

theless, whatever may have been the intention of Jesus, it is quite evident that this language, and this very concern, should make a most sorrowful impression upon the heart of this tender mother. What a change was it not for her? Ah! whatever might be the qualities of a stranger, however worthy he might be of esteem and affection, it is not at the moment when a mother loses a son, (and what a mother, what a son!) that she is to be told to transfer, or at least to extend her maternal affection to another — Nevertheless, that is what took place at the foot of Calvary. For the word of the Man-God is not like that of a mere man, a simple and ineffectual recommendation. It is a word as efficacious as that which created the world, as that which formed the hearts of the mother and the son, and which producing therein the very thing which it signifies, inspires Mary with a new and maternal affection for St. John, and St. John with a new and filial affection for Mary. And from that moment, as he himself tells us, the disciple took her for his own, and treated her as his mother.

Happy disciple! how sweet in the midst of affliction must have been to your ear this word of a master who loved you! this word which selected you for Mary, in place of Jesus, to be the brother and the successor of Jesus, the son and the consoler of Mary! Such therefore is the reward of your purity, of your love for Jesus, and above all, of that heroic fidelity to him which you displayed, by following him with his holy mother, even to the foot of the cross, when his other disciples had abandoned him!

Happy are we also, Christians! happy is our lot! For it is not with St. John alone that the heart of Jesus is concerned, but with all those whom he did not disdain to call his brethren. With St. John, and in his person, are included all

the apostles, and all the faithful whom Jesus bestows as children to Mary, according to the unanimous declaration of the fathers — Mary is the mother of all the faithful, but more especially, more affectionately, more maternally of those who imitate the purity of St. John, and his love for Jesus, and who like him accompany Mary to Calvary, and sympathise with her in his sufferings:

Fond mother! thou, whose love was love indeed!

Oh! give me by one sweet, resistless prayer,  
Whilst meditations sees thy Jesus bleed,  
In thy vast agony of grief to share!  
Give me, in loving Christ, my God, my All,  
To feed the ever glowing, sacred flame!  
And whilst unwearied at his shrine I fall,  
To make his love my sole, my glorious aim!\*

Let us make another reflection: The holy fathers, and particularly St. Augustine, have not failed to present this word of Jesus on the cross to his mother, as an example and instruction for all children, that even to their last breath, and in the midst of the greatest suffering they should remember the authors of their existence, and furnish them with all the consolation in their power. Let us add, that the words addressed by Jesus to his faithful disciple, from the summit of his cross, is an example and instruction to all friends. Hence, as our friends attach so much importance to the last recollections, and particularly to the last words of a dying friend, and as they feel so great a pleasure in recalling them to memory, we owe them this consolation, for the enjoyment we have experienced in their friendship. It would be hard-heartedness and ingratitude to neglect them on our death-bed. — But according to the example of Jesus, let not our friends, nor even our parents, obtain precedence of our enemies.

\*Stabat Mater.