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INTRODUCTION.

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF MARY.

HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE CONTROVERSY.

BY FATHER FELIX, S. J.

MEN whose minds love to follow in events here below the traces of the divine plans, have sometimes asked themselves, "Why has God permitted the belief in the Immaculate Conception to meet with contradiction in the Church? Was it his will that, agitated by dispute, as the tree by the tempest, that belief, by the very effect of the agitation, should strike its roots deeper in the souls of men? that emerging one day from the shock of human ideas, it should glorify the spotless Virgin by the splendor of its testimony? Or rather, was it his purpose to hold opinion divided and science in suspense for a certain time, to leave love the merit of a free and devoted adhesion? God alone knows. But what imports it that Providence has not yet decided? There is a clear manifestation of God's designs to be found in history; it is this: When it pleased the Lord to open a career of