

slightest degree unfaithful either to the exigencies of the scientific method or to the sovereign rights of truth.

Finally, whatever else may be said, the Christian will not forget that here we are in the domain of the transcendent. The function of Mary's Assumption is not, like Christ's Resurrection, to be an attestation to men of the truth of the message—so that the Resurrection, because of the very context of its promise by Christ, must be palpable and evident as an historical fact even to those who do not believe in Christ. The Assumption is not a motive of credibility; the nature of this doctrine does not demand that the historical circumstances which surrounded it should have been transmitted to posterity by irrefutable evidence. Its place is in that line of truths which are the joy and the riches of the faith, which can have meaning only for those who believe, that is, the divine rulings and provisions to which it is good for us to adhere, but the certitude of which, as it bears on objects beyond our apprehension, is only given in the loving acceptance of divine revelation. It is not Mary's empty tomb that the Pope will define shortly; it is her triumph already fully enjoyed in the plenitude of participation in the triumph of Christ, her Son and our first-fruits.



THEOTOKOS (LOURDES)

BY

DOROTHEA STILL

On the grey stone
Kneeling remote, alone,
Clouded with other people's prayers,
In the thick crowd alone:

Mother, where is your son?
Where is maternity, its shining dread?

The wind blows
An artificial rose:
The leaves are dead.

—Help sinners now and in the hour of death—
Words defeat the sense that they repeat.

Rocks and trees distil the tears of these
Imploring multitudes
Here in the flesh and ghosted from the past.
Heartache and pain again and yet again
Wash round the hem of sinugly plastered robe

Which holds in the prescriptive folds
A drifting scent of innocence's dream.

Mother, where is your child?

—What was the Word the formless waters heard
Bringing behemoth from the strangling slime,
Aqueous terror spawned in blinded dark?
What forechosen promise drove the fangs
Of fierce maternal love to angry death?
Creation reels from uncomputed wheels
Of aeons since a woman's choice
Planted the spot of crouching black decay
In the ambrosia of newborn life.
The fragrant bud doomed by a million lives
Of tiny-fingered blight,
The furry babe puling by festered bone:
Death—and potential mightiness o'erthrown,
The mock of parturition in a charnel yard.

Man saw the fated speck—

The grey uneasy stirring of his blood
Muttered for sacrifice:
Deep in the tangled growth of human fear
The altar's stain pleaded for life through pain,
While the great tree of knowledge stood
Blasted in God's deserted wood.

Mother, where is your child?

Athwart the riven trunk a crystal ray,
Slight as a wand, translucent blade of dawn—
The myriad victims turn to one alone.

Mother, your gentle word

Accepting sorrow's sword

Gave the consent of man to God's humanity:

Mother, here is your son.

In every murmur from a human heart,
In any stunted tendril of unends,
In every doorway and in every home
Whether they know him or they pass him by
They share your sweet acceptance and the fair
Savour of perfect offering.

Mother, here is your son

Holding the many sufferances in one,
From birth to death no more, but death to birth
Each moment in the lambency of now:

Here is your son.

On the grey stone kneeling no more alone
 We take our part.
 Forgive the stumbling fingers that have made
 Symbols of darkness for transcendent light,
 The plaster of our poor complacency.
 Forgive our ignorances, grant our share
 Of your unblemished gift when death draws near.



'DUC NOS QUO TENDIMUS'

BY

C. C. MARTINDALE, S.J.



HERE are two Feasts which, maybe, can be celebrated with special *unselfishness*—that of the Immaculate Conception, and that of the Assumption. We must not feel it wrong if we keep the great feasts of our Lord with a certain consciousness of *ourselves*, for after all, the Incarnation and all that it made possible—the Passion and the Resurrection itself—were ordained *propter nos homines*; for the sake of us men and our salvation. Even the Ascension, which can indeed be celebrated most 'unselfishly' as the feast of our Lord's glorification, yet reminds us that as we are co-risen, so we are to be co-glorified.

Of course, since all the perfections of our Lady were granted to her in view of her Son—*Christus cogitabatur*—she too can be thought of as existing ultimately for our sake. But I should find it difficult to see how the Assumption can be regarded otherwise than as something for our Lady's own sake, and for the glory of God. First, we can be single-hearted in our joy that here is *one* who has never deviated from (so to put it) the ideal he had for her (and, in lesser measure, for all of us) in his eternity. Forced as we are to use human language, we can say that God 'thought of' Adam and of Eve as pure and 'immaculate' and remaining so. But they deviated. God was disappointed in them. The image of God was marred: they were self-evicted from the paradise that all the world should have been; and, indeed, the whole of human history, as God would have wished it to be, was dislocated. We need not be afraid of words such as 'being sorry for God'. Francisco, the little boy of Fatima, became completely taken up with the thought of 'consoling God'.