From The Chapelry: No. I.

The Mind of Mary of Nazareth

By Naomi, O.P.A.L.

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THE MIND OF MARY OF NAZARETH.

And when she saw him she was troubled at his saying and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.—*St. Luke* i.29.

The famous Dr. Johnson says: "A woman's preaching is like a dog's walking on his hind legs. It is not well done; but you are surprised to find it done at all." You have come to-night to hear a woman preach, so it is on your own head if you are disappointed in this sermon. But a sermon it is, and it is in honour of Mary of Nazareth.

I have to begin by saying that Mary has been an outcast for nearly two thousand years.

In the Roman part of the Church you have a goddess surrounded by lilies who is treated like a pagan goddess of fertility. There Mary herself is unknown, but her motherhood is lauded to the skies. But to be a really splendid mother you must first be a really

splendid woman. And that the Roman Church cannot allow at any cost. To see Mary as a person with a mind would be death to Rome.

The English Church is more intelligent but no whit less afraid of Mary. The English Church knows that Mary is an outcast. But though it hangs its head and looks furtive, it is too gentlemanly to bring in Mary's motherhood and leave Mary herself outside. So it turns its back hastily upon her and talks of something else. And at those moments when through the sheer necessity of a festival Mary has to be mentioned, a preacher is found with some talent for making poetical phrases. He makes them over the pulpit edge with real feeling. And little blue lights are prettily hung by her statue. All is then well, and the English Church smiles shyly across at Rome.

But Mary is not a flower, or a star. No, Mary is a human being with a mind. And the New Testament is full of its genius.

Prove it, you say.

I am a woman who for forty-five years gave ready assent to the authority of the male mind over my own. I was so happy in my secret friendship with Jesus Christ that I did not trouble very much about other things. I suffered, but I did not understand. Then,

suddenly, the roadway of my life came to an end. I beheld a chasm yawning at my feet. The road had brought me to a precipice. The light went out, and I was alone. It was then that God showed me why I had been born.

I must speak very plainly.

I believe that the male mind has interfered with God's purposes for the human race. I believe this with intense conviction. It is therefore my duty to God and to my neighbour to rest neither day nor night until I have done what I can to destroy the authority of the male mind in Church and State. My duty to God is to love Him with all my being. My duty to God is also to love my neighbour as myself. Who is my neighbour? It is clear to me that everyone is my neighbour, and that my neighbour lies bleeding to death, robbed and disinherited.

What I am saying will be misunderstood. It will, perhaps, be called by ugly names. I must not concern myself with that. I must push on with my work of rescuing my neighbour. I see what God means for us. He means us all to be happy *on earth*.

There will have to be a tearing away from orthodox Christianity of the deep-grown roots of that great network of theological weeds which has sprung from and nurtured itself

upon the fecund soil of the male attitude towards womankind which has its world-wide strangle-hold upon modern intercourse with God.

The destruction of these roots can only be wrought by folk who have severed themselves from ordinary life. The roots of evil cannot be destroyed with one hand. Their destruction cannot be planned by a mind engaged in other activities. Those who give themselves to this service must have had a vision of the world set free from evil. And they must see how that freedom is to be gained. There must be no prejudices, no petty hatreds, no scorn. But a loathing for evil that is strong enough to be deliberate. Weeds torn off in anger grow again. The sin of the world must be destroyed at its roots. The more widespread its growth the more violent and unsightly will be its removal. The true gardener wields merciless tools with the mercy of thoroughness. To some it may seem like the destruction of the very garden itself. Others will understand. To these we look. And we shall not look in vain.

The first thing to be done is to clear away the lilies from the statues of Our Lady. The lily idea is a very clever one. Lilies are there as a symbol of purity, and that seems at first

so beautiful. But this symbol is used, not to mark Mary as the sweetest, fairest, purest woman that ever lived, but to mark her off from all ordinary womanhood. To most men, you know, ordinary womanhood is a very strange business. But to every theologian, and to theologically-minded laymen, ordinary womanhood is bad. Many a woman lives and dies without perceiving this. And theologians must bury her with a sigh of relief. For it must be a great strain to know her to be of this evil nature and yet to have to treat her as a dear child of God. But theologians are very clever men. They have to be. Silently and inexorably, by those acts which speak more loudly than words, and while their daily life is teaching them it is a lie, they have to insist in the Name of God upon the badness of woman's nature. Poor men, you would think a task so wearing and so dangerous difficult enough. But that is not all. It is only half, and, indeed, the simpler half. For what they also have to do is to convince everyone that this bad thing, womanhood, is of no account. In fact, a theologian is a person who has to maintain that a Church which is Holy is half evil; and that a Church which spurns half the human race is Universal.

Or we might put it another way. A theologian is a person who has to maintain that all

the misery of the world has come about through the bad nature of women, and that this badness is of no account. There are other ways in which we might put it, but as we are not theologians we had better not attempt to do so. It might unhinge our minds. A more useful task lies before us.

Have you been doubting me? I am hoping that, if you are a woman, your life has so far been lived free of the horror of knowing that the Church considers you of a nature inherently bad. For I would not care to think of any woman suffering secretly and unaided the pangs of such knowledge. But at least you will realize that if what has been said of the theological view of ordinary womanhood is true, it is important that it be tracked to its hiding-place and exposed to the sunlight of the twentieth century.

We find ourselves, then, faced with a Question. What is this theological ban on women—is it of God or of men? This Question must be answered before the doors of the Church can begin to yield to the pressure of Mary's genius. For here is a point to be remembered. If the Church cannot admit Mary simply as a woman apart from her motherhood, it cannot and shall not admit any other woman. But behind Mary stands waiting the great host of the holy women of

our own generation, who ask no scrip or purse but only that they may serve.

Let us say it again. If the whole gamut of the vocations of the Christian life is to be open to every Christian, as Jesus Christ plainly taught, Mary—not as The Mother but as a woman—must be the first woman to enter.

But if Mary enters as one endowed with a mind, apart from the functions of the body, she will be found to be more highly endowed than Peter, John, or Paul. Theologians of Rome, Constantinople, and Canterbury have cried aloud that Mary, by some mysterious act of God, has escaped not only that particular evil inherent in womanhood but the whole taint of original sin, and is a sinless and perfect human being. According to our theologians, then, Mary is not only the only woman, but is the only human being with a perfect mind. This means, of course, that the mind of Mary of Nazareth should be the reigning human power in the Church. In other words, Mary, not Peter, should be the head of the Church upon earth. And though that may seem impossible to you now, the truth will gain steadily upon you because it is truth.

Now to our Question. What, then, is this ban on women in the Church? Yes, but what is the Church?

A great many people who are well instructed in root-principles of the Christian Religion declare that the Church is something larger than that community calling itself the Holy Catholic Church. These people say that what is called the Holy Catholic Church is not built upon the teaching of Christ, but upon human interpretations of that teaching. These people outside the Holy Catholic Church live what is declared to be by those inside a very good Christian life. That means chaos. That this Christian Religion is vigorously alive is certain. It lives—but it lives in chaos. Those Christians who live the sacramental life calling themselves Catholic are themselves implacably divided into various sets. And outside these one can only lift one's hands in sheer amazement. What can be the matter?

To me it looks very much like the goings-on of a large motherless family.

But, you say, to you it looks just as much like a family life where the mother is by no means dead, but she is feeble-minded, or drinks, or has some abnormal obsession. Well, that is the very thing we need to see. We need to see that a happy home life is not the automatic result of a female who has produced young, but that it is the result of the continual activity of a mind. And the nobler the mind the more perfect the home life. We learn, then, that

these two terms 'female' and 'woman' are not interchangeable but refer to two distinct things. Do you realize the importance of this? It is tremendous. It looks small enough, but so does a mustard seed.

The important thing, then, about a mother is not her motherhood but her womanhood, not her body but her mind. This sounds elementary enough, but we must remember that we are dealing with theologians, to whom these differences are not apparent. Our Lady, then, is not a female whose femaleness is best hidden by treating her as a flower or a star. No. Mary is a woman with a mind. Mary's greatness is the greatness of her mind. And this fact reveals this truth. It was not Mary's fair and virgin body that God chose for the Only-Begotten, the genius of her mind being but a happy chance. It was Mary's mind that God chose for the Only-Begotten. This adds meaning to the fact of her virginity, a meaning that we will discuss next time. And it enthrones Mary in her rightful place. It was Mary's mind that made the Motherhood possible. It was Mary's mind that was God's gift to us. For God meant His Church to be the happiest family in the whole earth. And, behold, it is the unhappiest.

We ought, then, to look squarely at our Church's unhappy home life, and even to

rejoice at it, for this unhappiness is at last forcing us to look around for the cause. But what is a happy home life? A happy home life is the only life on earth in which everyone, no matter what their age, sex, colour, peculiarities or powers, is loved, is happy, is at ease. The whole family of Christians with its Holy Apostles, Early Fathers, Popes, Archbishops, Patriarchs, Doctors, Moderators, and even Generals, is unhappy. These many fathers have failed. They have tried for two thousand years, and throughout that whole period of two thousand years they have failed. The finest minds of the males of the human race have failed. No one has interfered with their efforts. No one has denied them a single opportunity of success. But to establish a happy home life for the Christian community they have failed to do. They have failed—all of them, everywhere, always. What does this prove? It proves two things. It proves that a happy home life is the most masterly achievement of the human mind. And it proves that the male mind is not capable for the task.

The unhappiness of the great Christian family, then, is caused by the absence of the supreme mind of the human race, the mind of Mary of Nazareth. That mind should be the predominating human mind in the Church.

This is not my idea. It is God's plan for His Church.

Let us now return to our Question. What is the ban on women in the Church? We are suddenly aware of its importance. Because from what we have just seen it is obvious that this ban on women is not of God but of some sort of devil. It is quite clear that it is not a natural outcome of a situation created by Nature; it wears an unmistakable aspect of deliberate evil. So that our Question now looms above us like a mountain.

Have you read the Fathers of the Church? I do not mean little bits of edification. I mean have you read the unpruned Fathers? If so you will know that these theologians have helped to poison life for women for nearly two thousand years. That is to say that for nearly two thousand years they have ruined the Church's home life. For centuries men have leaned from pulpits exhorting women to be grateful to Christianity for their rise in the world. But Mr. James Donaldson says that the effect of early Christianity upon women was so serious and so different from what we might presume that we need to ponder it most carefully. We must ponder to-night as briefly as possible.

In the *Church Times* of June 23, 1933, we find that one of the Early Fathers called Tertullian, who lived about 200 A.D., "was not only the father of the Latin Fathers: he was every bit as much the theological child of the Greek" and "an important influence on the Greek theological giants of the third and fourth centuries." So that if we take two or three of this Tertullian's utterances on the nature of women we may consider ourselves in possession of a kind of essence of Early-Father thought on women. Here are three remarks of Tertullian's:—

(1) "Let us ponder over our consciousness itself to see how different a man feels himself when he chances to be deprived of his wife. He savours spiritually."

(2) "Nothing disgraceful is proper for man who is endowed with reason, much less for woman to whom it brings shame even to reflect of what nature she is."

Referring to the loathing of the early Church for marriage, Tertullian says to women:

(3) "The sentence of God on this sex of yours lives in this age. You are the devil's gateway. You destroy God's image, Man."

So much for a quotation or two.

But unless you are a Greek and Latin scholar you cannot read the works of the Early Christian Fathers. For there are passages written by them upon women that are too

noisome to be translated into English. These passages, however, the Church throughout its course of two thousand years has not destroyed. No. For two thousand years it has reserved them for the perusal of those of our young men who, aspiring to the priesthood, are to mould the home life of the Church. This fact should startle every Christian woman wide awake. Modern writings and conversations are very plain-spoken. Frankness is the modern boast. But modern scholars agree that passages written about women by the Fathers of the Church are too vile to be written in English. What was it, then, that so influenced these early Christian shepherds that they could so cruelly treat the larger half of their sheep and lambs? The answer seems to be—St. Paul. But St. Paul's harsh, ungovernable contempt for women was not an original growth. It could not have sprung from his view of what the Christian life should be, for that view gives the lie to his attitude to women. No. From childhood Paul's mind had been distorted by the teaching of Jewish Rabbis. A little study, which it is time women more generally undertook, soon reveals the source of this Rabbinical attitude towards womankind.

What, indeed, is this ban on women in the Church? We likened this Question to

a mountain. Beyond that mountain lies a puddle of filth. It is enclosed on all sides. To find it, in this generation, one has to creep to it. Regardless of its stench. But to-night we will go forth from this holy place to find it, taking God with us. Deliberately we will step down into the weltering filth and tear away for ever the foetid bushes that conceal its slime.

The puddle lies revealed as a myth. That myth is the male rendering of the story of the Fall of Man.

Eve, said the ancient theologians behind Paul, consented unto and with her own will committed fornication with—a serpent. In this manner, said they, sin entered the world. This explained, they taught, how Adam, being almost but not quite helpless, fell a victim to a tainted nature. It was through fallen Eve. And thus, said they, every child thereafter conceived, utterly helpless, was tainted by its parentage. This, they said, was the way in which sin entered the world. Through woman —in this manner.

Now, you will say, we know you are mad.

But I must refer you to Dr. N. P. Williams' book, *The Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin.* Here you will find put forth with the utmost care and caution, by a learned, devout, and well-known living scholar, the fact

that this abomination was taught by them of old time.

That such an abomination was impossible did not destroy its usefulness as a male theory. Men solemnly taught this as a doctrine. They could have found no greater force for evil. It delivered woman, bound, into their hands. They proceeded to crucify her. She hangs still upon that stark cross. Stripped as no man can ever be stripped. Whispering as no man can ever whisper: "God forgive them."

And through this new vision of Calvary we begin to perceive with dim terrified eyes Another Figure upon Its Cross—God.

Now we will turn to our own day.

Perhaps you have been saying scornfully: Tertullian! who pays any attention nowadays to Early Fathers?

The answer is that whether you sun-bathe on the Lido, sigh on an office stool, milk cows in a shed, or run a parish, your daily life is moulded for you by this very Tertullian and his fellows of remote and modern times. You have not escaped. You cannot escape. Every babe conceived enters the meshes of that old doctrine's net. The wheels of daily life are clogged, the joys of humanity are cut short, the wings of inspiration are heavy and draggled, because this poor foolish doctrine still

breeds its clammy suckers beneath the lawns of the garden of paradise where God means us to dwell with the happiness of happy children.

We need no Greek and Latin learning to help us here. The memory of the struggle by which the noblest of our women wrested the power to vote from the males of the land overshadows England still. And the memory of that male opposition stands to-day like a cold and ugly monument to the fact that the vile and foolish doctrine the Rabbis taught is still at work. Where are those fearful catastrophes with which the voting of women was to engulf the world? Why was the voting of women expected to bring forth catastrophe? Strange and secret, like some foul dark lake beneath a city, poisoning its waters, there lies beneath our daily life the turbid lie concerning the nature of women. Why may they not vote if they wish? Why, when women vote, should there be danger? Why may not women be ordained if they wish? Why? I do not ask that they may be ordained. I ask why may they not be ordained? Why must we have an Archbishops' Commission to think out an answer? If there is an answer how gladly it would have been given! But there is no answer. There is only fear.

I suppose Professor B. J. Kidd in his *Science of Power* has a sentence that is useful here.

He says: "What has to be recognized is that the fear of women's mental influence is exhibited as a kind of overwhelming obsession of the male intellect." George Sand in her *Fadette* says: "Those who are feared are always hated."

O, you cry, men do not hate women. You are right. "Women," says Mr. Langdon-Davies, "are powerful because desirable beyond all else to every man." That is more true than even Mr. Langdon-Davies realizes. It is not women that men hate. It is the Mind of Women. That is very different. Men do not dare to acknowledge the Mind of Women, for they see too well where such an acknowledgment would lead. It would lead to the eclipse of their own power. So fearful are they, indeed, that they have devised a way of hiding this very fear. It is to make a loud outcry about an object they call Woman. They pretend that it is this object that they fear and hate. They explain that this thing Woman is most powerful. Through her sex she is a power so overwhelming that they are more or less helpless in her hands. The scheme is as clever as the devil. Because by this means they have been able to blame someone else for their own sin. And by this means they have imprisoned the mind of women in a hell of shame and misery for unnumbered ages.

But what is this mysterious being called Woman with a capital letter?—this kind of She-Devil upon whose nature men love to dwell with excited shudderings? Large though she looms in the male mind, the truth is there is no such being. A nightmare of wickedness has evolved this elaborate Witch. Her cauldron is the male mind; its hateful brew male imaginings. Her broomstick is the madness of male envy. Men's fury with Woman is a drunken fury. See how they spit upon her and beat her with the palms of their hands! Read Schopenhauer's *Essay on Woman.* Men, reading it, shudder and shudder again, staring up with craven eyes at their beloved monster. The fact is that women's sex is men's obsession. They insist, Rabbi-like, that their obsession with women's sex is women's fault. They read into women's thoughts, words, and deeds that which masters their own. Under the dominion of this great male slander women are held in an age-long captivity. And through this captivity of women the human race is a slave to misery, disease, and death.

However strange it may sound to our ears, it was to set women free that God became Incarnate.

"And He came to Nazareth . . . . and stood up for to read . . . . . and found the place where it was written: The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because

He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And He closed the book and sat down, and began to say."—*St. Luke* iv. 16-30.

You will notice that we are not allowed to know what Jesus said. We are told, however, that the men of Nazareth rose up and thrust Him out of their city. And if you preach to-day that God means women to be delivered, you too will find the men of your place being filled with wrath. And they will rise up and thrust you too from their midst. And they will have you carried whence they may fling you down headlong. Yea, though you once may have been as the apple of the eye, as Jesus had been to Nazareth.

To-night, so busily have we been clearing away rubbish from our path that we can hardly do more than hint at the wonderful depths of Mary's glorious mind. We can but get a glimpse of that mind in the girlhood, before the Annunciation. But it will be enough to show us that what is to follow next time will startle us. Scales will then fall from our eyes. We shall then behold the lies that male minds have conceived wherewith to sear Our Lady's fame. One by one these lies shall be brought forth and spread out in the shining light of truth.

There is some talk to-day of women being already delivered—by the Vote. The Vote! All honour to that spiritual victory. But the desperate world needs a greater salvation. There is awaiting women and, through women, the world, that deliverance of which the prophets cried long centuries ago. And for which in the fullness of time God became Incarnate through the fearless mind of Mary of Nazareth.

The fullness of time! Why was that particular moment out of long centuries the fullness of time? Why did Gabriel appear in Nazareth, a little city in a little land? The answer is of God. The fullness of time was that in which the degradation of women was complete.

Every page of history—save perhaps a leaf or two from ancient Egypt—is made ghastly by the woes of its women. So was it also with the history of that nation which had chosen to worship the One and Only God. Let us examine the pages of their history, which we call the Holy Scriptures. But are we for ever to call these Scriptures HOLY? Scriptures—yes. The history of the soul of humanity—perhaps. A story of God's unutterable love—yes. But the Bible reeks with male wickedness. From cover to cover of the Old Testament it paints its obscene

pictures. And in these Scriptures Mary was bidden to instruct her mind.

This at least women have been allowed—that one of their number is pure. If only one, at least that one is wholly innocent. Mary and the Old Testament! The realization sends a shudder of horror through the soul. The stories of powerful males glutting themselves with lust. This is what religious men laid open to Mary's wondering eyes. And like every other girl Mary marvelled and was silent. Divines love to dwell upon the silences of Mary. But here is a silence of Mary that they have overlooked.

History nowhere has a page so hideous, so replete with overloadings of wickedness as that made by Jewish Rabbis in the time of Mary of Nazareth. Not because the Jews were more cruel or more licentious than men of other nations. But because what they did and said they did and said in the Name of the One and Only God Whose Law was Love. Diabolical wickedness was not yet heaped to the brim. Women were yet to be branded and crucified in the Name of Jesus. But it gave God a chance. And He took it.

What a cry broke from heaven!

At that moment of time when the degradation of women was complete God found in the centre of that degradation—Mary.

The best men of the Jewish nation were standing up daily in the Temple at Jerusalem to thank God they had not been born a woman. Not because they deplored her misery, but because they scorned her. Women were being bought and sold in marriage like cattle. They belonged absolutely to the head male of their house. Helpless slave-girls were acknowledged to be at the mercy of all the males of a household, fathers and sons promiscuously. Not for service, you understand, or for punishment, but for indulgence of lust. A woman was so utterly a thing of nought that a Rabbi would not acknowledge his own wife in the street. A woman could be divorced for burning her husband's food, or for raising her voice, or for crossing the street with uncovered head. Or, as one Rabbi taught with a sneer, if a man saw anyone else he liked better. That was not all. A woman was not allowed to enter the synagogue if her physical condition was one to which males objected. In that time, then, in what is called the Holy Land, how defenceless must have been a woman's virginity! Yet here was Mary, a virgin.

How Mary was able to retain her virginity we shall consider next time. It has a most important bearing upon the story of her life. But all we need now to know is that she did so.

"The angel Gabriel was sent from God to a virgin . . . . . and the virgin's name was Mary."

People love to paint angels with wings. But angels have no wings. They do not fly. They go and come as your mother or brother, save that their powers of movement are less limited. Nor are they, of course, male beings. Our Lord Himself gives us this information, but like much else He told us it has been convenient to put it aside. The beautiful figure of Gabriel had no wings. Nor was Mary of Nazareth a goddess.

Have you ever realized that we see Mary first through the eyes of an Archangel? And that the sight of her filled the Archangel with joy? His cry was a cry of rapture. Has the Church made anything of this remarkable fact —that it was to a girl that the Archangel Gabriel uttered his great cry of salutation? For, remember, that salutation was not one whit necessary to the Annunciation. Nor is there any ground here for changing Mary into a goddess. She is simply a girl. This economy of words is pregnant with meaning. And that meaning is God's gift to us, to the Church, and to the world. Think what it means. It means that womanhood was all that God needed of humanity for the Incarnation. Remember also that the Incarnation came about through Mary's mind. Men seize

upon a woman's body. But God waited upon Mary's will.

"And the angel came in unto her."

And what did he find Mary doing? How was she caught by this unexpected visitor? What a picture is painted here! No walled garden, no beautiful cool bare room, well-path, or hiding-place in a corner of the Women's Court of the Temple. The story spurns the adorning of sunlit walls, springing lilies, or distant glimpses of ascending incense. By the will of God we see Mary only. Mary, full of grace. And the grace of Mary is her womanhood. No word of the story dehumanizes her. She glows with that same exquisite charm that belongs to our own rare beloved women. No goddess has ever had the power that a woman has to stir human beings to their depths. God does not need to dehumanize Mary. Rather He presses upon our attention that her perfection is a perfection wholly human. And looking upon her with fearless love, we shall perceive her to be unique in the history of the human race. As we continue our search we shall find overwhelming evidence that her genius outstrips that of any other human being. Mary of Nazareth thinks and says and does nothing that is not stamped with the grace of simplicity. And, I ask you, what

nobler sign can the immortal spirit give of its genius than grace of simplicity? It is of the essence of the nature of God. And it is the lack of it that is the curse of all theology—that science which takes from a man the best he can give. As soon as the eye of the scientific world is trained upon the despised and maltreated mind of women, it will be found that its essence, foundation, and crown is this genius of the grace of simplicity.

It matters not one jot where Gabriel found Our Lady. But it does matter what Mary was doing. I say to you that Mary was found doing the normal and important thing that all girls would have been doing in the conscious presence of God. She was thinking. Her mind was going upon its way of thought. The mind of a girl, you know, is the great treasure-house of humanity. Its force is tremendous. Its fiery purity is terrible.

"And the angel said: Hail highly favoured the Lord is with thee blessed art thou among women."

'Highly favoured.' 'Blessed art thou among women.' Gabriel uttered no such words. They are the words that men have put into his mouth. And they are lying words. The mistranslation is no mistranslation. It is a lie. They are words wherewith male skill has cast Mary out of her place in the Church. Do not

believe me. Search for yourselves. But I tell you that what Gabriel cried bore to the earth a different message. God sent to the world saying: Womanhood is My resting-place, My joy. That is the meaning of Gabriel's cry: Hail blessed and gracious one with whom the Lord is. To male pride the truth would have been death. Before such a picture of the mind of a woman the male authority of the Church would have fallen backward to the ground. For nowhere among men can such a mind be found.

> "And when she saw him she was troubled at his saying and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be."

The words give us a splendid snapshot of the mind of woman. What manner of salutation. Not what manner of messenger. O, no. Heaven is real—then why not an angel? Why be amazed or affrighted? An angel—someone from heaven. In a sense, then, familiar. No curiosity as to who or how or what. No. But the salutation *was* puzzling. Mary and her hosts of companions are not accustomed to salutations.

If you look back into written history can you remember any salutations being given to young virgin girls? By the State? Or by the Church? No, History will certainly yield us

no incidents of salutations being given to girls. I perceive that this puzzlement of Mary's mind was the natural outcome of the age-long way of treating girlhood. The *Church Times* drew unconscious attention to the male way of treating girlhood a week or so ago. It called its article 'The Unchanging Miss,' and so with male cleverness and godlessness sponged girlhood from the grey slate of its mind.

"She was troubled at his saying." The word 'troubled' here means 'moved' or 'stirred' as water is troubled, rather than its other sense of distress or fear. There would not have followed the words 'cast in her mind' had Mary been afraid or distressed. To cast about in the mind is a deliberate activity. You can only do it when you are master of yourself. This is a finished word picture. No one face to face with some awful apparition from another world, no one trembling with sick nerves, can cast about in the mind. The words 'cast in her mind' inform us that Mary was completely master of herself in the presence of this extraordinary personage called Gabriel. Yet Mary was no goddess. Here, then, we have a girl having a conversation with an Archangel. Or, if you prefer it, the great Archangel of God holding converse with a girl. Turn it how we will, we have to recognize that here we are brought face to face with a fact

that is inconvenient to male pride, but which is of vital importance to the Church and, therefore, to the world. I mean the at-homeness of the mind of a woman in heavenly things. There were only two ways of escape for male pride. One was to turn Mary into a goddess. The other was to ignore her.

The Roman Church reiterates with a passion that is not always fearless the sinlessness of Mary. The Roman Church need not be distressed. Mary was sinless. Mary of Nazareth was more spotless than ever the Roman Church conceived. We will enter into this later on, but now it is enough that we take Mary's sinlessness so much for granted that we do not need the aid of passion. All that we do need is to know that to turn Mary into a goddess is no way of God's for proving Mary sinless.

The male authorities of the Church are not the Church. The Holy Catholic Church is of very simple formation. People who think highly of Jesus of Nazareth are not Christians.

The Holy Catholic Church is formed simply of Christians; that is, of people who believe that Jesus of Nazareth is God Incarnate. No thing else and no one else. Organizations born of male thought and male authority are dangerous to this belief. This fact must be established before the sacramental life can

break forth on all sides. But break forth it will, with the triumph of the sun that has always been shining behind the clouds.

The male authorities of the Church have made grievous mistakes. They all arise from the refusal to accept the Mind of Mary of Nazareth as the greatest power in the Church on earth. Men have always seen that to acknowledge Mary's mind would destroy their own authority. But that is just what this New Age needs. Old things are passed away. A new heaven and a new earth are come into being. Listen to the newborn Age! Its strong crying is the sign of its vigour. But what is it that alone can comfort it? What is it that alone can maintain its life? It is Jesus. The world needs Jesus. It is craving with a cleaving tongue for Jesus, Incarnate God.

But, you say, the world has had Jesus for two thousand years.

And I say to you: This generation needs Jesus as the mind of woman alone can give Him to the world.

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