

To this I must answer: "But the same God has said, 'Parents, provoke not your children to wrath.' It is not that I hate the memory of my father or my mother; but I hate injustice and calumny. Every one would point the finger of scorn at a child who would refuse to liquidate the temporal debts of a parent; and is it not just as sacred a duty for one to render justice to those whom its parents have morally wronged? Are material rights always to triumph, to the exclusion of moral ones? Am I to refuse justice to others, merely because it was my mother who wronged them? No, no, a thousand times no; that would be misinterpreting God's most righteous commands. It is the duty of the child to honor its parents, but not to condone their sinful acts, especially when by those acts they have tried to trample on and deface that which God has taught us to hold most sacred.

It is also true that the moment a mother neglects, ill-treats, and corrupts her child, she to a great extent forfeits her title to that endearing name. There are mothers, who, after ill-treating and neglecting their children, abandon them! A Sister of Charity picks them out of the street, feeds, nurses, and educates them. Which is the mother? the unnatural being, who abandons them; or the Sister who rescues them? Go to the Foundling Asylum, and watch that woman, as she drops her child at the door; is she the mother? or is the Sister, who receives it? I never see a community of Sisters taking care of little waifs, but what my heart goes out towards them, and I feel that there is still on earth a far higher and more blessed motherhood, than that of mere physical generation.

I appeal to the hearts of all Christian mothers and ask them, who is my mother? I can already hear their reply: "that the Catholic Church is my mother;" for it was she who took me by the hand and raised me out of the abyss of spiritual misery, into which the faults of my parents had helped to plunge me. It was through her that God first gave light to my soul, which she has nourished by her teachings, until at last she has wedded me to my God. If the mother who bore me has claims on me, the mother who saved me has still greater; and it is to satisfy these that God in His justice and mercy inspired me to write this book.

The critics of the book will find severest things to say of the personal history of the author, and from her own showing. But they will not make me out as bad as I know myself to have been. I