



HISTORY

OF THE

DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY,
MOTHER OF GOD.

CHAPTER I.

ORIGIN AND ANTIQUITY OF THE DEVOTION TO MARY.

THE invocation of Saints, which heretics impute to us as idolatry, and which a Protestant minister has been pleased to set down as *the malady of the Christians of the fourth century*, is so far from being of modern date that it may, in truth, be regarded as of Apostolical tradition and of Jewish origin. The Hebrews sought counsel and miraculous cures of the dead, when those dead had been accredited prophets of the Lord. The prophets were their saints, and saints who read the future clearly, from the depths of the sepulchral cave where they slept beside their fathers. Behold Saul with the witch of Endor; the ghost of Samuel, though conjured up by enchantments which the law of Moses condemns, appeared by God's permission, to terrify the reprobate monarch. The prophet, shrouded in his mantle, emerges slowly from the earth in awful majesty; the sorceress utters a cry of terror at sight of the illustrious shade which she takes for a God. Saul, bowing down before him who was so long the supreme judge of Israel, questions him on the issue of the battle which he is going to fight with the Philistines; and the

