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BELIEVE IT . . . Not

By REV. OWEN B. MCGUIRE, D.D.
THE PERPETUAL VIRGINITY OF THE BLESSED MOTHER
THE ULTIMATE OBJECTIVE OF THE "HIGHER CRITICS"
UNCRITICAL MODE OF PROCEDURE
MEANING OF "BROTHER" AND "BRETHREN" IN HEBREW LANGUAGE AND USAGE
EXAMPLES FROM OTHER LANGUAGES
NO OTHER HISTORICAL RECORD SUBJECTED TO A LIKE ATTACK
FUNK AND WAGNALL'S INEXCUSABLE

In a recent conference we were speaking about the utterly inexcusable statement of "The New Standard Encyclopedia," that "James the Just" was "a later son of Mary and Joseph." Inexcusable and unpardonable I called it, because this work of reference, of "Universal Knowledge" as its subtitle claims, ignores the whole Christian tradition of the perpetual virginity of the Blessed Virgin, and makes that statement as if it were unquestioned and unquestionable, whereas it has in truth and fact no historical foundation.

There have been, of course, throughout the history of Christianity, some cranks and heretics who denied this Christian belief, as they denied Revelation itself and all supernatural intervention of Divine Providence. But these had practically no following until we came down to the age of "Higher Criticism." The purpose of these men in the 18th and 19th century was to undermine the credibility of the Bible in all that is supernatural. Their basic argument was exactly the same as that of our contemporary atheist and scoffer, George Bernard Shaw, in dealing with the life of St. Joan.

"There are," he writes, "fashions and family habits in belief, and my family habit Protestant (in his acceptance) for millions of Protestants have believed in miracles. I find myself unable to attach any scientific validity to Joan's visions." Accordingly, he begins with the "principle" that everything smacking of the supernatural must be rejected from the life of St. Joan.

False Principle
So it was with the "Higher Critics" who stepped out from the principle: The supernatural does not happen. Therefore, miracles do not happen. Virgin birth is a miracle, therefore, it does not happen. All such things are myths. Therefore, as "Higher Critics" we must remove them from the Bible. These ignorant Christians have believed in the perpetual virginity of the Mother of Jesus. But see here: Jesus had brethren, brothers, and

to take care of them. And in the last supreme hour of separation, Jesus from the Cross commends her to the care, not of another son or daughter, but to St. John who was not a relative or any kind. No unprejudiced person, without a "principle" to sustain against the facts, would ever conclude from these and other references to Mary that she had "later" sons. Any unprejudiced person - Jew, Gentile, Christian, Mohammedan or unbeliever - who sits down to read the Gospel narrative without "a principle" to read into it, must conclude that Jesus was the only Child of Mary.

Son of Another Mary
Moreover, it is distinctly stated in the Gospel narrative that another "James" was reckoned among the "brethren," or brothers of Jesus. But this same James is just as distinctly stated to be the son of Alphaeus, and of another Mary who is called "Mary of Clophesus" who is also "the mother of Joseph." And this Joseph is also reckoned among "the brethren of the Lord." The conclusion is, and no honest person can escape that -

(1) These "brethren" were, indeed, blood relations of the Blessed Virgin, but
(2) The degree of relationship cannot be determined because of the wide and indeterminate meaning given to the word "brethren" in Hebrew language and custom.

As I have already told you such questions would never have arisen were the Bible a work of profane literature, like Herodotus or Livy. In a word there is not a solitary line in the New Testament to indicate that the Blessed Virgin had any other child but Jesus. She is constantly referred to as the "Mother of Jesus" and of Jesus also. The so-called "brethren" who deny her perpetual virginity is that in the Gospel narrative a group of persons are referred to as "brethren of the Lord." But it is manifestly clear that some of these "brethren" were the sons of Mary for their mother nor Joseph for their father.

Determines Meaning
I have referred to the "usual" meaning of "brother" in English. But even in English, and in classic English, the word has a wider extension. Hence, the necessity of several epithets to determine its exact meaning in particular cases. Full brother, half brother, step brother, even the word "cousin" (unabridged) gives its first meaning as two "male persons having the same parents" (full brother or in one parent only) half brother in common. But the word "cousin" has a second meaning as "a kinsman by blood, more remote than a son of the same parents, as in Scripture."
Now it is necessary to refer back to the Scriptures, to usage in the Hebrew languages, to see that words denoting kinship are used even today in other languages in a much wider sense than are now accustomed to use them in English. In Spanish and Italian the word "brother" is constantly used to denote what we call a first cousin. Of course, another epithet is added to denote the distinct meaning, just as in English we add "half" and "uterine" for the same purpose. For instance, in Spanish the phrase "first cousin" is never used. The word "cousin" (from the Latin "germanus, brother german" and "the word for "cousin" is "primus" and first cousin "primo" always called "primus germanus" - "germanus" distinguishes them from other cousins, and "primus" to distinguish them from full or uterine brothers. The same is the custom in Italian (One day in Rome, I was walking down from the "Piccetta Hill" and in front of the English Church of St. George two little fellows were playing. They looked very much alike and pointing to them I asked "Frateri tui fratres?" "Si, Signore, fratelli cugini" (Yes, Sir, we are brothers-cousins). It never crossed the mind of the little fellows to deny that they were brothers, or to answer "No we are cousins."

Incorrectly Translated
The same occurs in Spanish with several other words that denote consanguinity. For instance, the word for nephew is "sobrino" for niece "sobrina." But these words are used constantly to mean the son or daughter of a first cousin something, by the way which English writers on St. Teresa do not seem to realize in several books in English that deal with her life and Reform. I have read that in 1562, when she founded her first convent at Avila, she was assisted by two "nieces," who later took the veil. At that time St. Teresa had no nieces. Two nieces of hers did afterwards take the veil one in 1562, and another after the Saint's death. Neither was born when she began the Reform. The two young ladies who assisted her in 1562 were daughters of a first cousin and were called, in Spanish rightly her "sobrinas." But the English writers meaning "nieces" in English.

So also in Spanish the word for grandfather is "abuelo," and for grandmother "abuela." But these words may also mean, and are constantly used to mean, the grandfather in the direct line, however remote. The Marquis of Piedras Albas is a noted Teresian scholar and has edited and annotated a popular edition of the Saint's writings, published by the Jesuits at Madrid. In the time of St. Teresa there was a princess of Eboli who caused the Saint much trouble in the foundation of her convent at Pastana. Explaining this in a foot note the Marquis adds, "I cannot defend her action although she is 'mi abuela' namely his ancestor, and not his grandmother, a person who died 200 years before the Marquis was born. Yet he uses the word that is used

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The Junior Cook
By MOLLY GAVIN

Many pretty novelties can be made with cookies as some of my young readers know. One of the Junior Cooks sent me the following recipe, which is well worth while passing on to others:
Party Cookies
Purchase 1-2 pound each of Animal Crackers and Vanilla Wafers. Break a real fresh egg and remove the white, being careful not to have any of the yolk mixed in with the white. Beat the white of egg just a little bit so it will be easy to work with it. Then dip the feet of the animals into the egg white and stand them up, one on each vanilla wafer. Arrange to advantage and you will be greatly pleased with the menagerie. Especially good for a party.

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Household 118, Order of Martha, will hold its annual sausage roast at Ontario Beach Park, Grounds No. 6, Thursday, July 11, rain or shine.
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