

By her faith and hope, she had left far behind her the just of the Old Testament, she had believed and hoped all her life, without ever allowing her heart to doubt God's faithfulness. As to the love of God, it is shown outwardly, by the interest one takes in holy things, by precious gifts destined to increase the pomp of sacred ceremonies, and especially, according to St. John, by the works of mercy and the many practices of brotherly charity. None surpassed Saint Anne in love. Urged, in her tender heart, by the interior law of that love at once double and single of God and neighbor, she preceded the time, she divined the distinctive character of the law of grace: the worship of the house of God, the worship of the poor. With Saint Joachim, as we have already said in the narrative of her life, she divided her revenue into three shares: one destined to the temple, another to the unfortunate, and the third to the wants of her household.

Saint Anne has thus merited her maternity by the practice of faith, of hope and of charity: she had reached the perfect maturity of these essential virtues. She could therefore perform towards Mary the same offices that Mary was herself to perform later on towards the child Jesus. Mary could, indeed, have a holy pride of her mother and thank God for having given her a mother so pure and so perfect. Mary could not be ashamed of her in presence of the angels, and during nine months she could rest within her as on a bed of lilies and roses; her prison-house was like a temple fragrant with the odor of all the virtues, and no dwelling-place, save the Heart of Jesus, was ever more worthy of her!

*(From the French of Father Mermillod, S. J.)*

*(To be continued.)*