

The Blessed Virgin in the Nineteenth Century: Apparitions, Revelations, Graces

Bernard St. John, Brother Hermenegild TOSF

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This work commences with Saint Catherine Lboure and the Miraculous Medal. Next follows Our Lady of Victories. This is followed by La Salette. Then we come to Lourdes, where Mary confirmed the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. We close out with the apparitions of Pontmain and Pellevoisin. In truth, devotion to Mary now comes to us not only weighted with dogma and the experience of all the Christian ages, but we see it, moreover, illustrated by certain object-lessons bearing immediately upon our own time. These object-lessons are as flashes from the invisible world, beacon-lights along the horizon. We allude here to those Apparitions and Revelations, with their attendant phenomena, of which it is the object of the following pages to treat. It would seem as if Providence had waited until now in order to present these object-lessons quickly in succession to a world dazzled by its own science. And the world, in the name of science, seizes upon the object-lessons thus presented and applies to them its latest methods of investigation; but to no purpose. How explain, in a human sense and satisfactorily, the radiant Apparition at the Lourdes Grotto, or the no less radiant one in the night sky above Pontmain each accompanied by words that were to be singularly ratified by subsequent events? Or, how explain the instantaneous forming, at the voice of prayer, of sound flesh in an unsound part? Or the sudden acquiring of sight, speech, and hearing, by those who had never seen, spoken, or heard? All this Lourdes has witnessed. Or how explain the sudden and complete straightening of a backbone considered by science to be irremediably crooked, as in the case of Maria Vaugeois at Pontmain? The position occupied by the Virgin-Mother in the religious life of the 19th century, justifies us in asking whether we may not be even now entering upon those times alluded to by the Blessed Grignon de Montfort in the work just referred to, when he says :--" Christ wills that now His holy Mother be more known, more loved, and more honoured than ever; " and when a little further on he describes, as follows, the men who were to be raised up to combat in these latter times :- "They will have in their mouths the two-edged sword of the word of God; they will bear on their shoulders the ensanguined banner of the Cross; they will hold a crucifix in their right hand, and a rosary in their left; the sacred names of Jesus and Mary will he in their hearts, and the mortification and modesty of Christ in their whole conduct.

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