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ALEXIS DE SALO
An Admirable Method to
Love . . . the B. Virgin Mary
1639
ALEXIS DE SALO

An Admirable Method to Love,
Serve and Honour
the B. Virgin Mary

1639

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NOTE

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References: Allison and Rogers 746; STC 21628.
AN ADMIRABLE METHOD
TO LOVE, SERVE AND HONOUR THE B. VIRGIN MARY.
With divers practicable Exercises thereof.
Al iariched with Choice Examples.

Written in Italian by the R. F. ALEXIS DE SALO, Capuchin.

And Englished by R. F.

By John Couturier.

M. DC. XXXIX.
TO THE NOBLE AND VERTVOVSS LADY the Lady Audley.

ADAM,

I present you with this translation not to remaine in your beds, but through them to pass un- to the publick. So shal it dou- bly
bly bee advantaged: First, more gratefully accepted of, comming immediatly from one so worthy as your self, and next be beleuwd worthie the acceptation, that I dare offer it to your sight, so wel verst in at the Original Languages. So, Madam, goe my obligations multiplying to the Infinite, whilst I cannot think of paying you one curtesy but I receive for it two; The whilst I must ever remaine.

Your molt obliged, R. F.
A SUMMARY
of the whole content of
this present Booke, for the
Readers better comprehension thereof.

The whole scope of this present Treatise
is no other then to teach in a devout and
excellent manner how
to Reuerence and adore with profound Inclinations our B. Lady
and mistresse the Queene of Heauen; as a preparatiue to which,
we have indeauoured to declare,
A 3 her
Summary.

her heroical vertues, greatnesses, excellencies and sublime prerogatives: And by the way is to be considered that although Adoration be peculiar to God alone, yet according to divines distinction thereof, it also may be appropriated to the B. Virgin, to Angels, and other Saints and thereby become common to God & Man. As we may cleerly gather from divers passages of the holy Scripture as namely in Paralip. chap. 26. when it is sayd; And they inclined and adored first God, and afterwards the King.

These Adorations then admit a three-sould distinction of Latria, Dulia, and Hyperdulia, where of the first is proper unto God alone, in regard of his infinit and increated Greatnes; the second
Summary.

Second hath reference to such creatures as advance in sanctity and glory above the rest, which sanctity and glory arriving in any on to more sublimity (as in the B. Virgin) with the more sublime honour of Hyperdulia, consequently we are to reverence them. But before we proceed to the exercise of this Adoration we prefix an exhortation to devotion towards her, and declare five Privilegs, her servants are indowed with al\-

\textit{setting down (as preamble to the worke) those conditions and qualities which are requisit in her devotees. Then we pass to the explication of these Adorations, in the first Chapter, declaring their excellency, in the second how grateful and acceptable they are to the B.Virgin, and in the fower fol-
Summary.

Following ones, severall forcible argumentts are established to proue her deserying that adoration. The first deducted from her being the Mother of Almighty God. The next for her being electe above all other Saints, and all the Quires of Heauen. The third for her soveraine power and authority, over all Creatures: And the fourth and last for her being an affectionat Mother vnto vs al. Then we come to the practice of these Adorations, (or Genusflexions) shewing how they are devoutly to be performed, as well in the interiour as exterior, and heereupon we take occasion to inlarge our discourse touching the Adorations due to God; to his Blessed Saints and Angels, &c. Imploying the remaine of the following Chapters
Summary.

Chapters, in setting down divers practical wayes of honouring the B. Virgin applying to every on its proper Reuerence and Adoratiōs: but principally we insist upon those twelue sublime prerogative of hers, prefigured by the twelue Starres, in her crowne of which S. Ioahn in his Apocalips make mention.

Now this advertisement is given to all that although the choice of many exercises of adoratiōs be proposed in this present worke, notwithstanding they are only to fix on, which they may find most gust and comfort in, and especially to beware of entering to much at once lest they become thereby but more negligent in performance of them, and a too precipitious desire of coming
Summary.

soon to end, make them but haste too much upon the way, and performe them without fruit and devotion.

Wherefore we counsel rather to make choice of some few we may performe with mediocrity of devotion, then of many with danger of tepidity & distraction. Notwithstanding when any feast occurs, unto which we have a particular devotion (as those of our Blessed Saviour his Mother or the like) we may then multiply our genuflexions to a hundred a day, (for example) or a thousand distributed equally to several days or nights of the octave as we please, as we shall more largely declare in the following Treatise by the assistance of Almighty God, and the favour of his
A Summary.

his holy Mother, al which we
dedicat to the praise of God from
whom al Good proceeds, to the
Blessed Virgin his most holy Mo-
ther, and to Saint Francis our
Glorious Patriarch.
A Table of the Chapters contained in this Booke.

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AN ADMIRABLE METHOD
TO LOVE, SERVE and Reuerence the Glorious Virgin Mary our B. Advocate.

Or a pious Exhortation to be devoted to the Queene of Heauen.

Very faithful Christian is to Indeavour to his vtermost to become devout and duly resigned to the service of the Glorious Queene of Heauen whom the Angels serue the
the Arch-Angels adore, the Thrones honour, the Cherubins and Seraphins respect, and in fine the highest advaeced in the Court of Heauen account it their Glory to make Court vnto Knowing how aduantagious her fauour would be to them, for if a Courtier heer accounts it for so high a felicity, to haue the glory of possessing the heard of some great Princesse as promising himselfe great honours and dignities from thence, and how much more, if besides al this he were assured of that dearer place in her me-

mory as shee could refuse him nothing but if he chaunced to fal into disgrace, would undertake his defence & reconcile him with his Prince againe free him from the punishments he had merited, obtaine
obtain his repeal if he were banished from the Court, and not only restore him to his former estate again, but advance him higher than ever he was before, what a blessing what an excess of joy would this fortunate favourit receive from thence what would he do, or rather what nor do in gratitude for so great an obligation? what means what sort of services would he most invent to honour her withal! assuredly both night & day, he would have no other thought then how to express his thankfulness to her in some particular manner, and then would be no danger so great, no service so painful he would not, go through withal, to maintain himself in her better graces still. And yet far more happy a thous
thousand times are the servants & favourits of the Queene of Heau-
uen, in that they are assured she is perpetually mindful of them
that she beares them an unequall loue, that they may hope the
Greatest of fauours from her and that she cannot be wanting to
them in their afflictions that as a faithful Advocate she doth Em-
brace their protection in al occurrences, that she prevails her
self of all occasions to render the Eternal King her B. Some propitious
to them, and what is most of al delivers the from eternal paines,
& brings them in fine to the possession of the glory and happines
of the Kingdome of Heauen.

From al which we may gather five rare Priviledges those truely
devoe vnto the Mother of God

Injoy
Injoy thereby the first is that she loves them with a profound and cordial affection; the second that she honours them with divers particular favours; the third that she is always ready to assist them in their necessities as after as they implore her aide; the fourth that as a most careful Advocate with particular solicitud she undertake their defence and renders them propitious the eternal King of Heauen, reconciling them into him, when they have offended him; the fifth and last that she delivers them from eternal damnation. Let us consider then and examine them on by on which great exactnes to animat every soule to the affection of so deare and great a Lady.

THE
THE I. PRIVILEGE.

How affectionat the B Virgin is to al devout Christians who serve and honour her with humble reverence.

Although 'tis true the sacred Virgin being al loue & charity loueth al, & like the Sunn fayes the devout Saint Bernard) displayes a like the beams of her sweetnes & benignity ouer al the world. Yet certaine it is withal shee beholds those with a more deere regard A who
An Method to love

who love her and render her the
most dutiful services and are most
affectional in reverencing her. And
most laudable and holy is that ob-
sequiousness by whose exterior
signs is manifested the interior
affections of the heart, for so (as S.
Gregory says) the proof of the
affection is the performance of the
thing. Now how reciprocal the
B. Virgin's love is to us again, her
self declares in those words attrib-
uted to her by the Holy Ghost;
those who love me, I love; as
much as to say, I have a particu-
lar love for those who affect me
with all their heart and soul, and
endeavour to render such honour
as they imagine the most accep-
table; and what sort of love it is
her self declares in another passa-
ge of Scripture where she lays:

I am
and serve the B. V. Mary. 3
I am the mother of beautiful love; signifying the love she affects her servants with, to be sincere, compleat at all parts, and truly worthy to divine and loyning a mother.

This glorious queen tends vs as her owne Children, in that shee is our Mother, and so neare and strait a bond tyes vs together, as her being a descendent from our generation, flesh of our flesh, bloud of our bloud, bone of our bone, for which reason shee cannot but affect vs much, especially if wee endeavour to deserve it by our constancie and fidelitie in serving her. Shee is the Mother of Jesu-Christ true God and Man, God is our Father: Our Father which art in heaven: his Sonne Jesu-Christ our brother: Go to
my brothers, (sayes he to Mary Magdalen: Oh infinit sweetnes of loue!) Go to my brothers and tel them, I ascend to my father & your father, to my God and yours. The Blessed Virgin is then our Mother, Iesus Christ the increated Word our brother, and the Eternal father our father.

Conforme to this, S. Bernard on these words, Ecce mater tua, behold thy Mother, argues thus: If Mary be thy mother, O man, (sayes he,) then Iesus Christ is thy brother, his father thine, his Kingdom thou hast right to, and Consequently the grace of Mary is thy riches, since the mother Visually layes vp for the Children, so thy necessities goe vnto
and serve the B. V. Mary. 5
unto her hart; for the mother
for these wants of her Child-
dren ismoved at hart; O take
her then for thine. Thus S.
Bernard: that eloquent Do-
ctor. And certainly our condi-
tion is most great and highly ad-
uantage’d above all others, to haue
the Mother of God, Empresse of
the Vniuerse, for Mother, and
her onlysonne, the King of glory,
glory of Kings, and our true God
for brother. An honour the An-
gels could never glorie in; for
when or where (fayes S. Paul)
did God ever say to them as he
sayd to man, speaking to our
Saviour Christ? Thou art my
sonne, to day I haue begotten
thee.
These spirits, as happy as they are
A 3
An Method to love

have never an Angel of them all, invested with their Angelical nature, they can say is God; whilst wee invested with our humane haue the God of Angels himselfe wee cannot only say is man but even our brother too; nor do wee find it was ever said to any of thee as it was to man; Behold thy Mother, in the person of S. John, who (according to the Doctours) personated and stood at the foot of the Cross for all mankind, whilst the Saviour of vs all deliver'd him the precious treasure of his Mother in trust. Let vs conclude then, that her love is generally towards all, but in a more particular manner towards those who assume her for their Mother, and by most affectionate ways seek out her safeguard and protection.

Moreover
and serve the B.V. Mary.

Moreover we must conclude this glorious Queen hath shewed more affection to men, then euer shee did to Angels: In imitation of the eternal Father, whom in her actions, shee of all others, most nearly imitats: and for prooue that his loue is more to vs then them, but consider with what preetious guifts he hath honoured vs, for to the greatnes of the presents giuen by the louver to its beloved manifestely declares the greatnes of its affection to it; and what guifts are those the eternal Father hath bestowed on the soanes of the earth! Let the Angels harke, and the Archangels lend an eare, and al the heavenely Hierarchies remaine astonisht at so wondrous a liberallitie. Behold the infinit present,
An Method to love

the infinit guift with God hath giuē & presented the world with-
al, neuer to be enough vallued neuer to be æqualled. God hath so
loued the World, as for it he hath giuen his only Sonne; out of his
excessive love to free it from the miferie in which it was; and what
on the Angels hath he bestowed
the whilst? nothing but their etern-
al beatitud merited (as the Di-
uines hold) by one sole act of
their Will; another thing it is; and
of other valuation which he hath
bestowed on men, to giue his
owne Sonne to saue them, then
his giuing the Angels their etern-
al beatitud; sō layes S. Bonau-
entre, To giue his only Sonne
for the impieties of men was a
greater matter, then to the merits
of Angels to giue eternal life. Let
vs
and serve the B. V. M. 

Vs grant then and freely acknowledge the loue of God & his holy Mother, more splendidly shining on men then Angels, since more admirable have been the effects produced of it, towards them then these, and more obliging to repay them reciprocally again.

But this is not al, nor doth our gratious Mistris stay here, to repay affection with affection, but by the transport of her loue shee passes to honour her servants, sometimes with her visits, sometimes to comfort them with her owne deare presence & her Bles-sed sonns.

An example of which, amongst an infinitie of others, wee haue in the new reformed Mirrour of Examples, and it is this: There was a yong Virgin some. 14. yea-
An Method to lone

res of age, so devoted to the Mother of God, as shee employed in her service almost all her dayes and nights; in which her pious exercises shee continued for almost seaven yeares space, euer beseeching her deere mistres, & patroness to saue her, as shee might behold her B. Sonn iust as shee had brought him into the world; vntil at last one night) and 'tis beleued to haue beene Christmas night;) retiring her selfe into an Oratorie shee had in her fathers house, & there with prayers and teares iterating her petition, behold sodainly there appeared vnto her the Queene of heauen, accompanied with Myriads of Angels, who gratiously reaching her, from her owne armes to hers, her heavenly Infant, sayd: Behold
and serve the B. V. Mary. hold hear my dear daughter, what you haue so much dehred; take him, embrace him, and at your pleasure solace you with him; at this the devout Virgin tooke him in her armes, and embracing and kissing him, vsted all the tendernesses a devout love could expresse an affection in; when in the heate of her kisses & embraces, the divine Infant darting a look at her, had been able to haue pierce’d; a farr harder hart, the hers asked her if shee loued him? that I do, said shee, and confirmed it with a thousand new blandish-mêts: but how much do you love mee? more then my body; and how much more? more then my very hart; yet, how much more then that? alasfe, said shee, it is impossible to tel you that, let it fond
An Method to love

Speak for mee, and so with a profound sigh shee concluded the dialogue, and with that her life; her hart burning in the midst, un\able to containe so much of loue was in it, when (we may piously imagine) the B.Virgin tooke her white soule in her armes, & deliuer\ing it into the hands of Ang\els, they with sweete and melodious harmonie condu\cted it to heaven. At found of which celestial musick, those of the house accru\ring & forceing open the Oratory doore, found the dead corps extended on the ground, and exhaling so much sweetnes, as it seemed all the most precious perfumes of the world had gon to the embalming it. Amongst the rest, two Fathers of S. Dominicks Order were pre\sent
and serve the B. V. Mary. 13
fent, who, as they dissected her,
to find out the cause of so suddenie
& strange a death, perceived her
hart inscribed with these words
in golden letters: O my Iesus, I
love thee more than my selfe, for
having Created, redeemed, and
adopted mee by thy holy grace.
Whereby wee may perceive, how
great was the love shee bore to
the sacred Mother and her Sonne,
and how greatly they are advantaged by it, who love them with
such tendernes of affection.

I am inuited by this so excel-
lent an Example, to the recital
of one other no lesse excellent,
taken out of the first part of our
Chronicles of S. Francis, one of
the most Exemplar patterns of
devotion to the B. Virgin as
euer was. This holy Saint in
visiting
visiting a certaine Convent somewhat remote, had appointed him for companion one of raw yeares and rawer experience in Religion. They being arrived at their journeys end, the Saint after some light refeston, retired himselfe somewhat more early then ordinary to his repose, the bitter to rise at the accustom'd houre of Mattins with the rest. Meane while his Companion flinging out one of the Convent's litle spirit as himself, began with bitter inuectives to inveigh against the Saint, saying (by way of mockery) that he could eate, drinke, and sleepe with the best of them, and even to passion seek his owne commodities, the whilst he kept them short enough, and flinted them as he lifted; & after many
and serve the B.V.Mary. 15
many such idle & misbe seeming
speeches, resolued at last to watch
him narrowly that night; whither
he rose at the nocturnal Hours
with the rest or no, and so he did.
When behold, about the second
Vigil of night he might perceave
him rise & take his way towards
the adioyning Wood, and following
him still with his observation,
at last he saw him fall prostrate on
the ground directing many a sigh
to heaven & many a prayer wing'd
with the fire of love unto the
Queene of heaven, beseeching
her of the favour to let him see
her B. Sonne just as he was infa-
ted into the world: scarce had he
utter'd this, when the B. Virgin,
environed with celestial light ap-
peared unto him & with incredi-
ble sweetnes presented him from
her
her owne armes with her B. Sonne: The Saint rauiished with so high a favour, and rendring al possible thanks for it, began to vie kisles & regards of him, to the emulatio of his mouth & eies, whether should take the more delight in him. This amorous duel lasted til breake of day (not only to the exceeding consolation of the S. himself, but of that Religious too;) when being constrained to restore his precious burthen to his Mothers arme againe, the visio rauiished. At sight so this so divine a miracle, the poore imperfect Religious man was so moued & edified, as he threw himself presently at S. Francis feet, beseeching him of forgiveness for his fault which he humbly there confess, and dying afterwards to his imperfections, became to live a
a perfect Religious man consummating in all virtue and perfection.

From these two examples results an infallible proof of this first privilege, & the B. Virgins exceeding love to those who hold dear her memory, and employ themselves for her sake in works of piety, whilst they become each day more faithful and fervent in serving her. And there are those shee most especially doth regard; these are those shee most particularly doth protect, neuer abandoning them (unless they abandon her) untill shee hath happily guided her to heaven. Al with the devout S. Bernard in these few words doth comprehend: It is impossible for you B. Lady to forsake him, who places his Confidence in you, since you are the Mother of
An Method to love

of mercie it selfe. Who would not endeavour then, to the uttermost of his forces, to be devout to her? who, to gaine the fauour of such a Queene, would not count it ho-nour to seeke out al occasions of seruing her? 'tis no smal one, I grant, to ingratiate ones selfe with an earthly Queen; but with the Queen of heauen 'tis the greate-est that can be imagined; an ho-nour not only to be preferred before al the greatnesses of the earth but al wee can receaue from any Saint in heauen. And thus much may suffice for the first Priui-

ledge.
and serve the B. U. Mary.

THE II. PRIVILEGE.

Is that the B. Virgin is most liberal, and accustomed to bestow frequent graces & favours on her servants.

O V E that is true & perfect (as daily experience teacheth) is never satisfied in cherishing the thing beloved, and obliging it by gifts and favours, even to dispose it self of all it hath most precious, to give unto it. So, Ionathas loue to David was so great, as the scripture sayes of him: Ionathas loued him as his very soule; he pluck't
pluck't off his richer garments & gaue to him; & to paint his freindship forth in more liuely colours it adds: He gaue him euyn his sword, his cineture, and his bow. Now if worldly loue hath such force over the harts of men, what hath the diuine over the harts of the Saints in heauen, especially of the B. Virgin, who excels al men and Saints together in the perfection of loue? Let vs unanimitously saie and acknowledge then, that shee is so affectionat to those who honour her, as shee never ceaseth showring on them the heauenly draw of the most preious guifts and richest treasures there; for which reason she is defirably fliled by our holy Doctours, the Treasuresse of al the riches in heauen, and dispensa-
and serve the B. U. Mary.  21

fatrix of all the guifts of God: A
dignitie to which his divine Ma-
jealtie hath exalted her in heauen;
an honour to which aboue all his
subiects he hath preferred her.

The keyes of euerlasting riches
are in her hands, the coffers of
Paradise ful fraught with diuine
treasuries are at her command, of
which shee is nothing sparing;
but liberally giues to all that wil,
to al that ask, to al that can pre-
tend least right vnto them; shee
being most riche and powerful,
and her wil equaling her power
both in heauen and earth.

To you al power is giuen (sayes
the mellifuous Doctor devotely
discourfing with her: both in
heauen and earth, so as you have
ability to do what you wil, and
so her selfe auowes how riche she
is
An Method to love

is in divine treasures where shee fayes: The grace is in mee of al way and truth, in mee al hope of vertue and of life. And knowing how much they import vs, her selfe inuites vs to demand them of her: Come to mee al, fayes shee, who are desirous of mee, and be replenish't with my gene-
rations. See how ready our ri-
che celestial Misfris is, to make vs participant of her celestial ri-
ches, and see how much she af-
tects our good, who offers vs to bountiously those goods and ho-
nours, as are neither beholding to Time, nor fortune. Why doe wee tarry then? why are wee then so slow, why shake wee not off this dulness that possessevs vs? doe wee feare perhaps a dis-
dainful repulse from her? a dif-
ficult
and serve the B.V. Mary.

ifcule accessse? a fastidious regard? ah no, shee is so far from it, as shee is very sweetnes, meeknes itselfe, and there is nothing, in earth or heauen more affable, more courteous, then shee, as S. Bernard testifies of her, where he sayes. What humane fragilitie is it, that feares to approch & haue accessse to the Virgin Mary, in whom is nothing austerere or terrible, but shee is al humanitie, al ful of charitie and curtesie towards al.

Let vs then with the common opinion of Doctors hold for certaine, that whosoever hath, recourse to her in their necessities, and duly implore her ayde, are never by her frustrated of their hopes. O sweet Lady (says the ancient Theophylact) you are a powerful
powerful protectrix of man; for
O immaculat Virgin, who euer
plact his hope in you, and was
confounded, or who amongst
men, hath implor'd your clemenc
cie, and been abandoned?

Free then from doubt and assu-
red of the truth, let vs haue re-
course in our necessities to this
most powerful and pittifull Lady,
and make our felues worthy of
those high fauours and preroga-
tiues shee so bountiously rewards
her faithful servaunts. Withal shee
is, as wee haue sayd, the Treasu-
resse and dispensatrix of al the
gifts of God; shee is the neck
(sayd S. Hierom) by which our
Saviour who is the head, infuses
into his body the Church al that
spiritual lense and motion,by 'tis
animated and sustaine; shee is
the
the body of the tree by which the roote imparts life unto the boughs, producing flowers, leaves, fruit, and all that in the tree excels either for ornament or use; she is the Concaue of the fountain which first receaues plenty of its living waters of grace, and after distributs them to severall pipes according to their severall capacities. Wherefore S. Bonaventure most maturely sayes: it is wonderful what a collection there is in the Virgin of all the pleasantines of grace, & how from thence it is derived to others, as from its proper source so abundantly as S. Bernard affirms, all the Citizens of heaven, all the men in the world, all the soules in Purgatory, nay even in Hell itself, do homage to her as to their sou-
souveraigne Lady, bowing their knees before her in submissive & beseeming reverence. So there is no profession nor estate, but is subordinate to her, especially Religious the glory and richest ornament of the Church, which is euer sheltered under the protection of her wings, whose founders have in particular manner stil been devout unto her, by which means they haue obtained for them and their spiritual children particular favours stil.

Who is not astonished at the admirable love of that great Patriark Saint Dominick to the B. Virgin from whom next to God, his Order acknowledges a dependency, and to haue receaued at its footre and conversation. For what remarkable graces and favours hath
& serve the B. U. Mary.  27

hath he not receaued by her intercession? Of this loue vnto her seruice, although there were no other proofe, yet that of the inuention of the Rosary were suffi-cient.

For how manie thousand sorts may we imagine hath this holy Saint led by this excellent deuotion to the honour and seruice of the Queen of heauen? how many Princes and Monarkes of the world, how many Queens and Lades of worth & honour, how many of al sorts and professions, euen whole people and whole worlds, (as witnes the new World Antipodes to ours?) neither can we passe in silence the surpassing affection S. Francis bare to her, which was so great, as he would often in amorous passion com-
pose verses to her praise, and either sing them himselfe, or cause them to be sung by his Religious. From whence it came, that he full obtained whatsoever favour he demanded of Alm: God, for himselfe in particular, or his Order in general, by the intercession of this beloved Virgin.

One amongst the rest for its raritie I cannot but recount, and it is one of the greatest and most stupendous miracles of the world, by which such an infinity of soules have been deliuered and dayly are from the very torments and paines of Hel it selfe: And this is that great and admirable Indulgence granted at the request of S. Francis by our Saviour Christ in the presence of the B. Virgin.
Virgin and innumerable blessed spirits, to the Church of Assisiun commonly cal'd Our Lady of Portiuncula; which by reason of Christendome is so much taken with the devotion, as also it being full of rare mysterie and worthy of general notice, we will briefly make you the narration of.

S. Francis once fervently praying for the salvation of souls, an Angel appeared to him and summoned him to the Church, where it said our B. Saviour and his mother, with a world of Angels were expecting him. At this, he ran thither, where, being arrived, he saw our B. Saviour seated on the high Altar in a maiclike seate, accompanied by his Mother, and incircled by multitudes.
A Method to love
tuds of Angels; When falling
prostrat at his feete, he was soone
excitated by this comfortable
voice of his most gratious Lord:
Know, Francis, thy praiers are
arrived unto mine eares, and for
that I know the affection and
solicitud of you and your Order
for the salvation of soules, de-
mand of me what grace you
please for their avayle, and I wil
grant it you. S. Francis at first al
trembling at sight of such a maie-
stic, by the sweetnes of these
words secur'd at last weighing the
importance of them, thus an-
swered: O Lord, not but that I
am conscious of my great vn-
worthines to obtayne any grace
from you much, lesse so great an
one, but that you are pleased to
add this to the number of my in-
nume-
and serve the B. V. Mary. 

numerable obligations besides; I accept your gracious offer, and humbly beseech of you for the good of every Christian; that all who visit this Church, having first duly confess and communicat; may obtain a plenary pardon and Indulgence of all their sins: And you O glorious Virgin and gracious advocatrix of every Christian, I beseech you joyn your powerful intercession with my Petition for it; when in concurrency with it, converting her selfe towards her B. Sonne she sayd: My dearest Sonne, whom I once had the honour to beare in this wombe of mine, grant I beseech you this his petition to your faithful seruants, since the saluation of soules (then which there is nothing you more ef-

B 4 teeme)
An Method to love

teeone)is so much concern'd in it.
Grant it to my Temple hear, to
your honour and the edification
of your holy Church. When his
divine Maiestie casting a gracious
eye towards S. Francis there pro-
strat before his throne, saxe vnto
him: S. Francis, though what thou
demand'st be much, yet thy desire
merits much more, in being so
conforme to mine; wherefore I
grant thee the Indulgence thou
desirest, with this condition that
thou haue recourse vnto my su-
veraigne Vicar, who hath the
free dispose to bind and loose at
heer on earth, and of him demand
from mee the grant of it. So the
vision vanished; when early the
next day S. Francis tooke his
journey towards Perugia where
Pope Honorius then resided with
the
and serve the B. V. Mary. 33
the Court of Rome; and there
humbly kissing his feet he de-
clared how al had past, and the
occasion of his comming there.
At hearing of which, the Pope
granted him a Plenary Indul-
gence (in manner aforesayd) for
one day in the yeare, though as
yet what day in the yeare, was un-
determined, it hauing neither
been prefixed by his divine Ma-
iestie nor his Holines, vntil at last
upon this occasion:

S. Francis returned to his Con-
vent, was once at mid-night in
deepe contemplation in his Cel,
when the Angel of darkness trans-
form'd in shape and voice appea-
red to him like an Angel of light,
and said: Poore Francis, why are
you such a Tirant to your seife?
why wil you destroy nature with

B v your
A Method to lose
your superfluous watchings thus?
Do not you know the night
was ordain'd for man to rest, and
that sleep is the principal stay and
support of life? Alas, you are yet
in the April of your years, have
a care then of your self & be ruled
by me, if not for your owne sake,
at least for your Orders, whose sa-
fty wholly depêds on yours; you
are of a strong & robustious com-
pexion promising a long life, if
you shorten it not by your indis-
creet austerityes, believe it, these
extravagant devotions are infi-
nitely displeasing to Alm.'s God,
who in all things is most delighted
with mediocrity. The Saint hear-
ing this, and by this discovering
the malice of the wicked Enemie
to delude him by a false suggestiô,
suddainly, start'd vp, and al naked
ran to the adjoyning wood, where he so long rowled him self among the sharpe thornes & bristy thistles til the bloud issued amaine fro every part of him; when in mockery of his body, now (said he) had it not been better for you, to haue attended stil to the sufferings of your God, then to suffer this, for attending to the Enemy.

He had no sooner vttred this, but instantly behold a cleer light spred it-self ouer al the wood, and chasind darknes thece; on the one side he saw the ground al icye(for it was in the harte of winter) and on the other close by the thornes (he embrewed in his bloud) the white and red rose freshly springing; whilst the Angels in multitudes made a lane for him from that place vnto the Church, sing-
An Method to love

ing in triumphant manner as he went: Goe, happy Francis, goe where thou art expected by the King and Queen of Heauen; and he knew it was no illusion, by their so miraculously receiving him a new; then gathering store and twenty of those Roles mixt of either fort, he went towards the Church treading on riche tapistry al the way, the Angels (as we said before) making a lane for him on the right hand and on the left; where being arrived, he beheld our Saviour seated & accompanied as in the former apparition; when with all low submission calling him as his feete; Most Sacred Maiestie: (sayd hee) before whom both heauen and earth do homage, it pleased your goodnes to grant mee formerly
and serve the B. V. Mary.

A plenary Indulgence, in that manner (as I desired it) now my petition is, you would appoint a certaine day for the obtaining of it, and this for your most deare and gracious Mothers sake: Our B. Sauiour thus answered him. Francis, thy deserts are such I can deny thee nothing, wherfore I grant thee thy petition, and appoint the first of August to be it; then the Saint rendring him al possible thankes replied; but how, O Lord, shall this bee divulged unto the world, or on whose faith wil they take on trust so great a miracle: For that (said our Bl. Sauiour) be it my care to provide, in the meane while haue you recourse againe to my Vicar here on earth, carrying with you eye-witnes of this apparition one of your brothers
38  A Method to love

brothers with some of those Ros-
es you have gathered there, and
feare not, you shal see your desi-
res accomplished. In this amia-
ble sweet, and admirable manner
was granted to Holy S. Francis
the famous Indulgence of our
Lady of Portiuncula, by the So-
ueraise Monarch of Heauen and
earth, a grace so great, a favour
so sublime, as never was heard of,
never mortal man receiv'd the
like. By which, and the foremen-
tioned Institution of the Rosary
by thy great Patriarch Saint Do-
minick, whereby his Order hath
been so much ennobled, may
clearly be perceived, how extra-
ordinarily this bountious Ladye
recompences them, who serve
her affectionally and faithfully.

THE
and serve the B. U. Mary. 39

THE III. PRIVILEGE.

Howv the B. Virgin helps and Comforts her faithful servants, in their afflictions.

The third Privilege this heavenly Lady honors her faourits which is: never to be wanting to them in their afflictions, a thing which neither ought nor can be doubted of. For if she loues them, and if she loues by effects to shew it, what greater effects of it, then in their most necessitous times to receine.
receive and succour them, or when is the tyme to declare ones loue and affection, if not then? A true frende loues at al tymes (sayth the holy Ghost) and a brother is tried in affliction; and can wee thinke any in heuen or earth more true to those she loues then the B. Virgin is? or that in her affection she serues the times, & loues not so well in pouerty as in riches, in sadnes as in mirth, in adversitie as in prosperity? Oh, no, A true freind alwayes loues, but especially in time of afflication, for that is the touch stone of true freindship; indeed, and then she shews hers mott. What a happines, what a felicity is it then, for those who loue & serue her faithfully to have so powerful a freind as she who when the burthen
burthen of misery lies heaviest on vs can lighten vs, when we are deserving more of pittie then of love, out of pittie loues vs more; and who lastly in the dark passage of death, where so many leepe their way, leads vs safely out of it, and not forsakes vs then, when al the world besides forsakes vs, but comforts vs on our death-beds, when al in this life turns to our more discomfort which we did most affect; and stands vnto vs, when whole legions of diuels are besidding our souls, sheilding vs from every harme, now defending vs from impatience by assuaging our griefes, or fortysinging our mindes against it, now from sorrow, with the ioy she brings vs, now from despaire with the assured hope
hope of our salvation, and finally with a new re-inforcement of Angels puts all our Infernal enemies to flight.

The glorious S. Antony of Padua (as is recorded in his life) when he was assaulted with any temptation, had no other weapon then to repeat this Hymn of hers. O gloriosa Domina, &c. when presently he should come off with victory. As it happened one day when being at his prayers; the devil (at defiance still withal good works) set so furiously on him, and strayed his throat so cruel hard, as he had almost strangled him, till the Saint having recourse to his accustomed armes, inforc'd him to leese his hold. In like manneral the article of his death being prepar'd vnto it before with
and serve the B.U. Mary. 43
with all the sacraments, and saying with his brethren the seven penitential Psalms, he concluded all Devotions with that, to which he was ever so devout: O gloriosa Domina, &c. When behold, the B. Virgin appeared unto him, infinitely comforting him with her apparition, and adding to the Consolation of it, the sight of her deare sonne and his deare Lord; at which with incredible joy he delivered his soule into his Bl. hands. Go reade all histories, search into all records, see if you can find any that ever trusted her with their confidence, and were deceived; who invoked; her in their necessities and were not relieved by her? So as we may well applye those words of the Wise man to her, and say: Behold al ye
yee nations of men and Know, that none hath pla\'t their trust in this soueraine Lady; & been Con-
flouned. And could we but see rising from their sepulchers all those who have been devoted to
her and could Demand of them where ever she had sa\'ld’ them at their need or no? Infallibly they
would all with one accord say with S. Bernard conuerting themselves towards her. Let him be silent O
Bl. Virgin, who can say you were ever wanting to them when they invoked you in their necessit\'yes.

We wil add another Example taken out of Scala cali, of a high miraculous straine, exemplifying
this pruileedge to the life, and to conclude it.

A certaine Matron of excel-
cellent endowments, and much deuo-
and serve the B. V. Mary. 45

devoted to the Queene of hea-
ue, sending her sonne to serve
a certaine Prince, in whose ser-
uice his father had spent his life,
charg'd him before he went by all
the eyes by which Heauen and na-
ture had obliged him to her, to
be devout unto the B. Virgin, in
al his necessities to implore her
ayde, and never omit dayly, at
least to say vnto her honour an
Aue Maria, with that short pra-
yer: O B. Virgin, bee propi-
tions to me at the houre of death
This he faithfully promised, and
being at Court inviolably obser-
ved, though for the rest, Youth
easily falling into disorder, and
the Court being a place most flipp-
pery, this yong Gentleman fre-
quenting the! societies of some
deboshed ones, soone tooke the
taint
taint of their societies, and became as debaish't as they; and (as there is no stay in wickednes when one is falling once) at last he was so deeply plunged in it, as the Prince when no admonition would serve the turne first banish't him his presence then his Court, and last of all his territory. Impatient for this disgrace; and converting that was intended for his cure, vnto his great maladie, what did this desperat youth but associat himselfe with certaine theues, who harbou-ring in the woods infested al the Provinces about, and was soone chosen their Captain; when ha-ving a more spacious feild to exercize his wickednes in, he soone became so ingenioulsly fierce, so wittily cruel, as in fiercenes and cruelty
and serve the B. V. Mary. 

Cruelty he excelled them all, sparing no humane creature, and no sort of inhumanity. But see Heaven's justice, which comes with the greater force upon you, the greater turne it makes ear it comes at vs. He raigned some years thus, in his wickednes, til at last it was his fortune to be taken and deliuered vp bound hand and foot to the publick Magistrate by them to prison, where the same day he was condemned to die; of this having secret intelligence; (strait as if the marke of his wickednes were but then taken off) he began to perceae the vglines of it, so as to detest it, be wayle and curse his fortune, and euen waxe desperat for the greefe and shame it had brought vpom himself and his family. When behold while he
he was in this dispose of minde, 
there entred dungeon a man 
of mightie stature and hor-
rible aspect, who addressing 
himselfe vnto him, Offered, if 
he would be ru’ld by him, to 
free him thence; and who are 
you ( sayd he ) almost freed by 
his promise from the feare of his 
appearance, I am the diuel ( sayd 
he ) sent hither by my Prince to 
deliver you; obey but his com-
mands; at hearing this, without 
yany long delay, the prisoner ( as 
it is ordinary with wicked men, 
to preferr the safety of their 
bodyes before their soules, ) an-
swered; What-so’ere you are, you 
will oblige me by so great a be-
nefit to what foeuer you demand; 
then first ( said the diuel ) you 
must renounce Iesus Christ, his 
merits
and serve the B.V. Mary. 49
merits; and all the principality
he hath over you, I doe (sayd he)
and it suffices to have found a
Prince of your Maister so ready,
to pleaure me; next you must re-
nounce al the Sacraments & com-
munion with his Church: and that
too, answered he. Then to Mary
his mother, and al your hope of
faavour and assistance from her; at
this he demurr’d, and entring in-
to himself call’d al his thoughts
together in consult of what he
had promised his Mother, & what
he had performed til then; when
resolved at last he answered, that
he would never doe, far be it
from me (sayd he) how neere so-
er my life be concern’d in it, to of-
fer such an affront to my deare Pa-
tronesse, and so to injure her who
so hath obliged me: No, rather I

C offer
Method to love
offer her my self (if she daine to accept it) whether she would have me live or die, to be wholly and absolutely at her dispose. Confounded with this his resolution, the diuell vanished, when he touched vnto the quick with a repentance for his hainous offences against his Lord & Saviour, at first began to weep & sigh most bitterly, then had his recourse to the ordinary refuge of sinners the Mother of God saying vnto her with a sobbing voice, a thousand times interrupted by his greefe: O most sacred Mother of mercy, have pity on me miserable sinner, and do not quite reject me from before your sight; I ask not of you deliverance from my bonds, I beg not of you to save my life, for that considering the heinousnes of my crimes) were too much for me to af-
and serve the B. V. Mary: 

ike and you to grant; I only humbly crave you would obtaine for me pardó of my sinns of your B. Són, and assist me as I have often petitioned you at the houre of my death: in this sorrowful and devout manner he palt al night, and the day was no sooner come, but he sent for a Confessours and confess him of al his sinnes; this done, he was led forth to execution; the poore soule upon his way ever calling upon the Blessed Virgin his Patronesse to assist him at that time of neede; On the way it was his chance to passe by a litte Chappel, where was erectd a statue of our B. Lady, which he beholding vehemently cried out sighing in most dolorous manner: O thou hope of sinners help me; the Image at this aduanc't a little
A Method to love
little, and in sight of all the people favourably beckened unto him with the head; which he perceiving besought the Magistrate he might be suffered to approach unto it, and kiss its feet in thankfulness for so great a favour; which being granted him behold just as he bowed down to kiss its feet, the Image laid hold of him, and held his arm so fast as all the force the Officers used could not take him thence, the people beholding so great a miracle, presently all cried out, a pardon, a pardon, & delivered him whether the Magistrate would or no; in presence of whom he made the full relation of all his passed life, praying and glorifying God in his B. Mother for it, whence returned into his Country, he became
and serve the B. V. Mary. 52
came so reformed a man, as he
came as remarkable afterwards
for goodnes and vertue, as he had
been before for vice and wicked-
nes.

From this History we may un-
derstand, that the Mother of God
is neuer wanting to her servants
in their necessities, that she is our
refuge, our safeguard, our comfort,
& remedy of all our paines, greesfs
and afflictions; for which reaSON
S. German Patriarch of Constant-
inoble vses these words speaking
unto her: There is none saued
without you (sayes he) O Blessed
Virgin, none delivered from
their greuances but by you, none
but by your mediation receues
any guift from God, none but at
your suite obtaynes forgiveuences of
their sinnes; O Virgin worthy of
C 3  al
A Method to love

glory and praise, who next to your sonne takes such an especial care of humane kind, as you; who defends them more affectionately then you? who succours them more readily then you, when they are assailed by temptations? who extenuates their faults with greater charitie? excules them to God, and exempts them from punishment due to their offences.

Wherefore (in continuation of his discourse) layses this holy Patriarch; Let the afflicted have recourse to you, let those who are lost vj. in the Sea of this worlds misery in danger to be wrack't, looke towards you as to their Pole-starr, that shal' safely direct you to their Port. Thus this pious Saint; By which, and that which hath
and serve the B. U. Mary. 55
hath been sayd before, this third
Priuiledge is enough illustrated
which the deuot servants of the
B. Virgin haue. Let vs passe vnto
the fourth.

THE IV. PRIVILEDGE.

Of the devoted to the B V. Vir-
gin, which is to haue her
in Heauen for their assure-
red Advocate.

CERTAINLY it is
a great comfort for
poore Widowes and
Orphans, and such
afflicted soules, when
their busines lies at Court on
which depends the safety of their
lives
lives or estates, to be assured of
the favour of some great one who
bath the Princes care; but if the
Queene her selfe should take
their affayre so to hart, as to em-
ploy her whoale authority therein,
an unspeakeable comfort would
it be to the: Now how much more
cause of Comfort haue we poore
despicable creatures, Knowing
we haue in heauen for Advocate
to Alm: God the Queene of Hea-
uen her selfe, who defends our
causes, undertakes our prote-
ctions, procures faithfully our
saluations, and omits no diligentce
in fine to render our soueraine
Judge propitious vnto vs. O as-
fured hope, miserable sinners
haue in such an Advocate with
Alm: God, so as the Church
stileth her in her Antiphon: Eid
and serve the B. U. Mary. 37

ergo advocata nostra &c. who having in her hands the managge of our affayres, we cannot but she wil expedite al to our advantage, which made the elegant Cassian Say: All the helpe of human-Kind Consists in the multitud of the favours and graces of the Blessed Mary.

The holy Church to our no smal cóforts with suffrage of the common opinion of Saints, attributs to the B. Virgin certaine Epiteths of honour in expression of the good offices she doth vs, callig her Mother of sinners, Mother of mercy, the vniuersal hope and refuge of al, Aduocatrix of mortals, as also Redemptrix, Pacifier, and Mediatrix betwixt God and man. Nor needs there any other prove the then experience it selfe,

C v how
how much al forts and conditions of Christians are devoted to her; the Pilgrims calle her their Mother, the Pupils their Tutrix, the sick their Philiscian, the tea-faring men their haven, the Culpable their Advocate, the Trauaylers their Guide, the Captaines their deliverer, the forsake their refuge, the desperats their Hope, the afflicted their Comfort, the oppressed their Releife; In fine, all the world acknowledges her, and calls her the only Refuge of the miserable, and the aime to which al Christian people commonly direct their vowes and ardentest desires; knowing for certaine she can do al she wil, and she wil doe nothing but what may be best for vs.

For which reason al forts haue recourse
and serve the B.V. Mary. 59
recourse to her as to their chief treasure in Heaven, the source whence all their graces spring, &
the gate at which they never knock in vain; In so much as
from the midst of the vastest
wilderness, from the bottom of
the deepest sea, from the jaws of
death, i.e., upon the earth bed
to it, to be devoured, from execution and the very stroke of
the hangman's hands, she hath
delivered all those who have duly
invoked her, and miraculously
feed them from the dangers they
were in; so sure and gracious a
friend she is at need to the afflicted and distrest.

Soe she incessantly makes suit
and instance for vs, at that great
Tribunal, where her B. Sonne
presides as Soueraine Judge for it
(as
A Method to love
(as S. Bernard layes) these three requisit parts of a good Advocate
First, a great repute in the Court
she pleades in; and the favour of
the Prince or Judge; next the
sufficiencie to plead; and lastly
such an affection to the cause she
undertakes, to goe through with
it what ere it cost.

Now to declare unto the ful,
the B. Virgins authority with
her sonne, not Only exceeds my
capacitie; but the capacities of al
men and Angels. Wherefore let
it suffice to say (lest in offering
at more we should incur but the
repute of presumption) that she
is Mother of God; from whence
by Consequence we may gather
that she is of unlimited power
with him, and that the least inti-
mation of her desire carries with
it
and servue the B.U. Mary. it (as I may saye) the force of a Command. And so the holye Church desires no more of her but; Monstra te esse matrem; shew thy selfe a Mother; And in another prayer we saye: Grant he may eare our prayers, who was borne for vs, and daigned to be thine. So in our ordinary litanies we supplicats her thrice to intercede for vs, as one who hath more power and authority, with the Blessed Trinity, then all the other saints. S. Gregory of Niconedia in his Sermons to her prayse, cals her Omnipotent in her aducation; And S. Peter Damian addressing his speech to her; It manifestly appeares (sayes he) O B. Lady; Quod Dominus fecit tibi magna: how great things God hath done for you in giuing you al
A Method to love
al Power in this world and the next, even to be able to afford the most desperat a ful assurance of their salvation; for the Omnipotent taking flesh of you, how can you be lesse then omnipotent with him? and in continuation of his discourse he sayes; you approach, O Powerful Lady, to the Altar of our humane reconciliation, not in suppliant wise as do the other Saints, but with the authority of a Mother to a sonne, which is but to ask and have.

Touching the second Condition of her Capacity of the charge in rightly understanding our necessityes, besides that she is stiled the Mother of mercy and our Aduocat, both, which
which suppose her abilities for it, this example may suffice out of the Chronicles of the Friars Preachers, whose Order in a special manner is devoted unto her.

In the City of Marcella there was a devout Virgin endow'd with all Saintly virtues: who on a certaine day, being present at Compline in the Church of the Dominicans, while they were singing the accustomed Antiphon, *Salve Regina*, was ravished in ecstasy, during which she saw close things of singular remarke: The first, that when they pronounced these wordes: *Spes nostra salve*, our hope; the Blessed Virgin with a gracious Countenance
tenance returned them their salutation: The second, that at these word; *Eia ergo advocata nostra:* O* therfore thou our Advo- cate with a lowly inclination to her B. Sonne she seemed to intercede for them: The third, that at these wordes: *Illos tuos misericordes oculos ad nos Conuerte:* Behold vs with those merciful eyes of thine: she cast upon them a most deare and sweet regard: And the fourth these words: *Et Iesum benedictum fructum ventris tuin nobis post hoc exilium ostende:* and shew vs hereafter Iesus the blessed fruit of your wombe: she by turnses pre- fented him there present in her armes to al the Religious: This vision, returning from her extasy, she declared to her Confessor, a man both holy, learned, and dis- creet,
and serve the B. V. Mary. 65

creet, with great feeling of de-
uotion and tenderness. Which
example may move vs, often to
have recourse unto this our hea-
uenly Advocate, supplicating her
by this devout Antiphon of hers,
in which she seems to take soe
much delight and complacence.

The third Condition, requisite
in a good Advocate, is faithfully
to acquit them of their charge; &
it is impossible for vs to compre-
hend, how faithfully and care-
fully the Mother of God negoti-
tats for vs our affaires in heaven,
or to conceaue the admirable ef-
fects thereof. So as she hath all
these requisite parts of a good
Advocate. Mary waiteth not power
(sayes the devout S. Bernard)
nor right addressse to obtaine
what shee Petitions for; for she
is
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is the Mother of Wisdom; nor
the will to employ herself to the 
vuttermost in our affairs, for she
is the Mother of mercy. To which
last, in being our Advocate, she is
( in manner ) bound; For so the
Jurists hold they are bound, faith-
fully to negotiate the cause they
undertake. Besides being so good
as she is, & so affectionate towards
vs, how is it possible she should
not take to heart an affair of such
consequence as is that of our sal-
vation; and above all, being our
Mother too, as well as his, to w-
hom she intercedes for vs: a strange
circumstance that she should be
both Mother of the King, and 
sitter, of the Judge and Criminal, of
God and Man; which must needs
render her much concern’d in the
affaire to make an attonement be-
twixt
and serve the B. U. Mary. 67

twixt God and vs; and (as S. Ber- 
nard, sayes) be even impatient til 
she haue performed it. In being 
our Aduocat then we must sup-
pole her incessantly pacifying her 
onns anger towards vs, and me-
diating a reconcilement for al 
those, who haue recourse unto 
her and implore her assistance: 
which may be clearly perceaued 
from this following Example re-
corded by John Grithi of the Or-
der of the Minorits.

There was (sayes he) a soouldier, 
a man of most wicked life, and 
vilolater of all things sacred and 
prophane: whose wife not with-
standing (a holy and pious wo-
man) had obtain’d of him, by so-
leme nose to fast in homour of 
the B. Virgin euery Saturday, & 
saye an Ave Mary as ofte as he 
beheld
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beheld her picture: which he did, nor euer omitted to doe. One day, (more to a voyd the vehement heat abrode, then for any heate of deuotion he had within) he entred the Church: where beholding an Image of the B. Virgin, he began to doe as he was accusto-med. When behold, he had an apparition of our B. Lady on the Altar holding in her armes her B. Sonne al couered ouer with wounds and the abundance of bloud that issued out of them: Moued to pitty at the sight of so pittiful a spectacle, the Souldier (divinely inspired) drew neerer, and had the boldnes to aske our B. Lady who had so wounded her B. Sonne? Thou, and suche sinners as thy selfe, (replied she with an angry countenance) who
who exercise more cruelty on him with your daylye crimes, then ever the barbarous Jewes who crucified him. These words struck the Soldyer into so lively repentance for his finnes, as he replied with a sorrowful hart & weeping eyes: O B. Ladye, it is true indeed, I haue been as great a sinner as you affirme; yet do but obtaine for me of your B. sone a ful pardon and remission of what is past, and I heer vow vnto you to be as obsequious hereafter to him, as I haue been rebellious heretofore.

No, sayd the B. Virgin, I am resolue to heare you no more, nor be any more deceiued by you; for whilst you sinners cal me the Mother of mercy, you make me with your finnes the Mother of all grief and
and affliction: Oh B. Lady (sayd he) be not so inexorable I beseech you to my prayers, but remember you are the Aduocat of sinners, and haue (in a manner) contrac-
ted by it, an obligation to inter-
cede for them, and consequently for me the most greeuous of them,
all, and most needing your inter-
cession: Heer the B. Virgin mo-
ued to pity with his words, cast a
pittifull eye towards her sonne &
sayd: Pardon then I beseech you,
O my sonne, this poore sinner
who so humbly petitions you; no,
sayd the sacred Infant, his offens-
ces are too great to be forgivien;
but she persisting stil to conjure
him by all the charmes she thought
most powerful to moue him; at
last seeing his anger so resolutly
bent nothing would moue it, she
arose
arose and placing him on the Altar went downe ready to cast her selfe upon her knees before him; which when her B. Sonne beheld, suspecting her intention, he ask't her what she meant to doe? why, saye she, to cast my selfe heer prostrate at your feete, and never rise til you haue granted me my petition; O mother, say the tender Infant, you know the force your wil hath with mine; For your sake, I pardô this wicked wretche and in lieu of satisfaction admit him, to kisse my wounde; encouraged at this by the B. Virgin, the soldier drew neere, and whilst with incredible Consolation, he kisst wound after wound behold, under the touch of his mouth they al heald vpp. The B. Infant thus recovering, the vision va-
nished, when the soldier presently hailing home, distributed all his goods unto the poore, and then by common consent, he and his wife separated, and entred into Religion. O happy soules the while, and happy Conver-
sion which I would to God al sin-
ners would imitate. To conclude then, since we haue so powerful an Advocate in heauen of the B. Virgin, let vs make no delay but preferr our supplications to her, expose our necessityes, and peti-
tion her for a redresse of them; the meane while, more to inte-
reft her in our affaires, let vs be assiduous in honouring her, and ingenio.us in finding out the way to do it best, omitting neither day nor night to salute her with humble reuence, alwayes re-
membring
& serve the B. U. Mary. 73
membrning that a litle of feru-
rous deuotion is better then a
great deale negligently perfor-
med.

THE V. PRIVILEDGE.

How the Mother of God sa-
ues her deuout servants,
and renders them worthy
of eternal life.

The glorious Queen of Heauen is not co-
tented yet, to che-
rish her servants af-
fter a deare manner,
to enoble them with singular pre-
rogatiues, to succour them in their

D neces-
necessities, and espouse the care of their affairs; but with all she delivers them with her prayers from merited punishment, and directs them vnto heauen; which souereigns favours ought to oblige vs perpetually to serue her, especially this last which I esteeme the principalst of all, and worthiest of greatest admiration, in that according to the common opinion of Doctours, 'tis in a manner impossible, that any one should be damned who liues & dies devote vnto her, be they never so farre gone in wickednes, but they recover at last, and through the mercy of God (as we haue a daily experience) make a happy end. Now if any object, that this cannot be without a praevious dispose of Grace and a sufficient sorrow for their
and serve the B. U. Mary. 75 their sinness I answeer, it is true, but this the incessant prayers of the B. Virgin obtaineth for them too, whose power is so great with her B. Sonne, as by vertue of that, she obtaines for them a perfect Contrition, and entire remission of their sins. And this, the devout S. Ambrose in these words affirmes: O B. Mary, sayes he, you embrace with a maternal affection the poore sinner defiled by al the World, and never forfacke him til God pacified by your prayers hath receaued him vnto Grace.

Let vs Confirme this verity by the example of a common Curtezen converted by the intercession of our B. Lady. We reade in the great Marial, of a lewd woman wholly abandoned to vice
and licentiousnes; who not with
standing never omitted dayly se-
uen times to bow downe in reue-
rence of the B. Virgin, and to
say an Ave Maria in honour of
her; Now amongst her frequent
prostitutions, it happened one
of principal quality haunted her
company, whose wife being a
vertuous Lady and one singularly
devoted to the Queene of Hea-
uen; did beare her husbands il
demeanour so impatiently, as one
day prostrating her selfe before
an Image of the B. Virgin she
sayd: O most soueraine Lady,
mirrour of al purity, how can
you suffer this, to see one so sha-
mefully abused, and an impudent
woman thus glory in my injury?
I beseech you punish her so ex-
empliarly, that she may be a ter-
rible
and serve the B.V. Mary. 77

rible warning hereafter for all the rest; Grant this request O so-
uperain Lady, if not unto the de-
serving of my prayers, and heate
of my seruices, Yet at least to the
pitty of my Cause, and the in-
tolerables of my injurye. When
behold a wonder, the Image thus
answered her; deare seruant, it
is impossible for me to satisfie
your desire, I know your wrongs
and the just cause you have to be
offended at them; but know whit-
al, she is so devout to me, in
midst of al her wickednes, as I
cannot proceed against her as you
desire; only this I wil doe, for
your comfort, I wil petition my
Sonne for her, that he would
turne her hart, and that she may
turne vnto amendment; which
was done, for within few dayes
D 3 after.
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after there happened a miraculous Change in both the Adulterers, both he and she reforming of their lives, and living chastly & exemplarily ever after. And is not this a rare privilege then, of those devoted to the Queene of Heauen, that let them be never so deeply plunged in the abyss of sins, yet she can deliver them thence? I call it a privilege, since for their particular devotion to the Queene of Heauen they are particularly exempted from the law of other sinners.

This affectionate devotion besides to the B. Virgin is a probable and experimented signe of predestination, I say only a probable one, because 'tis true, none knows whether they be worthy of love
and serve the B. V. Mary. 79

love or hate, and an infallible one
in this life there is none.

With what contented harts
then should we live, did we but
exercise our felues, in good
works and frequent acts of devo-
tion towards the B. Virgin? and
what hope of eternal felicity
should our minds be raised unto
free from all those doubts and
feares of their salvation, which
those who walke not in the way
of God and the service of his B.
Mother, do meet withal so often?
And from hence proceeded the
firme Confidence of Saints,
grounded on the knowledge they
had of the excessive liberality &
promises of Alm; God, to Con-
querr as it were the Kingdom of
heaven by the force of Christ's
merits and their owne coopera-

tions,
tions, by which they were so encouraged in the midst of their most grievous sufferances, as nothing could daunt or discourage them.

S. Bernard in his sermons on Septuagesima sayd, that although 'tis true no man knowes for certaine whether he be in the grace of God or no, since in this life no man hath an infallible knowledge of his salvation; Yet (sayes he,) (and 'tis a saying of unspeakable comfort those who are perseuerant in good) we are not to be disanimated, nor giue over the working of our salvation with an anxious feare, since we haue for our comfort a hope of it arising from so many evident signes of it, as it seldom or never deceiveth our trust. Heare himself: le'ts neuer
neuer trouble our selues (says he) with any such doubt as this, for we haue such certayne markes & manifest arguments of our saluation, as in those who haue them, there is no doubt at all.

The Example of S. Hilarion comes wel to the Confirmation of this; drawing towards his end, and being affrighted with the apprehensions of death in this manner encouraged himself; Go out my soule, said he, What fearest thou? 'tis seauenty yeares since thou begon'lt to serue thy God, and now art a feard of death? Behold what an assurance and firme hope of salvation a vertuous life can gie to the servants of God, and how cleere and evident the markes are of eternal saluation to those who liue vertuously. Let
every Christian then endeavour to live so, and he shall feel in himselfe the contentment of this security, which is so great, as it exceeds all the other Contentments we can have in this mortal life. Which S. Francis well experienced, when having had a revelation, how he was predestinated to be saved, through excessive joy for a long time he could utter nothing else, but Blessed be God, blessed be God. And if these signs of Predestination are to be seen in any, in a most particular manner are they to be seen in those who are devoted to the B. Virgin; which from this following Example will be made manifest.

S. Anselme in his booke of the miracles of our B. Lady, recounts this.
and serve the B. U. Mary. 83
this story: how the Diuel (who
out of his inueterat hate to man,
seekes al meanes possible to ruine
him) once put himselfe in ser-
vice to a noble man, having first
taken on him a humane shape;
whose humour he knew so wel to
comply withal, as in short space
he had al the care of his family
committed to his charge; and
pursuing the advantage he had
over his wil and his affections, he
was still suggesting some mi-
cheife or other to him, now coun-
seling him to wrong this man,
now to murther that, so as no
day past in which he made him
not guilty of some notable wic-
kednes; now it hapned one day,
this noble-man walking in his
woods accompanied with his
trew of ruffians, encountered with
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e a certaine holy Priest, whom he violently layd hands on and carried prisoner to his Castle; at night the Priest signified to him he had a secret to impart unto him, in which he was much concern'd, but it must be in presence of all his servants; the noble-man with a longing desire to know what it was, assembled them altogether except this diuel, who retired himself, and tooke for an excuse some indisposition of health: the Priest by divine revelation knowing the craft of the wicked enemie, told the noble-man his presence was so necessary among the rest, as without it, there could be nothing done. How would you haue him come? answer'd the noble-man, since you heare them say he cannot stand
and serve the B. U. Mary. 85
stand on his legs he is so ill? All's one for that, replied the Priest again, some means must be found out to bring him here. The noble-man seeing him so resolute, commanded two of his servants notwithstanding all his excuses to see him brought, which was done, and he came counterafiting the sickman unto the life; when the holy-man before them all, Conjured him presently in the name of Alt. God to declare who he was, and to what end he had put himself in service to that noble-man? At this, the diuel casting toward him such a looke, was able to make tremble the boldest there, answered plainly he was the diuel, and his end of serving his Maister was, to procure his destruction which he had long since
since effected, had not the B. Virgin interposed her self: & wherfore, sayd the Priest? why only for a certaine custome this wicked wretch had (sayd he) dayly to salute her humbly on his knees seaven times both morning and euening, and as oft rehearse in her honour the Angelical salutation. Which if I could have once persuaded him to omit, as I endeavoured often, I had presently killed him, and taken his soule to hell, and having uttered this in shooting himself like lightning out of the roome, he presently disappeared, with his hideous roaring leaving them all in horrible affright, of which the holy man taking his advantage, exhorted them all to penance and bitter life, and especially the noble-
man, with whom he prevailed so much, as he wholly converted him and made him as exemplar in goodnes, as he had been in wickednes.

By this example we see this Privileedge, and the exceeding value of this interiour and exteiior reverence exhibited vnto the Queene of Heauen. And if this hapned vnto one so wicked a man as he, how much more special care wil she haue of all those, who serue her in holines and purity of life? with what a Deare tendernes wil she vnder, take the protection of those? and what a watchful eye wil shee haue to defend them from the affalts of the Enemy?

Let vs then conclude this holy and profitable exercice with our duly
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duly honouring the B. Virgin
both with exterior and interior
reuerence offered vpp with all be-
coming obsequiousnes; so shal
we ingratiate our selves, with
our most deare and bountious
Lady, by whose means we shal
obtaine that quiet and repose of
hurt, which is to be preferred be-
fore al worldly things.
The Conditions requisit in a servant of the B.Virgin, and first of Humility.

Those who are entertained in service of any earthly prince to obtain their favours, endeavour to appeare endowed with al those vertuous parts and qualities by which they are taken most: so those who would be favoured by the Queene of Heauen, must whilst they serve her, endeavour to be qualified with those vertues she is chiefly delighted in; which are
are principally those she exercised her self in, whilst she was conversant in this mortal life, as namely *Humility, Corporal chastity, and purity of hart*, to which we may add our diligent frequenting and receaung the Sacraments, the only means to conferue vs in internal purity and to begin with humility, which is the foundation of all other vertues.

It is certaine, no other vertue was more perspicuous in her then that of humility, though she had al the rest in their highest exaltation; and this appeares by the account which she made of it, testifyed by these words of hers: *Because he hath regarded the humility of his handmayed: therefore all generations shall call me blessed: as much*
much as to say; that God only in regard of the lowliness of her humility, had elected her to that high dignity, of being his Mother. And if to be humble of heart (according to S. Dorotheus) is to account abjectly of ones selfe and preferr al before them, of what excellency was this vertue in the B. Virgin, who from those words of her, Because he hath beheld the humility of his handmaid; we may suppose (as F. Arias wel observes) she had so humble an opinion of her selfe, as she reputed her selfe of al other creatures the most contemptible.

This vertue then shining so resplendantly in her, we may suppose to have been that, most took the eyes of her B. Sonne, & made him soonest chose her for Mother,
as a sonne in this world if it lay in his choice would soonest make eleció of her for mother, whom he lawe endued with those graces and qualities which were most in account with vs; and this seems to be inferred by these words of the text: For he hath beheld the humility of his handmayd; and as if she would say; the sonne of his heavenly Father hath cast a favourable eye on me his humble servante, and thought me worthy of his loue; not because I am nobly borne, wise, prudent, conversant in the scriptures, and the like; not for any beauty or corporal perfection, but only because of my humility. For so although all her other vertues were most exceeding grateful to Alm. God, yet that of her humility was most
and serve the B.V. Mary.

Most of all, it being as it were the foundation of all the rest. In so much as according to Lyra's interpretation, it was in her the principal disposition to the conceiving of the Son of God; & so says S. Hierom. God was rather moved to be incarnate in her womb by her humility than another virtue else. In this virtue it was (as S. Mechtild understood by revelation) she so exercised herself and laboured so carefully, as she attained the height & perfection of it; by this she came to so absolute a knowledge of herself; by this she would lessen her own proportion compared either unto God or man. And disclaiming wholly from her owne deserts; by this she came to attribute all the favours she received to the sole benignity of Alm. God
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God, and renderd him thanks for them accordingly; by this in
fine she came neuer to utter word in her owne prayse, or to giue
willing eare to others prailes, neuer to take vain-glory in any
thing, but to attribut al the glory to Alm: God, incessantly magni-
sifying and prailling him, with rendring him infinity of thanks for
his great favours towards her; and so she begins her Canticle; My
soule doth magnifie our Lord, and my spirit exults in God my Sauior. And
to the model of this excellent vertue of hers, are all her devout
servants to conforme their actiöö, and expresse the portraiture of it
in their soules; when how grate-
ful wilty appeare in the eyes of
this glorious Queene, when they
present themselves before her in
this
serve the B. V. Mary this riche equipage. Certainly there is none hath any understanding or discourse in him, that will not humble himselfe vnto the ground and thinke him the most abiect of al other things, who shal but consider how profoundly humble the B. Virgin was even in that exalted state of hers of being Mother of God, more holy then the Angels, and more pure then the very sun-beames themselves. And who considering his owne vilenes and extraction only from a little earth, his being subject to such a world of faults and imperfections, his becoming through sinne enimie to God, and companion of the diuel, wil not in imitation of the B. Virgin cast themselves into the bottome of humility, from the topp of pride and
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and presumption, whereon they stand

A great and near Imitator of this humility of hers, was her great servant S. Francis, who was ambitious of nothing so much on earth, as to be accounted the most abject of all his brethren and for his own part he esteemed himselfe no better then a collection of all the abominable vices in the world, and one of the most greeuous sinners as ever was; which in one so great a Saint and in whom so many vertues were assembled, was the more rare, and worthy the greater wonder and imitation.

And although this in general might suffice to affect vs to this excellent vertue, yet I wil set you downe in particular a Method
the B. U. Mary.

thod for the attayning it, given by B. Tecelama Religious of the third Order, to a certaine freind of his: who demanding of him by what meanes the vertue of Humility was to be acquired, he answered; Contemne thy selfe, and al thou hast in the world; esteeme every one more perfect then thy selfe; and have a slight opinion of none; make great esteeme of thy faults, and litle of thy vertues & perfections; count litle al the good thou dost to others, and the harme thou dost for great; and thou shalt be in a faire way to Humility. To this we may add S. Bonaventures advice for the attayning this holy vertue; Abase thy selfe as lowly as thou canst (sayes he); Imagine al men thy betters, and thy self.
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selfe hardly worthy to be their
slave, and so thou shalt arrive to
a tranquillity of mind, and never
be molested with offence or mo-
ved to impatience. By which ex-
cellent documents we may learn
to find out true humility and the
ways that lead vnto, a jour-
ney so profitable for our soules
which our B. Saviour perswades
vs to undertake saying: Learne
of me to be meeke and humble
of hart. And those servants of the
B. Virgin: who are so indeed, es-
pecially women-kind are to shew
it in their exterior comportments
as they goe abrode in publique,
shewing neither pride nor vanity
in their lookes nor apparel, and
compassing both according to the
exact rules of vertue and decency.
For what an unworthy thing
were
were it in them, to appeare in
the B. Virgins light lesse ver-
tuously adorn'd or decently be-
haued, things which she in her
selfe so much abhorr'd as S. Epi-
phanius testifies of her together
with divers others, that her owne
habit was ever plaine and simple
without all affectation of riches
or novelty, and ( which is an
evident signe of her owne purity
(neuer subiect to any spot or
stayne, but til the more whit ( as
it wer) for her wearing it, This
humility in their habits then let
women learne of her, even for
the love of our B. Sainiour Christ
who died naked on the ignomi-
nious Crosse for vs, and let not
such vanity unworthy of a Chris-
tian appeare in their habits and
exterior garbe.
Sirius in the life of S. Elizabeth daughter of Andreas King of Hungary and wife of the Landgrave of Turing, recounts a story that comes well to purpose here. She (says he) one day attired in her Majestick robes in all her pompe and brauery entred the Church, where beholding just at the entrance a Crucifix, she solemnly made a stand, and in great bitterness and compunction of hart, began in this manner to enter into comparison of her self with it: Shal, my Lord and Saviour, remaine al naked nayled to this hard Cross, & shal I miserable sinner as I am, go at pleasure vested in these costly robes, curiously embroidered with gold and precious stone? Shal my sweet Redeemer have these divine
and serve the B. V. Mary. 101
unke hands of his fastned to the
Crosse with cruel nayles, & shal
I weare on mine, al the delicat-
cies that can be gott? O my Iesus,
shal I see thee, the only Spoule
of my hart, haue thy head trans-
pearct with those sharp thornes;
& shal I with such magnificence
weare a crowne on mine? Alas,
and can I behold him abandoned
by al his freinds, and inhumane-
ly left for a prey, to the outra-
gious vlage of his enemies, and
sett yp as a marke for them to
shooet their horrible blaspheme-
ries at; whilst I my self go with
so great a trayne, wayted vpon
and honoured at every turne? O
miserable, most miserable as I
am, is this the loue I beare to my
Sauior Christ, are these my ac-
knowledgment and gratitud for

E 3 a
al his benefits? And in saying this a fadaine palenes, overcast her face, and a greevous fainting cast her in a trance: when returning out of it, she firmly purposed never to admit of superfluity againe in any thing she wore, & de falso ever after she went so mortified in her apparel, as most commonly she had under it a rugged hayre cloth, and as often as the Dukes occasions absented him from her, she would be so courtely attired, as no poore woman but went better clad.

And certainly it is a deplorable thing ever with teares of bloud, to see what excessse of apparel & voluptuousnes raignes amongst women now a dayes, so as they seeme to place al their their felicity (as it were) in a newfangled fashion
and serve the B. V. Mary. It fashion or attire. I would they knew or considered how displeasing it is to Alm: God, or how many souls their vain curiosities and foolish pride have precipitated and cast downe to Hel, and what lamentable harms have had their origin from thence; for they are not only the cause of their owne finnes, but also of others participation with them, whilst in regarding them the bayte hath been but layd by the Enemy to draw thousands unto hel. Which perhaps we should hardly Credit, did not the holy Ghost it selfe affirme it: Turne away thy face (sayes he) from a woman Curiosity adorned, for many have been taken by the beauty of women, and become reprobate; a horrible thing to
imagination. And how many Religious men haue we seene
drawne by the attraction of beauty, first to insinuат themselves
into their familiaritie under the pretence of sanctity and spiritual
converse, and after by degrees so deeply engaged in their societies,
as without hazard of their salvations they haue never been able
to get out. The whilst with a
deafe ear they haue neglected all
the inspirations of heaven, flattering themselves with certaine
pernicious Maximes grounded upon I know not what imagina-
rie shew of good manners and
curtesy; For what (will they say)
should we turne our backes to
them? and what were that but to
give them cause to thinke vs
Clownes, and iustly to accuse vs
of
and serve the B. U. Mary. 105
of discursely and incivility. But
happy is the soule the whilst that
receiveth these vaine feares, in a
matter in which their salvation
is so much concern'd, and preferreth
their soules immortal good be-
fore all other humane respects.
Let women therefore take warn-
ing and leave off in time, all af-
fection and superfluity in their
behaviour & attire least they in-
curr as great or greater punish-
ment than she did, whose story I
will here relate, out of the second
part of the Chronicles of the
Friar-Minors.

A Religious man of the Pro-
vince of Sicily, praying one day
in the Church of his Convent,
had the apparition of a woman al
naked presented before his eyes,
whom he conjuring in the name

E v  of
of God, to declare unto him what she was, she answered with great shame and confusion; I was (said she a woman of fashion and quality in my dayes, and of plentifuls fortune, al which I abused so, to his offence who gave it me, as in al my life I had no other thought, than how to adorne me in most curious manner, and follow still the fashions of the time, till coming to die it, was God Almightyes mercy to me, I should repent me of my sinns, and with true Contrition make an entire Confession of them, by which means I had them all forgiven me on this condition that I should for penance of my former vanity, off attire, wander in this manner naked vp and downe the world; and hauing sayd this, she disapeare
& serve the B. U. Mary. 107

peared. Where is to be noted, that although the poore soule for its greater Confusion imagined she was a spectacle to all, yet none saw her but those whom God Almightye pleas’d to reveale this his secret judgement vnto, in whom it excited rather a holy seare of the severe punishments of Alm. God, then any unlawfull imagina

tion or desire.

Let those then who desire to render themselves acceptable in the eyes of the B. Virgin endeav

our with all their might to become humble both in the exterior & exterior humility being the only vertue on which God bestowes his most abounding fa

vours. God resists the proud (says the holy Scripture) and gives his grace to the humble. And the mof
most sure and infallible way to
heaven is true Humility. Humility (says S. Augustin) is the
Queene of vertues, the destruction of vice, the mirrour of Vir-
gins, and the throne of the holy
Trinity.

In fine, humility is that, which
best teaches us both to know the
decepts of the diuell, & to avoid them, being knowne; as was re-
veaill'd to S. Anthony, when be-
holding one day in vision al the
world sett with snares about, he
cried out; O Lord, how is it pos-
sible for one to escape all these?
and he was answered by a voice
from heaven; by being humble,
Anthony; for onely Humility
stoopes so low, 'tis never entan-
gled by them. And so we read, how the diuell once appear'd to
S. Maca-
S. Macarius with a mightie scithe in his hand, threatening him as if he would have mowed him off, & crying out against him; O Macarius, what a cruel strife is there betwixt us two, and yet how impossible it is for me to overcome thee: I doal that thou dost and more, for thou watchest sometimes and I never sleepe; sometymes thou fastest but I never eate; I thinke as obiectly; and sett as light as by the worlds vanities as thou; only one thing there is in which thou surmountest me, which is that profound humility of thine. We see then, what admirable force this Christian Humility hath, to overthrow pride, and triumph over the stratagems and forces of the Enemy; a force so great, as the very mention of it...
it is enough to put al the armies of Hel to flight; which I will confirme by an example taken out of the Friar Minors Chronicle, and it is this.

In the Conuent of Perusia the Province, where S. Francis was borne, there was a Guardian of an austere life, endowed with all the vertues of a good Religious man; now it happened that a noble man of the Countrey on Christmas-Eve sent an expresse messenger to desire him to send one of his Religious the next day to say Masse for him, and it hapned just at the instant that two of his Religious, returning from a long journey, weary with trouayling and almost dead with cold and hunger, he presently commanied them to satisfie the desire of the
Of sense the B.U. Mary. III
the Noble-man; which they as presently undertake without once murmuring and repining at his comamund or allading for their excuses their great necessities. Going then with great humility and obedience, behold they were scarce halfe way on their journey, but they were overtaken by night and involued in so thicke a darknes that they could not see their way; which incommoity joyned to that of their hunger and cold, made their case the more commiserable; when seeing themselves so desititut of al humane helpe, they had their ordinary recourse to the diuine helpe beseeching Almighty God, to succour them in their so great necessitie, and in the meane time going on, though whether right or no they could
could not tel; at last they hard the ringing of a Bell, and their eares directing their steps; at last they arrived at a Monastery (as it seem’d;) where having knockt, the gate was presently opened, and all the Religious in flock came to salute them; from thence they convey’d them to their chamber, where they had all things prepar’d for their rest & refreshment with great diligence; At last the Religious departing from them exacted of them a promise to make them some short exhortation before the next dayes Matins. Wel, the morning being come, and it ringing to Matins, the Religious were all assembled, and one of these good Fathers an excellent Preacher began to make them an exhorta-
exhortation taking for his text these words of the Prophet E-
saias: A child is borne vnto vs, and a sone is giuen vs; on which
he discoursed most divinely of our Saviours humility in descen-
ding so low to take vpon him our humane nature, and whilst he
was in the heat of his exhorta-
tion he might perceiue al the Re-
ligious one after another flinking
away till at last there was only
left the Abbot in the Quire. Whé
al amazed demanding of him the
reason why his Monkes had left
him so? your selfe are the cause,
sayd he, how is that possible an-
swered the good man againe? Why (sayd the Abbot) you haue
discours'd in such manner of I
know not what humility of the
sonne
A Method to love

sonne of God, as they neither
would nor could endure to heare
it pray'd and extolled so much:
for to discomew the truth unto you,
we are not (as we seeme) Reli-
gious men but diuels, who in re-
ward of your prompt obedience
to your Superiour have been, co-
strayn'd to giue you that assistance
you have receiued of vs to night,
and hauing, sayd this, both he &
the Monastery and al dis-appea-
red, leaving the good Religious
men mightily astonish't at so
wondrous an accident and in the
same place where they first hard
the Bell, from whence they tooke
their journey towards the Noble-
man, al the way thanking and glo-
ifying God for his great favours
& benefits bestowed upon them.

Many other examples of this
great
and serve the B.V. Mary. Its
great virtue I could recount, and
especially that of the B. Virgin,
who when the Highest had chosen
her for his mother profess her
selfe the lowlyest of his servants,
& in her greatest honors went in
visitation of S. Elizabeth, and serv-
ued her for three space moneths;
then with what greater humi-
licity can be imagined? besides
how lowly did she matche her
self, onely to a poore Artificer, to
whom she continued dutifull and
obedient eu'n to death, comfort-
ing her selfe alwayes with those
who were most poore and hum-
ble; as we may gather by the ma-
riage she was present at of that
poore couple at Cana in Galilee,
neither refusing her company to
the most greevous sinners such as
was S. Mary Magdalen and the
like,
like; and all this humility in one, who was exalted to so high a dignity, as to be mother of God, and Queene of heauen & earth, was so much the more admirable and rare, that she should never boast her of any honour she had, nor be the more exalted in her mind for being so high exalted in dignity; but neither on this nor any other example for the present will I further enlarge my selfe, not to exceed the limits of that breuitie I haue proposed to my self.
Of the second Condition
Which the devout servants
of the B. Virgin ought to
have, which is Chastity.

And if the servants
of the B. Virgin be
so grateful and accep-
table unto her by
reason of their Hu-
mility, how great must needs
her favour be towards those, who
add to this vertue that of Chastity
too, which so purifies and embe-
lishes a soule? in how singular re-
recommendation must she needs
have them, & how tenderly che-
rish them? Humility and Virgi-
nity
nity were so equally in this Blessed Lady, as to which to give the pre-eminence we do not know; so happy was her virginy in being adorned with such humility, that admitted of no vain presumption of it, and so happy was her humility in having the honour of such virginity, which defended it from all misprision and contempt; and what clearer testimony can there be of this holy Virgins immaculate Chastity than these words of hers; How can this be seeing I know not man? And of her humility on the other side, then those which presently follow: Behold the handmaid of our Lord; be it done unto me according to thy word. O what a marriage was heere of these two vertues in the B. Mayd, where chastity became
To humble, and humility to chast?
what higher dignity could there bee, then to be Mother of God, and yet she professe her selfe his humblest servant, aba-sing her selfe as low as he had exalted her, so as S. Antoninus had iust cause to saye, that it was chiefly the attraction of her humility, which drew the sonne of God from heauen, to make in her wombe another heauen on death.

Al then, but chiefly those of her owne sexe, are to imitate this B. Virgin in her Angelical purity, who is proposed a paterne and example vnto al. It wa's she; that first advanced the standard of Virginity, vnder whose white colours so many since have fought, and first ledd the way, which so many Virginc-soules haue
have followed since, of consecrating their virginities unto God by vow; in doing which (saying S. Anselme) she favoured more of divine than mortal: neither did the name of Mother any thing derogate from the dignity of a Virgin, but rather dignified it the more, adding the fruit of a mother to the flower of virginity in a divine & admirable manner. Wherefore with good reason she is stiled Virgin of Virgins; who began a paterne to all the rest, of Consecrating their virginities to God; a work so grateful to him and acceptable.

O happy and thrice happy Virgins, then, who perpetuate their Virginities by vow unto Alm. God, in spite of all resistance the world doth make; being besides the
and serve the B. V. Mary. 

the many prerogaties they have above those who are wedded to men; they enjoy by it such a Consolation of mind, as surpasses all the Comforts in the world.

In confirmation of which, I will relate the excellent discourse of Nereus and Achillies to S. Domitilla in commendation of virginity when they persuaded her to Christianity. These being her curious in adoring her self, took occasion from thence to dispose her minde: Madame (sayd they) if you were but as sollicitous to adorn your soule with vertues, as you are in setting your body of, with these superfluous ornaments to please your spouse Valerian, without al doubt you would take the eyes of Iesus Christ with it, a farre more noble spouse than he,
he, and one who would far more
deserve of you, with whom you
should live till in an increase of
beauty: whilst your other would
only live upon the spoils and the
decayes if it; To whom she an-
swered, ( yet unskilled in Christian
perfection, and one that knew
nothing but what the world and
flesh dictated unto her) what can
be more happy sayd she, then the
state of marriage, which compro-
ses in it all that is of honour and
felicity? Alas, Madame, said Ne-
reus again, you know no more
then the vaine pleasures which
vanish with this blast of life, and
are ignorant as yet (it seemes) of
those everlasting ones in the
other life, and weighs the com-
mmodities of marriage: al if, you
putt not its incommodities in the
other
other scale, which I would have you carefully doe, before you loose, a good can never once lost be recovered againe; And what good is that, laye she? your liberty, answered he, which with the litle of Virgin you must forgoe, changing it for a fereule estate and fruitful obsequiousnes vnto one whole humors you know not and which perhaps may be such, as out of pure lealously he may interdict you the company of your nearest freinds, and those who you most esteeme, behauing himselfe so harshly towards you, as no flaye but should live a more contented life then you. Al this, halfe smiling she ask't him, whither his general rule had no exception; for (sayd she) I grant you lealously is a vice but	too
too ordinary in men, which my mothers sad experience renders but too manifest, yet is it not so fatal to all the kind, but there is some so happy to be exempted from it, and amongst the rest, the excellent dispoze of my Aurelian promises him to be one. Achilles to this replied, Madam, (said he,) be not so confident, for these yong louers in the heat of their pourfluite, the easier to attaine to their desires, dissemble their natural inclinations, and appeare more mild and gentle then they are; but those once attayn'd, off goes the maske of their dissimulation, and then you shall see how jealous they can be, how harsh and crosse in their dispositions, how injurious to you in words, and not feldone also in deeds. But sup-
and serve the B.V. Mary. 125

suppose them of a more temperate humour and more gently inclin'd, what privilege enjoy they by it? If you shall give me leave, I will tel you what: To beare a painful burthen in the wombe nine moneths together, to waxe leane and pale with it, to be subject to a thousand languors and disguits the while if you have no Children. Lord what discontentes, what repining at it? If you have with what danger? and how often in giving their life do Mothers loose their owne? what care and trouble in their education? What feares least all their labours should be lost, and death make his harvest of what they had sowne with paine? then what disconforts do they bring their parents with their lewdnes and vantowardnes;

F 3 some
some living so as they wish they had never been born; others dying so, as they wish they had never lived; so as both alive and dead, they seem only born, for their Parents affliction. At this; Narcus crossing his arms and lifting up his eyes like one in ecstasy, concluded thus: O happy then the state of virginity which exempts us from all these miseries and vinctes the soul that is honored with it, to Alm. God O most rich and incomparable treasure, whose possession exceeds all esteem and repairs all loss; and O Divine love, and more than humane fortitude, by which a weak woman can subdue the flesh, & with a generosity above the weakness of her sex, wage war with the world, overcome her
Observe the B. V. Mary.

her appetites, and vanquish the forces both of death and hell itself; for which they shall one day enjoy a Crowne, with which none in heaven shall be honoured but they. With these speeches of her devout servants, but much more with those which heaven spoke to her inward heart, the Lady was so moved, as she presently consecrated her Virginity to God, for whose love unto the palme of Virginity she after added that of Martyrdome.

Now we are to note, there are three sorts of Chastitys in the Church, by either of which the B. Virgins devout servants may become grateful unto her. The first is Matrimonial Chastity, when man and wife loyally observe their Coniugal faith to one
another: The second is Viudal Chastity, when Widowes free from the obeysrance of man, liue afterwards in perpetuall continency, & this excels in excellency the first degree, as S. Paul sainke of widowes; Yet they are more happy so, sainke he, If you wil Credit me. The third is Virginall Chastity, more excellent then both the other more perfect and more meritorious; and this is, when we conserve our selves in our integriety of body & mind dedicating our virginities to Alm. God, which, oh, how grateful how acceptable it is to the B. Virgin, who preferres it before al other oblatios. Seing then al these three sorts of Chastity, are with proportion both good and laudable, and with the B. Virgin of pretious estenme, let thole
and serve the B.V. Mary. 129
those that are devoted to her, be
they maid, widow, or wife, endeav-
our in their feueral degrees, to
present her with this grateful of-
fering, to which end they are to
resolve to fight manfully, for the
Enemies that oppose it, are
both many and powerful, their
Arts ful of ambushes, and their
endeavours incessant for the over-
coming of us: so as S. Augustine
considering the difficulty of the
fight, and rares of the victory,
with good reason said: Amongst
all the wars the Christians had, that
of Chastity was the most sharpe, and
pressed us most; where the Combat
lasted always, and an entire victory
was never got attayned unto; and
those that naturally ponder it find
it true. For but consider how few
they are, that fight it manfully
F v indeed,
indeed, in compare with those who, cowardly yield unto the Enemy, and we may truly saye, the diuell gains by nothing more then this; for how many of all ages and conditions, of either sexe, doth the Enemy precipitate into this vice, who for the rest stood firme enough? To which purpose S. Augustin hath a fearfull saying: Excepting Infants (saies he) this only sinne is the occasion that so few of the rest are saued. Who at hearning of this, is not astonished? & conceiues not a pity of our miserable estate, to see how head-long al runne vnto this vice. And as for the servants of the B. Virgin; what excuse can they pretend for their excesses herein? what wayes they to please her, whilst they displease her heere?
Do they thinke, that laying their beads frequently wil do it? or their fastings on Saturdayes and the like? Alas, no, they doe but deceive themselues, and the vsur-pig such an honourable title as to be her seruants, whilst they are such? Doth but more encrease their damnation, whilst they abuse that name to the dishonour of Chastity by which ought to be cheefly honoured, and whilst they put on the face of wearing her liuery, but weare the badge of her Enemy in their harts. Alas, how many may we imagine now in hel, who were once devoted to the B. Virgin as wel as we, till with a foolish presumption of their saluation, they with a deafe eare past over her laving and di-vine suggestions & fel, to which
if wee desire to be saued indeed, we must lend an attentive ear, banishing from our harts, all motions of sensuality, and entertaining all chait ones in their place, or else we leese her fauour, and it wil be wo with vs.

But above all for conservaon of our Charity, it is necessary to flije al occasions and inducements to the contrary, for this is such a kinde of victory, as is best gained by flight, and they that frequently expose themselves to danger in it, are overcome at last. Wherefore let none enter into an ower-wening of thesefles or their forces for any former victory, for they may easily leese in a moment what they have been in an age a getting, and flight occasion may raish from them that,
serve the B. V. Mary. That, which many difficult ones went to the obtaining of, and let no humane or nice respect, make them be wanting here, to the care they ought to haue of their chastity; for many out of punctillious of honour haue stood so long upon it, till they haue falne, and many by daungerous familiarieties have been deceived. Rather let them flye carefully the aspect and haunt of those, whose companies may endanger them following the Counsell of our Saviour in it; If thy hand or feet scandalize thee, cut them off, &c. or if thine eye, pluck it out: which counsell some Saints have followed so neer, as S. Bridget in particular, not only auoided in her self al occasions of sinning in this particular, but to auoid it also in others, she
she prayed to Alm. God, he would convert all the virtue she had into deformity: Others there have been, that have disgraced themselves rather then to give cause to any temptation; and others rather then suffer the effect of it, have willingly departed with their proper lives. Which I will confirme by an example taken out of the second part off the FF. Minors Chronicle.

A Burgundian Gentleman had a daughter so affected to the service of the Mother of God, that secretly from her tender yeares she vowed her virginity to her. This virgin had a corporal beauty, ioyned to the beauty of her soule, io taking, as it attracted to her the harts of al. Among the rest, a servuant of her fathers was one
one, who omitted no arts nor industries to oblige her to a reciprocal affection to him; But this not taking, his love grew desperate, and at length engaged him in as desperate a course; For his Lord and all his servants being gone a hunting, he secretly, returned home, when his daughter was either not accompanied at all, or else slenderly only by her maids; and taking that opportunity to execute his wickednes, went and found her out, where in the Chapel she was prostrate at her devotions before a picture of the Queene of heaven: into which he entred audaciously, and without any reverence to the place, or respect to the person, told the reason of his returne, and how desperately he was in love with her.
her, conjuring her by all the force of a wicked eloquence to the accomplishment of his desires. Whereat the Virgin was so struck at the first, what with the impudence of the fellow, what with the horror and unexpectedness of his demand as she remained a while devout of speech and sense, til at last rowling her spirits vp, with a just disdain and bashful anger, she answered him; Gett hence thou impudent villain, and seek out some others more fitt to heare and grant thy suit then I: and whence is this insolence in thee? haue you ever seen any thing in me, that should thus embolden it? but cease your boldnes and your insolence, or I know the way to bring you to deare repentance of it the fellow
at this, grewne wholly desperat, and rageing no lesse for anger then for loue, drew out his sword, & faxing the point against her throte, told her there was but one way with her, eyther to re-solue to dy, or to satisfy his desire; thy desire (sayde she?) rather then by me such a wicked desire shall be euer satisfied, had I a thousand liues I would willingly lose them all; but you consider better (said he) for assure yourself I am not in jest; Bee in what mind thou wilt, replied she, doe thy worst, and when thou haft done, goe vaunt to such as thou art, how thou haft traiterously murthered thy Lords daughter in his owne house in defence of her Chastity. This put him wholly into the hands of furye and desperation,
and made him at one blow cutt off her head. When flying instant-
ly to the Vicar of the place who was his Uncle, he made him ac-
quainted with what he had done; Who being much troubled at it, 
advised him to lye concealed in a secret place which he shewed 
him, til he had don Mass and had further advised what course to 
take with him. Meane while behold a stupendious miracle. An 
Angel sent from heauen present-
ly visited the trunke of our be hea-
ded Virgin soe properly to the 
head againe, as there only remai-
ned a red streaake about the neck 
in memory that it was once cutt 
of when she restored to life 
againe, had presently recourse to 
Church to heare Mass, and ren-
der thankes to Alm: God for that 
mira-
and serve the B.V. Mary. miraculous favour; Being there, it happened the Curat at the Oft
sertyr descending from the Altar, with much astonishment esp-
pied her, and beleeving it rather some phantasme come to fright
him, then her returning to life againe, suspended his astonish-
ment and his feares, til after Masse, when he repaired unto
her more fully to informe him-
selue of what she was; Then she
recounted from point to point, al
that had hapned to her, greeuous-
ly a complaung of his Nephe-
wes barbarousnes, and in parti-
cular of his irreuerence towards
God and his B. Mother: The good
man loft in admiration of the ac-
cident, as soone as he had found
himself, was al in teares, belee-
ching her to keepe secret this
hainous
haynous offence of his Nephew, and pardon it. For my particular, said she, I doe from my hart; but how Heauen will pardon him; I know not; For that, said the Curate, I trust in the infinite mercy of Alm. God, only yours was all my feare, and thereupon he produced his Nephew, who on his knees shedding abundant teares besought her of pardon; when she rayled him vpp, and as if she had forgotten how much he had offended her, in this mild manner spake vnto him: My freind, said she, I haue already past my promise to your vnCLE that I wil forgive you; only procure by penance to purchase the forgiuenes of Alm. God, and his B. Mother, or I assure you, a more rigorous punishment then this world has any
any, is in store for you: Sweet Mistres said he, (making profound reverence unto her, and declaring by his sighes; and teares a more profound griefe & sorrow) how good and gracious you are, not only to preferue my temporal life, (which if you pleased to take it; were forfeited unto you) but to take such care of my eternal on; yet besides this favour I must needs begg another, which is, that from that mouth, which for so greuious a trespass has pronounc't my pardon, I may heare what penance I shal performe for it. Since you wil (said she) you shal; only take it by way of councel not of command, and it is this, That you become a Friar Minor, and before you are so, Confesse your selfe wholly and entire-
entirely of all your wickedness: This the sorrowful foule willingly accepted of: and having punctually performed what she injoyed in short space made such progress in religion, as he became an example of perfection unto all. And by this we may perceive; how succourable the B. Virgin is, to those who for the Imitation of her, preserve this virginity so carefully, as rather to depart with it, they chose to depart this life.
and serve the B.U. Mary. 143

The third Condition, which
is requisit in the honoun-
ners of the B Virgin, Of
Cleannes and purity of
Mind.

The sacred Virgin
being not only a
bright shining mir-
rou of Humility &
Chastity, to its per-
fection, but also of incomparable
purity of mind, wee who make
profession of being her servants,
ought to have her example al-
wayes before our eyes, to the
end the continual Contemplation
of
of these three excellent vertues in her, may excite vs to an affectionat desire of them, especially that of purity of mind, it being the most exquisit beauty of the soule, and an ornament which most of al illustrats it. Now this purity of mind is nothing els (according to Albert the great, as he alleaged by S. Antonine) but a recession from al impurity, which is finne, and an accession to God the soueraigne purity & in this consists the true sanctity of the soule, for the more we weed it of imperfections, the more place is left for perfections to spring vp in it, and so S. Dionyfe defyning sanctity fayes,that it is a perfect purity absctracting from al inne, and cleansed from al impurity, whence we may wel conclude
and serve the B. V. Mary. 145
conclude, that purity is no other
thing, then an exemption from
al imperfection.

Let the pious Reader then ima-
gine the purity of the B. Virgins
mind, who of all the Children of
Adam was not only excepted from
al actual sinne, but also from ori-
ginal; and that because of the
conueniency (as S. Anselm would haue it) that she who was
the Mother of God should next
to him haue al imaginable purity;
which could not be, if she had not
been preserued from original
sinne. Besides, God having pre-
destinated her to a degree of ho-
nour, the highest that any crea-
ture could be capable of, it fol-
lowed consequently he should
endow her with a purity above al
other creatures, and so al the fa-
G culties
cultsies of his power wisdome and goodnes, (we may imagine) were at once imploied in enri-
ching her with such guists and supernatural preparations, as ren-
dred her of al creatures the most 
eminent; in such manner as those 
who had but the eies of spirit 
open to penetrat into the beau-
tie and perfection of her glorious 
soule would infallibly more ad-
mire Gods workmansion, and 
fee more admirable effects of it 
in her; then in the fabrick and 
creation of the Universal. Neuer 
any thing came immediatly out 
of the hand of God, but it was 
pure, perfect and compleat; he 
created the Angels from the pu-
rest of the Heavens perfect and 
pure, he created man likewise 
sce, of the most pure-parts of the 
Earth
Endserve the B. V. Mary. 147

Earth, and Eve from the purest flesh and bone of Adam, whilst he was yet in the state of innocence was created pure; and the reason is, because the higher to the principal of purity a thing is, ever the more pure it is. This being so, what can be more resplendent (saies S. Ambrose) then she in whom purity it selfe close to abide? What finally more unblemished, then she whom the Sonne of God chose to inuevt himselfe withal? And if God hath fauoured other creatures with that highe prerogative to be borne in grace and exempt from sinne, who can doubt but she in a special manner was borne so, and exempted above the rest? For what incongruency els were it to have the mother inferior to her Children
A Method to love

Children the Queene to her subjects and. Seing then the Angels, and both Adam and Eue more created in grace and in the state of innocency, why should we deny the Queene of Angels, and the repairer of Adam and Eues offences, the life prerogative? Yet let vs passe farther, and affirme the B. Virgin excelling in purity by infinit degrees not only al men and women in the world, but also al Angels, Archangels, and the highest Seraphins in heauen. For this, S. Hilariion affirmes of her addressing himself into her in this devout manner. O soverainely happy Virgin above al women, and surmounting even the Angels themselves in purity.

Her sanctity then being so great, we may wel conclude of her
her, that there was never in her any blemish of sinne, nor the least shadow of imperfection. Let us consider her then, being so immaculate as she was, as an Idea framed by God, of all Chastity, as a lively paterne of perfection in women, model of supreme purity and finally schoole of all Vertues, Virgin both in mind and body, humble of heart, grave in dilcovery, prudent in action, never stirring abrode til invited by necessity sober and mortified, wearing always in her Contenance a holy bashfullnes, her gate well ordered and composed, simple in Clothing, moderat in her voice, never laughing but weeping often, sparing of speech, always well employed, having stil in hand some profitable booke, assiduous
in prayer, during which she seemed still in extasy; more abhorring sinne, then all the men of the world together as one who better then them al together knew, how hateful and detestable it was to Alm. God: she was of a spirit perpetually attentive to the exercise of vertue and holy life, holding in a generous dis-esteeme al thehonours dignities and riches of the world, as knowing how contemptible they were al, in compare with those of heauen, whose soueraigne Queene and Empresse she was to bee: how was it possible then she should euer fall into any sinne, being of so excellent a soule, and it being replenished with so many divine graces & perfections? and From whence (Iayes Dionysle the Carthulsian)
and serve the B. V. Mary. Thus, we may imagine these beames proceeded, which shooting from her countenance rendered her so resplendent and venerable to all that regarded her, as which were nothing yet in compare with the inward rays that illustrated her mind, which gave light unto the Angels of light themselves; her regard was such according to S. Ambrose & S. Bonaventure) as her bare light was sufficient to reclaim even those that were furthest gone in sinne; but that which was most admirable in her, and which most rauishes in attonishment both men and Angels, was her being at once both Mother & Virgin, virgin in purity, & Mother in fecundity; A prodigie of all others the most stupendious, and a preroga-
tiue only appropriat to this rare Phenix of perfection; for to whom els were attributed euer these supreme titles of honour, Virgin before child-birth, Virgin in child-birth, and Virgin after it? Yet? tis an Article of faith, and al doubt thereof interdicted by the holy Church; for the Consummation of which, we wil here relate a Miracle happening to B. Giles one of the first Companions of S. Francis, and it was this.

A Religious Diuine of the Order of S. Dominick, being once vehemently tempted by the Diuel (sworne Enemy to the B. Virgin) to cal in doubt her undoubted Virginity, and not sufficing by his owne forces to shake it off, was resolu'd to vse the helpe of some
and serve the B. U. Mary. 153

some other, and hearing the fame of B. Giles for sanctity, resolv'd it should be he. Being on his way towards the Convent where the holy man resided, who by divine revelation understand the cause of his journey, behold he was ready to meet him, and embrace him with all the friendly expressions of a Religious charity; and e're ever the other opened his mouth to communicat with him of his temptation, he layd it to him; Brother and friend, assure your selfe, she was a virgin before child-birth; when raking the ground with a little wane he had, one Lilly presently sprung vp, then converting himselfe to him againe; so assure your self, said he. She was a virgin in child-birth, & a second Lilly sprung vp in con-

G v firmation
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firmation thereof, finally, the third
time addressing himselfe to him
he said, assure your selfe lastly
(said he) that she was a virgin
after child-birth too; and this by
the springing up of a third Lilly,
being confirmed also, the Divine
remained delivered from his tēp-
tation and rendered infinite thanks
to A.m. God, for his so miracu-
loous deliver.

Let this suffice for a more am-
ple confirmation of the soueraine
Puritie of the Queene of heauen.
Let those then who desire with a
due purity of hart to serve this
glorious Virgin,endeavour with-
al their forces to imitat her, in
her admirable purity and Inno-
cencie of life, that is, to haue a
hart untainted, and free from al
contagion of taine, especially
such.
and serve the B.V. Mary. 155
such as are mortal, since, as the
Angelical Doctor teaches us;
The farther that purity is removed from sinne, the purer it
growes; so shal wee haue part in
the benediction: Blessed are the
pure of hart, for they shal fee God.
And to come yet neerer to particulars, those are pure of hart,
whose consciences are free from
mortal sinne; those more pure,
are likewise free from venial; but
those most of all, who accompany
this freedome from sinne, with
the assiduous practice of vertue, and
this according to S. Christostom,
is to be pure of hart. S. Hierome
defines it, to have a conscience
that can accuse vs of no sinne, at
al, such an one as that of our B.
Ladies was, who according to S.
Bonauentaure, was so pure from
sinne,
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finite, as it was reueale'd to a certaine person, as her conscience understood not what it meant. O happy and a thousand times happy are such as those, whose breast being pure, & invested with these white robes of purity, do serve in that liery the foueraigne Queene of heauen; for these are truly her servants, these truly her favorites, and such as in the next life she particular honours and advancements above the rest.

We reade of S. Lewis Archbishop of Tholoule, who issue from the Royal bloud of France, and was once a Frier-Minor; how he in his life never committed mortal sinne; this holy Saint dying at the age of 80. yeares, a certaine Frier-Minor farre from the place of his death, and igno-

rant.
rant of his infirmity, had a vision just at the instant of his departure of innumerable Angels bearing his soul to heaven, and singing melodiously on the way; so are they rewarded who serve God in purity and chastity of heart; and for his chastity and purity we have the attestation of all that conversed with him, that all his actions and words favoured nothing else.

And as vehemently is the B. Virgin displeased with the contrary vice, as with this virtue she is pleased; as witnesseth this following storie recounted by the learned Pelbart; A young Gentleman of a debauched life, exercising some devotions in the honour of the B. Virgin, she one day whilst he invoked her aide (being
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( being straited in a wildernes & almost famished ) appeared unto him accompanied with a glorious train of Virgins, bearing in their hands all sorts of delicat meates, but serv'd in so foule and lothsome dishes, as although his hunger was most vrgent, yet for very loathing he would not eate a bit; which the B. Virgin perceiving, aptly took occasion to reprehend him saying; even such are your devotions you offer vp to me; Good in themselves, but coming from one so foule with sinne, my heart serves me not to accept of them; so she vanished, and left him so stricken with this reprehension by the bitter flaine of his former life, as for the time to come he wholy amended it.

Let those then, who have the honour
honour to be stiled the servants of the B. Virgin, that their services may be the more acceptable to her, endeavour to keep up, to the highest point of this perfection of purity of hart, that is, to be so far from the conscience of any mortal sinne, as even to decline venial as far as it is possible; from the which the father they are, the higher they approach unto perfection, and the more they increase in grace and holiness of life. Happy is that soule then, which growing dayly perfecter in this purity of hart, shall finde a ready way to every grace and perfection it shall be delirous to obtaine, & merit to have Alm. God amply communicat them vnto vs, whose property it is to be most bountious of his favour.
to the pure, to impart himselfe
unto them in a particular manner,
and enrich them with his divine
Consolations. And this Hart of
ours being a thing of such per-
fection, each least defect in it,
appeares to be deformity, it being
(as Bro. Giles was vsed to saye)
like a bright mirrour which the
least breath would sett a blemish-
on; For which reason the Wise-
man so earnestly recomends unto
vs the Custody of it. Looke Care-
fully to thy hart, sayes he, for thy
life depends on it. And so we see,
how little a thing diminishes of
its merit and purity; an idle or ri-
diculous word a little leuity in our
actions, a friuolous Curiosity, a
leffe modest regard, immoderate
laughter, or such like, which we
account of as things light and in-
different
different. Now the better to conserve this purity of heart, we must be most careful of our Exteriour senses, our eyes, ears, smell, touching, tasting, &c. least the Enemy prevaile himself by them against ourselves.

To expresse the danger of which F. Iacopen of the holy Order of B. Francis, hath an apt similitude; There was (sayes this holy man) a Virgin of excellent beauty, having for her dower a Jewell of inestimable price, who had five brothers all poore and necessitous; the one a Musician, the other a Painter, the third a Perfumer, the fourth a Cooke, and the fifth a letter of others chastityes to take. One day the Musician address himself, unto her, and with an accent, as charming, as it was pitiful.
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tiful, desired her of pitty in his extreme necessity, if euer Charity, sayd he, were deare unto you, or if euer you knew what pitty meant, declare it now in your assisting me; give me your Jewell to redeeme me from my wants; it is a bould request I grant, both in regard of the greatnes of its value, and the smallnes of my sufferings, but the greater honour wilbe yours, withloe vn-interestfed a Charity, to assist a brother in his necessity, and the greater wilbe my obligation; and heer so paufed a while, as if his greefe had ftopp'd the passage of his speech; But she remaining Inexorable to his prayers, answered him thus: My deare brother, I would do much for you, but satsifie your demand I cannot; for the fame Charity
Charity which obliges me to benefit others, first of all obliges me to benefit my selfe ; what a folly were it in me then, by my enriching others, to make my self for ever poore, you know I haue nothing but it to maintaine my life, and to depart with it were to expose my life to extreme necessity; Wel ( answered the Musician ) then, since you wil not give it me, at least fel it me : and what wil you give me for it? I wil take my Lute, sayd he, and sing you two of the newest Ayres at Court at this she laughing, ask't him, when they were done, what remains for her to live upon? no, no, sayd she, brother you shal pardon me, I wil not sell soe precious a Jewel for soe slight a thing. After him the Painter came unto her
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her with the same request, offering one of his best pieces, in exchange, but she refused him as she had done the former. Then the Cooke, & the Perfumer came next, this offering for it, one of the delicatest perfumes he had, the other the most savoury dish he could invent; but they as the former saying of their pretenses; the first lewd Companion, addressing himself into her, who knew well the arts of persuasion, and how to instil his words into the mind, offered her for it, after a world of smooth and soothing word, her choice of a hundred Paramours; But being as the rest rejected, it happened not long after, that a mighty King moved by the fame of this riche jewel, came to demand it of her, offering to
to marry her on the condition that he might have it, & give her for dowry his Immortal Kingdom; when she overcome by the greatness of his offers, but much more by the goodness of the Offerer, thus answered him; My Lord, it were Impudence in me to refuse you, wherefore behold I freely give it you, without any further at all, and desire no other recompense for it, but that you would vouchsafe to accept it; and excuse the smallness of her merit that gives it you. This similitude the holy man would explicate in this manner; The Virgin is the soul, the jewel, the free will she hath; her five brothers, her five Corporal senses; the King, Alt. God; as for the rest, is obvious enough.

And
And here I could take occasion to inveigh against those, who would be held devout (forsooth) to the B. Virgin, and have no care the while of bridling their senses, but let them run on to all licentiousness; nay, which is worse they continue so, till the end of their lives, without any remorse, out of a vain presumption they shall be saved because of some odd devotions they exercise, then which what greater folly can there be, what greater blindness? not to see how the devil draws them as it were bound hand and foot to hell. For example, you shall see many, (I speake it with griefe and shame enough) so addicted to the devotion of the Annunciation, as they would not omit it for a world, (and 'tis com-
commendable in them) but mark how they abuse it; the miracles which they so spread of it, makes them presume the like; for what will they say: never tell me of Hel nor of the paines thereof, though I have never so much; I serve a Mistres who hath both will and ability to helpe me out of it, and let me but Confesse my innes at the houre of my death, and I am sure of heauen; see how these miserable wretches talke; drawing a wrong consequence from an Antecedent most true, that the B. Virgin both can and will succour her servants; but they must be such as make due use of her favours, and employ the in working their salvation: such indeed shee sometimes helps so efficaciously, as in shipwrack
A Method to love
shipwrack she keepes then from perishing in the sea, and frees them from al dangers on land of enimyes, theeues, and Murthe-
rers, and al this to bring them to amendment of their lives: But those who rather grow worse by it, or out of prelumption of it seeke not to amend at al, for my part I hold their safeties desperat. Then there is a difference of sin-
ers, for some sinne of deliberate wil, and make not due vse of their devotion to the B. Virgin, nay, as I haue sayd before, euen abuse it to greater licentiousnes of life, and such are in a most dangerous estate. Others only sinne, out of humane frailty, and by giving too much liberty to their senses, doing it with a remorse of Con-
science, and greeuous desire to amend
amend their faults, though they be negligent to put their good desires in execution: and for such, it is easier for them to dispose them selves for grace, and pre-

uayle themselves of those Inspirations the B. Virgin procures them for the amendment of their lives, themselves, both the one and the other are to honour the B. Virgin, and reverence her with all becoming reverence, that she may obtaine for them of her B. sone condigne penance for their sins, & amendment of their life. Let them like wise endeavour to make themselves partakers of that laudable devotion of the Annun-
ciat, since those who have been of it, have been in fine recompensated for it, and I exhort as well the lust and those of better life to this
this, as also sinners and evil li-
ers; sithence if these find such benefit of it, how much more must they, who are intimate freinds as it were to God and his B. Mother; as those who are in deadly sinne, are capital enimies, as this story taken out of the Cronicles of the Friers Minors doth manifest.

A certaine Frier Minor of holy life, vning to recommend himselfe vnto the prayers of every one he mett; it happned he entred once into a towne; mett a woman there of euill fame, and indeed of as euill life, and desired her likewise to remember him in her prayers to Alm: God and his B. Mother; At which, quite astonished, she answered him, Alas father! what good wilt my prayers do
and serve the B.V. Mary. 171
do you, who am the wickedest
sinner in the world? bee what
you wil, sayd he, your prayers
wil do me no hurt I am confident.
When behold a miraculous ac-
cident, the woman entering into
the Church, and Kneeling before
an Image of the B. Virgin to say
an Ave Maria for him, was ra-
uish't in extasy, and behold the
mother of God humbly supplica-
ting her sonne for him; and he
demanding of her why she would
harken to the prayers of an Ene-
meys, although it was for a freind
she prayed, Be therefore merciful
to her (sayd she agayne) and for
your freinds sake receive her to
freind ship also. The poore wo-
man returning from her extasy,
haftned to find out the Religious
man, to whom with great won-
nder
she recounted what had past, and having made a general Confession of all her sins, she liued there after a most exemplar life in the service of that great Patroness of sinners the Queene of heaven.

Let all who serve her then, if they desire to please her, carefully avoid all mortal sinne, and prefer their hearts pure and innocent; so shall they likewise obtain the favour of Alm:God, since as the holy scripture saies, they who loue purity of heart, infallibly shall haue the king for freind.
and serve the B. U. Mary. 173

The fourth Condition requisit in the servants of the B. Virgin, for the conserva-
tion of this purity of hart, which is the frequentation of the Sacraments, espe-
cially of that of Confession.

ALTHOUGH the pro-
feccion of being ser-
uants to the B. Vir-
gin, be a great stay
yno vs from falling
into sinne; neuerthelesse, standing
on such slippery ground, with
this weight of flesh on vs incli-

H 3 ning
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Ingr vs to fal, we canot but sometimes do it, and contract some blemish by it, and may need the wiping away of it. As for Mortal sinne, by the grace of Alm. God we may preserve our selves untouched by it; as many good Religious do even to the vitermost period of their dayes; but for venial, it is impossible, nor is there any of Adams descendents, that at some time or other have not saine into it. The Apostles themselves although adorn'd with richest sanctity, were not exempted from it, only the B. Virgin hath had this singular privilege above the rest, as the holy Church conceives of her in her Office; You are all faire O B. Mary, and there is no spot in you. Now our B. Saviour for the cleansing vs from the saine
and serve the B. V. Mary. 175
nes both of venial & mortal sinne
hath provided vs of the remedy
of the Sacrament of Confession.
And so S. Bernard sayes : Ami
Confessionem, si affectus decorem.
Louve Confession, as thou loue
to be faire; meaning that it is the
imbellishment of a soule, and so
certainly there is nothing that
more efficaciously purges the
soule from vice, then to frequent
quent this holy Sacrament.

All the Sacraments of the
Church, according as the Coun-
cel of Trent defines, were institu-
ted by our Saviour Christ him-
selwe, and had their first origin
from his sacred side, at what time
both blood & water came issuing
forth, and are so many rindets as
it were, by which his aboundant
grace is derived vnto vs. Let them

H 4 therefore
therefore who frequent them, make account (especially this of Confession), that they have recourse by it, to the outer flowing fountain of our Saviour's precious blood, by virtue of which their souls are washed and cleansed from the foulenes of their sinnes: which the Apostle S. John doth intinuat where he sayes: The blood of our Saviour Christ purges vs of our sinnes. O how merciful and gratious hath God ben to vs the whilst? how excessive his love, to give vs so precious a remedy, by which as often as we please we may be purged and cleansed from our sinnes: and as often as we are dead in mortal sinne, we may be revivued and rayzed to life againe, passing from the death of sinne into the life of
and serve the B. U. Mary. 177
of grace, from vice to vertue, from eternal paine unto eternal bliss.

Of aldeformities, mortal sinne
is that, which renders a foule
most deformed, in so much as
could we but see a soule
thereof, we should euen die for
horour, it would be a sight so
fearful and hideous: whereas no
sooner it hath been cleansed by
the sacrament of Penance, but it
produces againe a new beauty &
formosity. So S. Gregory the
great fayes: Could we but see a
foule made to the resemblance of
God, even in puris naturalibus, we
should admire it to adoration, &
beleeue the Creatours beauty
himselfe hardly superiour to it.
For which reason (fayes the lear-
ned Tilleman) God hath inclosed

H v

it
it in this corps of clay, least it beholding it-self, should be in danger of that Luciferian pride, which was so many Angels perdition. And for this cause those ancient Fathers of the Ægyptian deserts in elevating their mindes to their soules high, and taking the true altitude of their creatios, were as it were alienated from themselves; In so much (as we reade of S. Antony) as often as he was called on to pay the debt of nature either in food or sleep, or any such corporal necessity, he even blush't for shame, that so noble a substance as the soule, should be interested in such base reckonings. Now if a reasonable soule be of it-selfe so beautiful, what great addition must it needs receiue from the Sacrament of Penance,
Penance, which restoring it to its native luster, add to it besides, that of God Almighty's supernatural grace? Certainly there is no eloquence in the world can speak it sufficiently, no living imagination can conceive the hundredth part of its excellence. The Sunne (fayes S. Chriſtoſome) with his cleare rayes doth not so illumi- nat the world as the Grace of Alm. God can do a soule. Which that of S. Catharine of Sienna wel declares; who hearing a Preacher once discouering of the excellency thereof, and how exceedingly it beautifyed a soule, conceived an ardent desire to behold a soule in Grace, and advantaged with all the beauties thereof; Ful of this desire, she was no sooner departed from the Sermon, but she hard
a voice from heaven saying unto her: Catherine, presently thou shalt see the fruit of thy desire; and retiring her into her Oratory, she there besought God for the performance of his promise, and lo-therein beheld a person of incredible Maiesty al Circled about with light and shining with clear splendours; at the sight of which, she was so rapt in admiration and reverence, as she presently prostrated her selfe before its feete with intention to adore it, had it not with these words prohibited her: Catherine for bear for I am not God, as thou imaginet? and who then? answered the Saint; I am, sayd it, the soule of a certaine Murderer you prayed for not long since in feeing me ledd to execution who being now clean-
and serve the B. V. Mary. 184
fed in the fire of Purgatory, and
going al purifis to heauen, after
I shall haue left you satisfied of
your desire by the commandem-
ment of Alm. God. And after
this time, the holy Saint had a
particular in sight by Alm. God
bestowed upon her, of the natu-
res of each soule, and she was
wont to affirm unto her Ghostly,
Father, that if he sawe but the
beauty of a soule, she was assured,
he would: spend 1000. & 1000.
liues for the sauing of one.
The grace of this holy Sacra-
ment of Penance hath a won-
drous vertue, not only to purifie
the soule confessant from the stai-
nes of sinne, but also to beautify
it with good inclinations, and
from a slaue of sinne and vn-
apt for good, to render it free &
expedite
expedite; which we wil declare
by an example out of Cæsarius. There was a
learned Divine (say's he) exemplar
in al vertue called Thomas, who approching to his
end, saw in a corner of his cham-
ber the diuel appearing in a fear-
ful shape; to whom he with
undanted courage thus spake;
What art thou there cruel beast;
sayd he? tel me, I conjure the,
what amongst Christians is the
thing which afflicts the most? but
he forbearing to answere him, the
holy man iterating his admira-
tion, in the name of God charged
him to speake: when at last the
diuel thus answered him; Know
(fayd he) there is nothing in the
Church of God afflicts vs more
then the frequenting the Sacra-
ment of Confession, seeing when
a
and serve the B. V. Mary. 183

A man is in mortal sin, he is as it were bound hand and foot, wholly disabled from doing any good, and when he repays to Confession those bonds are broken, and he is restored to liberty again; and so certainly sinners are nothing else but so many chains which yee vs as it were unto the gates of hell, and so the Priest in the act of Absolution lays: I absolve thee from thy sinnes; and a mighty power the Confessours hath, or rather a mighty love our Saviour hath of vs to instruct & furnish them with so great a power as they have. We see, say the holy Fathers, when a Criminal confessed his sinnes unto an earthly Judge, he is condemned for it, but the contrary happens at the Tribunal of the Church:
Church, where the Priest presides and represents the person of our Saviour Christ himselfe: For those who confess, goe away wholly acquitted and absolved.

Al good Christians then, as soone as they are faine into mortal sinne, are presently to procure to purge themselves of the foule staine of it at the fountaine of Confession; and if we be so careful when the least spott appeares upon our garments, to wash it out; how much more careful ought we to be to wash out the blemishes of our soule? for the which, although Contrition may suffice accompanied with a firme purpose of Confession, not with standing who can secure his Conscience whether he hath had true Contrition or no, or that rather it
and serve the B.V. Mary. it hath not been a greefe lesse perfect for his liues proceeding rather from the feare of punish-
ments then a true loue of God Almighty, as it ought to do; such as the Diuines cal Attrition, nei-
ther sufficient of it selfe to deli-
uer vs from our fins, nor consiti-
tute vs in the state of Grace, nor consequetly to free vs from dam-
nation should we dye in that state of minde, whereas but ioyne it with Confession, and it is aboundantly sufficient, the Sacra-
ment supplying all that was want-
ting to it of true C*trition. Who sees not then the vertue of this Sacrament, and how necessary it is for our salvation? For which cause, the seruants of Alm. God were ever exceeding careful to Confesse them eden of their ligh-
test
tell faults, especially night the article of their deaths, at which tyme, although they had, led such Saint-like liues, as it hath pleased God to testify it euen by miracle; yet being to approach to the soueraigne purity, they imagined could never be pure enough. And so a certaine learned Authour sayes, that a soule in Grace at its separation from its body if it should but see the least blemish of venial sinnes adhearing to it, would be so ashamed of it, as rather the to appeare with it before the face of Alm. God, it would voluntarily plunge it self into Purgatory there to be cleansed from it; nay, which is more, woderful, he sayes that should an Angel descend thither vnto it while it were suffering the sharpest and most exquisite
exquisite torments there, & put it to its choice to go to heaven with some blemish of sinne upon it, or remaine there purging from it till the day of doome; the soule without any demurr upon it, would make election of the last, thereby to render it selfe more worthy the sight of God whom it loues so wel, who cannot endure any obiect of impurity. The purity of hart then being a thing of so singular recommendation with the Queene of heauen, let all who profess themselves her servants seek to purchase it, and purchasing it once embrace it with all their might; to which end let them know, that according to the opinion of all, there is no more efficacious way to do it, then that of the Sacrament of Confession.
Confession; the benefits of it are so many, that they are impossible to be reckoned up. For those who confess often, heape grace open grace, purity on purity, beauty on beauty, and make themselves the greatest treasure of it in heaven; those who confess often, have a more vigilant eye to the serving of their conscience in purity, which in the fountaine of penance they so lately purifed, those who confess often have a special care, not to fall into those sins for shame, from which so lately their Confessors help't them out; those who confess often, make more easily the examen of their Consciences, and goe with lesse difficulty to Confession, and are better disposed to the receiving of our Saviour Christ in the Sacrament.
and serve the B. V. M. ary. 189
ment of the Alas. In fine, those
who confess often enjoy both
day and night great tranquili-
ity of mind which only ac-
companies a pure Conscience,
and is the greatest blessing in the
world.

This the sacred Catechisme con-
firms where it sayes; Those who
holily and religiously receive this ho-
ly Sacrament acquire by it a great
tranquillity of Conscience, accompa-
nied with as great content of mind
and hart. But what needs other te-
stimoney of this, than experience it-selfe? How unwillingly they
go to Confection, who have their
conscience charged with a long
reckoning of sins? how full of sad-
nes and anxiety? how heauie the
burthen of them seemes to be, til
being lightened of it at last by
Confection
Confession, how great Consolation do they seele then in their soules? how chearful they are? & how embraced with the loue of God for which now they could be content to die, who before cared not to live for it! and if the practise of this do often occur, Oh! how happy doe they lead their dayes on earth euens as they were in another heauen: to participat of this so great a benefit no Christian if he ripely considered it, but would goe a thousand and a thousand miles, rather then want so great a commodity. How much the greater shame is it then for those, who vouchsafe not to stirr fower or five paces out of their way, to discharge themselves of the burthen of their sinnes. And yet in how farre worse estate are those
those, who remaine five or ten yeares without this benefit, how may we imagine do the Angels in heavens deplore so great a retchelines? of this sort how many wicked liuers are there, who pretend some devotion to the B. Virgin, as laying their beades, falling on saturdayes in her honour, and the like: who for the rest never think of heaven, or of timely repenting them for their sinnes.

Of whom what should we faile, and of their cruelty to their owne soules, whose cheifest contentment they so lightly prize? Certainly we could wish they would at least (since they make profession of fearing her) beseech the B. Virgin amongst their other devotions, to obtaine for them of her B. Sonne a true knowledge and
and contrition for their sins, which if they doe with a sorrowful hart indeed, without doubt she wil grant them their request, and it wil be amaine disposition for them to obtaine the divine Grace, seeing (as the Divines affirme) the works of charity although done in mortal sinne, haue yet the force to dispose the sinner vnto Grace, and consequent-ly vnto eternal life. An example of which, it being ful of rare document besides, out of the second part of the Frier Minors Chronicles we thought good to record.

Two Frier-Minors going from the Conuent of Paris in the depth of winter, were besides the dirty wayes so incommmodated with continual showers of raine as the elder
elder of the two towards the evening wholly tired out, sayd unto his Companion: My deare brother, what shal we do? I am so weary that I am scarce able to stirr a foote; alas, Father, sayd the other, we cannot remaine here in the middest of this foule weather and fowler wayes; why? answered the father againe) it seemes to me I spye a house some quarter of a league hence, where perhaps we may be lodged for God Alms sake; I know it wel, said the father, but it wil be ill coming thither for vs, the Master of it being a wicked man, no freind to God, nor to his servants, and such an enemie to himself, as for these 30. yeares (as the report goes) he hath never been at Confession; howsoever (sayd the Father)
Father) let vs goe, for there is no remedy now, and God is never wanting to his servants at such necessitous times as this; So they sett on towards the house, where being arrived, and asking a lodging for God Alms sake, the Mistris of the place moued with compassion to see them in such pitious plight, tould them her husband was forth a hunting, and for her selfe she was desirous to accommodat them with al her hart, but if her husband came to have notice of it, either of them should incurr his greuous displeasure by it, she for receiuing them, and they for being receiued, but come what would she durst not deny them for God Alms sake, and had rather then fal into his displeasure, incurr her
or serve the B. U. Mary. In her husbands by it a thousand times; so she entertained them in a more remote part of the house, with the greatest secrécie and charitie she could; In the meantime; her husband returning from the chace, finding all things prepared against his coming home, sate downe to supper, where he was plentiously servued, whilst the goodnes of his appetite equalled the goodnes of the provision; his wife considering the wants of the poore Religious men, in comparison of the plenty which was there, could not but express some sorrow for it in her countenance; which her husband observing, asked her wherefore she was so sad? and she a while excusing herself, at last she more & more importuning her, she plainly could
A Method to love

dould him, vpon his promise he
would not be offended with it;
how she had entertayned those
poore Religious men in their ex-
treme necessity for God Alms
fake, preferring by it the feare of
God before the feare of him, and
how whilst they by the fire side
were plentiously feasting it, those
poore soules pinched with hun-
ger & cold were ready to starue
to death, the copassion of whose
incommodities with reflexion
on their commodities the while,
made her so sad and sorrowful in
her minde: and hauing this disco-
overed with teares in her eyes, her
husband was so moued thereat, as
he presently arose from the table,
and commanding they should be
fetcht into the roome, he him-
selues went out to mee them, and
wel-
welcomed them with such signes of affection, as for his owne mother he could not have expressed more, this moued the wonder of al that were present there, but much more that which followeth: when he seeing their garments hang al frozen stiffe about them, and their feete and legs chapt through the extremity of cold, was so moued thereat, as he presently seating them by the fire caused a bath of hott water to be brought, and he himselfe washed their feete: then after he had a while refreshed them there, he comanded a chamber next his owne to be prepared for them; whither hauing conducted them he addressinge himselfe vnto the father sayd: My good father, resolve me I beseech you in cur-

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tely
A Method to love; whether one who hath li-
ved al his life a greeuous sinner, and yet hath neuer Confess him
his &\text{S}inn\text{s}, may possibl\text{y} be saued? There is no doubt, Sir, answe-
red the Religious man, but who-
soever with requisite penance for
his sinn\text{s} satisfi\text{s} the justice of
A\text{L}m. God, may arriue at last to
his saluation, for \text{S}o God hath
sayd; \text{A}t \text{w}hat \text{t}ime \text{S}o\text{w}er a sinner
shall repent him of his sinnen, \text{he}
should li\text{u}e: If it be so, replied the
Gentleman, for Gods sake oblige
me so much as to heare my
Confessi\text{\i}on; the good father ex-
ceeding weary and opprest
with sleepe, considering it a
worke of much time, to heare
the Confession, of such a one as
he, encouraging him in his good
desires, desired him to deferr it
til
and serve the B. V. M. ary. 199
til morning, when he might at
better leisure examine his Con-
science, and consider more matu-
rely of what he was to do; but
who can assuere me, answered the
Gentleman, to lieue til the mor-
ning? but for that, as it pleasefeth
God, and so he retired him to his
rest; meane while the Religious
man moued with an extraordina-
ry folicitude of this his new Con-
verts saluation, was no sooner at
privacy in his chamber, but ca-
sting himself upon his knees, he
besought Alm. God to dispose al
that concerned him for his grea-
ter good, and thereupon he tooke
himself to his bed; where in the
profoundnes of his sleepe, he be-
held in vision, the Angels and di-
uels at great debat about the soule
of this Gentleman newly decea-
sed;
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fed; the one challenging it to be theirs, the other denying it; the
diuels allending for their side the many and greevous crimes he
had committed in his life; the Angels for theirs, some flight and
ew few good workes which he had done, but with soe little successe
as the Judge was euene vpon the point of giving judgement for his
condemnation, when his Angel Guardian interposed and sayd: I
bseeche your divine Maiestie, rememuer (what I had almost for-
got) the charitable entertainement he gaue to those Religious men
but yester-night; and I trust it will more then incite you to par-
don him; at this the Judge demurring, at last in consideration
of this one act of his, he gaue sentence for his salvation, and so his
accu-
accusers departed frustrat of their intents. Heer the vision vanished, and the Religious man starting out of his sleepe, called to his Companion saying: My brother, my brother, the Gentleman of this house is dead, and which is more, is saued; and heere he re-
lated to him the whole progress of his vision. Hereupon they both rose and calling to them of the house, advertised them of what had happened, telling them for certaine that the Maiater of the place was dead: at this, al were wonderfully amazed, and his wife the most afflicted woman in the world, not so much for his temporal death, as his eternal, which withgood cause she feared, til the Religious assured her that he was saued, and that by the same

I v mea-
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means he came to the knowledge of his death, by the same he understood of his eternal life; So a great part of her sorrow being taken away, the rest she bestowed upon his obsequies, all that either knew his life or death, admiring in it the wonderful mercies of Alm. God.

From this Example let sinners take instruction, to be always charitable to the poor; & though their sins be never so many, yet never to despair of the sweet goodness of Alm. God, but chiefly let them learn from hence, to correspond to the inspirations of Alm. God, and preuayle themselves, of the occasions offered them by favourable heauen, for their conversions & eternal good: for so did this Gentleman both in
& serve the B. U. Mary. wil intreating the Religious by the Inspirement of Alm. God, & in conceiving a firme purpose for the Confessing of his sinnes, which nothing but death could hinder the performance of.

The Continuation of the Fourth Condition; which is the frequentation of the Sacrament of the Eucharist.

As the seruants of the B. Virgin then to preferue their harts and mindes in purity, ought often to Confesse: so likewise to increase it
it in their soules, the more to illustrate their mindes, & vnite their harts more neare to Alm. God, ought they to frequent the Sacrament of the Eucharist, where God is gloriously & ful of al sweetnes imparting of himself, no otherwise then he doth vnto the B. soules in heauen. And who can imagine the hundreth part of the greatnesses, maruailes, and superabundant advantages, which accrue to those who receive this ineffable Sacrament, much lesse expresse it in their discourse and wordes? for the other Sacramets, confer grace 'tis true, to those who worthily participat of them; but this is the fountaine of grace, from whence it springs, which consequently in more plentious manner is communicated heare;
the others come from God, but in this is God himselfe, the Author of al grace and of al the Sacraments, and the source of al our good; others are means to bring vs vnto God, but this is the End and brings God vnto vs; all the sanctity of the rest only helping to dispose to the sanctity of this. With good reason then S. Dionysius the Areopagite stiles it, the perfective and conservative Sacrament, seeing it is the perfection and consummation of all the rest.

Amongst al the motiues that should incite vs to the frequentation of this B. Sacrament, none, me thinks, should be more efficacious, than our B. Ladyes so often frequenting it, by which with a zeal incredible she dayly (as it were)
were) en-wombed her B. Sonne againe; according to the great Albert, S. Antonine, Sotus, and the learned Suarez; nor can any without strange tenuity call it in question, who but considers her (as she was indeed the light and paterne of those primitive Times, in which the B. Sacrament was so frequented, as Saint Luke writes of them; They persevered in the Temple in prayers and the Communion of breaking bread.

And as for the Apostles, Yts certaine they al were Priests and Bishops ordained and established by Iesus Christ and Consequently according to their functions consecrated and receiued the Body of our Lord: I have receiued of our Lord that which I have given you, (sayes the great Apostle
and serve the B.V. Mary. 207

the S. Paul of himselfe; And S. Andrew answered resolutely to the Proconsul exhorting him to Idolatry: I sacrifice daily to the God omnipotent, who is the only true God; not the smoke of incense, nor the flesh and blood of beasts, but the immaculat Lamb, of whose flesh and blood al the faithful do eate and drink that which was immolated, yet re-mayning entire and alivie. S. Albert a deuout seruant of the B. Virgin descends more to particulars, and sayes, that S. John was her ordi-nary Preist, from whose hands she communicated and receiued the Sacrament, that she continued this devotion al her life, and at her death procured to have ministred, vnto her. But who can imagine the excessiuenes of her devotion in receiuing it? Since if some
some Saints were so devout when they came unto it, as they rauished the beholders in an admiration, can we doubt but she surpassed them in it, who surpassed them by such infinite degrees in the lively apprehension and understanding of the thing. S. Catherine of Sienna when she would expresse to her Confessarius the ardent desire she had to communicat of this Sacrament, would only say she hungered, and he understood her meaning strait, and hauing received it according to her desire, she would remaine some five or sixe houres afterwards in extasie. Our S. Francis did so burne, nay euer dye with the desire thereof, as those who beheld him in the Act of Communicating, were astonishe at his
and serue the B. V. M. Mary. 209
his seruour in it, and none could behould him without hauing the fire of deuotion enkindled in the selues the while he seemed so inebriated with it and transported with the ioy, and so great was his reuereunce of it, as only it was that, which made him abstaine from Preiit-hoode, when once beseeching Alm. God by ardent prayer to declare vnto him what his pleasure was in that particular, an Angel appeared vnto him with a viol in his hand ful of pure and chrystallin liquor saying vnto him; Behold, Francis, thofe who dueley admiutter the B. Sacriment, ought to be as cleane in hart, and as free from blemish in their soules, as this liquour is from al fouldnes & impurity. With which apparition he was so con-

firmed
firmed in his humility as they could neuer induce him to any further Orders then he had.

And S. Clare of the same time with him, had no lesse devotion to this Sacrament; as it appeares in that she never approached unto it, but with her eyes drowned in teares, whilest her hart was burning in devotion. But what wonder that men goe to it with so profound submission and reverence, when euen the Angels & diuels adore and reverence it.

The B. Brother Stephen (as it is recorded in the Chronicles of our Order, celebrating Masse one day with great guist and devotion, the Acolothite who assisted him falling a sleep, hauing been ouer-watched the night before; Two devout women being present
present at Mass, beheld at the time of Elevation two Angels in most beautiful shapes with torches in their hands performing the Office the while of him that slept; and when the Elevation was done, after their most profound reverences they disappeared; This to their great admiration these devout women observed.

But what wonder if the Angels honour and reverence their eternal King, when even the Diuels themselves even do it, as is manifest in their storye following: In Germany there was a certaine Virgin possessed by the Diuelf, who before this lamentable accident was of rare vertue and singular piety; It happened once as she was issuing forth of the
the Church with divers others; a Priest passed by, bearing the B. Sacrament to the sick, when all the people fell on their knees reverently adoring it, except a certain Jew who was there amongst the rest, which this Virgin spyng she approached unto him, and striking him layd; thou wicked miscreant, why dost thou not adore the Creator and Lord of all? The Jew replyed (moued with the indignity of the thing,) we are obliged to the acknowledgement but of one God a lone, and why then would you have me reuerence this, of which there are, as many as there are Hosts consecrated in the world? the possessed person hearing this, tooke a Siue, and holding it before his eyes, bidd him regard the
and serve the B. V. Mary. 213
the Sunne, and then ask't him, how many Sunns he sawe? whether as many as there were beams that came through the sive, or only one, from whence all those beams were deriv'd? think'st me not so simple, sayd the Jew, as not to know there is but one only Sunne; more simple thou art then, answered she again, to believe that we have more Gods then one, though so many Hosts as thou seest everywhere derive themselves from his divinity; and at this the Jew confounded left the place.

The B. Virgin not only adored this B. Sacrament, on earth, but now in heaven actually continues her Adoration; which we may confirm by a storye taken out of Vincentius his Mirrour.
Historical the 17th booke, confirmed by divers other Authors of worthy credit: There was, sayes he, a Curate of evil life, addicted to his pleasures, and one who studi'd more to slay and kill his flock, than to feed them; It happened in his parish at the same tymne there-fell sicke a riche Gentleman of prime quality, and a poore widow of a vertuous life; the Vicar choosing rather to visit the Gentleman (as one from whom there was some what to be hoped for) left the widow without help abandoned: and after he had dispatch't with him, lightly hea-ring his Confession and adminis-tering the other Sacraments, yet he remained lingering there so long impatiently flattering the Gentleman with hope of life, though he
he even saw death in his Countenance, (only in hope of some temporal benefit) until the widow mindful of her eternal good, sent for him being almost in her last Agonie: but he sticking fast there, in hope of gaine, could not be drawne from thence: which his Vicar perceiuing, moved with compassion; alasse Sir, sayd he, suffer not this poore woman to dye thus destitute of help, but at least send me thither: if you wil not goo your selfe: Goe, if you wil, sayd he, for my part I wil not leaue this Gentleman where there is hope of some what to be gott, to visit a begger where there is nothing but misery: he-reupon the Vicar went with the B. Sacrament for her Viaticum, to visit this in firme creature, poor indeed
indeed of worldly riches, but rich in heavenly, without which all is poverty: and he was no sooner arrived at the door, where the poore soule lay only upon a little straw, but he beheld the glorious Queene of heaven, accompanied with innumerble troupes of Angels and Virgins, assisted at her happy departure, at the sight of which the Vicar suspended in his thoughts a while, whether he should enter or no, at last reflecting from his owne unworthines on the dignity of him who was in the Sacrament which he brought with him, he confidently entered in, when the B. Virgin and all her Glorious trayne with humble reverence adored it, and presently vanished away. When the good Vicar in extreme consolation
Serves the B. Mary. V. 217

Isolation approached to the Couch where the poor widow lay, and having heard her Confession and communicated her, the happy soul presently loosened from its mortal bones, took flight immediately to heaven.

In the mean while, things succeeded clean contrary at the rich man's house; whither the Vicar was no sooner returned, but he beheld the Gentleman's bed, all incircled in with ugly black spirits, with horrible noise, shriekings, and roarings affrighting of his soul, whilst he cried out in horrible dismay: helpe, helpe, my freinds, these wicked spirits are haling me, and with their gripes they even pressme to the hart: alasse! I am a lost and miserable man: and at last, whilst the

K Curæ
Curst and the rest were labouring in vain to comfort him, his aking soule weary of those momentary and painful gripes, issuing out of its body was receiued by those Feinds, and carried where was nothing but eternal torments.

Imagine but what impressions the whilst the concurrence of these two Visions made in the heart of the good Vicar, and how devoutly afterwards he reverence the B. Sacrament, hauing seene with what devotion the B. Virgin did it, and all her heavenly traine; At least, the professed servants of this B. Virgin ought to make their profitt of this Example, and learne from thence to reverence the B. Sacrament: and also to have the often receiuing
and serve the B. U. Mary. 2

uing of it-in his she esteeme; not
withstanding the frivolous opin-
ions of some, who hold it an ir-
reuerence the often frequenting
of it; not considering that it is
shiled our dayly bread; that S. Luke
and S. Denis the Areopagite af-
firmes it to have been the Cu-
stome of the Primitiue Christiâs,
to receive it dayly with incredi-
ble Consolation. For their better
instructi3on, let them heare Saint
Ambrose exhorting to the fre-
quent receiuings. The servants of
AIm. God, (sayes he) receive this
bread dayly, since dayly thou hast
need of it for thy Comfort refresh-
ment, and purging thee from thy sin-
nes; And the Angelical Doctor
S. Thomâs sayes, That whosoe-
uer experienceth an increas of
grace and devotion by their of-

K 2 ten
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ten receiviing it, both may and ought to frequent it still, and that although it be Commendable sometimes for humility to abstaine from it, Yet it is more Commendable out of love to receive it often. As witnesseth that example of S. Bonaventure, who in his yonger yeares at his first entrance into the Order of the Frier-Minors, out of the profoundnes of his humility would oftentimes forbeare to communicate; until hearing Masse one day, it pleased Alm. God to send him a particle of the Blessed Host by the hands of Angels to communicate withal, by this singular fauour both rewarding his humility, and encouraging him to more frequent receiuing it.

And
And here we wil cease all further Discourse of these Conditions requisit in the servants of the Blessed Virgin, and treate of the due reverence which wee owe to her; and first we wil declare the Excellence thereof.

Here endeth the first Part.
The second Part.

Of the Excellency of those Reverences we are to exhibit in honour of the Queene of Heaven.

CHAPITRE I.

Amongst all the most noble and excellent services appertaining to the divine honour, that Adoration which the Divines call Latria, and which is only appropriate to God in regard of the infinit
& serve the B. V. Mary. 223

finities of his Maiesty: holds the
first ranke and place. This adora-
tion according to S. Ioan Damasc-
cene, consists in an interiour Act
by which the Creature testifies
his submission vnto his Creatour,
by some exteriour signe either of
vncouering the head, bowing the
knee, inclining the body, or the
like. With this supreme sort of
Adoration the three Kings ador-
ed the Infant Iesus in his Mo-
thers armes; And entring the house
( sayes S. Mathew ) they found the
Infant with Mary his mother, & fal-
ling on the ground, they adored him
words which excellently well decla-
re the greatnes of this adoration;
by which the Kings and Monarks
of the earth humbly bow the head
and knee vnto the King and Mo-
narke of the heauens.

K 4 Now
Now to speake of the adoration proper to the B. Virgin, the next degree to that of God, himselfe, the Diuines distinguish it by the name of Hyperdulitia from the rest by which al creatures both in heauen and earth count it as honour to adore the sacred Queene of heauen.

According to the opinion of some Diuines, God had no sooner created the Angels, but he let them understand, how his B. Sonne was one day to become man, and this man should be their God.

Whereupon the B. Spirits with regard vnto the time, honoured him as such, and consequently (as Suares sayes: in following Saint Thomas his opinion) they adored his Mother as her who was
and serve the B.U. Mary. was to inuest him in mortal flesh.
And 'tis an approved veritie of all the Doctours and the cheife of them al S. Paul; that the Sonne of God being come into the world, al the Angels came to adore him. So (sayes he) when he sent his first borne sonne into the world, he sayd; Let all the Angels of God adore him: And S. Bonauenture and other devout writers say, that when the Infant Iesus was borne in the Stable, al the Angels in their feueral Quiers came to adore him, and that perhaps visibly in humane shapes, the more to honour his Humanity; After which they did their feueral reverences to his B. Mother, the one and the other sing- ing divine and melodious Canticles of prayse.

K 5 Now
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Now if the B. Spirits with such profound reverence adored the B. Virgin while she was yet resident in the world, what excessive honours may we imagine do they render her now in heaven, where next to God she holds the second place? Invested with incomparable glorie at the right hand of her B. Sonne? For my part I am of opinion, that their most ordinary exercise is to honour the Sonne & Mother with inceffant adoration; and so we read how S. John rauished in extasye beheld the Angels incircling the Throne of God, and falling on their faces before it adoring the B. Trinity, and the sacred Virgin, daughter of the Eternal Father, Mother of the Sonne, and spouse of the holie Ghost: by which:
and serve the B. V. Mary. 227

which doth clearly appeare the excellency of this adoration, both Latyra, and Hyperdulia, exhibited by all the Court of heauen vnto their King and Queen.

If then their glorious Ip: its honour with to foueraigne and magnificent a kind of Adoration the Mother of Alm. God, with greater reason ought we to ho-nour her, by how much greater her favours and graces have been to vs, then to them. Let vs then honour her with al possible reue-rence, to shew our selues grateful vnto her for her benefits: Of which we reade a rare and excellent Example in Scala celi; and it is this. A certaine holy Monke in England being much deuoted to the Queene of heauen, and amongst other his deuotions v-
fing often to salute her with profound reverence, and bow down as often as he heard her name pronounced, this holy name through extremity of age becoming so feeble as he scarce could move himself or so much as stirre him in his bed, the Abbot assigned him one to attend on him in his chamber; but he not being able to be always present to his occasions, it happened that once in his absence he desirous to remove himselfe, and having twice or thrice attempted it in vaine, at last having recourse vnto his prayers beseeching the B. Virgin's assistance, behold she sodainly appeared to him, waited on by a faire traine of Virgins, two of which by appointment set him in that posture which he desired; when
and serve the B.V.Mary. 229

When the B. Virgin, after she had most sweetly comforted him (as a pledge of her deare acceptance of his devotion) added vnto his terme of life twenty yeares, and restored him to his perfect health againe. A strange fauour, which coseferr'd not so much vnto the corporal vigour of the man, as it did to his spiritual in deuoutly ser-

uing her.

But in the laudable exercice hereof, we are not so much to re-
gard the outward comportment of the body, as the inward disposi-
tion of the mind in framing a deuout conceit of the B. Virgin, imaginining her present as often as we exhibit to her any corpor-
ral reverence, and beholding vs the while with a deare regard, whereby this one devotion will become
become more familiar to us, and our remembrance of her more deare and cordial, so as we shall take pleasure to speake with her and of her, on all occasions, and more confidently preferr our petitions to her in our necessities; And this affection whosoever shal conceive of her in his mind, is in a most happy estate & may wel presume of his salvation, and to be one of the number of the elect; whence he cannot but experience an incredible joye of minde, since (according to a certaine graue Author:) If thou seele in thy hart (sayes he) a singular affection and devotion to the glorious Virgin, it is a signe of thy Prædesti-
nation to eternal life, and thou mayst wel be glad and reioyce at it.

These holie motions and pious affects
and serve the B. V. Mary. 231
affects of love & reverence were found in that devout woman, of whom it is recorded in Scalaceli; That being of noble birth, though fortune were wanting to her nobility; and having two daughters, whom shee carefully had educated in devotion to the B. Virgin and the service of Alm. God; It chanced at last, that their poverty was soe great, as they had nothing to sustaine their life, nor defend them from the extremity of poverty; at which the mother exceedingly afflicted, had recourse one day vnto the Church, where before an Image of the B. Virgin devoutly kneeling down, she with a voice often interrupted with her sobs and sighes, in this manner devoutly suppliecd her: O most holy Virgin, the refuge of
of such miserable creatures as my selfe; behold my two daughters here which it hath pleased Alm. God to bestow on me being brought unto extreme necessity, whom now I resign over unto your care and motherly Providence, since mine no longer can awaile them; accept them then, and provide for them as you see best, since al humane protection fayleth mee.

Hauing finished her supplication, and being ready to depart the Church; behold a yong may of rauishing feature (wee man wel imagine some Angel sent from heauen) presented her with a hundred poundes saying; This money, Lady, I haue long owed to your deceased husband, pardon my so long delaying the payment of it; So she departed, and she vnto her home; where,
& serve the B. U. Mary. 238

with the money she made provision what was necessary for the adorning her daughters according to their quality; which made the world (euer inclined to imagine and speake the worst) report them to have by leffe chaft wayes arrived at that pléty which it law they had: the noble mother no sooner had notice hereof, but with teares in her eyes, calling her daughters to her, she sayd vnto them; My daughters, go to the B. Virgin, vnder whose patronage you are, and commend your fame and reputation vnto her, who now is more concerned in it then I, to fetch you faire & clearly off againe; they did so, & with all the attestations as devotion could suggest, they beseech ed their divine Mistresse, to re-
leive
Jeive them in their fame, as she had in their pouerty; neither was it in vaine, for in short time after, they became so vertuously reported of, as the Prince of the countrey moued by the common fame that went of them, constituted them Abbesses of two seuerall Monasteries of his foundation.
How acceptable to the Blessed Virgin these reverences & adorations are.

CHAP. II.

Here is none so ignorant that doth not know, that the more we honour where it is deserved, the more we ingratiate our selves with the honoured. This supposed, we having in the precedent chapter declared the B. Virgins merit in the highest kinde, this sort of Adoration which we call Hyperdulia, consequently our honouring
honouring her therby cannot but be most grateful and acceptable to her. It is an exercise, as we have insinuated, practised by the Angels themselves in heaven and who soever practises it on earth, becomes (as it were) by it, equale unto them; Angels of earth in honouring and reverencing the soueraigne Queene of heaven. Neither are we to imagine that honour we exhibit unto her here, lesse grateful unto her, then that which they do there; nay, perhaps there are some men on earth so zealous in her service, who acquit them so wel of their devotions and with such vigour of spirit goe reverencing her, that their services to her here, are more grateful then theirs here, and consequently in their
and serve the B. U. Mary. 237

their reward of glory also they shall our strip then farr.

Dul-sighted as we are then, not to see of how great glorye we deprive our selues, when we en-
deaour not in al we may', to please the B. Virgin in honour-
ing her. Certainly, to fast, to watch, to weare hayrcloth, say
our Beads, Offices, or such devo-
tions, are very meritorious and pleasing vnto her; but it is im-
possible for al the learning and eloquence of the Quire of Ser-
phins, to expresse vnto the life
the infinit gladnes and extreme
pleasure she receaues from these
Adorations proceeding from the
interior of the minde, and ac-
 companied with the respective
comportment of the exterior.

Besides, al the Angels and the
Celestial
Celestial Court do take particular contentment in the honour and reverence exhibited to their soueraigne Queene; for if earthly Courtiers rejoyce when any new honour redounds unto their Prince, how much more rejoycing may we imagine to be in heaven, when they see their Princesse so honoured here? and of this rejoycing the B. Trinitie hath its part, when it beholds her reverenced, in whom they have lodged all their supreme and singular delights; the Father rejoyces to see his daughter so honored, the Sonne his Mother, and the holy Ghost his Spouse.

Let all men then, of what estate, sexe, or condition they be, with all diligence and solicitude procure to
to honour the Glorious and euer B. Virgin Mary, with al becom-
ing reverence; especially since the honour due to her, redounds
unto her B. Sonne, as the honour done to Saints doth to God who
made them so. In honouring the B. Virgin then, as the molt ex-
cellent of creatures, we honour God her Creatour, confessing al
those excellencyes we honour her for, proceeding from his li-
berality unto her; and thanking and praying him for making a
creature of our owne Condition so worthy and excellent; besides,
the honour and services done unto the Mother for the Sonns
regard, the Sonne takes as done to him, and proceeding from the
love and respect we beare him, nay, which is more, the devotion
towards
towards the Mother encreaseth the deuotion towards the sonne, in that she ( as most true vnto his honour ( referrs al vnto it that is offered her , and leade them vnto him , who addresse themselves vnto her. Lust so then , as in ho-nouring and glorifying the B. Virgin ,we do but honour and glorify God, so we in placing our Confidence in her , but place it in God himselfe , for what is it to confide in him , but to con-fide in those meanes which he hath provided vs for our salva-tion; and amongst al the meanes one of the most efficacious is to Commend our selues vnto her patronage, as we are instructed by the holy Church in that her Antiphon: Spes nostra salue: eia ergo advocata nostra illos tuos misericordes
and serve the B. V. Mary.

Here ad nos comeite: Haile O our hope, and O our advocate Convert your eyes of mercy towards us. And that great light of the Church S. Augustin. sayest to the same effect: You are the only hope of sinners, & from you, Glorious Virgin. We expect pardon of our sins, & recompence for our good works.

Knowing then for certaine, that in Honouring the B. Virgin, we do but honour God, we are often to procure to honour her, and both day and night offer vp vnto her our reverences, especially in the night when the time is more silent and more fitt for our devotions. This how grateful it is vnto her, she her self declared to a certaine Capuchine of our order, one most devout vnto her. This good Religious man had a laudable custome profoundly to incline vnto her
her a hundred tymes a day, til ha-
ving some special charge of the
Conuent, the performance of
which exacted much time of him,
not able to Comply with both,
he cutt-off one halfe of his devo-
tions, & diminished them vnto
fifty tymes : Now it happened
that one day whilst he was bu-
sily employed in his pious exer-
cises, the B. Virgin appeared vnto
him, inuested with most glo-
rious ornaments, wearing a riche
mantle ouer them, with only one
halfe of it embroydered with
flarrs; and addressing her speech
unto him she sayd, how comes
it, my sone, thy loue is growne
so cold in thee? that hauing be-
gun to embellish this mantle with
so many bright shiuing flarrs,
though hast giuen ouer and left the
rest
& serve the B.U. Mary. 243
rest undone? it is a work so grateful unto me the performance of it; as nothing can bee more ungrateful unto me then the neglect of it; wherefore as you respect my loue, finish your devotions as you have well begun, and so vanished away leaving the good Religious man making his profit of her so mild reproofe, & renewing his ancient devotions agayne, he exercised them unto the end of his life, in that full number he began withal.

And let none imagine this a devotion only for women or the simpler and vulgar sort, for all are equally obliged to honour her, of what sexe, estate, or condition soever they be; the Patriarkes & Prophets (as the Diuines affirm) acknowledged her worth, and re-
uerenced her for it thousands and thousands of yeares, before she was borne into the world: But what do I talke of Patriarkes and Prophets, when the Angels them selues at the first instant of their creation, beholding her in the Eternal Word, humbly reuerenced and adored her, as one that should one day be their Queene in heauen, and be the mother of their King on earth. And what should we say more? euem God himselfe become man was obedient vnto her commands, and obserued her with al filial loue and reuence.

To descend now to the Christians of the Primitiue Church, the Apostles reuerenced her de- dicated Temples to her service, erected Altars to her, and accor- ding
and serve the B. V. M. Mary. 245

ding to the opinions of some co-
secrated to her the famous house
of Loretto. But omitting these,
let vs. come to the Potentates of
the world; how many Empe-
rours, Kings, and soueraigne Bis-
hops have there been, who have
reuerently taken their Crownes
of their heads, and offered them
at her feete?

What titles of prayse and ho-
nour by the Doctors of the
Church have anciently been be-
flowed upon her by S. Hierome,
S. Augustine, S. Chryfoftom, and
innumerable others? how Divine-
ly hath S. Thomas spoken in
her prayse? how devoutly S. Bo-
naurente? and how affectionat-
ly Albert the Great, in humble
acknowledgement of the learn-
ing which hereceived from her?

L 3 Let
Let vs fixe vpon Alexander de Hales amongst the rest, as one singularly devoted vnto her, and recount the motiue he had to leaue the world, and intol himselfe in the seruice of our Saviour Christ vnder the banner of S. Francis of Assisium.

This Alexander of Hales being English by nation, was of a sublime spirit, and of singular erudition, the first professor of Theologie in the Vniuersitie of Paris, & one so affectionately devoted to the B. Virgin, as he made a vowe, never to refuse any thing that should be asked him in her name; A certaine Gentle woman vnderstanding this, persuaded the Bernardines to make their use of it by winning him to their Order, and illustrating it by so great a light
light of learning, which they resolved to doe, and repairing to him they made their approaches a farr off, discourting of learning and devotion; but God Alm. permitted not, that at that time they should come neerer to him; the Gentle-woman understanding what was done, had recourse vnto the Frier Preachers next, animating them and putting them in the way to make him one of their Order as she done the Bernardines before; which was attempted also by them, & iust as they were putting him to his vowe, by chance two Frier Minors coming in, one of them diuinely inspired thus sayd vnto him; Alexandro, it is highe time for you to with draw your selfe from those vanities which have abused you.
so long; wherefore in the name of God and his B. Mother I conjure you to take the habit of S. Francis, for I know his Order hath need of such as you are; Alexander touched with these words as by the finger of the holy Ghost, and remembering the vow he had made, answered him presently, Go ye hence good fathers, and I will instantly follow to the full effecting of your desires; and so he did, taking on him the holy habit, till being in his probation he was grievously tempted to cast it off agayne, by reason of some austerities he could not undergo so well; and just as he was upon the point of doing it, behold S. Francis appeared vnto him in his sleepe, bearing on his shoulders a beauteie Cross, with which
and serve the B. V. Mary. 249 which he endeavoured to clime a stipe hill; at which he was so moved with compassion, as he offered him his service to helpe him vp with it; wherupon the Saint beholding him with an angrie eye; goe offer thy service (sayd he) to suche weaklings as thy selfe; for if thou canst not carry thine that is so light, how canst thou help me to beare my heauier one? the Novice perceiving strait his mind from this his reprehension, resolved to continue in the Order, not withstanding al the difficulties thereof, and concluded there was no other waye to heauen, then by bearing the Crosses which are offered vs.
That the quality of Mother of God obliges both men and Angels to the adoring of her.

CHAP. III.

Among all dignities, graces, greatnesses, and prerogatives, with which Alm. God hath honored the B. Virgin, there is none more highe and sublime, then that of being Mother of God, it surpassing all of which any creature can be capable; surmounts the heavens, and the celestial Hierarchies,
and serve the B. U. Mary. 249

chie, comes neere to divine, immense, and incomprehensible, & in fine goes beyond all that can be express'd by words, or conceived by any Angelical or humane thought. This S. Augustine in the beginning of his book of the B. Virgins Assumption, doth intimate, where he sayes: There is no heart that conceiveth, or tongue that can express the effect of this grace and dignity. And S. Bernard in divers places and divers manners sayes at the expression of this great dignity. S. Anselme in his Treatise of the B. Virgins magnitudes sayereth, that next to the being God, there is no dignity in heaven or earth can equal hers: To say only (sayes he) of the B. Virgin, that she is Mother of God, is a thing that exceeds all sublimity, which next
to God can be said or imagined. From hence the holy Fathers infer, that the title of being Mother of God, is the fontaine from whence do flow all her other graces and prerogatives; for so, say they, whence was it, that from al eterni- nity she was in a particular maner predestinat; because she was to be the Mother of God. Why was she sanctified by the holy Ghost in her Mothers wombe? to be the more worthy receptacle of the Sonne of God. Why in her Con- ception was she exempted from original sinne? that the eternal Word might from her body take immaculat flesh. Why was she exalted above all the Thrones & celestial Hierarchies? but because she was the Mother of God; who is the soueraigne King of heaven & earth.
and serve the B.V. Mary. 253

earth. Whence in fine, is it, that the Princes of heaven and earth, nay, even of Hell it selfe, bow downe and do reverence at mention of her name, but only because she is Mother to the supreme Lord of all, to whom all do homage, and in whose presence all the great ones that are, shrinke vp to nothing, and not appeare at all. O wonderful greatnes of this highe and excellent dignity bestowed upon a simple Virgin! Who is not astonishe, who is not alienate from his senses with admiration? to be at once a mother, and a Virgin! to containe in the narrow inclosure of her wombe, him whom the heauens with all their height & latitud can not containe! to be Mother of the most deare delights of the Eternal
Eternal Father, and the most glorious objects of Angels, and finally (which is the most prodigious of all) to have produced her Creator, and brought her Father forth. These are things above all capacity, rousing nature with astonishment and wonder, so as with good reason the holy Church says of her: Nature admired, when you brought forth that holy one, who brought forth you.

The B. Virgin then merits in being Mother of God, all imaginable honour from one creature to another, and in particular that which the Divines intitle Hyperdulia, which also admits of a subdivision, according to Suarez, into superior & inferior; with the inferior those are honored, who have some particular excellence
and serve the B. V. M. Mary. 255

ence above the rest, as to S. John Baptist, & the Apostles, for their eminency of place, to S. Francis for the singular testimony of his sanctity giuen by Alt. God in the impression of the sacred Stigmats; but with the superiour, the Mother of God alone, who only had the honour to beare, bring forth, nourish, & educat the only Sonne of the only Eternal God.

And in regard of this high and most eminent dignity of hers, al Creatures in heauen and earth reverence her, and acknowledge her for their soueraigne Lady and Queene, and at her name the greatest Potentats on earth bow downe their knees, and do humble reverence; so al generations of the world praise and honour her, as she in her Canticle divine-ly
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ly presaged; Behold from henceforth
all generations shall call me blessed, & de
facto, what people, what nation is
there on the earth, so irreligious
and barbarous, who haue her not
in honour and reverence? Even
the Iewes, & their Rabbins haue
written in her praisie, and the most
obstinat of them haue experienced and acknowledged her most
powerful aide in their necessities.

As witnesseth this maruaylous
story recorded by the learned Pel-
bert in his Stellary of the B. Vir-
gin; of a Iewish-woman, who
being in the paines of childbirth,
& neerer going out of the world,
then bringing a child into it,
some Christians (who charitably
came to visit her,) exhorted her
to invocat the B. Virgin for her
deliverance; the poore woman did
so
So and lifting up her eyes & voice to heaven in a languishing manner; O most gracious Virgin (saying she) I beseech you to have pity on me though I be of the unhappy race of those who so crucified God your Sonne & consequently unworthy of your favours yet notwithstanding if you shall vouchsafe me your assistance in this extremity I do here vow to relinquish the error of my Religion, and together with the fruit of my wombe (as soone as it shall be borne to light) to receive the holy Baptisme, and live and die at your devotion she had no sooner pronounced this, but soodainly behold her safely deliuered of a sonne, which according to her vow within some few dayes (together with her self) she procured to
to have baptized; which her husband (who then had undertaken a journey) understanding at his return, he was so mightily incensed at it, and in so furious a rage, as he presently in his mothers armes murthered the innocent child; whereupon she out of feare of her owne death, and horror of her childs, fled instantly crying al the way she went, in such a vehementye, and in such affright, as the people flocking about her, & understanding the reason of her laments, rann al towards her home so violently bent against the Murtherer, as infaillibly they had torne him in pieces had they encountred him; but he, (what with the horror of his crime, and feare of punishment) preuented them, and fled towards the Citty gates
and serve the B. U. Mary. 259
gates which finding shut, he was
forced to take sanctuary in a little
Chappel of the B. Virgins then
open by chance, where having
leisure to looke about him, he el-
pyed an Image of our B. Lady in
Relieue, over the highe Altar, at
sight of which he was so strucken
with shame and repentance, as
casting him on his knees with a
dolorous accent; Too great (sayd
he) too great, O sacred Virgin, is
your beingity to me, who have so
greenuously offended you, to ProteEt and
conceale me in this my flight; but I
see it is true what I have often hard,
that your Clemency is the greatest
mariusle in the world, and that but
regard it, & it is unmeasurable every
way: I implore then that sweet cle-
menccy of yours not to saue my life,
for the horriblnes of my Crime, hath
aswel
A Method to love as well taken from me the desire, as the deserting of it, but to forget it, and to forgive and wash it away in the fontaine of my teares, withal to accept his deed of gift of mine to your B. Sonne and you, of my hart and all I am, who now have no other desire, then to beal, and wholly yours.

He had prosecuted his speech, but the Officers entering the Chapel, interrupted him, and lea-zing on him, they carried him prisoner to the Prouost of the place; where he was no sooner come, but falling on his knees before him, he sayd unto him with a resolut countenance; I do not this to move you to Compasion of my crime, and saue my life, but only to begg this favour of you, that I may have the happeines to be baptized before I dye.

The
and serve the B. V. Mary. 261

The Prouost no lesse rejoicing then wondering at his demand, gladly granted him his request, and having received him from the Font himselfe, that Ceremony, being over, he proceeding to the examination of his fact, not letting the pleasure of the one, hinder the displeasure of the other. But behold, while this was in agitation, the mother pouring forth her affection in laments over the murdered carcasse of her Child, by degrees perceived it stirr, and fixe its eyes upon her with a gratious smile, and being in a transport of ioy and admiration thereof, at the same instant was brought her the ne-wes of her husbands Conversion; whereupon she instantly tooke her child, and presented it alive before
before the Prouost, no marke nor signe remayning that ever it had been dead, but only a little start where he had given the wound. The Prouost beholding this fupendious miracle, absolued the Criminal as one who already was absolued from heauen; who being a learned man and a great Rabby in the Jewish law, after-wards wholly converted his tongue and penne to the setting forth the prayles of the B. Virgin and the Christian law, which he strongly defended against the errors of that sort.

Nay, euens the Turkes themselves, and impious Moores concurr in honouring the sacred Virgin; and reverenceing her as Mother of God, as appeares by the greeuous penaltyes imposed by their
& serve the B. U. Mary. 263
their Alcoran, on any whoioeuer shal blaspheme her name. But what should we say of the honour exhibited to her amongst the Christians, when scarcely is any so poore a village or hamlett, where she is not honoured; by some place of devotion dedicated unto her? and her Images and pictures are in such veneration, as who hath not part in the worship of them?

A yong Scholler (as Vincen
tius in his historial Mirrors re
counteth it) being so devoted to her, as he vied on his knees, as often as any Image of hers occu-
tr'd, to salute her in this devout manner. Haile Mary &c. or this: Blessed is the sacred Virgin; wombe that bore the Eternal father's sonne, and blessed the breasts that gave him suck
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sucke, &c. But as God oftentimes scourges those most, whom he loues dearest, it hapned this yong man fel into so violent a freinzie, as he would teare and bite his bookes and evry thing he could lay his hands vpon; One day amongst the rest being in his furious fitts, behod a yong man of incomparable beauty, and shining with resplendent light (no doubt but his good Angel) was seen by his beds side, making for him this pious prayer: O B. Lady, see, see your poore servaunt heere, who so deoultly and often hath prayed vnto you; and giuen a thousand testimonies of his deuotion; behold him now in how pitious a state he is, so destitut of al humane Comforts, as euern inhumanity it selfe would commife-
and serve the B. V. Mary. 265
rat his case; this is the mouth, these are the lippes that haue so often pronounc't your praiue; and is it not pitty to see them now, the instruments of rage & furye only, which were once only of devotion and piety? O therfore haue mercy upon him, who of none with more right can expect it then of you, & restoring him to that health he so well imploied in your honor hertofore; This said, he dis-appeared, and the yong man felt instantly the effect of his prayers by his recovery, which was so speedy & miraculous, as acknowledging the B. Virgins partickler favour in it, he to gratifie her for it, entred into an austere Religion, where he liued & died as became one, who held his life on such a pious tenour of his good Angel, and his better Aduocate.

M     How
How we ought to reverence and adore the B Virgin, in regard of the sublimity of her glory above all other Saints.

CHAP. IV.

E E I N G the Saints which are now in heaven, in possession of their eternity of happiness, are to be honoured with that sort of reverence which the Divines call Du-
lia, which is the lowest sort of reverence appropriated to any Saint, & the higher they are in dignity, with
and serve the B. U. Mary. 267
with the more high and particular reverence are they to be honoured; what supreme honour may we imagine due, unto our soueraigne Lady and Queene of heaven, who by so many degrees of dignity is preferred before them all, seated at the right hand of her B. Sonne, so neere and deare unto him as she is, and whom the rest of Saints, only a farr off reverence and admire? And if it be true, that each ones glory beares a proportion with the grace they haue, & the more their grace on earth the more their glory in heaven; how excellent in glory must she bee above them all, who was so farr superior to them in grace? for who knowes not, how from the very instant of her Conception,
when she was sanctified in her Mothers wombe, God went heaping more and more graces upon her still, untill her death when the accumulation was Complete, and how in al tymes she cooperated with him in al her actions, in al occurrèces, still meditating how to add unto it, accompanying al her exterior workes with the interior intention of the minde; Which Albert the great exemplifies very wel in that treatise of his, de beata Virgine; and S. Bernard more particularly where he sayes. This Virgin and mother of the highest, not only waking but euen sleeping had the fruition of heavenly things in Contemplation, no earthylye affaire being so forcible, as to interrupt her Commerce of thought with heaven
and serve the B. V. Mary. 269

uen, in so much as even in her sleepe she was busied more in Contemplation then the rest of the Saints when they were most perfectly awake. Who then, of what intelligent a spirit soeuer they bee, can comprehend the immensity of the grace and merits of the glorious Virgin, & consequently the infinit glorie she had in recompence, seeing as the same Doctours affirms; The more she excelled others in grace on earth, the more glory she obtained in heaven. Let vs conclude then, that her glory there, is incomprehensible, and surpasses by infinite degrees that of all the Saints & Angels; Conformable to that saying of S. John Chrysostome: What is there more holy than the B. Virgin (says he;) neyther the Pro-

3 M phets
A Method to love

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phets Apostles, Martyrs, Patriarchs, Angels, Thrones, Dominations, Seraphins, nor Churubins; in fine, there is no visible nor Created thing more great or more excellent then she.

And S. Anselme; Ineffable (says he) and ever-more admirable is the grace and greatness of this Virgin. And in prosecuting his discourse: And what, O B. Lady: is there more to be sayd? when but Considering the immensity of your grace, glory, and felicity, I am destitut of forces; and my voice sayleth me. And yet not only from the abudance of Grace which was in her, but much more from her humility may we argue the greatness and dignity which she hath in heauen; for it being an approved verity to al the world that the more we abase our selues on earth, the more shal we be exalted
alted for it in heauen; as is testi-
fyed by verity itself: Who humble
themselves, shalbe exalted, &c. And
that great light of the Church S.
Ambrose sayes: The more abject we
are on earth, the more we shalbe exal-
ted for it in heauen: And he adds;
That by so many degrees of humility
we descend on earth, by so many of
glory we shal ascend in heauen. Since
no creature euer thought so hum-
bly and abjectly of her selfe as
this B. Virgin did, we may well
imagine, that by this preious
vertue she so wonn the hart of
God, and gott such hold of his af-
fections, that she euen obliged
him by it to descend from heauen
to earth into her wombe, and
choose her for his spouse and mo-
ther, which she in that Canticle
of hers Confesses of her selfe:

M 4 Because
Because he hath regarded the humility of his hand-maid, &c. Which shewes the excellency of her humility. And S. Bernard sayes of it, that when the Angel saluted her, her answering him in that manner so humble, and resigning her selfe entirely vnto the Wil of God: Behold the hand-maid of our Lord, &c. Was more grateful vnto God, and meritorious for her, then al the actions of men and Angels put together, and that by it alone, she merited, the being Mother of our Saviour Chrift: Never (sayes S. Bernard) had she been exalted above the Angels, if she had not humbled her selfe before.

And if some Saints, as namely S. Francis, have merited by their humility, to be ranged amongst the Seraphins the cheifest Order of
of Angels and next to the Divinity; to what immensitie of glory are we to imagine the B. Virgin is exalted, for the profoundnes of her humility, which descended lower then euer any Saints could doe? In consideration of which, we may wel imagine, that her glorie and felicity as farr surpafteth that of al other Saints, as the heaues do a little point, the cleare light of the Sunne a candle the Ocean a smale drop of water, or al the earth the least graine of sand.

With good reason then, since she is exalted to such a height of dignitie, we are to honour her, as the soueraine Queene and Empresse of men and Angels; and as eminent as she is in dignity so is she in beautye and amability, able to obscure with the brightnes
of its splendour, not only at humane eyes, but even those of the Angels themselves, as appears by this story recorded by Herod Religious of the Order of S. Dominick.

There was a young scribe (says he) much devoted to the B. Virgin, who being somewhat conversant in the holy Scriptures where her excellent beauty is commended with such Encomiums, he at last grew passionately desirous to see her in that beauty she appeared with in heaven, & praying for the accomplishment of his desires, he heard a voice comprehending him for it, in that he asked a thing above his capacity & which his eyes were too weak to behold, nor could it cost him to see then his sight the beholding it;
Oferue the B. V. Mary. 275

it; but he willing to put it to the venture, persisted stil in his Peti-
tion, yet at laft upon more mature reflexion, he resolu'd, if the favour
were granted him, to referue on eye at least whileft only with the
other he regarded it; And fo it happened that she appearing vnto him in a molt glorious and
resplendent manner, that one
eye with which he regarded her,
being overcome with the excelle-
cy of the obie& became who-
ly blind; but fo farr was he from
euer repenting it, as with itera-
ted petition he be sought her, to
appeare but vnto him in that glo-
ry once agayne, and he would be
also willing to forgoe the other
eye; the B. Virgin to content
his devotion, did as he desired
her, but was fo farr from inflicting
that
that penalty upon him which he did expect, as she restored him his other eye again, wherewith we may imagine how contented a man he was.

Neither doth she exceed all the Angels and Saints in beauty and splendour only, but also in joy and felicity, which with out doubt she hath in as supereminent degree above the rest, as her glory above the rest is more high and eminent; And for that there are divers Doctours who affirm, that she alone hath more glory then all the Saints together; this being so, imagine of what joy & felicity she is possess'd the while; the quality of which is so exceedingly rauishing, that S. Augustine doubts not to affirme of it, that one dropp of heauenly felicity
and serve the B. U. Mary. 277

city but falling into hell, would sweeten all its torments. O strange expression of the wondrous sweet-nes and deliciousnes thereof: if one drop of it could work such effects in hell, what must whole torrents of it work in the harts of those who are possesst of it? The Apostles upon an arid and barren mountains topp sawe but only a little glimpse of the glory of heaven in our Saviour's Transfiguration, and tasted by it but a little superficial joy, and yet you see they could have been content to have remained there all their lives. But that example which I shall now declare, deserves yet greater admiration.

A certaine Religious Monke of holy life, exercis’d long in the contemplation of the Ioyes of Heaven, conceived at last such
a fervent desire of it, that he incessantly besought Alm. God, that (to comprehend it the better) if it were possible he might have some tatt of it in this mortal life; and continuing in this devotion many years, at last close by his Cell he heard a bird sing so wonderfully, as rauished with it, he presently lyed him out to enjoy more freely its delicious melody, and following it a flight or two, at last it ledd him into a wood thereby; where it began to sing; and he rauish't in hearing it, sat downe nighte the tree wheron it was, where he might both see & heare it best, nor did he know, with whether he was delighted most; who when he beheld the beauty of it, wished himself al ey es
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eyes, when he heard its divine
notes wished himselfe all eares a-
gaine; In fine, feasting these two
fenses so long he latt till the Bird
ta'en its melody, and flew quite
away; when he arising tooke his
way towards his Monastery, ima-
gining he had been away only
some houre or two; but being return-
ne back againe, he found it almost
al rebuilt a new againe, and
knocking at the gate, the Porter
and he were both so strange one
to another, as they admired at
either, the Porter that the Monke
should say he was Religious of
the house, the Monke that he
should say he had been Porter
there many yeares; In fine, the
Abbot came being informed the-
reof, whom heas litte knew as the
Porter, and unto whom he was as
litte
little knowne; who in fine examining him, fould by the Records of the House that those Religious whom he named, to have lived in that Monastery with him, were deceased so long before, as by computation of time they found, he had been absent three hundred and sixty yeares. If then so many yeares seemed but a short houre to that Religious man charmed with the sweetnes of that Musick he listned vnto, perform'd perhaps by some Angel of heauen; how delicious, sweet, and raus- hing, must the Ioyes of Heauen needs bee, where all the Angels sing together incessantly praising and glorifying their heauenly King.

And if this good Religious man could remaine expos'd vnto the
and serve the B. U. Mary. 281
the injuries of the time so many yees, rauished with tasting but onedrop as it were of the deliciousnes of heauen; O God, who can imagine the delight of those, who in all comfortable Eternity shall bee feasted with it to all satiety; They shall bee inebriated with the abundance of thy house, and drink of the torrent of thy delights; saies the holy Scripture. Seeing then the B. Virgin, next to God is Mistr esse and Lady of this Pallace of deliciousnes, and as it were the pipe that couseys al its deliciousnes from God the fountaine of it, to all that participat of its Ioy in heauen: Let vs honour, adore, and reverence her with al those due acknowledgments, of which we have already treated or shall heraft er treate.

That
That we ought to adore the B Virgin, for that she is the soueraine Lady of all Creatures both in earth, and heaven.

CHAP. V.

A PERSON which is riche, noble, and vertuous, deserveth honour, & the more they excel in it, the more honour they deserve; as we see by experience in persons most eminent in the world. The Blessed Virgin then, being so great a paterne of sanctity, a Compendium
and serve the B.V. Mary: 283
dium of all perfections, chosen by
God for his Mother, and elected
to a supreme height of dignity
above all the Quiers of Angels,
and finally being Empress of all
superior and inferior Creatures;
with good reason both Ang-
gels and men are to honour and
reverence her, as the souerai-
gne Queene of the whole Uni-
verse: neither should there be
any (me thinks) so impudent
to dispute her title to it, nor so
impious as to offer to defraud
her of those sublime honours due
to so sublime a title; she were a
Queene, if there were no other
reason but only because her Sonne
is a King, King of Kings, & Lord
of Lords; and who knowes not
that the King and Queenes ho-
nours goes so conioyn’d in one,
as from the dishonouring the one, redounds to the other a dishonour too? The B. Virgin, being (as formerly we have said) daughter to God the Father, Mother of his Sonne, and Spouse of the holy Ghost, and consequently daughter, mother, and Spouse of the holy Trinity, considering her alliance and conjunction with God, and namely with the humanized Word of God the Sonne, whom this great Al acknowledges for King; of her being Queen can be no doubt at all; and this S. Athanasius affirmes where he saies: He being King and Lord, his mother who engendred him, hath consequently the reputation of Queene and Mother. And S. John Damascen: She was undoubtedly declared Queene (saies he) of all Created things when she
& serve the B. U. Mary. 285
she became Mother of the Creator.

Let vs then conclude, that she being Queene of this Vniuerse, hath ouer it an absolut command, and that al are to obey her, and render her that honour and obeisance, which from Vassals is due to those who are ouer them; And in admiration of this power of hers, was that devout exclamation of holy S. Bernard; O blessed Mary (sayes he) al power is given you both in heauen and earth, do as you can do al that you desire.

Among al the titles of Greatnes, which our Mother the holy Church honours her with, that of Queene of heauen she vses most frequently, & Lady of Angels: Reginae cali, & Domina Angelorum, &c. Now the greater the extent of ones Dominion is, the greater euer
ever is their power and magnificence; so as if one could attain
to the Dominion over all the
world; how absolute and unlimited should their power to be? and
yet what is all this world to the
Heavens amplitude which she is
Lady of? and where her subjects
are perpetually honoring her, so
as we may say of her: *The Heavens
declare the glory of Mary*; and the
heavenly Courtyers take it for
honour to obey her commands.
To conclude, it is but little we can
say of her greatness, how great
forever that little may seem to be,
and arriving even to admiration,
which ever there takes up, where
humane knowledge leaves.

And so it is not an admirable
thing, that the whole roundour
of the earth in comparison of the
Heavens
Heavens should be but as the center point compared to a migh-
tie Spheare? & who can imagine then the immensity of that, when
the earth which contains Empires, Kingdomes and Provinces,
is so meere a nothing in compa-
rison thereof? Some are of opiu-
nion, that the element of wa-
ter is ten times bigger then the land, the aire ten times bigger
then the water, the fire then that, and so with proportion each hea-
uen bigger then another, &c. And
to give you some dimme light of
its magnitud, the Moone which
in lesse then a moneth surrounds
its Orbe, would be incircling the
Harry heauen according to the
most expert of the Mathemati-
ciens thirty five thousand yeares
and more; which notwithstan-
ding
A Method to love

ding compared to the Cæolum em-
pyreum or habitation of the Blest-
Fed, is but a poore little Circle, &
for magnitud not worthy the
speaking of. For which reason
some Authours are of opinion ei-
ted by Philip Diez, that if a mil-
stone were throwne from thence,
it would be a thousand five hun-
dred yeares in falling down. Who
admires not in hearing this, and
cries not out with him: O Lord,
I have considered your workes, and
remaine astonished and out of my self
with wonder.

One of the ancient Prophets
in consideration of the greatnes
of this glorious Pallace of Alm.
God exclaine: O Israel, how great
is the house of God, how mighty great
is the place of his possession? he is
great and hath no limits, he is high
and
To serve the B.V. Mary. 289
and cannot be measured. And we
may well imagine it to be great,
since every Saint shall have a habi-
tation apart, and a place propor-
tioned unto its merits. And this
we have from our Saviour Christ
himselfe in comforting his afflic-
ted Disciples for his departure,
where he sayes: Let not your hearts
be troubled for in my fathers house are
many mansions. And S. Vincent
of S. Dominiks Order, speaking
of these Mansions, sayes that each
of the Blessed in heaven shall have as-
signed them for their habitation a lar-
ger circuit then is betwixt the east
and west. Now there being incom-
parably more Saints in heaven,
then there be men on earth, I
leave it to you to imagine how
infinit great the heavenly King-
dome is.

N  Now,
Now the B. Virgin being Queen of this so immense dominion, hath all the Blessed there consequently for her Subjects & Courtiers, who being in due Order rankt about her Throne, alwayes make tender vnto her of their services and obsequiousnes, and if (as S. John Chrysostome sayes) while she was yet on earth she was attended vpon by such an infinity of Angels to defend her against all the assaults of hell, and conferuencto their king this faire tabernacle of his, Inviolat; how much more gloriously attended is she now in heauen, where she sits crownd in possession of so high a dignitie? It is impossible to imagine the number that waytes vpon her there; which the Prophet endeavouuring to speake of sayes
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layes. Ten thousand serve thee, and a hundred times ten thousand assist before thee: setting downe a finit number for an infinit. And S. Denys layes, that the number of Angels by many parts exceeds the number of al Corporal and material things. And for those, we know, how the sublunary bodies yeild in greatnes to the celestial bodyes, and they vnto the tother, the more high they are; in so much as not a starr of the least magnitud, but is farr greater then al the globe of inferior things together. We know besides, that every man from Adam to the Consummation of the world hath had and shal haue an Angel Guardian to attend vpon them, be they good or bad, al equally participating of this benefitt; whence
it follows, (as we have said before) that the number of Inferiour Angels deputed to that charge, exceedeth the number of all men that ever were, are, and shall be; which being so, how innumerable must the superior bee, since (as we have formerly deduced) they increase in proportion the more superior they are. Certainly, more easily it were, to number all the stars in heaven, the drops of the Sea, the leaves of trees, the plants of the earth, and the Atomes of the Sun, then the multitude of Angels knowne only to God himself.

Let vs add moreover, the better to set forth the glory of our soueraigne Queene, a second wonder in traine of this; to wit; That all the Angels, as infinite as they are,
and serve the B.U. Mary. 293
haue each one yet a diversity
among themselves; and if it be
such a delightful sight, to see a
Garden all planted with variety
of flowers, how much more de-
lightful must it bee, to see these
Angelical flowers adorning the
heavenly Garden with each one
their several species according to
their several dignity and merits?
And heere our Imagination hath
a spatioues feild, to exercise it
selfe in devout conceipts of the
B. Virgins perfections and excel-
lence; for if the Courtiers strive
with so much splendor, how much
more splendid must needes that
Maieftie bee, on whom they al
attend.

For so these B. Spirits are per-
petually attending before her
Throne adoring her, and ready at
N 3 the
the least twinkling of her eye, to
execute her commands, which are
commonly for the good and sal-
vation of man. This is the opi-
nion of S. Augustine where he
layes: S. Michael and al the other
Angels have an eye in heaven unto
the B. Virgin, to see where she would
Command them any things for the
good of soules on earth. Let vs con-
clude then; that her Greatnesse
are unspeakeable and incompre-
henibles not only by men but
euen by the Angels themselves,
and that next to God she hath
the most soueraigne command in
heauen, as being Queene of al
the celestial Hierarchies there,
and Mother of the supreme Mo-
narck and Creator of every thing.

Neither doth her dominion
terminate or end heere, but as
she
and serve the B. V. Mary. 295
she is Queene of Angels, and of Heauen, so also is she of Earth & the Inhabitants thereof; and for this reason the Diuines cal her frequently Regina mundi, the Queen of earth. S. Gregory often intit-les her to the name of Lady of al Christians, & so with good reason may she bee, who was so great a part of our redemption, for God had never been made man but for her, and consequently had never suffered for vs, nor gone through with the worke of our redemp-
tion; which ought to be a powerful Motiueto induce vs to honour and reverence her.

Nay, euen the very diuels them-

N 4
deuout
A Method to love devoutly S. Bernard) the Heavens do smile, the Angels rejoice, the world exults, hell trembles, and the devils are in dismay. S. Bridgitt in the first booke of her Revelations sayes, that the B. Virgins rankes and dignity in heauen is so supreme, as the devils are constrained to honour it; and she addes: That as often as any shalbe molested by their temptations, let them but invoocat her sacred name, and presently they shall vanish and be put to flight, of whose sole Command they more stand in awe, then of all their torments: so as whensoever she undertakes the cause of any soule, they dare not withstand her in it; as witnesseth this story registred in the Promptuary of her Miracles, and taken out from thence by Pelbert in
and serve the B. U. Mary. 297,
in his Stellary of the B. Virgin.

There was a man (sages he) of
a nature so evil inclined and per-
uerse, as he never was exercised
in any good, but only in some
few reuerences and praieres which
he daily offered vp to the B. Vir-
gin. This man, though often ins-
pired to leave his wicked life, was
yet so far from it, as he persisted
more obstinate in it every day, un-
til at last in drawing his latest
breath, he imagined himself hur-
rried by a crew of diuels, with
horrible noysse and howlings un-
to the tribunal of the Judge;
where they demaundig justice,
and the Judge putting them to
declaration of the cause, they
clearly proued him a most wicked
man, and as such desired sentence
should be giuen on him; When

N v. the
the B. Virgin standing vp in his
defence, declared whatsoever
good she had knowne by him,
like a most faithful Advo cate;
but scarce had she finished her
speech, when in an insolent man ner the diuels argued against her
thus; is this al you are able to say
for him? vnlesse you defend his
cause better then so and bring
more proofs of goodnes in him,
what, for his bad, wil become of
him may be easily seen; & heere
he began to add vnto the list of
his offences thousands and thou-
sands more, when the B. Virgin
seeing their number so great, as
by the way of Iustice there was
no hope for him, shee strait ad-
dressed her selfe by that of mercy,
and prostrating her selfe before
she Judges feete, no sooner he had
rayled
and serve the B.V. Mary. 299
raised her vp, but she began: if these pretenders to justice (sayd shee) were interested in the cause more then out of malice, they should carry it and I would not so much as dispute it with them, but to what end al this long recapitulation of crimes what concerns it them whether your inspirations were obeyed or no? or since when have they been soe jealous of your honour, that they should care so much where you were dishonored? certainly, if there be any fault, it is chiefly theirs, and if there be any offence it is only yours; it is you only whom he hath offended, and to you alone he is ready to make satisfaction, not with any boast of merit, or that he stands on justifying his cause, but with repen-
tance
A Method to lowe
tance in his heart, tears in his eyes, & sighs in his mouth, to ob-
tain of your mercy, what of ju-
stice he cannot hope for. I confess
the quantity & quality of his cri-
mess are so enormous great, that
they deserve nothing but death &
danation; but if my prayers were
cuer powerful with you now hear
my prayers for him, and by these
breasts which had the honour
once to give you sucke, I conjure
you; for so many drops of milke
you have received from them, to
bestow one drop of bloud of the
aboundance you have shed for
sinners, to wash this man from
his sinnes; for his life hereafter
I wil undertake, so as you wil
pardon what is past; for I see al
signes of a repentant sinner in his
heart, his eyes, and al; and con-
cluding heere with a profound re-
and serve the B. U. Mary. 301
uerece, the Judge remained a while with his eyes fixt upon the ground in great suspense, now weighing the mightines of his crimes, now of her power that interceded for him, whilst either part was waueing betwixt hope and feare; at last lifting vp his eyes, & castinge them on her with a gracious regard: Though it be exceeding much you ask, said he, yet were it much more I could not deny it such an intercession, for your sake then I pardon him this once, but neuer let him hope for pardon againe, if he abuse it now; hauing sayd this, the diuels confounded departed with horribile cryes saying; We knew wel enough what would be the end of it, shee euer hath the better of vs, and 'tis our folly to contend with
with her, she is too powerful an
Aduocate, and too gracious with
the Iudge: so they vanished away,
and the poore man returning to
himself againe, recounted to al
this horrible vision, and decei-
uing the Phisicians for his corpo-
ral health, and the diuels for his
Spiritual, he recovered both, ma-
king of either such use for the
time to come, that he entred into
Religion, and there to his dying
day ledd a most holy life.

By which we may see the pre-
ciousnes of the sacred bloud of
Christ our Lord, and how prevae-
 lent with him and powerful ouer
our aduersaries is his Glorious
Mother and our most faithful
Aduocate.
Of the great honour we owe to the B. Virgin for her being our most deare and merciful Mother.

CHAP. VI.

The Blessed Virgin standing at the foote of the Croffe on Mount Caluary accompanied with S. Iohn; Our Sauiour Christ beholding her with a pittiful and gracious eye, sayed vnto her; Woman, behold thy sonne; meaning S. Iohn, and then addressing his speech to him he sayd; Behold thy Mother; & from
from that time (fayes the holy Scripture) he made account of her as his owne, and to the end of his life observed her accordingly.

From hence the learned gather this great mystery; how our Saviour in recommending her vnto S. Iohn for his Mother commended al the faithful vnto her for her children; for if S. Iohn (say they) represented them al (as there is no doubt of it) the B. Virgin being assigned him for Mother, was likewise assigned vnto al Christians. Whereupon S. Bernard falls into this devout exclamation: O worthy of al admiration! behold thy Mother, &c. for know thou, if Mary be thy Mother, Jesus Christ is thy brother, & his Father: consequently thine then embrace
& serve the B. U. Mary. 305
embrace thy happines in her; And
so assuredly it is, God is our Fa-
ther; Our Father which art in heauen:
We are brothers to our Saviour
Christ: Goe unto my brothers, &c.
sayes he to the holy Magdalen,
and for the B. Virgins being our
Mother, there can be no doubt
at al; and heare S. Anfelme pro-
ving it; Iesus Christ the sonne of
Mary, is our brother, (sayes he) &
therefore consequently his Mother must
be ours. How much then ought
we to rejoyce, and how excessiue
great our contentment ought to
be, hauing for our Mother the
Mother of God himselfe, Queen
both of heauen and earth.

And not only she is our Mo-
ther, but a most benigne and gra-
cious Mother, sauouring of no-
thing but mercy and sweetnes, &
exer-
exercising nothing but the works of piety and pitty towards vs. So as her most ordinary title is the Mother of grace and mercy: Maria mater gratiae, mater misericordiae, and so in that other Antiphon she is called Mater misericordiae, &c. where we, who lye lishing and weeping in this miserable vale of tears, implore her aide and gentle pittie of our calamities. And wherefore is it, that in every publick place her Image occurs unto our eyes holding her sacred Infant in her armes, but only to signify she is alwayes in actual Tendring of him vnto vs for our good, as if she would saye, hear take my sonne and the sonne of the Eternal Father who for your sakes descended from heauen to earth, and putt on the vestment of.
of humanity in which he suffered so many indignities even at last to undergo an ignominious death, fear not but approach unto him here with confidence, he is al gracious, al pitiful, and affable, and if your sinnes deterr you from comming neare, remember how to make you great, he is become a little infant, and their angers are ever easily appeald; on my word take him then, and enjoy him as a gift from me, whose possession can not but much advantage you; and to render your selfe more worthy of the interest in him, wholly renounce al interest in vice, and casting your selfe humbly at his feete, resigne unto him your hart, and your best beloved desires, and in recompence thereof he wil bestow on you a lasting
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lasting good and happiness above the injury of death or time. O happy, and a thousand times happy are those souls who harken to these silent invitations of hers, and having recourse unto her in all their afflictions know how to prevail themselves of her benignity; let them assure themselves they shall never find the gates of her liberality shutt, nor sit downe with a repulse of whatsoever they law fully desire. God forbid (sayes devout S. Bernard) that I should thinke you can ever abandon those, who have placed their confidence in you. And Theophilus in the Booke intituled, The mirror of the B. Virgin, is introduced sayeing: I know, O soueraine Lady your care of vs how excessive great it is; for who ever hath hoped in you and been
and serve the B.V.Mary. 309
been confounded; who ever implored your aide, and been abandoned? And
to this purpose is that saying of Origen: I should for certainly true,
that the B. Virgin being instantly beseeched for any thing, is never want-
ting to the necessities of him who beseeches her, for that she is at mercy,
and so full of grace, and therefore she cannot choose but have compassion of
those who crave her help. Excellent words, and able to animat the
most desperat to a hope of his saluation, and allay the most ou-
tragious affliction which was ever in any breast. Being our Mother
then, she cherished vs with a ma-
ternal love, and hath more care
of vs then ever any Mother had of
her only child, never saying vs
with succour in our necessities, af-
stance in our dangers, comfort
in our afflicctions, nor finally de-
liurance from any evil what so-
euer, when soeuer with confidence
and devotion we importune her
for it. So is she our advocate in
heauen with Alm. God, where
she gladly undertakes our protec-
tion, defends our cause, procure-
to assure vs the possession of
Eternal blisse, and finally neglects
no occasion of putting vs faire
with her B. Sonne, and working
vs into his grace. In considera-
tion of the great prerogatiue we
have in heauen by such an Agent
for us, S. Bernard encourages man
to present himselfe without feare
before Alm. God: Go, Go, with
confidence, saies he, before the throne
of his divine Maieftie where the sonne
beholds the Mother, and the father the
sonne; the sonne shews his father his
hands
To serve the B. V. Mary. 311
hands and feet and side all wounded;
the mother unto her sonne her sacred
breasts that gave him suck, so as there
is no feare of a repulse where so many
signes of love and charity are.

But yet this is not all, nor doth
this careful Lady and Mother of
ours only procure vs favours, but
she assures them vs by appealing
her Sonne when we have offended
him, and reconciling his love
unto vs again; but for her, how
often had the world been thun-
dred by that just Judge above?
how often had the foules therein,
for their offences, been precipita-
ted and cast downe head long into
Eternal hell? Of which a more
cleare example cannot bee, then
that memorable vision of S. Domi-
nick, who praying one night, be-
hold in vision our Saviour Christ
seated
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enteed at the right had of his Alm. Father, al inflamed with wrath & furie, holding three terrible thunderbolts in his hand, ready to discharge on earth in punishment of three sinnes then frequently raigning amongst men, Pride Avarice, and Luxury; when the Blessed Virgin to mitigate his wrath prostrating her selfe before his feete, and straitly embracing them; I appeale, I appeale (sayd she) from this your anger how euer iust it bee, vnlo that wonted clemency of yours, beseeching you by it, if not abso-
lutly to reuoke your sentence, yet at least to surcease for a while the execution of it; for, alas, what wil you do? against whom do you prepare these armes? and whose ruine haue you resolued vpon?
and serve the B. U. Mary. will you annihilate your own workmanship, and see the perdition of those whom you have saved with so much cost of paine and bloud? and would you) replied her sonne, having raysd her vp, & seatd her by his side) would you have such crimes as these unpunished? who would not then in hope of impunity commit them hereafter in despight of me? no, it were but to prostitute my justice to their abuse not to exercise it here; and now to pardon them were to make my pardon for ever more vile and contemptible? why alas deare sonne (layd she) as they are apt to offend, so are they to be sorry for it, doubt not then but at your first summons of them to repentance, they wilbe obedient to it; and to this effect O behold
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behold here ready two servants of yours (pointing out to S. Francis and S. Dominick) apt ministers to employ therein, and to exhort them unto penance, after which if they persist in their wickednes, do your justice what it will with them, I have done with them. Hereupon his divine Majestie let his thunder fall out of his hands, his boiling anger coole, and at his Mothers prayers was for that once content to pardon man.

Having then a Mother in heaven so powerful as she, let vs have recourse to her, and put vs in shelter under her, as children do under their Mothers when they fly their Fathers wrath, and that especially when wee finde our selves most pretext with ill fortune or calamity,
and serve the B.V. Mary. 315

ty, and say vnto her: Sub tuum praesidium, &c. O mother of God and of vs, wee put our selues under your protection, refuse vs not in our necessities, nor abandon vs vnto the afflictions that threaten vs; and haue a firme confidence that she wil succour you, and haue pitty of your miserable estate, who neuer refuses those who haue recourse to her. In so much as a holy Doctor sayes; If so great be the enormity of our crimes as we feare to appeare with them before Alme God, our best course were to ad-
dresse our selues to her, and she insallibly wil succour vs. And S. Chryſostom in one of his Ser-
mons sayes vnto her; You have been chosen from eternity (sayes he) Mother of God, to the end that those whom God in justice
cannot save, should arrive by your pittiful intercession unto salvation.

And with this accords well that Vision which B. Leo had, one of holy S. Francis companions, in which he had a representation of the small Judgement day, where he saw two ladders reared one reaching from earth to heaven, where our B. Savioural in terror sat; the other of white, just of the same proportion extended to the B. Virgins throne, where she sat in all sweetness and affability; and he observed that those who mounted up by that read one, did fall to ground agayne some from the neather rounds and so upwards even unto the very topp, until Saint Francis called to them, and admonished them
and serve the B.V. Mary. 317
them to clime by that white one,
and he would assure them of bet-
ter speed; and he sawe that those
who followed his counsel were
gratiously received by our Lady
& introduced into heaven. From
which vision, and we have before
deduced, results an evident proof
of her motherly Care of vs, and
how she loves vs euer to passion
procuring with extraordinary so-
licitud al wee stand in need of
both in heaven and earth. With
good reason then ought we to re-
suerence her, and have her in ho-
nour and veneration; with good
reason are we to serve her affec-
tionately, and consecrate unto
her the best desires of our heart;
and this al lawes both divine and
 humane exact of vs, to witt, that
if she be our mother, we should
O 3 lOue
A Method to love

love and honour her; and if a love and honour be due from us to our parents who engender us into this world, with how much more reason is it due to her, who so carefully procures our regeneration to a better life?

Let us not cease then to love & reverence this sovereign Lady both of heaven and earth since God himself doth it as well as we, and (according to Methodius) hath a kind of obligation also to do it, she being his Mother, and consequently the precept of honouring our parents having also reference unto him, yea and it seems in more particular manner unto him then us, since she was more particularly his parent then any can be ours, both because he had no other on earth but,
but her, as also because she could have no other sonne. You have good reason to rejoice (layes the sayd Methodius) since you have him in a manner on the score with you, to whom all mortals are indebted else. And so he went still honouring her here on earth, as his deare Mother, and as such was obedient to her; et erat subdi-tus illis, as the holy Scripture sayes; neither doth he lesse honour her now in heauen, but (as some devout Doctors sayd) after his glorious resurrection first saluting her with a Salve sancta Pa-
renis; he iterated it at her Assum-ption into heauen, and there seating her at his owne right hand, at the Court of heauen doing reverence to her the while, he constituted her in absolut power and authority
authority over the trine Empire of the Universe; where all bow down before her, as to the daughter, mother and spouse of the All-blessed Trinity, the Queen of Angels, Empress of the World, and most faithful Mediatrix of all Christian souls, unto her Blessed Sonne, who grants all things at her request.
How to put these reuerences in practisefe, Wherby the B. Virgin is to be honored.

CHAP. VII.

In the precedent chapters we have seen of what excellency and valour is the exercise of Reuerences to the B. Virgin, and how acceptable vnto her it is, we haue moreover sufficiently informed our selues of the reasons which should moue vs vnto her reuerence, as that she is the mother of the king of heaven, her surpassing glory there, and that she is of O v higher.
higher dignity than all the quiers of heaven, that she hath all power heer on death, and finally that she is our Mother and soueraigne Lady also. And yet much more could alleage I alleage to moue vs to devotion, did not the seare determe me of ingulfsing my self into so wide and profound an Ocean. Wherfore now it remaines that I treat of the Method we are to vs, to put in practice this so laudable devotion.

First then I say, we are to endeavoure by often genuflexions and inclinations of the body to honour her; in which the better to actual our selves we are to banish from vs all tepidity and drowsynes; and make choice of time and place most convenient for it: and first; touching the circumstance
To serve the B.V. Mary. 323

stance of place, primary is the chiefest thing we are to regard; of
time, the night seems fittest as
that, which is fittest from distraction, & best composes the mind.

We read in Surius, how S. Elizabeth daughter of the King of
Hungary exercised herself with
such affections in this so laudable
devotion, as she appointed one
of her women every night to awa-
ke her at a certaine houre by
some secret way she had, when
she would rise unknowne to the
Prince her husband, and spend
most part of the ensuing night in
these adorations which the Ro-
man Breuiary makes mention of;
Shee rising in the nights (says it)
from her husband, and the time in
prayer and meditations. At which
time, no doubt, but the Angels
rejoys-
rejoyced to see her vertuously employed, being riche and noble by birth, but far more by vertue and her true devotion, and finally her performing that on earth, which the Angels account themselves happy to do in heauen.

Now for the number of them, I wil prescribe none, but leave it to the devotions of those who are desirous to exercise themselves therein, nor the manner how it is to be done, either of bowing one knee to the ground, or both, of lifting vp their hands or crofing them before their breasts, but let them choose that posture which likes them best, and which makes most for their devotion.

Only I wil speake a word or two in the commendations thereof in general, as first, of the facility
and serve the B.V. Mary. 325
cility wherewith it is done, there being none so much employed or
infirm, who cannot with ease
do somewhat in this kind, either
in bending the knee, or bowing
the head, actions which are com-
patible with all, in what estate or
employment soe’r they be. Then
it is a kind of devotion (this of
adoration) of all others the most
noble and acceptable to the
Queene of Heauen, the office of
Angels, and who then would not
be ambitious of it? to doe the
same on earth, which all the cele-
stal Courtiers do in heauen? and
I beseech devout persons, that
they would but consider, how di-
ligently and with what care your
earthly Princes are served and
honoured by their followers and
Courtiers; which whosoever shal
but
but obserue, must needs blush for shame, if they be not as careful and assiduous in servuing their Queene of Heauen.

And to incite our devotions thereunto, it would do well to read of the diligence of Saints in this particular; as namely in Surius of S. Albert, how he bowed his knees a hundred times a day, and fifty times prostrated himself on the ground, saying each time an Ave Maria in honour of the Queene of Heauen; And of S. Catherine of Sucina daughter of S. Brigit, how (according to the same Authour) she was from her tender infancy so exercised in prayer, as besides our Ladye Office which she recited every day, with the Penitential Psalmes & other such devotions, she imploy'd her
and serve the B. V. Mary. 327
her selfe fower houres every day continually in this exercise of genuflexions vnto the B. Virgins honour, accompanying it with many teares. As for that which S. John Damascen hath left written of Simon Stilites, it doth more cause our wöder then imitation; his standing on a pillar, exposed vnto the rigors of winters and scorching of somers heat; thirty five cubits highe, situated on an eminent Mountaines topp; and this continued for more then thirty yeares, making a thousand and a thousand genuflexions and inclinations every day; and one of the servants of B. Theodoret Bishopp of Cyrene observing him one day, counted above a thousand two hundred and forty inclinations of his, and that of those
those more painful ones, he bowing (as it were) even round in performing them.

So of the glorious Apostle S. Bartholomew we reade, that, a hundred times a day and as many by night, he used to bend his knees, which was more in one who was so perpetually and assidually employed in preaching and converting of the world, then a hundred times so much were in another man. Well did he understand of how highe price and value with the B. Virgin these Reverences and adorations were, understanding things in such an illuminative manner as he did) or els he had never been so careful & punctual in performing them.

But no wonder that the holy Saints and freinds of Alm. God have
have produced such strange effects as these, & left to us so little hope of imitating them, since the divine grace that superabounded in them, the ardent fire of the holy Ghost that incessantly inflamed their harts, and that height of perfection they had attained vnto al concurred vnto the rendring them active vigours and dili-gent in this holie exercisef. But as for us weaklings as we are, destitut of those spiritual forces which they had, and that mind to apply those forces to the best; if we cannot imitat them so nearly, yet at least a farr off we may do somewhat in their imitation; and bitter is it so to do, & do it devout-ly, then weary our selues by en-terprizing too much, and fo be-come wholy dulled and dis-an-iat,
330 A Method to loue

mat, and rather looſe spirit then gayne by the excesse.

There is an Example concerning this, taken out of the MIRROR of examples which is this.
A certain Religious woman had a daily devotion to say an hundred and fifty Ave Maries, accompanying each one with a profound reverence; but the growing cold in the performance of them, by reason the number seemed excessive great, was divinely admonished in vision to diminish them to a third part, under the condition that she should say those with greater fervour & devotion. And S. Hierome to this purpose sayes, it is far better to say one Psalm devoutly and with alacrity of spirit, then the whole Psalter with negligence and tedi-
and serve the B. V. Mary. 331
dity. Notwithstanding, supposing al be equal, certainly much better it is, to do more than less, in these or any other exercises of piety, since good workes are the more meritorious, till with the more difficulty, they are perform'd and the more grateful is the doing of it, to those unto whose reverence it is exhibited.
How the aptest time for the exercise of these devotions, is the particular feasts of our B. Lady.

CHAP. VIII.

The Church ever guided by the holy Ghost, hath in all tymes erected Temples, and consecrated Altars, in reverence of the sacred Queene of Heauen, and hath honoured her with vowes, Hymnes, Canticles, and Laudes, and divers other devotions and services, which the feare of detayning the
the Reader too long, makes me forbear the relation of; but above the rest, some feasts it hath commanded to be kept, wherof she is more particularly honoured.

Those may be divided into two Classes, the greater & the lesser, the greater include her Conception, Nativity, Purification, Annunciation, and her Assumption into heaven: The lesser (& which are not of precept) her Presentation, Visitation, & others; among which we may add the Saturday. To begin then from the lowest, the Saturday is dedicated by the holy Church unto her honour, & namely in the Council of Trent, where it is ordained, that Masses, and Offices, should be sayd of her, on those dayes, when they concurr
concurr not with any other feast. Moreover it hath been an antient custome of devout Christians, to fast that day in her honour; which kind of devotion is most acceptable unto her, as appeares by this following story.

S. Anselme writes of a certaine Theefe, who entring once into a poore widowes houle, with intent to despoile her of what she had, and finding her so slenderly furnished as he imagined it not worth his paines, he to decline the suspition of what he came for, ask't her what viuitals she had, & whither she had broke her fast that day? God, forbid, replied she, that I should violat so my vow I haue made to the B. Virgin, of fasting in her honor every saturday: why so? sayd the theefe: because
cause, (sayd she agayne,) I haue heard a certaine learned preacher say that whosoeuer did it, should never die without Confeッション: The theefe was so strucken at the report of this, as remayning a long time in consideration of his wicked life, at last he started out of that melancholy posture wherein he was, and setting one knee to the ground, and lifting his hands and eyes to heauen: Seeing, it is so, O B. Vigin, (sayd he,) and that each poore thing that is don for you is so richly rewarded. I heere promise and vow in imitation of this devout servant of yours, every saturday to fast in your honour, as long as it shal please Alm. God to give me life and health; which afterwards he inviolatly obserued, but for the rest
rest continuing stil his haunt of robbing, it happened once that being ouer matched by passingers, he had his head cut off, and they thinking they had made him sure, went on their way glorying in what they had done, whe behold, the head cried out, Confession, for the loue of God, Confession; when imagine in what affright they were, vnable a long while for a- mazement to stirr or moue, vntil at last they came vnto the next village, and certified the Curat of what had hapned ; who running thither accompanied with many of his parishioners brought thither by Curiosity, behold, they hauing ioyned the head vnto the body, he with a loue and audible voice that al might heare him, sayd: vnderstand al of you, that
I never did any good in all my life, but only in honour of the B. Virgin fasting Saturdayes, for which reason when my soul was issuing forth of my body, as it was seperated from my head, and the dieuls ready to intercept it, were all assembled, behold the B. Virgin hindered them, nor would she suffer it to issue forth of my body, until by Confession it were expiated of its crimes; and thereupon having confessed himselfe, and desiring all the assistants to pray for him, he exchanged this life for a happier one.

This day then being particularly consecrated to the honour of the B. Virgin we should do well; to add unto our fasts this devotion of lowly inclining and reverencing her; It being of such excellency.
excellency as we have declared before, of which each one may offer up as many as his devotion shall suggest, and time and place permit. How ever for the more certainty, might I prescribe them a taxed number, it should be the number of the Beads, to wit sixty three, in honour of those years, which (according to some Doctours) the B. Virgin liued upon earth, and so it were best to number them upon their Beads, performing them the while with that attention, as if the B. Virgin were really present there; and while they do it, they may at earth one pronounce those first words of the Angelical salutation Ave Maria, which some are of opinion the Angel pronounc'd in actually bowing his knee and lowly reverencing
conserve the B. V. Mary. 339

tencing her, with bowing downe
his head; But of this we shal speake
more amply in the 11. chapter of
this booke, where we shal teache
an apt Method of putting in prac-
tise this exercise; and what I say
of the Saturday, may be obserued
when any of her lesser feastes oc-
curr.

As for the Greater feastes, the
greater the solemnity is, with
the greater devotion we are to
solemnize it; wherfore it were
wel if on such dayes as those, we
increased to a hundred the num-
ber of those reuerences, it being
a number much celebrated in the
holy Scripture for perfect and my-
sterious; but I would not wishe
you to performe them al at once,
for feare of tædiouſnes, but to di-
uide them so, as both morning,
P 2. noone;
noone, afternoone, evening, and night, may haue its parting, which in the former number of sixty three I would likewise haue obserued, that we may come to it with fresh devotion, and renew the memory of our B. Lady more affectionatly and often; And if the feast be celebrated with an Octave, we may celebrat each day of the Octave with this devotion, when if we begin the vigil with a hundred and ten, and so continue the Octave out, we shal make compleatly vp, the number of a thousand, a number perfect, sacred, and mysterious.

This excellent devotion was most frequent with S. Margaret daughter of the king of Hungary Religious of the Order of Saint Dominick, who (as Doctor Que-
in the B. U. Mary. 341
rin of the same Order recounteth
in her life, was so affectionately
devoted to the Queene of hea-
uen, as she no sooner sawe her I-
mage in any place, but she pre-
fently kneeled downe before it,
reciting in her honor the Ange-
lical salutation, and on the Eues
of her most solemn feasts she
always fasted with bread and
water; from which day til the
conclusion of the Octave she sayd
a thousand Ave Marias; at each
one of which she humbly prostra-
ted her selfe on the ground, ma-
kings it her greatest delight next
to honouring Alm. God, to ho-
nour his B. Mother.
Of the Feasts of our Saviour Christ.

CHAP. IX.

Upon occasion of treating of the feasts of our B. Lady, I am put in minde to speake a word of the feasts of our B. Saviour which we are to honour aboue al the rest; and with good reason, for if the feasts of creatures (as we have sayd) may be celebrated in their honour, how much is the Crea-tour on his feast to be honoured? Al those devotions we may exercise on his feast, which we haue
and serve the B. V. Mary. haue taught to be exercised on the feasts of our B. Lady: alwayes provided that we reuerence him in a higher straine of Latria, only proper to God himselfe: Thou shalt honour & serve the Lord thy God, &c.

The principal feasts of our Saviour Christ which are celebrated with their Octaues are these: the Natiuity; the three Kings adoration; the Resurrection; the Ascension; & that of Corpus Christi. or the blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist; amongst which I place in the highest ranke that of the Natiuity, because on that al the Quires in heauen descended unto the earth, to adore their King then an infant lying in the mane- ger or in his mothers lap. And so the devout soule that exerciseth theis devotions on that day, is to
frame a lively imagination of the place imagining themselves in Bethlehem, and adoring among the rest him, whom all both in heav'n and earth adore.

The feast of the three Kings puts vs in minde of nothing but adorations, since on that day they al adored our Blessed Saviour in his Mothers lapp, and in them al the nations of the world; and with how much devotion it was accompanied may be gathered from this pathetical expression of it by the Euangelist Saint Mathew: And entering into the house (sayd he) they found the infant with Mary his Mo- ther, and falling on the ground adored him.

The glorious Resurrection; to the dignity of which, al other feasts
...and serve the B. U. Mary. 345
feasts giue a kinde of pre-hemi-
nence, deserueth Adoration like-
wise; because on it our Sauiour
rose againe al victorious and vi-
tory, charged with the spoyles
of hel, while the Angels adored
him rejoicing at his triumph, and
singing in his prayses their songs
of ioy.

And what should I say of his
most glorious Ascension, on
which our Lord and Sauiour after
his victories, made his magnifi-
cent entrance into Heauen, and
there being seated at the right
hand of his Eternal Father, to
whom he was euery way equal
in power & vertue, al the heauely
Hosts the while humbly incli-
ning before his Throne, did him
moft profound honour and revere-
ence.

P v  Now
Now let vs come to the feast of Corpus Christi, or the B. Sacrament, in which all the others are comprised, and consequently more then all the others we are to reverence it. And is not this continually celebrated each day, and in each place (almost) throughout the world? do we not behold a world of Masses sayd, and people daily communicating throughout all Christendome? do we not see in every kingdom & almost every little village the B. Sacrament kept, and adored with unspeakeable reverence, where our Saviour Christ is as really present as he is in heaven, where Angels and Saints are incessantly adoring him. Wherefore we are never to enter into any Church, or passe by any Altar where the B.
B. Sacrament is kept, but we are humbly on our knees to reverence it. And happy are those, who performe this devotion not perfunctoriously, or for custome, as many do; but with gust of devotion and from their harts, relishing the sweetnes of the exercise they do; perhaps they may deliuer some soule out of Purgatory by it; (with such devotion it may be done) which arriving unto heauen, will there become perpetual intercessors for them to Alm. God; than which a greater benefit cannot be imagined.

But alas, (I cannot speake it without teares) we see Christians the while scarce vouchsafe to vncouer their heade or bend a knee before this B. Sacrament, so vn-reuerent and weak they are in their
their faith of it; Impudent and irreligious as they are, not to know how this mystery surpasses all discourse and all humane capacity, and that faith heer is al the light we haue. Let faith Command to us what we can neither see nor comprehend, saies the holy Church in one of its Hymnes, and in another place: Ad firmandum Cor sincerum, sola fides sufficit. For to Con firme a hart sincere, only faith sufficient were. And yet how many cleare testimonies haue we had of the verity of this by evident miracle: sometimes it hath appea red in the forme of a little child in the Preists hands at the Elevation: some times the very beast themselves ( lette beastes then some men therein) haue acknowledged their Lord and Creatour in
in it: as witness those Miracles which I shal here recount.

Al Paris in the yeare. 1258. a certaine Preist saying Masshe in a Chappel adjoyning to the Palace, as he elevated the sacred Host, a little child of incredible beauty appeared in the place of it; Which Miracle being reported to S. Lewis King of France; and some soliciting him to goe and see it amongst the rest, he made answer worthy of so pious a Prince; Let those goe who doubt of the reality of his being there (says it); for my part I behold him daily with the eyes of faith.

The other Miracle happened at Tholoufe in France, recorded in the Chronicles of the Minims, as also by Surius and divers others
others, and it is this: S. Anthony of Padua being there, had a fierce dispute one day with an obstinate heretic, denying the reality of our Saviour’s body in the B. Sacrament, who being vanquish’d by the reasons of the Saints, yet not willing to Confesse it; sayd unto him; What need all these words and disputations by which although by Sophisms I Confesse I am overcome, yet my reason remaines vn-convinced: If then you will do any good with me, let me see a miracle in confirmation of what you say, and I promise you I will turne to your opinion; the Saint accepted of the condition, and confident that the Author of the verity would not be wanting to the confirmation thereof, he bid the Heretick
& serve the B. U. Mary. 351
(to convince him the more evidently) name himselfe what miracle he desired should be done; and he answered him, he had a mule at home, which he would keepe fasting three whole dayes, and then procure him in the publ.ck market place, where let one of your Preists be (sayd he) with your God in the Sacrament, and if the mule refuse to eate of the oates I shall offer him, to adore him there, I wil promise you I wil be ready to adore him also; This was done, and at the fame of this, there being a mighty confluence of people from all parts to behold what the issue of it would bee; The day assigned being come, & al things ordered as was agreed upon, the mule at sight of the oates even wild with famine running
running towards them, and having taken some of them in his mouth, was in this manner conjured by the Saint with the Blessed Sacrament in his hand: In the name of God (sayd he) whom I although unworthy hold hear betwixt my hands, I command thee to leave that provinder, and come presently hither to adore and reverence him: When behold a most stupendious miracle, the beast not only forbore to eate any more, but euen let fall out of his mouth that provinder it had, and ran presently bowing downe the head, and on his knees adored the holy and blessed Sacrament, to the unspeakeable joy and alacrity of all the Catholicks, the Hereticks confusion, and the conversion of the
the man.

Now Friday being the day dedicated to the memory of our Saviour in particular by reason of his death and passion; I would advise the devout Christian, besides his ordinary devotions in honour of his five precious wounds to make five reverences, which can but be very meritorious and acceptable to the Majesty of Alm. God.
Of the Feasts of Saints.

CHAP. X.

Having spoken of the adoration of our B. Saviour, and his holy Mother, it will not be out of the way of my purpose, to say somewhat also of the adoration of Saints, since the holy Church celebrates them for no other end but to incite vs vnto their reverence. This article of faith is confirmed and ratified by many Councils, and lastly by the Council of Trent in the 25. Section, where Angels and Saints are declared honourable
& serve the B. V. Mary. 355

ble with the reverence of Dulia
proper and appropriated unto
them.

On the dayes then when any
Saints are to be honoured; espe-
cially the more principally sort of
them, we are to do it with the fo-
re said reverences. On simple feasts
and those of lesser obligation, it
may suffice before we go to bed,
to incline only once or twice in
their reverence; and when ’tis the
feast of those to whom we have
any particular devotion, or whom
we have chosen for Patron or Ad-
uocate, we ought with more par-
ticular Adorations to honour them
more or lesse according to the de-
vo tion & affection of every one.

Let all those then who desire
with due reverence to honour
those Saints, to whom they are
devoted
devoted, accustome themselues before they goe to bed, to make profound reverence vnto them, imagining the while them really present, and beholding what they do; for so, although corporally they be not there, yet spiritually they are, and both we know and understand what is done in their honour there, and have a particular care and protection of those that are devoted vnto them, perpetually procuring for them favours and assistances from Alm. God; & this verity is Orthodox, confirmed and approved by many Counells, and holy Doctors.

Now for the Saints Founders of Religious Orders, which by excellence are called Patriarchs, because as Abraham (for example) was stiled by that name for that
and serve the B. V. Mary.

So many people descended from him; so from them so many Religious are propagated in the Church: Of this sort is S. Benet, S. Augustine, S. Francis, and S. Dominick, and of later-yeares S. Ignatius, &c. Al which are to be had in highest veneration by those of their holy Orders, not only on the particular dayes when their feasts are honoured; but every day of the yeare besides; and that Religious man who desires to augment in him the devotion: he hath to the Founder of his Order, should do well, to assigne a particular day of the week for honouring him, & that Wednesday in particular, as the most convenient for this effect; when with some extraordinary devotion of fasting, praying, reverencing him, and
and the like, he is to procure to honour him more particularly & referre vnto that end al which he doth that day, which finally hath reference al vnto the honour of our Saviour Christ, and to imploy some houres of the day in the meditacion of the particular vertues of that Blessed Saint.

It is the general doctrine of the learned, that the Founder of each Religious Order hath a particular care not only of the Order in general, but also of each Religious in particular (more or lesse according as their merits are) and that they assidually defend them, strengthening their forces, and weakening the enemies who oppugne and fight against them. Of which great priviledge and prerogatiue Brother Leo in particular had
and serve the B V. Mary. 359
had an excellent revelation, vi-
sion of holy S. Francis, which I 
will here recount.

S. Francis being happily de-
parted vnto rest, having rendered 
his body to the earth and his soule 
to heaven. Brother Leo one of 
his most affectionat disciples bea-
rning impatiently the absence of 
one whom he loved so dearely 
well, prayed instantly vnto Alm. 
God to make him so happy, that 
once more in this life he might 
enjoy the happy aspect againe of 
his beloued Maister, and iterating 
his petition both earnestly & of-
ten; it pleased Alm. God; that 
one day he being retired into a 
solitary place, he beheld S. Fran-
cis appearing vnto him in a straige 
mysterious shape al shining with 
glorious light; but for the rest 
winged
winged with golden wings and
tallonted both hands and feete
with Eagles clawes; The Brother
transported with ioy al sight of
him, was running to embrace and
kisse his hands and feete, but eff-
pying in what strange equipage
they were, he al amazed deman-
ded of the Saint, the reason why
he appeared in that fort: the Saint
answered againe, ynderstaid these
are no other then markes of the
affection I beare my Order and
the Religious ther eof; and these
do signifie, that amongst all the
other riche prerogatues his di-
vine Majestie hath honoured me
withal since my arrivving into hea-
uen, one is the authority & power
to vindicat my Religious from
their necessities, and defend them
from any aduersity that presses
them,
and serve the B.U. Mary. 371 them, as often as with confidence they invoke my aide; and these wings and talons now I have assumed, to signify my readiness and promptitude in succouring mine, and the force and violence with which I oppugne all those who injure them.

Good reason then have the Children of this great Patriarch to rejoice on earth, for having so powerful a protector of him in heaven, so loving a father, and so careful an Advocate; I would advise them to be affialual in honouring him with those reverences of which we have spoken; and particularly to salute him every day with five times bowing their knees vnto the ground in honour of the five wounds so miraculously impressed upon him while he lived.
rejoycing and congratulating with him for so highe and so sublume a dignity; It being no doubt one of the most acceptable deuotions we can exhibit vnto him now he is in heauen.

Of the Adoration of the Angels.

CHAP. XI.

And if we be obliged to honour the B. Saints with that due reverence appropria
ted their worship, as we have amply proued in the precedent Chapters; with farre more reason are we to honour the holy Angels,
& serve the B.V. Mary. 365
Angels, as the noblest in sub-
stance of all created things, and
representing most liuely their
Creatours unlimited power and
magnificence. And although it
be true, that both men and An-
gels are both Creatures of Alm.
God, and workes of that soue-
raigne Artificer; that they are ei-
ther framed according to his I-
mage, and by the faculties of
their memory, understanding, &
their will, capable of his grace
and of being participant of his
glory and eternal felicity; and
that many circumstances there
are, which equal Man with An-
gels; yea and in consideration of
the Hypostatical vnioun, and the
Mother of our Saviour Crist, it
may pretend some pre-eminence
above them all. Yet if we weigh
their natures, and ballance them equally one against the other no doubt but we shal find the one farr exceeding the other; and as lead can never arrive to the excellency of siluer, nor siluer of gold: no more can a body any way equal in excellency a soule, nor the soule of man naturally speaking, the most inferiour Angel that is in heauen. Unto which our B. Sauiour infallibly alluded when he sayd: Verily I say unto you, amongst the sommes of men hath not been borne a greater then John Baptist; neuertheless the least in the Kingdom of heauen is farr greater then he.

But now before we wade any further into this matter, we are to understand, that the word Adoration is a notion general to good Angels.
Angels and men. In conformity, to which we find it in holy Scripture indifferently vled for either; as where it is sayd that the Israelits adored both their king & God, they bowed downe, sayes he, and adored God, and afterwards their King. So the Children of Israel adored their brother Ioseph then Gouernour of Egypt; & after his brothers had adored him, &c. For which reason, the Doctors both ancient & moderne haue distinguished it into three seueral species of Adoration; Latria, Dulia, and Hyperdulia; the first being exhibited only vnto God himselfe, as a soueraine kinde of adoration, only fitted to the soueraine power he hath; with the second we honour Saints and Angels; And as for the third, it appertaines to the

Q 3 B
B. Virgin alone, and unto her who surpasseth in excellency both Angels and all rest of Saints besides; and of this in the precedent Chapters we have discoursed at large.

In breafse then we establish this conclusion: we are to adore Angels and men deserving it; and this is an Article of faith (according to Suares) defined by Pope Felix the first of that name in the Council at Rome, the 7. th. Synod; And S. Augustine speaking of the B. Apostle S. Peter sayes: An infinit number of the believers adored the B. Fisher Peter. And in another place: Men merit (sayes he) to bee respected and honoured, and to say more, adored. Conformable unto which verity we finde in the holy scriptures many men to
and serve the B. U. Mary. 367
to have adored the Angels; as
Abraham in particular three, and
Lot his brother two. So Joshua the
famous Captaine of the Israelites
adored one, who appeared to him
in the likeness of a man; he fell pro-
strate on the ground, and adored him.

Seeing then we really owe
them this honour, let us endea-
avour to discharge the debt, in ho-
nouring them with such frequent
genusflexions, as our owne devo-
tions shall incline vs to, as the
most excellent Creatures of hea-
uen, ful of grace and glory and
participant of the divine nature.

And amongst all the motives
to incite vs to it, me thinkes one
of the most principal should bee,
the sublime privileges they are
endowed withal in heaven. For if
we consider their liues, we finde

Q 4 them
them to be incorruptible and immortal: of their nature and condition, they have no body, and consequently are above all its necessities, and are superior to all those miseries and afflictions to which we are subject here. If we cast our eyes on the agility and promptitude with which they operate, we shall see nothing in this universe to equal them, and even the heavens themselves come short of them, whose velocity we so much admire. But what should we say of the capacity excellency of their understanding, that comprehend perpetually without discourse, and from the first instant of their Creations had a perfect knowledge of all natural things? What of the constancy and efficacy of their Will, wher-
and serve the B.U. Mary. 369

wherewith they will earnestly, what
foeuer they desire, and are irre-
uocable in al that they intend?
what of the tenacity of their me-
mory, which never forgetts what
it hath stored once? lastly what of
their so great and unmeasurable
power, that one Angel only in a
night flew one hundred eighty
five thousand of the Assyrians?
and which is more, that one one-
ly can turne with an incredible
facility the primum Mobile, in
comparison of which all this great
machin of earth and water is but
like a little point: and that with
so even and regular a motion,
that in so many thousand yeares
was never obserued the least di-
forder or deuiation. And to omit
nothing that may conferre into
their honour, I will heer declare

Q v the
A Method to know
the several orders of them and
numbers which they containe.

In the first Hierarchy then:
which is that which receiveth im-
mediately the splendors and illu-
sinations from Alm. God, there
are three Quiers or Orders, to
witt, the Seraphins, Cherubins,
and Thrones: of which the Ser-
aphins in fervor of charity excel
the rest, the Cherubins in pleni-
tude of knowledge, and the Thro-
nes in seeing farthest into God
the causes and origins of his di-
vine effects. In the second Hie-
archy are likewise three other
Quiers or Orders to wit, Domi-
nations, Vertues, and Powers;
In the third, three others, to wit,
Principalityes, Archangels, and
Angels. For we must understand,
though this name of Angel be
com-
and serve the B.V. Mary. 371
common to al, yet in a more particular manner, to those of the third quire, it properly signifying a messenger, and so is rather a name of Office then nature, which because they are more ordinarily delegated to that function then the rest, hath a more particular reference vnto them.

Notwithstanding we must observe, that S. Paul speaking of the superiour Quires of them sayes: that they are ministers of God, imploied for those who are to participat of his inheritance: which words of his S. Denis the Areopagite his disciple, S. Gregory, S. John Damascene, and S. Thomas interpret thus: not that he meanes the first Quire of them are imploy'd immediatly with men; but the second receive their intel-
intelligence from them; the third of them and of what they are to do. Yet S. Gregory Nazianzen, S. Cyprian S. Chrysostom, S. Augustine, and many other Doctors, are of opinion, that although ordinarily they are not impoly’d about the affairs of men, as the inferior are, yet notwithstanding when any important business concerning them is to be done, Alm. God sometymes impolyeth them: as a Seraphin to purity the Prophet Hays lipps; the Archangel Raphael to accompany yong Tobias on his way; the Archangel Gabriel to Annuntiat to the B. Virgin the divine mystery of our Saviour’s Conception; and lastly, S. Michael in a particular manner to have a care and protection of the Church.

Now
Now if the division of their quires and Orders be so admirable and great, farr more admirable and great is the number of them, which none can truely tel but Alm. God himselfe, although many have giuen a guesse therat. Certaine it is, that if God for the Conueniency thereof hath furnished this inferiour world with such infinit diversitie of creatures corporal, much more aboundantly would he store the superiour world with creatures immaterial and spiritual, invisiblle and incorruptible, such as the Angels are.

And for their Number, I leaue you to conjecture it, from this Consideration how this world in comparison of that, is no more than the Center point is in respet
A Method to love
pect of an infinit Circconference
and consequently how many In-
habitants must goe more to that
then this. And so Job speaking
of them sayes: There is a multitud
of his soldiers: And if the Maiestie of
a King on earth, is declared most
in the number of those that serue
and fight for him, as the Holy
Ghost in expresse termes affir-
mes: The dignity of a king consists
in the multitud of his people, and in
the small number of them the Princes
shame. We must needs conclude
then to be infinit, in respect of
the Maiestie of Alm. God. Tou-
ching their number in particular,
I will heer declare what Albertus
Magnus amongst other Doctors
hath left written of them. She
sayes then, that there are nine
Quires of Angels, and that euer
quiere
quire hath its Legions, that each Legion of them containeth 6666.
and that there are, as many Legions in every Quire as there are
Angels in a Legion. Others saye, there are ten times more in the
second Quire then in the first in the third then in the second, and
so with proportion to the highest Quire. So as there being, for ex-
ample, in the Quire of Angels fower and forty millions, foure
hundred thirty five thousand, five hundred fifty five Angels;
that of Archangels hath ten tymes as many; that of the Principali-
ties as far in number exceeds them, &c. Who is not ready to
issue out of himselfe, with admiracion of such infinit multitud
exalted by Alm. God for his ser-
vice and our benefit? and who
entring
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entering into himselfe againe, can comprehend with what profound reverence they serve his divine Majesty of which Job speaking saies: Those who move the heavens, bow downe and lie prostrate before him, and the pillars of heaven tremble at his sight. So the Royal Prophet speaking of their readiness & promptitude in executing his commands, saies of them: And yee Angels praise our Lord, who are so powerful in performing of his will, and obey so faithfully the voice of his commands. And this is the first reason, that should incite vs to render them service and reverence.

The second yet is more forcible, and that is, our many obligations to them for their many good Offices don vs perpetually, which
which although it be at the appointment of Alm. God, and they in their performance are but his Ministers; yet they being derived vnto vs by them, from the soueraigne fountaine from whence all our good proceeds, we are to receive them from them most gratefully, & with a thankful acknowledgement. I will not inlarge this Chapter to summe them vp, but remit the Reader to the holy Scripture, where they shall find them recorded both very particularly and frequently. Now let vs come to the exercice of this deuotion. To render them then that honour which is due to the aboundance and sublimity of Glory which they have, in being of so neere access to God the fountaine of
it al, and participating by it of his divine nature; we are (to do well) for to retire our selves, and there recollecting vs in the interior of our soule, (excluding all earthly cogitations) to be the whilst the more in heaven, we are to imagine their Orders and array, their beauty, sublimity, riches, splendour, and in fine their glory and admirable perfection, and thus discourse within our selves: this Quire then the rest, is more sublime, this more specious, this fuller of merit and luster, with a thousand other considerations on a subject of such great worth and amplitud. Then we are to salute them troup after troup, with a comportment full of reverence and respect, making the longer stay, where
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where our devotions shall detain vs longest, either amongst the Seraphins, Cherubins, &c. Congratulating with them their great splendours and prerogatives; and afterwards prostrating our selves before the throne of God, we are to praise and render him humble thanks for creating creatures so perfect and excellent for his service and the honour of his Court.

The like manner of proceeding we may use in honouring the Saints, as Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs, Confessours, Virgins, and the like, especially those which we are most devoted unto, addressing vs to them, by the forefayd acts of congratulation, and adoring them, and taking delight to maintain discourse with them in our hearts,
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communicating with them our
affaires and necessities, and in-
stantly commending our felues
to their prayers: seeing (accord-
ing as the Doctours affirme)
they behold in God, and know
al our necessities, our most secret
wishes, and the affections of our
harts, and al the reuerences and
actions we doe in honouring
them.

Besides, I thinke it fitt, and
would counsel it to the zealous
Catholicke, who desires to go
on, in honouring these B. spirits;
to prescribe to himselfe a cer-
taine number in reuerencing
them; as that of Nine in honour
of the nine Quires of them, &c.
But because the holy Church ma-
kes reuerent mention of three of
them in particular, S. Michael, S.
Gabriel,
Gabriel, and S. Raphael; I would consent to begin with them: As first, with S. Michael, who is Prince of all the rest, seeing as Laurentius Justinianus says, although we are to honour all the souls of heaven, yet their General deserves more peculiar reverence, for the greatness & highness of his quality and prerogatives, his invincible force, the singular love which his souerain Emperor beares him, and finally for his fidelity to his service and admirable valour; of which he gave so rare proofes in that great battaile he fought against the Infernal enemy and all his followes. And certainly with good cause doth the holy Church to reverence him, acknowledging him for her protector, and one
382  A Method to love
one that receaues into his patro
nage al departed soules that die
in grace and the favourof God
almighty. Next S. Gabriel, as
he that had that happy emba-
sage committed to his charge of
Annunciating to the B. Virgin
the Incarnation of the soune of
God. Thirdly, S. Raphael the
guide & defender of Pilgrims in
this life, as he did by the yong
Tobias in all his pilgrimage.

If thou be then desirous to per-
forme these deuotions, and hast
retired they selfe to performe
them the better, putting thy self
in their presence (as it were)
who really behold at all times
what we doe; thou art twelve ty-
mes to bow downe and do reue-
rence honouring by the first Ado-
ration S. Michael, General of
and serve the B. V. Mary. 383
the host of heaven; by the second, S. Gabriel, who brought the Embassage of our salvation; by the third, S. Raphael, and by the rest in their several Orders the nine Quires of Angels, &c.
For the better performance thereof, I will here set downe a most easy method (for all sorts of people,) of this devotion.
The practising of honouring and reverencing the Angels: saying as followeth.

Honour and reverence you, O Glorious Saint Michael, chief of all the Angels.

I honour and reverence you, Blessed S. Gabriel, for deliuring that so grateful Embassage to the B. Virgin.

I honour and reverence you, affable S. Raphael, for rendring to the yong Tobias so cleere a testimony of Alm. Gods ineffable goodnes to man.

I ho-
I honour and reverence you most ardent Seraphins, who burn continually in the flames of the love of God.

I honour and reverence you most holy Cherubins, who in clear knowledge and plentitude of the science of God surpass all other Angels.

I honour and reverence you most happy Thrones, being in you the eternal Majesty doth repose, and by you our souls are disposed to peace and tranquility.

I honour and reverence you most noble Dominations, who by the great authority bestowed on you by Alm. God, rule all other spirits of inferior rank.

I honour and reverence you most powerful Vertues, who are deputed by the soueraigne King
of heauen to the regency and
governement of al the soildiers
in heauen.

I honour and reuerence you
most valiant Powers, who by your
might repress the insolency of
the powres of hel, and oppose
your selues to al the machina-
tions & desigines they haue upon
vs continually.

I honour and reuerence you
invincible Archangels, to whom
is given the protection and care
of people, & Kingdomes, and to
reveale vnto them for their good
most sublime mysteries.

I honour and reuerence you
likewise most humble Angels,
who disdaine not to couseffe with
men, and undertake their patronage and protection.

But if any be so defective of me-
mory
& serve the B. V. Mary. 387.

mory, as not to be able to retain by hart what is before sett downe, It wil suffice only to saye: I hon-
our and reuerence you O glorious S. Michael; I honour and reuerence you O glorious S. Ga-
briel; and so of all the rest, only adding the simple names of Seraphin, Cherubin, Thrones, Do-
minations, Vertues, Powers, Principalityes, &c. So likewise they may, more to facilitat the
memory, begin with the lower Quires, and so by degrees ascend to those more highe. And if there be any yet so wanting memory
that they cannot remember this, it may suffice they make nine re-
uerences, with intention to ho-
nour each Quire of Angels by it, without pronouncing any word
at al, but only imagining with
R 2  them-
A Method to love themselves; now I honour the first Quire, now the second, and now the third, &c.

Now it rests, that we assigne one day of the weeke for the exercise of this Deuotion; and what more proper the that the Church hath appointed to honour the B. Angels on? to witt, the Tewday: Let that then be it, and on that day let vs most particularly honour them, those that al Preists saying Masse of the Angels for them, those of the laity devoutly hearing it, &c.

And because Psalmody is exceeding grateful to them, (if it be accompanied with due attention of spirit;) those who are employed in that laudable exercise, are to endeavour to comport themselves with al due reverence and
and serve the B. V. Mary. and devotion; imagining themselves in presence of the Angels while they are performing it: I will sing Psalms in the presence of Angels, I will adore in his holy Temple, and praise his holy name. And to this accords well that which we reade of S. Bernard in the history of the illustrious men of the Cistercians, how he sawe the B. Angels, while Te deum was sung, to goe from one Quire to another, encouraging the Religious to sing it with fervour and devotion: Another tyme he saw them busily writing downe what the Religious pronounced, those in golden better which were pronounced with force of spirit and from the hart, those in siluer which were uttered with attention but not such fervour as the former
former were; those in ink, which proceeded from them with a little admixture of distraction; and those finally in puddle-water, which were pronounced without all sense of devotion. Moved then, by this example, and knowing that the B. Angels are assistent at our devotions, let us perform them with such a spirit, not only worthy of the Oratory that we are in, but also of the Company that is there. Happy and thrice happy are they who shall so honour them, since they shall be rewarded for it, not only by the Angels intercessions in heaven continually for them; but also by their affidual assistance of them here, from all dangers both of bodily and ghostly enemies, till at last receiving us at the honour of
and serve the B. U. Mary. of our deaths, they take us out of this transitory and miserable life, and transferr us to a happy and eternal on.

Of the honour and reverence we owe unto our Angel Guardian.

CHAP. XII.

And who sees not, how reasonable it is, in lieu of so many benefits we receive from them, to honour and reverence the B. Angels for it; and in particular our Angel Guardian, who hath the care
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care & protection of vs committed to his charge. For certaine it is, & auerred by al learned men, that (excepting our B. Saviour) each man hath his peculiur Angel attending fil on him; whence we may perceive, how great is the goodnes and charity of Alm. God towards man; who (we being such contemptible creatures as we are) hath not only been contented to create the Elements for our service, mixt bodies for our use, and finally al corporal creatures els; but also hath encharg'd the holy Angels with our protection and defence, creatures so excellent, so sublime in glory, wisdom, and power, to be our instructours in vertue, and our guides to truth.

But if goodnes be to be admired
mired in bestowing them upo
vs; no lesse admirable is his power
in creating them in such innume-
ral multitudes, that the very
lowest Quire of them is sufficient
to furnish with Angells guardian,
not only all the men that are, but
all that have been or shal be as
long as the world shal last: so
according to the probable conje-
cction of the learned, there being
a matter now of some million
million of soules in all the world,
not only every one of them hath
an Angel guardian, but one so
particularly unto himself, as he
was never Guardian to any one
before, nor ever shalbe to any
after him; God whensoeuer he
creates a soule, appointing a pe-
cular Guardian that never in that
office was imploied before. And

R v who
who can imagine then, how many millions of millions there must be to serve for so many millions of men, that have been & shall be until the general Judgment day? And this opinion is the more probable, not only because of God's omnipotence which is more illustrated thereby, but also of a certain congruency on the Angels part, who if they should not suffice in number to afford each one a Guardian, it would follow that the number of men would exceed that of them, which would argue a deficiency in them, and take from that proportion by which it is supposed, that as the Archangels exceed the Angels ten to one, &c. so there should be ten times more of Angels then of men.
The necessity we stand in of their celestial aide, is great and vrgent; first because our soules are spiritual, and consequently spirits can best see their necessities next because we our selues are weake and ignorant of the force and imagination of the Enemy to ensnare and overcome vs were it not for them; Who watching continually by vs obserue al their wayes, and carefully meete them with preuaent.

But heere some may obieet, how can they be continually by vs when our Sauiour sayes, they continually behold the face of Alm. God, in whose vision conflits their cheifeest beatitud: Angeli eorum semper vident faciem Patris mei qui in calis est. To this I answer

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Iver, with S. Gregory, that it is true the Angels are still in heaven, even when corporally they are employed else-where; else we could not reconcile that other place of Scripture with this, where it is said; that God employs them on his Embassages here on earth; so as while in contemplation of the heavenly essence they are still in heaven, we must grant them really the while to be on earth.

And to incite in vs a greater devotion towards them, I will endeavour to summe vp the many good offices they daily do vs, which although infinit in themselves, may yet be reduced to three heads. The first is; they deliver vs from many evident dangers, by their careful custody of vs,
and serve the B. U. Mary. 397
vs, which the holy Prophet testi-
ifies where he layes: He hath given
his Angels charge of thee, to looke to
thee in all thy wayes, and beare thee in
their handes least thou shouldst dash
thy foote against a stone. And heer
let each one Cal to minde, how
many-fold dangers they have el-
caped Heer, one the falling of
a house vpon his head, which if
he had not sodainly changed his
mind, he had gone iust vnder it
as it did fal; and to whom can he
attribute this change of mind,
but to his Angel Guardian: Ano-
ther, being prepared to goe some
voyage puts it off, he knowes not
why, and afterwards understands
that if hee had gone, he had falne
into the hands of Pirates or of
theeues, and this was the worke
of his good Angel also; with a
hundred
A Method to lose hundred others the like. Which the Patriarke Iacob acknowledged to come from his Angel keeper, when blessing the children of his sonne Ioseph he sayd: The Angel who hath preserved me from all evil, bless these children, &c. And so did Judith returning victorious from Holofernes campe. So it hath seemed good unto our Lord (sai'd she) whose Angel hath guarded me, in going forth, in remaining there, and in returning backe.

And though the B. Angels care extends itselfe as well unto the bad as to the good, yet notwithstanding they more specially impart their aide unto the just; as the Psalmist testifies where he saies: Qui habitat in adiutorio Altissimi, &c. Who dwelleth in the aide of the Highest, remaines in the...
serve the B. U. Mary, 399
protection of the God of heaven: And there is no doubt, but God hath a most particular care of the just and vertuous, and consequently commends them in a most deare manner vnto their Angels Guardians; as may be gathered out of that passage of holy Scripture: He hath given his Angels charge of you, &c. As if he would saye, those who are Gods faithful servants, may goe securely in the midst of dangers, for God hath given the charge vnto his Angels to haue especial care of them. Whether they sleepe, or wake, they need not feare; for being in this particular protection of God and their Angel Guardian, it may be sayd vnto them: They may walke on the Aspick and the Basiliske, and tread the Lion & Dragon under their feet.

What
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What a wonderful priuiledge is this? to be able to contemne the Alpick and Baalitike, which even kils with its light, and the Lion and Dragon the most formidable of al other beasts? and who restraynes the killing lookes of the one, or cohibits the others fiercenes, but only our Angel Guardian?

The second benefit which we receive from them, is the wholesome Counsell and advice, which they are stil infusing into our minds. And of this we have a cleere example in the Angel that accompanied Tobias on his way, and gaued him such wise and prudent instruction, in point of his mariage, how he should comport himselfe with his new spoule for to escape the fate which
which had sent so many of her husbands vnto death: as namely, that he was to begin his mariadge ( quite contrary to the custome now a dayes ) with watchings, prayers, and devotion. In the like manner an Angel Guardian is continually suggesting wholesome counsels vnto vs, now deterring vs from evil, now inciting vs to good, which without their incitemeit we should never doe: now proposing to vs the example of our Saviour Christ before our eyes, now of some other Saint, for to awake our imitation; then inflaming our wils to embrace the occasion of imitating them; lastly, they go sometymes spurring vs on by the consideration of the mercy of Alm. God; & now refrayning vs againe by
by that of his justice and severity; so cuer directing euен our course betwixt heav'n and hel, that neyer the consideration of the one extoll vs too much, nor the other too much depress vs.

And tell me now, have you neuer experienced, when you were about to committ any greeuous crime, a remorse of Conscience, and certaine shrinkings backe, and bidding vs forbeare? and what should this be; but our Angel Guardian, appointed to this office by Alm. God? Besides, how oftentimes may we imagine God offended with our crimes, to haue been in mind to haue pluck't vs from the earth, like vnfruitful trees, and throwne into the fire of Eternal hel, had it not been for their interceding for
and serve the B. U. Mary.

for vs, i like him who sayd vnto
the man in the parable, being
minded to pluck vpp his figge-
tree, which for three yeares he
had obserued never to haue borne
fruit that he should haue, pa-
tience with it another yeare, and
after he had cultivated it, if it
bore not fruit he should doe his
pleasure with it; The Doctours in
explicating this passage saye:
We are these vnfruitfull trees,
Alm. God the Lord of the Or-
chard, and our Angel Guardian
he that intercedes and underta-
kes for vs: Imagine then how
much we contristat him if we be
wanting vnto his promises and to
the hopes which he conceiuies
of vs.

The third and last benefit for
which we are liable to our An-
gel
A Method to love. Angel Guardian is, that he accompanies us perpetually from the hour of our birth to the final period of our lives, and never abandons us even when we are abandoned by every one besides; and such a friend we have of him, as the world hath none; For behold a beautiful Virgin in the flower of her years and pride of her beauty, how many, servants she hath that make court to her, and with what obsequiousness they observe her, til that flower fading, and the winter of her years and decay of age fall on her beauty once, they fall as fast, and she is left only to solitude and neglect, who was before the only one frequented, and to whom all respects were paid. Whereas our good Angel is so constant a friend of
and serve the B.U. Mary. 409 of ours, as no change of fortune
qualifieth, or time makes you goe
lesse with him, but he is ever the
same, and never alters in love
unto you, even when he sees you ha-
ted of God and man; and the rea-
son of this, is, because he knowes
not as yet the final reprobation
of him whom he hath in charge,
otherwise he would not have such
care of wicked men, as most cer-
taine is he hath.

Another benefit for which we
stand infinitely obliged unto the
is, that they carefully present our
Petitions unto Alm. God our al-
mes, watchings, and al our good
works we doe; which by those
words of the Angel to Tobias is
rendred evident: When thou prayedst
with tears, and buriedst the dead,
when thou didst leave thy repast, and
didst
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didst conceale the dead by day in thy house; and didst bury them by night,
I offered thy prayer unto our Lord.
And this by that mystical ladder of Iacob was understood, where the Angels were seen ascending and descending, betwixt heaven and earth, to signify the continual commerce they have with either for our avayle, not by local motion, but by a far more ready way. Sometimes one Angel presents to Alm. God the generous victory of this man ouer his temptations; another sayes, behould, O Lord, the profitable use which this soule makes of that precious blood you shed for it upon Mount Calvary, and of all those other graces which with so liberal a hand you have bestowed on it; A third cries out, Good Lord re-
and serve the B. V. Mary. 407
ceiue this charitable persons al-
mes bestowed vpon you in the
person of the poore, or these de-
vout teares shed only out of an
affectionat loue of you; Another
finally present the oblation of
this good Religious person in
wholy renouncing al worldly
commodityes, or this Priest's pic-
tie and zeale, in offering vp the
holy sacrificie of the Masse, or me-
ditating our Sauiours Passion; and
this the Canon of the Masse con-
firmes saying: Inbe hæc perferri per
manus sancti Angeli tui in sublime
Altare tuum in conspetu divinae ma-
ieslatis tuae: Command this to be
carryed by the hand of your holy
Angel to your sublime Altar in
the sight of your divine Maie-
stie, &c.

And as they are assistent to us
during
A Method to love
during our liues, so at our deaths are they much more powerfully
defending vs from al the assaults of the Infernal Enemy; as testi-
fies B. Aloysius Gonzaga of the Societie of Iesu, in that his de-
uout meditation of our Angel Guardian where hee sayes, that our Angel Custos at the time of our death is most diligent in affi-
iting vs against the Enemy, preserving vs chiefly from those two
sinnes which are most incident to men in that article of time, Infi-
delity and despaire, to the end that making heer a happy end
they may repaire with them to heauen, vnto their euerverlasting
habitation; And in prosecuting his discourse he sayes, that as
soone as the soule once is free from the captiuitie of the body,
its
and serve the B. V. Mary. 405
its Angel presently conducts it to the Tribunal of Alm. God, animating and encouraging it on the way, to put its chiefest confidence in the merits of the sacred blood of our Saviour Christ; and if it chance (the better to be purified from its snares) to be adjudged unto the purging flames, he visits it often there, comforts it, brings it the suffrage and succour of those prayers and merits which are offered for it in the other world, and encourages in midst of its sufferances, with the hope it can not be long in suffering; and in fine when the time is expired, he conducts it out, and al bright and purified leades it vnto heauen, and in the twinkling of an eye, presents it vnto Alm: God to receaue from him S the
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the Crowne of eternal beatitud, prepared from al evertie for those, who heer sigehe after it in this vale of teares. O happy and a thousand tymes happy is that soule, which hauing been faithful to its Creator, and pliant to his hand to be ledd whither focuer his leaft motion carried it, in fol-
lowing his good Angel for guide leaving the world ful of the ver-
tue of his example arrives at last vnto that Kingdome of eternal felicity, where with God and his Saints it shal for euer raigne.

But now touching the practife of this particular devotion to our Angel Guardian; first being as-
fured that we are committed to his Regencie, and that so noble and excellent a creature, as al the eloquence of the world rather di-
minishes
& serve the B. V. Mary. 411
minishes then add to its commendations, vouchsafes to keep us perpetual company, and defends us from all evil, with his careful watchings & his comfortable advice, we are on our parts to endeavour a requital: First, by comporting our felues with all devotion and due respect into his presence and next honouring him with all competent honour. Let vs then consider if we stood perpetually in the sight of some earthly Prince or Monarke; how careful we should be so to compose our outward behaviour, as might render us most grateful in his sight; & with how much more care and diligence ought we in the presence of our Angel Guardian to comport our felues? Heare what S. Bernard sayes in explication of these words:

S 2
words: For he hath given his Angels charge over thee to guard thee in all thy ways, &c. O mortal man, sayes he, what reverence, what devotion and confidence art thou to conceive in thy breast from these comfortable words of the Royal Prophet; reverence in standing in presence of thy Angel, devotion for his loue of thee, & confidence for his care. Be therefore vigilant never to exceed the bonds of thy respect while these holy spirits are alwayes in thy sight by the appointment of Alm. God himselfe attending them thy preseruation in all thy wayes, and wheresoeuer thou art, either in priuat or publique, be alwayes careful never to commit that indecency before him, which before me thou wouldest not doe. Thus S. Bernard in his
his devout and pious manner.

Secondly, we are to honour them with these reuerences we haue formerly treated of, which may be best performed when into pruinat we haue retir'd our selues; especially before we retire our selues to rest with a profound inclination we are to say, *Angele Dei, qui Custos es mei,* &c. beseeching him to keep vs in our sleepe from the assalts of the Enemy, that euer watches to harme and mischiefe vs; so when we awake, we are to commend our selues vnto them that day following, & whatsoever busines we are to undertake, that it may fort a wished conclusion; and we should do well often to commend vnto them in some vocal manner a devout conception of our harte in our occur-

S 3
rant necessityes, beseeching them to assist vs in the mannage of this or that particular affaire.

This devout custome had one Alexander Luzaqua an Italian Gentleman of a most holy and vertuous life; that as often as he saluted any man, he mentally intended that reverence unto his Angel Guardian whom he saluted; and an excellent consideration it was, to thinke a celestial spirit, more worthy the salutation then an earthly worme. Let vs imitate this devotion, and in saluting any say thus in our minds I offer this reverence to the Angel Guardian that attends upon him or her whom I salute. And most happy it wil be for vs if we do so, for by this means we shal indeare our selues in the love and care.
and serve the B. U. Mary. 415
care of those B. spirits, who can
do more for our real advancement and good, then at the world besides.

In what manner we are to proceed in the exercise of these Adorations, worthily to honour the Mother of Almighty God.

CHAP. XIII.

V E being composed of two parts, the superior and inferior, of body and soul by the singular providence and goodness of Almighty God, 54 that
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that we might honour him with both, both hear and in the world to come; a great part of our corporal honour Consists in these fore sayd Adorations, which not only the Saints have practisèd, but even our B. Sauior himself, we ofte read how he bowed of whom his knees vnto his eternal father, and prostrated on the ground; as namely the night preceding his Passion, when according to the Evangelist S. Luke: He kneeled and fel prostrated on his face. And S.S. Matthew & Marke; he prostrated on the ground: by which words we may gather, how our Sauior reuerenced his eternal Father in spiritu & veritate, in spirit and verity, with each part both of body and soule.

Let the devout Christian then desirous
desirous to render honour to the B. Virgin, accompany his interior devotion of the soul, with the exterior of the body; & first, when thou art retired in secret, for so, when thou wouldest pray, enter into thy chamber, saies the holy Scripture; thou art to begin with this Consideration, how excellent she is, whom thou art to reverence, and the excellency of the reverence thou exhibitst to her, which the whole Court of heaven take for highest honour to be employed in. And touching the excellency of her, thou art to consider her large portion of glorie above all the other Saints, and represent her to the eyes of thy mind, Inthroned in a most glorious manner above all the rest, as becomes the soueraine Em-

S v preffe
preste of them all, full of glory and of Maiestie, encompassed round about with innumerable Saints and Angels perpetually making Court to her, and honouring her with humble reverences; amongst whom thou art to imagine they self, and making thy first approaches of adoring her, without uttering any word, but only fixing thy mind upon her excellent beauty and Maiestie, procuring to beget in thy mind the whilst frequent acts of affectionate love and complacency in so much beauty and Maiestie as thou conceivest to be in her, congratulating with her that her high dignity of being Mother of God, and consequently Queene of heaven and earth; Acts which if they be performed with due intension
...and serve the B. V. M. Mary. 419
tention and devotion, it is impossible to imagine how grateful they will be to her, and how profitable for those who are exercised therein.

We have an example of a devout Religious woman recounted by F. Heroide Dominican) who being afflicted with a grievous malady after much paine and sufferance died thereof, whose soule appearing some dayes after to the sub-Prioreffe of the Conuent said amongst other discourses; Know, Mother, that the reward which Alm. God bestowes upon the least good work of ours, is so exceesive great, as if it were putt to my choice, I would returne euon from the joyes of heauen unto the earth againe, and suffer all my former afflictions, only to recite one
one *Ave Maria*, that returning thence againe, I might acquire a new merit by it in heauen, and this, although I were not certaine to say it without tepidity or distraction, so that I were but in grace the while, and free from all mortal sinne. And if this holy Religious woman would have exposed her self to such cruel paine and sufferances, only for the merit of so small an act, how great shal their merit be, who exercise themselves in this devout exercise of reverencing her, being one of the greatest & most excellent services which a Christian can render unto the Mother of God.

Hitherto we have treated of the interior comportment of the mind during this our actual reverencing the
and serve the B. Virgin. Now let us come to the exterior of the body. First, we are to bow the knee, in crossing our hands before our breast with a little inclination of the head; and after having prayed in that manner, we are to rise again, and iterate the same devotion for the second time, and so forwards as our devotion shall instruct us; the which Adorations we likewise may perform only with bowing one knee to the ground, joining of our hands, and fixing of our thoughts on the Majesty of the B. Virgin the while; and if any through infirmity find difficulty in these inclinations, they may help themselves by leaning or the like, or only bow down their body, or make some light inclination with the head.

Alwayes
Always remember that this exterior behaviour is not the chiefest thing we are to regard, but that which is proceeding from the interior, as the words pronounced, or by the heart or mouth the whilst, now saying: I adore you, sacred Mother of God; & repeating it as oft as we make our reverences, or else pronouncing these two words only of *Ave Maria*, with which the Angel Gabriel saluted her, and in that reverent manner (it is supposed) which we hear prescribe to her devout servants to imitate: so doing we shall performe that Angelical office too, as well as he, nay in a manner more excellent, for he saluted her but as a humble Virgin, we as the Mother of God, and daughter of the most holy
To serve the B.V. Mary. 423

holy Trinity; he in the lowly house of Nazareth, and we in the highe Court of heauen, where she sitts maieftically enthroned and crowned Queene of the whole Universe; he finally while she was yet subie<ct to mortality and the incommodities it goes annex't withal, but we now when she is aboue it, participant of eternal life glory and felicity. Great then is their prerogative who salute her so, and great shal their merit bee, if they do it with that due devotion and reverence, as they ought.

How
A Method to love

How in the like manner we are to reverence God, as also the Saints in Heaven.

CHAP. XIV.

Having spoken of the Interior & Exterior reverences, we are to honour the Mother with all: Let us make application of them unto God himselfe with the soueraigne honour of Latrnia due to his most divine Maiestie. We must then procure to reverence him so, as these exterior deuotions may proceed from the redundancy of the
and serve the B. U. Mary. 425
the Interior, to which effect be-
fore we put in practice the fore-
said reverences, we are to fix our
interior eyes on the Majesty of
Alm. God, considering his im-
mense greatness & incomprehen-
sible perfections in which we are
infinitely to take complacence; as
in his being what he is, so exceed-
ing good, & so exceeding great;
and then we are to accompany
this Interior act of ours with
most profound reverences and in-
clinations, bowing even unto the
ground before that Majesty, be-
fore whose glorious Throne the
Angels themselves, adore in pro-
sertling their faces on the ground.

And to acquit our selves the
better of this devotion, we are es-
pecially every morning when we
rise, as at night when we retire
to rest, most profoundly to reverence this our Alm. Lord, and whilst we remain in that humble posture on our knees, we are to cast the eyes of our mind with an affectionate regard on that high & incomprehensible Maiestie, so to begett interiour acts of joy and complacency of the soueraaine power he hath, and soueraigne goodnes accompanying it.

And this let vs do, as often as we bow our knees in reverencing Alm. God, accompanying it stil with some interiour act of the loue of him, an act, which no creature in heauen and earth can truly imagine the excellency of it; being an operation which God continually is exercising in himselfe, to wit of joy and complacency in his infinit goodnes,
& serve the B. U. Mary. 427
nes, whence doth proceed the love of it which must likewise
be infinite. These acts of love then let us endeavour to stir up in our
selves, and assure our selves that the least of them is sufficient to
raise a soul to a most highe degree of perfection.

As witnesseth this story extracted out of the second part of the
Chronicles of the Friars Minors. A certaine Religious matron beheld in vision thirty Religious
of the Convent of Paris al departing this life at once, whereas
five only were condemned to Purgatory, the rest went all immediately to heaven; & one amongst
the rest had his place assigned him amongst the Seraphins: She
being returned from her vision and astonished thereat, had re-
course
course to the Guardian of the Friars where she liued, and declared vnto him al that she had seen; who like a prudent man, aduised her, to beseech Alm. God in continuation of his former favouer to reveale vnto her the name of him who was so highly advanced aboue the rest; therby more particularly to know the truth of the vision: she did so, & it was revealed vnto her that his name was Venance; here-vpon the Guardian dispatcht an Express to Paris to informe him of those who were lately dead in that Couent; whose nüber being giuen him vpp, he found them exactly to agree with that of the Vision; and that this Venance was only a simple lay Brother amongst the rest, whose Office was to have care
care of the Friars' habits, and mend them when they were torn; which it seems he had executed with such charity, as he had merited by it that higher place in heaven.

Now if this good Religious man, in exercising this slight and manual Office could merit so high a degree of glory, those who are exercised in this Angelical devotion which we treat of, if they do it with that attention as they ought, how far more high an one must they needs merit by it? And for our encouragement, if it were good to consider, how far more profitably we may be exercised in it, then the blest Angels whose continual employment it is: for they with all that they can do, can never advance higher
higher by it, an Angel can never become an Archangel, an Archangel can never sit equal with the Thrones, nor a Cherub in fine be embraced with the fire of a Seraphim; whereas we may not only accumulat merits so, to rayse vs from men to Angels, but even surpass them themselves, and being elevated higher than Principalities and Thrones, become even equal with the Seraphins: and by this only exercise may all this be effected.

So likewise may we app'ye this devotion to the honour of Dulia proper to the Saints, by the only turning of the minds intention, and this more particularly on the dayes wheron they are honoured, and their feasts are celebrated; when besides these external reverence
and serve the B. U. Mary. 431

tences we are to procure to honour them from our hearts, by elicit acts from thence of congratulation for their felicities, and thanksgiving unto Alm. God for having predestinated the from all eternity to that high dignitie to which he hath promoted them, & to which they have arrived, by so many vertuous and meritorious wayes, leaving to vs their Imitation, to trace their glorious foot steps after them; That day likewise we are to ascend in mind to the particular actions of their liues, considering the ardent charity of this one, this others profound humility, and the like according as their liues shal giue occasion.

In conclusion, this aduertisement I wil giue, out of that holy Cardinal
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Cardinal Bellarmine touching these exterioir reuerences, to wit, that they are only to be distinguislished (whether done in the honour of Alm. God, of his B. Mother, of Angels, or of Saints) by the internal intention of the mind, and the merit and excellency of those they are directed to. As for example, we adore and reuerence Alm. God for the immensenes of his gratnes and Maitst, for his infinit goodnes, and for being both our beginning and final end. We honour the Saints, as those who participat of his divine grace and celestial glory, and the B. Virgin, as Mother of Alni. God, and surpassing in excellency of title, all Creatures both, in heaven and earth. Conformable to this, we see in holy scripture, how
and serve the B.V. Mary. 433
how Abraham with the same sort of veneration, bowed downe
both to God, Angels, and men, indifferently honouring them
according to their dignities; and
in this manner we are to understand the holy Scripture when it
occurs to speake in any other
passege of these venerations.

How these genuflexions may
devoutly be exercised before
any Image of our B. Lady.

CHAP. XV.

T is an ancient Cu-
tome of the Church,
to honour Images
both of our Sauior,
his B. Mother, and
his holy Saints, nay an article of
faith
faith from Apostolical Tradition received, as we are taught by divers Concels. This only is to be noted, that while we honour them, we direct not our reverences unto them, as they are materially what they are of wood or stone, &c. but as they represent them whose Images they are; it represents according to that ancient axiome; the honour of the Image is referred to those whom it represents. And this the Council of Trent infers where it sayes: In the Images, which we honour and fall downe before, we adore Jesus Christ, and reverence his Saints. And so the 7. Synod sayes; Who adore the Images, adores the soueraigne King it represents: the like we may say by the Image of the Queene of heaven; and it is confirmed by Origen
and serve the B. V. Mary. 435
Origen where he layes: Who beholds any mans image, (layes he) may be said to behold him whom it represents.

This verity then so Catholike, for the better performing this holy exercise we should do wel to procure some Picture both devout and faire, before which we are to do our reverences (although of this there be no necessity;) I say faire, for faire objects do soonest stir up the affections of the mind; as appears by that example of S. Bernardine, who while he was but very yong, was so taken with devotion to a certaine picture of our B. Lady, more comly then the rest, that he was neuer wel but when he was on his knees before it; and heer it was where he layd the foundation of his sanctity,
which afterwards he built so high upon, as it was an admiration to the world.

Which manner of adoring the B. Virgin in her Images, is a forcible remedy against the temptations of our infernal Enemy; as this following example doth declare, taken out of S. John Damascen by F. Suarez of the Society of Jesus. There was a devout Religious man (sayes he) accustomed to worship the Mother of God in a certain Image of hers; who being one day fiercely assaulted by the Enemy, with a greevous temptation, as he was carefully employing all his force for the repelling it, the diuell appearing to him promised him, if he would forbeare to honour that Image, he would not only free him
and serve the B. U. Mary. 437

him from that present temptation, but never molest him with the like again. But the good Religious man in defiance of him, felt a fresh to honour it before his face, and the duell and temptation both vanished away.

And a great help it would be to this devotion, to imagine the B. Virgin the while beholding vs from heaven (as without all doubt she doth) & taking complacence in our honouring her; & to make the Imagination worke the like-lyer, let vs frame a concept, that if an earthly Queene should take such delight in being honoured in picture, as she should place her selfe where she might behold with what alacrity and affection it were done, and bountiously reward those whom she sawe most.

T 3 for.
forward in their honouring it; what concourse would there be by all who desired to ingratiate themselves, and indeare their services to her Maiestie: and if this for an earthly Queene would be done with such forward & greedy desire, how much more prompt and ready ought we to be, to doe it to please & gratify the Queen of heaven? which while we doe, devoutly, we may suppose her gratefully regarding vs, and taking notice of each particular action, pointing vs out to the Angels about her, thus such one doth, and thus such a one, therefore have a particular care of them to defend them from their enemies, and when their soules are free from their mortal prisons, be careful to conduct them higher...
and serve the B. V. Mary. 439

unto me. Which is confirmed from
this ensuing example recounted
by F. Razzi a Dominican, in his
Hortulus, of a certain Shepheards
daughter exceedingly devoted to
the Queen of Heauen, in so much
as being her picture in an old ru-
nous Chappel (one day while she
was tending her fathers sheepe)
and much greeuing to see it so ne-
glected, she sayd: O B. Virgin,
were it in my power, this your
Image should be in greater veneration; but what it wants in exte-
rior ornament, I desire my in-
terior devotion may supply;
which desire of hers was so grate-
ful to the Queene of Heauen, as
minding to reward her for it and
her innocent life with an everla-
ting crowne of glory, she sent
her first a sickness; the fore-run-
ner
ner of her death, and just as that was ready to approach unto her. Two devout Religiousmen, the one in vision, the other in prayer, had eyther of them this revelation. Concerning her; they first saw a Procession of Virgins richly habited, al shining with glorious light; which passing by them, another troupe followed them more riche and glorious then the former, al clothed in white, and lastly a third whose garments being red, in ornament and beauty far surpassed and out-shined al those that went before; in the closing of this last trayne, a Queene of incomparable Maiesty appeared, infinitely exceeding al that can be imagined of venerable and amiable; at the feete of whom those Religious men prostrating themselfes,
To serve the B. U. Mary. 441
Selues, desirous of her to be informed who she was, she thus answered them: I am the Mother of God, and all those troups, you see marching before, are those who haue conserved their virginities all their lifetime; the first troupe, not fully resolved of their course of life, haue yet died Virgins, and received the reward thereof, the second is of those, who haue consecrated their virginities by vow unto their heavenly Spouse; and the last, who to the Crowne of virginity haue added the glorious palme of Martyrdome; all which are now attending me to a hamlet heere to receive the departing soule of a poore sheapardesse; whom for her devotion to me in mine Image, I mean to place amongst these heavenly Quires, T v and
and reward her with the glory of an everlasting Crowne. This Revelation (it happened) these two Religious men comunicated each to the other, when inquiring who this poore Shepeardeffe should be, at last they were directed to a little cotage where lay this poore yong Girle upon a padd of straw, even ready to breathe her last. When seeing these Religious men entering in; Good Fathers (sawd she) in reward of your charity I would to God I could shew you what a glorious Company is here awayting to beare my soule to rest; & hauing sayd this, she rendred vp her soule into their hands, who willingly receaued it. By which example we may see, how acceptable to the B. Virgin are our reverencing her devoutly in her Images.
& serv the B. V. Mary. 443

Now to the end the frequent aspect of her Images may excite vs frequently to honory her; I would counsel everie devout Catholicke to adorne their chambers with some Image of hers, or procure rather to have some portable one, which they are never to depart withal; In imitation of S. Heduing a Dutchesse of Polonia, who to honour the glorious Mother of God more frequently, would never be without her Image in her hand; the two first fingers & thumbe of whose right hand at the opening of her Tomb some five and twenty yeares after her decease were found whole & incorrupt, (al the rest of her body being wasted vnto to bone) holding betwixt them an Image of the B. Virgin so fast, as neither
when she dyed, nor then, could they take it thence.

So when in any place her sacred Image occurs unto our sight, we are devoutly to honour it, in uncouering the head, bowing the knee, &c. According as the ancient Christians were accustomed: the like reverence we are to do when we heare her name pronounced; a devotion so punctually observed by the ancient Christians, & Saints as S. Gerard Bishop of Pannonia commanded it through al his Diocese.

And that which we sayd of reverencing her name, invites me likewise to say a word or two of the reverence we owe to that of our Sauiour Christ. First, for the name of the holy Trinity how venerable it is in the holy Church; witnes-
and serve the B.V.Mary. 445
witnesseth that verse in the conclu-
sion of every Psalm: *Gloria
Patri*, &c. *Glory to the Father*, &c.
in pronouncing of which, all rise
up and do reverence, not only the
Quire on earth, but also in hea-
ven it self; as is manifest by that
wondrous example recounted by
Petrus Damianus. There was a
deueout man (sayes he) who one
night, while they were singing
Matins, rauished in extasy, be-
held the B. Virgin accompanied
with an infinity of Angels & Vir-
gins entring the Church, and lea-
ding the Procession up the high
Altar, he saw the al kneele down,
and whilst each *Gloria Patri*, &c.
was singing, they all fell prostrat
on their face; who demanding
the reason of his extraordinary
reverence, it was answered him,
that
that as often as that verse was sung on earth, they in heaven were particularly touched with the reverence exhibited unto the holy Trinity, and rejoiced that their ordinary exercise in heaven of adoring the Al Blessed Trinity, was in such vogue on earth.

And how severely any irreverence unto this sacred verse is punished by Almighty God, we have a clear example in the second part of the Fr. Minors Chronicles, of a religious man, who for not inclining while this verse was pronounced out of a negligent custom he had gotten, was after death punished in this manner; she was punished placed on a most highe and narrow pillar, environed about with sea, where a hundred tymes a day and as oft by night,
and serv the B.U. Mary. 4 4 7
night, he was condemned, to
most profound inclination until
he had satisfied for his neglect of
them, in the other world. Which
punishment being expired, he
revealed unto one of his fellow
Religious, that at every inclina-
tion he felt such a horrible fear,
as if at the instant he had been fal-
ling into hell.

As for the B. name of Jesus, there
needs no other testimony, nor in-
citement to honour it, then those
words of holy Scripture where
it is said: That at the name of Jesus,
at knees should bow both in heaven,
Earth, and the Infernal deepes below.
So likewise do we reverence those
words of S. John's Gospel: Et Ver-
bum Caro factum est: and the word
was made flesh: and that other par-
ticle of the Nicen Creed: Et in-
carnatus
A Method to love carnatus est, &c. by which we are reduced to memory of the sweet goodnes of Alm. God, and his infinit love; which caused him for our fakes to undergo so many torments, & afflictions in this mortal life; and that man were a very monster of Ingratitud, should he refuse to honour him for it.

Admirable truely, and worthy the notice of all the world is that history which Cesarius an author worthy of credit recounts. There was ( fayes he ) a yong Gentleman of a proud and haughty nature, who being present once at Maffe fung in the Cathedral Church, whilst al at pronouncing these words, Incarnatus est, &c. bowed downe their knees in humble reverence, he neuer offered to stirr or move him from his feate;
and serve the B.V. M ary. 449

In punishment of which irreverence, it pleased Alm. God to permit the devil presently to appear unto him in a most horrible and frightful shape, who giving him a furious blow on the face, laid unto him; Poor impious man, dost thou not know that the Eternal God became man for thee? and art thou not ashamed then to sit while others kneel, & bear thyself so high, for whom God stoop't so lowe? and what art thou more than others or what privilege hast thou above the rest? vngrateful as thou art; if he whom thou neglect’st so much, had done but a hundred part so much, for me, as he hath done for thee, I would not only bow downe unto the earth unto him, but even unto hel
A Method to love hel it selfe.

For the honour which appertaines to Images, hauing by the way spoken of it before, I wil heer omit it, and passe vnto.

The Reverences we are to make in saying our Beads.

Chap. XVI.

Having spoken of divers sorts of Adorations, that which we intend to speak of now, humbly to incline our felues at every Ave Maria in saying of our Beads, of all others is the most excellent, we may gather from the excellency
& forme the B. U. Mary: 4.51
Jency it selfe of Rosary and the
Angelical salutation.

And first for the Beads or Ros-
fary, its excellency Consists in
this, that it is a devotion wholly
composed of our Lords Prayer &
the Archangels wordes, with
and addition of Saint Eliza-
beths, out of the holy Gospels,
&c. vnto which the holy Church
hath no devotion comparable.
Then for the number, it consi-
ing of. 63. Ave Marias, being
the number of yeares the B. Vir-
gin liued on earth, it is both de-
uot and mysterious; wherefore
it were good, that in saying over
the Beads, we inclined at every
Ave Maria in memory of each
yeare of her B. life, and each ver-
tue in which she was exercised
the while; which if it be duey
per-
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performed, what an excellent devotion must it necessarily bee, whilst we commemorat, how she liued an infant, how in womans state, and how al her life in every age thereof, according to the seueral decades of our Beads’ upon every one, whilst we make devout and humble reverence me thinkes we exceed in devotion, eu en the Angel whom we imitat, for he only once saluted her, but we as often as there are Beads in the Rosary, and as oft as we shall say them ouer.

And whilst we are exercised in this devotion, what doe we else but compose a Garland for our selves of the Roses and Lillyes of immortal life, with which after this mortal life we shall be Crowned, or rather she doth it for vs, to whom
whom we offer vp this our devotion; as whilst a certaine devout Virgin laye her Beads, an Angel was observed on a goulden thread for each Ave Maria to thread a Rose, for each Pater nofer a lilly, which the following Miracle giues worthy credit vato, taken out of the third part of the Fr. Minors Chronicles, and it is this: A certaine Guardian had commanded a Noyice of his called Lewis Albanois, to lay euery day his Beads ouer before he eate or drunke. This devotion the good Noyice once by chance (hindered by other busines) did omitt, which the Guardian understanding instantly commanded him to performe, it (just when they were then sitting downe to eate,) seucately reprehending him for his negli-
negligence, the Nouice obeyed; and repayred vnto the Church, where after he had for some good space remained, the Guardian sent one of the Religious to seke him out: who going, found the Nouice on his knees before the highe Altar deuoutly saying his Beads, and saw an Angel close by him threading of roses and lilies on a golden thread.) as we haue sayd before): wherupon he remaining astonished at the thing the Guardian dispatch't another in search of him, who haung found him out, joyn'd with him in astonishment at so rare a spectacle; In fine, one in traine of another, being sent, and none returning thence, the Guardian at last with the rest arose, and al repayring to the Church, were al
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witnesses of the Miracle; In testimony of which, after the Angel
disappeared, (which was not till the Novice had finished his
take) the place remain'd, for a long while as freshly favouring
of roses and lilies, as if they had
grown there.

For divers reasons is this devotion of the Beads to be exceedingly
ly esteem'd. First for that the Angelical salutation consists of words
invented first in the consistory of the sacred Trinity, and afterwards
pronounced by the Archangel Gabriel one of the chiefest in
heaven; for which reason Albertus
magnus layes on these words Miss-
sus est, &c. that the Angel sa-
luted the B. Virgin with these
words Ave gratia plena: hayle ful
of grace; not in his person, but of
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of the B. Trinity, Secondly, because they are words pronounced first by one of the highest Seraphins, according to S. Gregory the great and divers others; and certainly there was a congruency in it he should be one of the highest in the Court of heaven, who should be imploied from Alm. God in a busines of the highest Consequence on earth.

Thirdly, by reason of the object's dignity, which is the B. Virgin, whose soueraine greatnes and perfections are farr transcending al other Saints.

Fourthly, because of the magnificence and respectful manner this heauenly Embassage was delivered her by the Angel Gabriel, who accompanied with multituds of Angels apparaied in
in a white vestment set off with shining beames of light, with countenance full of cheere and humble demeanour saluted the B. Virgin with the glorious titles of ful of grace, & our Lord being with her, Ave gratia plena, Dominus tecum: &c. So as with good reason the holy Scripture sayes, she was troubled at the aspect of so great Maiestie and magnificence, and especially at so vnaccustomed a salutation, attributing so much honour to her, and dignity; for (as Lyra wel obserues) it was that, and not the Angels presence she was so amazed at, for they had often been present with her before; but Ave gratia plena, Dominus tecum, she had never heard before; and so the Scripture sayes, she stood musing at that
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that salutation, comparing the
dignity of it with her owne vn-
worthines (as she imagined) and
that high fauour with her low
estate. The excellency finally of
this Angelical Salutation consists
likewise in this, that it contains al the vertues, graces preroga-
gatues, dignities, and greatnes-
"es, which God hath advanta-
ged his Blessed Mother with al,
it comprehending the highest
and deepest mysteries of our re-
demption, and there shining
brightly in it the infinit loue and
immense goodnes of the soue-
raigne wildome and incompre-
hensible omnipotency, of God.
Which being so, with how much
devotion and reverence ought
the devout servant, of the B. Vir-
gin to pronounce it, and how
high
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high esteem are they to conceive the whilst of so mysterious a prayer? what sweet resentments and guls of joy are they to conceive, while they pronounce these words so full of sweetnes and consolation? But what should I speake of the dignity thereof, of which the Angels can never speake enough.

Those then, who would devoutly indeed performe this exercise, are before they begin their Beads, to imagin the B. Virgin seated in a highe Maiestik throne invironed about with innumerable Angels and Saints, honouring and reverencing her; which Imagination being framed (as soone as we haue been speaking it) they are to begin their beads, making at each a profound reverence.
rence in bowing either the head or knee, and let the meditation of their heart accompany their words of the high titles of honour and dignity attributed unto her therein, and although they reach not fully the sense of the words, yet it will suffice that they keep the eyes of their Imagination fixt upon the B. Virgin imagining they speake in person to her; which will much auayle to stirr vp in them, a lively devotion; and this is the advise which Nauarr giues vs in his Commentaryes, to recite with attention the Pater nostor, and Ave Maria.

Besides we must obserue, that we are to make our reverence at pronouncing of these words Ave Maria, &c. natural reason teaching vs that in pronouncing of the
the name of those we honour, & giving them Al hayle, we are to make the greatest demonstration of Reuerence: And how grateful unto the B. Virgin this devotion is, if devoutly indeed performed, and how it Crownes her as it were with celestial honour; we may learne from this Example recounted by the B. Bernardin of Felthe at Verona, in publik Sermon. There was (says he) a devout Religious man, who one day saying his beads before the high Altar of the Church, another who secretly observed it beheld the Angels at every Ave Maria he sayd crowning the B. Virgin with a crown of sparkling diamonds, which action they iterated at every bead which he let fall, whilst others presented her the
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the whiles with seueral flowers of
lylyes roses and the like. Which
deuout vision ought to be al of
great consolation to those who
are piously exercised in this de-
uotion.

Remarkable Instructiōs how
to say the beads, extracted
out of the second Tome of
Namarrs Commentaries,
and other Authours.

CHAP. XVII.

The advisse of this
great Doctour is, to
deuide the Beads or
Rosary, and say them
at seueral tymes
(euen those we are to say of obli-
gation)
and serve the B V M ary. 

(Devotion) now one or two decades, and as many another tyme, more or lesse as our commodity shal serve; so as there passe no houre of the day that may not have part of our devotions; and he instances in the Canonical Houres, al which although they integrat one Office, yet the Church devides them into severall houres, and assignes severall parts of the day for the reciting them; so says he, although the Rosary be but one prayer, as it were, yet may it be devided into severall parts to be sayd at severall tymes.

And what on excellent commodity is this, for all sorts of persons, even in the midst of the presse of their affaires, to be able to comply with their devotions, to her, who of all other creatures
can best proper them; the merchant or citizen may say his beads, one part as he goes in the streets, the other at his returning home, the lawyer in going to the Hall, the Courtier to the Court, without any danger of distraction, or interruption of their devotions on the way; the Sodalists of our Lady whilst the Sodality is assembling, the devout persons whilst they await the beginning of a Mass, or return homewards after it is done.

And by this devotion of the Rosary, or any other particular prayer, the pious Catholike reaps a world of good: For first he often entertaines discourse with Alm. God and his B. Mother, by their seueral prayers, and that in a manner most succinat & breife; which
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which is the best, if as the saying
is; short prayers do soonest penetrat
the heavens; For which reason S.
Chrysostome in one of this Ho-
milies, counsels the people of
Antioch, rather to the exercise of
Iaculatory prayers, that is short
and often repeated, then to sel-
dome and long prayers, for this
(sayes he) soonest begets tedious-
ness; and he confirmes it from the
doctrine of S. Paul, and of our B.
Saviour himselfe; and this (ac-
cording to Cassian) was much in
vse with the ancient Fathers of
the Desert. The second good which
we reape from it is, that the more
short and breese it is, with the
more fervour and attention it is
said: for we see by daily experience
that when we haue much to recite,
we make more haste with it, then
V v when
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when we have but little; which
hafte takes much away from our
severour and attention.

The third Good is, that it puts
vs more often in memory of the
B. Virgin, and consequently awa-
kes our love of her, more often
too.

And lastly, it actuates vs more
frequently in these Adorations
and Reuerences of our soueraine
Queene & Empresse of Heauen.

Now if by busines any one be
hindered from saying their
whole Rosary in a day, they may
do it in a weeke (in this manner)
saying each day a feueral decad of
it, &c. which is so facile and easy
to performe, as none in reason
can excuse themselves from it.
Hovv alternatim, or by turnes, we may say our Beads.

His learned person also teaches vs, how in manner of Quire, we are likewise to say our beads, one answering the other; which Responsory Custome was very frequent in the Primitie Church, and we read in the Ecclesiastical History of S. Ignatius the Martyr who liued in the Apostles time, that he rauish't one day in extasy, beheld two Quires before the Throne of God, one answering the other in this manner; and so the
the ancient Hymne of Angels sayes : *Alternantes concrepando, melos damus vocibus* : which confirmes the received opinion to bee, that the Angels in that manner sing in magnifying God and his B. Mother, whom men to their no small joy and comfort ought to imitat.

The manner then to say the Beads alternately, or by turns, is this ; Two, or more, are with their beads in hand to say a *Pater noster* first vnto themselves, and then with an audible voyce recite the *Ave Maria gratia plena, Dominus tecum* : the other answers ; *benedicta tu in mulieribus, et benedictus fructus ventris tui Iesus* : when the first resumes agayne, or both may ioyne together and say : *Sancta Maria &c.* and so forth vnto the
the end. And this may be done eyther walking in the feilds, or visiting the stations in the streets; or the maisters or mistrefles of families convocating them together may distribut the in Quires, & do it with much profit & devotion; which if it be done with due attention, it is impossible to imagine how grateful it will ben- to the Queen of heauen. To con- clude this Chapter then, I will on- ly recount a certaine Miracle in confirmation thereof.

What tyme the B. Brother Ber- nardin of Felthe preached at Pa- uy, a certaine noble Matron had this devotion to teach al her chil- dren daily before they went to schoole, to say their beads before a certaine Image of the Queene of heauen which she had in her Cham-
Chamber; now it happened that one of the least of them, one day fell into the River in passing over a bridge; of which accident the Mother being advertised, she presently casting herself upon her knees before the Image of our Lady in lifting up her eyes to heaven, all bedeawed with tears; O mother of God, saith she the, visual hope of the afflicted, if it be your blessed will, save my poor child, if not, your B. will be done; and concluding with the Angelical salutation devoutly said, she ran to the place where many people were assembled to save the child, and was no sooner arrived at the bridge, but behold she saw her child floating upon the water and calling her by her name; at which much rejoicing she cried out, take strong
for the B. V. Mary. 

strong cheere my child, cal vp upon the B. Virgin, and my life for yours; when presently the child was taken vp safe, and brought vnto its mother, when embracing it; the child, saied vnto her its is not to men I owe my deliurace, but to our B. Lady, before whose Image you so often instructed me to pray; and therupon it recounted vnto her, how being falne in, she had receiued it in her armes, and bore it above the waters; At this, al the Assembly moued to devotion towards the B. Virgin, did render praisfe and thankes to Alm. God, and his B. Mother, for being so favourable and succourable to those who devoutly in.. aweke her in their necessities.
Of the most excellent devotion of the Rosary.

CHAP. XVIII.

Those who are diligent in serving of great Princes, are still inventing some new way of honouring them; and so we Christians being servants of Alm. God and of his B. Mother, are to do the like. Now amongst all the Inventions of which devotion hath been most fertile, none hath been comparable to the Invention of the Rosary.

And to say nothing of the name
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name, or whether it were so called to signifie, that as the Rose holds the first rank amongst all flowers so the Rosary amongst all devotions; or that the contexture of it seemes to be as a Garland of roses, for to crowne the head of her whom we honour in it. Finally there is none more universally exercised then this devotion of the Rosary, whose Invention the whole Christian world owes to that great Patriarke S. Dominike; as the propagation thereof vnto the Religious of this Order, who take care to celebrate it everywhere on earth.

Neither is it celebrated on earth alone, but the very Angels in heauen do exercise it too, as is confirmed by this vision, recorded by two grave & learned Authors.
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Lanspergius the Carthusian, and Bloisius the famous Abbot in his spiritual Mirrour, as followeth: The Prior of the Carthusians at Treuers a very holy man, and one much exercised in this devotion of the Rosary, one day rauished in vision, (as he was frequently) beheld the glorious Cittizens of heauen, praising and blessing with ineffable joy our Lord Iesus-Christ and his B. Mother by commemorating the mysteries of the Rosary, and recommendation of all those who devoutly exercised it heere on earth; besides he offered that singing in their praise as often as they repeated the glorious names of Iesus and Maria, they made humble obeissance to it; and lastly it was revealed to him that those who devoutly exer-
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exercised this devotion on earth, should obtain by our Ladyes inter-
tercession a plenary Indulgence of al their faults, with divers pri-
uiledges in this life, and more then can be imagined in the next.
From whence we may gather the excellency of the Rosary, & how acceptable it is to our Lord and
Saviour Christ, to his B. Mother, & al the Court of Heauen. Where-
fore we are to endeavour to per-
forme it with al due reverence &
attention, if we desire to be gra-
teful vnto them, and to have them
propitious vnto vs.

The whole Rosary consists of
fifteen Decads of Ave Maria and fifteen Pater nostler, that is, a
hundred and fiftie Ave Marias
which admitting of a triple di-
vision, your beads of five decades are
are those, most ordinarily in vie.
Now the manner of Meditating
on them, the several mysteries of
our Saviours and B. Ladyes life,
is this. On the first five decades
they vie to meditat the five Joyful mysteries, to witt, upon the
first, the Angelical Salutation;
when the Eternal Word by the
holy Ghosts cooperation, was con-
ceived: Upon the second decade,
the Visitation of S. Elizabeth:
On the third, the Nativitie of our
Saviour Christ: On the fourth,
the Presentation in the Temple
of our Saviour Christ, where holy
Simeon and Anna the Prophe-
etesse forsett to his glad mother
his future greatness and miracles.
And on the fifth, our B. Ladyes
finding her B. Sonne in the Tem-
ple disputing with the Doctors.
&c.
On the five next decades, we are to meditate the five Dolorous mysteries; the first of which is, our B. Sauiours prayer in the Garden, where he fell into that bloody Agony. The second, the cruel Flagellation, or his whipping at the Pillar, till he was almost bloody blood. The third, the crowning him with thorns, their spittings in his face, buffetings, reviling him, and the like. The fourth, the Carrying of the Cross on his B. shoulders to Mount Calvary, when his body so enfeebled as before, must needs sink often under the heavy weight. The fifth, his Crucifixion, or nailing upon the Cross, with unspeakable cruelty, and indignity.

On the last 5. Decades we are to meditate, first our Blessed Lord and
and seven glorious Resurrection, next his Ascension into heaven; Thirdly the happy departure of the B. Virgin hence; Fourthly, her Assumption into Heaven: Fiftly and lastly her glorious Coronation there, where she is declared Queen over the universal Kingdoms of heaven and earth.

Where is to be noted, that for the obtaining of the Indulgences granted to the sodality of the Rosary (then which I do not know any more ample) it is not requisite to meditate all these mysteries in order as we have set them down; but it may suffice to entertain one's mind the while, with meditating any one or two of them in which we shall find the greatest devotion, nay only to lay our beads
& serve the B. V. Mary. 479
beads over vocally (according to Nauarrs opinion) is sufficient, so it be don with due attention and devotion.

Now for the more ignorant, that they may participat likewise of the fruit of devotion, before they begin their beads I would counsel them, to frame an Imagination of the B. Virgin, in one of these three manners, as vulgarly they are accustomed to delineate her: Either with the Angel saluting her, or holding her B. Sonne betwixt her armes, or finally at glorious in heaven, ready to heare and grant our Petition; and this there is none but may make benefit of, for the stirring them vp vnto devotion; And that learned man Nauarr when he was lower-score yeares of age, not only made
made vse of this Imagination in reciting of the Rosary, but also in all his other devoions, and prayers, still Imagined the dignity of the person to whom he directed them. Which manner of stirring vpp attention is both easy, recreative, and devout, maintaining the spirit in attention and recollecting the memory the whilst, & opening a way to great familiarity with Alm. God and his B. Mother; which if (as we ought) we practize and esteeme according vnto its dignity, we shal in short time make wondrous progress in the way of spirit, and shal heape vp in heauen riches enough to make vs happy for al eternity. There only rests, that I add to this, a most stupendious accident, by which we may see the
and serve the B.V. Mary 481
the great importance of this devotion, & the great benefit those of the Confraternity of the Rosary enjoy thereby, & it is extracted out of a little booke intitled, The Rosary of our Lady.

At what time S. Dominik preached in the Kingdome of Aragon, a certaine yong Virgin of good account called Alexandria made instance vnto him as he came downe, from out of the Pulpit (where he had omitted nothing might make for the commendations of the Rosary) to be admitted into the Sodality thereof, which she obtained although for the rest, her life was no wayses accordingly, she being one who spent much more time in adorning her body, then to have her foule wel adorned. Now it hap-
ned, that two Gentlemen at once making suite vnto her, it was sufficient ground of quarrel (as they in their madnes thought) one to challenge the other into the field, where they both remayned dead upon the place. The freinds of either hearing of this sad accident, and imagining her (as it was true) the cause to be revenged on her, they rushed into her house, and notwithstanding she desired at least but so much respite as to confess her selfe, they would not allow it her, but presently cutt of her head, and threw it into a pitt. But our B. Lady, who has euere a special care of her devoted seruants, (though never so defectuoe) revealed the fact vnto S. Dominick, who in order to her merciful commands, went to the pit, & cal-
and serve the B. V. M.) 483
called on Alexandria by her name,
when behold (a wondrous acci-
dent) the Angels visibly in sight
of all the people, brought up the
head from the bottom of the pit,
which joined unto the body, she
besought the Saint to heare her
Confession; which being done,
she declared three things worthy
of particular note, arrived unto
her both before and after she was
dead: The first, that by vertue of
her being of the Confraternity of
the Rosary, she had a perfect act
of Contrition at the instant of her
death, without which infallibly
she had died eternally: The se-
cond, that as soon as she was dead,
the Diuels putting her to great af-
fright, she was maruellously secu-
red & comforted by the glorious
Queene of Heaven: The third:

$X\alpha$ that
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that for Penance and satisfaction
of the death of those two Gentlemen, she was condemned to Purgatory for two hundred years, &
for five hundred more, for her vanity in attire the cause of, that
so lamentable effect. But that she
hoped by the merits of the same
Confraternity, to be soone deli-
uered from that punishment, and
having sayd this, after she had re-
mained a liue two whole dayes,
for the confirmation of the mira-
acle, and to augment the devotion of the Sodality: she left this life
againe, whose body was honorably interred by the sodalists there.
When fifteen dayes after, she ap-
ppeared againe vnto S. Dominick
al in glory clothed in resplendent
beames of light, declaring vnto
him after a world of thankes for
the
and serve the B. V. M. Mary 485
the inestimable benefits she had received of him, two things of especial note concerning this devotion of the Rosary; the one was, that she was delegated to him from the soules in Purgatory with a Petition to be likewise inrold in the Sodality, to receive the benefit of it amongst the rest; The other, that the Angels much rejoiced at the erection of his Sodality, and that God instilled himselfe the Father of it, the B. Virgin the Mother, &c. And having sayd this, shee flew away to heauen.

This example ought to be a great incitement vnto every one to make themselues of this Sodality, and the better to become participant thereof to recite every weeke the whole Rosary, at X; least
least a payre of beads cannot be burthen some unto any one of what imploymient so ever they be; at the end of every decad thereof they are to make a profound inclination, laying with hart and mouth: O most holy Mother of God, I adore you, and wishe the Saints and Angels may reuereence and adore you a thousand and a thousand times togetherness with whom I haue firme confidence through the grace of Almighty God, and your favou rable assistance, to blesse, prai se, and adore you hereafter for euer and euermore.
Twelve most notable Adorations to be made, in the honour & memory of twelve dignities and privileges bestowed on the B. Virgin by Aim. God, answerable to the twelve Starres, which go to the composing of a Crowne for her most sacred head.

CHAP. XIX.

He B. Evangelist S. John in his sublime Revelations of the Apocalypse beheld a woman of incomparable beauty, euironed with Sun X 4 beames
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beames, the Moone vnder her feete, and on her head a crowne of twelue brighter starrs: by which according to the exposition of the holy Doctors and Interpreters, our B. Lady is understood, by the Sun, the glory and Maiestie which she shines withal in heauen; by the Moone which she treads vnder foote, is signified how al that is vnder God, such as are sublunary and earthly things she is Superior to, and for the twelue starrs which adorn her head, are presfigured twelue singular priuileges and prerogatives, which Alm. God hath endowed her with at, above all the Monarks in this world, and highest Angels and Seraphins in heauen; and these her words have a relation unto it, in that so excel- lent
and serve the B. V. Mary. lent Canticle of hers, where after she professes her soule doth magnifie our Lord, she adds the reason why, quia fecit mihi magna qui potens est, because he hath done great things for me (layes shee) which, in that she specifies not what they are, we may imagine to bee above all expression. These then how infinit and unspeakable they are, we shal endevour to speake a word or two of, reducing them vnto the number of twelve, answerable to the twelue Starres, which go to the composing of her Crowne.
The declaration of the first Starr.

The first Starr, or rather prerogaties; which our heavenly Lady is adorned withal, is her Eternal and particular Predestination, who before the Creation either of heav'n or earth, & before all times was divinely elected and predestinated unto sanctification, the plenitude of Grace, and the accumulation of all heavenly graces, to the end that she adorned therewith, might be the better disposed to the Conception of the Eternal Word. The holy Church makes mention of her divine predestination in these words
words of the holy Scripture attributed vnto her: *Dominus posse-dit me ab initio viarum suarum*: the Lord hath had the possession of me from the beginning of his wayes. And this other: *Ab initio & ante sæcula Creata sum, &c.* from the beginning I was created & before all times. So S.Bernard discourseing with the B. Virgin vpon this point, *You have been predestinated (sayas he) in the Spirit of God, before all creatures, to the end you should ingender God himselfe,* This then is the first star which crownes the B. Virgin. Where we may obserue, that, what is future and to come to vs, is present, and as it were past vnto Alm. God. So S. Paul speaking of the predestination of Alm. God, speaks of things to come, as if they
they were already past: Those whom she hath predestinated (layes he) he hath called, and justified, and glorified. This B. Virgin then having ever been present to the eyes of Alm. God as the most endeared object of his love, may well say of her selfe; ab initio & ante secula creata sum: And so at the first instant of the Angels creation amongst the Ideas which they beheld as in a Christal mirror presented unto their eyes one of the most beautiful of all next to the humanity of our Saviour Christ, was this celestial Virgin; when with what delight and delectation may we imagine them to have contemplated her, and in her the mystery of her redemption, and the restauration of humane kind: Where were you (layes
and serve the B. V. Mary. 493
(sayes the Wileman) when the
morning starrs did prayse me,
and all the children of God joyfully
cried out?

Having been then in so parti-
cular a manner of predestination
elected before all creatures; by
consequence in excellency she
was to excel them all, for so un-
doubtedly being honoured with
the greatest dignity which a crea-
ture could be capable of, she like-
wise had as great grace and san-
city as in any creature possibly
could bee, with all the other en-
dowments requisit, for one who
was to be Mother of Alm. God,
who in preparing her unto that
dignity, hath heaped upon her
more perfections, and shewed
greater proofs of his Omnipo-
tence, wisdom, and infinit good-
nes
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ness in creating her, then in creating the whole Universe besides; and so who so ever had an eye so cleare and piercing to penetrat God Alm. work in her, would admire it more then his worke manship in al other things beside, in perfectioning of whom he hath been more exact, then in what so ever else.

The second Starr declared.

The second Starr which adornes and embellishes our dearest Lady is, the prerogative of her sanctification or Conception; in which, her most pure soule when it was united to her body, received no staine of original sinne at al, it being endowed even
Of serve the B. V. Mary. 495

even at that instant with more abundant grace then any celestial or terrestrial creature else, even at their greatest height of sanctity; for which it necessarily followes, that in the wombe of her holy Mother, she should have more perfect use of reason, then any other at the ripest yeares; by which she both knew, loued, and contemplated her God and Creator in a more perfect manner, then all the Congregation of Saints and Angels could together. Naturally speaking it is true indeed, as descendent of Adam she should have been subject to original sinne, as also all other militeries which follow in trayne thereof, had not God with his superabundant Grace prevented her, as one whom he had chosen to be his Mother,
Mother, from al eternity, and so by an especial Priuilege exemp-
ted from the common condition, which al the rest are generally
borne vnto, through our first Fa-
thers disobedience, and so it was
most convenient, if we consider
the excellency and dignity of the
Sonne of God, and his B. Mother;
Now the manner by which was
don was this.

At the same instant as Alm.
God created the soule of the B.
Virgin, and infused it into her
body, the newly receiving forme
in S. Anne her mothers wombe,
it pleased Alm. God to enriche it
with his grace; so as to free it
from the contagion of al sinne,
which else naturally it had been
infected with, in such manner as
the diuel neuer had any interest
in
and sure the B. V. Mary. 497
in it; but to say, in what abundance it was, not only exceeds my capacity and expression, but that of all other creatures besides. For God at that instant did not consider her, as issuing from Adam a sinner and his enemy, but as his Mother chosen out for the reparation of our finnes, and to bruze the head and trample on the pride of the Infernal Enemy. Which being so, if (as they say) the Empyreal Heauen be composed of so noble a substance, and shine with so pure and rarified a light, only because it is the medium, wherein the object of Alm. God is seen; how pure and noble must the B. Virgin have been, who was chosen to be the tabernacle, where he was to inhabit, and in which the eternal Word was
was to unit himselfe to his holy Humanity.

And what a glory is this for humane one of their owne linage, not only thus exempte from all original and actual sinne, but also from the very instant of her nativity, to begin to lead a life ful of grace, celestial, and divine? What a consolation is this for poore sinners, who desire to convert them from their sinnes, to have one to ayde them, who hath so gloriously triumphed over them? What comfort to those who fight against them, to have her assistance in the fight, who formerly hath overcome them? But yet, not only men, but Angels themselves, rejoicyce and glory in it, to see their Queene, and the mother of their king, graced with so ritch...
and serve the B.V. Mary. 499
so rich endowment, with so many
graces adorned, and accumulated
with so many privileges, all derived
from this her immaculate Con-
ception. For which reason S. Vin-
cent Ferrerius saies, that at what
instant the B. Virgin was conceived,
there was universal joy throughout
the court of Heaven.

The declaration of the
third Starr.

The third Starr, or preroga-
tive, that goes to composing
the Crowne of our B. Lady, is her
Virginal purity, with which she
was endowed by the holy Ghost,
at the first instant of her Immacu-
lut Conception; and if, before her
birth she was so pure and holy,
how pure and holy must she ne-
cessarily
cessarily have been afterwards? finally, to pure shee was, as S. An-
sfelme sayes of her, that next to
God there was not to be imagi-
ned the like; & Theodoret sayes,
shee surpaft in purity al the An-
gels in heauen, treating of these
words of the Canticle; There are
sixtie Queens amongst the safed sou-
les of men, (sayes he) shee who had
the honer to bring forth Iesus Chrift,
the Virgin Mary his mother, no doubt
surmounts both the Cherubins and Se-
ymphins in purity; And so holy, so
pure, was this B. Virgin stil, as
shee held that Strict guard ouer
her affections, that neuer any di-
fordinat action came neere them,
neuer any vnlawful desire, or re-
pugnant to her deuoir had neuer
any accessse vnto her, finally neuer
had she committted any venial sinne
and serve the B. V. Mary: 301
as the sacred Council of Trent obliges us to believe, seconded by the opinion of all the most famous Doctors of the Church; and the exceeding affection she bore to this Angelical virtue (as S. Anselme sayes) was it, which made her consecrate to God her virginity from her most tender years, so as she was the first Inuentrix of this rare and excellent vertue, which equals men with Angels, and the first who by perpetual vow hath offered up her virginity to God, and led the way which so many since have followed, so as with good reason she is stiled Virgo virginum, the Virgin of virgins; besides we must believe, a rare purity was requisite in her, who was to be the habitation of the holy Ghost, Mother of
A Method to lune
of the Eternal father sonne, the
light of Heauens, and mirrour of
al purity and perfection. Besides,
such an affectionat loun she had
to this preitious flower of Virgi-
ginity; as in her tender yeares
she left parents freinds and al
worldly delights; to retire her
selfe within the inclosure of the
Temple amongst other Virgins
there, where she remained til
the fourteenth yeare of her age,
the great fortunes which acerued
vnto her by her father and mo-
thers death, (which hapned
about the eleuenth yeare the-
reof) not being able to diuert
her from her holy resolution;
meane while she refused al offers
of mariage, being at marigeable
estate, professing that she had
consecrated her virginity to God,
and that she had rather suffer a thousand deaths, then once in the least thought violat her vow.

Wherupon the Priests of the Temple suspended at the strangenes and nouelty of the thing, be-tooke themselves to prayer, and consulting the divine Oracle how they were to comport themselves in this affayre, it was revealed unto them, they should assemble at the men of the Image of David, and he to whose lott she fell, should have her for his wife; which, being done, (she having a revelation on the other side that such was the will of heaven) it was S. Iosephs lott to marry her, who had the happines by it to be the Foster-father of Alm. God.
The fourth Stārr declared.

The fourth stārr, which in splendor and beauty surpas-
es all the rest, is her being the Mother of Alm. God; so great a prerogatiue (according to S. Augustin) that no mortal greatnes can equal it, and nothing can goe beyond it but God himselfe, so much it hath in it of the Infinit (as S. Thomas sayes) being so nearerly conioyn'd with the infinit person of the Sonne of God; and this dignity of hers it is (sayes he) that implyes in vs an obligation, to adore her with a more excellent sort of Adoration, then any other Saint.

But is it not a wondrous thing, that
and serve the B. U. Mary. 

that a Virgin in the closet of her wombe, should containe him whom heauen and earth and sea cannot containe, who hath appointed to the Sun and Moone, and starrs, their several orders and stations; which maruayles are sufficiently express in these three verses: Quem terra, pontus, ebera, &c. Cui luna, sol, & omnia, &c. Beata mater munere, &c. Is it not a wondrous thing, the same woman should be both mother and a mayde, that one should conceiue and bring forth a child, without any detriment of her Virginity? that she should haue a mothers fæcundity ioyned with the purity of a Virgin, that she should haue a sonne both in hea-uen in his fathers bosome, and on earth in his mothers wombe to-
gether which sonne in heaven should be engendred without mother, and without father on earth? These are the exclamations of the great and learned Origen on these words; *Cum esset desponsata, &c.* O grace (sayes he) to bee admir'd! O incredible sweetnes! O Sacrament ineffable! the same is both mother and Virgin, the same both mother and servaunt too, and engendred one at once both God & Man! who hath heard of such wondrous things as these: so far Origen.

And so great and incomprehensible is this divine mystery, as the B. Virgin her selfe, sli-though she were most extraordi-narily illuminated by the holy Ghost, yet could she not comprehend, when the Angels toold it her
and serve the B. V. Mary. 507
her how it could be, that she
who was a Virgin could conceive
a child without any detriment of
her virginity, as appeareth by
her; Quomodo fiet hoc, quoniam
virum non cognoisco? &c. neither
could the Angel too informe her
how? but he remitted her to the
holy Ghost; Spiritus sanctus super-
ueniet in vos; for the understanding of the mystery. O mystery
of mysteries; & maternal dignity
to be admir'd both of Angels and
men, and never sufficiently to be
understood! but let vs yet pro-
ceed to delineat her prayles more
vnto the life.

When God out of the ribbs of
Adam had framed Eue, he wa-
kling out of his sleep, sayd to him-
selue; this now is bone of my bone,
flesh of my flesh; wherfore a man is

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to leave both father and mother, and
ioyning himself to his wife, to become
one flesh with her. Let vs apply this
mystery now to our Saviour
Chrift and say, that in like man-
ner the humanity of our Saviour
Chrift, by its union with God
united humane nature so straitly
with the divinity, that the B. Vir-
gin might as properly say of our
Saviour Chrift; this is flesh of
my flesh, bone of my bone, &c.
seeing, as S. Auguftin layes, the
flesh of Chrift, was the B. Virgin
flesh.

From whence S. Peter Damian
inferrrs, that God not only was
present to her by his vnlimited
being as he is vniversally with al,
nor by his grace as he is only with
the Iuft, but in a farr more excel-
lent manner of Identity, in that
that
that the sonne of God, is her sonne also, and (as we haue sayd) flesh of her flesh, &c. hauing taken from her the substance whereof his sacred body was compos- ed, a dignity in her so great, as admiration must there take vp, where humane discourse layes downe, and with its tongue of si- lence only celebrat it.

This so strait union or Identity betwixt Alm. God and the B. Virgin, is by the Angelical Do- ctor S. Thomas styled Parentela, or affinity betwixt God and her, which can be sayd of no other creature liuung beydes her selfe, neither of man nor Angel, to be naturally allyed, with God like her, hauing the natural sonne of God for her sonne. In considera- tion of which, S. Anselme sayes,

"The
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The Eternal father had not the heart to suffer, that his only beloved son, should be only his son, but would withhold he should be truly the only and natural son of the B. Virgin also; and this not as of two several persons but the person of the son of God, was likewise the person of the son of the Virgin also; and so the contrary. By which we see, that she was truely the Spouse of the holy Ghost, who wrought in her womb the Conception of the son of God; and by this she becomes every way allied unto all the persons of the B. Trinity. To conclude then, this dignity and prerogative we say (as we have said before) is the greatest in a creature, as can possibly be imagined.
The declaration of the fifth Starr.

The fifth Starr brightly shining and adorning this celestial Princesse, is the Illustration of her Spirit, by the holy Ghosts over-shadowing her, conformable to that which the Angel layed in her Salutation. Spiritus sanctus superneniet in te, & virtus Altissimi obumbrabit tibi: which divine obumbration was then, when the Sonne of God was incarnat in her wombe, the disposition to so miraculous a conception; and over-shadowing her with its divine vertue, the better to enable her to endure those celestial ardours which inflamed her breast the while, and which doubtlesly but
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for it, had wholly consumed her,
the flames of divine love were so
vehement the while.

Neither (according to S. Augustin and S. John Damascen) did the holy Ghost obumbrat her
body only, but her soul likewise; which obumbration is no other
then its light and grace, which
was conferred upon to her most
abundantly, when the Sonne of
God was Incarnate in her womb,
at which time her spirit was en-
lightened, & the darkness of igno-
rance wholly expell from thence
by which divine light was clearly
revealed unto her the profound
mystery of the Incarnation, and
divers other mystical secrets of
heaven; as also the understanding
of the holy Scriptures, and the
spirit of Prophecy was commu-
nicated
and serve the B. V. Mary. 513
nicated to her thereby, in a more ample manner then it euer was before to any other of the Prophets.

And it is the opinion of diuers Saints and learned men, as namely of S. Antonin, S. Bernard, S. Cyprian, Vrslin, and Cassal, &c. that what tyme the Sonn of God was Incarnat in the B. Virgins womb, she was often rauish't up to the Third heauen, where she beheld the cleere vision of Alm. God, more face to face, then eyther Moses or S. Paul. And Rupertus on these words of the Canticles: Oculi tui columbarum: thy eyes, are the eyes of Doues, clearly sayes that shee was rauish't up to the third heauen, where shee beheld in a more excellent manner then S. Paul did, those secrets which it is not law-

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ful
ful for me to know. This if it were granted to any, (as most certaine it is, it hath) no doubt, but it was to the B. Virgin; who as farr excels all Saints and Angels, as the Sunn in splendour and brightnes a little Starr. But what tongue can worthily expresse the sacred motions of her hart, while the Sonn of God was Incarnat in her wob? the light and splendour which illustarted her mind and understandling? the fire and ardour which embrac't her will? the toy finally, which her blessed soule possest, when the Word eternal taking flesh from her, ennobled her with the high title of his Mother.

What beames and rayes. of light, may we suppose, reflected from her countenance, while the Divine spirit illustrated her soule, in
and serve the B. V. Mary. in whose eyes were two continual fires burning with Divine love, all who beheld her, and yet in an admirable manner quenching all carnal love the whilst; And if Moses, issuing forth from conversation with an Angel, had his face shining with such majestic beams, as struck an awful reverence in the children of Israel's harts; what may we imagine of the B. virgin, who was perpetually accompanied with Angels, who took it for honour, ever to be serving her.

In the mean while, her understanding was so clearly illuminated as she had perfect knowledge of the Creator and all his creatures, and how much love she was to bestow on every particular thing, and so she burned in the
Joue of God, as she loued him not only aboue all earthly things, but aboue her very soule, aboue her life both spiritual and temporal, aboue al glory, and finallie aboue al desired felicity and beatitud in heauen. So she enjoyed such a tranquilliety of mind, and had all her apprehensivue and concupiscible powers so wholy at her Command, that the inferior part of her soule never rebeld against the superiour, but was alwayes in subiection & subordination to it. Whence it was, that she breathed forth in all places where she came, so excellent and sweet an odour of sanctity, which increased in her daily more and more, the longer she went with our B. Sauviour in her wombe; which sanctity of hers we cannot better praise
and serve the B. V. MARY. 517
praise nor speake of, then by si-
lent admiration, notwithstanding
eyerie one is to make some refle-
xion on it in his mind, and seeke
to draw forth from thence some
spiritual profit by it.

The sije Starr declared.

The sije starr of the B. Vir-
gins Crowne, & which was
one of the chei/est motiues the
Omnipotent God had to choose
her for his Spoufe; Was her pleni-
tud of divine grace, and of every
vertue else. Of this there needs
no other testimony then the An-
gels words unto her: Hayle ful of
grace, &c. Which plenitud of grace
in her (sayes S. Augustin ) was a
disposition no leffe then necessa-
ry
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try for conceiving the Sonne of God. And although many Saints have ben sayd to be ful of grace, and of the holy Ghost, as Zacharias and Elizabeth, with S. John Baptist their sonne; the Apostles, the seauen Deacons, and many more; Yet none of them al in that plenitud as she, the word admitting a superlativae; one B. Saviour as the fountaine of al grace deriving it vnto others from himselfe according to their several capacities now the B. Virgin being the most, capacious of al, no wonder she had more in her then al the rest. But yet it was a greater plenitud the Angel meant by saluting her so, and the greatest indeed that possibly could bee in any Creature, a plenitud which (as S. Bernard faies) deriving
and serve the B. V. Mary. 519
deriving it selfe to others, giues liberty to the captiue, comfort to the afflicted, to sinners pardon, grace to the Iuift; to the Angels Toy, glory to the holy Trinity, and to the Eternal Word the substance of her proper flesh. Besi
des, as S. Hierom sayes, Grace was giuen vnto others by parcels only, but to her, fully and in its intire perfection, in that the ful
nes of al was included in her; and consequently by this fulnes of grace, she must be ful of al other vertues else, which euer yet any Saint was endowed with al; Nay, the holy Fathers, and in particular S. Cyril and S. Hierom say, she was not only ful of grace, but had al other vertues, divine gifts and endowments congregated in her alone, which in
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in scattered piecees were dispersed amongst all the other Saints. There is nothing (sayes S. Herom) if we consider it well, of pure, splendidious, or of vertuous, which shinnes not in the glorious Virgin most particularly.

Now if so large a portion of vertues fell unto her share, before she was Mother of God, how must they afterwards be augmented, when she was indeed? assuredly, no tongue is able to express, how infinit & incomprehensible they were, (sayes S. Bernard) the greatnesses & perfections of God being infinit and incomprehensible, his Mothers who conceived him in her wombe, must needs participat of the incomprehensibility & infinitnes of them also.

Besides, there was also congre-
and serve the B.U. Mary. 521
gated in her al moral vertues in
greater measure then euer was in
any one; nay had an Angel come
to the earth inuested in humane
flesh, it could not have been more
perfectly accomplished then she;
for proofe of which assertion, I
will summv up in a catalogue those
most excellent parts of hers,
which are recorded to have been
in her by divers holy men; the ad-
mirablenes & perfection of whose
life, was propos'd as a paterne for
virgins to imitat by S. Ambrose
in these words: Neuer did she of-
fend any (sayes he) though she
had neuer so iust a cause; but she
both wished and willed wel into
every one, and did wel them too;
she was reverent towards her su-
periours, and no way molestful to
her equals; she shun'd al boast,
al her actions were conformable to reason; and she loued al ver-
tues with her heart; she neuer contristated her parents, and ne-
uer with freind or acquaintance entred into contest; she disdain'd
not the humble, derided, not the simple, nor thought it shame to
accompany the poore; there was no affectation in her behauiour,
nor dissolution in her gate, and her words were so temper'd, as the
modesty which shined in them and her actions sufficiently decla-
red her interiour sanctity, and in ward vertue & perfection of mind;
no other wise then a sumptuous Portal doth the magnificence of
the Pallace that is within. Neuer but to the Temple did she stirr
abrode, and then neuer but accom-
panied with her father, Mother,
kinsfol-
kinsfolk, or the like: & within doores she was delighted with solitude, and imploied her thought alwayes in somewhat of good and profitable for her soule. This much S. Ambrose, who hath much more besides.

And S. Hierom describing her Heroick vertues & celestial mäner of life in the Temple amongst the sacred Virgins, sayes: She alwaies endeavoured to be the first at Vigils of the night, to be best instructed in the law of God the most humble in her demecane, the most eager in the workes of Charity, the purest in purity and most perfect in al sorts of vertues and perfections, she was assidual in prayer, & (as the Prophet sayes) meditated night and day in the Law of God, she was jealous of the honours
honours of those she conversed with, and that without any disgust or molestation of theirs; Deo gratias was her answer to all salutations; and in fine, her whole life was such as for prayer, humility, modesty, solitudo, silence, virginal bashfulness, and the like noble virtues of her sex; she was a paterne and model for all to imitat.

The seauenth Starr declared.

The seauenth Starr nothing inferior in brightness to the rest, is her neere Communication of trust and secrecy with Alm. God, so as no earthly Prince was euer more confident with Secretary or chamberlaine, then he with her, nor none euer more secret and faithful then she to him. When he
he was an Infant, she with incredible care and diligence attended him, made him ready and unready, gave him milk from her sacred breasts, and with her virginal lips tenderly kissed him; all which she did with such devotion and respect, as (according to Albertus Magnus) she never layed him to rest nor took him up, but she adored him first with profound reverence, and entered so far on the consideration of his infinit love, that made him do what he did for us, as for the most part she fell into ecstasy. Afterwards for the space of 10 years, in all times, in all occasions she was present to his necessities, in all his travails, miseries, and calamities both winter and summer, in cold and heat, rain or snow,
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Now, she ever willingly would accompany him; neyther was he wanting on his part to correspond unto the dearenes of her affection communicating with her the greatest secrets of his divinity; so as she never desired him to unsould any hidden mystery as of the Trinity, the Quires of Angels, the vocation of the Gentils, the union of the faithful with his holy Church, but he did it presently; & if he revealed to his disciples with such candour and promptitud, the secrets of his heavely Father I call you no longer servants but freinds (saws he) for what I have heard from my Father, I have declared to you: much more would he do to his B. Mother, we suppose; And if in frequenting of his company & hearing of his doctrine only, during his last
And serve the B. V. Mary. 527
last three years he could render them so learned & expert in the divine mysteries, how much more learned & expert must she needs be, who both frequented & heard him for more then 30. years? whilst he revealed unto her those mysteries here on earth, which the very Angels of heaven were ignorant of. As Princes then vie to ennoble those with great titles of honours and dignities, whom they entrust with their persons and secrets; so not only did our Saviour here on earth advance the B. Virgin to eminent dignity, but much more now in heaven doth he intitle her to the highest degree of glory and excellence, not ranking her with the quires of Virgins, Confessours, Martyrs, Apostles, Prophets, nor Patriarchs
Patriarchs, but to a high sublimity above them, and above all the heavenly Hierarchies he hath advanced her, seating her at his owne right hand, where she sits instaled Queene of heaven: The Queene is at thy right hand, (fayes the Prophet Dauid) adorned with al varieties; whilst all the Blessed grant her the precedencie willingly, and deferr it vnto her as their soveraine Queen. Finally she rules over the whole Universe; and al the most important affaires of the B. Trinity, in a manner, do passe through her hands, so as al the heavenly Cittizens, the inhabitants of the earth, the soules in Purgatory, nay even hel it selfe acknowledge he power and reverence her for it with al humility.

The
The eighth Starr declared.

The eighth Starr is the high Priviledge she had of Contemplation and enjoyed all her life; so as from the very first instant of her sanctification in her mother's wombe, (according to Suarez) she had the use of reason, & converted it to the knowledge, love, and contemplation of Alm. God, from which nothing could divert, her ever after; and he confirmes it, for if this gift (sayes he) was bestowed on the Angels at their first Creation, with greater reason may we imagine it bestowed upon the Mother of Alm. God, and Queen of them. Whilst she was
was resident in the Temple with those other consecrated Virgins, she was still in highest contemplation, supplicating the divine Majesty with the fervent prayer oft interrupted with amorous sighs for the Incarnation of the Messias that was to come the whilst there are grave Authours who report, that the Angels daily administered her her food, still entertaining her with some heavenly newes, or some divine raps she had during those nine moneths the Incarnat Word lay couched in her sacred wombe. Some times she being wholly transported from her selfe, and absorpt in God, at other times her soule making such sallyes forth, per modum transcean-tis (according to some) as cleerly to behold God face to face; and no won-
Serve the B. V. Mary. 531

wonder, she having so spacious a field for her Contemplation to walk even to the third heaven, and farther if it were possible as her B. sonne then actually present with her, his heavenly fathers delight and Mothers joy; who can say, or so much as imagine her sweet transports through the consideration of the maruaylous excess of that love of his, that had inclosed him in womb whom the Heauens cannot containe, and held him in the restraint of a little body; who in his hand held all that is comprised in this great universe? For my part I am of opinion with SS. Bernard, Bonaventure, and the learned Canisius, that she continued whole nights rauished in contemplation of these divine and wondrous my-
Itteries; for we may believe, she was of a complexion and temper so excellent, as she required but little sleepe, and during that little time she slept, F. Suarez is of opinion, that she was so inflamed with the loue of God, that she often started out of her sleepe, (as loue is a restless thing) and was transported by the force of loue to God the only object of her affections; and S. Bernardin affirms, that she enjoyed so supernatural a contemplation, that she had the use of it in sleepe, in a far more excellent manner, then ever any Saint in waking had. However, whether waking or sleeping, or however employed, we may well affirm, with the learned Canisius, that she never interrupted her meditations.
and serve the B. V. Mary. 533

tations, but that all her life was
but a continual exercise of extas-
fy and contemplation; whilst
every thing ministered matter to
meditation; she read with incre-
dible affection the holy scripture,
which she understood exactly
wel, both by her owne cleere
understanding, as also by the
light communicated unto her
from Alm. God; and to her me-
ditations a great helpe was the
moderatnes and temperature of
her diet, which together with her
solitud and silence disposed her
spirit to meditation and union
with Alm. God, with whom she
was so perpetually united, as she
rather seemed divine them mort-
tal. For which reason perhaps it
was, that God would have no
mention made in holy Scripture,
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neither of her father nor mother;
to witt, that we might consider
her rather a celestial creature co-
ming from heauen, then a terre-
strial, borne on earth. Meane
while, the Angels, that she
might the more wholy attend to
contemplation, did dayly bring
her food; a miracle, which we
are the lesse to admire, since we
reade of S. Paul some what to the
like effect, who was one by in-
nit degrees inferior in sanctity
and perfection vnto her.

And what wonder is it, that
she should seeme more divine
then humane, when she was ar-
riued to such a high degree of in-
nocencye, that she never felt into
the least defecet, nor was ever
transported so much as with the
first motion of any disordinacion;
which
and serve the B.V. Mary. 535
which were no wonder, if (as
a grave Author affirms) she
were borne impeccable, a qua-
lity, fayes he, but, in a manner,
necessary for her, who was de-
stitut to the high honour of being
the Mother of Alm. God. Neither
was it possible for her to be other
wise, considering how Alm. God
tooke vpp al the lodging with in
her for himselfe; while she con-
sidering her owne humility on
the one side, and the high honour
on the other, to which God had
advanced her, was so studious how
to comply with her obligation to
him for so great a benefit, as her
thoughts had never leisure to
thinke of any thing besides; To
say nothing of the absolut morti-
fication of her body and exterior
fenses, and the continual watch
Z 4. the
the Angels kept over her by turnes, that no evil should approch her, as one who was the liuing Tabernacle of the liuing God. As for the diuels, they fled her more then they follow others, as we may wel imagine if S. Antony, S. Bernard, and other Saints were so formidable to them as they durst not approche their sight; And for her, she fled synne more then any wicked person followed it, as knowing that whofoeuer sinned, ipso facto felt into the dis-grace of Alm. God, a thing which of al other she dreaded most so as al her delight was in the exercise of vertue and sanctity of life. To conclude, she despised all honours of the world, as knowing she was shortly to go to the possession of that supreme honour of being Queene
& serve the B.U. Mary. 537

Queene of Heauen hauing no-
thing then to diuert her from it;
and al helps and incitements to
it, how could she choose but be
perpetually in contemplation?

The Declaration of the
Ninth Starr.

The Ninth Starr of our B.
Ladyes crowne, is the Di-
gnity she is exalted to, aboue al
creatures both in Heauen and
earth, which by proper name,
we may cal her Exaltation; since
by it she is exalted aboue the hi-
gest heauens, aboue al the Or-
ders of Saints, and Hierarchies of
Angels, as the holy Church fings
of her prayse; Exaltata es sancta
Z. v. Dei
Dei genitrix super choros Angelorum ad Cælestia regna. Neither can we admire, that next unto himself, the soueraine king of glory should advance her to the greatest he had, for she being his Mother there was a kind of obligation on his part to honour her and do her all good he could, since the honour which Children are bound to giue to their parents, consists not only in words and ceremonious respect, but much more in effect and really doing for them. Wherefore (sayes Hippolytus) he who hath commanded this: Honora patrem & matrem: honour thy father and thy mother, to fulfil the law which he himself prescribes to others, would not (we must suppose) be wanting to his Mother, in what
and serve the B.U.Mary. 539
soever honour grace and glory
he could bestow upon her. Now
all the privileges and advantages
above others which the B. virgin
hath, are founded upon these two
principals; the first, the infinit
power of her B. son; in consi-
deration of which S. Augustin
speaking of her Assumption both
in soul and body. lays, that
God could do it and why he did
it not, those who denied it were
to give him a reason for it, The
like argument we may use in
point of the B. Virgins glory.

The second is her dignity in
being the Mother of God, who is
infinit, wherefore as the title of
Son of God is the foundation on
which we ground the excellency
of the humanity of Christ; so the
title of Mother of God, is that, on
which
which we ground al her prerogatives, her singular graces, and her supreme glory, for natural reason teacheth vs that the mother is more nigh to her sonne, (excepting the Father) then any other kynn. Wherefore the B. Virgin being the Mother of Iesus Christ, who was Incarnat in her sacred flesh, must needs be nigher her sonne, in grace and glory, too, then any else besides.

Soe he would not ranke her amongst the Hierarchies of Angels, for then there had been others higher advanced then she amongst the Powers and Thrones; nor amongst them, because the Cherubins and Seraphins surpast them in dignity; but next unto himselfe, as was most fitt, that his Mother might not be
be inferior unto his servants, nor the Queene unto her subjects, where she sitts enthroned with incredible pompe and Majesty, making a Hierarchie more high and excellent by her selfe, then any of them al.

But what understanding can comprehend, or what tongue express the Glory she is possessed of? For if the eye hath never seen, the eare never heard, nor the hart of man euer conceiued, what God Alm. hath prepared for those who loue him; how can one conceiue, what he hath prepared for her, who not only loued him, but brought him forth, nourished, educated, and serued him with such affection & diligence? Only this we may imagine and say of it, that glory and felicity next to Alm.
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Alm. Gods, is the greatest that is in heaven, and that in comparison of creatures she is holy above all holyes, happy above the happiest, hath more grace then those who have most besides, and hath more glory, then the most glorious.

The holy Doctors speake marvayles of this Exaltation of hers, and amongst the rest, S. Bernard sayes, that the glory she enjoyes in heaven, beares a proportion to the plenitud of grace she had on earth above all creatures els; and adds, that as on earth there was not a more sanctified place then the sacred Temple of the Virgins wombe, which contained God himselfe, so in heaven there is not a more glorious then her Throne, where she sitts exalted.
and serve the B.O. Mary. 543

ted at the right hand of God. In another place he sayes, the understanding of man cannot conceive her glory, nor his tongue declare it, which puts the Inhabitants of heaven it selfe to their admiration in beholding it. Andraes Cretensis sayes, that her glory can not be comprehended, for that it exceeds the glory of all the Saints and Angels putt together. S. John Damascen, that there is a mighty difference betwixt the servants and the Mother of God. S. John Chrysostom, that the B. Virgin is more glorious incomparably then the Seraphins. B. Laurentius lustinianus, that all the glory and felicity which in scattered pieces is distributed amongst the Saints, is found united in the B. Virgin And the Sera-
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Seraphike S. Bonaventure sayes, that the greatnes and goodnes of
God doth more manifestly appeare in the B. Virgin only, then
in all the rest of creatures, and that all their perfections are in a more
excellent manner to be found in her then them; and he concludes,
that as in grace and merits she surpasseth all other Saints, so likewise doth she in felicity and
glory. This and much to this effect is sayd by them of the B. Vir-
gins high exaltation answerable to the height of her other merits
and prerogatived, who being Mo-
ther of God, the supremest di-
gnity which any creature could be
advanced unto, on earth. Corres-
pondent to it is this ninth Starr,
and one of the brightest in her
glorious Crowne of being ad-
uanc't
and serve the B. V. Mary. 

wanc't to so supreme a dignity in heaven.

The tenth Stare declared.

The tenth, and that a most resplendent one, is the Empire and soueraine command she hath over the whole Universe, all creatures both in heaven & earth and in the deapes below, acknowledging her superiority in reverencing her for it, and adoring her; there being a congruency, says S. John Damascen, that the mother should partake of the sonnes dignity; And since he (says S. Athanasius) who was borne of her, is King and soueraine Lord of al, consequently she who bore him, is to beheld for
for soueraine Lady and Queene; so says S. Bernard; who can deny her a legitimat clame to be Lady ouer al, of which her sonne is Lord. Let vs then acknowledge her authority ouer al, to be as great and vnlimited as her will. In consideration of whose greatnes S. Bernard breakes forth into this exclamation: *All power, O soueraigne Lady, in heauen and earth, is given you to do what you will withal.* S. Brigitt in one of her Revelations fayes, that at the instant of her solemne entry into heauen, God advanc't her aboue al the heauens, gaue her the Empire of al the Uniuerse, and constituted her Lady and Mistres of the Angels; and she confirms it in these wordes dictated vnto her by the holy Ghost: *The principality of al people*
and serve the B.U. Mary. 547
people and nations she had (says she) and by her vertue she treads upon the harts of the Proudest and highest there. And truely a wonderful dignity it is, which equals her (in a manner) with the Lord of al; but a more wonderful and stupendious it is, that she should have an authority euene over him; which that it may seeme lesse strange vnto the care of flesh and bloud, let vs remem-ber only, that she is his Mother and our admiration wil cease, for that filial obedience he owed her here on earth, he stands not to quitt of in heaven, but it induces a kind of obligation in him to grant her whatsoeuer she desires; whom there we may Imagine speaking vnto her thus: Demand of me, deare Mother, whatsoever you please, it is not lawful for me to turne away my face. This
This our triumphant Empresse, to express unto vs more unto the life the greatnes of her dignity, declares unto vs in these remarkable words lower things: I alone have incircled the round of heauen, and have penetrated the depth of the Abisse, and have walked on the waves of the sea, and have the principality of al nations: signifying by the first part of the text the dominion she hath in heauen, by the second, that which she hath in hel; by the third, the benefit the soules in Purgatory receive by her; and by the fourth, her dominion over all the world, and what can be more sayd of her dignity? Unlesse what a devout servant of hers in a certaine prayer unto her hath sayd; O most pure (sayes he) and singularly happy Virgin, al ful of grace
grace and glory, the most blessed amongst all women, who surmountest the Angels in purity, and all the Saints in benignity next to your B. Sonne, you only command over this world in chief, extending your favourable hand to all who lye and crave your ayde; and there is no hour nor moment equally amiable and admired, who have conceived the Sonne of the Highest, and brought for the Saviour of the world; O Mother of salvation, & fountaine of mercy, we miserable sinners in rendring of them vp, without last breaths sighe and grone to you, praying, saluting, and acknowledging you Queen of this world, rejoicing at your greatnes, congratulating your glory, your souerainty and the place you hold at the right hand
hand of you B. Sonne, where becoming wholly in a manner divine, and having nothing of mortal in you, you govern the heavens at pleasure, illuminat the Sunn, rule the world, trample under foot the pride of hell, and have dominion over the stars, the elements serve you, the seasons obey you, the Angels adore you, the diuels stand in awe of you, whole nations and Kings bow their knees before you, and do you honour and reverence: O Lady of heaven and earth & hell, your Majesty and Empire is so great a thousand tongues cannot speake it to the full; and even the foules of the aire, the beasts of the land, and the fishes of the sea do al acknowledge it at your beck, the flowers spring vp, plâts grow, and
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and seeds sprout forth, the earth
is fertilized, rivers flow, & winds
do blow, the left will of yours can
incline the destinies, and order
second causes, whilst the first is
wholly at your dispose. Cast a gra-
tious & pittifull eye upon vs poor
sinners heere, & declare the great-
nes of your power, by helping vs
to overcome our felues, and to ob-
taine remission of our sinns, grace
heere, & glory in the life to come
by your prayers and merits, unto
which is nothing impossible; that
after this miserable life, we may
come to enjoy that happy life,
where we shal see our soueraigne
Lord, in whose light consists all
our felicity.
The declaration of the eleventh Starr.

The eleventh Starr, whose splendour not only adorns her head, but the rays of it thence do likewise reflect on us, & crown us with a supreme felicity, is her Mediation betwixt God and man; one of the chief reasons according to the holy Doctors, why God from eternity chose her for Mother, that as a most powerful mediatrix her maternal prayers for sinners might moderate the rigour of the divine justice, and occasion a reconciliation.

Iesus Christ (says S. Bernard) was sufficient; it is true; for our repa-
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reparation, from whom proceeds al that suffiseth thereunto; but it was well for us he joined with him such an one as she; for although, as he is man, he be our most faithful and powerful Advocate, yet such dayeling beames break through his humane nature from his divinity that we cannot looke upon him with that confidence; and though he be infinitly gratious, yet being Judge with al, offenders haue small hart to approch unto him; for which reason the B. Virgin was chosen for Advocate, and meditatrix betwixt God and man, to whom there is none can seare to approch, she having nothing in her of formidable or aultere; but rather being al sweetnes and benignity and abounding in al goodnes and mercy
A Method to love mercy. Thus S. Bernard.

None then, how great sinners soever they be, but may be confident of their salvation, if they have but recourse to this our sweet and pitiful Lady, who being constituted the mediatrix betwixt Sinners and Almighty God, most faithful performs the charge, and like a true Mother of mercy stands always with open arms ready to embrace those sinners who have their refuge unto her, & it is impossible they should perish, if they have but recourse unto her as they ought, if you will believe S. Anselme in his Booke of the miracles of the B. Virgin: Oh happy Mary (sayas he) as the sinner whom you forfake and detest cannot but perish: so who converts him unto you, and you receive,
and our Saviour, cannot but be saued. To which concords these excellent words of S. Bernard so frequent with preachers to giue hope vnto the desperat sinner: O man (saye this great Doctor) thou hast a sure accessse to God, where the sonne, beholds, the mother, and the father beholds the sonne, whilst the Mother shews her sonne the breasts that gave him suck, and her chast wombe; the sonne to his father his wounds & pierced side; where so many loving signes concurre to the entreata-ning thee, thou canst not be repelled.

And this cannot but be a great comfort to poore sinners, that they know they haue with the Eternal Judge such an Aduocat till present, or rather a mother indeed who is his mother also. For so in the person of S. Iohn,
our Saviour on the Cross by these words, Woman behold thy Sonne, commended her as mother unto vs all; at which time she had two sons on Mount Calvary both dead, the one in body, the other in soul, one by the torments of the cross, the other by languishing of spirit; of which one was her natural son, the other only by adoption, the one innocent the other culpable. This in these words S. Anselm would say: O sure refuge that we have, (says he) the Mother of God is our mother also, and either of her children suffered death, in his passion, the one upon the cross, the other by infidelity; Judge you in what bitterness of mind the while was the B. Virgin, &c.

And so there is no Mother would
would more rejoyce, to see her only sonne resuited from death to life againe, then the B. Virgin doth when a sinner repents and hath recourse to her; and for me I am of opinion, that she glories in no title more (excepting that of Mother of God) then of being Mother of sinners, and consequently is most glad when she may shew it most: Maria mater gratiae, mater misericordiae; sayes the holy church; the very sound of whose name, methinks, hath a certaine sweetness in it, that promiseth all grace and clemency: In confidence of which, S. Ignatius the martyr who liued in the Apostles tymes, thus supplicats vnto her: Receive me then, sayes he, in the bosome of your maternal piety, you who are the mother of the soueraine Deity,
A Method to love the true Mother of our Saviour and of sinners by Adoption. She is painted in a long vestment, vnder which many are protected, to signify the maternal care she hath over them; & amongst the rest, the Fathers of S. Dominicks Order, are pictured so, vpon this occasion, (as S. Brigit receieued it by Revelation); S. Dominick neare his happy end, thus with teares in his eyes converted himselfe vnto the B. Virgin and sayd; Receiue, O soueraine Queene, receiue my brothers, whom with such care I haue nourished and educated vnder the spreadig vaile of your great mercy; gouerne them, and giue them such force and courage, as their ancient Enemy may never preuayle against them; To whom she an-
swered
and serve the B. V. M. 

I promise you, my belov'd Dominick for that you have loved me better than your selfe, to take a tender care and protection of yours; & to receive both them and all those who shall embrace your Rule vnder the court of my veyle, which is my mercy, the benefit of which and but demand it, I refuse to none. From whence we may perceive, how great her mercy is to her devoted servants, to sinners who have recourse vnto her; and finally to all, in that she is the Mother of God, the Mother of grace and mercy, the mediatrix betwixt God and man, one, of the greatest dignities she hath in heaven.
The Twelfth Starr declared.

The twelfth and last Starr, which diffuses over the world its brighter rayes, is the Universal honour, exhibited to our B. Lady, both from the Angels in heauen, and men on earth, all calling her Blessed, in fulfilling that prophetie of hers: Behold, all nations shall call me blessed; and she gives the reason; Because the Almighty hath done great things for me. Thus this divine Oracle of verity hath presaged of her selfe, that for her gratious priviledges, and sublime dignities heretofore declared, she should be called Blessed by all the nations of the Universe.
And so it is, for there is no climate so remote, no nation so barbarous no people so uncultivated, where the mother of God is not blessed and adored, and her name celebrated by the title of the Queen of Heaven and earth. The first Christian consecrated Temples and erected Altars to her honour those now make solemn vows, and institut Sodaliaces in her name, so as there is no countrey great or little, fertile or barren, where some Church or Oratory is not dedicated to her name, nor any man so impious and wicked, who hath not some particular devotion to her; yea the Jews themselves, according to Josephus in his Antiquities, though mortal enemies to the name of Christian, are yet effused
in her prayse; and S. Bonauentur sayes, this they affirme of her, that though on the one side she was exceeding beautiful, yet on the other she never stirred upp in her beholders other then chaft desires, her modest and maiestick presence repelling al vnchaufe thoughts, and purifying their minds with whom she was present. Nayther do the Nations more Infidel & Barbarous render her lesse reuereence; since accor-
ding to S. Antonin in the third part of his Summe, the very Tur-
kes and Moores in their Mosquees prayse and honour her, and haue her name in such veneration, as whosoever blaspheme or speake irreuerently of it, they punish them most rigorously. Whence we may see, how uniuersally ho-

noured
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noured she is, which is the di-
gnity represented by the Twelfth
Starr, with which we conclude
the contexture of her glorious
Crowne.

The faithful Christian then;
who would call to memory these
twelue prerogaties of the B.
Virgin, or rather would crowne
her with these 12. bright Starrs,
must every day in memory of
them make twelue reuerences or
inclinations; which while he
doeth) in profound silence) he is
to call to mind the immensity of
her greatnes in them, and ende-
vour to produce as many Acts of
complacence and congratulation
with her for them, according to
the instructions we have giuen
heretofore. There are many spi-
ritual persons, who in memory
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of those 12. hours, vse to recite
twelve times the Ave Maria, sal-
luting her as often in that man-
ner as the B. Archangel S. Ga-
briel did.

I would counsel also, to do
these reverences with more de-
voition, and to stir vp our affec-
tion more to the service of the B.
Virgin, that at every reverence
they would express by word of
mouth, her several dignities and
prerogatives, which for that pur-
pose I have breifly heere expres-
sed.

1. I reverence and adore you, O
blessed Mary, the most illu-
strious Daughter of the soue-
raine and eternal Emperour.

2. I reverence and adore you,
the celestial Spouse of the ho-
ly Ghost,
3. I reverence and adore you, the glorious Mother of the Incarnate Word.
4. I reverence and adore you, Mother of the Omnipotent God.
5. I reverence and adore you, both Daughter, Spouse, and Mother of the holy Trinity.
6. I reverence and adore you, who are highly seated in a Throne of glory above all the Hierarchies of Heauen.
7. I reverence and adore you, Treasurer of all the riches and graces of the Divinity.
8. I reverence and adore you, most glorious Queen of Heauen.
9. I reverence and adore you, most worthy Lady of the Angels.
10. I reuerece and adore you, Empresse of all the Universe.
11. I reuerece and adore you, our most pittifull Mother and faithful Aduocat.
12. I reuerece and adore you, whom all Kings and Monarkes of the earth do reuerece, and whom all heauenly Courtiers adore.

Another sort of Adoration, which for the greater variety of the devout servaunts of the B Virgin, I haue heere annext.

1. I Reuerece and adore you, O B. Virgin Mary, with all the Angels of heauen.
2. I reuerece and adore you, with
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with al the Archangels.
3. I reverence and adore you,
   with al the Vertues.
4. I reverence and adore you,
   with al the Principalities.
5. I reverence and adore you,
   with al the Powers.
6. I reverence and adore you,
   with al the Dominations.
7. I reverence and adore you,
   with al the Thrones.
8. I reverence and adore you,
   with al the Cherubins.
9. I reverence and adore you,
   with al the Seraphins.
10. I reverence and adore you,
    O B. Virgin Mary, with al the
    Nations of the world.
11. I reverence and adore you,
    with al the faithful departed
    soules.
12. I reverence and adore you,
    with
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with all Creatures of Heaven, earth, and depts below.

These 12. reverences, the zealous honourer of the B. Virgin is to make with great resentment and refexion of mind, because of the profound mysteries contained in them; And by so doing, he shall adorn the head of the B. Virgin, a more grateful Crowne of these 12. Starrs, then if it were all composed of 12. of the richest Jewels in the world, nay of 12. of the most radiant Starrs in heauen.

Touching the acts of complacence, which we formerly mentioned, I have here sett downe a forme of them, which each one may exercise according to their devotion.
Twelve Reverences correspondent

to the Blessed Virgins

12. prerogatives.

1. O Blessed Virgin, I hartily congratulat and rejoyce with you, for your being predestinat from al eternity to be Mother of our Saviour Christ, and the liuing Sanctuary of the holy Ghost.

2. O B. Virgin, I hartily congratulat and rejoyce with you, for being conceiued without al spott of original sinne, in such manner as you out-shine in purity & splendor the very Angels themselues.

3. O B. Virgin I hartily congratulat
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tulat and rejoynce with you, for
your being the first in confe-
ocrating your Virginitie to God,
which fo many Virgins have
imitated since.

4. O B. Virgin, I hartily con-
gratulat and rejoynce with you,
for being Mother of the Om-
nipotent, the highest honour
which you haue in heauen, and
on which al your dignity de-
pends.

5. O B. Virgin, &c. for the holy
Ghosts illuminating you, in so
excellent a manner, at the ho-
ly Incarnation of the Sonne of
God.

6. O B. Virgin, I hartily congra-
tulat and rejoynce with you, for
your being so replenished with
diuine grace, & endowed with
al rare vertue and perfection.

7. O
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7. O B. Virgin, &c. for your dignity of being of nearest trust and secrecy with the soueraine Monarke both of heauen and earth.

8. O B. Virgin, &c. for that high priuiledge of yours, to have perpetual fruition of the wil- dome of Alm. God.

9. O B. Virgin, &c. for your being so highly seated in an eminent Throne above al the Quires of Angels.

10. O B. Virgin, I hartily congratulat and rejoynce with you, for the great power and authority you haue ouer al the Universe, and for that both heauen earth & the depts below, obey your Commendements.

11. O B. Virgin, &c. and with our selves, for your being our care-
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reful & affectionat Mother, and
like a faithful Aduocat procuring every way our greater
good and advancement.

12. O B. Virgin: &c. finally for
that al the world honours and
adores your name, celebrates
your prayses, and prayses your
graces, merits, & perfections.

And this devotion of taking
complacence in the B. Virgin's
perfections and dignities, is so-
verainly grateful unto her, as was
manifest to S. Brigit in her Reue-
lations upon this occasion. Her
sonne being a braue and noble
spirit, dying in the holy warrs,
she anxious for his soule, be-
sought the B. Virgin to reuеale
unto her, in what estate it was;
when
when behold, when she was in the greatest fervour of her devotion, the B. Virgin appeared unto her, and comforted her in this sort; my deare daughter, layd she, be no longer solicitious for your sorne, for I haue taken care hif his saluation, in visiting him before his deceafe, and rendring his hart inaccessible to all sorts of temptations, and as no doubt of faith could bow it from the rectitud it was in, nay more, I made the passage of death both sweet and easy for him, to the end the feare and terror of it might not transport him either to impatience or despare. So, I cleared his chamber of those diuels assembled there, to lay snares for his soule, and intrapp it at its departure thence, and at the instant of his soule and bodyes separa-
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paration, I took it, in myne arguys, vnder the protection of which, I caryed it safe away from its infernal enemyes.

And the reason of this tedium of hers she declared in another revelation, when one day the holy Saint making her prayers at the Sepulcher of Christ, was rauisht in extasy into a sumptuous Pallace, where she beheld our Sauour Christ on an Imperial Throne, and his B. Mother seated by his side, with an infinity of Angels incircling them about; Presently after, she beheld her sone present, al trembling & in great dismay before this Throne to receive his Judgement there, his Angel Guardian on his right hand, and the diuel on his left, who with a horrible voice
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voice thus cried out: most omnipotent Judge, I appeale to you for justice, and right of the greatest injury that was ever offered me; your Mother against all equity hath ransht that wicked soule out of my hands, entering his chamber at the hour of his death, and excluding me and my company, hath debarred me of that privilege which you have granted me, to tempt every soule at the article of tyme, when it will best be testified whether they belong to me or you, then which greater inijustice can there be imagined? To this, the B. Virgin answered, though thou art the father of lies, yet in this thou hast but declared the truth, I have done all this indeed, and my reason for it was this: This soule, while it was
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was couerlant in the world, was so devoted to me, as it rejoiced and tooke complacency in my dignity of being Mother of Alm. God, and at my exaltation above all the quires of heauen, the pleasure of which it would not have exchanged for all the contentments and pleasures of the world; Judge then if I had not just reason to do what I did: O but (replied the diuell), all this cannot excuse it from an Injury to me, your debarring me access to tempethim, as also your receiuing his departing soule, and conveying it hither which cheifly belongs to me: when conuerting himself unto the Judge he sayed, of you then I demand justice (who ought to be as equitable, as you are powerful) against this wicked
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cked soule heer, who being arri-
ued vnto the yeares of discretion,
in sted of taking the right hand
way of your commandements,
went on the left, in his transgref-
sing them; wherefore I demand
but justice that be condemned;
and heer he insisted in particu-
rising his mortal and venial sins;
at this, his good Angel inter-
posed himselfe saying; thou wi-
cked feind, al this is but true, I
grant what thou hast sayd; but
knowest thou not, that his holy
Mothers prayers incessantly offe-
red vp vnto Alm. God for him,
haue cancelled these, and obtay-
ned for him a true contrition, and
sacramental absolution for them:
before he dyed; besides her, and
his many other holy workes don
in satisfaction of them, how then
B b canst
canst thou have the impudence to urge them any more? goe home, and keepe company with damned soules, looke not after him, for he is a snaeed one. At this, the devil vanished away.

And by this we may see, the benefit of being devoted to the B. Virgin, of the prayers of others for them, and of dying in a good estate, prepared unto it by true contrition and Confession.
An excellent way of adoring the B. Virgin, in remembering the ioyes whiche she had heere.

CHA P. XX.

The common opinion is, that the B. Virgin had in this world, seuen ioyful times in particular.

The first was, at her Annunciation.

The second, the Visitatiion of S. Elizabeth.

The third, the glorious Natiuity of our Saviour Christ.

The fourth, the Adoration of the three Kings.
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The fifth, at the finding of her B. sonne in the Temple.
The sixth, at our B. Saviours apparition to her after his most glorious Resurrection.
The seventh, her happy decease, and glorious Assumption into Heaven.

Now her devout servants may dayly administer her matter of fresh Joy, by calling these vnto remembrance, and occasion to themselves a great increase of merit and glory. The Angel Gabriel's salutation to her of Ave, &c. was no other then an Invitation to rejoice, according to the interpretation of Origen; so the holy Church sings her Antiphon: Gaude virgo gloriosa, &c. and in other: Regina cali latare &c. and bids her rejoice and be glad; and
and serve the B. V. Mary. in a third; Gaude & lætare Virgo Maria.

Let vs then announce unto her Ioy by commemorating those her seauen Ioyful mysteries, in this following Method, making at each one of them a low reue-rence.

1. Rejoyce, O B. Mary, for that upon the salutation of the hea-
uenly messinger, you concei-
ued in your sacred wombe your sonne, to the incredible conso-
lation of your soule.

2. Rejoyce, O B. Mary, for that you burning with diuine loue, and incited by the holy Ghost, overcome the toyle and labour of passing ouer the high moun-
taines of Iury, and visited your cossen Elizabeth, where you heard her uttering your cele-

Bb 3 stial
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A trial praises, and magnifyed in spirit your Lord and Saviour.

3. Rejoyce, O B. Mary, for that at the end of nine moneths, you brought forth into the world, the so long expected Messiah, bright as the sun of heaven, while all the celestial Angels played in the beams of him, to your unspeakable comfort.

4. Rejoyce, O B. Mary, for that you saw the three Kings adoring your B. Sonne, and conceived a fortunate presage from thence, of the Gentils conversion.

5. Rejoyce, O B. Mary, for that after three days search, you found your B. Sonne, to your excessive gladness, amongst the Doctors in the Temple, where you were astonisht among the rest,
and serve the B.V. Mary 533
rest, to heare him expound the deepest mysteries of the holy Scripture, too clearly, and with such admirable perspicacity.

6. Reioyce, O B. Virgin, for that after three dayes deluge of teares, by the appearing of your glorious Sonne in his Resurrection, they were all dryed vp, and you exceedingly reioyc'd and comforted.

7. Reioyce, O B. Mary, for that all the Apostles being assembled together at the happy hour of your departure out of this mortal life, the third day after you were gloriously Assumpted into heauen, where now you sitt crowned and in-
flated by the holy Trinity Queene of Angels and of all the Univers.
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S. Anselme, amongst our B. Lady's miracles, records this for one; that a certaine devout Religious man, whose custome it was, dayly in his devotion, to remember the 7. Ioyes of our B. Lady, being now neere his end, and exceeding fearful of that last Agonie, our B. Lady appeared vnto him, and comforting him sayd, my sonne why should you seare? you who haue so often rejoiced me with the remembrance of the greatest Ioyes I had in my mortal life? take courage, and assure your selfe no euel shal happen vnto you, but you shal soone be partaker of those Ioyes which you haue so often announced to me: with whose celestial presence he was so comforted, that forgetting his sickness while he endeavoured
and serve the B. U. Mary. 585
to rise, and through joy to call himself at her feet; his soule prevented his body, and went out before to the fruition of those ioyes which she had promised him.

The forelayd joyful mysteries may be distributed to each Houre of the Office of the B. Virgin, The first, at Mattins; the second, at Prime; the third, at the Third Houre; The fourth, at the Sixth; The fifth, at the Ninth; the sixt, at Vespers; and the seauenth, at Complin; On each one of which we may devoutly meditat the while, and so in the like manner we may meditat then on our Beads; a devotion most acceptable to our B. Lady, as from this Example we may perceive, recounted by Pelbert in the Stel-
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lary of the B. Virgin.

There was, sayes he, a yong
man, who making himselfe Re-
ligious of S. Francis, his Order,
was accustomed before he entred
into Religion, to crowne a cer-
taine Image of our Lady with a
wreath of flowers which he dayly
gathered for that intent, but
being once become Religious,
wanting the commodity of flo-
wers, he intermitted this devo-
tion, though so unwillingly as
the leaving that, made him re-
folue at last, to leave being Reli-
gious also, and being upon the
point of departing the Conuent,
behold our B. Lady appeared vnto
him saying; leave off that your so
pernicious resolue vpon so truial
an occasion, and if you desire to
undertake a devotion grateful
unto.
& serve the B.U. Mary. 587

unto me, instead of making me a material crowne of flowers, offer me up a spiritual one of salutations, and I shall be farre more delighted with it, and the forme of it shalbe this: you shall first say a Pater noster, in memory of the Ioy I conceived when the Angel saluted me and the Eternal word was Incarnat in my wombe, and say. 10. Ave Marias in consequence thereof. Secondly, you shall do as much; in memory of the Ioy I had in visiting my cousen Elizabeth: and so forth, unto the seauenth Ioy I had; which you shall conclude with the last three Ave Marias of your Beades, so the whole number will amount to 7. Paters and 63. Ave Marias; which deuotion if you shall dayly perfore in mine honou
nour, know you shal much more please me, then in that other devotion which you had; and having sayd this, she vanished away, leaving him exceedingly comforted and strengthened in his vocation. Now it hapned that whilst one day he was performing this devotion, a certaine Religious beholding him by chance, sawe an Angel standing by him, threading on a golden thread, as many roses as the Novice sayd Ave Maria, and for each Paternoster a golden lilly: at which when the Novice had done he joined them together, and crowned his head with them; the Religious man astonished at this vision, charged him by vertue of holy obedience, to declare vnto him what devotion he vsed; which he
& sever the B. U. Mary. 589.
ke doing with great sincerity, the Religious man encouraged him to persist therin, assuring him it was a devotion the B. Virgin was delighted with.

And S. Bernard exercising this devotion our B. Lady appeared vnto him once, saying vnto him; my sonne, this devotion of thine, is exceeding grateful to me, and that thou mayst perceive so much, I have obtained of my sonne for thee in reward thereof, the grace of preaching, and of working miracles; besides, I promise you, one day to make you participant of those Ioyes which you daily call to remembrance; and de facto soone after, the holy Saint began to be famous indeed for miracles, and to abound in innumerable graces, and converted a world of soules
590 A Method to love soules by his learned preachings and force of his miracles.

Of the Interiour Reverences we are to exhibit to the Glorious Queene of Heauen, and of the place, time, & occasion of exercising them.

CHAP. XXI.

Intherto we have spoken of the Adorations we are to make, the exterior accompanying the interior, with relation to mans composition consisting both of body and soule; Now because those exterior are not alwayes to be performed, neither are all places
and serve the B.U. Mary. 591 places and times accomodate for them, we wilonly speake of such interiour Adorations as we may be exercising, they being only acts of adoration produced by the Wils; which according to S. Thomas, are those which the Blessed in heauen only exhibit unto Alm. God. These then, there is none but may performe, when in the performance of the others, they are hindred either for want of commodity of place or time, and these indeed are the most excellent of all, and most acceptable to Alm. God, as those without which the others were nothing worth.

And it being our principal scope, to treat of reverencing the Mother of God, we wil only exemplifye in that, and instruct her votaries in the place, and Time,
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when and where they are principally to be exercised. In all times
and places they may commodiously be produced, but chiefly when
for the company of others: we cannot exercise any other devotion,
as also when we ride, walk, eat, or take repose; at all which
times it is but lifting up our mind to heaven, and to say with our
heart: I humbly adore you, O B. mother of my Saviour Christ; I
adore you O Queene of Angels, or the like; in only doing of
which, we sanctify all we do, making every one of those indifferent actions, equivalent to prayer: happy the ground they go
on, happy the bread they eat, & the rest they take, who are so exercised the while; So when the Clock strikes, it were a good devotion
and serve the B. V. Mary. 593

Votion in this sort to elevat our mind, as also before each Hour of our B. Ladyes Office, produc-
ing an act of interiour compla-
cence, sayeing with our heart: I exceedingly rejoice O B. Virgin, for your high honor of being Mo-
ther of God, of being Queene of beauen, &c. which cannot but be most acceptable and grateful unto her. In the meane time this de-
notion were best perfomed on
their knees, it being a posture most repugnant to slouth and te-
pidity.

Besides, for those who are trou-
bled with insirmity, age, or any other weaknes, this devotion were best, as that which without any difficulty they may perfomme, since there is none but haue their spirit free, or at least so free, as for
A Method to lose
for a glance or so they may reflect
it upon heauen, how euer other-
wise they are incumbered. And
a great consolation this ought to
be to every one, that without any
other paynes, then the only lift-
ing up the mind to God, so it be
don with spirit and vivacity, one
may merit so much, as to arrive
to most high perfection. When
one then, is sitting by the fire, or
reposing on the bed, let them but
exercise their mindes in these In-
terior acts of deuotion, and even
when they seeme to men most
idle, they shal appeare unto God
most vertuously employed. O
most happy employment, that a
man in a manner doing nothing,
may do as the very Angels in
heauen, And while some, to finde
out solitud and deuotion, retire
them
them to the Desarts, and liue Eremites liues, he that exerciseth but these adorations, hath al that within himself, which they seeke abrode, and may sooone arriue to the height of perfection by this easy way, as by the most fatigable they can go. Besides, these acts of Adoration haue yet another benefit, that they expose vs not to vainglory, which others perhaps may do, as being only betwixt God and our seules performed in the interiour of our soule, which by so much the more innobles them aboue the other, as the soule exceeds the body in nobility; and thersore of the bodyes operations we are to haue no regard at al, further then they go accompanied with the attention of the mind, conformable to that saying
of the Apostle: Corporalis exercitatio ad modicum utilis est.

But to returne to our purpose, the servant of the Queene of heaven is to the uttermost bent of spirit and industry to imploy himselfe in these interiour Adorations, as farre forth as the circumstances of time, place, & occasion shall give him leaue. Notwithstanding he is to haue regard the while to accompany them (if he can) with exterior reverence both because the one much aydes the other, as also because the neglect of them alwayes implyes an inexculable negligence; which that Example which Pelbert recounts, doth well declare, happening in his time in Hungary, and recounted unto him by a Religious man of worthy credit, and it is this: A
A Religious of the same Order was accustomed ever at the Ave Maria bel, or Angelus Domini, to rise out of his bed at the hours of night, and humbly on his knees salute the Queen of heaven; This devout custome once, being persuaded by sloth and laziness, he omitted, when behold, being falne a sleepe againe, he seemed in his sleepe to see, the Church steeple euë incline itself vnto the ground; which sight three times being represented vnto him in sleepe, at last he imagined that he heard these words; Miserable and negligent creature as thou art, art thou not ashamed to see euë senslesse creatures thus bow down themselves in reverence to the Mother of God, whilst thou sensible as thou art, neglectest it? by which
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which vision touched with a lively sorrow for this neglect, he became more fervoruous thereafter in his devotions.

These interior Reverences then, although of themselves they be of never so high worth and dignity, yet when commodiously they may be done, we are never to neglect the exterior, but still accompany the one with the other, that the fervour of the one joyned with the other payne may render them more meritorious; and the best place for the exercising these devotions is, when the commodity of some Chappel or Oratory is offered vs, at which time we are upon our knees, in a more particular manner to commend our selves to Alm. God and his B. Mother; And of
of this we have for paterne our Saviour Christ, who, as often as he ascended to Hierusalem, repayed ever to the Temple, the first thing he did, to offer vp to his eternal Father his prayers and adoratiōs. In imitation of which, those of the Capucines Order have a constitution, that when they arrive in any place, they are first of all to return vnto the Church, and there to adore the Blessed Sacrament: the words of the Constitution are these: Being arrived to the place where we are to goe, to shew our felues true fones of the Eternal Father, we are first to visit the Church, where having don reverence, &c.

And divers by these means have escaped imminent dangers; as appears by this following holy
A Method to love story, recounted by the Illustrious James Voragius Archbishop of Genua, in his history of the B. Virgins Assumption.

There was (sayes he) a person of quality, whose wife excelled in all virtues, but principally in devotion to the B. Virgin, so as no day past that in some reverent and religious manner she did not honour her. Now it happened that her husband through his excessive prodigality, at last fell into want and misery, in so much as one day some noble men inviting themselves to dinner with him, and he wanting means to entertain them, in that splendid and abundant manner as he was wont, to avoysd the shame went forth into a wood, where he intended to absent himself while they
before the B. U. Mary. 601
they might be come and gone
without taking notice of their
visiting him; whilst in a Melan-
coly passion he wandered up
and down then revolving in his mind
into what misery he was fallen,
behold a person of a horrible as-
pect, mounted upon a horse no
lesser horrid then he appeared
onto
him, requesting him to let him
know his cause of discontent; To
whom the Gentleman ( after he
had recollected his spirits which
fear with its dismay, had put to
flight at first ) declared his whole
fortunes; at which ( quoth the
other ) is that be all, take comfort,
for I will promise you ( grant me
but one request ) to reduce you
to an estate more riche and opu-
lent than euer you were in before;
It must be a strange request ( sayd
the
the Gentleman) I should not
grant you upon that condition;
nay, it is but easy in performance
sayd the diuel) for it was he dis-
guised in that shape) to witt, that
on such a certaine day and houre
you bring your wife along with
you, and meete me in this
place:& this being agreed upon,
the diuel directed him to a cave,
where he fou'd a mighty treasure,
by the helpe of which, recovering
out of his necessity, he liued in a
more noble way than euer. Now
it hapned, the time drawing nigh,
when ( as he had promised ) he
was to take his journey with his
wife vnto the place appointed.
and she perceiving that som-what
extraordinary was in hand, by his
hasty warning her to prepare to
take horse with him, and the trou-
ble
and serve the B. U. Mary. 603
ble of his Countenance, when she could by no means get out of him what it was; she recommended the matter to the B. Virgin, & presently took horse so obedient to her husband, as never to examine further his intentions; Now it hapned on their way, that passing by a little Chapel dedicated to our B. Lady, the Lady by the consent of her husband lighted and went in, only in mind to do her devotions, and returne againe; but behold, whilst with prayers and teares she commended to the Queene of heauen the good successe of her affayres, she was diuinely cast into a sleepe meane while the B. Virgin assumed her shape, and with her husband went on her way.

They were no sooner arrived
at the entry of the wood, but the
duel with great noyse and furie
appeared vnto the Gentleman,
not daring to approch vnto him
for feare of our B. Lady ( whom
presently he knew) but casting on
him a sterne regard in this man-
ner he spake vnto him; vngrate-
ful and persidious as thou art, is
this al the reward I haue, for those
great benefits thou hast receiv'd
of me? didst thou not promise to
conduct thy wife hither vnto me,
and in her steed had thou brought
heer the mother of Alm. God?
It was against thy wife ( since
against this I cannot) I intended
to auenge my selfe, for her being
so diligent in the honour and
firme affection to the Queene of
heauen.

Wherunto the B. Virgin thus
an-
and serve the B. U. Mary. 605 answered him: and whence is this temerity thou abominable Feind, that thou shouldst dare to offer any injury to those who love and reverence me? goe hence to Hel againe, and desist from malicing them, upon paine of a greater hel, then euer yet thou feltst; When the diuell with a violent clatter, as if all the wood had been torn vp by the roots, straight vanished away, and left the Gentleman in such affright, as he fell flatt to the ground before the B. Virgins feet, beseeching her pardon for his offence; who sharply reprehending him for it, commanded him to goe back into the Chappel, to awake his wife out of her trance, and returning home with her, to discharge his house of all those ill gotten goods, so dam-

C 3  nable
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able to keepe: All which he punctually did, and quitting both those goods and his evil together, he became in short time of more plentiful fortune, then ever he was before, by the special favour of the Queene of heaven; who is always succourable and merciful to those, who implore her ayde in their necessities, and advantage them with high graces and priviledges, who endeavour to honour her with this excellent sort of Adorations, as well exterior as interior, which hitherto we have largely treated of; together with the reasons, discourse, authority, and wondrous examples, which should induce vs to the embracing of it, which is the principal scope and ayme of al this worke.
and serve the B. U. Mary: 607

And now at last, we have brought it to an end, by the particular favour and assistance of Alm. God, obtained through the intercession of his glorious Mother, our most benigne and B. Lady; whom we beseech by the same intercession, to render vs worthy of the participation at last of eternal good, which being only that, which can satiate indeed, can only render vs on all parts happy and content.

FINIS.
Faults escaped in the Print.

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