the just, figured by Abraham's servant, but even confer favours on sinners, who are as

beasts without reason. The liberality of Mary, says Richard of St. Laurence, resembles that of her son Jesus, who according to St. Paul, "is magnificent to all who invoke him;" and another Author says, "Blessed Virgin pray for me, you will ask the graces I want, more devoutly than I could, and you will procure me greater favours, than I should presume to ask: *Majori devotione orabis pro me, quam ego aul-erem petere; et majora mihi impetrabis, quam petere præsumam.*

When the children of Zebedee, transported by indiscreet zeal, demanded of the Lord to permit them to invoke fire from heaven on an infidel city, which had refused to admit him within its walls, Jesus replied to them in a severe tone, "You know not of what spirit you are," as if He had said, What! I am descended from heaven to save sinners, and you my disciples wish to destroy them! Why do you speak to me of fire and chastisement? this is not my spirit. But we cannot doubt that Mary's spirit is that of Jesus. St. John saw her clothed with the sun; whence St. Bernard says to her, "You have clothed the sun the divine word, O holy Virgin, with human flesh, and he in his turn has inves-

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ted you with his power and mercy, *Vestis solem, et vestiris ab eo.*"

Mary is so sweet and merciful, that when a poor sinner implores her aid, she never considers his want of merit, but receives him with tenderness and compassion. She is compared to the moon, "because" says St. Hildebert, "as the salutary influences of the queen of night, are felt by the lowest terrestrial bodies, thus Mary's amiability is experienced by the greatest sinners, and as although this orb borrows all its light from the sun, yet its course is much more rapid in our regard;" so says St. Anselm our salvation is often more speedily effected by invoking Mary, "Beautiful as the moon," than in calling on Jesus the divine son of Justice; for this reason, Hugh of St. Victor exhorts us, if we are deterred by apprehension of the divine Majesty, to approach to Mary without fear. She is, it is true, holy and spotless, the Queen of the Universe, and the mother of God, but she is also a pure creature and a child of Adam like unto us. *Si pertimescis ad Deum accedere, respice ad Mariam; non illic invenis quod timeas: genus tuum vides.*

"In one word, says St. Bernard. 'every thing in the blessed Virgin is full of clemency and graces; she makes herself all to

all, she is a debtor to the ignorant, as well as to the wise, and the bosom of her mercy is ever open to all men." As the enemy of our souls incessantly goes about seeking whom to devour, so Mary is ever on the alert to seek and to save us. How does it happen that the same God who in the old law, was so prompt in punishing crime, now deals so mildly with the greatest sinners? It is through love for the blessed Virgin, and in consideration of her merits. "For a long time" says St. Fulgentius, "heaven and earth would cease to exist, if Mary did not preserve them by her prayers and intercession." *Coelum et terra jamdudum ruissent si Maria suis precibus non sustentasset.*

"We can really go to God with all confidence," says St. Arnold, "because the Son is our Mediator with the eternal Father, and the Mother is our Mediatrix with her Son: and as Jesus Christ exhibits to his Father his opened side, and the wounds in his hands and feet, so Mary reminds her Son of the womb that bore him." If I may use the forcible expressions of Saint Peter Chrysologus, "this blessed Virgin having lodged the Son of God in her womb, requires from him as the price of her hospitality, peace for the earth, salvation for

the lost, and life for the dead." "Mary" says St. Antoninus, "is that throne of grace to which the Apostle exhorts us to go with confidence, that we may obtain all the assistance necessary for our Salvation."

Let us conclude with the beautiful exclamation of St. Bernard, on the words "O Clement, O pious, O sweet Virgin Mary." "O Mother of God," says he, "clement to the necessitous, compassionate to those who invoke you, sweet to those who love you. O Virgin Mary, clement to sinners, benign towards the just, sweet to those who feed on your unfading charms. O Clement in delivering, O kind in bestowing, O sweet in communicating yourself to those that love you, to those who seek you."

EXAMPLE.

In the year 1629, the Emperor Ferdinand III. being menaced by the Swedes, who were flushed with victories, had recourse to the blessed Virgin for protection. He caused for this purpose a magnificent Pillar to be erected in the grand square of Vienna, ornamented with engravings emblematic of Mary's immaculate conception ;

at the four corners of the pillar an Angel was represented as armed, and crushing a monster under his feet; emblematic of Mary's victory over original sin; the holy Virgin appeared at the summit of this superb monument crushing the serpent's head, and at its base was written in Latin: "To the All Perfect and Sovereign God, the Almighty Ruler of heaven and earth, by whom Kings reign; To the Virgin Mother of God, who was conceived without the stain of original sin, and by whom Princes govern; who is chosen on this day by particular devotion, as Sovereign and Patroness of Austria; Ferdinand the III. confides, devotes and consecrates all that he possesses, his person, his children, his people, his armies, his provinces; and in perpetual memory of this Consecration he has erected this Statue."

No festival was ever solemenized with more pomp in Vienna, than that of the dedication of this pious monument; it was truly the triumph of the immaculate conception of Mary; crowds from the Court and City assisted thereat; at the hour appointed, the good Emperor accompanied by his son, Ferdinand IV. King of Hungary and Bohemia; by his daughter Mary Anne of Austria, Queen of Spain; the

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Pope's Nuncio; the Ambassadors of Venice and Spain; all the Clergy and religious; the entire of the Nobility and an immense concourse of the Citizens, went in procession from the Church of the Augustinian Fathers, to that of the Jesuits; After a very fine Sermon on the immaculate Conception, high mass was pontifically celebrated, by Prince Ferdinand, bishop of Vienna, and the chant performed by the musicians of the royal chapel. After the Communion of the celebrant, the Emperor approached the altar, and in presence of the holy Sacrament, adopted the Mother of God for special Patroness of his states and kingdoms, and promised to solemnize as a holy day of obligation, the feast of the Immaculate Conception, and to fast the eve of said feast with all under his command; after signing a formula to this effect, he received the holy Communion, and mass being concluded, all present went to the place where the Statue was set up; there in presence of the assembled multitude, the bishop blessed this trophy of the Immaculate Conception, while the Emperor's musicians chanted the Litanies of the holy Virgin, accompanied with the sound of trumpets and cymbals, and a grand salute of all the Artillery.

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After the court and city had spent this solem day, in exercises of the most fervent piety, the Empress Mary Eleanor, widow of Ferdinand II. entertained their devotion in the evening, by one of the most magnificent spectacles perhaps, until then witnessed there. She gave directions to illuminate all the houses in the city, and that the grand square particularly should be splendidly lighted up; the Column was so charged with flambeaus of white wax, that it appeared all on fire, and the statue was encircled with a rainbow formed of lights; all the princes and princesses with their suite attended in the square, and spent with the rest of the people, two hours in prayers and litanies solemnly chaunted, and did not retire until all was concluded by the benediction of the bishop. We need not add that the Emperor soon gathered the fruit of his religious conduct by the blessings that flowed in on his extensive empire.

PRAYER.

O Mother of mercy, appease your Son; while on earth you occupied only a small portion of it, but now elevated to the highest heavens, we regard you as the pro-

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pitiation of all nations ; grant us your prayers so desirable, so precious ; prayers, holy Mother, which in propitiating the most High, will obtain us grace to expiate our sins, to practise virtue, to confound our enemies, and triumph over their designs. Amen.

CHAPTER X.

O Dulcis Virgo Maria.

O Sweet Virgin Mary.

SECTION I.

The sweetness of the holy name of Mary, in life and death.

It is well known how much men are guided by caprice, in the names which they appropriate to things and persons. Shall we then say, that the name of Mary is a mere empty sound, the echo of fancy ! O no, this sublime name has not originated on earth, it came from heaven, it was by an express command from the Most High, that Joachim and Anne gave it to their holy infant. "Your admirable name O Mary,"

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says Richard of St. Laurence, "has emanated from the treasury of the Divinity, the three persons of the adorable Trinity assembled in council to give you a name. It is after that of your Son, the greatest of all names, at the name of Mary every knee should bend in heaven on earth and in hell.

Among these sublime privileges of the name of Mary, let us consider the benefit the Lord makes her children find in it, in life and death. "First, during life," St. Honorius Anchoret, said, "that the name of Mary is full of a divine sweetness," and St. Anthony of Padua, experienced the same comfort in it which St. Bernard found in that of Jesus. "The name of Jesus," says the latter; "the name of Mary," resumes the former, "is joy to the heart, honey to the mouth, melody to the ear. *Nomen Jesus, nomen Mariae, júbilus in corde, mel in ore, in aure melos.* It is related of the venerable Father Juvenal Ancina, Bishop of Saluces, that he felt in his mouth a most sensible sweetness in pronouncing the name of Mary, and a certain holy person in Cologne, says the Bishop Marsilius, seemed to have honey on her tongue, when she pronounced it, and I myself experienced the same effect.

But it is not of this sensible sweetness,

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which is only granted to a few chosen souls, that I mean to speak, it is of a spiritual sweetness, of the consolation, confidence and holy joy, which those experience, who pronounce devoutly, this holy name. The Abbot Francon says, that after the name of Jesus, there is not a name in heaven or on earth from which devout persons receive so many graces, as from the name of Mary. This name has in it something amiable and divine: when it enters a faithful heart, it diffuses a most sweet odour: though repeated a thousand times, this admirable name is always new. "O Virgin, worthy of all praise," says St. Bernard, "your name so sweet and amiable, cannot be pronounced without inflaming the heart; the sole idea of it, suffices to recreate your servants. In its remembrance, the afflicted are consoled, sinners encouraged, it is our riches in poverty, and the consolation of our afflicted hearts."

"Thy name is as oil poured out." "The glory of the name of Mary," says the blessed Alain, "is compared in the Canticles, to oil poured out, for as this liquid has the property of healing wounds, diffusing odour, and nourishing flame, thus the sweet name of Mary, cures the sick, rejoices the heart, and inflames with divine love. "Recur to

this great name O sinner," says Richard of St. Laurence, "it will suffice to cure your infirmities ; in short, there is no disease so malignant, which is not obliged to yield to its irresistible efficacy. Your name, O Mother of God, is full of grace and benediction ; it cannot be uttered without procuring to the soul some spiritual good, its virtue is so great, that it melts and liquifies the most obdurate hearts. It is, in fine, a delicious odour, a fragrant perfume. May its aromatic balm descend into our hearts, as into well prepared vessels, and thence diffuse around, its salutary effects, may we often invoke with love, respect and confidence, a name which is to us in this life, the principle of grace, and in the world to come, the seed of eternal glory. ' To him that shall invoke your name,' says Jesus to his Mother, in presence of St. Bridget, ' and confide in your intercession, having at the same time, a firm purpose to amend his life, I shall give contrition for his sins, the means of doing sufficient penance, the grace of perseverance, and the kingdom of heaven.' "

The name of Mary, is moreover the consolation of her children, because it is the terror of the infernal spirits. At the mention of this holy name, Satan flies, and hell

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trembles; *Satan fugit, infernus contremiscit, cum dieo: Ave Maria*, says the blessed Alain. "The name of Mary," says Richard of St. Laurence, "is a strong tower which not only shelters sinners from the pursuits of divine justice, but preserves the just from the assaults of hell. It is well known, that the name of Mary is a most effectual remedy against temptations of the flesh." The last named author, on this text of St. Luke, *and the Virgin's name was Mary*, observes, that the Evangelist joins the two words, Mary and Virgin, to insinuate to us that they are synonymous, that both mean the same thing, and St. Peter Chrysologus says, "that Mary indicates chastity, so that he is sure to preserve untarnished this precious virtue, who in the hour of temptation invokes this blessed name.

Who could relate the victories won by the servants of Mary, on invoking her name? It was by it that St. Anthony of Padua, the blessed Erric Suzon, and numbers of other saints, have made the devils flee. These wicked spirits fear so much the holy name of Mary, that the bare mention of it, causes them to abandon the prey when already in their grasp.

We read in the history of the missions of Japan, that the devils having one day appeared to a new christian in that country, under the form of ferocious beasts, for the purpose of striking him with dread, he said to them without being alarmed, "I cannot resist you: if God permits it, treat me as cruelly as you please, but I have to defend me, the holy names of Jesus and Mary. Scarcely had he pronounced these august names, than the earth opened and engulfed in its bosom all the infernal host.

Let us then follow this advice of St. Bernard, *in dangers perplexities, and distress, invoke the name of Mary; let it never depart from your mouth, let it never be effaced from your heart.* Let us obey this counsel of the venerable A. Kempis, *If you wish to be consoled in tribulation, recur to Mary; venerate, invoke, commend yourself to Mary; rejoice with Mary, he continues, weep with Mary, pray with Mary, walk with Mary, seek Jesus with Mary, desire to live and die with Jesus and Mary.*

But if the name of Mary is sweet to her children during life, by the graces it procures, it is infinitely sweeter in death, by the consolation it infuses, and the victory it achieves. F. Sertorius Caput, S. J. desired all those employed in assisting

dying, to repeat often to them, the name of Mary, "because" says he, "this name of life and salvation, supports them in their pains, and puts to flight the infernal spirits. St. Camillus, who founded an order, for assisting dying persons, told his religious to remind them to invoke the holy names of Jesus and Mary; and his biographer relates, that he himself in his last moments repeated so devoutly these holy names, with his eyes fixed on their images, and the delights of paradise painted on his countenance, that the assistants were enraptured. This short prayer, Jesus and Mary, is as easily retained and as full of consolation, as it is omnipotent against our enemies. O how happy should we be, if like F. Fulgentius, of Ascoli Capuchin, we died while pronouncing "O sweet and amiable Mary, how enrapturing to be in your society for ever;" or as the blessed Erric, of Citeaux, who expired while invoking this holy name. Let us beg of our good God to grant us the like favour; may our lips move for the last time to pronounce this sweet name, as St. Germanus prays, *Dei matris nomen sit mihi ultimus linguæ loquentis motus.* O sweet, O happy death! since it is only those whom God designs to save, that he enables at their last

hour to pronounce the all-saving name of Mary.

Holy Virgin my amiable mistress and Mother! I tenderly love you, and because I love you, your name is infinitely dear to me; I resolve to invoke it during life, and above all at the hour of death. For the glory of your name, I will say to you in the affecting sentiments of St. Bonaventure: "When my soul departs from my body, graciously come forth to meet and receive it; do not refuse O Mary, to console it by your sweet presence, be its ladder and its way to ascend to heaven, in fine obtain for it pardon and eternal rest.

EXAMPLE.

St. Stephen, King of Hungary, more illustrious for his extraordinary devotion to the holy Virgin, than for all his earthly greatness, had such a profound respect for the sacred name of Mary, that he would not dare pronounce it, so that he generally styled her *The Great Lady*; after his example all the Hungarians gave her the same title, and if at any time they uttered this holy name, all present bent the knee with profound veneration.

The blessed Herman, of the order of St. Dominic, as Surius relates, had a singular devotion to the holy name of Mary, and gathered from it wonderful advantages; often when alone he used to prostrate himself in his cell and repeat *Mary ! Mary ! Mary !* One of his friends, another devotee of the Mother of God, having witnessed Herman in one of those blissful moments, was amazed to see him so long prostrate, and with so much recollection. "What are you doing there, said he, what sentiments are you now occupied with?" "I am collecting" said Herman, transported with delight, "the delicious fruits of the sweet name of Mary, I pronounce it, and it would seem that the most fragrant flowers and sweetest perfumes, embalm the air, while a certain virtue of which I am ignorant, inundates my soul with a joy and gladness all divine; here I forget my pains, here I rest from my labours, hence I should never wish to go forth, that I might incessantly repeat the august name of *Mary ! Mary ! Mary !*"

PRAYER.

O Jesus ! O Mary ! may your names live in my heart, and in the hearts of all

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men! May I forget all other names in order to remember your admirable names alone! O Jesus, my Redeemer! O Mary, my Mother! when my last hour shall come when my soul shall be at the eve of its departure from the world, grant I beseech you, that my last words may be, Jesus! Mary! I love you! Jesus! Mary! I give you my heart and my soul. Amen.

FINIS.

