

with Nestorian heresy which was backed up by the intrigues and power of a debased court. Daily when we recite the *Ave Maria*, we are reminded of the Council of Ephesus, and we desire to have in our hearts the intense love of Mary that was buried deep in the hearts of the faithful people of Ephesus. Let us now pass down the long avenue of centuries, and we come to another day when Our Blessed Lady was again specially honored, and the faith and the devotion of her children were amply manifested in our own progressive times. The eighth day of December, 1854, ushered in new earthly glory for the Queen of Heaven. Rome was as jubilant as was Ephesus of old, when Pius IX. of happy memory proclaimed in St. Peter's Basilica the dogma of Mary's Immaculate Conception—a solemn declaration to the world of one of her most glorious privileges, the foundation of all her other privileges, without which the title of Mother of God might not, without doubt, have been conferred on her by the Most High. The number of bishops assembled in Rome on this auspicious occasion was the same number that gathered at Ephesus. The object of the more modern gathering was the same object at the Council of Ephesus: to proclaim honor to Mary. The Christian people of the nineteenth century were as expectant and as anxious to have Mary declared *Immaculate*, without spot or stain, as were the Ephesians of the fifth century to have her declared the Mother of God. Happier, however, than Pope St. Celestine, Pius IX. presided in person over the assembly of his brethren, the Cardinals, Patriarchs, Archbishops and Bishops from all quarters of the globe. He was happier also than his sainted predecessor, because he was not called

upon to strike one of his brethren of the Episcopate with the censures of the Church, and the arrogant Nestorius had no imitator in the gathering of December 8, 1854. Fifty thousand voices greeted with earnest thanksgiving Mary's glorious prerogative—it was an ardent, unanimous prayer that mounted to Heaven inside the Mother of all the churches, while outside salvos of artillery and the pealing of the city bells re-echoed the acclamations of those within the Basilica. There was joy on earth and joy in Heaven when all the earthly homage was laid at the feet of the Immaculate Virgin by God's ministering angels. Rome's festival became the world's festival.

We wish to treat of the historical, rather than of the polemical, side of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary in this paper. The dogmatical definition of the dogma has now settled all differences, but it is a matter of interest to all Catholics to see how this doctrine became embodied, after the lapse of ages and the din of incessant theological battle, in the articles of our Apostolic faith.

There is no doubt that belief in the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception lived in the minds of men long ages before it became the subject of controversy, for it is a certain fact that belief in many as yet unproclaimed doctrines of the Church always precedes the noise and wrangling of controversy which time creates. This belief possessed men's minds, and devout souls naturally sought to give expression to it in the ceremonies of worship and the forms of liturgy both in the Eastern and Western Church, for the doctrine was known and believed in the former Church, as we may ascertain from the oldest Greek Menologies, just as firmly