

**Mary**  
**The Second Eve**



# Mary The Second Eve

JOHN HENRY NEWMAN



TAN BOOKS

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## PREFACE

This pamphlet consists of a series of extracts from some of the books written by John Henry Newman. The extracts are arranged systematically so as to provide continuous reading of his key-thoughts and key-explanations about the Blessed Virgin. There is no word other than Newman's in the pamphlet—except where he himself quotes the early Fathers of the Church.

A very important part of the pamphlet is that of the quotations Newman gives—chiefly in the section on THE SECOND EVE, but also in that on THEOTOCOS—from the early Fathers of the Church, who had received the teaching of the Apostles. It was his reading of the Fathers which made him realise that *their* teaching—being the teaching of the early Church—was the true teaching,—teaching based on the truth of Scripture.

On 29th January, 1868, Newman, when commenting on the acceptance—in England—of his Apologia, wrote: “. . . Perhaps He wishes me to do nothing new, but He is creating an opportunity for what I have already written to work. . . . Perhaps my name is to be turned to account as a sanction and outset by which others, who agree with me in opinion, should write and publish instead of me, and thus begin the transmission of views in religious and intellectual matters congenial with my own to the generation after me.” (From THE LIFE OF JOHN HENRY CARDINAL NEWMAN, by Wilfrid Ward, London, 1912. Vol. II p. 204).

H.H. Pope Paul VI used part of the above quotation in his address to the Newman Symposium (7th April, 1975), and he added: “. . . the present time can be considered in a special way as Newman’s hour, in which with confidence in Divine Providence, he placed his great hopes and expectations. . . . it is precisely the present moment that suggests, in a particularly pressing and persuasive way, the study and diffusion of Newman’s thought. . . . May his prayer become ours too: ‘Enable me to believe as if I saw; let me have Thee always before me as if Thou wert always bodily and sensibly present. Let me ever hold communion with Thee, my hidden, but my living God.’” (Meditations and Devotions).

18th June, 1977.

*Feast of The Immaculate Heart of Mary.*

SISTER EILEEN BREEN, F.M.A.,

Compiler.



## SOURCES

- I A LETTER TO THE REV. E. B. PUSEY, D.D., ON  
HIS RECENT EIRENICON  
BY JOHN HENRY NEWMAN, D.D., OF THE  
ORATORY  
(Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1866).
- II MEDITATIONS AND DEVOTIONS OF THE  
LATE CARDINAL NEWMAN  
(Longman, Green and Co., 1893).
- III DISCOURSES ADDRESSED TO MIXED  
CONGREGATIONS  
BY JOHN HENRY NEWMAN  
(Dublin: James Duffy, Wellington Quay and  
London: 22 Paternoster Row, 1862).
- IV SAYINGS OF CARDINAL NEWMAN  
Originally published 1890.  
(Carraig Books (Reprints 3—1976),  
Blackrock, Co. Dublin).
- V TO HENRY WILBERFORCE Maryvale,  
January 19th, 1948.  
(The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman—  
Volume XII)  
(Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd.).



## INTRODUCTORY EXTRACTS

. . . there just now seems a call on me . . . to avow plainly what I do and what I do not hold about the Blessed Virgin, that others may know, did they come to stand where I stand, what they would, and what they would not, be bound to hold concerning her. (I p. 27).

\* \* \*

Though I hold, as you know, a process of development in Apostolic truth as time goes on, such development does not supersede the Fathers, but explains and completes them. And, in particular, as regards our teaching concerning the Blessed Virgin, with the Fathers I am content; . . . the Fathers are enough for me. (I p. 26).

\* \* \*

I fully grant that *devotion* towards the Blessed Virgin has increased among Catholics with the progress of centuries; I do not allow that the *doctrine* concerning her has undergone a growth, for I believe that it has been in substance one and the same from the beginning. (I p. 28).

\* \* \*

The faith is everywhere one and the same; but a large liberty is accorded to private judgment and inclination as regards matters of devotion. (I p. 30).

\* \* \*

I recollect one saying among others of my confessor, a Jesuit father, one of the holiest, most prudent men I ever knew. He said that we could not love the Blessed Virgin too much, if we loved our Lord a great deal more. (I p. 23).

\* \* \*



## The Second Eve

What is the great rudimental teaching of Antiquity from its earliest date concerning her? By “rudimental teaching” I mean the *primâ facie* view of her person and office, the broad outline laid down of her, the aspect under which she comes to us, in the writings of the Fathers. She is the **Second Eve**. Now let us consider what this implies. Eve had a definite, essential position in the First Covenant. The fate of the human race lay with Adam; he it was who represented us. It was in Adam that we fell; though Eve had fallen, still, if Adam had stood, we should not have lost those supernatural privileges which were bestowed upon him as our first father. Yet though Eve was not the head of the race, still, even as regards the race, she had a place of her own; for Adam, to whom was divinely committed the naming of all things, entitled her “**the Mother of all the living**”, a name surely expressive, not of a fact only, but of a dignity; but further, as she thus had her own general relation to the human race, so again had she her own special place as regards its trial and its fall in Adam. In those primeval events, Eve had an integral share. “**The woman, being seduced, was in the transgression.**” She listened to the Evil Angel; she offered the fruit to her husband, and he ate of it. She co-operated, not as an irresponsible instrument, but intimately and personally in the sin; she brought it about. As the history stands, she was a *sine-qua-non*, a positive, active, cause of it. And she had

her share in its punishment; in the sentence pronounced on her, she was recognised as a real agent in the temptation and its issue, and she suffered accordingly. In that awful transaction there were three parties concerned,—the serpent, the woman, and the man; and at the time of their sentence, an event was announced for the future, in which the three same parties were to meet again, the serpent, the woman, and the man; but it was to be a second Adam and a second Eve, and the new Eve was to be the mother of the new Adam. **“I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed.”** The Seed of the woman is the Word Incarnate, and the Woman, whose seed or son He is, is His mother Mary. This interpretation, and the parallelism it involves, seem to me undeniable; but at all events (and this is my point) the parallelism is the doctrine of the Fathers, from the earliest times; and, this being established, we are able, by the position and office of Eve in our fall, to determine the position and office of Mary in our restoration.

I shall adduce passages from their writings, with their respective countries and dates; and the dates shall extend from their births or conversions to their deaths, since what they propound is at once the doctrine which they had received from the generation before them, and the doctrine which was accepted and recognised as true by the generation to whom they transmitted it.

First, then, St. Justin Martyr (A.D. 120-165), St. Irenæus (120-200), and Tertullian (160-240). Of these Tertullian represents Africa and Rome; St. Justin represents Palestine; and St. Irenæus Asia Minor and Gaul;—or rather he represents St. John the Evangelist, for he had been taught by the Martyr St. Polycarp, who was the intimate associate as of St. John, so of the other Apostles.

## 1. St. Justin:—

“We know that He, before all creatures, proceeded from the Father by His power and will, . . . and by means of the Virgin became man, that by what way the disobedience arising from the serpent had its beginning, by that way also it might have an undoing. For Eve, being a virgin and undefiled, conceiving the word that was from the serpent, brought forth disobedience and death; but the Virgin Mary, taking faith and joy, when the Angel told her the good tidings, that the Spirit of the Lord should come upon her and the power of the Highest overshadow her, and therefore the Holy One that was born of her was Son of God, answered, ‘Be it to me according to Thy word.’”

—*Tryph.* 100.

## 2. Tertullian: —

“God recovered His image and likeness, which the devil had seized, by a rival operation. For into Eve, as yet a virgin, had crept the word which was the framer of death. Equally into a virgin was to be introduced the Word of God which was the builder-up of life; that, what by that sex had gone into perdition, by the same sex might be brought back to salvation. Eve had believed the serpent; Mary believed Gabriel; the fault which the one committed by believing, the other by believing has blotted out.”

— *De Carn. Christ.* 17.

## 3. St. Irenæus:—

“With a fitness, Mary the Virgin is found obedient, say-

ing, 'Behold Thy handmaid, O Lord; be it to me according to Thy word.' But Eve was disobedient; for she obeyed not, while she was yet a virgin. As she, having indeed Adam for a husband, but as yet being a virgin . . . becoming disobedient, became the cause of death both to herself and to the whole human race, so also Mary, having the predestined man, and being yet a Virgin, being obedient, became both to herself and to the whole human race the cause of salvation. . . . And on account of this the Lord said, that the first should be last and the last first. And the Prophet signifies the same, saying, 'Instead of fathers you have children.' For, whereas the Lord, when born, was the first-begotten of the dead, and received into His bosom the primitive fathers, He regenerated them into the life of God, He Himself becoming the beginning of the living, since Adam became the beginning of the dying. Therefore also Luke, commencing the line of generations from the Lord, referred it back to Adam, signifying that He regenerated the old fathers, not they Him, into the Gospel of life. And so the knot of Eve's disobedience received its unloosing through the obedience of Mary; for what Eve, a virgin, bound by incredulity, that Mary, a virgin, unloosed by faith."

—*Adv. Haer. iii. 22. 34.*

And again:—

"As Eve by the speech of an Angel was seduced, so as to flee God, transgressing His word, so also Mary received the good tidings by means of the Angel's speech, so as to bear God within her, being obedient to His word. And, though the one had disobeyed God, yet the other was drawn to



obey God; that of the virgin Eve the Virgin Mary might become the advocate. And, as by a virgin the human race had been bound to death, by a virgin it is saved, the balance being preserved, a virgin's disobedience by a virgin's obedience."

—*Ibid.* v. 19.

Now what is especially noticeable in these three writers, is, that they do not speak of the Blessed Virgin merely as the physical instrument of our Lord's taking flesh, but as an intelligent, responsible cause of it; her faith and obedience being accessories to the Incarnation, and gaining it as her reward. As Eve failed in these virtues, and thereby brought on the fall of the race in Adam, so Mary by means of them had a part in its restoration. . . . not to go beyond the doctrine of the Three Fathers, they unanimously declare that she was *not* a mere instrument in the Incarnation, such as David, or Judah, may be considered; they declare she co-operated in our salvation not merely by the descent of the Holy Ghost upon her body, but by specific holy acts, the effect of the Holy Ghost within her soul; that, as Eve forfeited privileges by sin, so Mary earned privileges by the fruits of grace; that, as Eve was disobedient and unbelieving, so Mary was obedient and believing; that, as Eve was a cause of ruin to all, Mary was a cause of salvation to all; that as Eve made room for Adam's fall, so Mary made room for our Lord's reparation of it; and thus, whereas the free gift was not as the offence, but much greater, it follows that, as Eve co-operated in effecting a great evil, Mary co-operated in effecting a much greater good.

And, besides the run of the argument, which reminds the reader of St. Paul's antithetical sentences in tracing the analogy between Adam's work and our Lord's work, it is well

to observe the particular words under which the Blessed Virgin's office is described. Tertullian says that Mary "**blotted out**" Eve's fault, and "**brought back the female sex**", or "**the human race, to salvation**"; and St. Irenæus says that "**by obedience she was the cause or occasion**" (whatever was the original Greek word) "**of salvation to herself and the whole human race**"; that by her the human race is saved; that by her Eve's complication is disentangled; and that she is Eve's Advocate, or friend in need. It is supposed by critics, Protestant as well as Catholic, that the Greek word for Advocate in the original was Paraclete; it should be borne in mind, then, when we are accused of giving Our Lady the titles and offices of her Son, that St. Irenæus bestows on her the special Name and Office proper to the Holy Ghost.

So much as to the nature of this triple testimony; now as to the worth of it. For a moment put aside St. Irenæus, and put together St. Justin in the East with Tertullian in the West. I think I may assume that the doctrine of these two Fathers about the Blessed Virgin, was the received doctrine of their own respective times and places; for writers after all are but witnesses of facts and beliefs, and as such they are treated by all parties in controversial discussion. Moreover, the coincidence of doctrine which they exhibit, and again, the antithetical completeness of it, show that they themselves did not originate it. The next question is, Who did? for from one definite organ or source, place or person, it must have come. Then we must inquire, what length of time would it take for such a doctrine to have extended, and to be received, in the second century over so wide an area; that is, to be received before the year 200 in Palestine, Africa, and Rome. Can we refer the common source of these local traditions to

a date later than that of the Apostles, St. John dying within thirty or forty years of St. Justin's conversion and Tertullian's birth? Make what allowance you will for whatever possible exceptions can be taken to this representation; and then, after doing so, add to the concordant testimony of these two Fathers the evidence of St. Irenæus, which is so close upon the School of St. John himself in Asia Minor. "A three-fold cord", as the wise man says, "is not quickly broken." Only suppose there were so early and so broad a testimony, to the effect that our Lord was a mere man, the son of Joseph; should we be able to insist upon the faith of the Holy Trinity as necessary to salvation? Or supposing three such witnesses could be brought to the fact that a consistory of elders governed the local churches, or that each local congregation was an independent Church, or that the Christian community was without priests, could Anglicans maintain their doctrine that the rule of Episcopal succession is necessary to constitute a Church? And then recollect that the Anglican Church especially appeals to the ante-Nicene centuries, and taunts us with having superseded their testimony.

4. St. Cyril of Jerusalem (315-386) speaks for Palestine:—

"Since through Eve, a virgin, came death, it behoved, that through a Virgin, or rather from a Virgin, should life appear; that, as the Serpent had deceived the one, so to the other Gabriel might bring good tidings."

—*Cat. xii. 15.*

5. St. Ephrem Syrus (he died 378) is a witness for the Syrians proper and the neighbouring Orientals, in contrast to the Græco-Syrians. A native of Nisibis on the further side of the Euphrates, he knew no language but Syriac.

“Through Eve, the beautiful and desirable glory of men was extinguished; but it has revived through Mary.”

—*Opp. Syr. ii. p. 318.*

Again:—

“In the beginning, by the sin of our first parents, death passed upon all men; today, through Mary we are translated from death unto life. In the beginning, the serpent filled the ears of Eve, and the poison spread thence over the whole body; today, Mary from her ears received the champion of eternal happiness: what, therefore, was an instrument of death, was an instrument of life also.”

—*iii. p. 607.*

6. St. Epiphanius (320-400) speaks for Egypt, Palestine, and Cyprus:—

“She it is, who is signified by Eve, enigmatically receiving the appellation of the Mother of the living. . . . It was a wonder that after the fall she had this great epithet. And, according to what is material, from that Eve all the race of man on earth is generated. But thus in truth from Mary the Life itself was born in the world, that Mary might bear living things, and become the Mother of living things. Therefore, enigmatically, Mary is called the Mother of living things. . . . Also, there is another thing to consider as to these women, and wonderful,—as to Eve and Mary. Eve became a cause of death to men . . . and Mary a cause of life; . . . that life might be instead of death, life excluding death which came from the woman, viz. He who through the woman has become our life.”

—*Haer. 78. 18.*

7. By the time of St. Jerome (331-420), the contrast between Eve and Mary had almost passed into a proverb. He says (*Ep. xxii. 21, ad Eustoch.*), **“Death by Eve, life by Mary.”** Nor let it be supposed that he, any more than the preceding Fathers, considered the Blessed Virgin a mere physical instrument of giving birth to our Lord, who is the Life. So far from it, in the Epistle from which I have quoted, he is only adding another virtue to that crown which gained for Mary her divine Maternity. They have spoken of faith, joy, and obedience; St. Jerome adds, what they had only suggested, virginity. After the manner of the Fathers in his own day, he is setting forth the Blessed Mary to the high-born Roman Lady, whom he is addressing, as the model of the virginal life; and his argument in its behalf is, that it is higher than the marriage-state, not in itself, viewed in any mere natural respect, but as being the free act of self-consecration to God, and from the personal religious purpose which it involves.

“Higher wage”, he says, “is due to that which is not a compulsion, but an offering; for, were virginity commanded, marriage would seem to be put out of the question; and it would be most cruel to force men against nature, and to extort from them an angel’s life.”

—20.

I do not know whose testimony is more important than St. Jerome’s, the friend of Pope Damasus at Rome, the pupil of St. Gregory Nazianzen at Constantinople, and of Didymus in Alexandria, a native of Dalmatia, yet an inhabitant, at different times of his life, of Gaul, Syria, and Palestine.

8. St. Jerome speaks for the whole world, except Africa; and for Africa in the fourth century, if we must limit so world-wide an

authority to place, witnesses St. Augustine (354-430). He repeats the words as if a proverb, **“By a woman death, by a woman life”** (*Opp. t. v. Serm. 232*); elsewhere he enlarges on the idea conveyed in it. In one place he quotes St. Irenæus’s words as cited above (*adv. Julian i. n. 5*). In another he speaks as follows:—

“It is a great sacrament that, whereas through woman death became our portion, so life was born to us by woman; that, in the case of both sexes, male and female, the baffled devil should be tormented, when on the overthrow of both sexes he was rejoicing; whose punishment had been small, if both sexes had been liberated in us, without our being liberated through both.”

—*Opp. t. vi. De Agon. Christ. c.24.*

9. St. Peter Chrysologus (400-450), Bishop of Ravenna, and one of the chief authorities in the 4th General Council:—

“Blessed art thou among women; for among women, on whose womb Eve, who was cursed, brought punishment, Mary, being blest, rejoices, is honoured, and is looked up to. And woman now is truly made through grace the Mother of the living, who had been by nature the mother of the dying. . . . Heaven feels awe of God, Angels tremble at Him, the creature sustains Him not, nature sufficeth not; and yet one maiden so takes, receives, entertains Him, as a guest within her breast, that, for the very hire of her home, and as the price of her womb, she asks, she obtains peace for the earth, glory for the heavens, salvation for the lost, life for the dead, a heavenly parentage for the earthly, the union of God Himself with human flesh.”

—*Serm. 140.*

It is difficult to express more explicitly, though in oratorical language, that the Blessed Virgin had a real meritorious co-operation, a share which had a “**hire**” and a “**price**”, in the reversal of the fall.

10. St. Fulgentius, Bishop of Ruspe in Africa (468-533). The Homily which contains the following passage, is placed by Ceillier (t. xvi. p. 127) among his genuine works:—

“In the wife of the first man, the wickedness of the devil depraved her seduced mind; in the mother of the Second Man, the grace of God preserved both her mind inviolate and her flesh. On her mind it conferred the most firm faith; from her flesh it took away lust altogether. Since then man was in a miserable way condemned for sin, therefore without sin was in a marvellous way born the God-man.”

—*Serm. 2, p. 124. De Dupl. Nativ. . . .*

Such is the rudimental view, as I have called it, which the Fathers have given us of Mary, as the **Second Eve**, the Mother of the living: I have cited ten authors. I could cite more, were it necessary: except the two last, they write gravely and without any rhetoric. I allow that the two last write in a different style, since the extracts I have made are from their sermons; but I do not see that the colouring conceals the outline. And after all, men use oratory on great subjects, not on small;—nor would they, and other Fathers whom I might quote, have lavished their high language upon the Blessed Virgin, such as they gave to no one else, unless they knew well that no one else had such claims, as she had, on their love and veneration, (I p. 33-46).