

Why I Became A Protestant

by

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CHAPTER FIVE

MARY, OUR MOTHER

After what has been said, the statement I am going to make will be a surprise.

We must love and venerate the Virgin Mary, mother of Jesus, with all the affection of our hearts. He who loves God must love that which is of God. From this is born the obligation of loving one's neighbor.

He who loves Jesus Christ, loves everything that is of Jesus Christ. Just as the one who loves a person loves all that is of that person: his family and friends.

From this is born the obligation of loving the Virgin, mother of Jesus. Because who is more of Jesus than His mother? She cared for Him with such tenderness, served Him and loved Him so during His life, fulfilled with such perfection the commands of Jesus, that those of us who love Jesus Christ cannot do less than love her dearly and be grateful to her for what she did for our beloved and good Jesus.

But everything has its limit. One should not love the Virgin Mary more than Jesus, nor place her at the top, not even as the center of our Christian life.

No one else can occupy the place which belongs to Jesus Christ unless He should grant it. If He had suggested it during His life, we would do it now according to His divine will.

But He never told us, nor did His Apostles either, that all the graces should come to men through Mary.

The universal mediation of Mary is something added later by Catholic authorities without any scriptural foundation.

On the contrary; in the New Testament we find the opposite of this Catholic glorification of the Virgin Mary. It is true that she was called "**blessed among women**" by the angel Gabriel, and all evangelical Christians recognize and exalt her as such.

I must say that, like almost all Catholics, I had a mistaken idea of the appreciation which the Blessed Virgin Mary draws from evangelical Christians.

On entering into relationship with them I discovered my mistake. No one loves the mother of the Saviour more from the heart than those who are called Protestants. But in face of the teachings of the Gospel they do not feel free to exalt her above the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. They do not find in the Holy Scriptures that she is the universal mediatrix, queen of the angels, dispenser of all divine graces and favors.

When the Virgin Mary goes in search of Jesus and they announce to Him her arrival, telling Him: **“Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee,”** the Saviour’s reply surprises the Catholic accustomed to thinking in the terms of his Church about the so-called “Queen of Heaven.”

“And he answered them, saying, Who is my mother, or my brethren? And he looked round about on them which sat about him, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother.”

In the same way, when a woman became enthusiastic hearing the Lord’s preaching and uttered an exclamation of exalted glorification of the Virgin Mary, saying, **“Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked,”** instead of being approved by the Lord, anticipating the glories which Mary should receive, according to Catholic teaching, and recommending devotion to His mother, as any priest of our day would have done, Jesus simply replied:

“Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it” (Luke 11:27, 28).

Jesus Christ did not deny that the Virgin Mary is blessed. *But in both cases, taking away importance from the person of the Virgin, He exalted faith and obedience to the Word of God.*

That is, instead of acting like a Catholic, our Lord behaved just exactly as any Protestant of our day would.

Does not this argument have force?

On the other hand, we see that in Catholicism the worship of Mary has absorbed the piety of the people, and that sanctuaries, hermitages and devotions to Mary are many more than to Jesus.

This is simply an inversion of values.

It is said as a reply to this argument, *“She is our Mother.”*

Let us analyze this Catholic belief and we shall see that it is founded solely on the words spoken by Jesus on the Cross, **“Behold thy mother”** (John 19:17).

John is the only evangelist who relates it.

Commenting on these words of Jesus, the Catholic commentators have believed that they understood that Jesus was handing over Mary as their mother to all men present, absent and future. And that He was committing all men to Mary as her sons.

But what is recorded in the Gospel is that Jesus Christ commits men to Peter: “**Feed my lambs, feed my sheep.**” Jesus Christ did not have flocks of sheep or of lambs. He was clearly referring to men.

He committed to Peter the care of those whom He saw as sheep of a flock which had been without a shepherd, and now was going to be left again without Him. “Take care of them, Peter. Feed them with good doctrine, the doctrine which I have taught you.”

And we ask, “Why does He commit them to Peter if He had already entrusted them to Mary, and not simply as a shepherdess but as a mother?”

Is it that He has no confidence in His mother? Or is it perchance that her protection is not enough?

It is a redundancy which makes no sense, understanding it as the Catholics do.

The truth is that the Lord committed His mother to John, and men to Peter.

Moreover, if Jesus Christ wanted her to be our mother, it would not have cost Him any more trouble to say, “Behold *your* mother,” speaking to those who were present, than to say to John only, “**Behold thy mother.**” And it would not have cost Him anything to say to His mother, “Behold thy *sons.*”

If there had not been at Calvary anyone but John, perhaps the Catholic interpretation could be better explained; but the Magdalene was there, the other pious women, and the disciples, and others.

The Gospel expresses it very clearly. He addresses John alone, so that he will play the part of a son and care for her with filial affection, and comfort her in her loneliness as a true son would. And he suggest to her that she should not grieve too much. That she should look upon John, the beloved disciple of her Son, Jesus, as one put in His place, as a true son.

So that this Gospel passage can be better clarified, we shall set forth a comparison which everyone can understand.

A farmer wants to give a sack of wheat to a friend in return for favors received, or as a proof of friendship. He takes his friend to the granary, which is full of sacks of wheat; pointing out one he says to him, “Here is your sack. You can take it away whenever you want.”

If that friend who was given a sack of wheat should come with a cart, and want to take away all the sacks because he was told, “Here is your sack,” would anyone say that he was right?

Would anyone understand that when it was said, “This is your sack,” all of them were given to him?

And if what is given is a living thing, for example a dove which is in a dovecote; the owner would say, pointing to the prettiest dove, “Here is your dove.” And perhaps taking it tenderly in his hands he would say, when he hands it to his little friend, “Go along, go along with him; this is your master.”

Would anyone understand that he is giving his friend all the doves in the dovecote, or that he is giving the dove to all the children of the neighborhood as its owners?

The expression of Jesus in the singular has the same sense, “**Behold thy mother.**” It should be understood just as it sounds, in the singular.

There is no reason for speaking metaphorically here.

But the fact is that there was an orator who began to make literature and poetry with this expression. It was liked, it became popular, and tradition has preserved it, basing Catholic Mariology on it.

Let us not forget what we said when treating of the Roman pontiff and the giving of the keys to Peter: Jesus knows how to speak properly and to express what He means to say.

~ end of chapter 5 ~

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