

ly know, and on which it is necessary to speak. On other occasions, Silence is preferable to speech. Peace and Silence are the best asylum of a quiet conscience. A person that speaks too much, is a city without a wall, a house without a door, a vessel without a cover, a horse without a rein. Be silent, therefore, if you wish to be secure.

Our holy Mother, Mary, the Mother of God, who was full of grace, and the mirror of all virtues, was most remarkable for her love of silence.

St. Bernard, alluding to her extraordinary silence, says, "If we well remember, throughout every text of the Four Evangelists, Mary is heard to speak but four times;—first, indeed, to the Angel, but not until he had repeatedly spoken to her. Secondly, to Elizabeth, when the voice of her salutation caused the Baptist to exult in his Mother's womb. Thirdly, to her Son, when he was twelve years old, when she told him that herself and his Father had been searching for him in sorrow. Fourthly, at the marriage of Cana, to her Son and to the attendants."

Now, if we count her words, as the words of Christ on the Cross are numbered, we shall find that they also amount to Seven.

The first; the salutation of Elizabeth, is a Word of Charity.

The second; My soul magnifies the Lord, is a Word of Thanksgiving.

The third; How can that be since I know not man? is a Word of Chastity.

The fourth. Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to thy word, is a Word of humility.

The fifth. Son, why hast thou done so to us? is a Word of Grief.

The sixth. They have no wine, is a Word of Commiseration.

The seventh. Do whatever he

shall say to you, is a Word of Instruction.

Examine every word and syllable, and you will perceive nothing vain, nothing superfluous, nothing fruitless—but all full of wisdom, of gravity, of silence! Observe, too, her holy silence with regard to St. Joseph. When she appeared to him to be pregnant, he neither dared to pronounce her guilty, nor wished to explore the nature of the mystery, but he wished to abandon her privately. The Virgin, who was full of God, must have perceived this. She must have observed his doubts, his surprise, his altered behaviour, and yet, she is silent! She sees herself about to be abandoned, and yet she is silent. She knows the promises of the Angel to be most certain, and yet, she is silent. She observes her spouse wavering in his opinion of her fidelity, and still she is silent. O admirable silence of Mary! O silence full of confidence in God!

When the promises of heaven were completed, when she brought forth the Redeemer of the world, when she beheld the Shepherds of Bethlehem in adoration before him, and heard the Angelic music which proclaimed his birth, when she perceived the King's of the East conducted by a star to the manger of his nativity, offering him in profound homage their richest treasures, was she elated? Did her joy break forth in words? Did she express one word of delight or satisfaction? No, not one!

Extraordinary silence of the Mother of God! Whilst others expressed their admiration of these wonders 'Mary,' says the Evangelist, 'treasured up all these words in her heart.'

Let us contemplate now, her silence during the Passion of her Son.—No one could feel his sufferings more acutely than she did, but she never speaks.