

# I FOUND THE ANCIENT WAY

By

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## CHAPTER TWO

### THE VIRGIN MARY

IN THE MONASTERY of El Parral the book of St. Alfonso Maria de Liguorio, *The Glories of Mary*, was read rather frequently. It inspired in my soul such a limitless confidence in the mother of JESUS that I had put all my hopes for salvation in her, and whenever I could I said the mass dedicated to her.

When the struggles of my soul about the Catholic dogmas began, the thing I most feared was to fall into the Protestant heresy. But I consoled myself thinking that while I kept my faith in the mother of JESUS it was impossible to leave her fold.

But little by little I began to notice that the Virgin Mary was after all a human being, and so there is an infinite distance between her and GOD, and that the place she occupies in the Scriptures is very different from what the Catholic Church at present ascribes to her.

Later, when the dogma of the Assumption was defined she was declared *Mediatrice of all graces*, the thought tormented me, "What place does JESUS CHRIST have in the spiritual development of souls if Mary is the Mediatrice and the distributor of all the divine favors?"

In my imagination JESUS stood before me like an old thing that needs to be retired from service; like those poor fellows who, after giving their lives to the carrying out of a job, are told to go home and take it easy.

This worship is causing people to forget CHRIST or to let Him become a decorative figure and is turning their eyes to Mary, to such an extent that today many good Christians are looking with sorrow at this change in the practices of the church and can't help questioning whether Catholics should be called Christians or Marians.

Let the following serve as an example.

Some time ago there arrived in Spain some repatriates from Russia.

It seems natural to think that they would be received with patriotic rejoicing and gratitude to GOD and JESUS CHRIST. But nothing of that sort happened. From the time when their ship appeared on the horizon, the speaker on the radio didn't cease to thank Mary, under her names of Mercy and Perpetual Aid. JESUS and the heavenly Father were not even mentioned.

I suppose the Catholics would answer to this the same as a young man of Catholic Action who stood next to me listening to the rebroadcast: "The speaker is not an authority on religious affairs; he is simply a man who speaks clearly." Agreed, but it still serves to show how a man of culture thinks, even though a layman in religion, and therefore how the people think.

The repatriates disembarked and then were taken to a church dedicated to the Virgin of Mercy. There the one who spoke was not a layman but a Catholic priest. One would suppose that he would thank GOD because some of his brethren were returning again to the fatherland. But whoever supposes such a thing is badly mistaken.

I won't say that down in his heart there may not have been a sense of gratitude to the Almighty, for only GOD knows our hearts. But his talks didn't show it. This priest didn't remember GOD or JESUS; he only had grateful words for Mary. I can assure you that in the whole ceremony not once was the name of GOD or of His Son mentioned. How can one call himself Christian if he doesn't remember CHRIST on such a special and joyful occasion?

There is a proverb that says that the Devil knows more because he is old than because he is a Devil.

And he shows his great knowledge of human nature in the transformation to which he has been subjecting the Catholic Church. If Satan had tried to make them forget CHRIST in a few years without giving them anything to take His place, he would not have succeeded.

But he has raised up as a standard in front of JESUS His blessed mother Mary.

This is not the work of a day but of sixteen or seventeen centuries. Every one or two hundred years something has been taken away from the worship of GOD to give it to the one who professed herself to be His servant and a sinner, since she needed a Saviour.

It has been a work of much patience, but one that is now reaching its climax.

The Holy Scriptures say nothing of the Immaculate Conception, and neither do they speak of these latest prerogatives of Assumption and Mediatrix of all graces.

The Holy Scriptures say in the words of Paul that we "**all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God**" because of our sinful nature (Romans 3:23).

It is evident that Paul fell into heresy, for he did not say "**all** (but Mary)."

As someone has said, it seems strange that for this and other teachings, like that of justification by faith, the Catholic Church has not excommunicated the Apostle to the Gentiles himself.

What do the Fathers of the first centuries think on this subject? Without a shadow of doubt they follow the "heresies" of Paul, for there is one who says about Mary what no Protestant would dare to say.

For example, Irenaeus, referring to the wedding at Cana, speaks of CHRIST's "checking her untimely haste" to have Him do the miracle (*Against Heresies*, Bk. 3, chap. 16, sec. 7).

John Chrysostom says that Mary at the wedding in Cana showed herself to be annoying and ambitious (*Hom. on John 2*). Who today would dare to apply such harsh adjectives to the mother of JESUS? No one. Yet the one who does it is one that the Catholic Church has on its altars.

Epiphanius says that we are to hold Mary in honor, "but adore and give worship to the Lord" (*Her. 79, 9*).

**This is just what we Evangelical Christians always do; we honor and love Mary because she is the mother of JESUS our Saviour, but we can't worship her with any kind of worship out of respect to the Word of GOD.**

It is true that the invocation of Mary and other saints (not worship in the way it is practiced today) appeared quite early in the Church, but not before the third century.

The quotations previous to the third century that the author of *St. Mary, Mother of GOD* offers us state nothing that could not be written by a good Evangelical Christian of our day. They speak of the virgin birth of CHRIST and the appreciation that we should show the one who was chosen of the Lord among all women, but nothing more.

The patristic texts that refer to Mary as an intercessor, not in today's form but in a much more modest way, are all later than the third century and are refuted by other opinions, especially those concerning her immaculate conception, in clear contrast to the decided and unanimous opinions concerning the miraculous conception of JESUS CHRIST her Son.

Tertullian says: "For to the Son of GOD alone was it reserved to persevere to the last without sin" (*Prescription against Heretics*, ch. 3).

And Ambrose adds that JESUS is the only One whom the snares of sin did not conquer; that no creature conceived by the contact of man and woman has been excepted from original sin; that He only has been expected who was conceived without that contact and by a virgin through the operation of the Holy Spirit (*On Psalm 118*).

Eusebius states that none is excepted from the stain of original sin, not even the mother of the Redeemer of the world. Only JESUS was exempt from the law of sin, although born of a woman subject to sin (*Emiss. in Horat. 2 de Nativ.*).

Who ever heard of such impudence! I don't know what the Pope in those times was thinking of when he didn't excommunicate such shameless people.

But there is still one very important Father, Augustine, who writes that the flesh of the Virgin differs in no way from the flesh of sin . . . but her body does not transmit the sin to the body of JESUS, whom she did not conceive through concupiscence (*Against Julian*, Bk. 5, ch. 13). And in another place he explains, "Mary died because of sin" (*On Psalm 35*, sec. 14).

We shall not be able to do anything else but find refuge in the Roman See, because the Popes are infallible, and of course there can't be any contradiction among them. So just as the present Popes give this doctrine as a dogma, the former ones must have held the same view. But with amazement we read that Pope Innocent III declared that Eve was formed without guilt and brought forth in guilt; that Mary was formed in guilt and brought forth without guilt (Sermon Assumpt.7. And Pope Leo I adds that among men only CHRIST was innocent, because "he alone was conceived and born without concupiscence" (*Letter to Julian*, sec. 3). Gregory the Great says the same thing (*Bibl. Patri. T.13*, p. 669).

The reader shouldn't be surprised that three Popes speak against the immaculate conception of Mary, because this miracle was a bright idea of Scotus.

It took six centuries for it to make its way, and in the nineteenth century it was declared a dogma of the faith, but of a new faith, not of the ancient one that the early Christians professed, which is the one we want to have.

The Assumption is a consequence of the previous doctrine, which we have already seen is rejected by the Holy Scriptures, the Fathers of the first centuries and the Popes themselves.

As for Mary's being the Mother of GOD, I shall present only one argument.

The word maternity indicates priority in time, and if GOD is eternal without doubt He cannot have a mother. We believe that Mary is the mother of JESUS. In the person of JESUS the divine and human natures enter and have a part. But her being mother of the person that results from it union does not imply that she is mother of the constituent parts. So to call her Mother of GOD is to rob GOD of His chief attribute, eternity.

~ end of chapter 3 ~

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