

1. The Blessed Mother of God has occupied a prominent place in the work of our redemption, and has ever been associated with our Divine Saviour in the scheme of man's salvation and in the dispensation of His graces and mercies.

Our Lord is the inexhaustible fountain of grace ; Mary is its channel. Our Lord is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, our Father, our Creator, our Lord, our all, the God of our heart, the God that is our portion forever. It is needless to tell you, dearly beloved brethren, for you are perfectly convinced of it, that our Saviour is the author and finisher of our Faith, that He is the life of our life, the Way, the Truth, and the Life ; that it is His precious blood that has redeemed the world, that He is the only mediator of redemption between God and man ; that there is no other name under heaven, save the holy name of Jesus, whereby we can be saved ; and that no soul can ever enter heaven, except through the merits of the sufferings and death of Christ. To Him alone are divine worship and adoration due. All this is Catholic truth and teaching. But as it has pleased God to rule the natural world, and to preserve and direct its marvellous harmonies by secondary agents and laws, so in the supernatural order it pleases Him to make use of secondary agents to carry out His merciful behests. Now such is the position of Mary in the divine plan of man's salvation.

She actively co-operated, but only as a secondary agent, with our Blessed Lord, in the great scheme of the world's reparation. As Eve, by her infidelity, actively co-operated in bringing on the fall of the human race in Adam, so Mary, by her superlative virtues, and her unswerving fidelity to grace, had a part in its restoration. Scarcely had the divine justice passed sentence on our guilty parents, at the gates of Paradise, when in love and pity God pronounced a sentence of mercy and of hope. He said to the serpent, "I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed ; she shall crush thy head and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel" (Genesis iii. c., 14 v.)

Between Eve and the serpent there arose a friendship that brought ruin and death on mankind ; between Mary, the