

whose meaning and whose application to the Virgin Mary there can be no manner of question.

In the very first book of the Bible, and in almost its first chapter, we are introduced to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Here are the words :

“The Lord God said to the woman (Eve) Why hast thou done this? And she answered, The serpent deceived me, and I did eat. And the Lord God said to the serpent (the devil) . . . I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed ; she shall crush thy head and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel.”—Genesis, iii., 13-15.

In this scene we have three parties, the man, the woman and the serpent, and in the fulfilment of the prophecy we likewise are shown three parties ; but in the fulfilment, the man is to be the second Adam and the woman the second Eve. Amongst all commentators of Scripture there is not a single dissentient voice that in speaking of the offspring of Eve Almighty God had reference to the Messiah to come and His mother. The woman and her son became for prophet, priest and patriarch the source of inspiration and the subject of meditation in all the ages that were to precede the coming of the Messiah. For more than three thousand years this thought filled the world with hope ; it alone bore God's people up against despair. Every Jewish mother hoped that her child might be the mother of the Saviour, and every Jewish maiden prayed that she might be chosen for the signal honour. As in this first message of hope after the fall of man the Saviour and the woman stand united, so in every subsequent passage of Holy Writ the Mother and the Son are found together.

Seven hundred years before the event the prophet Isaias, that inspired mouth-piece of the Most High, spoke these significant words :

The Lord Himself shall give you a sign, Behold a Virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and His name shall be called Emmanuel, (God with us)—Isaias, vii., 14.

And this glorious prophetic vision, which links together the Virgin and her Son became more and more distinct as the years went on, until in the fullness of time God sent His Son made of a woman.

But if the Old Testament gives these undisputed prophecies of the function, dignity and glory of Mary, it is in the New Testament that we must seek her real picture. The Old Testament gives but the outline. But outside the Catholic