

as in the Latin Church. In the chain of the Fathers who are quoted as favorable to the doctrine, as many Eastern Fathers are to be found as Western ones.

An unexpected event, however, occurred, which disturbed the peace of those who believed in Mary's spotless Conception. The Canons of the Cathedral of Lyons, desirous of obtaining an advantage which other churches enjoyed, resolved to adopt and celebrate the Feast of Mary's Conception without applying for the Papal sanction, thus proceeding in this important matter on their own authority. This happened in the twelfth century, and St. Bernard, whose vigilant eye overlooked the whole world, raised his voice from the depths of the cloister and remonstrated sharply with the Canons on their action. He was indignant to see a feast observed which was not authorized by Rome, and he left the full weight of his displeasure full on the Chapter of Lyons. From that day St. Bernard was recognized as an opponent of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, and though he had written most beautifully and tenderly of Our Blessed Lady, he was regarded as failing to give her the privilege of having been conceived without spot. Passages have been quoted from his writings by Petavius and others which go to prove that he held simply that the Blessed Virgin was sanctified in the womb like Jeremias and St. John the Baptist. Many writers, however, like Cardinal Lambruschini, (*Polemical Treatise on the Immaculate Conception*, Ch. XXIII), have thought otherwise, and maintain that St. Bernard, in his famous Letter addressed to the Chapter of Lyons, referred most probably to the *active* and not the *passive* conception of the Blessed Virgin. Theologians

make this distinction: the *active* conception is where there is question of the generation of the body and its organization; the *passive* is effected when God places the rational soul in that body already duly formed and organized. It is the *passive*, not the *active*, conception which Catholics have in view when they speak of Mary's Immaculate Conception. There was nothing miraculous in Mary's generation, but God's mercy interposed in the fact of her conception, and granted her in this fact exemption from contracting original sin as happens to all of Adam's progeny, and this act of divine mercy was done in view of Christ's "merits foreseen," so that grace was poured into Mary's soul at the first instant of her being. Eve was made without sin; Mary was conceived without sin, and her exemption from original sin we must look at as not so much a gift, as a singular privilege accorded her by God.

After St. Bernard's condemnation of the Lyonese Canons, the battle began in earnest, and the field of the conflict was extended far and wide. Two sides were formed, and able champions entered the lists. We find on one side Nicholas of St. Albans, and on the other Pierre de Celles, both followed by a host of minor disputants. Nicholas contended for the ancient traditions of Great Britain, his native country. It has been said that England was the first among the Western countries to keep the feast of Mary's Conception, and a Council of London (A. D. 1328) attributed its introduction to St. Anselm, who had been Archbishop of Canterbury. From England the observance passed over to Normandy, and thence to Lyons. Pierre de Celles fought hard for the honor of St. Bernard, whose remonstrance against the