

ENCYCLICAL LETTER OF THE POPE ON THE ROSARY OF MARY.

(Continued.)

THE vocal prayer appropriately fitted with the mysteries has the same tendency. First comes, as is right, the Lord's Prayer, addressed to Our Heavenly Father: and, after He has been invoked in becoming words of appeal, the voice of the suppliant is turned from the throne of His Majesty to Mary by the law of interceding and propitiating of which we speak, and which is explained by St Bernard of Siena in this sentence:—"Every grace communicated to the world has a threefold course. For it is imparted on a perfectly regular system (*ordinatissime*) by God to Christ; by Christ to the Virgin; and by the Virgin to us (Serm VI, in Festis B.M.V. de Annunc, a 1, c 2). These, stages, as we may call them, though they differ indeed in kind from one another, being laid down, we dwell longer, and in a certain sense more pleasingly, upon the last, from the design of the Rosary, the Angelic Salutation being continued in decades as if in order that we may ascend the more confidently to the other stages, that is through Christ to God the Father. The same salutation we pour forth to Mary so many times in order that our weak and defective prayer may be sustained by the necessary confidence, beseeching her to pray to God for us and as if in our name. Our voices, in fact, are far more acceptable and powerful with Him if they are recommended by the prayers of the Virgin, whom He Himself urges to intercession with the gentle invitation:—"Let thy voice sound in My ears for thy voice is sweet" (Cant II 14). For this very reason are repeated by us so often the glorious names she possesses for obtaining favours. We salute her who "finds favour with God," being singularly "full of grace" from Him, so that it might flow in abundance to all persons; her in whom God inheres by the closest possible union; her "blessed amongst women," who "alone took away the curse and brought the blessing" (St Thomas op viii, *super salut. angel.*, n 3), the blessed fruit of her womb, in whom "all nations are blest"; finally we invoke her as the "Mother of God," from which lofty dignity, what is there that she does not certainly and earnestly ask "for us sinners," what may we not hope for throughout all our life and at the last agony of our spirit?

It is assuredly impossible that anyone who has devoted himself with faith and earnestness, to such prayers and mysteries, should not be seized by admiration at the Divine counsels respecting the Virgin for the common salvation of the nations; and with lively confidence he will long to commit himself to her care and protection according to the declaration of St Bernard: "Remember, O most pious Virgin Mary, that it was never heard of in any age that any one who had recourse to thy protection, implored thy aid, or sought thy intercession was abandoned."

The power of the Rosary in inspiring those who pray with confidence as to the issue of their appeals is equally effective in moving the heart of the Virgin in compassion for us. It is clear that it must be exceedingly grateful to her to see and hear us whilst we solemnly weave into a crown sincere petitions and beautiful words of praise. For, that in thus praying together we pay and wish God the glory which is His due; that we are anxious that His pleasure and His will should alone be fulfilled; that we extol His goodness and munificence, calling Him Father, and, unworthy as we are, begging for very high favours—all this is a source of exquisite joy to Mary, and in our devotion she really "magnifies the Lord." And in truth we address God in a prayer worthy of Him when we recite the Lord's Prayer. Moreover, to the requests we make in this prayer, so just and fitting in themselves and so conformable to Christian faith, hope, and charity, a certain charm most agreeable to the Virgin adds a special weight. For with our voice appears to be united that of the Son Jesus, who gave us the same formula of prayer in fixed terms and commanded that it should be employed:—"Thus, therefore, shall you pray" (Matt vi 9). Let us not doubt, then, that she will discharge towards us her office, full of eager love, when with a ready disposition we carry out this injunction by reciting the Rosary; gracefully receiving this chaplet, she will grant us in return a rich reward of favours. The character of the Rosary, in itself well calculated to help us to pray with the proper spirit, affords no small ground for feeling assured of her liberal bounty. Such is man's weakness that when he is engaged in prayer his attention is easily and frequently withdrawn from God, and he is divested from the object he has resolutely set before himself. Now, whoever properly considers the nature of the Rosary will at once see how efficacious it is for keeping the mind alert, for removing torpor, for exciting a salutary sorrow on account of sins that have been committed, and for leading the thoughts to subjects of heavenly contemplation. As is well known the Rosary consists of two parts which are distinct and yet connected together—the meditation on the mysteries and the vocal prayer. This kind of prayer then requires particular attention on the part of those who use it—that is, not only in directing the mind in a certain way towards God, but in contemplating and meditating in such a manner that examples of the higher life are taken to heart, and food found for every species of piety. Indeed, there is nothing greater or more admirable than those same things in which

the perfection of the Christian faith appears, and by the light and power of which truth, justice, and peace have advanced on earth upon a new scale and with most beneficial results. Consonant with this is the mode in which these truths are set before the cultivators of the Rosary; that is to say, in a manner adapted to the intelligence even of the unlearned. For the Rosary is arranged not for the consideration of dogmas of faith and questions of doctrine, but rather for putting forward facts to be perceived by the eyes and treasured up in the memory—facts which make all the greater impression on the mind and affect it more beneficially in as much as they are presented as they occurred, the identity of time, place, and person being preserved. When, before everybody, these considerations are marked and strongly impressed upon the mind from early years, on the mention of the mystery whoever is really inclined to prayer takes them in without any effort whatever, and by a sort of natural movement of the mind and heart he receives abundantly the dew of heavenly grace which Mary plentifully bestows. There is another commendation which renders these chaplets more acceptable to her and more worthy of recompense. For when we piously repeat third series of mysteries we express in a more lively manner our grateful feelings towards the Blessed Virgin, declaring as we do that we can never be sufficiently mindful of the blessings which she enured with ineffable charity in contributing to our salvation. These noble mementos, recalled again and again in her presence, must bring to her soul new and inexpressible pleasure and excite in her sentiments of solicitude and maternal beneficence. And from these recollections our prayer becomes more ardent and assumes the force of an entreaty. So that as the mysteries are severally gone through we feel that we have put forward so many appeals which will prove influential with the Virgin. For it is to thee we fly, Holy Mother of God; do not despise the wretched children of Eve. To thee do we address ourselves, O procurer of our salvation, equally powerful and merciful. By the sweetness of the joys which Jesus your Son provided for you, by your participation in His indescribable sorrows, by the splendour of His glory, in which you are enveloped, we urgently beseech you to graciously hear us, though unworthy, and grant our prayer.

DO THOU LIKEWISE.

WHEN one sets a candle in a window on a dark night he never can tell how many lost and bewildered travellers it may guide on their way. I once knew a dear old lady who habitually did it on every dark night. The road that passed her house was always forsaken and lonesome enough, and houses were far apart. So, on the general principle of goodwill to men, she placed her candle in a sort of projecting window, where it would shine both ways and do the most good. She is dead and gone now, but let us hope that her family keeps up the custom. To be sure it brought her many a strange guest, yet she did what she could for them, and never grumbled—pay or no pay.

A year or two ago a little book was printed, containing an account by Mr John Hodson, of Warboys, Hunts, of the way he was cured of a wasting disease by Mother Seigel's Curative Syrup—a complaint contracted in India, where Mr Hodson was once a soldier in the British army.

This candle of Hodson's beamed hopefully in all directions, and among others, its rays fell upon the eyes of a woman who needed light at that particular time. How it came to pass she tells in a letter, from which we quote the following:—

"As I grew weaker I was confined to my bed more and more, and my daughter was obliged to take my place in doing the household work. A doctor attended me for over a year. He tried first one kind of medicine and then another, but none of them helped me. At the end of the year the doctor said he could do no more for me, and recommended me as a last resort to try a change of air.

"I had got to despair of ever getting better when a book was sent to me full of statements from different people, telling how they had been made well of various complaints by using Mother Seigel's Curative Syrup, and I read of a young man living at Warboys, near me, having been cured in a marvellous manner by this medicine. I got a bottle from Messrs Palmer and Sons, Chemists, Ramsey, and after I had taken it a week I felt relief and gained strength. *All my pain left me*, and I have never looked behind me since. I take an occasional dose of the Syrup and keep in excellent health. I give you full permission to use this letter as you think fit. Yours truly, (signed) Sarah Mason, Ramsey Heights, Ramsey, Hunts, January 27th, 1892."

What better use could we possibly put this lady's letter to than to publish it? In this way it has fallen into the present readers' hands, and may turn out to be a candle in the window to show him refuge and shelter beside some long and gloomy path. A word more on this very point. It is not a matter of choice whether we are to help one another. We are *obliged* and *bound* to do so by every consideration of morality and utility. Humanity is like the body of one man: if a single part is neglected the rest must pay the penalty. Therefore set candles in windows. If, for instance, Mother Seigel's Curative Syrup has done you good, say so, publish it, wake it known. Others near you may be groping in darkness.

And it is all the more a subject of rejoicing that this remedy as in the above case, conquers indigestion and dyspepsia, because that complaint it is which clouds the sun for millions on Life's hard road.