

having all a human being's experience of sin, its temptations, trials, and sorrows; having the consciousness of weakness in herself, teaching her how hard it is not to sin, which would necessarily make her compassionate towards others. We all know how step by step she has been raised from that position of participation in human sin and sorrow to an exemption from the human lot and an elevation above all human frailty. We can trace this gradual ascent in the pictures of her which exist in the Roman Catholic Church from the earliest times, representing her first as alone; then with the infant Saviour in her arms; then with Christ crowning her; then as kneeling before him; then sitting a little lower than He; then on a level with Him. And now there is a tendency to place her above Him; for throughout Christendom there are far more churches dedicated to Mary than to her divine Son. In the Eternal City it is not the one God of Jews and Christians who is worshipped; it is not He whom Christians believe to be God blessed forever, incarnate in the flesh of man. God the Father is almost unknown, and God the Son has ceased to be an Object of adoration. The former is represented in the pictures in the churches as an old man, and the Saviour is uniformly exhibited as a little child; and both are made subservient to the glorification of the Virgin Mary, who is clothed with the incommunicable attributes of the Godhead itself. But this last monstrous development of Mariolatry will, in the end, defeat the very purpose for which it exists. By making the doctrine of the immaculate conception of the Virgin an essential article of the Romish creed, and thus paying Divine honours to her, she is removed further from the sympathies of men, and the attraction of her intercession will ultimately be weakened. What made her worship so alluring was the mistaken idea that just because she was a tender, human being—a loving, sainted mother—having the knowledge of sin, she would be less severe towards the frailties of men. But this charm she will lose by her deification. The same process of moral deterioration will take place in the minds of her votaries regarding her which took place in the minds of the worshippers first of the Father and then of the Son. She, too, in the end will come to be regarded as a stern and implacable judge, having no sympathy with men because she is herself withdrawn from the possibility of their frailties; and the confiding trustfulness with which prayers are now offered to her will be altogether unknown. Indeed the change has already taken place, and the supposed mother of the Virgin, called St. Anne, is now invoked to entreat her daughter to ask her Son to be propitious to the suppliant. Where is to be the end of such mediatorship? May not the Virgin's grandmother be also brought in? And if the Virgin is to be regarded as conceived without sin, must not her mother also—and so on—back to Adam?—and thus the doctrine of the fall and of original sin be done away with altogether, and with it the standing-ground and necessity of the Church! How simple and satisfactory the truth itself which is thus so shockingly perverted! "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."—*Rev. Dr. Hugh Macmillan.*