

was Mary, who was destined from all eternity to be the Mother of Jesus Christ. She was the earth's Spring, full of promise, full of beauty, full of joy; she was the earth's Spring that was to be the herald of the coming summer, and of the full, unclouded light of God's own sun beaming upon her. And, just as the little leaf that comes forth in the corn-field to-day, holds in its tiny blossom the promise of the full ear of wheat, bending its rich, autumnal head, the staff of life to all men, so Mary's coming, from the beginning, was a herald and a promise of His appearance upon the earth—was the announcement that that little plant was to grow and to endure, until it was to be crowned with the purity of God, and to bring forth the Bread of Life, the Mauna of Heaven, the Bread of angels, Jesus Christ, the world's Redeemer, the Word made flesh.

How well, therefore, dearly beloved brethren, how well does not this fair Spring month of May, this opening of the summer of the year, testify in nature what Mary was in the order of grace. And just as the Almighty God clothes this month in the order of nature with every beauty, all the fields with fragrance, clothes the hill-sides with the varied garb of beauty that nature puts forth, so tender, so fair in its early promise, so also the Almighty God clothed the Spring—the spiritual Spring of man's redemption, which was Mary, in every form of spiritual beauty, and robed her in every richest garb of divine loveliness of which a creature was capable, so that every gift in God's hand that a human creature was capable of receiving, Mary received. For, in her the full of my text was to be fulfilled. It was a strange promise, beloved: a strange and a startling word that came from the inspired lips of the Psalmist as he said, speaking of His chosen: "I have said: You are Gods, and all you the sons of the Most High!" That word was never fulfilled until the Son of the Most High became the son of a woman. This was the meaning of St. Augustine, when he says: "God came down from heaven in order that He might bring man from earth to heaven, and make him even as God." Thus it was that man, in the Child of Mary, united with God, became the Son of the Most High. Thus it was that, in virtue of the union of the human and divine which took place in Mary, we have all received, by the grace of adoption, the faculty to become children of God. "But to be as many as received Him," says St. John, "to them did He give the power to be made the sons of God." And this was the essential mission, the inherent idea of Christianity—to make men the sons of God; to make you and me the sons of God by infusing into us the spirit of Jesus Christ, and bringing forth, in our lives, and in our actions, and in our thoughts and in our inner souls, as well as in the outer man, the graces and glorious gifts that Jesus Christ brought down to our humanity in Mary's womb. Never has this idea been lost to the Catholic Church. My friends and brethren, you are living now in the midst of strangers. You hear the wildest theories propounded every day in philosophy, in science; but in nothing are the theories or the vagaries of the human mind so strange as when they take the form of religious speculation or religious doubt. The notion prevalent among all men outside of the Catholic Church nowadays is, that man has within him, naturally, without the action of God, without the action of Christ, the seeds of the perfection of his life; that by his own efforts, and by his own study, and by what is called the spirit of progress, a man may attain to the perfection of his own being without God, and become all that God intended him to become. That notion is the antagonist and destructive of the very first vital principle of Christianity. The vital principle of Christianity is this: the Son of God came down from heaven and became Man, and the Child, the true child, of a woman, in order that mankind, in Him and through Him, might be able to clothe itself with His virtues, and so become like to God. And in that likeness to God lies the whole perfection of our being; and the end of Christianity is to bring every sufficient agency to bear upon man; to make that man like to God; to make him as the Son of God. "I have said, 'Ye are Gods, all of you, sons of the Most High!'"

God is a God of truth. Man must be a man of truth in order to be like to God. God possesses the truth. He does not seek for it. He has it. He does not go groping, sophisticated, and thinking, and arguing in order to come at the truth. Truth is God Himself. And so, in like manner, man, to be a child of God, must have the truth, and not look for it. God is sanctity and purity in Himself. Man, must be holy and pure in order to be made the Son of God. He must be free from sin in order to be like to God, the Father. He must have a power over his passions to restrain them, to be pure in thought, in word, and in action, in soul and in body, before he can be made like to the Son of God. And that religion alone, which has the truth and gives it; which has grace and gives it; which touches sin and destroys it; which enables the soul to conquer the body; which holds up in her sanctuaries the types of that purity which is the highest reflection of the infinite purity of Jesus Christ—that religion alone can be the true religion of God. Every other religion is a lie. But the world is unable to believe this. Men compromise with their passions. Men go to a certain extent in satisfying their evil inclinations. Men refuse to accept the

truth because the truth humbles them. Hence the Protestant maxim: "Read the Bible, read the Bible, and don't listen to any priest!" These Catholics are a priest-ridden people. Whatever the priest says in the church is law with Catholics. They refuse the humility of this. They won't take the truth. They must find it for themselves; and the man who seeks it, by the very fact of seeking it shows he is not the son of God. I say this much because, my dear friends, I wish you to guard against the wild, reckless spirit that is abroad in the world to-day; I wish to guard you in your fidelity to the Church of God, your mother, in your fidelity to her teaching, in your fidelity to her sacraments; that word that she puts on my lips and says to me—that sacramental grace that she puts into the hands of the priest for you; these are the elements of your salvation; these are the means by which every one of you may become the child of God; and there is no perfection, no scheme of perfection, no secret of success, no plan of progress outside of this that is not an institution of the enemy, a delusion, a mockery, and a snare. And all this we get through Mary, because Mary was the chosen instrument in the hands of God to give to Him that human nature in which man was made even as the Son of God. Mary's coming upon the earth, therefore, was a Spring-time of grace. Mary's appearance in this world was like the morning star when, in the morning, after the darkness and tempest of the night, the sailor, standing upon the prow of the ship, looks around to find the eastern point of the horizon, and he sees suddenly rising out of the eastern wave, a silver star, beautiful in its pure beauty, trembling as if it were a living thing. And he knows that there is the east, for this is the morning star. He knows that precisely in that point, in a few moments, the sun will rise in all its splendor, and he knows that that sun is coming because the herald that proclaims the sun has risen. The morning star proclaims to the wild wanderer on the deep, in the eastern horizon, the advent of the coming day. So with us, upon the wild and angry waves of sin and error, and of God's anger and curse, our poor humanity, shipwrecked in the garden of Eden; our poor humanity, without even the wreck left to us of the sacrament of penance; our poor humanity, groping in the sacrifices and in the oblations of the world, for the love of God the Redeemer, the day-star whose light was to illumine the darkness of the world—behold, suddenly, the morning star rises, the pale, trembling, silver beauty of Mary! Then it was known that, in a few years, the world would behold its Redeemer, and mankind would be saved in the fullness of Mary's time. Therefore it is, that she enters so largely into the scheme and plan of redemption, that the Almighty God willed it, that even as the name of Jesus Christ was to be made known to all men, was to be glorified of all men, was to be proclaimed as the only name under heaven by which man was to be saved; and so, side by side with His purpose of God's declaration of the glory of His Divine Son, came the prophecy of Mary, from the same spirit that wherever the name of Jesus Christ was heard and revered, that there, and to the ends of the earth, all generations were to call her blessed. "He that is mighty hath wrought great things in me," she says; "Wherefore, behold, henceforth, all generations shall call me blessed."

And now, my friends, going back to the fountain-head of our Christianity, going back to the earliest traditions of the Church of God, examining with the light of human scrutiny, the spirit, as manifested in the earliest ages of her being, in the earliest documents she presents us with, does not every man find that wherever the true religion of Christ was propagated, wherever there was the genius and the instinct of faith that adored Jesus Christ, there came the fellow-instinct and genius that loved, and revered and venerated, and honored the woman who was His mother. If every other proof of this was wanting, there is one proof—a most emphatic proof—and it is this; that whilst the Blessed Virgin Mary was yet living, during the twelve years that elapsed before her assumption into heaven, a religious order was organized in the Catholic Church, devoted to the veneration, and the love, and the honor of the Blessed Virgin—a religious order dating from the early times of the prophet—a religious order founded by the sons of the prophets, under the Jewish dispensations, was converted to Christianity, and at once banded itself together and called itself, "The Brethren of our Lady of Mount Carmel." No sooner was our Lady assumed into heaven, than these men spread themselves through Palestine and through the East, and the burden of their teaching and their devotion was the glory of the Mother of God; the woman who brought forth the Man-God, Jesus Christ. No sooner was the Gospel preached than the devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary spread with the rapidity of thought, of sentiment, and of love through all distant parts; and when five hundred years later, a man rose up and denied that Mary was the Mother of God, we read that when the Church assembled at Ephesus in general council, the people came from all the surrounding countries, and the great city of Ephesus was overcrowded with the anxious people, all waiting for the result of the deliberations, and all praying; and when,

at last, the Council of the Holy Church of God put forth its edict, declaring that Mary was the true Mother of God, we read of the joy that came from the people's hearts, the cry of delight that rang from their lips, the "All Hail!" that they gave to you, Mother in heaven, spread throughout the universal Church, and never, among the many conclusions of her councils for eighteen hundred years, never did the holy Catholic Church give greater joy to her children, than when she proclaimed, in the fifth century, that Mary was the Mother of God, and, in the nineteenth century, that Mary was conceived without sin. But as we are entering upon this May's devotions, I wish, dearly beloved, to bring unto your notice this very devotion to the Mother Mary as a wonderful instance of the rapidity with which this devotion to the Mother of God spread throughout the Catholic Church.

It was at the beginning of this present century that this devotion of the month of Mary sprang up in the Catholic Church; and the circumstances of its origin are most wonderful. Some seventy years ago, or thereabouts, a little child—a poor little child—scarcely come to the use of reason, on a beautiful evening in May, knelt down, and began to lip with childish voice the Litany of the Blessed Virgin before the image of the Child in the arms of the Madonna in one of the streets of Rome. One little child in Rome, moved by an impulse that we cannot account for—apparently a childish freak—knelt down in the public streets and began saying the litany that he heard sung in the church. The next evening he was there again at the same hour, and began singing his little litany again. Another little child, a little boy, on his passage stopped, and began singing the responses. The next evening three or four other children came, apparently for amusement, and knelt before the same image of the Blessed Virgin, and sang their litany. After a time—after a few evenings—some pious women, the mothers of the children, delighted to see the early piety of their sons and daughters, came along with them, and knelt down, and blended their voices in the litany; and the priest of a neighboring church said: "Come into the church, and I will light a few candles on the altar of the Blessed Virgin, and we will sing the litany together." And so they went into the church; they lighted up the candles, and knelt, and there they sang the litany. He spoke a few words to them of the Blessed Virgin, about her patience, about her love for her divine Son, and about the dutiful veneration in which she was held by her Son. From that hour the devotion of the month of May spread throughout the whole Catholic world; until within a few years, wherever there was a Catholic church a Catholic altar, a Catholic priest, or a Catholic to hear and respond to the litany, the month of May became the month of Mary, the month of devotion to the Blessed Virgin. Is not this wonderful? Is not this perfectly astonishing? How naturally the idea came home to the Catholic mind! With what love it has been kept up! With what love—with what instinct—it spread itself! How congenial it was to the soil saturated with the divine grace through the intelligence, as illumined by divine knowledge and divine faith! Does it not remind you of that wonderful passage in the Book of Kings, where the prophet Elias went up into the mountain-top, when for three years it had not rained on the land, and the land was dried up, and he went upon the solitary summit of the mountain, there to breathe a prayer to God to send rain upon the land. Whilst he was praying in a cave in the rock, he told his servant to stand upon the summit of the mountain, and to watch all round, and to give him notice when he saw a cloud. The servant watched, and returned seven times—"and at the seventh time, behold, a little cloud arose out of the sky, like a man's foot. . . . and while he turned himself this way and that way, behold, the heavens grew dark with clouds and wind, and there fell a great rain."

The word "Mary" means the sea—the star of the sea. A few years ago, a cloud of devotion, no larger than the foot of a little child, in Rome was seen, and whilst men looked this way and that way, it spreads over the whole horizon of the Church of God, and over the whole world, and then, breaking in a rain of grace and intercession, it brings an element of purity, and grace, and dignity, and every gift of God to every Catholic soul throughout the world. Oh! when I think of the women that I have met in the dear old land of Faith! The women oppressed from one cause or from another! Some with sickness in the house; some with perhaps, a dissolution; some with a drunken husband; some with the fear of some great calamity or of poverty, coming upon them; some apprehensive of bad news from those that they love. How often have I seen them coming to me in the month of May, just in

the beginning, and brightening up, thank God and say, the month is come! I know. She in heaven will pray for me, and that my prayers will be heard! And I have seen them so often coming before the end of the month, to tell me, with the light of joy in their eyes; that the Mother heard their prayer, and that their petitions were granted then was I reminded of that mysterious cloud that broke out in the heavens, and rained down the saving rain. One have I before me—one whom I knew and loved—a holy nun who, for more than fifty years, had served God in angelic purity, and in heroic sacrifice. For seven months she was confined to a bed of pain and of suffering that deepened into agony. And, during those seven months, her prayer to God was, whilst suffering, to increase those sufferings. Not to let her leave the world until one whom she loved dearly, and who was leading a bad and reckless life, should be converted unto God. Weeks passed into months, and months followed months, and most frequently did I sit at the bedside of my holy friend. Month followed month for seven long dreary months, and she spent that time upon the Cross, truly with Jesus Christ. But when the first day of May came—the month of Mary—I came and knelt down by her bedside, to cheer her with prayer and with sympathy. She said to me, "I feel that the month is come that will give me joy and relief. It is Mary's month, and it is the month when prayer grows most powerful in heaven, because it is the month in which the Mother will especially hear our prayers." Before that month was over, he for whom she prayed was converted to God, with all the fervor of a true conversion; and when the month was drawing to a close, the sacrifice of pain and suffering was accepted, and she who began the month in sorrow, ended it with the joys of Jesus Christ and His Virgin Mother. So it is all the world over. His secret graces are poured out at the instance of Mary's prayer. And even as she was the Spring-time of grace upon earth, so is she over, now in heaven, by her prayer for us, the spring-time of holy grace, obtaining for us the grace of repentance, the grace of prayer, the grace of temperance, the grace and power of self-restraint—in a word, whatever grace we demand, that, springing up in our souls, will produce to-day the flower and leaf of promise—to-morrow, the fruit of maturity—and for eternity, the reward of grace which is the everlasting crown of God's glory.

THEY SEEK SALES, NOT SOULS

While conscientious ministers are warning that the land is veering paganwards, that the pace of the combined church membership before 1910 kept pace with the population, but since has lagged half way behind; while the Protestant religious statisticians, Dr. H. K. Carroll, is lamenting the "distinct disappointment" of the Men and Religion Forward Movement after its expenditure of \$1,000,000; while the Protestant Dr. Robertson Nicol is writing that in England the Catholic Church alone is "in a condition that warrants self-congratulation," and Dr. Horton in India is endeavoring to swell church membership by having all the Protestant denominations accept one another's converts; while ministers in this country to fill their churches are forced to the sad expedient of theatrical advertisement, sensational sermons, free lunches, moving pictures and vaudeville shows, and still unable to move the 56,000,000 Americans that are unaffiliated with any church; while in the last 40 years 5,000,000 were married people here professed to break what God had bound; while we have with us now more than a quarter-million people that have forsaken their marriage vow, and maybe quite as many that are living in unlawful, though not illegal, adultery; while in the year that has gone 200,000 in the land have heard their bonds snap and fly in the face of their 70,000 children; while the little ones are taught all the mysteries of life but none of death, all of earth but none of heaven, all of chicane and crime but none of conscience and Christ; while godless brows, self-garlanded with pride, are ripping the Bible to tatters, and ministers are decrying the fact that Protestantism, after having repudiated an infallible Pope, would set up the infallible "Paper Pope" of the Scriptures; and still without, while all Protestants and Catholics are praying for Church unity; while we are paying \$3,173,000,000 yearly to guard the country against crime; while Socialism is supplanting the mandates of the Creator with the mandates of the creature—the laws of God, with the lust of men; while through the land murder stalks with its red hand snatching a life at every hour; while 25,000 shameless women with fair faces and foul hearts are feeding in brilliant vice halls on the bestial carcasses of manhood; and countless poor are gasping for life in shops and mills and sunless alleys, is it not strange that in all this crimson crime, this wreck of home and happiness, this scene of sins and shames and sorrows—is it not strange that the Christian Herald of New York City should say in its editorial of November, 1912:

"We should welcome such fraternal concord among the various Protestant denominations as would inspire all to put themselves officially

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on record concerning the aggressions of Rome. . . . Out with your flags, brethren of the denominational press, and let the world see where you stand?"

Why this cry? Why the "fraternal concord" against this Church? If they cannot unite with it in things of faith, cannot they unite with it in its fight against Socialism and divorce, godlessness, free-love and crime? There is more work to be done in a year than all the churches will do in a century. Socialism and divorce, godlessness, free-love and crime are the common enemy within our gates. Why strengthen the enemy by weakening the influence of this one Church? The Socialist Berger says that this one Church is the only great organized opposition against his creed. The Protestant editor of the Despatch, O. Flavin, a recent issue speaks of "the air of sacredness" that pervades the Catholic Church—and the beauty of its marriage ceremony being fit for the brush of an artist. "No wonder," says he, "there are so few divorces among the Catholics! These people realize the solemn vows they are taking. . . . We cannot call to mind now that we ever knew of a case of free love among Catholics. . . . If this ceremony will cause men and women to live together till death; if the Catholic faith will cause man and wife to be honest and true to each other, then, in the Name of God, what is the matter with our Protestant religion?" And the Rev. W. J. Greer (Protestant) quoted in Western Catholic, January 17th, remarks, "How many times have I heard the remark, 'If the Catholics get the upper hand again they would persecute the Protestants.' . . . The Catholic Church

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never has and never will claim the right to compel people by force to become Catholics. Her only methods are those of persuasion, instruction and example. . . . Was it ever enacted in any Catholic country that anyone that refused to attend Mass should be heavily fined? Was it ever enacted in any Catholic country that no Protestant children should inherit land until they conformed to the Catholic faith?"

The very pagan, Dr. Anezaki Maraha, speaking not long ago to his pagan audience in Tokyo affirmed that this church has more authority than any other, has more interest in the people, and that the Pope is absolutely necessary to the progress of civilization. In the "Fairness Argument" (John F. Noll, Huntington, Ind., 1912), a book of five hundred pages, there are found several hundred of intelligent Protestant witnesses defending every single point of Catholic belief. With such Protestant intelligence arrayed against the Christian Herald fair Protestants will see that it is thoroughly un-Christian for the Christian Herald to herald sensations for the sake of sales, rather than truths for the salvation of souls.—The Marian.

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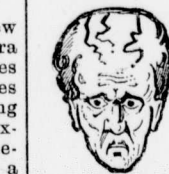
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