

brown stuff in honor of the Mother of God before they die. We answer to this, that it is equally demoralizing to teach the sinner that every one who makes a genuine act of contrition at the last moments of his life, will certainly enjoy the eternal bliss of Heaven, whatever may have been the abominations of his past life. Yet every Catholic knows full well that this is true. How is it that this is not an encouragement to sin? For the simple reason that Catholics know that a just God watches over us, and that he who abuses the mercy of God to continue in sin, will in the end fail of obtaining that necessary contrition. If a man trusts to a death-bed, repentance will probably never take place. The sinner will be struck down of a sudden. He will have no time for repentance, or delirium or insensibility will creep over him before the arrival of a priest—or it may be that he will in punishment of his presumption, have lost the power of making an act of contrition at all—or even if he make one, some subsequent temptation will overcome him, and the devil will regain his victim before the last moment comes. Now it is just the same with any one who should abuse the privilege of the Scapular. If God has granted this privilege to Mary, He will not allow His Holy Mother to be insulted by her Scapular being made an excuse for sin. To trust presumptuously to it is no less dangerous than to trust presumptuously to a death-bed repentance. The Scapular, in which the sinner trusts, will somehow disappear. The strings will break and he will lose it, and will not take the trouble to provide himself with another. Very often he will himself tear it off under the influence of an evil conscience and a heart hardened against God. Somehow or other, when the hour of death arrives, it will be gone. The vanished Scapular will be, through his own fault, the just punishment of continuance in sin. As a matter of fact, we do not believe that there is any practical danger of Catholics having any undue confidence in the efficacy of the Scapular. We certainly have never encountered an instance. The tendency is quite the other way. One of the strongest practical arguments in favor of the privilege attaching to it, is that a continuance in sin almost always carries with it the voluntary or involuntary abandonment of the Scapular. We could quote

instances without number which have come under our own experience. Often a Catholic who intends to commit mortal sin, will deliberately take off his Scapular. Bad he may be, but not so bad as to insult the Holy Mother of God by wearing her uniform while he is outraging her Divine Son. More often the indifference to holy things, which is one of the effects of sin, will make him careless, and one day he will forget or neglect to resume it after it has been taken off. Somehow or other, and many of my readers will confirm the truth of what I am saying from their own knowledge, the abandonment of the Scapular is one of the most certain signs which accompany willful persistency in wrong doing, and a determinate resistance to the grace of God. All this does not prove that we *must* believe in the efficacy of the Scapular; it only proves that we *may* believe in it with the most implicit confidence, without laying ourselves open to the charge of superstition or encouraging a dangerous abuse. But it proves more than this, it proves that there is a certain connection between the presence of grace in the soul and the wearing of the Scapular, and between the loss of grace and the loss of the Scapular. This at least points to the further conclusion that he who wears it to the end will either retain or recover the grace of God before he dies; and this again confirms the fact of the apparition and of the promise made, which we shall now proceed to establish on sufficient and more than sufficient evidence. But first of all we must do the disagreeable work of demolition. We cannot reconstruct till we have cleared the ground of the rubbish accumulated by the *Catholic Dictionary*, which dismisses the positive evidence in favor of the apparition as follows:

As to the fact of the apparition to Simon Stock, it is accepted by Benedict the Fourteenth, Papebroch and Alban Butler, on the faith of a "Life" of the Saint by Swaynton, who was his secretary, and wrote the story of the apparition at his dictation. A fragment of this "Life" was produced from the archives at Bordeaux, and printed by one of the Carmelites, *viz.*, Cheronensis. We may observe that the Carmelites refused a sight of this "Life" to Papebroch. (See Bollandist, Acta S. S., Mail, tom. iii.) This paragraph is quite inaccurate (to say the least), both in its facts and in its insinuations.

TO BE CONTINUED.