

advancement of this work,—the holy prayers and devotions of so many good Souls in France, who take so great a share and so much interest in all these affairs.

I am sometimes astonished at the order formerly observed by that great Apostle of the Indies, St. François Xavier,—when he was engaging and entreating the divine Majesty to assist him in the enterprise of converting the unbelievers of the countries where he was,—in one of his Prayers which he said every day with this object, [60] and which is found in the narrative of his life; in this he gives the first place to the prayers of saintly Souls, as the most powerful means he had of influencing God and causing him to show mercy to those poor Wanderers.

But experience causes me to recover from this astonishment. For considering, in the harvest of this year, what it pleases God to make us hope for the future of our labors in these countries, and yet the small ratio of our forces to such labors, I feel myself compelled to acknowledge that, as in the Sky which turns above our heads there are some Stars and constellations so powerful that the first and principal virtue productive of certain riches of the soil is attributed to them,—this being done usually by Philosophers, when they cannot find here below any cause proportionate to the effect,—so, likewise, in the Sky of the Church there are some mystical Stars and constellations so powerful to influence the affairs that we have in hand, that the first and principal virtue productive of the good that we can do here should be attributed to them, since, in fact, we do not see down here any other causes proportionate [61] to these effects.