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A COMPLETE MARIOLOGY

Translated by a Religious
of the Retreat of the
Sacred Heart



1958
BLACKFRIARS PUBLICATIONS
LONDON

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Originally published in Dutch by
N. V. Gooi & Sticht of Hilversum
under the title *Volledige Marialeer*

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Nihil obstat: Carolus Davis, S.T.L.
Censor deputatus.

Imprimatur: E. Morrogh Bernard,
Vic. Gen.

Westmonasterii, die 26a Martii, 1958.

To my parents
Theodorus Friethoff (1861-1919)
Christina J. Pierik (1865-1950)
with filial affection.

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY THE DITCHLING PRESS LTD,
DITCHLING, ELGESSHAM, SUSSEX
AND BOUND BY KEMP HALL BINDERY, OXFORD

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PREFACE

THE GROWTH of science is furthered by the unceasing collaboration of colleagues, by the exchange of their views and opinions, by the discussion of one another's work and the reciprocal resolution of difficulties as well as the refutation of objections. We thus advance science by a common effort. It is perhaps even more true to say that the scientist himself evolves little by little by the same process. He gains further insight into certain points or in actual depth, while with reference to other points his personal opinions and views are wholly or partially altered.

Since my first Mariological publication in 1923 (Nederl. Kath. Stemmen) an evolution of this kind may be found in my work. For since then I have had the good fortune to be able to continue my Mariological studies without interruption, in witness of which there are various publications, e.g. *Angelicum* (Rome), 1929, 1933; *Het Schild*, 1932; *Smer* (Trencin, Slovakia) 1941, 1942, 1943; as well as: *Mary our Mediatrix with Jesus our Mediator* (Hilversum, 1934); *Alma Socia Christi Mediatoris* (Rome 1936); *Katholieke Marialeer* (Hilversum 1937).

But it was above all the encouragement of my colleagues that induced me to undertake the collection into one volume of a series of fifty articles which had appeared in the *Standaard van Maria* since 1939. It could not in the nature of things be a mere material putting together, but had to be carefully revised and, where needful, rewritten. Hence this Marian doctrine claims to be complete. Obviously we do not mean by this that there is no more to be said either about our Lady or in praise of her that is not included here. We simply mean that the whole of Marian doctrine is offered here in a really systematic whole, for which we are accepting the responsibility in this introduction.

From the fact that the series of articles that form the basis of this book appeared in the *Standaard van Maria*, it is evident that the readers I had in mind from the outset were priests

and seminarists. Nevertheless it was also my intention from the first to write for educated lay-folk. For this reason practically all Latin terms are carefully avoided and all texts are translated. Not all foreign words have been eschewed, however, for these have in many cases won the right of citizenship among us, and indeed enrich us sometimes by adding a further shade of meaning.

May this publication contribute to making our Lady better known as our Lord Jesus Christ's great masterpiece, and may we, by knowing her better, attain a higher degree of love and admiration for our Saviour.

INTRODUCTION

PLAN OF THE MARIOLOGY

IN THE HONOUR we pay to Mary, and in the doctrine that theologians have built up about her person and her privileges, what is of first importance is not this child of the human race herself, but God.

Whenever anyone piously confesses—on the authority of Revelation—that Mary, daughter of David, was chosen by God to be God's Mother, i.e. Mother of the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, he will be obliged to confess at the same time that God effected the ineffably lofty elevation of this Jewish maiden with all the precautions and in the manner required by the importance of the matter itself.

If this child of man was really raised to be the Mother of God's Son, and so was united with him by the ties of blood, she was brought into the intimate life of the Blessed Trinity. Consequently, the importance of the matter requires that no spot, were it ever so slight, should ever stain the unspeakable radiance of divine glory.

With this the divine motherhood becomes Mary's ultimate and highest end, towards which converge all the graces and privileges that God had prepared for her in time and in eternity. Everything was to serve to effect this raising to the highest heavens in the worthiest way possible. This end becomes the measure of all that there is to say about Mary and in her honour. Again, the most important part is always the unblemished spotlessness of divine honour.

Thus the first thing that can be reasonably demanded is that this maiden, who is to be raised to be Mother of God, should possess the highest possible human integrity and perfection. There is a perfection destined for man by God's autonomous goodness which man cannot attain, starting from his natural position and with the powers naturally at his disposal. It is a perfection that can be achieved only by the perfecting of man's highest spiritual faculties, reason and

will, in the contemplation and enjoyment of the divine Being itself. As God has provided this for human beings, the splendour of the divine motherhood—precisely because God's honour is at stake—demands that God's Mother must possess this supernatural human integrity and perfection, by acquiring the highest attainable degree of heavenly completeness.

But the economy of salvation with which we are dealing is: that *all* our salvation is through Christ, our Lord. And this means, not only that Jesus merited this salvation for us by his suffering and death, but also that this salvation is apportioned to each of us personally, according to the measure of Christ. For God has predestined us 'to be moulded into the image of his Son, who is thus to become the eldest-born among many brothers' (Rom. viii, 29). And this also means that the more we resemble Christ the greater the grace of salvation given to us will be. Consequently, she who has been called to reach the highest measure of heavenly perfection must also acquire the greatest possible conformity to Jesus. And, as he could enter into his glory by suffering only (Luke xxiv, 26), and by it saving his people from their sins (Matt. i, 2), and as he unmasked and openly exposed the dominations and powers, and conquered them by the Cross (Col. ii, 15), therefore she too, who was to be in the highest degree conformed to him so as to benefit in the highest degree by the salvation he acquired, also 'united with him by an indissoluble and extremely close bond, was, with him and through him, to practise eternal hostility to the poisonous serpent and to triumph fully over it' (*Ineffabilis Deus*).

Thus in this economy of salvation, the divine motherhood itself to which Mary, daughter of David, was called, requires her to be associated with her Son in his full triumph over the devil. Her predestination to heavenly blessedness and her perfect resemblance to Jesus are prerequisites for her selection as the Mother of God's Son.

But this full triumph over Satan—for it is not just an eventual one!—demands two things: first, that no single victory for Satan's side can be shown; and secondly, that Satan is totally defeated.

And so, from the deepest well of gifts of God's grace, which consists in the choice of Mary as Mother of God, there flow for her all the privileges she ever received, *via* her triumph over Satan.

It must be impossible to point to anything in her that could in any way be interpreted as a victory for Satan. For that would certainly spoil her complete triumph over him and water it down to an eventual victory, such as ours will be. Therefore there are neither sins nor penalties for sins to be found in her, for, as the Book of Wisdom testifies, not only sin itself, but even punishment for sin, is a victory for Satan (Wisdom ii, 24).

In Mary, therefore, no original sin, but immaculate conception; no personal sin, not even one venial sin, but inestimable holiness of life and aspirations. In her, therefore, no evil concupiscence rooted in sin and leading to sin; no pains at childbirth, no mastery of man over her with all its entails, but virginity before, during and after parturition; therefore also a virgin spouse, to watch over her and her Child; no corruption after death, but a jubilant ascension to God, of both body and soul.

But she, the handmaid of the Lord, was also obliged to share with Jesus, the Servant of God, in Satan's defeat. In unspeakable grief and indescribable suffering, she had with Jesus to tear her people from the grasp of Satan and lead them back to the liberty of the children of God. Our Lady of Sorrows had to bear in closest union with the Man of Sorrows the redemptive suffering by which we are freed from our sins and have our debt of punishment remitted, and are reconciled with God, to be again favoured with his gifts.

Holy Scripture says so clearly of the Lord our God: he orders everything graciously (Wisdom viii, 1). There are no fits and starts, and therefore in Mary's case no sudden overwhelming with all sorts of gifts, but all these countless divine gifts, that have made her what she is, form a beautiful and perfectly harmonious whole.

We shall now repeat all this in diagram form.

DIAGRAM SHOWING THE CONNECTION OF MARY'S GRACES WITH ONE ANOTHER AS WELL AS THE STRUCTURAL PLAN OF THE MARIOLOGY.

God called *MARY*
to raise her in a manner worthy of the importance of the matter to the
dignity of
MOTHER OF GOD
wherefore he destined her to the highest degree of heavenly perfection
which she was to merit as the
NEW EVE
by the greatest measure of conformity with the
NEW ADAM
who triumphs completely over Satan.
This full triumph requires:

On the one side:
Never being beaten by Satan

- (a) Original sin
Immaculate Conception
- (b) Personal sin
Holy Mary.

With regard to the punishment for
sin:

- (a) Evil concupiscence
The Morning Star
- (b) Pains of childbirth
Virginal parturition
- (c) Tyranny of a husband
Virgin of virgins
- (d) The sweat of work
Joseph's wife
- (e) Corruption of death
Assumption

On the other side:
The complete defeat of Satan
As co-operator with Jesus in the
general causality of salvation:

- (a) Removal of sin
Co-redeeming
- (b) Removal of punishment
Atoning with
- (c) Restoration of God's friendship
Co-reconciling
- (d) Winning back God's favours
Co-meriting.

AS VICTRESS over Satan in the appli-
cation of the general causality
of salvation:

- (a) Completion of the reconcilia-
tion
Mediatrice of all graces
- (b) Completion of merits
Suppliant Omnipotence
- (c) Completion of the triumph
Queen of Jesus's Kingdom.

'For this work of thine . . . I will establish a feud between thee and the woman.' (Gen. III, 14-15.)

PART I

THE RÔLE ALLOTTED TO MARY

CHAPTER I

THE MOTHER OF GOD

§1. *The Dogma:* We learn by faith that Jesus Christ is a single person, namely the second Person of the Blessed Trinity, who united in himself two natures, the divine and the human, so that both natures with their properties remain in the most perfect way intact and distinct. If we wish to give its full value to the mystery, we must attribute to this one Person both natures with the properties of both. We must confess that this Person is God and so immortal; also that he is man and died as such. If we bear in mind according to which nature we attribute such qualities to that Person, we can, without contradicting ourselves, ascribe to him not only distinct but even opposing qualities, as is clear from the example given.

But if we put the question otherwise, if instead of saying: 'Do the properties of both natures belong to *this Person*?' we use other terms instead of 'person', then the matter becomes more complicated. If we say: 'May the properties of the Son of God be attributed to the Son of man?' and similarly: 'May the properties of the Son of man be ascribed to the Son of God?', we do not seem to inquire whether *this Person* is God or man, mortal or immortal; we seem to ask whether *this man* is God and whether the Immortal has died!

It is certainly not juggling with words, but a very serious question about an objective truth, a question as to heresy and the true faith. Holy Scripture repeatedly ascribes what is human to the Son of God:

'What we make known is the wisdom of God. . . . None of the rulers of the world could read his secret, or they would not have crucified him to whom all glory belongs' (I Cor. ii, 8). 'God sent out his Son on a mission to us . . . he took birth from a woman'

(Gal. iv, 4). (Vide Acts xx, 28; Rom. i, 3, and viii, 32; I John iii, 16.)

But Holy Scripture also does the opposite, for it attributes to the Son of man, what is God's.

'It is not for any deed of mercy we are stoning thee, it is for blasphemy: it is because thou, who art a man, dost pretend to be God.' (John x, 33.)

The same method is to be noticed in the confession of faith:

'I believe . . . in Jesus Christ, his only Son . . . who was conceived . . . born . . . suffered . . . was crucified, dead and buried . . . descended into hell . . . rose again from the dead . . . ascended into heaven . . . shall come again to judge.'

The same also in the documents as in those of the General Councils of Ephesus and Constantinople. (Denzinger 113, 218, 222.)¹

The most primitive but fundamental form of this way of speaking is: '*This man is God*'. We need to be watchful, for it is not only a question of the truth of both terms *man* and *God*; indeed, if we go no further than this we shall find the heretics on our side. Arians as well as Monophysites and Nestorians accept this expression, but mean by it something quite different from the Church's meaning. They recognise, each in his own way, that in a specified sense the term *God* may be used of Christ as well as the term *man*, but they deny just what we confess, that the attribution itself is true and proper: to be God belongs truly and properly to this man.

The solution of this problem is to be found in our human way of thinking and of expressing our thoughts. We use abstract and concrete words. When we contemplate a nature or a quality in itself, leaving out of consideration who is the possessor of this nature or quality, we use abstract words. In such a case everything that is ascribed to the nature or quality belongs to it because of *itself* and not because of the owner: human nature is lower than the angelic nature; charity is the queen of all virtues.

But we use concrete words precisely when we do not wish

¹ Vide Denzinger-Bannwart-Umberg: *Enchiridion Symbolorum definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum* (Friburgi Brisgoviae 1937) nr. 113 sqq.

to leave the possessor out of consideration, but ascribe to nature or quality what is not due to it because of itself, but because of its *possessor*: this man is blind. Hence the axiom that the golden key to the whole problem is: concrete nouns bring the personality with them. On this account therefore all concrete names can be put in the place of any given possessor of the nature or quality concerned. The concrete word *man* may be used for anyone who possesses human, and the concrete word *God* for anyone who possesses divine nature.

The name of God may thus be used for the second Person of the Blessed Trinity, the Son of God. But he has really put on human nature. We say of the Son of God that he is man just as truly as we say it of the Apostle Peter. And the converse is equally true: this man, namely the Son of man, is God.

It is therefore exactly the same thing if, in order to specify the second Person of the Blessed Trinity, we employ a word which directly designates that Person, or a name which belongs to his divine nature or to his human nature or to both: provided it is a concrete name, because the person—in this case the same Person—to whom the qualities in question belong, is always signified by a concrete word. In the primitive form, *this man is God* and *God is man*, the subject may be replaced by many other concrete names: this Person, this man, God, Jesus, the Word, Christ, the Lord, the Almighty, Ruler of the universe, the Creator, the Redeemer, the Eternal, Infinite Wisdom, he who died for us, the Merciful, etc., is God or is man. Of all these names, which, I repeat, have no other function than to designate this divine Person, we may assert, as a matter of course, all concrete divine and human predicates: this man created the world; the Son of God died and was buried; Jesus is omniscient; the Saviour shall judge all men, etc.

In one formula: all that may be said of the Son of God may be said of the Son of man, just as everything that may be said of the Son of man may be said of the Son of God.

This is a completely universal rule and admits of no exception. But it is opportune to avoid the use of certain expressions, because heretics have misused them, and we,

to quote St Jerome, do not want to have even expressions in common with heretics, in order to avoid even the appearance of agreeing with them. Therefore we do not say: the Word of God is a creature, although this is just as true as the phrase: the Son of man is the Creator, for the Arians taught that the Word of God was a creature even in his divine nature.

If, however, we replace the concrete names by abstract terms, we no longer predicate anything of the possessor of the nature or the quality, but we predicate something of that nature or quality considered in itself and apart from the person. So that it would be false and heretical to say, instead of *God is born of a woman, the Godhead is born of a woman*.

It is clear from all this, why on the one hand all who believe in the inviolate mystery of the Incarnation salute Mary not only as the Mother of Jesus, but also as the Mother of God; while on the other hand those who tamper with this mystery, drag the Mother of God along with them into their Christological conflict. For whoever confesses the mystery of one person in two natures, must logically admit that this Person, the second Person of the Blessed Trinity, Son of God, God himself, remaining what he was, was conceived and born in time of the Virgin Mary; that therefore Mary is the Mother of this Person, the second Person of the Blessed Trinity, of God's Son, of God: God is the son of Mary, Mary is the Mother of God. She bore him who was born of her and he is God. It is the selfsame Person who is signified whether we call Mary the Mother of the Son of man (of *this man*) or else of the Son of God (of God): the One who possesses both natures is the second Person of the Blessed Trinity: and he is both Son of God and Son of Mary.

Anyone who distorts this mystery of one person in two natures, either by denying Jesus's Godhead (Arians and Modernists); or by mutilating his manhood: phantom body (Docetes, Phantasmasts); heavenly body (Valentinus); not formed from Mary (Eutyches); without a rational soul (Apollinaris); either by denying the one person (Nestorius), or by assailing the manner in which both natures are united in the one person: accidentally (Theodoret of Mopsueste);

having become *one nature* (Monophysites), or by the theory that the Son of God took to himself an already existing human being, or at any rate a foetus already conceived by Mary (Photinus); such a one cannot possibly admit that Mary is in truth the Mother of God, for whatever she might have conceived, it was not God.

Yet there are Christians who do believe and confess the mystery of one person in two natures, and nevertheless object to the expression 'Mother of God'. It is illogical, but their objection is based on a pure misunderstanding, so that St Thomas says of them that they do not understand their own language. They stumble over the fact that Mary brought forth Jesus in his human nature only, so that she certainly is the Mother of the man Jesus, but not of Jesus-God. It is clear from what we have said above that they have a wrong idea of the teaching as to the common attribution of both kinds of predicates to the *one* Person. St Thomas tries to meet them half-way with the remark that no woman brings forth the soul of her child, as God alone creates souls and does it directly. The mother prepares the body only, which is not the entire man, and not even the noblest part. All the same, no one will assert that his mother is the mother of his body only, not his true mother, not the mother of his whole person. If, then, your mother is the mother of your person because she made ready a body for you, why should not Mary be the Mother of God, since she made ready a body for him?

Apart from this last group of objectors to the name of Mother of God, the refusal to give Mary this glorious title always goes paired with a distortion of the mystery of the Incarnation. It is not at all to be wondered at that the Church was obliged over and over again to defend Mary's divine motherhood at the same time as she defended the mystery of the Incarnation against the pedants. We know that the third Oecumenical Council of Ephesus proclaimed the following canon amid loud acclamations from the Christian people.

'If anyone does not confess that Emmanuel is really God, and that therefore the Blessed Virgin is truly the Mother of

God, for she bore in the flesh the Word of God Incarnate, let him be anathema' (Denzinger 113). Similarly the fourth, fifth and sixth Oecumenical Councils were obliged to reiterate this truth, at Chalcedon (Denzinger 148), and Constantinople (Denzinger 218, 290). Pope John II (Denzinger 201) and Pope Pius XI (AAS 1931) insisted again on it.

Nowhere does Holy Writ teach in these exact words: Mary is the Mother of God. That is a fact to which Nestorius thought he could appeal, but wrongly, as St Cyril of Antioch pointed out. St Thomas formulates St Cyril's argument as follows:

'Although it is not explicitly said in Holy Scripture that the Blessed Virgin Mary is the Mother of God, we find nevertheless explicitly stated in the Gospels that Jesus Christ is true God, which may be read in the last chapter of St John's first Epistle; and that the Blessed Virgin is the Mother of Jesus Christ, as is shown in the first chapter of St Matthew. It follows necessarily from these words of Scripture that she is the Mother of God. It is also written in the Epistle to the Romans (ix, 5) that Christ is sprung from Jewish stock according to the flesh, he who rules as God over all things, blessed for ever. But he is not of Jewish stock otherwise than through the Blessed Virgin. Hence he who is God, ruling over all things, blessed for ever, is truly born of the Blessed Virgin as of his Mother'.¹

As Mary's divine motherhood can be found in the above quotation from the Epistle to the Romans, we can also understand Luke 1, 35 in the same sense. For the Angel says: 'Thus that holy thing which is to be born of thee shall be known for the Son of God.' The objection cannot be made here, which is brought against Luke 1, 43, passing over Pius XI's interpretation (AAS 1931: 512). Elizabeth greets Mary as 'the mother of my Lord'. It would seem that this expression in the mouth of a daughter of the Jewish race can mean nothing but Mother of the Messias. But to maintain this also of the angelic greeting would seem to be more difficult. But when the Church, basing herself surely on divine tradition as the source of revelation, presents Mary's divine motherhood to us as a divinely revealed truth, it does not seem to be of such paramount importance that

¹ Vide. *Summa Theologica* III, qu. 35, a. 4 ad 1 um.

Holy Scripture does not teach this divine motherhood in so many words.

§2. *The Relations of the Three Divine Persons*: It is a philosophical truth that every becoming aims at a definite being: for a thing becomes in order to be, in other words, becoming is the way to being. Properly speaking, we may ascribe becoming only to those things which are themselves in existence: for being excludes becoming. Here we need to be all the more careful in that we are accustomed to the incorrect use in speech of terms such as: 'proceed from', 'decay', 'become'. For we say that noise originates, colour fades, friendship grows, etc. All this is incorrect, for as sound, colour, friendship, or any other accidentals never are of themselves—for they are always belonging to something else—even less can they become or pass away of themselves. But the thing which is this or that by reason of such an accidental, also becomes this or that. So that friendship does not grow, but people become friends, because friendship does not exist, but men are friends. Using words in their proper meaning, we cannot say that human nature becomes, begins to exist, or is born, because human nature never is of itself but is an element by which the owner of the nature, the person, is a human being. As being is not due to that nature, but to the possessor of that nature, the person so becoming is not due to the nature but to the possessor of the nature, the person.

A relation is founded on the origin of living beings (being conceived and born) which is expressed by the word *offspring*. Hence that relation is due only to what really becomes, which is, as we said, the possessor of that nature, which has just arrived at being, along the way of becoming. It is not therefore the nature that is the offspring, but the person who received the nature. But offspring and parent are correlative notions, so that no one can be father or mother of a nature, as a nature cannot be a child. Relations of motherhood are therefore never directed to a nature as such, but always to the possessor of that nature, to the person who is child of that mother.

If we apply this to Jesus Christ, it is at once obvious that the human nature of Jesus is not the child of Mary, but that the possessor of that nature, Jesus himself, the second Person of the Blessed Trinity, is the child of Mary. Therefore (remembering that offspring and parenthood are correlatives) the relation of motherhood does not belong to Mary with regard to Jesus's human nature, but with regard to Jesus's divine Person who is brought forth by Mary according to his human nature. She did not bring forth the human nature of Jesus, but Jesus according to his human nature. So that her child is not the human nature of Jesus, but Jesus is her Son: nor is Mary the Mother of Jesus's human nature, but she is the Mother of the Person Jesus, the Mother of God. Her maternal relation is thus directed to the *one* Person in whom both natures are united.

As movement is limited by its goal, relation is characterised and determined by the end to which it is directed; Mary's maternal relation is consequently characterised not by God's human nature, but by the divine Person himself to whom this nature belongs through the medium of Mary. Hence the relation between the human mother and her divine Child is of a supernatural order, so much so that Mary is raised by this relation above all creatures and assumed into the intimate life of the Godhead.

Mary has to the Person of God the same relation that our own mother has to our person: consanguinity in the first degree of the direct line: she is united to the second Person of the Blessed Trinity by the bonds of blood (her own blood that flows in his veins). This relation would be in truth more than sufficient in itself to raise Mary as high as heaven, but yet more wonders follow from it.

Jesus Christ, the divine Person, *has* the human nature, but *he has not* the divine nature; the divine Persons are, it is true, distinct from one another, but they are only *one* divine being, *one* divine nature. They have not a share in that nature, they do not possess or own it, but they are identical with it. Jesus is the Godhead, *he is* the divine nature. When, therefore, Mary is united to Jesus by her motherhood, she is necessarily also united to the divine nature. But the Father is also

the divine nature, as is the Holy Ghost. By her motherhood, therefore, there exists in Mary a relation to the Blessed Trinity in so far as the divine Persons are identical with the *one* divine nature. Naturally we have no single word sufficient to express this, for our understanding simply baulks at it: all we see is that it *must be so*, we cannot see *how it can be so*. Yet Mary's relations go much further still. She is not only united to the divine Persons in so far as they are *one* Being, but also with each of the three divine Persons in so far as they are distinct from one another. And the reason for this is the connection of the mystery of the Blessed Trinity with the mystery of the Incarnation.

The Person signified by the names Jesus, God-Man, Son of man, etc., is the second Person of the Blessed Trinity, the Son of God the Father. The Son of Mary is the same Person who is the Son of the eternal Father, so that one and the same person is both child of Mary and child of God. We may also put it thus: God the Father and Mary have a child in common, who, in his divine nature, is born of the Father from all eternity and is born at Christmas, according to his human nature, of Mary. In virtue of God's paternity and Mary's motherhood of the same person, there arises thus a relation between Mary and the first of the three divine Persons, for the second Person is the only-begotten Son of both. But as we derive our knowledge from things in this sublunary world where there is no adequate example to be found of this absolutely unique relation, it is clear that any name imagined by human beings for it will fall far short of the reality. Having no one adequate name, we must be content with something less, so that of sheer necessity we use the word relationship. This word is used by us for relations arising out of consanguinity; thus by marriage the blood relations of the one partner become relations by affinity of the other. By analogy we may call Mary, on account of her consanguinity with Jesus, the relation by affinity of Jesus's Father, the first Person of the Blessed Trinity.

How utterly inadequate this name is may be seen by the following reflection: we are wont to say that God the Father generated his Son from all eternity, which is quite true; for

divine generation, an act of divine intelligence, is a perfect act, which is not completed by stages any more than is our own act of comprehension. When we say we understand a thing, we might just as truly say we have understood it. To understand and to have understood, to begin and to end the act, is one and the same thing with acts of will and understanding. Thus, to signify the perfection of the divine generation, we rightly say that God *has* generated his Son from all eternity. But while our act of understanding is an accidental and quite distinct from our human being, God has no accidentals, but is himself his act. So that in this light we may exchange the perfect past time for the present and say: God the Father is himself the act by which he *generates* his Son.

It follows from this that at the moment when Mary conceived her divine Son and during the following nine months, God the Father is also in her womb, and in this virgin womb is generating his Son according to the latter's divine nature. While Mary is producing Jesus in his human nature the Father is producing him in his divine nature: for he does it in the *one* indivisible *now* of eternity to which all the fast-flowing *nows* of time correspond. Mary's relationship with the Father means more than that she bore a Son who is also the Son of God the Father . . . it is indescribable, ineffable, unnamable.

As the second Person of the Blessed Trinity proceeds from the Father alone, the third Person proceeds from both the Father and the Son. In order to indicate the perfection of this act, we might employ the past perfect tense and use the present tense for the perfection of God's Being. If the Father generates the Son in the womb of Mary, then the Holy Ghost also proceeds in the womb of Mary from the Father and the Son who are both present there. As we are obliged to establish that Mary's relationship with the eternal Father embraces more than the fact that that Person is the Father of her Child, we are bound to observe that her relationship with the third Person includes more than that he proceeds from her Son. Our forefathers found a name for this humanly incomprehensible relationship and called her 'Sanctuary of the Holy Ghost'.

This name points to something quite other than does the expression 'Bride of the Holy Ghost'. We call Mary by the latter name because she conceived by the Holy Ghost, but it signifies no personal relation. We know, of course, that all created things come into being through God in his unity, for the three distinct Persons have only *one* common omnipotence, as they are only *one* Being. So that although only the second Person took a human nature, yet all three divine Persons in the unity of their Being and their common activity united that human nature with the second Person. Hence the phrase, 'conceived by the Holy Ghost', means nothing but 'conceived by the action of God in the unity of his Being'. A relation between Mary and God is certainly brought about by this, but this relation is one of passive causality such as every effect has to its cause. But as in this case the effect is in the supernatural order, this relation of Mary to God in the unity of his Being may be compared (but *only compared*) with our relation of passive causality to God, by which he brings about supernatural effects in us.

Mary's divine maternity produces thus consanguinity between her and her Son, affinity with the three divine Persons in the unity of the divine Essence, affinity also with each of the other divine Persons separately. While sanctifying grace unites us to God in the unity of his Essence and action by a relation of passive causality, Mary's motherhood unites her to the divine Persons as such, and, as related to them by consanguinity and affinity, she is assumed into the inner life of the Godhead. She may be called, in sound theology, the complement of the Blessed Trinity, although it must be admitted that several theologians take exception to this.

Perhaps it may not be superfluous to point out that the relations which Mary has with the divine Persons, and on which the sublimity of her Motherhood is founded, are real on only one side, i.e. on Mary's, and hence are not reciprocated by the divine Persons.

A relation is never real in virtue of itself, but exclusively in virtue of the foundation on which it depends. If that foundation is real then the relation is also real, and conversely. It is therefore real on both sides if the same real foundation

is to be found on both sides. As God and the creature belong to different orders—the creature is always classifiable according to species and kind, while God is supersubstantial and transcends all species—it is quite impossible that the same foundation should exist on both sides. It is completely out of the question that correspondence on God's side to a relation of a creature to God could ever be found. If it were, it would only be in so far as we make a relation of God to a creature which only existed in our own mind correspond to a real relation of the creature to God. Therefore theologians, except a certain group, teach that no relation of the Son of God to Mary corresponds to the real relation of Mary's divine motherhood—which is a relation of Mary towards the second Person of the Blessed Trinity. In the nature of things this could be said of the other relations to the divine Persons.

Creation has a true relation of dependence on God, for its real foundation is the fact that it was made out of nothing by him. But this relation has no corresponding relation from God's side. Nevertheless he is really Lord of creation. Similarly Jesus does not correspond to Mary's relation with him, and nevertheless he is really Son of Mary.

Indirectly other relations arise, inasmuch as Mary, on account of her elevation to the divine motherhood, is appointed by God to share in her Son's work of redeeming mankind. Here again we have to do with a personal relation, because although Jesus is as man mediator between God and men, conqueror of death and devil, it is nevertheless the divine Person who accomplishes this titanic work in his human nature.

§3. *More than Sanctifying Grace:* The relations which are Mary's as a direct result of her divine Motherhood are so magnificent and so mysterious that our mind is unable to penetrate them.

Yet it is clear that Mary is raised up in an exceptional way, far above all other creatures by these ineffable relations. Hence it will surprise no one that theologians try to obtain

some idea of that height by asking and answering the question: which of the two is the higher, being Mother of God or being child of God, as man becomes his child by sanctifying grace?

Obviously, if we understand Mary's motherhood in so far as it includes the whole treasure of grace that she received on account of it, the answer will be in favour of the divine motherhood; just as the opposite will happen if we leave out of account the relations, and consider only the maternal functions on which those relations are founded.

To put the question plainly, let us take motherhood as the real relation between mother and child, based on the maternal functions of conceiving, bearing and feeding, and set it in front of the grace of adoption as child of God, and then ask: which is more sublime, Mary's motherhood of the second Person of the Blessed Trinity, or Mary's grace of adoption as child of God?

With very few exceptions theologians agree that Mary was raised higher by her motherhood than by the unspeakable treasure of grace that she received for the sake of that motherhood. For by sanctifying grace the foundation of our supernatural life is laid, by which we resemble God supernaturally, and are united with him in special knowledge and friendship, and by which he dwells in us in an especial way. As a result of this grace man thus obtains a special relation to God as Author of the supernatural order, a relation described as one of passive causality.

But by her motherhood Mary stands to God not only in a relation of supernatural effect to supernatural cause, but simply as one person to another. By this she is raised to the limits of all creation. Jesus alone surpasses her, because the Man Jesus is himself God, but Mary has the closest relation to God: she is his Mother.

Consequently—for in philosophy the less perfect is always ordered to the more perfect—Mary's grace is ordered towards her motherhood. God did not choose Mary to be his Mother because she found favour in his eyes, but conversely: because he had chosen her to be his Mother, she had to find favour with him. Because she was to be united to him by the closest

of personal relations, she had also to be bound to him by knowledge and friendship.

In the Bull in which Pius IX gave the Immaculate Conception the status of a dogma, he wrote:

'Therefore he lavished on her, far beyond all angels and saints, such a wealth of heavenly gifts from his divine treasures that she was always entirely free from any stain of sin, wholly spotless and sound, revealing that perfection of innocence and holiness, than which none greater . . . outside God . . . is even thinkable, and which no one . . . outside of God . . . is even supposed to be capable of attaining.' (*Ineffabilis Deus*.)

Thus Mary's motherhood is not the goal to be reached through her holiness but is the end for which that holiness is essentially required. The sublime relations by which she is bound to Jesus require that the lesser bond uniting her to the divine Persons should also be present: union with God by grace and love. At first sight this view that sets Mary's motherhood higher than her filial relation to God seems to conflict with the interpretation of Luke xi, 27, given by St Justin, St Augustine and others. For it is told there that once, during Jesus's preaching, a woman in the crowd, full of admiration for his words, cried out: 'Blessed is the womb that bore thee, and the breast that thou hast sucked'. But Jesus reacted to this in a different sense: 'Nay rather blessed are they who listen to God's word and keep it!' It was thus greater holiness on Mary's part to keep God's word by being holy, than it was to be Mother of the Word of God. Consequently, grace seems to be of more importance than the divine maternity.

Against this it is to be remarked, firstly, that there is another way of understanding Jesus's words. It is as though he would say: 'Woman, what you are saying has little to do with the matter. What is important is that you should listen to me and do what I tell you.' But even if we take Jesus's words literally, they are in no way in conflict with the interpretation given above. For actually Jesus does not mention greatness or sublimity, but happiness and blessedness (*beati, μακάριοι*).

It is precisely from that 'happiness and blessedness' that

St Thomas draws one of the arguments for the necessity of accepting that even the Man Jesus received sanctifying grace. The Saint puts it as follows:

'There is a twofold union of the soul with God: the first is as existing in *one* person, and this belongs exclusively to the soul of Christ. The other is union in operation and is common to all who know and love God. The first union does not suffice for beatitude without the second, for even God himself would not be blessed if he could not know and love himself; for then he would find no satisfaction in himself. But this is a part of blessedness. So that for the soul of Christ to be blessed in this way, union in operation is required as well as his union with the Word in person.' (*Vex. xxix, 1.*)

If then the Incarnation alone is not sufficient for the human blessedness of the Son of man, Mary's motherhood alone is surely not enough for her blessedness. Grace is necessary for Mary's even more than for Jesus's supernatural human blessedness. But if, starting from the fact that Mary's motherhood does not give her what she receives from grace, i.e. blessedness, we conclude that grace considered in itself is greater than the divine maternity, then we are obliged for exactly the same reason to conclude: therefore grace is greater than the divine filiation. For grace gives something that neither the motherhood nor the filiation gives. Formulating it thus at once shows up how absurd it is: the created gift is greater than the uncreated gift, which is the same as affirming that the creature is greater than the Creator! Obviously, then, if we may not conclude from the fact that grace gives the Son of Man what the divine filiation does not give him (i.e. blessedness as a human being), equally obviously we cannot conclude that grace is higher than the divine motherhood because that motherhood does not produce this effect. So that it remains true that Mary is really more blessed on account of her holiness than on account of her motherhood, and that her motherhood is nevertheless greater and nobler than that holiness.

§4. *Predestined Before All Time.* It is a divinely revealed truth, presented to us by Holy Church, that all who are saved were already foreordained or predestined to it by God

from all eternity. Even Jesus, our Lord, is predestined, according to the teaching of the eleventh Synod of Toledo explicitly confirmed by Pope Adeodatus (Denzinger 285).

The occasion of a closer theological consideration of Jesus's predestination is perhaps to be found in the Latin translation in the Epistle to the Romans i, 4, but the Greek text does not support this version. In whatever sense we may understand the text from Romans, the Church, relying on tradition, left the theologians to face the difficulty of finding an explanation for the fact of Jesus's predestination.

Jesus's predestination is very different from ours. The difference does not come from God's side, for from his side the term signifies nothing but his foreordaining of all that was to pass, according to which plan all distribution of grace takes place; just as the term Providence signifies the divine economy according to which every creature has a place in the universe assigned to it. Thus, as there is only one divine Providence on God's side, although innumerable things are planned by it, so there is only one predestination, one divine foreordaining, although there are the most varied distributions of grace. The difference in predestination must therefore be sought on the other side, i.e. in that to which we are predestined. Men and angels are predestined, according to a determined measure of grace, to union with God in contemplation and love; but Jesus's predestination has reference to the hypostatic union of a human nature with the Word of God. So that, while we are destined to be God's adopted children, Jesus, on the contrary, is destined to be, as a human being, God's own Son by nature. The expression predestination is thus not used univocally of Christ and us, but multivocally or analogously.

The predestination of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, differs not only from Jesus's predestination, but also from ours. However, on closer examination it is more like Jesus's than ours. In virtue of God's plan of salvation, his Son does not become man by creation, like our common father Adam, but, as shown above, by human birth. He is born of a woman, although without the intermediary of a human father, and therefore miraculously. In the divine

decree of the Incarnation is already included the choice of a woman on whom will devolve the inconceivable honour of becoming the Mother of God. This agrees entirely with what Pius IX teaches in his Bull, *Ineffabilis Deus*, that: 'In one and the same decree as the Incarnation of Divine Wisdom, the creation of this Virgin was included.'

We have already said that predestination in itself is the divine plan of salvation in accordance with which all graces are distributed: it is thus something in God's mind, more, it is the divine mind itself. Clearly then, by one and the same divine act, which is God himself, Jesus and Mary and we and the angels are foreordained. In God all is one and undivided, except in the case of the distinction of the three divine Persons, as the seventeenth Oecumenical Council of Florence teaches (Denzinger 703). But our human mind cannot grasp a one and undivided God as one and undivided, and so we necessarily understand, according to numbers and parts, what in itself is neither multiple nor divided. In God's one and undivided act we distinguish various moments, understanding them successively, and therefore speaking of God's various decrees. In this way, we imagine various decrees referring to the predestination of Jesus, the angels and ourselves. Mary's predestination is so closely connected with that of Jesus that even our human understanding, always busy with distinctions, can make none here; there is only *one* moment, even for our minds: when from all eternity God foreordained that his Son should be born as man of *this* woman, then the woman's destiny is also necessarily included in the same decree. However, as long as the woman has not yet been pointed out, Jesus's predestination must be looked on as *not yet consummated*.

A distinction can certainly be made in theory. It is not at all the same thing to say: 'the Son of God will have *a* mother', etc. and 'the Son of God will have *this* mother'. In our case this distinction cannot be made, not even in theory, and for a very simple reason. Our person is made up of body and soul, so that if our body is to be replaced, another person will be necessary. We could not have had any other mother than the one of whom we were actually

born. If our father had married another woman, or our mother another man, we should never have existed.

But Jesus, the second Person of the Blessed Trinity, is not a human, but a divine Person, existing from all eternity, and consequently not composed of body and soul. He remains always the same whether he assumes this or another human nature, and is born of this or that mother. So that it is theoretically quite a different question to ask whether the Son of God has a mother, or whether he has *this* mother.

Divine predestination is, however, in its proper nature and essence not theoretical but practical knowledge: it is, as we have said, the divinely foreordained plan; it is thus concrete and provides for the smallest details. So that God has not only prearranged that his Son should be given this or that mother, but has concretely assigned this particular mother to him. Therefore Jesus's predestination is inseparable from the concrete choice of his own beloved Mother, and we must recognise that both Jesus and Mary are predestined in one and the same divine decree.

At the same time, these considerations show that Mary's predestination, like that of Jesus, is very different from ours. The distinction is again to be found in the end of our destiny. We are predestined to be God's adopted children, Jesus to be God's own Son, Mary to be God's own Mother. Just as sanctifying grace and heavenly glory result from Jesus's predestination to be in his human nature God's own Son, so sanctifying grace and heavenly glory result for Mary from her predestination to the divine motherhood. This agrees with what we said in the introduction: in order that Mary might be raised up in a way befitting the importance of the matter to the dizzy height where she was to be related by blood and by affinity to the divine Persons and assumed into the innermost life of the Godhead, she had to have the closest possible conformity with Jesus. Mary is not called on account of her holiness, but conversely her destiny, her vocation to the divine motherhood is the source from which all graces flow towards her in time and in eternity.

But while Christ, as God's own Son, could not be made an adopted son by sanctifying grace, Mary, although

God's own Mother, did become his adopted daughter by grace. As she is predestined, in same divine decree as the Son of God, and therefore before all angels and men, she is correctly called the first-born daughter of the Father.

The question of Jesus's and Mary's predestination is very closely connected with the reasons that the Word of God became man.

God's will has no cause, not even a final cause, for God is his will; if we want to ascribe a cause to God's will, we ascribe that cause itself to God and therefore strengthen our notion of God. We can, of course, ascribe a proper object to God's will, God's own goodness, for God cannot will, permit or hinder anything outside himself, except because of his divine goodness. This must not be understood in a selfish sense, as though God sought to perfect his own goodness through the things outside himself, but only in an altruistic sense: divine goodness is distributed to others in innumerable ways: it shines out in the endless variety of beings, each with a beauty and a wholeness of its own, borrowed from divine goodness. Thus to all the questions: why did God will this and not that? Why did he allow this and prevent that? There is only one final answer: because God is good; or in other words: it is a revelation of God's goodness.

Thus if we ask the reason why God made man, the answer is clear: because he is good. This answer, however, contains the reason exclusively from the side of God, who wills it, which does not prevent the possible existence of other reasons, from the side of things willed by God. These things willed by God have also connections with one another, and so find in one another a reason for existence. If we are looking for the reasons of the sun's existence, we certainly can and may find them in divine goodness. But another may be added from the side of created things: a reason for the sun's existence is to provide light and warmth for living things. If then we ask reasons for the Incarnation, we can and must find them in God's goodness. The question is whether there is also a reason on the creature's side. Theologians are of the opinion that from this point of view the salvation of

men must be given as reason for the Incarnation. Many even think that from the creature's side this is the only reason, so that if, humanly speaking, it ceased to exist, the Incarnation would not have taken place. In their view, which however is not shared by everyone, Jesus's and Mary's predestination supposes prevision of sin to be taken away, and that Jesus is thus destined to be the Father of mercy and, for the same reason, Mary to be the Mother of mercy. So that Mary does not exist secondarily and accidentally, just because she happens to be the Mother of the Saviour, but because she is divinely ordained to be the refuge of sinners. It is for the sake of their salvation that Mary is predestined to be Mother of God. Pius IX puts it as follows:

'As God, the ineffable, foresaw from all eternity the grievous ruin of the whole human race which was to be the result of Adam's transgression; and as he decided to complete the first work of his Goodness . . . a secret kept hidden in past ages . . . by an even more hidden mystery, the Incarnation of the Word, so that what was a failure in the first Adam, might be set right again more happily in the second, he chose and predestined from the beginning of time a Mother for his only-begotten Son.' (*Ineffabilis Deus.*)

The first work of God's goodness, the creation, is mysterious in itself, yet God, foreseeing man's fall and his misery, willed to uplift it even more mysteriously: fallen man was to be lifted up by the incarnate Son of God, and so a Mother was chosen for him. The revelation of God's goodness is to be made by the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. But the incarnate Son of God is not to come otherwise than through the Mother of mercy, cause of our joy.

§5. *Behold the Handmaid of the Lord:* If predestination is simply God's divine plan, and therefore in the order of his purpose, we shall need to consider the execution of that plan.

This consideration brings with it the question as to Mary's ultimate merits with reference to the acquisition of her motherhood. But this question presupposes the explanation of human merits with regard to God, so that we shall deal

with it separately later. Another question which we meet here concerns the actual acceptance of the motherhood.

The story of Mary's acceptance is to be found in Luke i, 26-28. It is obvious from the text that the angel Gabriel has not merely come to inform Mary of what is about to happen in her, as he told Zachary that his prayer had been heard. The angel is expecting an answer, which is given to him in these words: 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord, let it be done unto me according to thy word.'

It would be foolish to ask what would have happened if Mary had refused. We can never know. But we do know that Mary accepted of her own free will what she could have refused with equal freedom. So that in fact we owe the Saviour's coming into the world to her. The Word became flesh, because Mary freely agreed to the motherhood offered her by God.

In a homily attributed to St Bernard (*super Missus est*), the mellifluous Doctor paints that wonderful picture for us, and addresses Mary as though he himself were anxiously waiting to hear her speak the words of redemption:

'The angel waits for the answer: it is time for him to return to God who sent him. We too, O Lady, are waiting for the word of salvation, we who walk so miserably bent under the sentence of condemnation. Behold the price of our redemption is offered to you; if you agree, we shall be instantly set free. We were all made by the eternal Word of God, and behold, we are dying. By one single word from you we shall be revived and called back to life. Adam with all his grief, Adam with all his wretched offspring implores you to say that word, O gracious Virgin. Abraham, David and all the other holy Patriarchs, your ancestors who dwell in the shadows of death, beg you to say that word. The whole world is waiting for it, prostrate at your feet. And they are right, since there depend on your lips the consolation of the wretched, the redemption of prisoners, the freedom of those condemned, and finally the salvation of all Adam's children, of your whole race! Hasten, then! Give the answer that earth and the underworld and even the heavens are expecting from you.'

In order to appreciate exactly the import of Mary's obviously free consent we need to know first to what she is being asked to consent. Gabriel says:

'Thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt a bear a son, and

shalt call him Jesus. He shall be great, and men will know him for the Son of the most High; the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he shall reign over the house of Jacob eternally.' (Luke i, 31-41.)

At this solemn moment when such a far-reaching consent is being asked—it will completely change the face of the world—and now that the long looked-for fulfilment of the ancient promise made in Paradise is on the point of being carried out, the announcement cannot and may not be made in any other words than those in which the prophets had so often renewed and illuminated God's promise. The ancestor of the woman destined to crush the head of the hellish serpent is to be (and this has been pointed out over and over again) the famous Son of David, the King of the Jews, whose reign is to be glorious and never-ending. We too confess that in the Creed: 'of whose kingdom there shall be no end'.

The notion of this King and Messiah had deteriorated in the course of time among the Jews. They were now expecting him as a political personage, who was to drive out the detested conqueror and submit the nations to the sceptre of Israel. Jesus was on this account obliged to declare explicitly to the Roman governor that his kingdom was not of this world (John xviii, 33-37). Even on the day of his glorious ascension, as he was about to go up into heaven, some disciples came forward with the question: 'Lord, dost thou mean to restore the dominion to Israel here and now?' (Acts i, 6.)

Nevertheless the Scriptures had foretold what kind of a Saviour the Messiah was to be, and that he would free them not from a hostile earthly conqueror but from an enemy who had ruined their paradise. Had not the prophet Isaiah, who bears among us the honourable title of Evangelist of the Old Testament, foretold centuries before?—

'Here is one despised, left out of all human reckoning; bowed with misery and no stranger to weakness; how should we recognise that face? How should we take any account of him, a man so despised? Our weakness, and it was he who carried the weight of it; our miseries, and it was he who bore them. A leper, so we thought of him, a man God had smitten and brought low; and all the while it was for our sins he was wounded, it was guilt of ours

crushed him down; on him the punishment fell that brought us peace, by his bruises we were healed. Strayed sheep all of us, each following his own path; and God laid on his shoulders our guilt, the guilt of us all. A victim? Yet he himself bows to the stroke; no word comes from him. Sheep led away to the slaughter-house, lamb that stands dumb while it is shorn; no word from him.' (Isaias liii, 3-7; *vide* xlii, 1-7; xlix, 1-7; lii, 13—liiii, 12.)

It is a remarkable and definitely established fact that even as late as Jesus's time, the Synagogue interpreted as Messianic the prophecies of Isaiah, and especially the chapter just quoted. In spite of this, the Jews on the whole never expected any other Messiah than a king of glory. But it is also a fact that it was not until the Middle Ages that the Jews began to interpret these texts from Isaiah as applying not to the sufferings of the Messiah but to those of the persecuted people of Israel. The occasion of this was controversy with the Christians who quoted their own prophets against them.¹

We are confronted therefore by the fact that in Mary's time the Jews knew Isaiah's prophecies very well, and understood them to refer to the Redeemer, and yet on the whole were not expecting a suffering Messiah.

Did Mary understand the angel entirely? She is to be the mother of the Redeemer; she knew Isaiah's texts, for they were read aloud in the Synagogue; but did she actually understand that the consent asked of her involved accepting to be the mother of the Man of sorrows? Or was she too misled by the idea of a glorious King of Israel whose mother she was to be? Obviously that would make an immense difference to the character of her consent.

There is no possible doubt that Mary had a correct idea of her Son as Redeemer from sin. The angel after all explains it clearly to St Joseph: 'Do not be afraid to take thy wife Mary to thyself . . . she will bear a Son . . . he is to save his people from their sins.' (Matt. i, 20-21.) In the Acts (viii, 27) we read of an Ethiopian, a chamberlain of Queen Candace, who is reading, as he travels, the text of Isaiah quoted above; but he understands that the prophet can hardly be speaking of himself here. So when the Holy Ghost brings Philip the

¹ Bonsirven; *The Judaism of Palestine in the time of Jesus Christ* (Paris 1935), I, p. 380.

deacon up to his chariot, he asks at once: 'About whom does the prophet say this?' But it is written of Mary, who belonged to the house of David, that she was full of grace and therefore possessed special enlightenment from the Holy Ghost.

Beside the fact that the Jews in general were not expecting a suffering Messiah, there is also the fact that some of them certainly were, but that for them as for the others the cross was a scandal.

In the early years of Christianity, there lived a pagan from Sichein, called Justin, who was converted at Rome, and became a fervent apologist, though he remained a layman. He was martyred about the year 165. In his home in Samaria he had been in the habit of discussing religious questions with Rabbis and other outstanding Jews. One of his writings, called *Conversation with Tryphon*, is a report of such an argument with a rabbi who is thought by many scholars to have been Justin's well-known contemporary, Rabbi Tryphon. When Justin appealed to the different prophecies, the rabbi answered as follows:

'Know well that Christ is expected by all our people; and that we believe all the passages of Scripture you have quoted to have been said of him. . . . Nevertheless it seems to us doubtful that it was *prophesied* that Christ would have to be so disgracefully crucified. The Torah calls all who are crucified "accursed", so it will be extremely difficult to convince me that it applies to him. The Scriptures teach clearly *that Christ will suffer*, but we should like to have some very clear proofs before believing that he will suffer this punishment that is cursed in the Law. . . . We know that he will suffer and be *led like a sheep to the slaughter*, but *do prove* to us that he will also have to be crucified, and endure so shamefully and disgracefully the death cursed by the Law.'

If many Jews . . . (the rabbi said *we know* . . .) really believed the Messiah to be foretold as the Man of sorrows, must Mary, full of grace, be separated from those many? This is utterly unacceptable.

Mary accepted of her own free will a motherhood which, as she knew in advance, implied an ocean of suffering and misery: she was to become the mother of the Man of sorrows, the details of whose sufferings she does not know; she has

the prophet's word for it that they will be immense beyond all measure. If she accepts, she will have to drink the cup to the dregs with him. But that suffering will be redemptive suffering: her people will be saved from their sins and therefore Mary forgets herself entirely, and consents: 'Behold the *handmaid of the Lord*' . . . an evident allusion to Isaias who speaks of the *suffering Servant* of the Lord.

Mary is the *cause of our joy*, not only because she conceived of the Holy Ghost, but because, with heroic courage, she accepted his action freely in faith and obedience. Because she, knowing in advance what suffering would inevitably come to her personally as the mother of a man bound to suffer beyond measure, nevertheless made the heroic choice, by which she became the *New Eve* so highly praised by the Fathers.

§6. *Honouring Mary*: Just as blame witnesses to a person's incompetence, impotence, ignorance, lack of virtue . . . in a word, to his shortcomings . . . in the same way honour witnesses to his competence, authority, power, knowledge, wisdom, and above all, virtue, in a word, to his excellence in one domain or another. So that it is a simple demand of justice that we should all honour one another, not only inferiors their superiors, but also superiors their inferiors, and that everyone should honour his equals: 'Give all men their due.' (I Peter ii, 17.)

When, however, inferiors honour their superiors, another element may be introduced, that of the dependence of him who is honouring on him who is honoured. Then we use other words and speak of veneration, or reverence, which is nothing but honour given in submission. It goes without saying that this may be expressed in many different ways: by words (praise, acclamation), by actions (uncovering the head, bowing, standing up, accompanying, giving place to, etc.), by things (monuments, portraits, gifts, etc.). But the honour or reverence is not differentiated in itself by these expressions. The proper or formal distinction is in the excellence to which they are bearing witness, and the corresponding

degree of independence. Hence worship of God comes first, by which we testify to his supremacy as Creator and Ruler of the world and to our utter and complete dependence on him. We use the word adoration for our worship of God. This adoration is not differentiated from other kinds of reverence by our kneeling, for example, before God: that is merely a material distinction, and we make no difficulty about kneeling before Popes and Bishops. The important point is what we wish to bear witness to by our kneeling—in the same way we may stand up for an old woman ('Honour widows'—I Timothy v, 3) as well as for a Bishop, but this does not mean that we are rendering both exactly the same honour!

As God is the first highest principle of our becoming, being and developing, our parents are the immediate principle, and our race the intermediate cause: God binds us to our race through our parents. This is the reason for reverencing not only God but also our people and our parents, and so we speak of patriotism and filial piety. And as our parents share in God's suzerainty so others share in his authority. Therefore we distinguish still more ways of honouring or reverencing, either in the purely natural order or even in the supernatural order. Outstanding excellence is always the thing to which we are testifying, and the dependence consequent on it. This might be arranged in a plan:

Honour or Veneration

- I. in presence of God's uncreated glory: adoration.
- II. in presence of the created, but exceptional greatness of Mary: *hyperdulia*.
- III. in presence of created excellence:
 1. heavenly greatness honouring the saints.
 2. earthly greatness:
 - (a) our nation: patriotism.
 - (b) our parents: filial piety.
 - (c) our superiors: respect and esteem, of which many kinds may be distinguished.
 - (d) our benefactors: gratitude.

Holy Scripture gives various examples of reverence for Mary. The angel Gabriel is the first, greeting her by a new name: 'Thou who art full of grace, the Lord is with thee.' (Luke i, 28.) Elizabeth even pays homage to her, and places herself in a position of subordination: 'Blessed art thou among women. . . . How have I deserved to be thus visited by the mother of my Lord?' (Luke i, 42). Mary herself prophesies: 'From this day forward all generations will count me blessed.' (Luke i, 48.) And the woman who interrupts Jesus in his sermon does so with the words: 'Blessed is the womb that bore thee, and the breast that thou hast sucked.' (Luke xi, 27.)

The same expressions of homage are to be found in the catacombs. Even to-day we do not yet know for certain whether the pictures there were objects of veneration properly speaking or whether they served only as ornament. We do know that they served to help in teaching, for St Gregory says of them: 'What writing is to those who can read, pictures are to the ignorant who look at them.' But we may remark that homage is also expressed in these pictures. In the catacomb of St Priscilla (second century) and in that of SS Peter and Marcellinus (third century), there are pictures in which the Blessed Virgin alone is shown as seated, while all the other saints are standing. In the Canon of the Mass, Mary was given her place *before* the Apostles, as early as the fourth century. Churches also were built in her honour, e.g. the cathedral at Ephesus, in which was held the third Oecumenical Council that promulgated the dogma of her divine Motherhood (431), while a few years later a second church was erected at Rome under her patronage, Sancta Maria Maggiore. Even in those days, St Epiphanius (*ob.* 403) bears witness to a true veneration of Mary (*adv. haer.* 79: 7) and we find sermons about Mary and, a little later, hymns. Feasts in her honour quickly followed and in the eighth century the seventh Oecumenical Council of Nicaea explicitly took devotion to Mary under its protection (Denzinger 302), as did also the eighth Oecumenical Council of Constantinople (Denzinger 337).

But it is also clear—and not to Catholics alone—that we honour Mary not only more than other saints, but even

differently. We find an expression of this in the manner in which we combine our devotion to Mary with our devotion to other saints. In my booklet, *Katholieke Marialeer* (Hilversum 1937), I have formulated it thus:

'We want to ask St Anthony to help us by his intercession in obtaining one or other intention, and we do not find it in the least curious that we should say ten Hail Marys in his honour for nine days: why do we never dream of saying the litany of St Peter of Verona in honour of St Anthony for nine days? In other words, why do I address myself to our Lady when I want to obtain something from St Anthony? The answer is that we may do any good work in honour of such a saint, e.g. fasting, almsgiving, going on pilgrimage, receiving Holy Communion or any other Sacrament, etc., but that I can also in many cases make this good work consist of . . . devotion to Mary!'

A reviewer of the booklet mentioned above went so far as to say in his notice of it that he hoped I did not believe what I had said. In his view the reason of the fact I had recorded was to be found in a deeply ingrained need-for-formulae-in-prayer! Quite apart from the compliment that the said reviewer was paying in the same breath to the well-intentioned, if deluded, author and to his easy-going Catholic readers, his own position is not tenable. If need-for-formulae-in-prayer is the reason of the fact that we practise devotion to Mary in honour of any given saint, it would really be much more practical to make use of one of the innumerable prayer-books that exist and say the litany of—let us say—St Peter of Verona, in honour of St Anthony.

Another striking fact about these combined prayers is that *we never call upon one saint to intercede for us with another; one would never, for instance, think of saying: 'St Anthony, ask St Bernard to obtain this favour for us'.* This is of course quite understandable because although the saints differ in degree they are essentially equal to one another. Yet we have no objection to asking other saints to pray to our Lady for us! We beg St Bernard, for instance, St Dominic, St Alphonsus, St Louis Grignon de Montfort and other well-known clients of Mary among God's saints to support our prayers by their own intercession.

From the place assigned to devotion to Mary in the plan

(*vide supra*), as well as from the name *hyperdulia*, it is clear that the honour we pay to the holy Mother of God occupies an intermediate place between adoration of God and veneration of any creature whatever.

Leo XIII says of it:

'We beg the Blessed Trinity to *have mercy on us*; we beg any saint to *pray for us*; but the ritual prayer with which we approach our Lady has something in common with our worship of God, so much so that Holy Church cries to her with the words with which she implores God: *have mercy on us sinners!*' (*Augustissimae Virginis.*)

And Pius XI is applying this doctrine in an address to the cardinals:

'Beloved brothers and sons, let us all pray to our common Mother: Immaculate Queen of peace, have mercy on us; immaculate Queen of peace, pray for us; immaculate Queen of peace, intercede for us!' (*Osservatore Romano*, 29, IV, 1935.)

The question as to the why of this exceptional position, and as to the principle of this special veneration, which has something in common with our cult of God, is not sufficiently answered by pointing to the high degree of sanctity attained by Mary. Although her sanctification is specifically distinct from ours (we shall return to this later), the grace which produces this sanctification gives her a holiness differing indeed in its abundance, but not in its essence, from that of other saints. In answer to the question why we ought to honour Mary above all the other saints, the catechism rightly does not put forward in the first place the high degree of Mary's sanctity. We have already worked out that Mary's divine motherhood is more sublime than the whole treasure of grace allotted to her in time and in eternity. This motherhood gives her a dignity differing not only in degree but in essence from the excellence of the brightest seraph. As Mary has something in common with God by her motherhood, i.e. the only Son, she has also something in common with God in her cult. Devotion to Mary stands thus specifically just as we put it in our plan, between worship of God on the one hand and veneration of the saints on the other. St Thomas writes very strikingly:

'The chief of all reasons for excellence is the one for which a creature is honoured on account of its union with the Creator.

And therefore this veneration is called by the special name hyperdulia as rising beyond veneration towards adoration.' (III *Sent.* 9.2.2.)

The Congregation of Sacred Rites:

'The Church reveres the Queen and Mistress of the angels more than the other saints with a higher kind of veneration, because inasmuch as she is the Mother of God . . . hyperdulia and not just any kind of veneration is her due.' (June 1, 1884.)

Although we venerate our Lady in practice as the Holy Mother of God, her cult does not depend on that holiness, but rests ultimately on her far more intimate relations with the divine Persons. If, in the case of any of God's saints, we set aside his holiness, we no longer have any basis for his veneration. But if we set Mary's undeniable, personal, exceptional holiness aside, her veneration will still have a firm basis, and in this again her cult comes into agreement with divine worship. For God has a right to our adoration in the fullest measure, even if we leave his infinite sanctity out of the question.

In this connection I cannot omit some pages from *The True Devotion* by St Louis Marie Grignon de Montfort:

'Here let me turn to you, O my beloved Jesus, to complain affectionately to your divine Majesty that most Christians, even among the most learned, do not know the necessary connection existing between you and your holy Mother. . . . I am not speaking now of . . . heretics and schismatics . . . but of Catholics, and even of some Catholic teachers who, although they think they are called to show the truth to others, do not know you or your Mother, except in a speculative, arid, sterile and indeterminate way. These people rarely speak of your Mother or of the devotion we should have to her, for fear, they say, that it may be abused and that you may be wronged by an exaggerated veneration for your holy Mother. . . . Meanwhile these people have neither pious affection nor tender devotion for you, because they have none for Mary. . . .

'O my beloved Jesus, have such people your Spirit? Do they please you by their attitude? Does it please you when people, for fear of displeasing you, omit to do all they can to please your Mother? Does devotion to your Mother stand in the way of devotion to you? Does Mary usurp the honour we pay her? Is she a stranger with nothing to do with you? Do we displease you by wanting to please her? Do we separate ourselves or estrange ourselves from your love by consecrating ourselves to her by loving her?' (Nos. 63 and 64.)

CHAPTER 2

THE NEW EVE

§1. *Mary and Eve*: It is quite certain that from the earliest days of Christianity the Church saw *more* in Mary than the Mother of God only. And in saying *more*, I do not mean anything that might be greater than that motherhood, for we have shown that Mary's divine motherhood is so sublime that it can be no other than the end towards which all the graces given her converged. With the word *more*, we are trying to express a gift that is not given with her motherhood itself, but is added to it by God, purposely in order to elevate Mary to the highest degree possible.

We may find an analogy (but it will be no more than an analogy and will therefore limp a little) in the action of a king who ennoble the woman whom his son has marriedmorganatically. Obviously, to be the wife of a king's son exalts the woman more than just being of noble rank. Yet it is more fitting that the king's son should marry a noblewoman than a commoner. In like manner no possible addition of any dignity whatever can elevate Mary higher than does her motherhood, but all the same it befits this dignity itself that the Mother of God's Son should be exalted in another way.

The oldest depositions we possess of tradition place Mary in an *antithetic parallel* with Eve, and therefore call her the New Eve.

In the Epistle to the Romans (v, 12-19), so important for the theology of Original Sin, we find an explanation known as the *antithetic Christ-Adam parallel*. The beginning and end of this pericope runs as follows:

'As sin came into the world by *one man*, and through sin, death, death also came to all men, for all have sinned. . . . Thus as

damnation came upon all men by the fall of one, by the justice of one there also comes to all men justification to life. For as by the disobedience of one man all became sinners, so by the obedience of one, all will be justified.'

Here we have a parallel: as—so . . . but it is put in reverse, for while Adam is the cause of all men's damnation, Christ is the cause of justification for all. Let us set it out thus:

ADAM	CHRIST
by disobedience	by obedience
cause of	cause of
sin and death	justification
to all mankind.	to all mankind.

St Paul comes back to this teaching in his first Epistle to the Corinthians (xv, 21-22), but this time in connection with the Resurrection: 'A man had brought us death, and a man should bring us resurrection from the dead.' Just as all have died with Adam, so with Christ all will be brought to life. If Adam was cause of death and sin for all, Christ brought not only justification from sin, but also resurrection from the dead. In verses 45-9 St Paul again looks back to this and now we find Christ called Adam also, although as the 'last' or 'New Adam'. So that now the parallel runs as follows:

ADAM	CHRIST (the New Adam)
by disobedience	by obedience
cause of	cause of
sin	justification
and death	and resurrection
to all men	to all men
solidary with him.	solidary with him.

Besides Holy Scripture, in which divine revelation has been set down in part only, we know of another source of this revelation: divine tradition: in other words the teaching received by the Apostles from the lips of Jesus himself, or else given them by the Holy Ghost, and passed on to us as it were from their hands (Denzinger 783). This tradition, in essence the oral passing on of revealed truth, must in no way be identified with writings that have come down to us from early days. Nevertheless, under certain specified conditions, these writings may be able to throw light for us on oral tradition. Ultimately, however, judgment over all that is or

is not to be found in this source of tradition, as well as the final decision as to what is or is not taught by Holy Writ, remains with the authority appointed by God for this purpose: Holy Church. But, just as we read and study Holy Writ, we may also read and study the written evidence concerning the content of oral tradition. In this way we can form a well-grounded opinion, without committing ourselves until we learn the authentic ultimate judgment of the Church. Divine tradition has always an equal intrinsic value, as being guaranteed by the same Holy Spirit under whose inspiration the Holy Scriptures were written. Nevertheless, in studying a specific problem, the older these written depositions of oral tradition are, the more value they will have for us inasmuch as they are nearer to the source and therefore enlighten us more easily as to the apostolic character of these traditions.

Just as we have found the antithetic Christ-Adam parallel in St Paul, we meet a similar antithetic Mary-Eve parallel in the testimony concerning oral tradition written down by many outstanding figures, Fathers and ecclesiastical writers belonging to God's Church. They are indeed many, but we propose to limit ourselves to three witnesses, St Justin, St Irenaeus and Tertullian, and our choice of these is justified. St Justin, a man from Sichem in Samaria who became a Christian at Rome (*d.* 165), represents the Church of Rome. We have already referred to him about Mary's free acceptance of the divine motherhood. St Irenaeus (*d.* 202), disciple of St Polycarp of Smyrna, represents the Church of Asia; and Tertullian (*d.* 222), the Church of Africa. We have thus chosen three witnesses from the three continents in which the Church existed in the second century. It is very important that these three witnesses, speaking of the Mary-Eve parallel, never ask their hearers to listen to it as to something new, but always presuppose that it is well known to them. This is of immense importance, for if, in the second century of Christianity, a specific doctrine can be presumed to be known in the universal Church . . . in Rome, Asia and Africa . . . there is only one possible explanation: that the doctrine in question belonged to the original preaching and must therefore be recognised as *apostolic*.

St Irenaeus appeals to the text already quoted from the Epistle to the Romans, and continues:

'Consequently the Blessed Virgin was also found to be obedient when she said: "Behold thy handmaid, Lord, be it done to me according to thy word." But Eve was disobedient; she did not obey even when she was still a virgin. Therefore, as she on becoming disobedient, became cause of death both to herself and to the whole human race, so Mary who was obedient became cause of salvation both for herself and for the whole human race.' (Migne PG 7: 958.)

Whereas St Paul contrasts Christ with Adam, St Irenaeus contrasts Mary with Eve, even explicitly mentioning Mary's obedience as opposed to Eve's disobedience.

Here it is not merely a question of what the Holy Ghost wrought in Mary independently of Mary, which is the mystery of the Incarnation, it is a question of what Mary herself did. We are examining Mary's actions, as we examine Eve's, and therefore stress is laid on Mary's obedience (just as St Paul stresses Jesus's obedience), as Mary's faith is also pointed out in opposition to Eve's unbelief:

'Thus the knot tied by Eve's disobedience was unravelled by Mary's obedience, and what the virgin Eve had bound by her unbelief, was set free by the Virgin Mary's faith.' (*loc. cit.*)

Tertullian writes on similar lines:

'Eve had believed the serpent: Mary believed Gabriel. The wrong done by the former in believing, was obliterated by Mary's believing.' (Migne PL 2: 827.)

Evidently Mary's causality is not considered in itself, apart from Jesus's causality. Mary can be a cause only through Jesus, our Lord and hers. The witnesses therefore speak most of all about the message of the angel: there, lost in admiration of Mary's faith and obedience, they contrast them with the unbelief and the disobedience of Eve. And exactly that in Mary is leading on to the conception of her Son. She is quite certainly cause of our joy by the conception of her Son, but that is not the chief point here. This is Mary's virtue, which led up to it, and which is contrasted with Eve's sins in order the better to show that in St Justin's words:

'In the same way, in which the disobedience originating in the serpent had begun, the disharmony was to be resolved. For Eve, as yet a maid and innocent, brought forth disobedience and

death at the word of the serpent, but the Virgin Mary answered the angel Gabriel in faith and joy when he brought her the glad news that the Spirit of the Lord would come upon her and the power of the All Highest would overshadow her, wherefore the Holy One that would be born of her would be God's Son: Be it done to me according to thy word.' (Migne PG 6: 710.)

Let us now put the two parallels side by side:

ADAM	CHRIST (New Adam)	EVE	MARY (New Eve)
by disobedience	by obedience	by disobedience	by obedience
cause of	cause of	cause of	cause of
sin	justification	death	salvation
and death	and resurrection		
for all men.	for all men.	for all men.	for all men.

It is evident that here we have not to do with *two* parallels, but with two halves of *one* parallel. Holy Scripture as source of revelation does not contain all revelation, because Jesus did not order his disciples to write, but to preach. It is necessary therefore to complete Holy Scripture from oral tradition. That is here the case: Holy Writ contains the most important part of the parallel, but not the whole, so that it needs to be supplemented by oral tradition. The single antithetic parallel runs as follows:

ADAM AND EVE	CHRIST AND MARY
by disobedience	by obedience
cause of	cause of
sin	justification
and death	and resurrection
for all men	for all men
solidary with them	solidary with them
(by birth)	(by re-birth)

So that this parallel taken in its entirety is substantiated by Holy Scripture, in Genesis iii, 14-15; to which we shall return presently: 'For this work of thine, thou shalt bear a curse . . . And I will establish a feud between thee and the woman, between thy offspring and hers.' The reason that we call Mary the New Eve is therefore to be found in the datum of revelation taken from divine tradition, that Mary is contrasted with Eve in the work of salvation. As St Irenaeus said, Mary had to unravel the knot tied by Eve's disobedience, or, to quote Tertullian: 'so that what had been

lost by the female sex, might be saved again by the same sex.' (Migne PL 2: 827.) As Jesus compared with Adam is called the New Adam, Mary is called the New Eve.

The meaning of these names is also perfectly clear: the whole parallel points to the fact that Mary co-operated with Christ in one way or another throughout the work of the salvation of mankind. She did so not only by her divine maternity which gave the world the Author of our salvation, but by her personal activity, expressing itself in deeds of virtue and first of all—just as in the case of Christ—by her obedience. And so (although this could not yet have been said at the time in these words), she co-operated with Jesus in meriting and atoning, because every act of virtue presents both these aspects.

We are not, however, told in detail in what Mary's obedience was shown. The angelic message is naturally pointed to, for it is in any case part of the parallelism. Eve disobeys at the instigation of the fallen angel, Satan, who had disguised himself as a serpent; Mary's obedience also results from the invitation of the angel, Gabriel. No further description of the way in which Mary's obedience expressed itself on other occasions is given at that time, although it evidently cannot have been confined to that one moment of the Annunciation.

* * * * *

This doctrine, that Mary in one way or another was able to co-operate with Jesus in our salvation, is also expressed in the strongly diverging yet always closely connected names that Christendom has found for her in the course of the centuries. In Migne's Marial Index (PL 219: 503-522) we find a treasury of names, all referring to this co-operation:

To be found in the first five centuries:

Succour	Our help
Guardian of the whole Church	Spring of living waters
Woman through whom we were saved	She who strengthens us
Healer of mankind	Conqueror of her sex
Woman who reinstates all women in their rank	Destroyer of vices
Our shelter	Goddess of pity
	Hope of sinners
	Help in oppression

She who intervenes on behalf of the despairing Haven in shipwreck

To be found in the fifth to tenth centuries:	
Our only remedy	Refreshment of our soul
Way of salvation	Mediatrice
Preserver	Cause, after God, of our salvation
Restorer of life	Conqueror of the ancient serpent
Rescuer of the world	Liberator of sinners
Work of our redemption	Protectress of earth-dwellers
Basis of our sanctification	Light of the blind
Light of the heathen	Benefactress of sinners
Our help	Rehabilitation of sinners

May be found as late as the eleventh, twelfth or thirteenth centuries:

Daughter who leads us to the Father	Ruin of death and hell
Conqueror of the devil	Renewal of the world
Who puts the accursed one to flight	Bond of reconciliation
Terror of devils	Life of the world
Camp of God	Rebuilder of ruins
Mother of mercy	Cause of our hope
Who pities sinners	Who solves every problem
Remedy for human ills	Who lays hell waste
Who sets prisoners free	Who condemns death
Who brings home the lost	Who removes the curse
Who sets sinners free	Who stills tumult
Anchor	Arm to defend us
Faithful and powerful patroness	Shield to protect us
Our Advocate	Our reconciler
In whom we are all blessed	Consoler of the afflicted
Forgiveness of sinners	Who cleanses us from crime
Hope of the despairing	Who renews all things
Comfort of the afflicted	Who co-operates in distributing God's alms
Source of all good	God's almoner
Bringer of peace	Unconquered trophy
Who helps the Church to spread	Protection of the world
Hope of those who fall	Who restores mercy
Companion of God	Beginning of all good
	Immaculate lamb of sacrifice
	Treasurer of grace

On reading over this incomplete litany quietly, one cannot escape the impression that the Church really does ascribe a

rôle to Mary in the achievement of our salvation. It even shows up more clearly than in the parallelism. No one must think that this terminology has no value before he has searched out exactly what each author meant to express with each one of these titles. That certainly would be important for the question as to what is taught by them, explicitly or implicitly. But here we are concerned only with the practical meaning of this varied terminology. In the words, names and praises used by the Church through the centuries in order to honour Mary, her co-operation is to all intents and purposes stated, even if the individual users of these titles probably never thought of expressing such an idea or even wanted to. Here there is no question of one or other special expression by a single author, but of a treasury of invocations and veneration spread over several centuries. It all confirms and brings into light what the antithetic Mary-Eve parallel has already taught us: besides her physical motherhood of the Redeemer, Mary was assigned a special role in our sanctification, and this certainly places her in a very different category from all other saints.

§2. *The Woman and the Serpent*: In order to confirm the teaching regarding the New Eve and Mary's role in the bringing about of our salvation by her co-operation with Jesus, appeal is also made to Holy Scripture, especially to the divine oracle of Genesis iii: 14-15:

Genesis iii: 14 'For this work of thine, thou shalt bear a curse:
 15a I will establish a feud between thee and the woman,
 b between thy offspring and hers.
 c she is to crush thy head
 while thou dost lie in wait at her heels!'

In verse 15c some translations have the same verb 'crush' twice over. The Septuagint Greek and the old Latin translations taken from it (*Vetus Italia*) have rendered the Hebrew verb twice over by 'lie in wait', and the Leyden translation has done the same. St Jerome (in Hebrew questions on Genesis), the English Authorised and Revised Versions and

the Dutch Authorised Version repeat as do the others, but use a different verb, meaning to 'crush'. Against this are the translations of Aquila and Symmachus, the Vulgate and the Dutch P.C. translations which use two different verbs: she is to crush thy head

while thou dost lie in wait for her heel.

This last method however is in conflict with the rule of hermeneutics that the same word, used twice in succession in absolutely the same context, may not be translated differently each time: for that would give an impression of arbitrariness.

In various translations, the same verse 15c seems to refer to the woman, but there is no doubt that in Hebrew it means the offspring of the woman. Therefore the rendering 'she shall crush thy head' cannot serve as scriptural evidence in support of any privilege of Mary's: it simply does not refer to the woman, whoever she may have been, but to her issue.

Otherwise this verse tells us nothing new. We are dealing here with Hebrew poetry, in which the abstract 'I shall establish a feud' of verse 15a is given a concrete form in verse 15c: a picture of a man trying to tread on the head of a small serpent to make it harmless, while the snake naturally struggles to escape its fate by biting the heel that threatens it. The whole passage tells us therefore that God is arousing enmity between the woman and the snake, and between the offspring of both. And God is stirring up this enmity as a punishment for the serpent, 'for this work of thine' (verse 14). So that in this punishment there is a guarantee that victory will ultimately be for the woman and her descendants.

Who is this woman?

Rationalists and Protestants think the woman can only be Eve, because, as we have seen, the same word appearing in the same context *must* be understood in the same sense, unless there is some cogent reason for another rendering. But in the whole preceding account (*vide* verses 1, 2, 4, 6, 12, and 13) and in what follows (16 and 20) the word *ha ischa* is used for her to whom Adam will not give the name Chawwa (Heva, Eva) until later. No sufficient reason can

therefore be adduced for giving this word alone another meaning in verse 15.

Among Catholics, many theologians and some scholars are of the opinion that the woman is *Mary only*, and their argument runs as follows:

(a) The woman's offspring is mentioned; if this woman is Eve, the whole human race must be meant, in which case it would surely have been more obvious to speak of the offspring of the man. And then enmity between *thee* and the man would have been mentioned.

(b) The woman's offspring is to conquer the serpent: a woman is therefore meant who is to have offspring without the intervention of the man: and that woman is the Virgin Mary.

(c) There is a striking similarity between this passage, in which *the* woman is mentioned with the definite article, and Isaiah vii, 14 where *the* virgin is mentioned, with the definite article. But in the latter Mary is meant.

(d) In the Apocalypse of St John xii, 4 we read: 'and the dragon stood fronting the woman who was in child-birth, ready to swallow up the child as soon as she bore it'. And in xii, 13: 'So the dragon, finding himself cast down to earth, went in pursuit of the woman, the boy's mother'. This certainly refers to Genesis iii, 15, for what meaning could it have if it did not refer to Mary?

(e) Various expressions of the Fathers prove that they understood this passage to refer to Mary: St Irenaeus (Migne PG, 7: 964); St Epiphanius (PG, 42: 727); St Jerome (PL, 30: 80); St Justin (PG, 6: 710); St Cyprian (PL, 4: 704); St Leo the Great (PL, 54: 194); St Bernard (PL, 183: 63).

Against this is claimed that rationalists and Protestants with their *none but Eve* fail to appreciate the supernatural in Mary, or at any rate her privileges. Besides the literal meaning of Holy Scripture, and notably of Genesis iii, 15, they will accept no spiritual meaning.

On the other hand the Catholics referred to, with their *none but Mary*, do not understand the literal sense of Scripture. They are told in answer to their arguments:

(a) There is actually a special reason why the offspring of *the woman* is mentioned. According to the Book of Wisdom 'A man's own sins are the instrument of his punishment' (xi, 17). Thus Adam, who disobeyed by eating forbidden fruit, was punished by a curse upon the earth, which could no longer produce of itself the fruits needful for man. The woman had led the man astray and so was punished by having to suffer all her life under his yoke and its consequences. Likewise the serpent who had tempted the woman was punished by being made subject to her.

(b) The word used in Hebrew means not only seed, but also offspring posterity, adherents or followers. It is used not only for the descendants of the man but also for those of the woman (Gen. xxiv, 60), so that there is absolutely no reason to consider virginity a necessary condition here.

(c) In Isaiah vii, 14, *ha almah* means Mary only, when other possible women have been eliminated by a whole chain of arguments. But *ha ischa* can and must without any hesitation be said of her we call Eve, as no one else appears in the whole story.

(d) Holy Scripture itself explains who the woman is, i.e. the Church, for verse 17 reads: 'In his spite against the woman, the dragon went elsewhere to make war on the rest of her children, the men who keep God's commandments, and hold fast to the truth concerning Jesus.' (Apoc. xii, 17.) The application of this to Mary is no more than an accommodation.

(e) The witness of the Fathers proves neither more nor less than what all Catholics hold, namely that Mary is concerned here in one way or another.¹

Catholics who do not belong to the group just mentioned combine the two opinions given above. They admit that Eve is really in question here, and that rationalists and Protestants are not wrong about this. But they are wrong in maintaining that no one is concerned in it but Eve; just as

¹ On this question *vide* F. Ceuppens, o.p., *Historia primaeva*, Romae (1934), p. 181. There is an important article by Dr J. B. Valckens, o.praem., 'The Proto-Evangelium and Tradition', in *Standard non Maria*, 25th year, p. 281.

the Catholics of whom we have spoken are wrong in taking up the position that Mary alone is concerned, for in reality both are concerned. The literal meaning of this passage of Scripture (in which the words therefore mean the things) is that the word *ha ischa* (the woman) signifies her who will later be called by Adam Chawwa, a name that we have corrupted to Eve. But the spiritual sense of this passage, in which therefore the things signified by the words mean other things in their turn, is: that Eve and her offspring stand for Mary and her Son.

In Romans v, 14, Adam is called the foreshadowing (*τύπος*) of him who was to come (Christ), which is why St Irenaeus also recognises Eve explicitly as type of Mary (Migne PG, 7: 958). But as in a prophecy, the true object of importance is not the type but the antitype (not the prophetic symbol but what that symbol represents) it is obvious that although Eve and her offspring are signified by the literal sense of Genesis iii, 15, nevertheless this scriptural passage has first of all in view the holy Mother of God and her Son.

It goes without saying that we may not accept any spiritual sense according to our own preferences, for such a sense will not be there unless God himself has introduced it. And again, the fact that he has done so cannot be known otherwise than by his own revelation. Consequently a potential spiritual sense of a specified passage in Holy Writ must be communicated to us in another part of the same Scripture, or else divine tradition must explain the passage in this way.

The following are the reasons why a spiritual sense based upon the literal sense is accepted in Genesis iii, 14-15, so that actually Eve and her descendants, who are signified by the literal text, signify in their turn Mary and her Son:

(a) We said above that the Vulgate's translation of verse 15 differs considerably from the original, as it alters the situation: for the lying in wait for the offspring of the woman is now transferred to the woman herself. Therefore this text can afford no scriptural proof of any privilege of Mary's. All the same this translation is very significant. The Vulgate offers us here a proof by tradition, as being a very different translation, accepted by the

Church for centuries. If tradition had not recognised Mary in some way in this divine oracle, this pronounced difference would never have been accepted, and certainly would never have been retained for so many centuries.

(b) The texts of the Fathers, quoted as proof that in their opinion Mary is spoken of in this passage, may not be sufficient to show that she is literally signified here: but they are quite sufficient to prove that there is some question of her here.

(c) The Liturgy for the feast of the Immaculate Conception points in the same direction.

However, we shall look elsewhere for the great argument. The writings of the Fathers and those of other witnesses to this tradition which have survived and are at our disposal, are not the only, nor even the most important source of our knowledge. This source is the authority of Holy Church which preserves and vouches for both the content of knowledge in Holy Scripture and the content of knowledge in divine tradition.

We shall therefore refer to this authority, and especially to the Bull of Pius IX, in which he declared the Immaculate Conception of Mary a dogma of faith. Here the Pope appears in his own capacity of highest Teacher of the Church, with the infallibility lent him by God, in order to take the most important ecclesiastical decisions as to what we are obliged or not to believe. It goes without saying that the Pope is infallible only on that one point that he is defining, and not on what comes before or after. Nevertheless it is also evident that *what* the Pope is intending to teach by what comes before and after is of the greatest significance, especially if it concerns the definition directly. And here it is all the more convincing that in this Bull, at the Bishops' own request, the sources are given in which this point of faith lies enclosed—in this order that they may be able to help the apologists to refute the objections brought by the opposing side.

Now the Pope teaches here that the Immaculate Conception of Mary is revealed to us in the divine oracle of Genesis ii, 14-15, called the *Proto-Gospel*, provided that we understand this passage of Scripture traditionally as revealing Mary's union with Jesus in his full victory over Satan. The point in question is the following:

'The Fathers and writers of the Church have . . . in reporting the words by which God . . . had both broken the pride of the deceitful serpent and revived in a wonderful way the hope of the human race, by saying: "I am establishing a feud between thee and the woman, between thy offspring and hers" . . . taught that in this divine speech the merciful Redeemer of the human race, the only-begotten Son of God, Christ Jesus is clearly and distinctly foretold; that his holy Mother, the Virgin Mary, is also indicated; and at the same time the enmity of both for the devil is most clearly expressed. So that, as Christ, mediator between God and man in his adopted human nature, destroyed the handwriting that witnessed against us by nailing it in triumph to the Cross, so too, the most Holy Virgin, united with him by the closest and most unbreakable of ties, exercised with him and through him eternal enmity to the venomous serpent, and triumphing completely over him, crushed his head with her immaculate foot.' (Ineffabilis Deus.)

Thus the Pope teaches that the revelation of Mary's Immaculate Conception is contained in this divine prophecy because, . . . as divine tradition according to the Pope understands the oracle, . . . it contains the revelation of Mary's union with Jesus in his complete victory over Satan.

The ultimate purpose of the enmity aroused by God, according to this prophecy, between the serpent and the woman and between the offspring of both, is to drive the devil out of the place he had usurped, and free mankind from his clutches. Jesus, the offspring of the woman, will tread on the poisonous head of the snake, release mankind from its grip and lead the human race in triumph to heaven which will have been reopened. Naturally, all the redeemed will share the triumph in some way, but . . .

We were conceived in sin, children of God's anger by nature even then. (Eph. ii, 3.) In addition to this, we ourselves have done much evil (Esd. x, 13); we go bowed under the weight of the cares of this life, in affliction, need and poverty (I Cor. vi, 4); we shall die quite soon; our body will return to dust (Gen. iii, 19); and our soul that cannot die will have to be purified by fire . . . God knows for how long! (I Cor. iii, 15.) And when it enters heaven at long last, it will, in the nature of things, always be longing, up to the Last Day, for reunion with its co-partner, the body. But then, when the voice rings out from heaven: "Sound the trumpets!"

(I Cor. xv, 52), we shall be clothed again with our own flesh and we shall rise again . . . we ourselves . . . and when we realise that heaven is our heritage, eternity will not be long enough for thanking God for this: that after so many defeats at the hands of Satan, we are *nevertheless finally* sharing in the triumph of Christ our Lord.

But even in the bliss of Paradise, no one will venture, after being so thoroughly defeated by Satan, to call his ultimate victory a complete one. However often the enemy may have defeated us, there may be a final victory awaiting us; but total conquest does not allow of a single defeat.

'The most perfect and the finest kind of victory is this: never to have yielded even once to the enemy.' (IV Sent. 49.3; qu. 1 ad rum.) Mary not only shares, like us, in Satan's eventual defeat, but in closest union with Christ, she has exercised *eternal* enmity to the hellish serpent; she has triumphed completely over him; in other words, if her part is *total* victory, we cannot accept that the devil ever won a single victory over her.

Here we find the more detailed account of Mary's rôle in the work of our salvation, which we saw concretely expressed in the antithetic parallel and the rich litany of titles. With the unconquered Christ Mary is unconquered, and conquering with the conquering Christ.

In the first place this title to glory implies for Mary the most perfect separation from sinners, just as it is claimed for Jesus in the Letter to the Hebrews (vii, 26) 'not reckoned among us sinners', separation in all that concerns both the guilt of sin and the penalty of sin, for both are diabolical victories. (Gen. iii, 13; Wis. ii, 24.)

To have a share in the final victory means more than merely never being beaten, it includes beating the enemy. The comrade of the entirely triumphant Christ participates in one way or another in achieving the salvation of men, rescuing them from the devil's slavery to be free with the freedom of the children of God.

The heavenly glory awaiting Mary to raise her in a way befitting a matter of such moment to the position of Mother of God demands, in the present economy of salvation, the

highest conformity with the image of his Son (Rom. viii, 29). But as partner with Jesus, unconquered and conquering with him, Mary already has a conformity greater than any other that is even thinkable. As his comrade in their eternal opposition to Satan, she resembles Jesus to the utmost, receives in the highest possible measure the fruits of the salvation earned by him, and is thus worthy Mother of God.

The source of all the graces and gifts bestowed on Mary is and remains her divine motherhood, from which her heavenly perfection proceeds immediately. She must however earn this by conformity with her Son, just as we must in our turn. But hers is the highest conformity, and it is attained in her partnership with the Victor.

The choice of Mary as Mother of God is thus necessarily the first principle of Mariology, as being the final end of all the graces and privileges bestowed on her. But we must not understand this as though it meant that we may consider this vocation as the fundamental source of our knowledge of our Lady, so that by all kinds of reasoning we may draw from this vocation correct conclusions about her very great variety of privileges. But since their end is the standard by which we measure things, vocation to divine motherhood must surely be first in order of importance. Consequently we find in Mary's vocation to the divine motherhood the first and highest basis on which we can arrange the data received from divine revelation, from the doctrine of the Church, and from the well-grounded opinions of theologians. When we have combined these into a system, we can construct a Mariology.

PART II

NEVER CONQUERED BY SATAN

CHAPTER I

CONCEIVED IMMACULATE

§1. *The Dogmatic Definition:* Holy Church did not proceed without due preparation to declare the dogma of Mary's Immaculate Conception. For five centuries the theologians of the Western Church discussed the pros and the cons. And just as nowadays in the controversy over the manner of Mary's co-operation with Jesus in the redemption of mankind, the supporters pointed to the dignity of the Mother of God, while the opponents appealed to the dignity of Jesus, Redeemer of the human race, as though Mary's privilege could not accord with the dignity of both. And both sides were so convinced that they were basing their argument on revealed truth, that they accused one another, not quite of heresy perhaps, but at least of mortal sin. The Holy See was obliged to forbid these and similar censures under threat of severe penalties, as the magisterium had not yet pronounced any definite judgment on the subject.¹

Slowly, but surely, however, what was called the 'pious view' won more and more adherents, and time and time again petitions from Bishops as well as from secular princes for a final pronouncement were presented to the Holy See. Opinions were however divided as to the manner in which such a pronouncement should be made. Would it be sufficient to sanction the feast? Should it be declared that the 'pious view' alone might be held? Should the Immaculate Conception be declared a certain truth? or perhaps a divinely revealed truth? Many were the writings advocating these suggestions in turn. The Popes, often themselves upholders of the 'pious view', were inclined to settle the matter definitely but were held back by reasons of opportuneness,

¹ We shall come back to this point in paragraph 3.

and over and over again had to content themselves with half-measures. At first there were great scholars as well as great saints on both sides, but gradually—and repeated interventions of the Holy See contributed to this—the opponents became fewer and fewer, until at last a Pope appeared, Pius IX. called to express the ultimate decision of the Church after such a long journey.

On June 1, 1848, he appointed a commission of twenty, whose task was to examine whether there was ground for making a papal decision. Only three of the twenty were against an eventual definition, while the rest considered that proceedings for a papal decision might be begun on the grounds of Holy Scripture, divine tradition, the teaching of the Church and the liturgy. And some of these supporters even doubted the opportuneness of this. In September 1850 and in the months of July and August, 1851, nine more were heard, of whom all but one were in favour.

Meanwhile on December 6, 1848, the Pope had appointed a new commission of eight Cardinals and five consultors with another task to fulfil. They were to investigate whether, considering the pressure from the episcopate of the whole world, the Pope should be advised to declare, in an eventual papal decree, that Mary was by an exceptional privilege conceived without sin. And if so, what, in the given circumstances, would be the most suitable way to declare it.

On the first point the commission answered unanimously in the affirmative, but with regard to the second, the majority were of the opinion that it would be a good thing to consult the Bishops.

Consequently, on February 2, 1849, the Pope issued the Encyclical *Ubi primum*, in which he informed the Bishops of his intention, asking them to call for prayers. The Bishops were to let the Pope know what the feeling was among their clergy and people with regard to the conception of Mary, whether a papal decision was desired by them, and above all what the Bishop's own personal opinion was.

The result was staggering: of the 603 answers received, five were against a dogmatic definition, twenty-four doubted its opportuneness, ten voted blank, and about the same

number did not like the idea of such a pronouncement because it would make heretics of those who thought differently. Thus more than nine-tenths, i.e. 546 Bishops voted for a dogmatic definition. Many of these were fully alive to the fact that a definition might give rise to attacks and accusations from the opposing side (just as happened in our own days over the question of Mary's mediation), but they were convinced that one should not let oneself be held back by these incidental minor inconveniences. The Bishop of Malines did suggest that because of this the tradition should be exposed in the papal decree itself, so that it might be made easier for the defenders to find material for their replies.

It is hardly useful to say that Pius IX was greatly encouraged by these answers. In March, 1851, he began to prepare a document in which a statement of this kind was worked out. When two outlines (*Deus omnipotens* and *Quemadmodum Ecclesia*) proved unsatisfactory, he appointed on May 10, 1851, a congregation of twenty theologians, who drafted another outline after a great deal of preparatory work. This was examined from March 22 onwards by a commission of theologians and Cardinals, while Bishops, some of them happening to be in Rome, others invited specially for this purpose, were asked to give their opinion on it. After another six revisions of the text, the Pope held a secret consistory on December 1, 1854. In this the final decision was made, and December 8 following was fixed for the solemn promulgation.

The definition, drawn up with so much care and exactness, reads:

'We declare, pronounce and define:

that the teaching, which contains

that the Blessed Virgin Mary at the first moment of her conception by a special grace and privilege

of Almighty God, In view of the merits of Christ Jesus, the Saviour of the human race,

BY PRESERVATION

WAS PURE OF ALL STAIN OF ORIGINAL SIN,

has been revealed by God,

and therefore must be believed firmly and perseveringly by all the faithful.' (*Ineffabilis Deus.*)

The Pope consequently defines that this is a doctrine exactly framed, divinely revealed and therefore to be believed by all the faithful, concerning the conception of Mary. This doctrine contains:

- (a) Mary was free from original sin, and that
- (b) at the first moment of her conception,
- (c) by preservation.
- (d) This is an exceptional privilege,
- (e) bestowed on her by Almighty God,
- (f) because of the merits of the Saviour of the human race.

* * * * *

Purity from original sin is expressly ascribed to *Mary*, and not, as in earlier versions, only to *Mary's soul*, so that the definition fully refers to the *person of Mary*. The conception alluded to here must therefore, according to the context (it is the conception of the person *Mary*), be understood of the so-called passively consummated conception, so that we may call it the moment at which we may speak in the proper sense of a person called *Mary*. This conception is thus neither the marriage act of her parents, nor the generation of their seed in which there is as yet no rational soul. *Mary's* conception is not consummated until the person is formed of both body and soul. That and nothing else is meant by the conception of *Mary*.

The Church has purposely left untouched the philosophico-biological question as to the moment at which the rational soul is created and infused; the scholastic view is that it is not present in the seed from the very first moment. The seed is self-evidently alive, and has therefore a soul, but a vegetal soul. Not until there has been sufficient development does this perish, and the sensitive soul appear; and when the seed is at last completely prepared, God creates a rational soul in it. This view is based on the generally accepted philosophical principle that no 'forma' can be, come into being, or remain in existence except in a matter sufficiently disposed to receive it; and on the other hand, on the experience that the rational soul demands a very high degree of development, and cannot remain any

longer in a body lacking this, as we see in the case of those killed accidentally. Further it is extremely difficult, if not quite impossible, to prove that from the first moment at which the ovum is fertilised, these very highly developed dispositions would be there, for it is not only a question of the natural fitness, the potential, by which alone a human being can issue from the embryo, but also of the degree of development of this potential. But it is just as difficult to prove at what moment these highly developed dispositions begin to be present. Consequently the scholastics were of the opinion that the moment at which God creates the soul is unknown to us. But that unknown moment is the very point which concerns us here: at that moment when the rational soul was infused, *Mary* came into existence, her person was constituted, and at that moment of her conception, she was free from original sin.

The most widely differing theories have been put forward to explain *how* *Mary* could be free from sin at that moment. Some took refuge in inconsistency: at that moment *Mary* had original sin and at the same time she had not. Others in purely imaginative inventions: St Anne, they said, conceived as a virgin. Or else *Mary's* parents were said to have not had any concupiscence at the time of the marriage act (this last in connection with the theory of the transfer of original sin by actual concupiscence). It was also proclaimed that at the moment of Adam's fall, the devil entered into him, took possession of his inferior faculties, except for one molecule which he did not notice. This immaculate molecule was transmitted from generation to generation until, they said, it provided material for the making of *Mary*. Others again maintained that God purified the seed which had not yet been animated by the rational soul, so that the rational soul was infused into an already purified seed and thus could not be stained again. The Grand Masters of Scholasticism took up arms especially against this theory. Alexander of Hales, O.F.M., and his disciple St Bonaventure, O.F.M., as well as St Albert the Great, O.P., and his disciple, St Thomas Aquinas, O.P., opposed this doctrine with an argument which is still valid: if that had been so, *Mary* would not have

needed a Redeemer'. The human person is constituted of both body and soul. If therefore there is neither in the soul created by God himself, nor in the body purified by God anything which could be a loop-hole for the entry of original sin, then the person composed of such a soul and body is, *in the nature of things*, free from original sin and needs no Redeemer. And just as they opposed this error, so they opposed other ideas also, together with St Bernard, and in doing so used expressions which we should certainly not dream of employing now that the definition has been pronounced. The problem of what we now call the Immaculate Conception had not yet been explicitly stated, for the science of their time was not far enough advanced, and for that reason it is difficult to say positively whether they were for or against it.¹

Duns Scotus possesses the immortal merit of having surmised the only true solution. By the sacrament of baptism which produces sanctifying grace in us we are cleansed from the guilt of original sin already in us, although it still remains a fact that we are without the gifts bestowed in Paradise. Thus at the first moment of being Christians we are free from original sin. In the same way it must also be possible for God to free from this guilt at the first moment of his human existence a man in whom these gifts are lacking. But in that case, this man is not, like us, cleansed from a guilt that was actually present but preserved by sanctifying grace from the entrance of original sin. So Scotus, modestly, but with right perception, stressed Mary's freedom from original sin *by preservation*.

This preservation, now fixed in the definition, is however an exceptional privilege. The great stumbling-block that prevented so many from accepting the 'pious view' lay in the fact that the law of sin was universal: 'It was through one man that guilt came into the world; and, since death came owing to guilt, death was handed on to all mankind by one man. All alike were guilty men.' (Romans v, 12.)

On this account the 19th Oecumenical Council of Trent

¹ C. Friethoff, O.P., *Quomodo caro B.M.V. in originali concepta fuerit*. (Angelicum, 1933.)

in its decree regarding the universality of original sin with all its consequences, did not yet judge it opportune to exclude Mary positively. Various efforts were made in that direction, but the Council simply decreed that it had no intention of including Mary. The irrevocable ultimate judgment of the Church excludes her positively: she is privileged; she is not cleansed from sin like us, but the law of sin has never had any hold on her.

But in the definition itself, the Church has inserted that Mary's privilege is exceptional. We offer this to the meditations of those who are beginning to launch an idea that one really might perhaps consider St Joseph also as immaculately conceived. . . .

§2. *The Preservation*: The definition refers the exceptionality of Mary's privilege to Almighty God. It was an intervention of God himself, who in this way prevented original sin in Mary. The Church has defined nothing as to the time and manner of this divine intervention and the opinions of theologians differ widely, but the general idea is that Mary must (was bound to) have contracted original sin.

This *must* (called '*debitum*') must not be taken as a synonym of *befit*, or *oblige*, but merely expresses its necessity for Mary, as child of Adam, in accordance with the general law of sin. To inquire about this divine intervention is to inquire about the manner in which Mary escaped the universality of this law. Did the law not apply to her, as the law of fasting does not apply to a man of eighty, or is she dispensed from the law, as a working man of thirty can be dispensed? The question is: is the law not meant for Mary, or does the law in itself apply to Mary also, but she is dispensed from it?

Many think that the law of sin did not apply to Mary. The necessity of contracting sin was very far from her. She would have contracted it, had not God decreed from the beginning that this law did not apply to her.

The attitude of these theologians is closely connected with the theory that God appointed Adam moral head of the human race, so that in virtue of this appointment any sin

he might commit could be imputed to his whole family, and every descendant of his would be tainted with his sin. But, according to this view, Adam was not appointed Mary's head, Mary stood outside the law of sin, which simply did not apply to her. Some of these theologians were influenced in their attitude by the very special view of the reasons for the Incarnation which we have already mentioned in connection with Mary's predestination (I, I, §4).¹ In itself this question is not associated with the problem we are considering here, but it may influence this and indeed has already done so. If we accept that the Incarnation had already been decreed by God, before he had, humanly speaking, foreseen and permitted Adam's sin, then Mary was already destined to be Mother of God before there was any question of original sin. And as it was just her dignity as God's Mother that was the ultimate reason of her sinlessness, she must have been placed by God outside the law of sin which was to be later established. . . .

Other theologians think that Mary *was* included in the common law: that she was thus from the first obliged to contract original sin. According to the opinion shared with St Thomas by many of these theologians, the necessity lies in this: that Adam's guilt, because he was physical head of humanity, distorted human nature so that everyone who receives this nature becomes guilty too. For Adam's personal sin spoils the perfection proper to human nature as it came from God's hand; he had lost by his sin both the supernatural gifts given to human nature in him. He should in accordance with God's ordinance have brought forth children in the state of original justice, but after losing it himself, though he can still transmit nature, he cannot pass on the gifts added to nature in him. Thus Adam's sin corrupted nature. The seed begotten by Adam is now conditioned in such a way that at the infusion of the rational soul, neither will the body obey the soul (hence passibility and inevitable death) nor will the lower faculties obey the higher (hence evil concupiscence). Original sin is not and cannot be in the flesh, but the flesh is Adam's instrument in

¹ *Vide*. Part I, chapter 1, paragraph 4 of this book.

generating sin in the soul created by God. According to God's decree, parents were to procreate children who would have enjoyed his grace and friendship from the first moment of their existence. That ought to have been so, that could have been so, but on account of sin that is not so. In this way Adam's sin distorted nature and this twisted nature continues to generate sin in all who receive it.

Mary was born of two parents, children of Adam. She received human nature by the same process as did all descendants of Adam; as a matter of course she should have received a sinfully twisted nature. At the very moment when Mary began to exist as a person by the union of body and soul, at the moment thus of her conception, that twisted nature should have tainted her, just as it did us at that moment. But then, at that very moment God intervened. He interfered, so to speak, with the natural course of events, by a miracle, and his omnipotence prevented what would have happened: he preserved Mary from the taint of Adam's sin.

Mary was thus really included under the law of sin, but God's miraculous intervention removed her from its grasp, and thus she is privileged by his act. Romans v, 12, to which the opponents of the 'pious view' appealed, did apply to her, but yet there was never the least shadow of a stain in her. The necessity was the same for her as for us: it was inevitable; yet at that critical moment she was already immaculate.

Hence Mary's sinlessness is very different from that of her Son. For Jesus is conceived of the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary. So that he is no son of Adam in this sense, although the Holy Ghost formed his body of material originating in Adam. He received human nature, but not the nature wrenched out of line by Adam. He could not have original sin, any more than men directly brought to life by God from the stones in the river Jordan could have contracted it, even had God not been able to give them sanctifying grace.

The miracle by which Mary was preserved from original sin was wrought by God in view of Jesus's merits, for, as Saviour of all mankind, he is also Mary's Saviour.

The opponents of the 'pious view' appealed not only to the

universality of the law of sin, but also to the universality of the redemption by Christ. We have already said that we have here the reason that the Grand Masters of Scholasticism rejected, and rightly so, the theory of the sanctification of the seed before the rational soul animated it: for in that case Mary, free from sin by nature, would have had no need of redemption. And St Thomas says that this does not agree with I Timothy iv, 10: 'It is for this that we endure toil and reproach, our hope in a living God, who is the Saviour of all those who believe in him.'

But we may add to this verdict of St Thomas (III, 27, 2) that it is not in accordance with the definition of the dogma either!

For Mary is indeed not cleansed from original sin already present, but she is preserved from it altogether. And just as our cleansing takes place in view of Jesus's merits, so also her preservation. In other words: Jesus earned for us our liberation from an evil that was already present, and similarly he earned for Mary her preservation from a threatening evil. Actually the definition says clearly that Mary is preserved: 'In view of the merits of Christ Jesus, the Redeemer of the human race'. But the difference between Mary's sanctification and ours is not reduced by this to a mere matter of degree. There is a difference of this kind, for example, between the sanctification of St John the Baptist, who was sanctified in his mother's womb, and ours. Whatever may be the degree of our sanctification, its time, its place, or other circumstances, we are all alike in this: that a stain that was present was taken away from our souls. Even a divine miracle cannot alter the fact that once we were sinners. Jesus and Mary are the only exceptions to this: they were always holy. As long as Mary has existed . . . thus at the moment when she began to exist . . . she has been united to God and pleasing in his eyes; so that her sanctification is essentially different from and more sublime than ours. But as this essentially more sublime sanctification fell to her lot for Jesus's sake, the Redeemer of mankind, it follows with inescapable logic that Mary was redeemed in a more sublime manner.

This difference in the manner of her redemption is of fundamental importance to what we shall have to say later about Mary's co-operation in our redemption.

We often use the term redemption in a general sense to indicate Jesus's salvific work, in which however there are several aspects to be distinguished. If we do not take the term redemption in a general sense but in its narrower meaning, the word stands for only one aspect of this work, i.e. our redemption from the slavery of Satan. But this aspect of the redemption supposes sin, of which slavery is a consequence. In this sense it is just as impossible to maintain that Mary was redeemed by Jesus, as it is to maintain that he gave satisfaction to God for her sins. Jesus's salvific work concerns Mary under the aspect of merit only. He merited for her the grace that preserved her from original sin, and therefore he is, formally speaking, just as the Bull says, her Saviour.

§3. *The Sources*: We have already drawn attention to the unanimity with which the episcopate of the world felt that the doctrine of Mary's Immaculate Conception, as revealed by God, should be raised by Holy Church to the position of a dogma of faith. Holy Church was also conscious that, as the Bull *Ineffabilis Deus* says:

'The Word of God, venerable tradition, the constant sense of the Church, the exceptional unanimity of bishops and faithful, as well as the acts and constitutions of our predecessors illustrate and explain this doctrine wonderfully'.

In our exposition of the doctrine of the New Eve (I, 2, §3) we have already pointed out that we should understand the proto-evangelium, as it is called, in the sense in which, according to the Pope's teaching, tradition has always understood it, namely the co-operation of Mary in Jesus's triumph over Satan.

Another place in Scripture referred to by the dogmatic letter is Luke i, 28 and 42.

'Into her presence, the Angel came and said, Hail, thou who art full of grace. The Lord is with thee.'

'She cried out with a loud voice: Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.'

Pius IX teaches us that this greeting is understood as follows by tradition:

'The Fathers and ecclesiastical writers have taught that this exceptional and solemn greeting, found nowhere else, indicates that the Mother of God was the seat of all divine graces; enriched with all the charismata of God's Spirit, nay more, the almost infinite treasury and inexhaustible abyss of these same gifts of grace; so that she had *never been under the curse, but shared with her Son in eternal blessing* and might hear these words spoken by Elizabeth under the impulse of the Spirit of God: "Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb". (*Ineffabilis Deus.*)

Neither here nor in the Proto-Evangelium is there any question of drawing a conclusion of any kind from a revealed truth. There is nothing decided as to Mary's privilege by means of a new argument. This privilege is stated in the text of Holy Writ itself, if one reads the prophecy in union with tradition. Just as Mary's complete triumph over Satan, prophesied in the Proto-Evangelium, cannot be grasped in all its fulness unless one accepts her Immaculate Conception; neither can her fulness of grace and eternal blessedness be seen to full advantage unless that exceptional privilege be accepted. Hence with the formally expressed truth of Mary's fulness of grace and blessedness, her Immaculate Conception is taught as formally implicit.

It is well known that the dogma of Mary's privilege did not always need to be explicitly taught in the Church. Even the debate in the Western Church which lasted for centuries does not seem to have produced any real difficulties, as the Pope's letter establishes: 'Nothing at all that might in any way conflict with such a great privilege given to the Virgin can be validly brought forward from Holy Scripture, or from tradition or on the authority of the Fathers.'

In earlier suggested versions of the Bull, many quotations and references were given which were later scrapped, lest the solemn dogmatic letter should look like a proof-sheet or a polemical pamphlet. Nevertheless a sufficient number of traditional data have been kept in the present version.

The text points out that in using the antithetic parallel (Mary-Eve) the Fathers and other writers compare Mary's purity and sinlessness with those of Eve before the fall; or elsewhere even with the holiness of Christ. But above all, the rich and varied terminology exalts Mary's holiness to such a degree that even the appearance of sin is in reality excluded. We quote here a few of the eulogies cited in the Bull:

Lily among thorns	Paradise of innocence
Ever free from any stain of sin	Earth of which the new Adam is
Ever pellucid spring	formed
Utterly divine temple	Ever blessed
Model of innocence	Unspotted
Flawless	Preserved from all the snares of
Unfading tree	the poisonous serpent
More beautiful than beauty	Holier than holiness
More full of grace than grace	Holier than the Cherubim,
itself	etc., etc.
Virgin soil	

The constant sense of the Church is very strongly expressed in the celebration of the feast, and this was so even centuries before the definition, just as we had been keeping the feast of Mary's Assumption throughout the world long before the dogma was proclaimed. Quite apart from any dogmatic reasons for it, the feast of Mary's Conception first came to be a custom in the Eastern Church. Its introduction served exclusively as a finish to the cycle of feasts of our Lady. From the oldest times the feast of the conception of St John the Baptist (September 23) had been established, because of St Luke's account of the angel's message to Zachary, telling him that his wife, hitherto sterile, would conceive a son. A similar story about Mary's conception is to be found in the apocryphal gospel of St James. Mary's sterile parents also were said to have received a message from an angel regarding the conception of their child. It was thus absolutely on the analogy of St John's feast that the feast of Mary's Conception was introduced on December 9. The angel's message was the motive for both feasts; nevertheless there were two other elements operative in both cases: on the one hand the miracle, by which the sterile woman became a mother, and

on the other the purpose of the conception: a child predestined by God to great things. God's solicitude for the child is then stressed and both conceptions are therefore described as holy, divine, and glorious. God's concern in the preparation of his own Mother is specially shown in the ascription to Mary firstly of eternal holiness, and finally of explicitly recognised initial holiness. The names of the feasts then correspond to the emphasis laid on these points: the message of the angel to Anna; the conception of Anna; the conception of Mary.

The first authentic witness¹ to the existence of this feast in the Eastern Church towards the end of the seventh century or the beginning of the eighth is found in St Andrew of Crete (Migne PG 97: 1305), where it is called the conception of God's Grandmother Anna. In the ninth century the feast was introduced among the Greeks in Italy; in the ninth or tenth century into Eire; in the eleventh century into England, where the venerable conception of Mary is spoken of, which proves at the same time that the feast refers to the conception itself, although it is not quite clear why this is venerable: is it on account of the miracle or on account of her holiness? During the time of the Danish invasions, the feast disappeared but was restored in the following century, and then certainly meant the Immaculate Conception (Fadmer). But on the continent it was far from being widespread. *Circa* 1138 St Bernard fiercely opposed the people of Lyons, who were introducing it; and a century later, St Thomas can still testify that the Roman Church does not celebrate it, but tolerates its celebration by the other Churches. Here begins the great conflict between promoters and opponents, while the celebration of the feast spreads with the growth of the 'pious view' and both are causes of strife.

Repeatedly the Popes had made decisions in giving permissions for celebrating the feast, raising the rank of its solemnity, approving Offices in which Mary's privilege was

¹ See the article of Fr Jugie, A. A., on the Greek Church since the Council of Ephesus in *Dictionnaire de Theologie Catholique*, Vol. VII, Part I, col. 894-975.

explicitly announced: Sixtus IV, Clement VII, Paul III, Sixtus V, Clement VIII, Paul V, Urban VIII, Alexander VII. They also erected altars and chapels in the name of or under the patronage of the Immaculate Conception; they approved religious confraternities, institutes and congregations, bestowed indulgences and privileges for the celebration of the feast, recitation of the Offices, and assistance at Holy Mass. Other Popes besides the above-mentioned did the same, i.e., Innocent VIII, Julius II, Adrian VI, Pius V, Gregory XIII, Gregory XV, Clement XII, Clement XIII, Clement XIV, Pius VI and Pius VII.

But when the battle between the fors and againsts had become keener, and all the forms of Christian civilisation were no longer always observed, Sixtus IV issued the famous Bull, *Grave nimis*, the prescriptions of which had to be renewed and confirmed by many of his successors. Pope Sixtus condemned as false, mistaken and contrary to truth the following views that were being disseminated by many: namely, that all who believed Mary to have been conceived immaculate were heretics, or were at least committing mortal sin; and that all who said the Office of the feast, or listened to sermons on the 'pious view', were committing mortal sin. Similarly, all pious writings in favour of this view were condemned. On the other hand, Sixtus reproves the upholders of the 'pious view' for daring to condemn the opinion of their opponents as heretical or gravely sinful. Holy Church could not allow these reciprocal censures, before the question had been settled by the Church of Rome and the Apostolic See (Denzinger 735).

The 19th Oecumenical Council of Trent renewed this decree of Sixtus, even going a step further, as we have seen, by explicitly declaring that it was *not* the Council's intention to include the blessed and spotless Virgin in the decree relative to the universality of original sin (Denzinger 792).

After the Council, nevertheless, the quarrels broke out again, so that many bishops besought Rome to intervene. To put an end to the dissension, the saintly Pope Pius V decreed in the Bull *Super speculum Domini*, that thenceforth in all sermons, and in meetings where men and women came

together, this question should not be mentioned at all. Scholars alone were allowed to debate it among themselves, with due observance of Sixtus's prescriptions. At the same time St Pius condemned the coarse seventy-third thesis of the heretic Baius (Denzinger 1073).

Paul V modified St Pius's prohibition slightly, by forbidding the opinion that Mary was conceived in original sin to be put forward in sermons, lectures, debates and all similar public meetings; the 'pious view' might indeed be presented, but with the proviso that the opposite opinion might not be attacked. Thus Pius V had ordered complete silence on the subject, but Paul V went further and imposed silence on the unfavourable opinion . . . only! (Bull *Sanctissimus*). Gregory XV, in a Bull with the same name, extended Paul V's ban to . . . private conversations.

And now that things had got so far, Alexander VII was able, when renewing the above-mentioned enactments, to put on the Index all writings in which any doubt is expressed about the 'pious view', or even about the feast or the devotion (Bull *Sollicitudo omnium ecclesiarum*).

Next, Clement XI sanctioned the feast by making it obligatory for the whole Church. Lastly, Leo XII gave a ruling which could not but exercise an immense influence. All through the long period of conflict there were Dominicans among the holders of the 'pious view', increasing in numbers as this 'pious view' spread. But, then as now, Dominicans were bound by oath to adhere to the recognised teaching of St Thomas Aquinas. Many, however, had the incorrect idea that St Thomas had rejected the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception,¹ and so they came to the disastrous conclusion that, however much they might wish to join the ranks of the promoters, they could not without perjuring themselves. Now Leo XII decreed that they would not become guilty of the perjury they feared if they adopted the 'pious view'. And that was practically the end of the controversy. Benedict XIV rightly put on record in his Bull *Mulierem pulchram*—which was never published—that the

¹ O. Fricthoff, O.P., *Quomodo caro B.M.V. in originali concepta fuerit* (Angelicum, 1933.)

Holy See, all through the conflict in the Western Church, had constantly favoured the 'pious view'. Therefore it is also very rightly that in the quotation given above, Pius IX refers to the acts and constitutions of his predecessors.

HOLY MARY

§1. *Consecrated to God*: It is quite evident that the word *holy* is not always used with the same meaning, for we apply it to persons and to things: we speak not only of the holy angels and of holy men, but also of holy vessels and holy vestments. One obvious reason for this plurality of meanings is the difference of the order (moral order, order of being, etc.) to which this quality is being attributed.

In relation to the order of being, everything is called holy that is *consecrated* in a special way to God and to what is God's. We speak therefore of holy vessels and vestments, destined exclusively for his holy service; we speak of his Holiness the Pope, who is so specially consecrated to Christ; of the priest's holy hands, etc.

Where the moral order is concerned, however, we use the word only in connection with the *virtue* of holiness, which coincides in practice with the virtue of worship of God and brings the rational creature itself and all its actions into harmony with God. But it would be less exact to try to reserve *holy* exclusively for persons, because here there is an evident analogy. For we also call the sacraments or a religious rule *holy*, in the sense that they can be the cause of human, personal and moral holiness. Similarly we may say that a certain behaviour is *holy* because it is a sign of such holiness. Therefore it is not always possible, especially where we are not speaking of persons, to make a sharp distinction between holiness in the sense of consecration and in the sense of moral holiness: both meanings may even be present simultaneously. The expression *Holy Mass* is an example, for here the qualification *holy* may refer both to the devotional character of the sacrificial action and to its causality where our holiness is concerned.

As in the present economy of salvation there can be no personal holiness but by God's grace only, we must be careful to notice that the word *grace* also appears to have more than one meaning: that of pleasure or delight in anything, and that of something given for nothing. We can verify that directly in expressions such as: beg for *grace*, *days of grace*, be in someone's good *graces*, and, in the biblical expression, find *grace* with someone or in someone's eyes. These meanings do not lie far apart. It is just because we like someone and he is more or less pleasing to us that we give him our gifts for nothing. And the more he pleases us, the higher rises the value of our gifts until we eventually give ourselves. . . .

Even with reference to God, both these meanings are used in a causal connection, but otherwise than with us. God's love is not awakened, as ours is, by a good that was present beforehand, but the other way round: his love is the cause of all good. He has not loved us because we were pleasing in his eyes, but, because he loved us even before we existed, we have begun to exist and are even pleasing in his eyes. It is thus God's *grace* (i.e. gift given gratis) which makes us find *grace* (i.e. the power to please) in his eyes. Moreover, the greater his gifts are, the more we shall be pleasing to him.

God gives his greatest gift, himself, to men by a *grace* which we rightly call sanctifying *grace*: by it the fire of divine love is kindled in our hearts, and makes us so entirely *one* with him in heart and soul that St John can say: 'He who dwells in love dwells in God and God in him'. (I John iv, 16.) With this gift, God makes his continual abode with man (John xiv, 23); we belong to God's household (Eph. ii, 19); those who do all that God commands are his friends (John xv, 14); they are God's children, and if his children, then his heirs too (Romans viii, 17).

The moral concept of human, supernatural holiness brings with it evidently:

- (i) Union with God (God dwells in us and we in him);
- (ii) Favour in God's eyes (we are his friends and children);
- (iii) Consequent right to heavenly glory (we are his heirs);
- (iv) Purity from sin (we do all he commands).

Great as the union may be which is attained by a love in which two persons feel they are one but remain nevertheless separate persons, still greater is the union when two are so fused into one that they must be called one single person. Thus when God and man are not only united by love, but are *one* in person, union with God is at its highest. Jesus as man is the only one to possess this privilege; this man is not only united with God by the affections, but the man Jesus is God.

This hypostatic or personal union must of necessity and quite apart from sanctifying grace and the love rooted in it, have a consecratory significance for Jesus's Sacred Humanity. And actually, as far as the order of being is concerned, no one can deny that the man Jesus must be called holy on account of this, the highest measure of union with God. While the sanctity of created persons and things is merely secondary or accidental, the sanctity of the man Jesus, derived from the hypostatic union, must be a substantial reality. For to the same extent as the man Jesus is substantially and not merely accidentally God, and the Son of God, to that extent he is substantially and not merely accidentally holy.

But with reference to the moral order, some theologians have felt obliged to express a doubt as to whether the man Jesus may be called formally holy, solely on the grounds of the hypostatic union—thus apart from sanctifying grace—or whether there is present merely a claim, a prerequisite based on these grounds.

In opposition to this, many others are of opinion that even where the moral order is concerned, the man Jesus alone is to be called formally holy on the grounds of the hypostatic union. And in point of fact, the four elements which we found when considering holiness by sanctifying grace must be attributed to the man Jesus unconditionally, and in the highest degree, on the grounds of his exceptional union with God.

Union with God by love by the way of the affections becomes perfect to the point of identity in the hypostatic union: the man Jesus is not merely most closely united with

God, he is God. The favour with which he is regarded by the heavenly Father is especially expressed when the heavens open and the Father's voice is heard saying: 'This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.' (Matt. iii, 17.)

We, God's adopted children, are, it is true, God's heirs, but only co-heirs with his own Son. By the hypostatic union Jesus is properly God's own Son, so that he cannot be adopted again as a son even by the sanctifying grace which is due to him also. Therefore from the first moment of his conception in the womb of Mary, he is the heir, sharing all the possessions of his heavenly Father. For love, man does all that God commands him, and so avoids sin, but even that love is not firmly anchored in the human heart until it receives the perfect grace of the Beatific Vision. Only that Vision, which takes away all short-sightedness, ignorance and error, banishes for good all the possibility of sin belonging by nature to every creature. But even apart from any gifts of grace, it is a metaphysical impossibility in virtue of the hypostatic union for the man Jesus to sin. Various theologians, even famous ones, have adhered to the view that it was possible for Jesus to sin, a possibility limited, they admit, either by the Beatific Vision or by a series of powerful graces. They supported this view because they saw no other solution to the problem of how Jesus's human liberty (and with it the meritorious character of his actions) could be upheld in the face of an imperative order from the Father. We shall not attempt to discuss here how to answer this difficulty satisfactorily; but the majority of theologians maintain that we must recognise in Jesus a complete, unconditional, metaphysical incapacity to sin. He, the man Jesus, is God. Just as it is metaphysically impossible (a contradiction in terms) that God should sin, so it is—the hypostatic union being postulated—equally impossible for Jesus to sin.

The holiness thus due to the *man* Jesus, in virtue of the hypostatic union, apart from any grace, is not only in the order of being but also in the moral order. In the latter it is not merely postulated but is a formal premise. Yet this does not make sanctifying grace superfluous, for Jesus's human actions must not only be sinless, i.e. not directed against the

supernatural order, but must also be positively supernatural human actions, that is to say, at least if one accepts that Jesus enjoys the bliss of heaven not only as God but also as a human being, and has really merited for us that bliss which is supernatural in its nature and in its essence. (Ver. 29, ad quatuor). The hypostatic union thus formally includes holiness, but postulates sanctifying grace as the principle of supernatural human acts.

After this explanation, the application to Mary will not be so difficult. Just as in many other speculations on the Mother of God, there is a perceptible parallel with Jesus here. Therefore the question arises here also: how was Mary sanctified? Was it by sanctifying grace alone, like other human beings, or was it by her divine motherhood, apart from sanctifying grace?

Here again the sense of theologians is not entirely at one, or rather they do not all express it in the same way. Some think that Mary is already *formally* sanctified by her divine motherhood, others shrink from this teaching and are of opinion that Mary's motherhood *postulates* her holiness.

Looking back at the distinction we have made above, we find there can be no doubt that Mary is to be called formally holy in the order of being on account of her divine motherhood. Just as the hypostatic union consecrates Christ in the order of being, so divine motherhood consecrates Mary in that order, and does so far more than any other consecration can dedicate other persons or things to God.

With regard to the moral order, however, we must direct our attention again to the four conditions already mentioned.

No one doubts that divine motherhood includes an interior union with God, closer than any that the highest degree of sanctifying grace could produce. In virtue of her motherhood Mary is united by very close and real relationships with the divine Persons (1, 1, §2); and these relations excel to an ineffable extent the relation of passive causality with God in the oneness of his essence which we possess by grace.

That she is pleasing in the sight of God, who is really her Son, and who honours, obeys and loves her in accordance with his own law and order, goes without saying.

As to her right to glory, let us remember what we said in the consideration of Mary's predestination (1, 1, §4). She was eternally predestined to become God's own Mother, just as Jesus was predestined to be, as man, God's own Son. With that is taken for granted that Jesus could not be adopted again as Son, though Mary could be adopted as daughter. She has thus a right to glory, in so far as she became heir to it by sanctifying grace as adopted daughter of the Father, and even first-born daughter. But it is worth while to reflect that the heavenly inheritance comes not only to God's own Son, but also to the Mother of this Son. Even her motherhood therefore gives Mary the right to inherit, but as she is only a creature, hers cannot be a strict right, like her Son's.

As regards the fourth point, sinlessness, one must remember that Mary's motherhood is not substantial but accidental: it is a relation, which implies its correlative. Jesus is *God* by the hypostatic union, Mary, even in her divine motherhood, remains a *mere creature*. The conclusion is inevitable: Mary, called out of nothingness by God's power and will, and, in spite of all her beauty, limited, and a creature, has it in her very nature and essence that she *can* sin, for it requires unlimited and unrestricted goodness to do what is good always and everywhere and in everything. It would be a contradiction in terms to say that God can sin, but it is just the same contradiction in terms to say that a creature cannot sin.

Mary's divine motherhood formally consecrates her, sanctifies her, in the order of being: she is pre-eminently the One who is consecrated to God. But in the moral order that motherhood postulates grace as the immediate source of Mary's sanctity of life.

§2. *Full of Grace*: The fact that Mary possessed God's grace is explicitly mentioned in Holy Writ, and belongs to the very notion of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. The only question therefore that can be put regarding her grace concerns its measure. Is it possible to fix at least approximately the measure in which Mary became a sharer

in divine grace? In the Gospel narrative (Luke i, 28) we read that the angel greeted Mary in a special way. He did not call her by her name, but said: 'Hail, *thou who art full of grace*'. This is the Vulgate rendering of the Greek word *κεχαριτωμενη* which properly means 'graced' or 'gifted with grace', and it has been justified as follows: 'As a title, replacing the proper name (Mary), it points here to something special, that cannot be said of everybody. Mary is eminently *graced*. This points to an abundance of grace, not given to others, but which Mary would still be able to increase by her collaboration.'

Here we find ourselves at once in the heart of the problem: Mary received so much grace, that she rightly deserves the new name 'Full of grace', and yet the fulness given to her was susceptible of further increase.

We use the word 'full' in at least two senses, according as we take it to be the measure of capacity proper to the possessor of the fulness, or else as the possibility of being communicated proper to that which is being given in fulness. Thus if anyone has so much grace that his own capacity for receiving will permit of no further addition, whether it be his momentary receptivity, according to his state of life and position, or whether it be according to the measure 'dealt out to him by Christ's gift' (Eph. iv, 7) and to which we shall not attain until we are in heaven, we may say he is full of grace. In this way, Holy Scripture praises the deacon Stephen as being 'full of grace and power' (Acts vi, 8) although at that time Stephen had not yet reached the limit of his own absolute capacity, as is clearly shown later at his martyrdom.

Jesus also was full of grace, and first of all full to the absolute capacity proper to him. From the first moment of his conception, he enjoyed to its full extent the Beatific Vision, and consequently throughout his whole life, in spite of the most heroic actions, that initial grace never increased. For Jesus was also full of grace as far as the communicability of grace itself is concerned. In the present economy of salvation no higher measure of grace is possible, as God has never made it available to anyone in a more sublime degree than that bestowed on Jesus. There are even theologians who go

further and are of the opinion that, speaking absolutely and thus with reference to God's omnipotence, no greater grace than that of Jesus is possible. In other words: if God had not autonomously fixed this measure of grace as the highest, it would still be intrinsically impossible for grace to be given in a fuller measure; for it is a share in the divine nature and so requires a receptive subject; but a more receptive subject than Jesus's soul is impossible. . . .

This absolute and thus unincreasable fulness of grace in Jesus is to be understood both of the excellence proper to grace itself and of its effects. So that Jesus possessed grace in the highest excellence in which grace can be given, and with the strongest efficacy with respect to its fruits.

It is the definitely established and generally received teaching that Mary did *not* attain to Jesus's measure. She did not possess grace either in its highest excellence or in its fullest effects. The fulness of grace in Mary is understood in proportion to her own receptivity: the grace given to her corresponded entirely with her state and position: it made her the worthy Mother of God.

This difference between the fulness of grace in Jesus and in Mary becomes evident when we reflect that all gifts and graces given to her converge towards her divine motherhood as towards their ultimate end. But as the dignity of God's Mother remains infinitely far beneath the dignity of God's Son, so the claims of her soul will remain infinitely beneath the claims of the soul of the Son of God and so the gifts of grace measured out to each are bound to be very different.

A similar consequence is to be reached by applying the philosophic axiom that the closer a thing stands to its fundamental principle the more subject it will be to the latter's influence. Jesus's soul is the closest to the source of grace, God, on account of the hypostatic union. Therefore Jesus's soul will receive grace in the greatest possible abundance. Mary, it is true, comes very close to God, but through Jesus, who, himself first dispenser of God's mysteries, took his human nature from her. So that Mary will not receive grace in the measure proper to Jesus but in the measure

proper to herself, and which makes it possible for her to approach Jesus worthily.

Thus while Jesus's grace knew no increase, Mary's fulness on the contrary was susceptible to growth, and it is obvious that this possibility did become actual.

Increase of grace in Mary took place first of all by her own activity: for by all kinds of acts of virtue and good works she *merited* that increase, just as we, according to the explicit teaching of the 19th Oecumenical Council of Trent (Denz. 842), can merit such growth.

Further, Mary's grace was added to *sacramentally*. In the nature of things, she could receive no sacraments that presuppose in the receiver imperfection on account of sin, or of evil concupiscence, e.g. penance, marriage, extreme unction. It is also certain that she did not receive Holy Orders, both because this is reserved to men, and because, as St Albert the Great remarks, Mary was called to something higher: not to be servant but partner of the High Priest. She did not receive Confirmation, for, with the other assembled disciples at Pentecost, she was given a share in the gifts of the Holy Ghost in a more sublime way than any of us will ever receive *illum in Confirmation*. It is extremely unlikely that she was baptised. In any case she had no need of Baptism to remove original sin, or to be incorporated into the Church by it, so as to receive the sacraments validly. By the Incarnation, she had been actually raised to the dignity of God's Mother, and also spiritual Mother of the Church (see Conclusion), for she brought forth the Head of the Mystical Body, the Church. So nothing remains of which we can be certain except the Blessed Eucharist.

In the third place Mary's grace was *quasi-sacramentally* increased. Here we must notice first of all the mystery of the Incarnation, meaning by this not merely the moment at which the Word became flesh, but also the period of nine months gestation and the Nativity. This is how Mary brought the source of grace within the reach of mankind, and therefore there cannot be any reasonable grounds for doubting that she herself was the first to enjoy its fruits.

Similarly, we may include grief and compassion under the

Cross, especially if we hold that she was there directly co-operating in the salvation of the world. As partner of the High Priest she received in a far more sublime way all that is given to the priests of the New Testament.

But, we repeat, however immensely the fulness of Mary's grace increased by her own merits, by sacramental and quasi-sacramental means, the measure of Jesus's grace was never attained by her.

In considering the question of Mary's measure of grace, we must not only contemplate it as rounded off at its maximum, it is also important to view it at its minimum. For this we need to compare her grace with the grace given to other creatures.

The same reasoning which proves that Mary's measure of grace must necessarily remain inferior to that of Christ, also shows that her fulness must surpass that of all other saints. The end is the measure of all that leads to it, and therefore the measure of grace must be determined by the end of grace.

The highest end of all the elect, the end to which all the graces given to them lead, is union with God in the Beatific Vision in heaven, for all the elect are predestined to this. But Mary was predestined to something higher: the dignity of divine motherhood. And we have shown (I, I, §4) that by virtue of her selection for this motherhood, an immensely high degree of perfection in heaven was foreordained for her. Mary had to grow to the highest attainable human perfection, which could only be realised by the highest attainable holiness, so that her admission into the inner life of the Blessed Trinity should cast no shadow on the glory of God. In other words: what for all other saints is the ultimate end, namely the highest attainable perfection in the final supernatural human happiness, towards which all the graces given them were leading, is not Mary's ultimate end, but merely disposes her for what lies beyond and above: her divine motherhood. Consequently, the treasure of grace that leads towards this higher end and is measured against it, must surpass unspeakably the fulness of grace bestowed on all the other saints.

The philosophical principle applied above may also be used here. It is apparent not only that Mary's fulness of

grace must remain below that of Jesus, but equally that it must rise above that of any other saint. For by her motherhood Mary approaches nearer to the source of grace than any other creature: she is personally united by consanguinity with the first dispenser of God's mysteries. All the gifts of grace flow from God's hands to Christ, from Christ to Mary, and finally from her to us, as St Bernardine of Sienna says in his commentary on St Bernard's words that such is the will of him who intends to give us all things through Mary (VI in *Annum*. a.1.c.2). Thus as Jesus, the Man, first instrument of grace and hypostatically united to God, received more than Mary (for he stood closer to the source), so Mary must receive more than others because she stands closer to him, who draws first from the spring.

Lastly we have to consider that, as we have already remarked, God's is a creative love. It is not awakened by any already existing good, but itself awakens all good. If God therefore loved Mary from all eternity as his chosen Mother, far beyond all creatures, then he will also have adorned her with grace far beyond all other creatures. From the first moment of her existence she was the chosen Mother of God, and was treated as such by God, as witnesses her Immaculate Conception. So that it is not difficult to understand the certain and generally accepted teaching that the fulness of grace with which Mary entered life far surpassed the measure of grace received by angels and men at their first sanctification. On the same grounds it is now accepted as very probable that Mary's initial fulness of grace was greater than the ultimate fulness of any other saint, though here we must add the rider that her fulness of grace here on earth did not give her the Beatific Vision, as in that case all growth in grace would have been ruled out for her, just as it was for Jesus.

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Nowadays theologians like to go a step further. They say that Mary's initial fulness not only surpassed the ultimate fulness of grace of every other saint, but even that of *all* the other saints together. In other words, if we imagine that all the treasures of grace distributed among all the individual

angels and men could flow together into one immense treasury of grace, even then the fulness of grace received by Mary at her Immaculate Conception would surpass that sum of the graces of all the dwellers in heaven.

It would seem a sound idea to make a distinction here between the excellence of a grace in itself and its effects. For grace is incorporeal and therefore St Augustine's saying applies here: that with regard to things which cannot be called greater in volume, greater and better are identical (*de Trin.* VI, 8). A greater grace is identical with a better, a more excellent grace, just as a greater and more excellent intelligence mean the same thing. Hence with grace, if we stop at its excellence, there can be no question of any aggregate. The greater grace is the better grace and so includes all the good that is in the smaller, i.e. the lesser grace, so that a lesser grace can never be added to a greater one. If a sick man has a temperature of 39° and another has one of 40° no one could seriously think the two sick men together had a temperature of 79° for the 39° are already included in the 40°. Thus as the sum of two temperatures does not rise above the higher of the two, several graces cannot be added together, because the lesser measure of grace is already included in the higher. So that if Mary's fulness of grace excels that of the highest of the saints, we have said all that can be said of it, because all the excellence of grace that is given to the lesser saints is already included in what the highest received. The view therefore that places Mary's initial fulness above the sum of all the graces bestowed on all the saints, adds nothing to the view that places her fulness above that of each of the other saints. The clearest and the most exact way of putting it is to say that this fulness of grace, received by Mary at her Immaculate Conception, far surpasses the ultimate fulness of grace of the highest among the saints.

Next to the excellence of the grace, we have to distinguish the effects of grace. Mary excels every other saint, not only by participation in the divine nature, but also by her participation in God's life, acts and works. Not only sanctifying grace, but also the habitual gifts deriving from it, such as

theological and moral virtues, gifts of the Holy Ghost, fall to her share in an unparalleled measure, even though she did not need to use some of these gifts, e.g. contrition, because of her perfection. She was likewise given charismata, such as the gift of prophecy, discernment of spirits, understanding of Scripture, etc. Moreover, God showered on her numberless graces of assistance, which among other things made it possible for her to use all her supernatural strength in all her human actions, and thus grow towards God in all of them. In addition she was also able to exercise the most sublime virtues for which a special inspiration and assistance from the Holy Ghost are required. She put into practice the eight beatitudes, and enjoyed all the fruits of the Holy Ghost. With all of this together, her merits must obviously have been brought to the highest pitch.

In such a variety of graces, differing from one another not only in degree, enumeration is impossible because where these gifts are concerned, a greater saint does not necessarily possess what a lesser one enjoys. For which reason we may say that the fulness of grace in Mary surpasses the effects of grace in any other saint and in all of them together, so that this superabundance of grace seems in perfect concordance with the marvellous praise in the Bull *Ineffabilis Deus*:

'The ineffable God chose and destined a Mother from the beginning and before all time for his only-begotten Son. He encompassed her beyond all other creatures with such love that he found in her alone his greatest delight. Therefore he lavished on her far more than on the angels and the saints, a wealth of all heavenly gifts from the divine treasures, so wonderfully that she was always perfectly free from any stain of sin, entirely spotless and perfect, and manifested a plenitude of innocence and holiness beyond which none greater is even thinkable outside of God, and which no one but God is presumed to be able to attain.'

§3. *Mirror of Justice*: As in the natural order the soul is the immediate principle of life, but only indirectly the principle of the expression of life (i.e. through the faculties), so in the supernatural order, sanctifying grace which affects the soul in its essence is the immediate principle of supernatural life,

but only indirectly (i.e. through the virtues) the principle of supernatural expressions of life. As the faculties are rooted in the being of the soul, so are the virtues and the gifts of the Holy Ghost rooted in sanctifying grace. Both virtues and gifts are permanent dispositions (habits) in the faculties. The virtues dispose the faculties to accept promptly and willingly the guidance of the reason, enlightened by faith and grace, while the gifts dispose the same faculties to react promptly and willingly to the far higher impulses of the Holy Spirit himself. These two kinds of dispositions proceed from sanctifying grace to which they are indissolubly bound as qualities with the essence.

The generally valid axiom that every principle has effects in proportion to its own perfection may therefore be applied not only to the soul and its powers (human beings who have a better soul dispose also of a better understanding, quite apart from better aptitudes of the sensible cognitive powers) but it may be applied equally well to grace and the virtues and gifts proceeding from it.

Consequently, without drawing any conclusions from the well-known facts of Jesus's life, but on the grounds of his fulness of grace alone, we can infer with theological certainty the sublimity of his virtues. Apart from what is told by Scripture of Mary's life of virtue, or has been handed down to us by oral tradition, we can conclude with theological certainty from the fulness of grace bestowed upon her that her virtue was sublime.

This conclusion is twofold: in personal excellence, Mary's fulness of grace excels that of every other creature and thus parallel with it her wealth of virtue will also surpass that of any other creature even the inhabitants of heaven¹. Every virtue that appears in the lives of the saints will be Mary's lot, in as far greater measure as her grace surpasses theirs. Consequently we conclude that Mary's fulness of virtue is as

¹ It is noteworthy that St Albert the Great remarks that as far as the perfection of execution is concerned, Mary possessed virtues in the same way as the dwellers in heaven, but surpassed them where the results are concerned, as by her lofty virtues she also amassed merits. (*Mariale* 61.)

far beneath that of Jesus, as her measure of grace is beneath her Son's.

When theologians decide that the man Jesus possessed all the virtues in the highest degree, because the grace given him was so excellent, they none the less allow some exceptions. This is not because anything was lacking to his fulness, but on account of that fulness itself, which inevitably excludes wholly or partially those virtues that presuppose imperfection in their primary or secondary objective.

We are obliged therefore to verify, whether and how far such might also be the case in regard to Mary.

The man Jesus could not have *faith*. He enjoyed the Beatific Vision from the first moment of his conception, the very vision that will some day take the place of faith for us and make us perfect. (I Cor. xiii, 10-13.) A difference between Jesus and Mary is to be noticed here. The oldest witnesses of tradition, in the antithetic Mary-Eve parallel (1, 2, §1) mentioned here several times already, lay great stress on Mary's faith. Eve sinned by pride, disobedience and disbelief, while Mary sets all right again by humility, obedience and faith. But Scripture too praises Mary's faith with Elizabeth's words: 'Blessed art thou for thy believing; the message that was brought to thee from the Lord shall have fulfilment.' (Luke i, 45.)

But the heroism of her faith appeals to us most perhaps when it is making her the partner of the dying Saviour, standing by him in his abandonment by God, and sharing superabundantly with him in the bitterness and misery of his last hours. St Albert the Great affirms: 'The most glorious degree of faith was hers, who believed in the promise made to her, and did not doubt when even the disciples doubted; who was perfectly certain that all is possible to him who believes.' (*In Luc. i.*)

And a saying is ascribed to St Bernard which we can feel underlying this text of St Albert's, that during the Passion while everyone else doubted, in Mary alone the faith of the Church was kept alive. (*de lament. Virg. Mariae.*) Two things are thus proved by this: firstly, how wrong Luther was in thinking that the faith of the centurion in Matthew viii, 10

surpassed Mary's; how wrong the renowned Erasmus who doubted whether Mary really adored her divine Child at once as God; how wrong those others who imagined they could find proof of Mary's doubt on other occasions.

This also shows how untenable is the view that Mary already enjoyed the Beatific Vision continuously during this life. But we need not exclude the opinion that at decisive moments in her life Mary, like Moses and St Paul, may have enjoyed the Vision temporarily; it is probably sufficiently excluded by the theory generally held nowadays by scholars that neither Moses nor Paul did actually have the Vision, which removes any reason for allowing it to Mary.

In connection with Mary's supernatural knowledge, it may be said that there is no sufficient ground for the view that Mary might have had infused knowledge like the angels who have it by nature, or by analogy with that of Jesus. Jesus of course possessed it. But Mary's knowledge must be explained as acquired naturally: by teaching, study (contemplation) of the Scriptures, by the keenness of her own human intelligence, not blunted by the results of original sin, by her thirty years' intercourse with Jesus, by the gifts of the Holy Ghost (understanding, wisdom, knowledge and counsel). If more had been necessary in definite circumstances, there is nothing against accepting infused knowledge for such occasions. God granted this sometimes to other saints also. St Alphonsus Liguori thinks this should be accepted as the case at the moment of her Immaculate Conception, so that she might be enabled to consent to her sanctification, which she would then have received as an adult, in itself a far more perfect way than that in which small children receive it. But this knowledge does not exclude faith.

According to the usual opinion one may speak, at any rate in a general sense, of Christ's possessing the virtue of *hope*. Certainly he enjoyed the Beatific Vision during this life, as we have said, and it made faith impossible for him, nevertheless his body was passible, so that the secondary expectation of hope was open to him, although the primary one had already been fulfilled. But as Mary was not yet in

possession of the Beatific Vision, the theological virtue of hope must be accepted as being in her to its fullest extent. It expressed itself heroically in her accepting to be Mother of the suffering Servant of the Lord, the Man of Sorrows (1, 1, §5) in her presence beside the Cross, where she sacrificed her only Child in bitter grief and pain in the strength of that heroic hope in God's promise. Here too that hope finds expression, that Mary merited the putting forward in time of the Incarnation. This is the popular view.

Christ was not alone utterly sinless, but also impeccable: to sin was for him a metaphysical impossibility. As the special object of the virtue of penitence is horror of one's own sins, impeccability must make it impossible to feel that contrition. For this reason the Holy Office condemned the well-intentioned, but definitely incorrect ejaculatory prayer: 'Penitent Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us!' (A.S.S. 1894, 319.) Jesus did indeed feel grief for the sins of others, and even more grief than the most deeply contrite sinner could ever have for his own sins, for Jesus's regret proceeded from greater knowledge and love, and was also more all-embracing, as it included the sins of the whole world.

By the grace of God, Mary did not know sin either, so it is impossible that she could ever have felt sorrow for personal sins . . . but we may not conclude from this without more ado that therefore she had not the virtue of penitence. For there is a great difference between Jesus and Mary on this point: Mary's motherhood did not involve in any way a metaphysical impeccability, merely the moral impossibility. Jesus was impeccable, Mary was sinless. As in fact she never sinned, she never in fact felt contrition; but as she could sin, she could feel contrition. Hence we may admit that the Blessed Virgin possessed the virtue of penitence which disposed her to feel contrition; but in her this virtue was never obliged to pass into action, as the necessary condition (i.e. sinfulness) was never present. Mary did, however, feel a very deep grief for the sins of the world, a grief surpassed only by that felt by her Son.

It is an incorrect notion that the first task of the cardinal virtues of *temperance* and *fortitude*, which operate in the lower

faculties, is to control the passions. If this were really the case, obviously these virtues would not have been found in Jesus or Mary, for on this point original integrity had been restored in both (II, 3, §3). Actually the first task of these virtues is to adapt our actions to the rules of our understanding enlightened by faith and grace. The better a man controls his passions, the more perfect and complete this adaptation will be. In this we find another reason for assuming that both these cardinal virtues were strongly developed in Christ and in Mary. And let us notice in passing that precisely because fortitude was so highly developed in Mary, there could be no question in her of the fainting-fits which constantly recur in Anna Catherina Emmerich's visions. In long-ago times they were considered as the acme of our Lady's suffering, so that in some places a feast was instituted under the name *De spasmo B.M.V.*, 'Our Lady's Swoon' in fact! The Holy Office was obliged to forbid various images and pictures of this object of devotion.

Continence is less than virtue. In its strict sense, it is a disposition of the will to resist very violent evil inclinations, especially in sexual matters. Continence therefore presupposes disorder in the passions, and especially with regard to the more violent of them. In the nature of things this quality is entirely eliminated from the life of Jesus and Mary. But if we are using the word loosely and mean by it refraining from everything that is not permitted, then it is also granted that this self-control was possessed by both of them in its fullness.

Shame or *confusion* is in no way related to virtue, but is a passion. It is fear of reproaches or reproof. Just as honour is a witness to a man's excellence in some domain or other, so reproach is a witness to his shortcomings. Therefore men feel a deeper shame in presence of those to whose opinion they attach more importance. There are two kinds of people who do not feel this shame or fear. Firstly the shameless, who have lost the habit of blushing and even boast of their sins. Secondly, very old or very virtuous people who do not find it difficult to avoid what is blameworthy, and therefore have no fear of it, and are never ashamed or embarrassed

(II-II, 144-4). But even in the case of these, embarrassment is always a possibility as an unreasoned movement in the emotions before understanding and will can intervene (*motus primus*). This is something which, as long as our original integrity is not restored, remains our lot in the whole domain of the passions. It is true that men sometimes blush for things that are not blameworthy in reality, but only appear to be so. Nevertheless this is a fault, for the really very virtuous man avoids both what is evil and what has the appearance of evil. To be ashamed or confused or to blush supposes that a person is neither very bad nor very virtuous. The fulness of virtue in Jesus and Mary, as well as the restoration in both of original integrity, prevents shame or confusion in them.

The other virtues and gifts of the Holy Ghost were Mary's portion in a very high degree, but not all virtues are equally striking. Besides her faith, her charity impresses us specially, that charity which made her consent to be the Mother of the Redeemer in order to save her nation from its sin, and made her take a share heroically in his cruel Passion. The Church applies to her very fitly the words of Scripture: 'I am the mother of fair love' (Eccles. xxiv, 24). Wonderful too was her prudence, which we honour in her Litany. We invoke her also for her devotion, i.e. the firm resolution of readiness for everything the services of the Lord might demand (II-II, 82.1) . . . *Vas insigne devotionis, ora pro nobis*. The Fathers praise her obedience in the Eve-Mary parallel. Her all-embracing mercy is proverbial: Mother of Mercy we call her. Her generosity and patience earned for her the title of Mother of Dolours; her purity that of Virgin of virgins; and under the impulsion of the Holy Spirit she sang the praise of her humility in the Magnificat.

Lastly we may remark that the virtues which flourished so luxuriantly in Mary under the breath of God's grace were supernatural virtues. This of course presupposes that the natural virtues had also been fully developed in her by constant exercise (asceticism), for these also have an important task in the present economy of salvation: they prevent anything that might obstruct the supernatural virtues in

their expression. We ourselves know by experience how the whole treasure of infused virtues does not hinder us from showing ourselves very imperfect in a multitude of things. Lack of asceticism! However, many theologians hold the opinion that Mary did not need to acquire these virtues, because God had infused the whole treasury of them into her together with the supernatural virtues at her Immaculate Conception. They think the reason for this was to make Mary a model for each and all from her earliest youth: Mirror of justice.

§4. *Entirely Sinless*: Besides the shortcomings that Luther, Erasmus and others thought they could diagnose in Mary with regard to faith, the reformers find other sins in her, e.g. lack of forethought (Luke ii, 43); impatience and discouragement (Luke ii, 48); ambition and importunity (Matt. xii, 47).

Not only the reformers, but even others who appear as witnesses of tradition with regard to many truths, make mistakes here. Tertullian for instance holds that there was a time when Mary did not believe in her Son (*de carne Christi*, 7); Origen (*hom. 17 in Luc.*) and St Cyril of Alexandria (*in Joh.* 19: 25) explain the sword of sorrow that was to pierce her heart, according to Simeon's prophecy, as portending the doubt and scandal she would feel at Jesus's Passion; St Basil holds the same view; and St John Chrysostom (*hom. 21 in Joh.* 2: 3, *hom. 44 in Matt.* 12: 47) even accuses her of ambition and vainglory, to which St Thomas Aquinas reacts very sharply: 'In these words Chrysostom forgets himself' (III 27.4 ad 3um).

Holy Church's teaching is however very clear on this point of Mary's utter sinlessness: by a special divine privilege she avoided during her whole life all sin, even venial sins. The Church has not presented this truth as a doctrine revealed by God, but in the same anathema in which the 19th Oecumenical Council of Trent rejects such sinlessness for all other human beings (Denzinger 833), she permits it to be admitted for Mary. Thus, although this truth has not

been solemnly given us by the Church as of divine revelation, and is not yet a dogma in that sense, it belongs nevertheless to Catholic teaching. Moreover it is also implied in the passage of the Bull *Ineffabilis Deus* that reads: 'always perfectly free from any taint of sin, entirely stainless and perfect'.

The same divine oracle of Genesis iii, 15 and of Luke i, 28, 42 which, read as tradition reads it, contains the revelation of Mary's Immaculate Conception, also contains that of her utter sinlessness.

It is part of Catholic truth that when God calls anyone, he equips that person with everything necessary to carry out his vocation exactly. As Mary was called by God from all eternity to the supernatural dignity of the divine motherhood, it would be in flagrant contradiction with that same Catholic truth to suppose that God did not equip Mary with his grace, or at least equipped her insufficiently. But if there is anything that would be incompatible with such divine equipment, it is sin; and therefore we cannot allow that Mary was ever involved in sin, for she would then have been unfit for her divine vocation. Besides, this would have an immediate repercussion on the honour of God, which is at stake because of her relationship with each of the divine Persons.

^{iniquity or} 'What has innocence to do with lawlessness? ^{What is there in common between light and darkness?} ^{What harmony between} Christ and Belial?' (II Cor. vi, 14-15.)

Here St Thomas quotes a strikingly appropriate text:

'Never yet did wisdom find her way into the schemer's heart, never yet made her home in a life mortgaged to sin.' (Wisd. i, 4.)

St Albert the Great writes:

'Wherever the slightest venial sin is found, there must be some lack of grace, but Mary was full of grace, therefore there was no sin in her.' (*Mariale*, 133.)

In opposition to the erroneous views of Tertullian and Origen, and to the opinions of St Cyril and St Basil which at least lend themselves to false interpretations, we have the explicit witness of tradition. We refer to St Athanasius (*in Luc.*), St Ambrose (*serm. XXII: 30*), St John Damascene (*hom. in nat. Mar. 4*). In his book on nature and grace (36) St Augustine writes as follows:

'When we speak of sin, I would not for Christ's honour even allow a question to be asked with regard to the Blessed Virgin Mary: that she received more grace in order to be able to overcome sin under any circumstances, we know from this: that she could conceive and bring forth him of whom it is an established fact that there was no sin in him.'

* * * * *

God alone, pure and absolute Goodness itself, is by nature incapable of sin, and confirmed in good. It is *metaphysically* impossible for him to sin. And, as we have said, this is also true of Jesus, whose human nature is hypostatically united with this divine Person. The Word therefore can no more sin by actions of his human nature than he can sin by actions of his divine nature.

But every creature was called out of nothing by God; so that no creature is goodness itself, but possesses within the limits of its species and class a greater or lesser share of goodness. Therefore no creature can derive from its limited goodness the power of never failing in any of its actions, i.e. never wavering from the goodness required here and now. It needs the utterly unlimited goodness of God to do good unlimitedly. So that there is not a single creature, and there cannot be one, that is confirmed in good by virtue of its own nature. Even God's omnipotence could not make such a creature.

Yet there must be some way or another by which a creature, angel or man could be *made impeccable*. Otherwise eternal blessedness would be a contradiction in terms, as no creature would be able to continue to persevere in goodness.

By nature our will is directed to good as its object, and therefore it is possible for us to desire evil only because we mistakenly look on this evil as good. So that sin is possible only from lack of sufficient understanding. Two reasons may be given for this. Our understanding knows of course to be good infallibly in general, both what makes us happy and what is useful to us, but when we descend from the general to the particular and inquire where we are actually to find that happiness or that usefulness, our intelligence can go wrong by choosing what in fact brings no happiness, under the

illusion that it will. And then will follow in the will a wrong purpose in proportion to this wrong judgment.

Besides this possibility of erring that comes from within, the understanding can also err under the influence of confusion from outside which makes it judge wrongly here and now what it will presently, without that influence, judge rightly, e.g. how differently one judges when in a tearing rage, in comparison with one's way of proceeding after calm reflection!

Now all who will enjoy the Beatific Vision, 'will see God as he is' (I John iii, 2), but they will see in him at the same time with unerring clarity everything that unites with him or separates from him. On account of this personal, intelligent insight given by the light of glory, it will no longer be *physically* possible for them to err in their theoretical or practical judgment of what is true good. Therefore, just as here on earth we infallibly seek happiness in general, in heaven we shall desire by grace happiness in the concrete, as it really exists in God, and thus we shall be confirmed in good. It will therefore be not metaphysically but physically impossible to sin. If Mary had enjoyed the Beatific Vision here on earth as Jesus did, it would not have been physically possible for her to sin, but we were obliged to disclaim this for her on the authority of divine tradition which praises Mary precisely for her *faith*.

We are therefore obliged to present the problem differently: can a human being, *here on earth*, without the grace of the Beatific Vision, be confirmed in good?

The answer must be a decided affirmative, since the constant tradition of Holy Church has been that after the first Pentecost the Apostles were unable to sin, at least mortally.

By the gifts of the Holy Ghost, especially those of wisdom and counsel, a man may be made inerrable in his judgment not only of happiness and utility in general, but also of what pertains to happiness and utility in particular cases and in the concrete. And this implies that grace prevents error from within caused by wrong connections made by the understanding between subject and predicate, premises and con-

clusions. Also the confusion in the intelligence from outside, as is clear from the example of anger adduced above, can be the fault of the unruliness of the lower faculties or of the more or less necessary circumstances, worries, and distractions, which hinder the mind from remaining uninterruptedly in contemplation, and so having God always in view as standard of all particular actions. By God's grace and the virtues and gifts connected with it, the lower powers can be for the most part controlled and the will strongly inclined to God, and the mind absorbed by contemplation. Nevertheless it is a thing above our present condition that the lower powers should absolutely and unresistingly obey those higher than themselves or that our mind should not be interrupted in its contemplation by the indispensable needs of life and very necessary relaxation. No remedy has yet been found on earth for this and nothing but a very special care on the part of the divine providence can help us out of the difficulty. We can find a parallel in the immortality of Adam and Eve. By the praeternatural gifts they received, their souls were able to keep their bodies rightly disposed, but the care of Providence was necessary to protect them against exterior calamities such as falling trees, lightning, etc. For those confirmed in good in this way, sin is neither metaphysically nor physically but only *morally* impossible, in so far as their strong inclinations to virtue and grace make it very difficult for them to sin.

When we apply this to Mary, this great difficulty in sinning (moral impossibility) appears greater for her than for the Apostles. The fulness of grace given to her surpassed that of any other creature, so that her understanding was led in an incomparable way to judge correctly even in concrete cases and to remain fixed on God most intently and with the least possible deviation. Her will was drawn to God more than that of any other creature that had not yet attained the Beatific Vision. Add to this the very great privilege that as far as obedience of the power faculties to those of understanding and will were concerned, in Mary as well as in Jesus, the state of original justice had been restored. This excluded in her case even venial *sins of surprise*, from which

the Apostles themselves were not immune. But contingent shortcomings, possible for Mary on account of the necessary occupations and interruptions occurring in everyday life, were prevented by a special solicitude of God for his Mother, alluded to by the 19th Oecumenical Council of Trent as a special privilege.

It is thus quite true that the Blessed Virgin was neither metaphysically nor physically impeccable and therefore the real possibility of sinning was left to her. But *morally* sin was impossible to her. With this reservation it seems justifiable to speak not only of the sinlessness, but also of the impeccability of the Blessed Virgin and Mother of God, Mary.

CHAPTER 3

THE MORNING STAR

§1. *The Emotional Life:* Since Mary's partnership with the unconquered Christ requires her complete separation from sinners, both as regards the guilt and the punishment of sin, an examination of her immunity from all punishment follows necessarily on the consideration of her Immaculate Conception and her personal sanctity. We have already pointed out, when considering her sinlessness, that, as far as Mary's life of grace was concerned, the state of original justice was restored in her. The disorder of the emotional life is a punishment for Adam's sin and in turn provokes evil desires, which are food for sin; thus it has its origin in sin, and leads to sin. (Denzinger 792.)

It is true that the emotional life has its roots in only one power of the soul—that which we know as the sensory faculty—but none the less it is expressed by means of two specifically distinct faculties. The object of the sensory faculty and thus of the emotional life in general, is that which is perceptible to the senses, as being attractive, and which, in so far, that is, as it gives them pleasure, can be enjoyed by the senses, and becomes an object of appetite but, in so far as that pleasure is obstructed, it becomes the proper object of the faculty of resistance.

The appetite faculty reacts primarily on what the exterior senses find attractive. It also acts on the imagination as well as on the power of resistance, but this reaction is only secondary, in so far as the imagination reproduces what the senses have already experienced. Thus in dreams the effects of both faculties can be felt. Just as our reasonable will does not only react to our intellectual knowledge of evil, so our desires are moved, not only by what our exterior senses find

attractive, but also by what these same senses find repellent.

The difference between the faculty of desire and that of resistance must not be sought only in the fact that the faculty of desire reacts to what is agreeable and that of resistance to what is disagreeable. It is one and the same faculty which makes a cat seek a warm place in the sun or behind the stove, and avoid rain and cold. She seeks the one because it is pleasant and avoids the other because it is unpleasant. The faculty of resistance responds primarily to the warning given by an interior sense, known as discernment, which pronounces judgment, not so much as to whether a thing is pleasant or unpleasant, but as to whether it is useful or harmful. This faculty is, in certain respects, more developed in animals than in men. In animals it is fully under the direction of a natural instinct, on account of which the judgment between the useful and the harmful is, in normal cases, naturally right.

In man the natural instinct is much lighter, but to compensate for this, he possesses reason, the influence of which on the critical faculty is so great that philosophers are accustomed to call it in man the mental faculty of knowing the particular, on the analogy of reason, which knows universals. Thus as soon as the appetitive faculty finds obstacles to its wishes, whether because the sensual pleasure presents difficulties or because what is repellent to the senses is placed within easier reach, the critical faculty judges whether or no it would be advisable to fight against the difficulty in question. Consequently the protector of the appetitive faculty, i.e. the faculty of resistance, comes into action. The emotions which follow the judgment of the critical faculty can no longer be emotions of desire, for it is impossible that desire should leave that which is pleasant and seek that which is displeasing. And yet we see, to employ the same example as before, that a cat will not even glance at the fish for which her mouth has watered, but will join battle with a dog she has never seen before and ultimately suffer pain and wounds which she does not at all enjoy. Here is an expression of the faculty of resistance reacting to the judgment of the critical faculty that this conduct is

useful for defence, here and now. The fight is an object of sense desire, not because it is attractive, but because having been judged useful by the interior sense it must be perceptibly desirable.

The reactions of the emotional life, and of the sensory faculty, and of the appetitive and resistive powers are coupled with more or less striking bodily phenomena, especially as regards the heart; hence we call them '*passions*'. We distinguish eleven of them, six of which belong to the appetitive faculty and five to the resistive faculty. The following *scholium* will make this clearer:

I. In the appetitive faculty:

(a) Regarding that which is agreeable to the senses:

1. Regarded in itself pleasure.
2. With chance of possession desire.
3. Possessed enjoyment.

(b) With regard to what is displeasing to the senses:

1. In itself dislike.
2. If threatened by it repulsion.
3. If attained by it distress.

II. In the faculty of resistance:

(a) In regard to that which is pleasing but difficult to attain:

1. In case of acquirement considered as possible. . . . hope.
2. In case of victory considered as impossible. . . . despair.

(b) In regard to displeasure:

1. If what is threatened appears avoidable. . . . boldness.
2. If not so. . . . fear.
3. If actually happening. . . . anger.

As both the lower and the higher faculties have their roots in the one human nature, it stands to reason that there must be a certain degree of contact between all these emotions and the expressions of intelligence and will, so that the sensory emotions are influenced by the higher faculties. But this influence by its very nature cannot be so strong that reason and will would have complete mastery over the senses. The lower faculties are anyhow blind powers not competent to judge, and consequently as soon as the senses concerned perceive their proper object they react, whereas the higher faculties on the contrary, being guided by natural and supernatural light, by no means blindly pursue every good presented to them, nor set themselves against every evil

they perceive. So that naturally there cannot fail to be conflicts, as the lower faculties, as soon as they come under the influence of their object, begin to move at once without waiting for further decisions from reason and will.

In considering the emotional life, therefore, a distinction must be made between emotions that are controlled by reason and will and those that forestall every reflex of the higher powers. As the lower faculties are distinct from the higher organic powers and are thus subject to emotions stirred merely by the condition of the organ or body, the reactions that anticipate the order from the will must again be distinguished, for they are either the result of purely organic activity or else of sense-perception.

In the emotional life we thus differentiate in the first place the so-called natural feelings. These are simply the results of actions and reactions on the part of the natural powers. They therefore forestall not only the commands of the will, but also sense-perception. The source of these emotions cannot come in any way under the control of reason and will, because the physical constitution is not subject to the will.

In the second place we differentiate the movements of the senses which also precede the orders of the will, but not sense-perception. Unlike bodily reactions, the perception of the senses—unless it be a question of sickly phantasies or organic disengagement—are under the control of the intelligence and the will. Therefore a healthy man, by the exercise of these powers, can forestall such perceptions, above all if the sense of touch be not concerned, for it must sometimes unavoidably endure the stimulus of its object (e.g. pressure, temperature). The consequence of this control by reason of the sensory perceptions is that a man whose nature is healthy, provided he be on his guard, can forestall every inward motion which is not merely the result of a bodily, and thus sensory, motion.

But human life supposes necessary cares and necessary relaxation, which make it impossible to be continually in a state of tense watchfulness. It is therefore true that though a healthy man can forestall each sensory motion, nevertheless he cannot control them *all*. Therefore as we have already

said, being given the auto-activity of the senses, conflicts must occur. We are not here speaking of passion in the Stoics' sense of the word, but of every inward movement, permissible or forbidden. We must therefore make yet another distinction.

The motions which follow the sensory perceptions may be of such a nature that the intelligence, reflecting on what has happened, can confidently approve of them and therefore the will may sanction them. Thus we can be simply moved to compassion at the sight of misery. Such motions, however, although in no way against reason, may be called unregulated, or at least not-in-order in so far as they proceed from the auto-activity of the senses without awaiting the decision of the intelligence and the will.

There are also sensory motions which are positively disorderly, so that the intelligence and the will, reflecting on what is happening in their despite, are obliged to refuse their approval and, as far as they can, arrest further developments. Thus, we can be moved to hate or rage at the sight of a former 'enemy occupant' . . .

This imperfect subjection of the lower faculties to the intelligence and the will, is now natural, but nevertheless in the beginning it was not so. In the beginning, God established man in the state of original justice. Adam and Eve enjoyed divine grace, thanks to which intelligence and will were submitted to God and to his laws: but they also possessed the so-called five gifts of integrity, impassibility, immortality, knowledge and power over all creatures without reason, and complete submission of the emotional life to the intelligence and the will. In our first parents, no single sensory motion could occur without an order from the intelligence and will. There was in them, not by nature but by supernatural grace, no question of either unregulated or disorderly sensory motions, since both are caused by the auto-activity of the sensory faculty anticipating that of the intelligence and the will. Once the order of the will was received, the sensory motions were directed to that which was right and were not capable of being carried away by violence and of thus blinding the intelligence and the will.

One of the lamentable consequences of Adam's sin is the loss of this submission, so that our nature was deprived of the supernatural gifts added to it, and was abandoned to itself. Thus, although this condition may be considered natural in the abstract, since God by his additional gift has redressed man's natural condition and then took away the gift as a punishment for Adam's sin, the return to a state of nature—which had never in fact existed—can only be attributed to sin. In other words, the imperfect submission of the emotional life to intelligence and will is merely the result of Adam's sin.

This rebellious character of the sensory faculty leads, in the nature of things, to positive rebellion, that is, unregulated motions and thence to sin. What remains, e.g. the condition of these faculties, mere consequence of the sin of our first parents, brings Adam and Eve's children to personal sin, in as far as that condition causes difficulties in doing what is right and also attraction to that which the reason forbids; as the old heathen poet sang:

*'Nitimur in veritum, semper cupimusque negata.'*¹

Holy Church calls this rebellious character of the sensory faculty evil concupiscence; St Paul even speaks of it as sin (*Romans vi, 10*), but the 19th Oecumenical Council of Trent expressly declares that evil concupiscence is not of itself sin, but is so called by St Paul because as a matter of fact it has its origin in sin and leads to sin. It is left to us that we may combat it, and therefore it is incapable of harming those who do not yield to it, but who, by the grace of Jesus Christ, manfully strive against it. On the contrary, he who strives lawfully is crowned (*II Tim. ii, 5*). (*Denzinger 792.*) We must therefore keep well in mind the difference between the condition of the emotional life, of itself no doubt natural, but caused by Adam's sin and the actual rebellion, result of the said condition. The rebellious character of this condition is evil concupiscence, its unregulated self-expression is sin.

§2. *Evil Concupiscence*: Mary was, as we have said, completely

¹ 'We strive for what is forbidden and always want what is denied us' (Ovid.)

sinless, which means that her emotional life was free from sinful emotion. We cannot therefore even ask whether evil concupiscence ever reached the stage of actual rebellion in the Mother of God. That is excluded.

But this does not answer the question as to whether evil concupiscence, that is, the rebellious character of the sensory faculty, existed in her or not. We must here refer to four different points of view.

It has been thought that Mary did not suffer from concupiscence, in so far as it is an inclination to evil, but that she did in so far as it renders difficult that which is good. This view is untenable, because it contains a contradiction. It is proper to the auto-activity of the sensory faculty that inclination should precede the judgment of the intelligence, and this naturally renders good difficult and favours evil. The tendency of the lower faculties to react blindly to their object brings with it that, whether the object be permitted or not, it will produce reactions that run ahead of the control of the intelligence.

Thus the difficulty of doing right cannot be accepted and at the same time the inclination to evil be rejected; both must be either accepted or refused.

Others bring forward a completely different distinction. They say that Mary did not suffer from concupiscence, as far as her person was concerned, but only in her nature. Here again we find a contradiction. For if concupiscence in Mary neither hindered good nor attracted to evil and the senses were completely obedient to the intellect, it cannot be admitted that these obedient faculties were at one and the same time disobedient, and thus, by eventual progeniture, as their advocates intended, became children of original sin.

The third view, supported by many of the great scholastics, was this: it was not until the moment of the conception of Jesus that Mary's sensory faculty became wholly submissive to her reason and will. Before that, i.e. in the period which elapsed between her own conception and that of Jesus, her emotional life was in exactly the same condition as ours. But the abundance of grace accorded her, and above all, the exceptional care vouchsafed her by Providence, would

prevent the rebellious character from leading to actual disobedience and thus to sinful motions. In consequence it is accepted that the tendency to auto-activity (blind reaction to its object) actually did produce in Mary the unregulated movements spoken of above—such, for example, as compassion—but never disorderly movements, to which reason and will could never consent. This is called 'enchained concupiscence'. According to this view, evil concupiscence existed in Mary, as it does in us, but was fettered in her so that it could not lead to sin, a restraint which is supposed to have lasted until the conception of Jesus. And the reason alleged is the dignity of Jesus.

Evil concupiscence is, like suffering and death, part of the punishment imposed on mankind for Adam's sin. Humanity has been freed by Jesus from this sentence; it is therefore fitting that first Jesus, and then mankind whom he has freed, should enjoy this privilege. Thus, as since Adam's sin no mortal had put on immortality until Jesus first rose from the dead, so it was fitting that the subjection of the emotional life to the reason and the will should take place first in Jesus, and not until afterwards in Mary. Therefore there seems no difficulty in admitting that Mary's enchained concupiscence should have been suppressed after the conception of Jesus. In this view there is no question of Jesus *meriting* this restoration, for then the difficulty would remain the same even after his conception; but it is merely considered *fitting* that this immunity should be restored first of all in the Liberator of the human race.

The fourth view is that, on the contrary, Mary never had evil concupiscence.

It is remarkably suggestive that this fourth view has been universally accepted since the proclamation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. May it not be that the influence of Duns Scotus and of many of those who with him upheld the pious view can be felt here?

It is also striking that modern manuals of theology point to the Immaculate Conception as proof of this opinion without further comment; as if the argument: no original sin, therefore no evil concupiscence—were really conclusive.

Original justice is not restored by the removal of original sin; sanctifying grace alone is given as a personal gift to those who are baptised, so that, although reason and will are submitted to God, the lower faculties are not restored to a condition of subjection to the aforesaid reason and will. With this grace come the virtues by which the motions of the sensory faculty are *actually* more or less controlled; but even the heroic virtue of the greatest saints cannot entirely prevent the auto-activity of the emotional life, which is why no one can avoid all venial sin (Denzinger 833) during his whole life. Consequently, just as evil concupiscence can co-exist with the *removal* of original sin, so it can co-exist with *preservation* from original sin.

We have already spoken of the necessity for Mary to contract original sin (2, 1, §2). This necessity is inherent in the condition of the human fruit conceived by two parents, fruit which thanks to their descent from Adam, receives a guilty and distorted nature. Distorted, not as if something which naturally belongs to it had been taken from it, but because guilt has deprived it of that which was supernaturally added to it by God. The human fruit is so disposed that once the reasonable soul has been breathed into it, it becomes a man in whom body is not subject to soul, nor lower faculties to higher, nor understanding and will to God. If we admit then that Mary was under that necessity and was only protected from original sin by a special privilege, it also follows—unless God provided for it in some other way—that Mary's emotional life was not in a condition of subjection to reason and will. This rebellious character of the senses before the actual conception—that is, before the infusion of the reasonable soul—is called '*debitum*' (necessity) and afterwards it is called evil concupiscence. The argument: no original sin, therefore no evil concupiscence, is as incorrect as: no original sin, therefore no *debitum*!

We are therefore obliged to maintain, in spite of everything, that all Adam's children who descend from him by both parents are bound to contract original sin and thus, whether or not they by God's special intervention never actually had it, they were also subject to evil concupiscence



unless God once again intervened. But that must be proved separately.

The revelation that Mary, by God's special intervention, was preserved from original sin is not of itself sufficient to prove her immunity from evil concupiscence. Doubtless reasons can be given that it was fitting that Mary should have had this privilege, and amongst them that of her Immaculate Conception is not the weakest. We can also deduce it from Mary's complete sinlessness, since experience shows us, what the Church also teaches, that evil concupiscence is for mankind a continual occasion of sin. It would also be strange if the emotional life of Adam and Eve was restored to order in the New Adam but not in the New Eve.

But besides all these and similar reasons of fitness, there is a yet more conclusive proof to be given of Mary's immunity. And what is more, a proof at the same time that this privilege of hers is a divinely revealed truth and can be raised to the rank of a dogma, should Holy Church ever think fit to do so.

We have already (1, 2, §2) given an explanation of the proto-evangelium. According to the teaching of Pius IX, it is understood by divine tradition to be the unbreakable bond between God's Mother and her Son in the most complete triumph over Satan.

Every explanation disruptive of the totality of this victory in any respect, or with regard to any fraction of it, conflicts with this formal revelation, and so with the divine oracle itself, and hence would reduce the perfect triumph to a mere eventual victory. Such is the result of any concession to Satan of a partial triumph. For as soon as we admit that Satan has achieved a victory, however slight, the triumph over him is no longer complete. Such would be the case, did we concede that Mary was conceived in original sin. But such would also be the case had she possessed evil concupiscence which has its origin in sin and leads to sin.

The proof of Mary's immunity must therefore not be sought in the Immaculate Conception, but the same proof of it must be given, since both privileges have the same source. The totality of Jesus's triumph over Satan in which Mary shared, requires, as well as her Immaculate Concep-

tion, that rectification of her emotional life to that which was the original state of our first parents and which was lost by their sin (i.e. by Satan's triumph over them).

The second proof of the Immaculate Conception is also valid here. According to the teaching of Pius IX, divine tradition has always understood the salutation of the Angel and that of Elizabeth (Luke i, 28 and 42) as indicating such gifts of grace and such blessings that Mary can never have been subject to any curse, but shared with her Son an eternal state of blessedness (2, 1, §3). This oracle has not only an overwhelming significance as regards Mary's sinlessness, and therefore her Immaculate Conception, but seems equally important as regards her entire immunity from all punishment due to sin. For it is said here that Mary never incurred the divine curse, but that on the contrary her lot was that of a constant blessing. Therefore whatever curse God may have pronounced on mankind in general, it never concerned Mary. Whatever blessing God may have refused mankind was not refused to Mary. The parallel with Jesus is complete: 'Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb!'

Here it becomes necessary to reflect on the meaning of cursing and blessing. Latin terminology will help us here. What we call blessing is there called '*benedicere*' . . . 'saying good to'. What we call cursing is there called '*maledicere*' . . . 'saying evil'. But here 'saying' must be understood as the expression of a *wish* of good or evil. When we *wish*, we give ourselves a certificate of powerlessness; only when our will cannot produce acts, do we put up with a wish. As long as there is a question of 'I will' and not simply of 'I should like to', we try to relieve our will by deeds and do not content ourselves with wishes until we find that deeds are beyond our power. If we really wish to find a situation for a friend who is out of work, we shall not rest until we have, by some means or other, provided for him. Not until the facts have shown us that neither by hook nor by crook is it in our power to do so, do we content ourselves with expressing a *wish* that he may soon find something. If anyone thinks that the wish suffices, without any effort on his part, he does not really *wish* to help his friend.

God is never powerless, for his will is his omnipotence. His will depends on nothing, but everything depends on it. Whatever he wills happens infallibly, for he does not merely prescribe what must happen, but also the manner and the circumstances in which it is to happen. Thus everything he wills happens and nothing happens which clashes in any way with his will or is outside it. Hence also if God curses, his divine wish produces real evil, as his will to good results in good. There is only one exception; whatever God's will to good or blessing may bring forth, his will to evil or curse, can never be a cause of sin. God cannot will sin directly or indirectly, nor positively will that it should happen, though it may please him not to interfere in order to prevent it.¹

Thus when God curses a man and wishes him evil, he overwhelms him with adversity and does not help him to avoid sin (Romans i, 24). When, on the contrary, God blesses him, he gives him what is good, both natural and supernatural, whether for himself or for his family, for his existence or for his work. If therefore Mary has been given a share in God's constant (eternal) blessing, if she was never under his curse, then he has always given her what is good and he could not possibly have meant her, when in his unimpeachable justice and divine severity he cursed all the human race.

The tendency of the sensory faculty to rebel against the higher ones may thus, as we have said, be called, seen in *abstracto*, our natural condition; as a matter of fact our natural condition has never existed, but only nature re-adjusted by God. The withdrawal of this re-adjustment as a consequence of Adam's sin, in the concrete order, with which alone we have to do, is nothing else than the divine curse, and therefore in this concrete order, no child of man, both of whose parents descend from Adam and Eve, can lack the gift of integrity save by God's curse. One of two things must follow: either Mary had evil concupiscence and then she fell under God's curse—which is contrary to divine revelation—or else she never lost the divine re-adjustment of our natural condition and the grace that preserved her

¹ C. Friethoff, O.P., *Warum die Sünde?* (Divus Thomas, Fribourg, 1940.)

from original sin has, in this respect also, the power of original justice, so that Mary enjoyed the same inward peace as Adam and Eve did before the fall.

This argument therefore strengthens the former conclusion that not only thanks to a life of sublime virtue and the very special care of divine Providence, Mary was free from the sinful motions of latent concupiscence, but that the tendency to rebellion in the lower faculties was rectified. Mary's emotional life was thus so constituted, that it was moved only in as far as it was guided by her reason and her will.

§3. *Freedom from the Passions*: In van Dale's *New Enlarged Dutch Dictionary* (1850), the word 'passion' is thus defined:

'A strong urge, a passion of the sensory nature to satisfy its desires, passion (either abstract or concrete); sometimes with the implication of being led to actions of which the reason disapproves; impetuosity in thought or deed; becoming the slave of one's passions; letting oneself be led away by one's passions, or (master them)—yield to them; control or bridle them; do something with or without passion; gambling is a dangerous passion; sordid, low, noble passions; with regard to art: interior impulse; (2) impetuous affection, love, he has a passion for music, ardent love for a person.'

For the word '*passie*':

'(2) Passion: a fit of passion; (3) an irresistible urge which must be satisfied; he has a passion for smoking; his only passion was music.'

After all we have said of Mary's emotional life, the question necessarily arises: had Mary passions in the strict sense of the word? The Latin word which corresponds to 'passion' gives an impression of suffering, of defeat. That is in fact the element which, in four different ways, seems to influence passionate natures.

a. The essence of passion is an access of emotion producing bodily symptoms. (§1.) These bodily symptoms are changes. But there are changes for the better as well as changes for the worse, and in the latter the notion of suffering is more accentuated. Therefore the passions excited by evil, such as distress, fear and so forth, have a more passionate character

than those of hope, pleasure and so forth, whose object is what is pleasing to the senses. But even these do not entirely lose their passionate character, precisely because they are accompanied by bodily symptoms (phenomena) which can sometimes be equally drastic: thus men can die of pure joy as well as of fear. That is why people who suffer from heart complaints are warned that they must avoid any violent emotion. Great joy can be as fatal to them as grief or fear, etc.

b. The element of defeat is also greater when something imposed by another has to be borne, than when one imposes it on oneself. It will therefore follow that the emotions which are roused by the automatic action of the senses—i.e. by the compelling stimulus of the object—are more passionate than the motions produced purely from within, by order of the understanding and the will. The pity we feel spontaneously at the sight of a severely wounded person will be more passionate than that which we deliberately excite in ourselves.

c. We use the word suffering in a fuller sense, when a thing is affected to the point of being completely changed, than when the alteration is only partial; thus anyone whose constitution is undermined by disease suffers more than if he had merely sprained his thumb! So the emotions which are limited to the senses are less passionate than those which stir up the whole man and from a state of greater or less confusion in the intelligence can bring him to a condition of complete bewilderment.

d. Neither may the difference in degree be forgotten, so that a slight emotion is said to be less passionate than a very sharp one, even if the latter be limited to the mind alone.

In the course of these considerations we repeatedly remarked that in Jesus, as in Mary, human nature was rectified, as it was in Adam and Eve. Beside the variations which we have mentioned there is yet another interesting difference.

Adam and Eve enjoyed a paradisaical happiness disturbed by nothing bodily, since they had been granted the supernatural gifts of impassibility and immortality. They were therefore in the undisturbed enjoyment of all good due to

them here and now, and nothing evil could touch or even threaten them. In the emotional life of Adam and Eve there was thus no room for such emotions as disgust, grief, fear or anger. Even certain emotions with regard to what is good, such as despair, could not affect them. But if according to *a*, emotions produced by evil are stronger than those produced by good, we are obliged to acknowledge that the emotions of Jesus and Mary must have had a more passionate character than those of Adam and Eve, since Jesus and Mary were overwhelmed by such a flood of misery that they deserved the names of Man of Sorrows and Mother of Dolours. It is, however, not necessary to show that these emotions in Jesus and Mary were much less passionate than in any other mortals. I deliberately say mortals, and not men, for the blessed in heaven (at least after the resurrection of the body) are in the same position as Adam and Eve were. All mortals, be they sinners or just, all those who mean well and who persevere in the narrow way of salvation are subject to evil concupiscence.

It follows that all experience from time to time unforeseen impulses, whether from without or from within, towards disorderly as well as towards unregulated motions. The just, it is true, have not to bear the yoke of completely triumphant and blinding passions, for their justice—i.e. their sufficiently developed life of virtue—can temper such impulses; but the imperfect among them lack the strength of the perfect, so that they cannot prevent their passions from sometimes blazing up very high, and therefore they will from time to time experience very violent emotions.

In comparison with the great differences with other mortals, the difference between the emotional lives of Jesus and Mary and those of Adam and Eve is negligible. Theologians, therefore, when speaking of the emotional lives of Jesus and Mary, of the saints after the resurrection, of Adam and Eve, do not generally speak of passions, but of pro-passions, which may perhaps be most clearly translated: 'so-called passions'. Practically speaking it would be better not to speak of passions at all, but merely of the emotional life and emotions.

CHAPTER 4

VIRGIN OF VIRGINS

§1. *The Dogma*: The ultimate end of all God's beloved creation is God's glory. This means that God's own goodness and beauty is reflected in creatures according to creaturely capacity and through this the creature gifted with intelligence comes to admiring praise of God. But every creature is finite, imprisoned in the narrow bounds of species and kind. Therefore creation, if it is to realise the highest attainable finite reflex of infinite, divine beauty, must find its capacity in a very great variety of beings. The number of the same objects is not primarily concerned, but their difference in becoming, being, essence and action.

Holy Scripture in telling us how things came into existence says with regard to human beings: 'And now, from this clay of the ground, the Lord God formed man, breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and made man a living soul.' (Gen. ii, 7.)

Adam the first man came thus into existence *without father and without mother*, so that when St Luke enumerates Jesus's ancestors he can name no father when he gets to Adam and concludes: son of God. (Luke iii, 38.)

'But the Lord God said: it is not well that man should be without companionship, I will give him a mate of his own kind.' (Gen. ii, 18.) . . . 'So the Lord God made Adam fall into a deep sleep and, while he slept, took away one of his ribs, and filled its place with flesh. This rib which he had taken out of Adam, the Lord God formed into a woman, . . . and brought her to Adam.' (Gen. ii, 21-22.)

Eve, the second human being, was like Adam fatherless and motherless, but she was made out of that *one man only*, so that St Paul will preach to the Greeks: ' . . . he has made

of one single stock all the nations that were to dwell over the whole face of the earth.' (Acts xvii, 26.)

But after God had made Adam out of clay and Eve out of Adam, we read: 'And God pronounced his blessing on them; increase and multiply and fill the earth and make it yours.' (Gen. i, 28.) All have grown thus from these two, by the co-operation of father and mother. There was one variation in the mode of coming into existence that was not realised: that human beings should come from *the woman alone*.

And so God completed the different ways of coming into existence, when he sent his Son into the world, and chose for him a Virgin Mother. The question of the suitability of this divine choice for the incarnation of his Son is not open to discussion: divine Wisdom guarantees it. Nevertheless we are permitted to examine whether this undeniable appropriateness can be seen by us. Theologians usually adduce the following reasons:

1. Firstly with regard to the eternal Father. Jesus is the true Son of God even in his manhood. If he had had as man a human father in addition, there would have been a danger, and by no means an imaginary one, of our transferring the incomparable dignity of the eternal father to Jesus's human parent.

2. Secondly with regard to Jesus's Person. He is the second Person of the Blessed Trinity, distinguished from the other two Persons by this one character: that as the Word, he is spoken by the divine Speaker. But the word, as term of the act of thought independent of all materiality, comes to maturity even in us without in any way affecting (even supposing such a thing were possible in him), the purity of the Word. It is therefore perfectly in harmony with the personal character of the second Person of the Blessed Trinity to leave his Mother's virginity inviolate at his conception and birth. As long ago as the 3rd Oecumenical Council of Ephesus, one of the Fathers drew attention to this point.

3. Thirdly, with regard to Jesus's sinlessness. If Jesus had had a human father, he would have been a descendant of Adam through both parents, and he would therefore have been obliged to contract original sin.

4. Fourthly, with regard to the aim of the Incarnation. Jesus became man that we might be reborn of the Church, which St Paul presents as an inviolate virgin. (II Cor. xi, 2.) No more beautiful expression of this could be given than his coming into the world through a Virgin.

5. Fifthly, with regard to Mary also it is evidently suitable. For the sake of her Son, whose Mother and fellow-worker she was called to be, the primeval curse was not allowed to touch her, but she was to share an eternal blessing. God did not include her when he cursed woman: 'Many are the pangs, many are the throes I will give thee to endure; with pangs thou shalt give birth to children! and thou shalt be subject to thy husband, he shall be thy Lord.' (Gen. iii, 16.)

Woman's desire for the man and his lordship over her with all its consequences, which must be looked on exclusively as punishment in this concrete order, were ruled out in the case of the blessed among women. Mary's inviolate virginity while not debarring her from the joys of motherhood, protected her from this divine curse.

It is noteworthy that Mary's virginity was the object of attacks from the earliest times. In Jesus's own time, the Jews—even, St Justin says, those who believed him to be the Messiah—maintained that he had been born of two parents in the usual way. The Ebionites themselves supported this view, and some set about it so coarsely that a certain Celsus was reproached by Origen with blaspheming the holy Christ of God by making him out to be the son of a Roman soldier. In the sixteenth century the anabaptists had recourse to a natural explanation, as also in our own times rationalists and many modernists.

Tertullian, who believed in the virgin birth, fell into error in his reaction against the Docetes, and thought that Mary lost her virginity at parturition: in this loss he hoped to find an argument for the article of faith that Jesus had a real and not an apparent body. In the fourth century a certain Helvidius renewed this heresy, and it still had adherents in Spain as late as the seventh century. Many Protestant sects have been attached to this opinion since the Reformation.

Nowadays almost all non-Catholics, even those Protestants who accept the virgin conception and birth, hold the view that Mary did not preserve her virginity after the birth of Christ, but that her marriage with Joseph was then consummated. This opinion was championed in the West in the fourth century by the above-mentioned Helvidius, and in the East especially by those whom St Epiphanius dubs 'antidicomarianites'.

This continual reappearance of the same error is not surprising, for Mary's virginity is closely bound up with the character of her divine motherhood, and so is involved in the christological conflict.

The Church has, understandably, continually opposed this error, both in the exercise of her usual magisterium, and in solemn decisions. Among the Church's documents dealing with this matter, we distinguish between those which refer more to her usual teaching, such as the various formularies in which the confession of faith is expressed, and those which concern the solemn practice of the magisterium. Among the latter we are not concerned with those which, while mentioning Mary's virginity, do not relate it to anything, as they are interested in other points of doctrine unconnected with it.

1. In the diverse formulas of the confession of faith, we confess that our Lord Jesus Christ was conceived, incarnate, begotten or born (of the Holy Ghost):

- (a) Of the Virgin Mary:
 - in the Apostles' Creed (Denzinger 2)
 - in the Nicæan-Constantinopolitan Creed (Denzinger 86)
 - in that of St Felix (Denzinger 52)
 - in that of St Damasus I (Denzinger 15)
 - in that of the first Synod of Toledo (Denzinger 20)
- (b) Of Mary Ever Virgin:
 - in the formula of St Epiphanius (Denzinger 13)
 - in that of St Leo IX (Denzinger 344)
 - in that of the 12th Oecumenical Council of the Lateran (Denzinger 429)
 - in that of the 14th Oecumenical Council of Lyons (Denzinger 462)
- (c) Of the Immaculate Womb of Mary:

- in that of the 17th Oecumenical Council of Florence (Denzinger 708)
- (d) Of the Inviolable Virginity of Mary:
in the formula of St Leo the Great (Denzinger 143)
in that of the 11th Synod of Toledo (Denzinger 282)
2. In the various ecclesiastical decisions which are connected indirectly with Mary's virginity, the following expressions are to be found:
- (a) Holy Virgin:
in that of the 3rd Oecumenical Council of Ephesus on Mary's Maternity (Denzinger 113)
in that of the 4th Roman Synod under St Damasus on the Person of Christ (Denzinger 64)
in that of the 4th Oecumenical Council of Chalcedon (Denzinger 148)
in that of the 6th Oecumenical Council of Constantinople (Denzinger 290)
in that of St Gregory I (Denzinger 250)
in that of the 2nd Synod of Braga (John III) (Denzinger 233)
in that of the 7th Oecumenical Council of Nicea on the Sonship of Christ (Denzinger 310)
in that of the Synod of Frankfurt (Adrian I) (Denzinger 313)
- (b) Ever Virgin:
in that of John II on the Divine Motherhood (Denzinger 202)
in that of the 5th Oecumenical Council of Constantinople on the Person of Christ (Denzinger 214)
- (c) Immaculate Virgin:
in that of Pope Honorius I against the Monergists (Denzinger 251).

The significance of these ecclesiastical documents with reference to Mary's virginity is in itself very important, but it seems to be increased by the fact that not less than eight Oecumenical Councils threw their weight into the balance, i.e. the 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 12th, 14th and 17th. Moreover, we have intentionally left on one side the documents which do not regard the virginity either directly or indirectly, but which nevertheless mention virginity, as e.g. the anathema of the 19th Oecumenical Council of Trent concerning venial sin (Denzinger 833), and the decree re original sin (Denzinger 792).

3. Documents directly concerning Mary's virginity are: that of St Siricius about Mary's possible later children (Denzinger 91);

that of the Council of the Lateran under St Martin I: 'If anyone does not confess with the holy Fathers, that the holy and immaculate Mary, ever Virgin, is really and truly Mother of God, as she conceived God the Word himself . . . of the Holy Ghost, and brought him forth as a virgin, while even after this her virginity remained inviolate, let him be anathema!' (Denzinger 256.)

Paul IV condemned the opinion that:

'the blessed Virgin did not always persevere in inviolate virginity, before, during and ever after parturition.' (Denzinger 993.)

With such an abundance of these official ecclesiastical documents further argument is unnecessary to show that tradition is more than clear concerning this dogma; so much so, that even Harnack, with special reference to the virgin conception, finds himself obliged to testify that in the second century the Christians from among the Gentiles confessed this dogma unanimously. (*Dogmengeschichte* 3, I: 96.) The same is true of the virgin birth, about which many details were often related, e.g. in the apocryphal gospel of St James.

The question of Mary's virginity after Jesus's birth is in a somewhat different position. This aspect of her virginity is also confessed, as is clear from the above quoted documents, in which the expressions: ever virgin, inviolate virginity, immaculate womb, occur. But it is difficult to find this point explicitly mentioned until doubts began to arise, even among those who confessed her virginity. In this respect Pope Siricius's letter to Anysius, Bishop of Salonika, is very instructive. The saintly Pope compares the denial of Mary's virginity after the birth of Jesus to the perfidy of the Jews about Jesus's birth itself. (Denzinger 91.) After that epoch this aspect began to be explicitly defended and denial of it was branded as heresy.

§2. *Prophecy*: The dogma of Mary's virginity is to be found not only in divine tradition, clear as this is, but also grounded in Holy Writ.

In the first place Isaiah's prophecy deserves attention: 'Maid shall be brought to bed of a son, that shall be called Emmanuel.' (Is. vii, 14.)

St Matthew is our guarantee that we have here undoubted Messianic prophecy. He establishes explicitly:

'All this was so ordained to fulfil the word which the Lord spoke

by his prophet: Behold a virgin shall be with child, and shall bear a son, and they shall call him Emmanuel, which means God with us.' (Matt. i, 22.)

A book by Professor Isenbiehl, *Neuer Versuch über die Weissagung vom Emmanuel*, in which the Messianic sense of the passage was denied, was condemned on September 20, 1779, by Pope Pius VI, as follows:

'Out of the fulness of our apostolic power we condemn the above-named book. . . . It contains teaching and positions which are respectively false, temerarious, scandalous, pernicious, erroneous, favourable to heresy and to heretics.'

The original text of the prophecy makes use rather remarkably of the word *almah*, which according to specialists in the subject, means no more than: 'young, marriageable woman', and thus may legitimately suppose virginity without mentioning it explicitly. Another word exists in Hebrew for expressing virginity, *betulah*, but it is used indiscriminately for old and young women. To learn the meaning of a word, however, we need to consider not only its derivation, but rather its use, and in this case its use in Scripture.

We can thus establish:

1. Nowhere in Scripture is this word used of a *married* woman; nor of an unmarried woman of whose virginity there might reasonably be a doubt.

2. The word *almah* occurs in six other places besides this prophecy, in two of which it certainly applies to a virgin, and there is no reason in the other four for assuming that it does not:

(a) In Genesis xxiv, 43, Rebecca is called *almah*, and it is clear from verse 16 that she was a virgin (*betulah*).

(b) In Exodus ii, 8, Miriam, the sister of Moses and Aaron is called *almah*, and it is certain that she remained a virgin.

(c) In the Song of Songs vi, 8, the queens and wives of secondary rank are contrasted with the girls in the service of the queens and destined to be eventually chosen as wives by the king. These are also designated by the name *almah*.

(d) In the Song of Songs i, 3, the reference is certainly to unmarried girls.

(e) In Psalm lxxviii, 26, a procession is described in which the singers go first, afterwards the minstrels and in between, the maidens with their timbrels; a rôle which is attributed to Miriam, sister of Moses and Aaron in Exodus xv, 20, and also in Judges xi, 34, to the daughter of Jephthah, who was a virgin.

(f) In Proverbs xxx, 19, the *almah* is contrasted with the wanton:

'Three mysteries there are too high for me, and a fourth is beyond my ken: eagle that flies in air, viper that crawls on rock, ship that sails the sea, and man that goes courting maid! Nor less I marvel at the wanton wife. . . .'

From the usage of Holy Scripture we may conclude therefore that the term *almah* is used only for a young woman who is, or is justly supposed to be, a virgin. It is striking that not only Christian translations such as the Syrian and the Vulgate, but also the Jewish translation of the Septuagint have rendered the word *almah* by a term which means in its direct sense: virgin.

In the original text of the prophecy, the tense called the prophetic past perfect is used: the prophet *sees* and then cries out: 'See, the virgin has conceived and brought forth a son. According to the proper meaning of the word *almah*, the prophet is speaking of a young unmarried woman, but he certainly does not intend by that what we call 'an unmarried mother', for then he would not have had any reason for being so emphatic: see the virgin (*ha almah*) and, as we have said, there is not a single instance of such a use of the word in Holy Scripture.

But it would be ridiculous to suppose that the prophet meant only that the woman in question was a maid until the conception of her son, like thousands of others. This is all the more important that the woman of whom he is speaking was not only, like so many others, a virgin until the conception of her son, but because she had something special, far above that, and which no other woman could share with her: namely that she was the mother of the

Messias. The prophet cannot mean anything but that the *almah* who has conceived is still a virgin.¹

From the text itself it follows, although not so forcibly, that the prophet means that this *almah* also remained a virgin at the birth of her son. There is nothing to show he did not mean this, for as he *saw* she had conceived, he also *saw* her bear a son. We know moreover from the evangelist that this is what he did mean. The oldest witnesses of tradition are unanimous in their view of this.

Besides the prophecy of Isaias, Holy Scripture also announces that it is about to be fulfilled. It relates the mission of the angel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary, and, according to Luke i, 31, puts in his mouth the very words of the prophecy as they are translated in the Septuagint, but naturally in the second person:

Isaias:

See, the maid shall conceive in her womb and shall bring forth a son.

Luke:

Behold, thou (virgin) shalt conceive in thy womb and shalt bear a son.

But while the prophet speaks only of God-with-us, the angel reveals *how* God will be with us: as Redeemer. Hence the variant:

Isaias:

And she shall call his name Emmanuel.

Luke:

And thou shalt call him Jesus.

At the request of the maiden, who testifies that she knows no man, the angel explains that this mystery will be wrought by the Holy Ghost.

As well as the prophecy and the announcement of its fulfilment, the fulfilment itself is related with the evangelist's authentic declaration that 'all this was so ordained to fulfil the word which the Lord spoke by his prophet' (Matt. i, 22.)

Luke too hints discreetly at his own announcement, when, after telling in a few wonderfully sober words the story of the birth, he adds in the same breath that Mary at once wrapped the child in swaddling clothes and laid him in the manger.

Mary's virginity, both before and after the birth of Jesus, is incontrovertibly proved by these passages of Scripture.

¹ F. Ceuppens, O.P.: *De prophetiis messianicis in Antiquo Testamento*, Romae (Angelicum, 1935), p. 188-225.

but we have no direct proofs in writing of her virginity for the rest of her life. Not that we Catholics need it, for we accept divine tradition as an independent source of revelation. But one might advance some indirect proofs. 'Every year his parents used to go up to Jerusalem at the Paschal feast.' (Luke ii, 41.) This would surely have been improbable, if there had been younger children as well as Jesus.

St John tells us also (John xix, 26) that before his death Jesus confided his Mother to the care of his beloved disciple, which would certainly have been superfluous if she had had other children living. And against this no one can allege that they were probably dead, because the whole difficulty about Mary's having always remained a virgin was caused by the presence of these so-called *brothers of the Lord*. (2, 5, §3.)

Those who hold that Mary abandoned her virginity after the birth of Christ try to prove it from Holy Scripture. Fifteen centuries have taught them very little, and to-day they still appeal with as much assiduity as ever to the same texts, as though St Clement of Alexandria, Origen, St John Chrysostom, St Ambrose, St Jerome, St Hilary and others had never answered their objections!

The main difficulties are to be found in expressions used by St Matthew.

First they appeal to i, 18: 'His Mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, but they had not yet come together when she was found to be with child by the power of the Holy Ghost.' This difficulty is based on a false interpretation of the expression *come together*, which here, as is abundantly clear from the context, is to be taken literally as the leading of the wife into the house of the bridegroom. They were of course betrothed, but Joseph still had to take Mary into his house with all the solemn ritual of a Jewish wedding. He is however afraid to proceed with this and they do not go to live together until the angel has brought him a revelation from God. But the objectors were unwilling to understand this coming to live together in the literal sense, obvious as it is in the text, but took it in a metaphorical sense of marital intercourse, and so read into it that Mary had given up her virginity. But even supposing that the text should be understood of marital

intercourse, and that it should therefore be read thus: 'His Mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, but they had not yet consummated the marriage when she was found to be with child by the power of the Holy Ghost' . . . even then it by no means follows that they did consummate it later. 'Before' can of course point to something that happens later, but this happening is not inevitable. St Jerome points this out to the Helvidius of whom we have spoken already. First the saint gives some examples and continues with biting sarcasm: 'Before Helvidius has done penance he is surprised by death! Must we understand by that that Helvidius will do penance after death, in spite of the words of Scripture: who will praise thee in hell?' If the expression: 'Helvidius died before he did penance' does not and cannot mean that he did penance later, then the expression: Mary was found with child before they came to live together, need not mean that they did live together as man and wife later.

Objectors appeal again to Matthew i, 25: 'He had not known her when she bore her son.' This difficulty resembles the preceding one. If one thing happens before another it does not oblige the other to happen. We can borrow St Jerome's example: Helvidius had not done penance when he died. Does that mean that he actually did, later?

Holy Scripture gives a clear example in II Samuel vi, 23: 'And Michol, that was daughter to King Saul, never bore child to the day of her death.' And in Psalm 109, 1: 'To the Master I serve, the Lord's promise was given: sit here at my right hand until I make thy enemies a footstool under thy feet.' Thirdly they appeal to the phrase *first-born Son*. But this is also a misunderstanding. This expression commonly used in Scripture signifies, according to St Jerome, either, a child after whom other children follow, or, a child before whom no other child was born. And this must be so, otherwise the whole prescription of the Law about sacrifice and the right of the first-born would be absurd: for in order to know whether a child really was the first-born, people would have to wait until another one was born.

In the fourth place comes the difficulty about the *brothers of the Lord*. The Fathers have explained this way of describing

them in various ways: some went as far as possible by accepting the apocryphal gospel of James and making them the children of St Joseph by a former marriage. But, willing as they were to sacrifice St Joseph's virginity to this designation, they refused resolutely to sacrifice Mary's. We shall return to this question and deal with it in detail (2, 5, §3). Here we merely wish to point out that the expression is a Hebrew idiom adopted by the evangelists and the translators. Among Hebrew speakers the term brother is also applied to men whom we should not consider as such. We read that Abraham and Lot call one another brothers (Gen. xiii, 8), although Scripture had informed us fully as to their family relationship: Abraham was brother of Aran, Lot's father and was therefore uncle to Lot. (Gen. xi, 27.)

§3. *Mary's Vow*: The perpetual virginity of the holy Mother of God is a truth revealed by God, which we may know as such from Holy Scripture and divine tradition, and which is presented to us by Holy Church as a dogma of faith.

Having established this, we shall go further and examine that virginity.

The term *virgin* is often loosely given by us to any unmarried woman, even to one who longs with her whole heart for the joys of motherhood. But its true sense is much more restricted. There are three elements that have to be considered. Firstly there is the *essence* of virginity which consists in the will to refrain from every satisfaction connected with sexual intercourse, whether such as is permissible in itself or not.

In the second place, that such a satisfaction was never allowed, and this is *presumed* in the first.

Thirdly, and this *follows* from the two others: the unbroken seal of virginity.

Consequently those who, before resolving to refrain from satisfaction of this kind, had already actually enjoyed it, and those who have actually abstained from it in the past but are by no means resolved to continue to abstain, cannot be called virgins in the strict sense of the word. They may practise the virtue of chastity (purity), but they are not virgins.

Mary's virginity includes these three elements. Her virginity, as declared before the birth of Christ, includes that in all her preceding life she had never done or wished or permitted anything contrary to it. Her resolution to refrain definitively from satisfactions of this kind must therefore have been taken a long time before.

The dogma of Mary's virginity as well as her entire sinlessness are our guarantee that she carried out the resolution she had made. And this is rendered all the more convincing by her having confirmed *by vow* her resolution to remain a virgin.

St Augustine, in his book on Virginity, is (as far as I know) the first to have pointed out that Mary had framed her resolution to remain a virgin in the form of a vow to God. Nowadays this view, based as it is on scriptural data, is generally held.

We need only compare the message of the angel to Zachary (Luke i, 13 sqq.) with that to Mary (Luke i, 30 sqq.).

It looks at first as though Zachary and Mary were reacting in more or less the same way to the message, and even asking how what the angel had foretold could come to pass. Both have an objection to make that seems to tell against its realisation. Zachary brings up the advanced age of the prospective parents, while Mary pleads that she 'knows no man'. But the angel's reply is utterly different in each case: he gives a detailed explanation to Mary, while Zachary receives a reproach and is struck dumb.

'But the angel said to him: Zachary, do not be afraid... Elizabeth thy wife is to bear thee a son... He is to be high in the Lord's favour...'

But Zachary said to the angel: By what sign am I to be assured of this?... I am an old man now, and my wife is far advanced in age.

Then the angel said to her, Mary, do not be afraid... Thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bear a son... He shall be great and men shall know him for the Son of the most High...

But Mary said to the angel: How can that be, since I have no knowledge of man?

The angel answered... Behold thou shalt be dumb, and have no power of speech, until the day when this is accomplished; because thou hast not believed my promise which shall in due time be fulfilled.

(Zachary is dumb.)

The angel answered... The Holy Spirit will come upon thee and the power of the most High will overshadow thee; Thus that holy thing which is to be born of thee shall be known for the Son of God. See how it fares with thy cousin Elizabeth, she too has conceived a son... for nothing can be impossible with God. And Mary said: Behold the handmaid of the Lord; let it be unto me according to thy word.

We learn from verse 13 that Zachary had prayed for children, and now that his prayer is granted he thinks he sees reason for doubt, and asks for a sign. He is given his sign: he is to be dumb until the sign is replaced by what it signifies.

Mary receives a detailed answer and even a sign, though she had asked for none: the angel tells her of the aged Elisabeth who is expecting a child, for with God nothing is impossible.

Mary did not doubt, but asked for an explanation in her difficulty, which is that she 'has no knowledge of man'. Yet the context of the passage tells us explicitly that she is betrothed and that her bridegroom is called Joseph. If we add to this the witness of Flavius Josephus, historian of the Jewish nation, that the so-called betrothal among the Jews was in essence the marriage agreement, with all the marriage rights connected with it (which the modern writers also grant), then Mary's difficulty seems incomprehensible. They need only abide by God's institution to become parents as announced by the angel.

Since then Mary, when the angel tells her from God that she, a woman betrothed according to Jewish customs, is to conceive a Son, appeals to her virginity as a difficulty, there is only one possible explanation: Mary finds herself in presence of a complication. God foretells that she will conceive a Son, and yet she knows *she is bound in conscience*

so that she cannot co-operate naturally in this conception. This is possible only if her resolution to remain a virgin had the character of a *vow*, in which case she would have to be released from her promise by God himself, or else God would have to make some other provision. This is the very reason why she needed further light, which the angel immediately gives her.

Theologians are not unanimous as to whether Mary's vow was absolute or only conditional. St Thomas starts from the supposition that she had appended to her vow the explicit condition: if it is God's will. The reason for this is to be found in the Jewish idea that everyone ought to marry in order to further the extension of the Kingdom of God: Abraham's offspring. These theologians think that she agreed later with St Joseph to renew the vow without explicitly renewing the condition. But in our day commentators prefer the view that Mary's vow was absolute from the beginning, their reason being that an absolute vow is more perfect than a conditional one, and that we must ascribe the more perfect to Mary. This seems the more cogent that the same reason is used for thinking she made a vow at all. For a good work performed in virtue of a vow is in the nature of things more perfect than the same good work not done in fulfilment of a vow. If Mary is the Virgin of virgins, or, as St Ambrose calls her, *Standard-bearer of Virgins*, then her virginity must have been vowed, and if so, by an absolute vow.

In my opinion this reasoning is not flawless. It is certainly true that an absolute vow is more perfect than a conditional one, *at least if that condition is added to the vow from outside*. Thus it is more perfect to vow without further preface to enter religion, than to make the condition: if I recover from this illness. But since 'the Lord loves obedience better than sacrifice' (I Kings xv, 22) Mary's condition 'if it is God's will' must be inherent in any vow, even the most absolute. So even if Mary expressed this condition, already inherent in any vow, it was not because she doubted whether she would always *wish* to remain a virgin, but whether she would always *be able* to remain a virgin. Her vow loses none of its value by

this explicit condition, but on the contrary shows a very high degree of prudence: Virgin most prudent!

§4. *God's Miracles*: According to the laws of nature, no human being can come into existence but by co-operation of both father and mother: the human seed can germinate only if the ovum is fertilised. All the same, we should under-rate God's omnipotence if we thought God was bound by these laws.

It is a philosophical axiom that the power of action of every being is based on the actuality and the perfection proper to it, so that the measure of limitation, proper to every created thing, is the limit of its power of action. God is not hemmed in by the bounds of species and kind: he is far above all that. In him is not a single limit, but on the contrary the summit of all perfection and actuality. As theologians say, he is self-subsisting being.

To the essence of God belongs all the fulness of all being, so that divine power of action is also unlimited and extends to the whole plenitude of being itself. Everything, therefore, that can be, is within the domain of God's power. Only what cannot be—and which is therefore nothing—because it includes a contradiction in terms, e.g. a square circle, is beyond God's omnipotence; and that, not because God's power is insufficient, but because what cannot *be* cannot *become* either, for becoming is the road to being.

Within the scope of God's power, that far surpasses the effectiveness of any creature, lies the production of any result you may wish to choose for any cause whatsoever, yet without any contribution from that cause. He who multiplies every year by the power of nature the corn we sow, showed by feeding five thousand men, not counting the women and children, with five loaves, that he is able to do such things without the co-operation of nature.

God, therefore, according to the laws of nature established by himself, produces the children of men through secondary causes, called by us parents, but he can, as often as it pleases him, eliminate these connecting links and do himself

directly what, in the course of nature, he does indirectly.

In the beginning he acted in this way. He could have created the first man out of nothing, not only his soul, but likewise his body, but he willed to do otherwise. He produced the soul, as he produces all souls, from nothing, but he did not create the body of the first man, but moulded it of material that already existed. Material is in itself pure potentiality, and cannot therefore appear anywhere in nature unless it is joined to some form of substance or another, so that it is always the material of some existing substance or another. In other words: in the formation of Adam's body God used some kind of material substance, which he changed into a human body.

It is not at all more difficult for God to borrow the necessary material for this human body from any other kind of substance: mineral, fluid, gas, plant or animal. We have no preference: no substance is specially suitable for this, just as none needs to be excluded; whatever God's choice may be, it will be equally easy for him.

Thus as long as no proofs have been given us of the ultimate evolution of man from an animal that has arrived at a sufficient degree of development, there is no well-founded choice to be made, unless we prefer to keep to the letter of Holy Scripture, which says that God's independent choice was clay. On the other hand, when God makes the body of the woman, his independent choice is human material, which is present under the form of Adam's substance. Holy Scripture here makes God choose Adam's rib.

It might be useful to stop here and reflect on the rôle of the Holy Ghost in the Incarnation of God's Son from the stainless womb of Mary. As appears from our explanation, the material of which God made the bodies of the first pair of human beings was much further removed from the material provided by the laws of nature (i.e. the fertilised ovum) than the material of which the Holy Ghost formed the body of Jesus: the unfertilised ovum in the pure womb of Mary. By eliminating the intermediate cause appointed by the laws of nature, i.e. the male semen, this cell was made by God's immediate action into the body of Jesus, animated by

the created, rational soul, and hypostatically united to the Word of God.

It is obvious that if we look at them from God's side, we cannot classify his miracles as great and greater: for him there is simply no difference; God spoke and it was so! But we can and do see a difference, looking at them from our side.

The highest class is then occupied by the miracles in which something happens that could not possibly be effected by nature: e.g. for two bodies to occupy the same place.

We assign second class to the miracles by which something happens that nature could bring about, but not in the circumstances in which it actually is happening. Nature, for example, can produce life, but not in someone dead; she can produce the power to see, but not in one born blind; raising the dead and giving sight to the blind are therefore miracles of the second class.

The lowest class is taken by the miracles in which nothing is beyond the power of nature except the manner or the order in which they happen. When, for instance, an open wound or a broken bone is cured suddenly without going through the normal stages of healing, both what has taken place and that in which it takes place are within the domain of natural causes and only the manner in which the cure has taken place is beyond merely natural powers. Here we are face to face with a miracle, but it is one of the lowest kinds, looked at not from God's point of view, but from a natural angle.

If we put aside the hypostatic union and consider the formation of Jesus's body only, we find a miracle of the lowest class, for nature can produce life, and can do it from a female ovum, but not in this way, i.e. without male semen. God has here the entire *maternal* co-operation of Mary, so that in spite of direct divine action, and in spite of the fact that Mary's virginity remains intact, we may speak of a *conception* in the full sense.

At the making of Adam's body God himself did everything, and not only the way in which it was made, but also

the material of which it was formed were miraculous. So that the making of the body of the first man was, by our standards of measurement, a greater miracle than the making of Jesus's body. Yet the latter excels all other miracles which have ever been or ever will be performed, because it was not merely the making of a human body but the making of the human body of God. This body never existed at all without being at the same time the body of God.

However, the perfect maternal co-operation of Mary in her virginal conception of Jesus is the reason that this conception belongs to the innermost heart of the mystery of the Incarnation. By it Mary's virginal conception is more than a miracle wrought by God: it is also a mystery, and is, in addition, the mystery of the Incarnation. Therefore, although Mary gave on her part her full co-operation as mother, her virginal conception is nevertheless to be called miraculous, without further comment.

The miracle of Mary's virginal conception was followed by that of her virgin childbirth. For as the virginity of Mary was left intact by the birth of Jesus, he must have left the closed womb of his Mother without breaking the seal of her maidenhood. This is why the Church applies Ezechiel's words to her: 'And the Lord told me. . . Shut this gate must ever be . . . since the Lord, the God of Israel, entered by it.' (Ez. xlv, 2.) And likewise those of the Song of Songs: 'My bride, my true love, a closed garden, hedged all about, a spring shut in and sealed!' (S. of S. iv, 12.)

Considering the marvellous character of this birth from an inviolate maiden, there could hardly be any difference of opinion as to the manner of its happening. It has been compared to the birth of a beam of light that leaves its source of radiance intact:

*Sicut sidus radium,
Profert Virgo Filium,
Pari forma:
Neque sidus radio,*

*Neque Mater Filio,
Fit corrupta.*

As the star darts its ray,
The Virgin brings forth her Son,
Alike in beauty:
The star is not lessened in beauty
by the ray,
Nor is the Mother deprived of
purity,
By her Son.

The opinion has been put forward that in spite of Mary's virginity everything took place in the normal way. Others have thought that Christ already made use at his birth of one of the gifts which he possessed after the Resurrection, when he passed through closed doors to reach his apostles. This view is based on an incorrect idea of the gifts accompanying the Resurrection. For it is completely untenable that the glorified soul should be able to force its risen body through another body. Jesus's appearance to the apostles while doors and windows were shut, and his passing through a heavy stone that closed his grave, and his birth from a sealed womb, are miracles—and first-class miracles at that.

For when one body forces its way through another, then at a given moment both must be occupying the same place, which clashes with the laws of nature, and cannot possibly happen by means of natural powers. It is true that we are still far from knowing everything that is naturally explicable, because we know so little of the laws of nature, but we must add to this that there *are* miracles of which we do not know with absolute certainty that they are beyond the laws of nature. In other words, although we do not know all that nature *can* do, we know quite well what she cannot do.

The parts of one body are distinguished from each other by their dimensions, which cause them to be in different positions with regard to each other. And just as happens with the different parts of one body with regard to the same place, the same happens with several bodies with regard to several places. Matter in itself is pure potentiality: it is only divisible and thus distinguishable, in virtue of dimensions. If the dimensions are no longer distinguished from each other, then the matter is not either. Thus, as the parts of one and the same body would no longer be distinguishable if the coincidence of the dimensions should remove all difference in their positions with regard to each other, so in similar manner several bodies would not be distinguishable from one another if they happened to occupy the same place, thus putting an end to the difference in dimensions. It therefore clashes with the laws of nature that two bodies should remain distinct and yet occupy the same place.

Nature therefore cannot achieve the feat of passing one body through another. It is a physical impossibility. We have, of course, said above that not every physical impossibility is necessarily outside the domain of God's power, but only what implies a contradiction in terms. By his omnipotence God can do immediately himself, what in the ordinary course of nature he usually does through the medium of secondary causes. If God can maintain the distinction between bodies by means of dimensions, he can also do so immediately, without them. Although the laws of nature do not permit of two bodies occupying the same place, because then they would form only one body by the coincidence of their dimensions, God nevertheless, if the distinction of dimensions were removed, could himself maintain immediately the distinction of these bodies. And should he do so, there will be nothing to prevent one of these bodies from passing through the other, and we shall be face to face with a first-class miracle, able to see that it *must* be so, but not in the least how it can be so.

God's omnipotence is our guarantee that he has merely to will in order to realise immediately, what in the normal course of nature he does through a medium: he can give light without sun, bread without crops, life to a child without a father, and thus also preserve the distinction of bodies without dimensions. But how he does all that is hidden from us, for we do not know him as he is in himself, but only in relation to the things that are about us.

So that Mary's inviolate virginity in conception and childbirth is a great miracle, a double miracle wrought by God, which we are not able to fathom, although God has willed to reveal the fact to us, and we can see that it is not beyond his power. And both these miracles are closely bound up with the mystery of the Incarnation.

CHAPTER 5

'MARY, HIS WIFE'

§1. *A Perfect Marriage*: The customs of Mary's time are sufficient proof that she must have been married, and if further evidence is needed we have it in the general opinion that the highly-favoured Mother of God was an only child and thus obliged by the Law, as heiress, to marry a man of her father's tribe. (Num. xxxvi, 8.)

Holy Scripture informs us not only of Mary's betrothal but also of the actual marriage ceremony: the official introduction of the bride into the bridegroom's house (Matt. i, 20-24). Consequently the Evangelists call St. Joseph Mary's husband (Matt. i, 16, 19) and Mary, his wife (Matt. i, 20, 24; Luke ii, 41, 45). Luke indeed does not hesitate to call Mary and Joseph Jesus's parents, and he even attributes to Mary the expression: 'thy father' (Luke ii, 41, 43, 48) and reports that Jesus was subject to them (Luke ii, 51).

The most important perfection anything can have is its essentiality; this perfection is in the nature of things present in every marriage: the unbreakable spiritual bond between the souls of the man and the woman, by which they owe one to the other an inviolable fidelity. Yet a further perfection in marriage is to be obtained by the realisation of the end; Yahweh, God, had said: 'It is not well that man should be without companionship: I will give him a mate of his own kind.' (Gen. ii, 18.) Hence childless marriages cannot attain this perfection, not even when the sterile couples adopt orphans out of charity, for the end of marriage is not to bring up the children of others, but one's own.

Mary and Joseph's marriage was perfect in its validity. We need to be on our guard against lowering it, on the grounds of Mary's virginity, to the status of a mere formality

or a marriage of convenience. We are really speaking here of a true and genuine marriage that knits a spiritual bond between man and wife, a marriage in which the man sincerely loves his wife and the wife is subject to her husband (Col. iii, 18, 19). Mary and Joseph did not live next to one another, but with one another, in everything a support to one another, so that the great Pope Leo XIII of immortal memory holds this very marriage up as an outstanding model to the eyes of all Christian households (*Neminem fugit*). Far from being the faithful old servant who keeps well in the background, St Joseph is the head of the Holy Family. The other idea we owe to the apocryphal gospel of St James, and also, a great deal, to the art inspired by it. God however treated him as the head; he did not make known to Mary his will as to this family but more than once sent his angel to tell Joseph. (Matt. ii, 13, 19.)

As head of his household Joseph enjoyed rights, which Mary respected with perfect submission and love. Only St Paul's prescription (Cor. xiv, 35) that if a woman has any question to raise about spiritual matters, she should ask her husband, was not binding on her, for after all she did know more about these things than he did, and later she was to appear as Queen of Apostles and Mother of Good Counsel.

Besides the proximate perfection possessed in the highest degree by this marriage, we must also grant it the further perfection. It was certainly not in virtue of this marriage that Jesus was born, nevertheless it was in this marriage willed by God to this end, that he was conceived of the Holy Ghost lawfully and brought into the world accompanied by God's miracles. St Joseph thus in his lawful marriage lawfully received this Child, who must therefore without any doubt be called his own Son. So that, in relation to this marriage, Jesus is not an adopted child, and both his birth and his upbringing give his parents' marriage the further perfection that every other marriage obtains from the birth and upbringing of its own children. We may therefore in honour of his virginity call St Joseph Foster-father of Jesus, but in reality and by right he is much more than that; just as Mary

called him 'thy father', with respect to Jesus. This is also why Jesus honoured the parental rights of *both* his parents (Luke ii, 51).

Mary's and Joseph's parental rights must not be taken in the same strict sense as our parents' rights over us. By the very fact that our parents are the divinely appointed, irreplaceable source of our becoming, being and development, they have authority over us, and correlatively our strict duty is to acknowledge that authority by practising the noble moral virtue of filial piety. This duty on the one hand and that right on the other are based on the fact that our parents are our origin by God's will; and that duty is so strict that whatever we may do in our lives with respect to our parents, we shall never be in a position to repay their goodness to us adequately; whatever we do, we shall always remain in their debt. . . .

But Jesus, although he is true man, is the second Person of the Blessed Trinity. No matter to what height a creature may have been raised, he can never appeal to any rights with respect to God, unless God out of his goodness begins by giving them to him. So that Mary may be the principle of the Man-Jesus, and may be together with Joseph, the principle of that Man's development, but they were both this only because Jesus-God had made it possible. So that Jesus had no obligations towards Mary and Joseph. God can owe only one thing and that to himself, namely, the execution of what his wisdom has decided. Mary and Joseph, therefore, had authority over Jesus only because he subjected himself of his free will to his parents, and so had made it his duty to obey them. What he was later to say to the representative of the Roman Government is equally true here: 'Thou wouldst not have any power over me at all, if it had not been given thee from above.' (John xix, 11.)

We have no details as to place, time, and other circumstances concerning this marriage. It is fairly certain that this wedding conformed to everything customary in that environment at that time, and did not stand out as unusual in any way which might have been in conflict with humility.

In this connection it is interesting to note the truly fantastic

story concocted by the author of the apocryphal gospel of St James which we have already quoted several times. We find many features there which have persisted for centuries in the popular imagination:

"When Mary had reached the age of twelve, an assembly of priests was called in order to decide what should be done with this child of the temple. It was agreed that the High Priest wearing his ceremonial robes should enter the Holy of Holies to ask what should be done. But within the Sanctuary an angel appeared to him and said: "Zachary, go and collect all the widowers together from all the people; let each of them bring his staff, and Mary shall be entrusted to the one to whom God shall give a sign." The messengers went through the whole land of Israel, blowing trumpets everywhere, and all the widowers were assembled.

Then each of them had to give up his staff to the High Priest, who went into the Sanctuary again to pray. After this prayer, each of them received back his own staff, but there was no sign until it came to Joseph's turn. His staff burst open and a dove flew out and settled on his head. The High Priest understood this sign, but Joseph hesitated: "I am old and I already have sons, while Mary is only a child! I fear I shall make myself ridiculous in the eyes of all Israel." But the High Priest answered Joseph, "Fear none but the Lord thy God, and remember how he dealt with Dathan, Abiron and Core. The earth gaped and swallowed them up on account of their rebellion. Fear, Joseph, that similar things may happen to your family!" Then Joseph took Mary in order to guard her for the Lord.' (Chaps. 7 and 8.)

Two stories are based on this tale: firstly, the question of the so-called brothers of the Lord has to be settled: they must be the children of the widower Joseph by a first marriage. The second is that of the old Joseph and his young bride, Mary. This image became traditional in iconography, and unfortunately was too easily adopted by Christians, perhaps because, in the eyes of weak human beings like ourselves, Mary's virginity seemed to run less risk when there was such a difference in their ages. But if the dying Saviour was unwilling to confide his virgin Mother to any but his virgin disciple, would he have given her to a husband who had surrendered his own virginity? Would he not rather have bestowed the grace on him which he gave to the saintly Emperor, Henry the Pious and his holy bride, Cunigonde,

or to St Edward the Confessor, or to so many simple, anonymous Christians who live as brothers and sisters even in our times?

St Jerome wrote to Helvidius: 'You say that Mary did not remain a virgin, but I affirm more than that: namely that Joseph himself remained a virgin, in order that a virgin Son should be born of this virgin marriage!' If that is the case, there is no further reason to bring forward for such disparity in age. On the contrary, all the evidence tends to prove that Mary and Joseph were about the same age, certainly younger than is customary in our part of the world, so that there was nothing striking about their marriage. Far from giving St Joseph the rôle of a faithful old servant, we ought to emphasise the fact that he was the young virgin husband for the young virgin Mother of the Lord, chosen by God to whom both of them vowed their virginity. Certainly this view is not only more honourable to the patriarch himself, but also to the Son of God, whose earliest years were surrounded by the care of a virgin Mother and a virgin Father, Head of the holy household of Nazareth.

As far as we are concerned, God's infinite and eternal wisdom guarantees the suitability of the union of perpetual virginity with marriage. But from the oldest times efforts have been made to make it clearer to us. St Ignatius of Antioch, St Ambrose, St Augustine and St Jerome have given various reasons for it:

For our sakes:

Mary's virginity is witnessed to by the evidence of her husband: for if Joseph had not believed in her miraculous virginity, it was in his power to avenge that shame. (St Ambrose, in *Luc.* 1: 26-27, bk 2.)

Mary's own testimony is confirmed by it, for as a woman betrothed according to Jewish customs, she had not the least need to vindicate the glory of her motherhood. (loc. cit.)

Her marriage made it impossible for less prudent maidens to allege that even the Virgin Mother of the Lord was defamed. (loc. cit.)

Mary's marriage is a type of Holy Church, which is betrothed as a pure maiden to Christ, according to II Cor. 11. (St Augustine on *Virginity*, ch. 2.)

In Mary we see how God honours both virginity and marriage, in contrast with the practice of heretics. (III, 29, 1.)

For Mary's own sake:

Mary's marriage protected her from death by stoning as prescribed in the Book of Deuteronomy xxii, 20-21. (St Jerome, *comment. in Matt.*)

She is saved from the shame in the eyes of men that would have been hers as an unmarried woman seen to be with child. (St Ambrose, *op. cit. supra.*)

Mary found in Joseph a husband who would look after her, so that she would not have to provide for the maintenance of herself and her child. (St Jerome, *loc. cit.*)

For Jesus's sake:

His Mother's marriage saved Jesus from being slandered as the child of an unmarried mother. (St Ambrose, *loc. cit.*)

According to Jewish custom, Jesus's genealogy on his father's side could now be published. (St Ambrose, in *Luc.* III: 23 bk 3.)

Above all Jesus was protected by this marriage from Satan, from whom his miraculous conception remained hidden. (St Ignatius, *vide* St Jerome, *loc. cit.*)

§2. *Protection against Satan.* Several times in the course of the liturgical year, we meet in the Breviary St Jerome's well-known homily (Matt. I, lib. 1). In it he explains why Jesus was not conceived simply by a virgin, but by a betrothed virgin. He says:

'Ignatius the martyr has added here a fourth reason why Jesus was conceived by a betrothed virgin. It was so that his birth might remain hidden from the devil, who would suppose that he was not born of a virgin but of a wife.'

Once I received a letter from an old priest in which he told me that all his life long he had found this reason utterly incomprehensible. A further investigation of it may therefore not be entirely without interest.

There is absolutely no doubt that the Child Jesus was all-powerful from his earliest youth. He is the divine Person who unites both natures in himself and of whom we may thus predicate in truth and reality all that is proper to both of them (I, 1, §1). Even as a child he was able to resist by himself all who might conspire against him. When his enemies surround him one day and lead him to the brow of

the hill on which their town is built, to throw him over it, 'he passes through the midst of them, and so goes his way' (Luke iv, 29-30). Before he gave himself up in the garden, he showed that he was acting in perfect freedom by making all the soldiers shrink back and fall to the ground (John xviii, 6). In spite of the violence done to him, he kept all his strength, so that after so much suffering and loss of blood, he was able to cry out with a loud voice, to the astonishment of Luke who was a physician (Col. iv, 14).

It is also evident that such things as these are miracles. So that if the Lord would not perform any miracles until he had begun his public life, the only possible reason is either that he was accepting persecution, or that he was looking out for a protector. . . .

Jesus's great opponent must not be looked for among the Jewish people, nor among the priests and pharisees: he is Satan. All through the history of mankind the threat of *the woman and her seed* has been hanging over his head, a threat continually repeated and emphasised by the prophets. As soon as he suspects that Jesus might be the Messiah his enmity flames up. Obviously he would not have delayed if he had had sound reasons for suspecting this Child from the first. And certainly the fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy would have provided such a reason. The best protection for Jesus, since he is not to suffer yet, or work miracles, is to hide from Satan his miraculous conception and birth, which would hardly have been possible if he had been conceived and brought forth by the unmarried virgin Mary. But as she conceived of the Holy Ghost after she had been betrothed to Joseph according to Jewish rites and had brought him into the world as a married woman, the secret could be kept perfectly.

An angel is a pure spirit whose only faculty for knowing is his sublime intellect, with which he can know not only universals, as we can, but also all particulars that we have to learn with different senses. His way of knowing is also quite different from ours. We begin with separate, painfully acquired *notions*, build definite *judgments* on these first of all, then with their help use our reasoning faculty in order to

arrive at the *conclusion* for which we were looking. Many of our judgments are formed in us by nature as soon as we have acquired the notions. As soon as we grasp the meaning of part, whole, large and small, nature provides the judgment: every whole is greater than its part. But the angel has no need to judge or to reason.

At his creation he was given together with his understanding all the intellectual images that he would ever need in order to make naturally any notion he desired.¹ He does not need to reason, but knows by intuition. A direct result of this wonderful intelligence is that an angel is never deficient in his knowledge. He knows all he needs to know (hence no ignorance); he knows all he wants to know without any mistake (hence no error). Once at a big exhibition in Rome we saw a slogan put up in letters the size of a man: '*Mussolini ha sempre ragione!*' ('Mussolini is always right!'). This is actually perfectly true of the angel: he is always right, never mistaken. Just as he cannot make any mistake in judging whether a certain sort of material is inflammable or not, he cannot be mistaken in judging the fact of bodily virginity or otherwise of a young woman. (I say 'bodily', because our personal secrets and the secrets of grace are hidden from all, even from spirits, as long as we ourselves keep them.) Whether a thing is public property or not, whether people try to hide it or not, has nothing to do with the matter, for the angel does not acquire his knowledge as we do from the things themselves, hidden or not, but from his own inherent notions. Distance or nearness, hiddenness or publicity make no difference at all.²

This brief exposition will help the reader to see what a difficulty seems attached to the reason given by St Ignatius the martyr. Whether Mary was married or not, or whether her virginity was hidden or not, is beside the question. Satan could know naturally that a maiden had given birth to a child, which would suggest at once a direct intervention of

¹ As soon as he uses his reason, i.e. directs it to the knowledge of a definite truth, or an object specified by species or number, the necessary idea is immediately formed from the object present.

² C. Friethoff, o.p. *Angels and Devils* (Hilversum, 1940).

God Almighty and the fulfilment of Isaias's prophecy! I do not hesitate to grant that Satan *could* know that Mary was a virgin at conception and childbirth and afterwards; he *could* know that Jesus's birth was miraculous; he *could* know that this Child was the fulfilment of Isaias's prophecy. He could know it just as well as all the other angels could, but . . . he did not know it!

We must remember that whether we have to acquire our images from the objects themselves, or whether we enjoy divinely infused ideas, all knowledge of nature presupposes that God has not interfered miraculously with the ordinary course of nature. We all know that tomorrow the sun will rise, assuming that today will not turn out to be the last day. It is true that the dead never rise, but we are assuming that God does not intervene, as Jesus did in the case of Lazarus.

Whoever keeps his gaze fixed upon God will always leave a loophole open for this possibility, but those who have no eyes for God and for what is divine will be mistaken here. This is the solution of the problem.

An angel cannot make a mistake, he is always right: true! But the fallen angel *can* make a mistake, because his utterly spoilt nature will not take God into account; neither God whom he hates nor the supernatural which he despises. . . .

Satan knew Mary and knew that she was a virgin. But she was betrothed according to Jewish customs, which, as we have already said, granted all the essential rights of marriage to the betrothed. After a time she is about to have a child. Satan knows all this, but because his keen intelligence will not take God into account, it is misled, and he believes, wrongly, that Mary has renounced her virginity. So that Satan is mistaken because Mary's marriage conceals from him the supernatural character of Jesus's conception and birth.

§3. *The Brothers of the Lord*: It is a well-known fact that relationship is produced by marriage: the wife's kindred become the relations of her husband, and in the same way the husband's kindred become the wife's relations. And they

become related to the other partner in the marriage in the same degree in which they are kindred: e.g. father-in-law, sister-in-law, son- or daughter-in-law, etc. But relationship-in-law does not give rise to further relationships-in-law: so that there will not be any relationship-in-law between a man's family and his wife's, but only between a man's family and his wife, or between a wife's family and her husband.

We must now apply these facts to the relationships arising out of the valid marriage between Mary and Joseph. Mary's kindred become the relations-in-law of Joseph and Joseph's kindred become Mary's relations-in-law; but Joseph's possible relations-in-law will not become Mary's relations-in-law, nor will Mary's kindred and Joseph's kindred become relations-in-law of one another.

Let us begin with the brothers of the Lord. St Paul writes in his letter to the Galatians: 'I did not see any of the other apostles, except James, the Lord's brother' (Gal. i, 19). He cannot mean St James the Greater, who is the son of Zebedee and brother of St John. Therefore he must mean James the Less, bishop of Jerusalem.

This James has other brothers, for Mark speaks of another Mary: 'the mother of James the Less and of Joseph' (Mark xv, 40). Moreover we find in the lists of the apostles (Luke vi, 16; Acts i, 13) the apostle Jude, also called Thaddeus (Mark iii, 18; Matt. x, 3). He is described as the brother of James. Besides this, Jude says so himself in the beginning of his epistle: 'Jude, servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James'. In addition to these three brothers of the Lord, the apostle James the Less, the apostle Jude Thaddeus, and Joseph, and a certain Simon is also named (Matt. xiii, 15; Mark vi, 3).

We know the mother of at least two of these four brothers, James and Joseph; she is the above-mentioned Mary; and we also know the name of James's father, for he is called the son of Alphaeus in the lists of the apostles. But we may not conclude from this that these four were brothers in the sense in which we use the word in our language. It does not follow that the above-mentioned Mary was *also* mother of Jude and Simon, nor that Alphaeus was also the father of Jude,

Simon and Joseph. The accounts of the Passion will take us a step further. More or less close to the Cross of Jesus there stood some women:

John xix, 25	Matthew xxvii, 56	Mark xv, 40
Jesus's mother,	Mary Magdalene,	Mary Magdalen,
his mother's sister,	Mary the mother of	Mary the mother of
Mary the wife of	James and Joseph,	James the Less and
Cleophas, and	and the mother of the	Joseph, and Salome.
Mary Magdalene.	sons of Zebedee.	

It is generally accepted that Mary, mother of James and Joseph, is the woman whom John calls the wife of Cleophas, while the mother of the sons of Zebedee, mentioned by St Matthew, is said to be identical with the Salome in St Mark. St John mentions neither himself nor his mother, Salome, but he does refer to the presence of Jesus's own mother and of his mother's sister.

Does St John mean three or four women here? It seems improbable that he should mean four, for in that case this would be the only place in the Scriptures where a sister of the Blessed Virgin is mentioned without her name being given at the same time. Therefore it seems reasonable to assume that this woman is here called by her name: Mary, the wife of Cleophas.

No one need be surprised at St John giving her a different name from that attributed to her by the other Evangelists. In those days surnames were not used and ultimately one was named after some better-known member of the family: father, husband, brother or son. This is why Mark, who here calls her the mother of James the Less and Joseph, alludes to her in verse 47 as the mother of Joseph, and Luke calls her the mother of James (xxiv, 12). She might be called, just as it happened to occur, after one son or the other or both. St John can call her after her husband, father or brother, especially as he has already indicated her relationship to Jesus's Mother: the sister of his Mother. The addition of Cleophas is also important as showing in what sense she is the sister of the Mother of God. Considering the use made of the terms brother and sister (as we have already said, Abraham and Lot called one another brothers although

Abraham was Lot's uncle: Genesis xi, 28 and xiii, 8), all that really follows from St John's statement is that the two Marias were closely akin. They might have been sisters, sisters-in-law, etc.

The well-known confessor of the faith in the second century, Hegesippus, a converted Jew, was much interested in the family of our Lady, and, as Eusebius relates in his history of the Church (III: 11, 32 and II: 22), he is able to tell us that Cleophas was a brother of St Joseph, and the father of Simon and Jude. But it does *not* follow from this that Mary of Cleophas was his wife, for she, according to the Gospel, was mother of James who was son of Alpheus!

Here we are face to face with the difficulty that Jude and James are brothers but whereas Jude is the son of Cleophas, James is son of Alpheus.

An effort has been made to get over this by assuming that Mary was not Alpheus's wife, but his sister. In this case she must also be St Joseph's sister, and sister-in-law of the Blessed Virgin. The four brothers are then really two sets of brothers: Simon and Jude, James and Joseph, who are all cousins as well.

Another hypothesis is that Mary married twice: first Alpheus, then Cleophas. As wife of St Joseph's brother she is his sister-in-law, and related by marriage to the Blessed Virgin. One pair of brothers are step-brothers to the other.

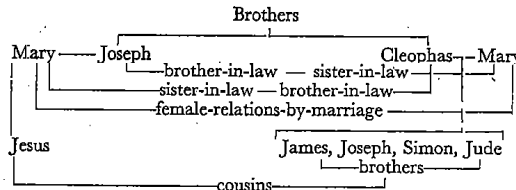
A third hypothesis proposes that Mary was Cleophas's daughter, niece therefore of St Joseph and niece-by-marriage of the Blessed Virgin. This makes her sister of Simon and Jude.

The fourth idea, probably the right one, is St Jerome's: Cleophas and Alpheus are the same person! There would be nothing extraordinary in his having two names. His own son Jude Thaddeus is an example. We have also Levi Matthew, Joseph Barnabas, and Saul Paul.

Moreover, this is not a question of one person with two names, but of two forms of a single name. The Aramaic name Chalpaj was translated into Greek in two ways. One, leaving out the guttural sound, gives Alphaios, just as the name of the minor prophet Chaggaj gave Aggaïos (Aggeus). Another way of putting an Aramaic name into Greek was

by joining it to a name already current in the Greek-speaking world. So, for instance, Jesus would become Jason, Saul Silas, Simeon Simon. One such current name was Kleopatros, usually shortened into Kleopas, as Antipatros was into Antipas. The Aramaic name was written without vowels and where the guttural was dropped, and Chalpej Alphai became Alpheus, that name could also become, by restoring the guttural sound, Cleophas.

The position is now much simplified.



and Mary, wife of Cleophas, Jesus's aunt, so long as we realise that this is nothing but a conventional title. They are not blood-relations of Jesus, for he is not the child of Joseph; nor are they Jesus's relations-by-marriage, though they have this relationship to his Mother.

The four 'brothers of the Lord' are blood-relations of St Joseph (he is their uncle, their father's brother), and related by marriage to the Mother of God (she is their aunt, as being wife of their own uncle), but they are in no sense relations of Jesus. According to Aramaic use they might be called brothers, and we should call them cousins, but in this particular case the names would mean nothing but courtesy titles which we may use because it is the custom to call the sons of our father's brother by this name.

CHAPTER 6

ASSUMED INTO HEAVEN

§1. *The Dogmatic Definition:* Since the solemn dogmatic definition of the Immaculate Conception, on December 8th, 1854, many petitions have been presented to the Holy See, begging, in consideration of the connection between original sin and death, that Mary's other privilege, which is accepted by all, namely her bodily assumption into heaven, should be solemnly proclaimed a dogma of the faith. These petitions came both from separate individuals and from the representatives of states and ecclesiastical provinces, and even from not a few of the Fathers of the 20th Oecumenical Council of the Vatican. When all these petitions had been collected (*Hentrich en Moos, adln, typis poliglottis, Vat. 1942*), and carefully examined, Pius XII, considering the importance and seriousness of the matter, judged it opportune to lay the following questions before the bishops of the whole world:

'Do you, Venerable Brethren, in accordance with your eminent wisdom and prudence, think that the bodily Assumption into Heaven of the Blessed Virgin can be proposed as a dogma of faith? Is it your desire, and that of your clergy and of your people?' (May 1, 1949.)

The Church can propose a truth to us as being divinely revealed in two ways: by her ordinary teaching authority in the unanimous preaching of her bishops, and by a solemn declaration. As a general rule it is not difficult to ascertain whether the whole Church teaches a definite truth, but it is not always so easy to answer the question whether she also proposes this truth unanimously as *divinely revealed*. By his direct and official interrogation of the bishops, the Pope desired to establish this clearly concerning Mary's bodily assumption into heaven.

To this interrogation 1,194 bishops (94 per cent of the total number) answered, and 98 per cent in the affirmative with regard to both questions; 2 per cent only were in doubt as to the answer to the second question, and in this 2 per cent are included 2 per cent of the total, who were all uncertain about the answer to the first question. Pius XII rightly judged then (*Munificentissimus Deus*) that those appointed by the Holy Ghost to govern God's Church as bishops (Acts xx. 28) 'replied in the affirmative to both questions with almost unanimous voice'. He then declared categorically:

'This common consent is of itself an absolutely certain proof, admitting of no error, that the privilege in question is a truth revealed by God, and is contained in that divine deposit which Christ entrusted to his Spouse to be faithfully guarded and infallibly proclaimed.'

For if, in spite of the bishops' almost unanimous agreement, we grant the hypothesis that Mary's assumption into heaven has not been revealed, it would be definitely established that both the teaching Church and the Church taught, that is to say the entire Church, was in error, and that therefore also the infallibility in questions of faith and morals promised to her by Christ was an illusion.

Therefore the Pope had firm ground, firm even as rock, under his feet when he granted the innumerable petitions, and proposed to the Church as doctrine by a solemn assertion of dogma, what she already accepted as divinely revealed truth. This solemn declaration runs as follows:

'We proclaim, declare and define it to be a dogma revealed by God that the Immaculate Mother of God, Mary ever Virgin—when the course of her earthly life was finished—was taken up body and soul into the glory of heaven. Wherefore, if anyone . . . should dare to deny . . . what we have defined, let him know that he has abandoned . . . the faith.' (*Munificentissimus Deus*.)

* * * * *

It is a point of faith, clearly formulated at the 14th Oecumenical Council of Lyons and at the 17th Oecumenical Council of Florence and expounded in detail by Benedict

XII (*Benedictus Deus*), that the souls of the faithful departed, that is to say, all who have left this world in a state of grace to be admitted into heaven, need not wait until the last day. Actually the souls of the saints of the Old Testament had been obliged to wait a long time for admission, because heaven was closed on account of original sin, so that no one could enter. But Jesus opened the gate of heaven again by his death—*O salutaris Hostia, quae coeli pandis ostium*—and at his glorious Ascension he took those souls with him into the heavenly Paradise.

Since then no soul has ever needed to wait. The particular judgment takes place as soon as a man dies: the souls of the damned go straight to hell; but the souls of those who die in a state of grace may go to heaven at once, unless there is temporal punishment to be undergone in expiation, which eventually comes about in the place of purification that we usually call purgatory (Denzinger, 464, 693, and esp. 530).

We must be careful to note that we are referring here to souls only, not to human beings. For man is dissolved by death: he is no more. His body becomes dust while the best part of his substance—but not more than a part—continues to exist until the day when by God's omnipotence the general resurrection will take place, and every soul, reunited to its own body, will again constitute the human being that was, and is no longer, but shall be again. . . .

In the proper sense of the word there are as few saints in heaven as there are human beings in purgatory. There are no human beings there, only human souls; complete human beings themselves will not be in heaven or in hell until after the general resurrection.

The dogma proclaimed concerning Mary refers to something special that cannot be said of any saint. The point is not whether Mary's soul is in heaven, but that Mary, with her whole personality, and thus with *soul and body*, has been assumed into heaven.¹ Christ conquered sin and death by

¹ The dogma of Mary's Assumption accentuates once again the significance of the human body, even with respect to blessedness: The soul by itself is not the human being, though it is the best part of one, but soul and body together constitute a human being.

his own death and any one who dies in communion by baptism with Christ shares with him the victory over sin and death. In spite of this, God has made a law, applicable to everyone, that the entire fruit of this conquest is not to be accorded to the just until the end of time. This is why the body of the just falls to dust, and will not be reunited to his soul until the last day. Now God, as we see from the declaration of the dogma, made an exception to the general law in Mary's case, just as he made an exception for her to the general law of original sin by her immaculate conception.

The papal definition does not consider in this the question whether Mary died or not before being assumed into heaven with soul and body. We shall come back to it again, but for the moment it will suffice to point out that if Mary died, her assumption will involve her resurrection also; if on the other hand she did not die, then she did not rise again but was taken up to heaven on the day fixed by God, which would have happened in Adam's case also if he had not sinned. . . .

§2. *The Earlier Witnesses:* The assumption of Mary is a historic event that actually took place in time. But it is in vain for us to try to determine this, for facts must always be put on record by eyewitnesses or by hearsay; otherwise if these events took place a long time ago we have to try to reconstitute them by weighing carefully everything that is left to us in the way of written witness. Both ways are as impossible in the case of the bodily assumption of Mary as they are in the case of Jesus's Ascension.

Holy Scripture relates Jesus's Ascension in detail and likewise mentions the Apostles as duly qualified witnesses of it. But even so, if we had asked the Apostles to give evidence of all they had been present at, they would have been able to witness under oath to having seen Jesus rising up into the air, and not returning. But they could have given no evidence as to the point under discussion: his going into heaven. Yet while they were staring up at the sky, angels appeared to them and said: 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand here looking heavenwards? He who has been taken from you into

heaven, this same Jesus, will come back to you in the same fashion, just as you have watched him going into heaven.' (Acts i, 11.) So that the Apostles are not witnesses for us to the historic fact of Jesus's Ascension: they could not be; but certainly they are witnesses for us to the *divine revelation* of that Ascension, which we also confess in our Creed.

Therefore it is even more impossible to produce witnesses of Mary's Assumption: no one but God and his angels saw her joyous entrance into eternal glory. And for that reason we need not be in any way perturbed because experts have not been able to agree among themselves about it, or because among the remains of writings that have come down to us from the first five or six centuries, there is practically no word of a bodily assumption, strictly speaking, of Mary into heaven. And, forgive the paradox; even if we had witnesses of this kind, we should not be able to use them. The historic fact of Mary's Assumption, just like Jesus's Ascension, escapes once and for all every control by eye-witnesses or hearsay. But as the Church has nevertheless, since the earliest times, been convinced of this special privilege belonging to the 'Blessed among women', the foundation of this conviction must be looked for either in the infallibility of the Church where matters of faith or morals are concerned, or else in the fact that it has pleased God to reveal his Mother's privilege to us. We know *now* that God has in fact revealed this truth, but in the past that was not established, and nevertheless the Church accepted it.

The infallibility of the Church in matters concerning faith and morals extends also to the so-called solemn canonisations, i.e. the formal recognition of the fact that the soul of one of her children has gone to the glory of heaven. Hereby the Church presents the life of such a saint to us as a pattern and ideal of Christian life: if she could make a mistake here, if she could err in this, she would be leading us also along the wrong way: and it was not for this that Jesus founded her. Therefore, just as canonisation assures us of the truth that the soul of this or that Christian, e.g. Maria Goretti, has been taken to heaven, in the same way, for many centuries the Church had been certain of the truth that the

Mother of God had been assumed into heaven with both body and soul, although no one was yet aware that a divinely revealed truth was concerned in this. And the Church expressed this certainty through the liturgy of the feast of the Assumption, solemn and universal, and celebrated year after year with increasing devotion. For this concerns the groundwork of our faith, the general law of redemption from the corruption of death on the last day, so that the Church, in virtue of the infallibility given to her, had to be immune from error on this point. And thus it was possible to find, up to the Middle Ages and later, great men in the Church who confessed this conviction held by God's Church, while at the same time they did not brand ignorance of it as heresy, but as a sin of temerity and pride, because it involved running counter to the whole Church from sheer self-conceit. The general certainty as to Mary's privilege was really a result of belief in the infallibility of the Church, whereas now the prerogative itself is solemnly presented to us as object of our faith, and we now have divine certitude of faith.

The apostolic constitution of the declaration of the dogma quotes, remarkably enough, the Doctor of the Church, St Peter Canisius (*d.* 1597), from the time of the Reformation:

'This belief has now prevailed for some centuries and is so firmly fixed in the minds of the faithful and has so commended itself to the universal Church that those who deny that the body of Mary was taken up into heaven should not be given a patient hearing but should everywhere be dismissed in derision as contentious and utterly temerarious persons, whose spirit is heretical rather than Catholic.' (*De Maria Virgine*, n. 36.)

But there is yet more:

'According to the apostolic constitution, ever since remote times down through the course of the ages, there appear witnesses, indications and traces of this common faith of the Church, and this same faith becomes manifest with ever greater clearness.' (n. 13.)

Then the constitution itself gives a list of these elements: the churches dedicated to God in honour of the Virgin Mary assumed into heaven; the picture portraying this triumph; the cities, dioceses and provinces which chose Mary as their Patroness under this very title; the religious institutes which

have been named after it; the fourteenth mystery of the Rosary, the recital of which is so greatly recommended by the Church herself; above all, however, the liturgical celebration of the feast.

The Pope adds the very notable proposition:

'The Liturgy is not the mother of the Catholic faith, but rather its child. Wherefore the holy Fathers and great Doctors of the Church . . . did not draw this doctrine of the Assumption from the Liturgy as from an original source, but rather spoke of the doctrine as something well known and accepted by the faithful; they explained its teaching more lucidly; expounded its nature and content with more profound arguments, and above all put with special clarity what the liturgical books had often merely touched upon briefly and succinctly.' (n. 20.)

And as a matter of fact, we see how the Fathers, Doctors and theologians endeavoured to compare this privilege of Mary's with other prerogatives and even with the divine truths conveyed to us in Sacred Scripture.

From the time of St John Damascene (*d.* 753), who was pre-eminently the great herald of tradition concerning this truth (n. 21) onwards, we find the following privileges of Mary's brought forward as answer to the question regarding the reason for her bodily assumption:

Mary was taken bodily up to heaven because:

1. She is God's Mother.
St John Damascene, Migne: *Patres Graeci*, vol. 96, col. 716 (abbreviated: MG 96: 716); St Robert Bellarmine, *Conc.* 40; Peter Cell., ML 202: 850; Savonarola, Sermon 18.
2. Mary's flesh and Jesus's flesh are one.
St Bernardine of Siena, *In assumpt.* 3: 1; St Antoninus of Florence, *Summa Theol.* p. IV tit. 5c. 43 §3; Bl. Hildebrand of Turin, ML 171: 630; Peter Bless., ML 207: 664; Suarez, *de Incarn.* p. II disp. 20, sect. 2; Nicholas of Lyra, *Postillae maiores*; Louis of Granada, *Med.* c. 24; St Francis de Sales, Sermon, August 15, 1602.
3. Mary's body is united to the principle of life.
St Modestus, MG 86: 3292; St Andrew of Crete, MG 97: 1081; St John Damascene, loc. cit.; St Germanus of Constantinople, MG 98: 348; Peter Bless., ML 207: 662.
4. Mary is a virgin.
St John Damascene, loc. cit.; St Anselm, ML 158: 966; Hugh of St Victor, ML 177: 807; Peter Bless., loc. cit.;

- St Bernardine of Siena, loc. cit.; St Antoninus of Florence, loc. cit.; St Robert Bellarmine, loc. cit.
5. Mary is unstained by sin.
Peter Cell., loc. cit.; St John Damascene, loc. cit.; St Bernardine of Siena, loc. cit.; St Robert Bellarmine, loc. cit.; Theodore Stud., MG 99: 724; John Maurop., MG 120: 1098; Suarez, loc. cit.
 6. Mary is Blessed among women.
St John Damascene, loc. cit.; Bl. Hildebrand of Turin, loc. cit.; St Bernardine of Siena, loc. cit.; St Thomas Aquinas, *Expos. Salut. Angel.*
 7. Mary is the New Eve.
St Germanus of Constantinople, MG 98: 345; St Anselm, loc. cit.; Peter Cell., loc. cit.; St Bernardine of Siena, loc. cit.; St Alphonsus Liguori, *Glories of Mary*, p. 2, §2, c.8.
 8. Other saints too enjoyed this privilege.
Suarez, loc. cit.
 9. Mary's body is nowhere to be found, and neither are there any relics of it.
Nicholas of Lyra, loc. cit.; St Antoninus of Florence, loc. cit.; St Bernardine of Siena, loc. cit.; St Robert Bellarmine, loc. cit.; Absalom of Sprinckirsbach, ML 211: 256.

Even at the first glance we perceive a great difference between the reasons listed; and very specially between the last two and the seven preceding them. For the last two start from a comparison with other saints, and apply the principle: what others received, was granted to Mary also. So that if other saints were assumed into heaven, then Mary was also. If the relics of other saints are honoured, then those of Mary should, if they are still on earth, also be venerated.

The force of the eighth proof is extremely weak, because it depends entirely on the special interpretation, according to which the dead, of whom St Matthew writes 'the graves were opened, and many bodies arose out of them, bodies of holy men gone to their rest: who, after his rising again, left their graves and went into the holy city, where they were seen by many' (Matt. xxvii, 52-53), were supposed not to have died again, but to have accompanied Jesus at his ascension. . . .

The last proof is stronger: for it is a tangible fact that the relics of other saints have been venerated, while absolutely

no trace exists of veneration being paid to relics of the Mother of God. One might have presumed that God, just because Mary was considered as incontestably the greatest of all saints, was keeping his Mother's body hidden, as he had done that of his friend Moses, lest it should induce the just converted heathen to relapse into idolatry (Deut. xxxiv, 6). But even supposing that this might have been necessary in the early days of Christianity, it does not explain why God, when the danger was past, did not reveal where these precious relics were: after all, he did it in the case of other saints.

St Bernardine of Siena puts it as follows:

'As God revealed in this way where the bodies and relics of other saints were hidden, as we know in the cases of St Stephen, St Gervase and St Protase, and as is told in the lives of many others; would he not have done the same for those holy relics and that very holy body (of Mary), so that we might show them due honour and veneration? Therefore this is a token and a proof that they did not remain on earth.'

Here we have to do with a wonderfully convenient argument, but it cannot be called a proof. The reasoning is based on the principle already mentioned: what others received, Mary received too, which principle, it is true, holds good in general, but is not, for all that, true in every case. What was given to others, was given to Mary also. True on the whole, but it is not always true without exception, that Mary *formally* received all that also, although she lacked nothing of the perfection of others. Thus, Mary received all perfections given to others by the priesthood, but she was never explicitly a priestess. All the splendour shed on others by the veneration of their relics, Mary must enjoy too, but it need not be explicitly in the veneration of her relics: in any case she possessed that splendour to an eminent degree, since we render her *hyperdulia* (1, 1, §6), a veneration rising far above that which we pay to the other saints. And this disposes of any necessity for proof.

None of the first three arguments possesses more than the value of a convention, although they differ from one another in weight.

1. Mary was assumed into heaven because *she is the Mother of God*.

Her divine motherhood is in fact the ultimate end towards which all the graces and privileges granted to her converge: they all serve the same purpose, that of raising Mary in a manner worthy of its importance to the dignity of the Mother of God's only-begotten Son, as was said in the introduction. If therefore the purpose of a thing is its measure, the ultimate end is the most perfect measure, and therefore every question about any privilege of Mary's whatsoever may always be answered as follows: because she is the Mother of God; and apart from that, we can always give all such questions the final, uncreated reason for everything: because God is good. But we human beings who are able to see quite well the necessary connection between a definite result and its immediate cause, have more difficulty in perceiving such a necessary connection between this result and its more distant cause. Thus, while a more immediate cause of the assumption can be a cause of knowledge of the assumption for us, because the connection is evident to us, the ultimate and deepest cause of the same assumption may be a cause of knowledge that offers no certainty because the connection between the two is hidden from us. Is it utterly unthinkable that, after her death, the Mother of God might have been taken up to heaven in her soul only, to wait there like all the other children of Eve for the resurrection of the body on the last day? If this is really unthinkable, then, and then alone, the knowledge of the truth that Mary is truly the Mother of God will suffice to prove to us her bodily assumption with complete certainty. And if we argue further from the data of revelation given us by the book of Ecclesiasticus (iii, 13): 'for the glory of a man is from the honour of his father, and a mother without honour is the disgrace of the son', then the divine motherhood necessitates everything needful for preventing the slightest spot on the ineffable honour of the Godhead. The Bull of declaration of the dogma seems to attach special significance to this reason. Nevertheless I shrink from calling this a compelling proof without further confirmation.

2. Mary was assumed into heaven because *her flesh and Jesus's flesh are one.*

This argument must not be reduced without further preface to that drawn from her motherhood. We are specially stressing the *oneness*, so that the Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus are not really complete as long as the body of Mary has not come back to life and been assumed into heaven. This *oneness* does not arise from the motherhood as such, but from the special motherhood of Mary, who gave her Child all he needed, whereas other children do not depend on their mother alone but have a father also.

Nevertheless this story, comparatively generally accepted though it be, is open to criticism. For the conditions of everything that comes into existence should be measured rather by the instrumental cause that arranges the matter than by the matter itself, which puts off the existing arrangement precisely under the influence of the instrumental cause and so loses its existing substantial form. By the same action of the instrumental cause new arrangements begin to exist in the matter (by which the old ones are replaced), and they result in a quite different substantial form, and thus cause a numerical distinction.

In forming Jesus's body the Holy Ghost withdrew a part, set it in an entirely new order and infused into it by creation Jesus's soul. Hence the union between Mary's body and that of Jesus is not numerical, not absolute, but concerns nothing but its origin. What Jesus has belonged *originally* to Mary. It is true that at the conception of her Son, Mary contributed her maternal co-operation, but the holy Ghost was nevertheless the real instrumental cause. But in the conception of Mary herself, parents, whom we call Joachim and Anna, were the instrumental cause, which provided the matter and also arranged it, so that there is something to be said for the view that when *oneness* is mentioned, there is a greater *oneness* between Mary's body and those of her parents, than between her body and that of her Son.

3. Mary was assumed into heaven because *her body is united with the principle of life itself.*

The weight of this argument must not be sought for in the fact that Mary bore God under her heart for nine months, for what should be said in that case of a chalice that had

contained the Blessed Sacrament for many years, even centuries, or, if it is preferred, what might be said of Christians who receive Holy Communion every day of a human life? Might they find in this a safeguard against the corruption of death? The holy Fathers of olden times teach indeed that by Holy Communion *the seed of resurrection* is sown in us, but Jesus himself promised that: 'The man who eats my flesh and drinks my blood enjoys eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.' (John vi, 55.)

So that we must emphasise that this bearing of the principle of life must be understood of the maternal gestation by which Mary obtained these ineffable bonds of relationship with the divine Persons (1, 1, §2). These relations are personal. And as a human being is composed of both body and soul, Mary's maternal relations must bind even her body permanently to the principle of life borne by her. Therefore it is not fitting, but on the contrary shocking, that this body should remain in the bonds of death.

4. Mary was assumed into heaven, because *she was a virgin, especially at her parturition.*

This argument, as well as the following one, differs entirely from those preceding them. For here we are dealing with true deductions from a revealed truth, which lead therefore to a theological scientific conclusion.

But we should get no further than a convention if we were to state the arguments as follows. Granted the revealed fact that God wrought such unheard-of miracles to preserve Mary's virginity at the conception of Jesus (2, 4, §4), it is not possible to accept that he would not also do what is less. For preservation from the corruption of death requires no new miracle, but merely anticipates the already certain future resurrection.

The weakness of this argument is obvious: for here we are considering an operation of God's free and sovereign will, which may do this and leave that undone for reasons hidden from us. Hence this argument, enunciated in this way, however alluring it may seem to be, cannot lead us to certainty. So we must set to work differently.

If a man had not sinned, every mother would have

brought her children into the world painlessly, from which it is at once clear that virginity is not an indispensable requirement for painless parturition. But conversely, no virgin parturition is thinkable which did not offer protection from the pains of childbirth. For if the maternal womb remains closed—and this is the only way for virginity to be inviolate—then the result is removed with the cause of pain. Mary's virginity has therefore been looked upon at all times as the basis of the teaching that she brought her Child into the world without pain. And from this we shall argue as follows:

For the sin of Adam is only *one* sin, but it may be looked at from different points of view. We saw, after all, how in the Eve-Mary parallel, the Fathers opposed precisely the manifold aspects of that sin, its disobedience, incredulity, pride, to the various aspects of Mary's action, i.e. her obedience, faith, and humility. In the nature of things, this *one* sin demands *one* punishment, which however, like the sin itself, will have different aspects corresponding with those of the sin.

So that if Mary, on account of her virginity, is immune from pain, especially that caused by parturition, this shows that the other aspect of the punishment did not apply to her either: 'Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.' (Gen. iii, 19).

There remains but one step more to be taken: if Mary is safeguarded from the chains of death, her body is united with her soul which is contemplating God, and so she has been assumed into heaven with body and soul.

5. Mary was assumed into heaven, because *she is unstained by sin.*

With this argument also we have to be on our guard against an attractive, but not conclusive, inference. For we may not deduce her assumption into heaven without more ado from her immaculate conception, although both are very closely connected, as being two results of one and the same cause. We shall return to this.

In order to make the argument entirely conclusive, we reasoned thus: considered in the abstract, the tendency of

the emotions to rebel against the higher powers may be called the natural condition of man, but must nevertheless in the concrete order (the only one with which we are concerned, since the so-called natural state has never really existed), be considered exclusively as punishment for sin, as God took back the rectification as punishment for sin (2. 3. §2); for in this way the falling to dust—however natural it may be as seen in the abstract—can be understood only as punishment for sin in this concrete order.

Now, however, to punish someone who is perfectly sinless is utterly in contradiction with God's justice. Yahweh himself tells the prophet Ezechiel indignantly: 'Strange that a proverb should be current in Israel: the fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are being set on edge. As I am a living God, the Lord says, this proverb shall be current in Israel no more. What, is not every soul at my disposal, father and son alike; it is the guilty soul that must die.' (Ezech. xviii, 2-4.)

Thus if Mary is immaculate, we may not ascribe to her anything that would have to be designated exclusively as punishment in this concrete order of salvation, and consequently we deduce her assumption into heaven from her utter sinlessness.

§3. *The Sources of the Revelation:* The attitude of the Church towards Mary's Assumption into heaven, as it was manifested in past ages, would never have been possible if the sources of divine revelation had told of that assumption in as many words as they used for Jesus's Ascension. But Holy Scripture has nothing to tell of that historical event, and when the Fathers, from the seventh century onwards, speak of it plainly, they do not, even then, present it as a truth revealed by God, which it would be heresy to deny. So that neither Scripture nor tradition teaches us the divine revelation of Mary's Assumption.

But now, however, the Church has expressed herself clearly: Mary's Assumption is a truth revealed by God, the denial of which leads to loss of the faith. Therefore it is absolutely necessary that it should exist in the sources of

divine revelation. But it is sufficient for the sources of revelation to contain this truth *included in other revealed truths* in which it is wrapped as it were implicitly. Then the Church, led by the Holy Spirit, 'who will guide you into all truth' (John xvi, 13), can become more and more conscious of the treasures hidden in the pledge entrusted to her by the Holy Ghost, for: 'the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send on my account, will in his turn make everything plain, and recall to your minds everything I have said to you'. (John xiv, 26.)

In their search for the connection between Mary's Assumption and the other revealed truths, the Fathers have scored a winning shot here also, for the two remaining reasons for the Assumption are likewise of extremely ancient date: with the sixth reason we read the name of St John Damascene, and with the seventh that of St Germanus of Constantinople (d. 733).

For the force of these two reasons is really unsurpassed, as here we have not to do with fresh reasonings leading to theological conclusions, so that the result is no longer under the influence of revealed truth alone, but also under that of human reasoning, and a chain is never stronger than its weakest link; here we have to deal merely with explaining the terms, so that as soon as we grasp the import of these, the truth of Mary's Assumption is seen to be contained in them.

Proofs have no other object than to throw light on a proposition that is not of itself clear. Thus if we grasp a definite truth at once, then all proof is superfluous, even impossible. For what is already plain, cannot be made plainer. This is always the case when what is stated in a proposition belongs to the definition of the subject, on condition, of course, that we know the import of the terms used. Anyone can see, without more ado, that a whole must always be greater than its part, that one cannot affirm and deny something at one and the same time, that one should strive after good and avoid evil. But not everyone can grasp without further effort that the human soul is immortal, and the reason is that not everyone would see that the said

'immortal' belongs to the definition of the subject 'human soul'.

It is the same here: under guidance of the Spirit who leads to the full truth, the Church becomes conscious of the import of the terms in which God has revealed definite truths, and then she perceives that the correct understanding of one truth includes another truth as well, so that the first is not entirely comprehensible unless the second is understood with it. The truths of which we are thinking here, we have met already when we were treating of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception.

6. Mary was assumed into heaven, because *she is the Blessed among women*.

With this St John Damascene again scores a winner. We have said that in his Bull *Ineffabilis Deus*, Pius IX, at the request of the bishops, included the sources in which he saw the revelation of the Immaculate Conception given by God. He pointed to Luke i, 28-49, the greeting of the angel and that of Elizabeth. With all tradition he understood the divine oracle in the sense that Mary had never been subject to any curse, but shared with her Son eternal blessedness. Therefore Mary was never tainted with original sin, for had she been, her blessedness would have been interrupted and she herself would have been subject to the curse. This divine oracle about her blessings cannot therefore be quite understood unless her freedom from original sin is seen as included in it. But this is just as true of her freedom from the corruption of death, which was precisely the old curse of Paradise: 'Thou art dust, and unto dust thou shalt return'. (Gen. iii, 19). Thus if it is a divinely revealed truth that Mary is free from every curse, this will include that she is also free from what Scripture itself presents to us as a divine curse.

7. Mary was assumed into heaven, because *she is the New Eve*.

Just as St John Damascene in quoting Mary's blessing was at one with the oracle given in Holy Scripture, in which Mary's privilege of bodily assumption is implicit, in the same way also the aged St Germanus, Patriarch of Constantinople, came upon the truth revealed in divine tradition in which

this privilege is also included. Here too the main point is the Church's becoming conscious of the deep import of the truth revealed by God. According to the teaching generally received all over Christendom in the second century, Mary is the New Eve who co-operated with Jesus, the New Adam, in the work of salvation by carrying on the struggle against Satan, in order to restore what had been ruined by Adam and Eve. At the declaration of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, Pius IX appealed to this doctrine, for with tradition itself, he saw it foretold in Genesis (Gen. iii, 15). One hundred and thirteen Fathers of the 20th Oecumenical Council of the Vatican thought the following should be added to their petition for the raising of the Assumption to the status of a dogma:

'According to the teaching of the Apostle in Romans v, 8; I Corinthians xv, 24, 26, 54, 57; Hebrews ii, 14-15 and in other places also, the triumph won by Christ over Satan, the ancient serpent, consists in a triple victory over sin and its fruits, i.e. concupiscence and death; in addition the Mother of God is represented in Genesis iii, 15 as the special partner of her Son's triumph. We may add to this the unanimous feeling of the Holy Fathers; and on all these counts, we do not doubt that in the oracle mentioned above the same Virgin is prefigured in the splendour of her triple conquest. Therefore it is foretold in that place that as she was to win by her immaculate conception a special triumph over sin, and by her virgin motherhood over concupiscence, she would also overcome the third enemy, death, by rising again speedily as her Son had done.' (Cone. Vat. doc. eccl., Paderborn, 1879, p. 106.)

Sin, concupiscence and permanent death, in the Fathers' view, are all in conflict with this divine oracle, as it is understood by divine tradition according to the Pope's judgment in the exercise of his ordinary teaching authority. Thus in the same way as the immaculate conception and the subjection of Mary's emotive life to her higher faculties are revealed in the proto-evangelium, that is to say, as component parts of the whole history, Mary's privilege of being assumed into heaven is also included in it.

We cannot therefore be surprised—we shall rather be overjoyed—at finding the following words written by Pius XII in his Apostolic Constitution, *Munificentissimus Deus*: 'Above all we ought to mention that from the second century onwards

the Fathers thought of the Virgin Mary as the *New Eve*, who, although subject to the New Adam, was still most closely united with him in the struggle against the infernal enemy. This struggle, as foretold in Genesis, was to be crowned by the most complete victory over sin and death, two things that were always joined together in the writings of the Apostle of the Gentiles. Hence, as the glorious resurrection of Christ from the grave was an essential part and *even the triumphant final sign of this victory*, so too the struggle that the Blessed Virgin endured together with her Son was to end in the glorification of her virginal body. For, as the same Apostle says, "when . . . this mortal nature has put on immortality, the saying of Scripture will come true, that is written: Death is swallowed up in victory".

* * * * *

But, speaking frankly, does it not look as though these two arguments prove too much and therefore prove nothing at all? For Mary, as we said, was never subject to any conquest by Satan. Otherwise her victory over him would not have been a full victory but only an eventual one. She is not subject to any curse, for otherwise her blessedness would have been interrupted, and would no longer have been an eternal blessedness. But in these arguments, are we not making a mistake in taking defeat by Satan and the divine curse too narrowly, and as though it were limited to the corruption of death, while death itself is a victory for Satan and a divine curse?

Actually, it is written: 'But since the devil's envy brought death into the world, they follow him that take him for their master.' (Wis. ii, 24-25). And also: 'We can eat the fruit of any tree in the garden except the tree in the middle of it; it is this God had forbidden us to eat or even to touch on pain of death.' (Gen. iii, 2-3.)

Here we must also reflect that Jesus is indeed the complete conqueror of the devil, but that he did not win this victory by force of arms, but by rendering entire satisfaction to God for our sins. For the best reparation is to bear *voluntarily* the punishment imposed on the offence. The Son of God had taken human nature of his own accord, and so might have adopted it in the same unpolluted state in which Adam possessed it, thus without any capacity to suffer. But this did

not correspond to the purpose of the Incarnation. Wherefore St Thomas Aquinas writes as follows:

'As therefore the Son of God incarnate came into the world to satisfy for the sin of men; for one satisfies for another by taking on himself the punishment due to the other . . . it was therefore in pursuance of the end of the Incarnation that he took upon himself such penalties in our stead, according to the words of Isaias (liii, 4): Yet it is he who carried the weight of our iniquities and bore our miseries.' (III, 14.1.)

Jesus thus triumphed indeed over Satan, but he did this by making satisfaction for our sins, and therefore he took upon himself enough of our punishment for that, without however endangering his conquest. Therefore he took upon himself suffering and death as well as hunger, thirst and weariness, but not the corruption of death. For, says St Thomas:

'Had his body suffered corruption or fallen into dust, this would rather have been to the disadvantage of the salvation of man, for men would not have believed that divine strength was active in him. And therefore Psalm xxix, v. 10 makes him complain: "How will my blood profit thee, if I go down into the grave?" as though he would say: "If my body becomes corrupt the value of the blood I have shed will be lost".' (III, 51.3 ad 1 um.)

Thus his triumph over Satan would have been lost if his body had become corrupt. For this he suffered hunger (Matt. iv, 2) thirst (John xix, 28) weariness (John iv, 6) suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried (twelve articles of Faith) but before the corruption of death could touch his body he returned to life, for it is written: 'Thou wilt not allow thy faithful servant to see corruption' (Ps. xv, 10). In this way Jesus triumphed, certainly over death which as the Lamb of God he took away from the world by his life and death, over death which he vanquished by his glorious resurrection; and over Satan whom he conquered by liberating us from sin and death.

But if Mary is appointed by God and by Christ to be the latter's special ally in the complete conquest of Satan, it is also just that she should share with him in everything that contributes to victory: that is why she suffered hunger and was tired, for according to Luke ii, 24 and Leviticus xii, 8, she was a poor woman. She stood by the cross of Jesus

(John xix, 25) where the sword of grief pierced her heart (Luke ii, 35), so that Benedict XV writes of her:

'She suffered so greatly with her suffering and dying Son, that she died as it were with him; she renounced so thoroughly her mother's rights to him, and offered her Son as far as it depended on her, to appease God's justice, that we may truly say of her that she redeemed humanity with Christ.' (*Inter Sodalicia*.)

On account of all this, Mary's victory requires that she should be unassailable by the corruption of death: she who had brought the incarnate Son of God into the world could not remain bound by the chains of death. But this does not include immunity from death itself. On the contrary the 'triumphant final sign of Christ's victory' (*Munificentissimus Deus*) was not to be denied to Mary: she too was to vanquish Satan by victory over sin by suffering and death, and win victory over death by a glorious resurrection from the grave.

Nevertheless there have been, and indeed still are, theologians who have actually drawn the following conclusion from the difficulty: Mary was not only not subject to the corruption of death, but not even to death either. The fact of Mary's death cannot be proved from history. And although Jerusalem claims to possess her grave, Ephesus makes the same claim. Both cannot be right, but it is quite possible that both may be wrong. Even an appeal to the general law of death is vain, for just as God excepted Mary from the general law of original sin, he *could* have done the same about the general law of death. Yet my opinion is, that on account of the 'triumphant final sign of Christ's victory', Mary died also. And that this is the feeling of the Church—even though in declaring the dogma, the Pope left the question of Mary's death aside—is clear from the ancient *Sacramentarium Gregorianum*, in which there occurs on the feast of Mary's Assumption a collect, maintained in the Dominican, Trappist and Norbertine Rites, and also quoted in the Bull *Munificentissimus Deus* from the 'same Sacramentary sent by Adrian I, our predecessor of immortal memory, to the Emperor Charlemagne'. This collect runs as follows:

According to the Papal constitution:

According to the Dominican rite:

This feastday, Lord, is venerable to us

on which the holy Mother of God underwent temporal death, but could not be kept down by the fetters of death, she who begot your incarnate Son, our Lord.

May we receive help towards salvation, Lord, through the venerable feast of this day, on which the holy Mother of God underwent temporal death, but could not be held down by the bonds of death, she who brought into the world your incarnate Son, our Lord.

In several of the other quotations given in the apostolic constitution, the feeling of the Fathers and Doctors about Mary's death and resurrection is quite clearly shown.

The 'triumphant final sign' of Jesus's victory also needs to be correctly interpreted: it does not refer to the fact as such, that our Lord died and came to life again, for in that case we might justly say: Mary shares in his victory over death, by escaping herself from its grasp. Indeed, just as she was redeemed in a more exalted way than we were, by being preserved from original sin from which we were set free, in the same way she can triumph over death in a more exalted way, not by rising from the dead, but by being preserved from death.

No! Christ's resurrection from the dead is the triumphal final sign of his victory for quite other reasons. For he died for our sins: if then God cancels this death, it can mean nothing but that the sins too are cancelled, i.e. forgiven. And that is why Jesus's resurrection is the guarantee on which our faith in the forgiveness of sins is based. Therefore St Paul writes:

'If Christ has not risen, our preaching is groundless, and your faith, too, is groundless . . . and those who have gone to their rest in Christ have been lost.' (I Cor. xv, 14-19.)

If Jesus's glorious resurrection from the grave is 'an essential part and even the triumphal sign' of his victory, because it includes the divine guarantee of the fact that his passion was not in vain for us, and if Mary is united with him as the New Eve with the New Adam, in an uninterrupted collaboration of life and labour, so that the words of the

prophet apply to both alike (Ps. xxx, 11), 'my life is all grief and my years are but sighs' (*Ad diem illum*), can this triumphal final sign, this divine guarantee be refused to her?

The truth of Mary's Assumption is a divinely revealed truth: that was already an established fact before the declaration of the dogma, being already proved by the unanimity of the Church, the teaching and the taught, manifested in the answers of the bishops to the Pope's questions. But this divine revelation is seen now to be evident in the sources of this revelation: Holy Scripture and divine Tradition.

The Papal document also gives this summary before the actual definition:

'Therefore, since the universal Church which the Spirit of Truth actively and infallibly directs in perfecting the knowledge of revealed truths, has manifested in various ways down the centuries her belief, and since the Bishops of the entire world almost unanimously petition that the truth of the bodily Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary into heaven be defined as a dogma of divine and Catholic faith . . .

'Which truth is founded on Sacred Scripture, is deeply embedded in the minds of the faithful, has received the approval of liturgical worship from the earliest times, is perfectly in keeping with the rest of revealed truth, and has been lucidly developed and explained by the studies, learning and wisdom of theologians. . . . We deem that the moment preordained by the plan of divine Providence has now arrived for us to proclaim solemnly this glorious privilege of the Virgin Mary.'

PART III

THE COMPLETE OVERTHROW OF SATAN

CHAPTER I

CO-OPERATION WITH JESUS

§1. *The Manner of this Co-operation:* It forms part of the Church's treasure of faith, explicitly handed down from the earliest times, that Mary is the cause of our salvation, not only because the Saviour was born of her, but because, as the New Eve (1, 2), she contributed to it by her own actions. All Catholics are therefore agreed on this point that Mary was Jesus's collaborator, but theologians are divided in their opinions as to the manner of this collaboration.

Two phases are to be distinguished in the work of redemption: that of Jesus's life on earth which is called the phase of the winning of grace, of objective salvation, or better still, of general causality of salvation. The other phase can then be called that of the distribution of grace, the subjective redemption, but it might be better to call it the phase of application of the general causality of salvation.

Everyone accepts Mary's co-operation with respect to this latter phase, inasmuch as by her powerful intercession, she is called: distributor of grace under Jesus. As regards the earthly period, all are agreed that she co-operated with Jesus, by:

- (a) meriting the putting forward (in time) of the Incarnation,
- (b) meriting to be the instrument of the Incarnation,
- (c) freely accepting to be the mother of the Saviour,
- (d) bearing, bringing up and preparing Jesus for his sacrifice,
- (e) enduring with him the suffering by which he saved us.

Many qualify her collaboration on the whole as a remote co-operation, while others hold that this is too general and needs to be defined. Evidently one must first distinguish

between mediate and immediate, and then divide the latter into proximate and remote co-operation. When we apply this, we see with regard to points (a) and (b), remote, mediate co-operation; on the contrary, with regard to points (c) and (d) we find proximate, mediate co-operation. The same theologians consider with regard to point (e), that there is no mediate, but immediate co-operation to be found. In the nature of things the disputed point lies between the two views. Those who do not accept an immediate co-operation base their refusal on the established point of doctrine, that Jesus redeemed Mary also. To his merits she owes the grace of her Immaculate Conception and all that is given with it or results from it. As she herself is one of the saved, it seems impossible that she could herself co-operate in that salvation.

* * * * *

In examining the constituents of human personality, it is a mistake to begin with the mystery of the Incarnation. There we find an individual human nature that is not a person. Then we start *a priori* from the question: what must be added to the individual human nature to make it a person? And we find ourselves on the wrong track. One should not begin with the difficulty; one wants to end with it. When the proposition has been dealt with, one will be obliged to answer the objections to it, or, if some difficulty cannot be resolved, one must prove that, even though it may be a serious objection, it does not upset the proposition.

This problem is such a case. We should not begin with the difficulty that, as Mary herself has been saved, the teaching authorities must mean something else by what they say: that will take us off the track.

This is all the more true if we write:

'That co-operation with Christ may not, in view of the explicit teaching of the Magisterium, be reduced to a mere co-operation in the application of the redemption to us, in the sense that on Calvary Mary merited no more than the application of Christ's graces to us, or that she was to become distributor of graces.'¹

¹ Chr. Oomen, C.S.S.R. *The Problem of Mary's Co-operation with Christ on the Cross*. (Ned. Kath. Stemmen, 1947.)

In order to make the author's meaning clearer, I shall quote a further passage:

'Mary's compassion with Christ was entirely in the order of applied redemption. So, in this same order, the Patriarchs contributed to our salvation by their longing for the coming of the Saviour, and Abraham merited the grace of faith for us. (Gal. iii, 7-9.) While Christ was dying on the Cross John stood beneath it with his mother. I am assuming that John surmised something of the meaning of this death, and if so, his compassion for Christ also contributed to our salvation. But on account of Mary's exceptional union with Christ in the order of applied salvation, her compassion with him as she stood by the Cross is very specially constituted. Her activity alone includes, like that of Christ, the whole of salvation. By her *fiat* and her compassion, she is the mother of life for all men. Christ came to atone for us; but first God asked for Mary's *fiat*. She gave it freely and it was completed by her dolorous compassion on Calvary. Here the activity of the New Eve surpasses that of all who collaborate in order to bring about the redemption. Therefore in the order of applied salvation, which embraces both meriting and distributing grace, she is an order by herself.'

The purport of this passage is clear:

1. Mary is in the same order as all those who collaborate in the application of salvation, as Abraham did, who merited the grace of faith for us, or as St John did.
2. Nevertheless Mary is not to be put on the same level as these without further comment, for she had something that those others had not: she merited not only, as they did, a definite grace, but *all* salvation for *all*.
3. The order of applied salvation includes not only distribution of graces, but also meriting them.

To begin with this last point: in the order of purely applied salvation, meriting grace is certainly present. Any one of us can *earn* for himself increase in sanctifying grace, with all the virtues and gifts it implies, and even eternal life, and that even *de condigno* while we can also to a moderate extent merit for others. But we are not obliged to mean merits only by the word 'earn', it also includes prayer. So that we can obtain the light of faith for the heathen, conversion for sinners and perseverance for the just. And even more the saints with God in heaven obtain for us by their petitions

the grace merited by Christ, this purely in the order of applied salvation.

Grace is a supernatural spiritual power or quality which does not lie in treasuries ready for use, but is made by God, who in doing so employs or not according to his good pleasure, whatever instruments he wills. But when we say that Mary is the distributor of graces, we do not mean to emphasise in the first place that God uses Mary as an instrument in order to produce these graces, for very few people accept that God would do that as a rule. What we all do mean by this distribution is, that she obtains for us here and now by begging for it what was then merited on Calvary. In other words; if we remain in the order of purely applied salvation, then obtaining, earning, getting by another's intercession and distributing graces, are merely nuances in the expression of one and the same thing. In essence and in fact all that is nothing but the application to us here and now of the general salvific causality of Jesus's redemptive suffering.

Whether Abraham obtained for us the grace of faith (but, if so, this grace alone and no other) and whether Mary obtained for us besides the grace of faith all other graces also, is essentially just the same: Abraham and Mary obtained the application of the general salvific causality. This is only a question of more or less, and there is no need to talk of special structure. But if it is only a question of more or less, there is all the less reason to lay such exceptional emphasis on titles such as Mediatrix or Co-redemptress given to Mary, and no reason at all why the Popes should speak so emphatically of Mary's role on Calvary. It is all the more necessary to say this because there are so many theologians who would misunderstand such titles and expressions and on the strength of these utterances assign to Mary a place above all the collaborators in our salvation, lifting her out of the order of applied redemption and acclaiming her as the partner of Christ in his general causality. Keuppens¹ is quite right in laying down that the Popes would be scandalously remiss in their duty if they

¹ G. Keuppens, S.M.A.: *Mariologiae Compendium*, n. 294.

allowed such misuse of their words. They know of this misuse and instead of at least ceasing to employ such equivocal terminology, removing in this way all grounds for its abuse, they calmly continue to use it themselves. If the Popes only mean that Mary stands entirely upon our own plane, but is simply more powerful there, then it is high time that the Holy See should intervene without sparing anyone and root out this dangerous theory that affects the very base of our faith. This consideration alone is sufficiently weighty to make us conclude that a place of her own is certainly due to Mary, and that she should be thought of as on a different level from all those others who merit only the application of the graces of salvation.

* * * * *

By his passion and death Jesus is the general Cause of salvation, nevertheless not all children of Adam share in this salvation which was obtained for all. The Church confesses this in the 19th Oecumenical Council of Trent:

'Although he died for all (II Cor. v. 15), not all receive the benefit of his death, but only those to whom the merits of his sufferings are allotted. . . . (Denzinger 795.)

The Church also speaks of this application of Christ's sufferings in connection with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass:

'During the Last Supper . . . he offered up his body and blood under the species of bread and wine to God the Father . . . in order to leave his beloved bride, the Church, . . . a visible sacrifice, by which the bloody sacrifice to be offered once upon the cross would be signified . . . and the saving strength of which would be applied to the forgiveness of all the sins we daily commit. . . . (Denzinger 930.)

St Thomas therefore writes:

'The merits of Christ are sufficiently effective as general cause of the salvation of men, but this cause must be applied to individuals by the sacraments and by faith operating through love. And therefore something is needed for our salvation besides Christ's merits, but something of which Christ's merits are the cause.' (Ver. 29. 7 ad 8um.)

Also in the *Summa Theologica*:

'The Passion of Christ has its results in those to whom it is applied by faith and love, and by the sacraments of faith. And therefore the damned in hell, who are not united with Christ in

the manner referred to, do not receive its effects.' (III, 49. 3 ad 2um.)

Again:

'Christ's passion was the general cause of the salvation of men, both living and dead. A general cause is applied by something special in order to produce particular results. So that as the power of Christ's suffering is applied to the living by the sacraments, which make us conformable to Christ's Passion, this is also applied to the dead by the descent of Christ into hell.' (III, 51.1 ad 2um.)

Briefly: no general cause has a particular effect, unless it is applied by something specific. We could also put it thus: even if a general cause is working its hardest, it will have its effect only where things are subject in the required way to the action of that cause. And what makes us subject to the action of the general cause, is called the applying cause, which, precisely because it has to apply the general cause to the particular cases, cannot be in its turn a general cause, but something special, thus a particular cause.

Hence everything that simply remains within the order of applied salvation is a particular, specific cause, because its task is simply and solely to apply the general cause to the special cases. So that whether we obtain grace for an individual, for a few or for many, whether we obtain it by merits, by mortification or by prayer, it is always a matter of here and now. Every time it is a particular causality.

If Mary is only in the order of applied salvation, she is a particular, special cause, active from case to case in applying the general causality of salvation to this or that particular human being. As such Mary was able, during her mortal life (and thus even on Calvary) to merit for men, atone for them, pray and suffer for them and in heaven she can obtain graces for us now by her all-powerful intercession.

But, in that case, it is not permissible to say that her activity alone embraces all salvation; or that by her *fiat* and her compassion she is the Mother of life for all men. That certainly will not do. If she is only applying cause, and that is the point from which we started, then she is merely a particular cause, active from one case to another, bound by time and space.

Moreover a purely applying cause cannot extend its

activity to what is still in the future. So as we define what is future: 'what is not yet, but is still lying in its cause in order that it may become', St Thomas is right in holding that the things we call in our ordinary way of speaking, future, but the proximate causes of which do not yet exist, are not really future things in the proper sense at all, but belong to the domain of pure possibilities (I. 16. 7; ad 3 um). At the time of the Crucifixion, we were not yet even future things. Jesus could of course merit for us then, because he is the general cause of salvation; but as Mary even *there* was merely the applying cause, she could not obtain for us, who were not even in the future, any grace at all. She could do that only for those who were able to receive the application of salvation; thus for those only who then existed, or had existed, but not for those who were to exist in the future, or perhaps would not exist at all.

We must therefore choose between the two views: either Mary is simply applying cause, like all those others who collaborate in working for the salvation of men, in which case her activity, even on Calvary, does not embrace the whole of salvation, either as regards the gifts of grace themselves or as regards the recipients of those gifts. At most it embraces all who were before her, or with her, but certainly not us, because we were simply inaccessible to her activity. Or else Mary's activity does embrace the whole of salvation, in which case she may not be described merely as applying cause. For then, as Mother of all men, as the New Eve, as Jesus's co-operator, she is admitted into his universal causality of salvation.

The texts, especially those dealing with Mary's universal motherhood, are convincing.

I shall conclude this section with a quotation from the Pastoral of the whole Dutch Episcopate, in which they instruct the ecclesiastical Province of the Netherlands 'on the place and the task of our Lady in the order of salvation' (August 6, 1943). With the war at its height, the venerable Bishops call upon the people of Holland to dedicate themselves to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. To prepare for this dedication, the Bishops decided to instruct us as to Mary's

share in the work of salvation. After setting forth the fact that Mary's holiness must correspond to her dignity, the letter continues:

'That is your first triumph over the devil, who could not on account of God's choice, have any hold over you. . . .

Holy Church shows us with more and more insistence and clearness that Mary has won and will yet win more victories over Satan. She teaches us that the Saviour's Mother is at the same time involved in the great work of the Redemption; that . . . she was permitted to co-operate with Jesus Christ both in obtaining the grace of salvation and in applying it. . . .

Thank God, the truth about the task of Mary in the work of our Redemption and the sanctification of souls is penetrating more and more into the consciousness of the faithful. We have learnt to know her better and better as the partner of the Redeemer, who was allowed to add her contribution to Christ's immense act of atonement. The truth has been borne in upon us, more and more clearly and distinctly, that the Mother of men helped to merit the salvation of her children. . . . Her share in atoning and meriting was first of all realised in her dolorous compassion. . . . In all this God's intention was that Mary who would be co-redemptress by obtaining the graces of salvation, would also be partner and help in the distribution of these graces.'

§2. *Our Lady of Sorrows*: The Pastoral letter of the Dutch Bishops quoted above showed us that Mary's co-operation was first of all realised in her dolorous compassion. We shall therefore turn our respectful attention to the analysis of this suffering . . . a Mother's suffering . . . which must be understood if we are to have an exact idea of her co-operation in the payment of the price of our liberation and in the sacrifice offered by Jesus.

Everyone knows that there is a difference between enduring pain and being sorrowful. We can have to suffer both at the same time, but we may also suffer one without the other.

It is also a fact that we never reproach anyone with his pain, although we sometimes urge him not to be over-sensitive. Pain does not depend upon our will, but upon our natural constitution. A wound or other bodily injury need not by itself cause pain, as is seen in the case of an operation when the patient has been anaesthetised. Something must therefore be added to the wound or injury, namely that we

experience it through the sense we call feeling, touch. So that pain depends on two factors: not only the gravity of the wound or injury, but also on our personal sensitiveness. Finely-strung people, delicate natures, suffer pain sooner and more violently than less sensitive beings. This is not over-sensitiveness, which does not depend on greater or lesser reaction to touch, but is the habit of complaining at once about all kinds of minor aches, which occur in every normal human life. One may, without deserving the name 'over-sensitive', be very highly perceptive of many kinds of pain. Pain is thus the experimental sense perception of bodily injury by touch. So that the pain begins with bodily injury and is completed in the sensory apparatus.

We have already pointed out that we have some feelings in common with animals (2, 3, §1). These emotions arise from the perceptions of our interior or exterior senses, so that if any evil comes to us that is perceptible by the senses, a strong emotion is aroused in us just as in the animals. In this way a wound can not only cause us pain because we feel it, but also arouse a strong emotion which we call sorrow or even anguish. For we do not perceive this wound by the feeling only but also by other senses. Therefore where the pain ends, the distress begins.

But a misfortune can also happen to us, which is not perceptible by the senses, but only by the intellect. In this case there will be no pain and no passion, but a reaction of the will which we call grief.

We can thus distinguish three kinds of suffering: pain, grief, and sadness of soul. We may endure all three at once or separately. In the case of a serious wound we feel pain, then at the sight of it there comes grief, and when we revolve the gravity of our situation in our minds, our will is moved. It either resists what is and so we wish it were not, or it resists what is not, and we wish it could be. That is sadness of spirit.

Let us now turn our eyes in deep respect towards our Saviour who is suffering for us. We must first remind ourselves that in Jesus and in Mary (2, 3, §3) there were no passions in the strict sense of the word, because the state of

integrity proper to man before the fall had been restored to them. For this reason we do not speak of passions with reference to them, because since the fall the term has acquired a pejorative meaning, but we speak of strong emotions.

Where Jesus is concerned we must remember in addition that his reasoned will always agreed with God's will. Since the first moment of his incarnation he had enjoyed the Beatific Vision. Nevertheless there was also room in Jesus for resistance in the will, especially with regard to the acts of his instinctive will, i.e. all that a man wills naturally. To put it more simply: when we are face to face with the elements needful for the happiness that we necessarily desire and cannot reject, e.g. life, our will goes out to those objects without further reasoning: we will life and we reject death. But if we reason, for instance, that here and now death would be our true good (martyrdom, for instance), then the reasoned will goes out to the same object that our instinctive will rejects. Jesus's instinctive will refused in this way what his reasoned will accepted: 'My father, if it is possible, let this chalice pass me by; only as thy will is, not as mine is.' (Matt. xxvi, 39.)

Here we find in Jesus first of all an indescribable *pain* arising from the many grave wounds which he received during the hours of his Sacred Passion, and the numerous injuries he sustained from the cruel treatment. Did any man ever have to endure so much? Pious meditation on Jesus's Passion will teach us about that. But here we must not think of any alleviation. He had so often soothed the pain of others or taken it away entirely, but he did nothing to lessen his own. For that reason he would not drink the sedative that was customarily offered to those condemned to death: 'Here they offered him a draught of wine, mixed with gall, which he tasted but would not drink.' (Matt. xxvii, 34.)

Moreover, precisely because he was a divine Person, his pain was all the worse. We have already mentioned that the keenness of the pain does not depend solely on the gravity of the injury, but also on the personal sensitiveness of the man injured. This sensitiveness arises from the perfection of

the bodily constitution on which the senses depend. With us, thousands of factors come into play, which in the course of nature must collaborate in the building of our body. This is why there is so much unevenness in our make-up, and why in actual fact every one of us lacks this or that, and why our susceptibilities are so diverse. But Jesus's body was built by that unerring worker called the Holy Ghost, so that Jesus was bound to be in truth not only the most beautiful among the children of men, but also the most sensitive and finely-strung. Hence he felt pain much sooner and far more keenly than any other man.

Besides Jesus's physical pain we find in his Sacred Passion a great suffering caused by his wounds and bruises, but far beyond, deeper than that, by all the evil done to him that was perceptible to his senses: the shedding of his blood, the desertion of his friends, the blasphemies of his enemies, the false accusations, the unjust judgments, the mockery of Herod, the sarcasm of the priests, the hoots of the mob, etc., and above all, the loss of his life at such an early age. And all that was made still harder to bear by the presence of his beloved Mother, whom he could see suffering for his sake.

Add to this the sorrow of his soul. Had he not said: 'My soul is ready to die with sorrow'? (Matt. xxvi, 38.)

With the great store of his infused human knowledge, he foresaw all his Passion in its least details, but above all he understood the words with which the Holy Ghost would later inspire St Paul: 'Christ never knew sin, and God made him into sin for us, so that in him we might be turned into the holiness of God.' (II Cor. v, 21.)

He who abhorred sin so deeply because he knew its implications so well, and because he loved his Father so ardently, was treated by God in his Passion as though he and not we had committed all those sins. He really took our place. That was the worst of all. He went bowed under a burden that he knew with his intellect and abhorred with his will: his whole will had to revolt against it: let this chalice pass me by! But then he reasons, then he reflects that this suffering is so glorious to God by taking away sins and their punishment, and bringing graces and salvation, that all

the resistance of his will is lost in anguished surrender: they will be done! But precisely because he is now reasoning and can now see his Passion relatively, all the grief flows over him again: 'To me, all my labour seemed useless, my strength worn out in vain.' (Is. xlix, 4.)

His Passion is vicarious, but how few will profit by it! Is it really worth while enduring all that? Then the sweat breaks out, the sweat of blood caused by suffocating dread of death, and an angel from heaven encourages him (Luke xii, 43).

Under Jesus's cross stood a little group of his friends: Mary of Cleophas, his Mother's sister, Mary Magdalene, St John and the latter's mother, Salome. They had compassion for him, which means that their love for Jesus made the sight of his suffering grieve them, and if possible they would have liked to relieve it. The cause of their grief was the suffering of Jesus whom they loved. They were full of pity for him, the suffering man.

With that group there was yet another: this was no friend of his; she was his Mother. She had no pity, no compassion, but she actually suffered with him. There is a world of difference. To suffer with her child is the lamentable privilege of every true mother. It is a psychological fact that no one can pity himself, he can only suffer from his own misery. If there are people who are so closely bound to us that they are as it were part of ourselves, then, whatever disasters overtake them, we cannot pity them any more than we can pity ourselves, but we suffer with them. Hence a mother, unless she is degenerate, must in the nature of things suffer with her suffering child. Thus Mary has a very special place in that group of faithful friends: she is the only one among them who, loving him, has no pity, no compassion, yet has something unspeakably greater: she bears his suffering with him.

Evidently we are referring to two distinct persons: Jesus and Mary. Each of them has his or her own pain, grief, sorrow, but it is the same cause that awakens in these two distinct souls the same reactions, precisely because of their union. The wounds in Jesus's body hurt Jesus and Mary; the same false accusation, the same unjust judgment, the

same mockery, the same contempt grieve Jesus and Mary. The same sin that Jesus's will rejects finds resistance too in Mary's immaculate heart. While then Jesus's suffering is the cause of his friends' sympathy, it is not the cause of Mary's suffering. What *causes* his suffering is the cause of hers. Mary's suffering is not of itself, it depends inwardly on her Son's and together they form *one* whole. As his Mother she bears *his* anguish with him.

In Mary we can thus distinguish pain on account of Jesus's wounds as if they were her own wounds (II-II, 30. 1 ad 2 um; St Albert the Great, *Mariale* 149); also her sorrow as emotion about whatever Jesus sorrowed for; and then sadness of soul just as in Jesus. But here there is a difference. Mary did not enjoy the Beatific Vision on earth (2, 2, §3), so that she could not yet understand how sins and deficiencies are permitted in God's counsel. Therefore, in contrast with Jesus, she felt sadness about the sins, by which and for which her Child had to suffer so terribly. But there was no resistance in her reasoned will to the other causes of the Passion; in this she was, like her Son, entirely surrendered to the Father's plans.

Deep though her sadness was, heart-felt her regret, and agonising her pain (had not Simeon foretold it would pierce her soul like a sword?), there was yet room in her for a serene and intense joy; as Pius X puts it, she was full of joy (*Ad diem illum*). Joy at the salvation of her people, won here and now by the most bitter Passion of her Son, that she had been allowed to bear with so much pain.

The salvific work of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ can be considered from divers points of view and be given different names accordingly.

If we contemplate this suffering as being accepted by his free human will from love and obedience, we speak of Jesus's merits. But if we see it subjectively as a worthy reparation for sins committed by us, we call it satisfaction; again, if we intend to stress the fact that by this suffering we were redeemed from slavery to the devil at the price of his life, we name it redemption or salvation; lastly, when we are praising the culminating point of Jesus's mediation, the

reunion of man to God, we speak of Jesus's sacrifice of atonement. At the same time we call the application of this suffering to each of us individually, the distribution of grace.

As we have tried in Part II to explain how it was that Satan could get no hold upon Mary (with the unconquered Jesus, she is unconquered) we are now endeavouring to show how Mary, on the contrary, gets a hold on Satan by setting mankind free from his pitiless grip, for she is triumphant with the triumphant Christ. And that not only (although in itself it is a very great thing) by the distribution of the graces merited by Jesus, but also and chiefly by her co-operation as Mother of mankind in the universal causality of salvation.

Nevertheless we must remember all the time that Mary, whatever she might be permitted to do, did everything by Jesus's power and could not do anything otherwise! Once again we quote the letter of the Dutch Hierarchy:

'Deep reaching and universal as is Mary's share in the order of salvation, she is entirely dependent for it on the redemption and the merits of her Son Jesus Christ. Just as she was conceived immaculate in anticipation of his merits . . . she also accomplishes her task as co-redemptrix and mother of mankind in virtue of his merits alone.'

And Pius IX defined it thus:

'The Blessed Virgin, united indissolubly to Jesus by the closest of bonds, pursued the poisonous serpent with perpetual hostility, always with Jesus and through him, until she triumphed over it completely by crushing its head with her immaculate foot.'
(*Ineffabilis Deus*.)

CHAPTER 2

CO-MERITING

§1. *Merit and Reward*: Buying and selling belong to the so-called contracts of exchange, buyer and seller exchange definite objects, and as in accordance with the virtue of justice we are each obliged to give what is ours in proportion to our rights, the objects to be exchanged must represent an approximately equal value, and therefore, in the nature of things all kinds of factors are drawn into the calculation. The same happens with merits and reward. Here too there is a contract of exchange in question, but with this difference that the one who merits offers no objects for exchange, but offers his activity in exchange for the reward which may or may not consist in an object.

But justice is a virtue that regulates the attitude of men to one another, and therefore in the strict sense of the word we can be just only with regard to another. If there is anything lacking in this respect, so that there is no question of another in the full meaning of the word, that will entail special consequences.

Such a case is that of a child who is still young. It is not yet independent: it still belongs to its father, and therefore neither father nor child can count as separate from one another. So that if a child under age is on his father's payroll, not only the youth himself, but his work belongs to his father. That son cannot claim any wages in virtue of justice, as can other workers in the same employment. He could lay claim to wages only in so far as his father had promised them and is therefore obliged to pay them in virtue of fidelity to his promise.

But far more closely than a child under age belongs to his father, does the creature belong to God. It will never be

able to lay claim to any remuneration in the name of justice. The only question of reward would be in as far as God had promised it of his own free will, and hence owes it to himself to make good his promise.

So that if we speak of human merits in connection with God, these can never be the same kind of merits as men have in respect to one another, for man, with all he has and all he does, belongs wholly and unreservedly to God.

The 19th Oecumenical Council of Trent teaches us on this subject that God, for the sake of Jesus's Passion, gave us grace, by which we can effectively merit: increase of the same grace, eternal life, the winning of that eternal life (on condition of dying in the state of grace), and increase of heavenly glory. (Denzinger 842.)

In his omnipotence, God promised us that reward for the works we should accomplish by the strength of grace. They are really merits, but they do not depend on justice but on God's free promise, and hence it is necessary to make a restriction: they are indeed merits, but they are not that alone and nothing else, and consequently we call them merits in a limited respect, namely in consideration of God's free promise.

There is a great difference to be found between *our* merits and those of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The first difference concerns this very point. The relations of the three divine Persons are in the fullest sense those of 'another to another'.

What Jesus merits is therefore not only real merit, but also real merit simply and unreservedly; thus the eternal Father is bound not only to himself but also to Jesus to give him the reward agreed upon, and that without a preliminary free promise.

Hence if we compare our human merits with those of Jesus, ours are completely cancelled out. And this is the more conclusive that our merits are only real merits in virtue of the grace given to us by God for that purpose. But that very grace that makes our good works really meritorious is merited for us by Jesus, so that our merits depend entirely on his.

We cannot object here that Jesus accomplished our salvation as Man, and that his human deeds, if they were to merit a supernatural reward, had to derive their value also from grace. This is perfectly true, but is not an objection. Even Jesus would not have been able to merit without grace (Ver. 29: 5 ad 4 um) and that for the reasons stated. But whereas we receive grace from God's mercy, the Man Jesus enriched himself with grace. The possession of grace is thus of very great importance even for the Man Jesus, but it in no respect weakens the meritorious character of his deeds: for of him it is fully true that he merits by his own power.

The second difference regards the *value* of the merits.

Jesus's actions are human in virtue of his human nature, and they are supernatural in virtue of grace, but they are theandric in virtue of the divine personality of this Man. This divine Person possesses infinite divine majesty and dignity, and consequently the actions of this Man are at the same time human actions, *and* supernatural human actions, *and* human supernatural actions of positive, unlimited, moral value.

Hence Jesus's merits can balance an equally limitless supernatural reward. Whatever God might decide to give for the sake of Jesus Christ's merits to the men of all ages, places, races, peoples and languages, these gifts could never excel the value of Jesus's merits: 'And where sin abounded, grace did more abound.' (Rom. v, 20.)

With regard to the equivalence of our merits the position is quite different. It is obviously unnecessary to demonstrate that there cannot be the same weight of value in quenching the thirst of a man for love of God, as in eternal glory. And yet by that one good work we can really earn that glory! Where then is the balance between merit and reward?

The term equality is multivocal: but on the grounds of similarity in quantity we speak of geometrical equality: a cube is as long as it is broad or deep. And so there is equality between merit and reward when the same value is present in both, whether it be expressed in money or otherwise. Jesus's merits might therefore be better called super-

abundant, since they contain a greater value than the reward as we have shown.

Besides geometrical equality we know arithmetical equality, which is based not on similarity in quantity but on proportion. Geometrically the numbers 75 and 45 are quite different, for 75 represents more value than the other. But another equality exists between these numbers, i.e. that of proportion, for just as 75 is three times 25, so 45 is three times 15. We express this in the formula $75 : 25 = 45 : 15$ and read: as 75 is to 25, so is 45 to 15. So there is actually a similarity, but it is one of proportion.

Hence when we speak of merits according to equivalence, we do not mean according to geometrical likeness, nevertheless the expression is useful as likeness of proportion is intended: it is not more difficult for God to give us the reward of eternal life, than it is for us to do a good work by virtue of grace. According to God's promise, our works are meritorious, but it is in virtue of his grace that those meritorious works are equivalent to the reward. The proportionate equality between our merits and the reward granted to them is created by grace: therefore that equivalence cannot reach further than the grace which is its principle. God gave us that grace that we might reach heaven by it, but not in order to bring others to heaven by it. Hence grace makes it possible for us to merit salvation *de condigno* for ourselves, but not for others.

We have already mentioned that among adults, there is always, in the nature of things, a balance between merit and reward. Nevertheless we distinguish, besides these merits based on justice, others, based not on justice but on fittingness. We find this present, for instance, where a real reason can be adduced on behalf of the employee for his reception of a greater wage than is due in strict justice to his performance considered in itself. Here then, there is no question of a right based on justice, but rather of fairness. Such a claim is present when a worker has been in service for a long time, for length of time brings its special difficulties with it (think of the so-called bonuses given at jubilees); or else when a worker has done a certain task in a particularly

satisfactory way. The increased wage is not a combination of wage and alms, or of wage and present, but it is entirely wage; which is why besides merit according to equivalence we speak of merit according to suitability—*de congruo*.

Similarly we can exercise influence with regard to the salvation of others. For on our side it can be advanced on the grounds of fairness that our merits, although as we said, they are never equivalent to the salvation of others, may yet demand that salvation as a reward. That fairness is founded on the friendship between God and man. Friendship is not a one-sided but a mutual love. But love is wishing the good of another and therefore promoting, as far as in us lies, the good of him who is the object of this love. Consequently real friends try as much as they can to do one another's will; and they will have a right to this: the right of friendship which is allied to the cardinal virtue of justice. Hence, since the theological virtue of charity is a true friendship between God and man, we shall find in it the argument we are seeking for fairness, for it is fair, that just as the man in a state of grace fulfils the will of God, his friend, as far as his weak strength permits, in like manner God should fulfil the will of that man, his friend, but then of course according to his almighty power.

So that the core of the matter lies here: one single act suffices for merits *de condigno*, for one single cup of water given to the thirsty for love of God, or one mouthful of bread, merits heaven for us. But one single act is not enough for the merit *de congruo*. That will vary in accordance with the length and breadth and height and depth of the friendship. Where the friendship is firmly established, the fairness of God's fulfilling the man's wish (e.g. with reference to the salvation of others) will be all the greater, and consequently the merits based on that fairness will be so much more valuable than when the friendship is weak and unstable.

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In the light of all this, we cannot but find a very great difference between Mary's merits and ours. Her merits *de condigno* are inexpressibly superior to ours. For their founda-

tion is sanctifying grace, in which they originate and which creates their equality with the supernatural reward. But we saw above (2, 2, §2) that the fulness of grace bestowed on Mary is so great that it far surpasses the plenitude of the greatest saint, and of all the others with him. The merits of all the other saints, angels as well as men, must thus be necessarily inferior to Mary's.

This is true in an even higher degree of Mary's merits *de congruo*. The theological virtue of charity is an attribute of sanctifying grace: Mary's friendship with God must therefore be unspeakably closer than that of other saints ever can be. Hence the fitness of the greater recompense to be awarded, based as it is precisely upon the right of friendship, must be greater in the same proportion. Moreover, Mary's friendship with God knew no ebb and flow: it was never disturbed or weakened, for all through her life she avoided even the least sin, so that always and everywhere and in everything she fulfilled God's will entirely. In that case the right of friendship demands that God in his turn should also fulfil Mary's will entirely always and everywhere, for that is fair in the highest degree.

Immeasurable as is the distance between Mary's merits and ours, so that we need not try to avoid the expressions unspeakable, inexpressible, unutterable, yet the difference between Jesus's merits and hers is far greater; here we replace immeasurable by infinite!

Mary is a pure creature: all her merits in the sight of God are based on his free promise, so that in contrast with Jesus's merits Mary's, just like ours, are only merits in a certain respect.

Consequently Mary's merits are based on the proportion of relation: there is merely arithmetical equality, but no geometrical preponderance as in Jesus's case.

Thirdly, all Mary's merits, just like ours, are based in the last resort on those of Jesus, as even she received grace with a view to the merits of her Son.

Hence we shall do well to keep these two rules before our eyes during the explanations which follow.

Whatever merits we may ascribe to Mary with respect to

our salvation, it will never be possible to rob Jesus in doing so, for every merit of Mary's presupposes a still greater one belonging to Jesus, which is the prop and stay of hers. Further, *whatever value* we may attribute to Mary's merits it will always be true that Jesus is the only mediator between God and men, and that all of us, including Mary, depend on him. In comparison with his work, Mary's disappears entirely, for no proportion is possible between inexpressible value (Mary) and positively infinite value (Jesus), for the infinite has absolutely no ratio to the finite.

§2. *Did Mary Merit the Incarnation?* As we have already said, our mother cannot be replaced by anyone else. For not only our soul, but also our body is part of our personality: the human person is composed of both. This body is composed of material borrowed from our parents, and therefore had our father married another woman or our mother another man, one of the component elements of our personality, the very matter that is the principle of our individuation, would be replaced by some other matter, and therefore not this person but another would have come into existence.

But Jesus is a divine Person who has existed from all eternity, and so in no way composed of a soul created by God and a substance taken from Mary. Hence it was all the same for the Son of God at the Incarnation to be born of any woman whatever. Therefore in this mystery there are two questions which must be carefully distinguished. The first question regards the nature of the Incarnation: has the Son of God a Mother?—i.e., did the Son of God become man by conception and birth? The other concerns a circumstance of the Incarnation: has the Son of God Mary for his Mother? Did he assume his human nature from Mary by conception and birth? With reference to Mary's merits, both these questions can be expressed as follows. One can raise the point: did Mary and not only she alone, merit the fact of the Incarnation, that is: did Mary and others with her, merit that the Son of God should become man? And further, did Mary merit to be the woman from whom the Son of

God chose to be born? So that this is a question as to one of the circumstances of the Incarnation.

Let us take this last question first: *did Mary merit that the Incarnation should take place through her?* This may be understood in two ways and first of all with reference to God's choice of her for the divine maternity: did Mary merit being *chosen* to be the Mother of God? We can make this clearer by recalling the story in the Book of Esther: after the repudiation of his queen Vashthi, Assuerus began to brood, and he was advised to have beautiful maidens sought throughout his kingdom, and to take as his queen the one who pleased him best. This was done, and Esther became queen for she deserved to be chosen on account of her beauty. (Esth. ii, 1-17.)

Briefly, Mary could not merit this. For it has been said over and over again that her divine maternity is the summit towards which converge all the graces and privileges bestowed on her in this life and in the next. But no merits are possible without grace. So that, if Mary's divine motherhood is the principle of all her graces, then it must also be the principle of her merits, which would be a contradiction in terms. Mary therefore to be chosen so as to be able to merit, and at the same time not chosen if it was to be a result of her merits. And this is in perfect agreement with what we said in § 1, § 4, i.e. that God predestined both Jesus and Mary in one and the same decree: Jesus to have Mary for his Mother, and Mary to have Jesus for her Son. So that we cannot assume the decree of the Incarnation and then ask as well whether Mary merited to be chosen as Mother of God, for that decree contains not only the Incarnation of God's Son, but also the Incarnation through Mary.

We may certainly ask, however, whether, *in the order of realisation*, Mary had to acquire by merit the divine maternity for which she had been chosen gratuitously.

Here an excellent parallel may be drawn with our own predestination. The reader probably knows that not all theologians agree on this difficult question, and this is not the place to enter further into it. But all theologians agree about that part that is a dogma of faith: the human beings

chosen by God for heaven must, in the order of realisation, acquire that heaven by their merits. Many hold the opinion that the prevision of these merits may not be given as a reason for God's choice of these men. In other words: God's free, sovereign, autonomous will, independently of any merits foreseen or not, chose this particular man to go into heaven; but that same will of God determined that this man, chosen gratuitously, should nevertheless in actual fact be obliged to earn his heaven, by *deserving*, with the help of the grace placed at his disposal gratis, for the sake of Jesus's merits.

Predestination itself is thus independent of those merits, but it is on the other hand cause of several effects which again are interdependent. By virtue of this predestination: heaven becomes the final end of merits (we merit *in order* to get to heaven); merits, on the contrary, become the efficient cause of the reward (they make us worthy to attain heaven); grace becomes the principle of merit (by grace we *can* merit). Grace, merits and heaven are the consequences of free predestination, and thus cannot be its cause, but these consequences are interdependent. So that there is really no contradiction at all in saying that we are chosen gratuitously for the reward, and nevertheless we must earn it.

When we speak of Mary's merits in connection with the earning of her divine motherhood, one thing is certain: they are not merits *de condigno*. In the case of these, as we said in § 1, there must be a balance between merit and reward. But the principle that effects the balance between human merits and the divine, supernatural reward is sanctifying grace. In the present economy of salvation, God has given us this grace in order to win heaven with it, i.e. the beautiful Vision of God. Grace thus creates a balance between the good work performed by virtue of this grace and the supernatural reward, which consists in union with God by the supernatural intellectual contemplation of him, with the love corresponding to it.

The divine Motherhood is also a union with God but of a quite different kind. It is a family relation, characterised like all other relations by the term to which it is directed;

thus in the case of the divine motherhood, by the divine Person of the Word. Hence union with God by the divine motherhood not only raises Mary into the supernatural order, but raises her above all other supernatural union with God, and it is surpassed only by the hypostatic union. Therefore we pointed out above that Mary's motherhood considered in itself is of greater value than the whole treasure of her graces (1, 1, §3); and that consequently Mary's own beatific vision of God is no final term for her, but simply a preparation for something higher: her motherhood (2, 2, §2).

So that, although sanctifying grace creates a balance between human supernatural good works and the Beatific Vision, it will be insufficient to make a balance between these same good works and a reward on a higher plane. Hence it is out of the question that Mary should have merited her motherhood *de condigno* by her good works.

But if merits *de condigno* are lacking from want of balance only, this does not prevent merits *de congruo* from being present. For these do not depend on such a balance, but on the fitness brought in by the right of friendship. The reward, the divine motherhood, might then far surpass the achievement itself, but friendship and its rights will justify the excess of the reward.

Of course it is true that the word merit can be used in a metaphorical sense (fruitful ground merits or deserves to be cultivated), but it does not seem obligatory for us to understand the expressions of tradition and of the Church in this remote sense.

Hence we can say: in virtue of the grace given to her gratuitously, Mary gained true merits; and in such a way that she deserved *de condigno* to increase continually in grace, and so to arrive at the measure of purity and spirituality befitting the Mother of God. Thus she merited this growth in grace *de condigno*, as we can also, but the purity and spirituality thus gained merited for her *de congruo* the actual attainment of the divine motherhood, to which she was gratuitously predestined.

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Mary merited *de congruo* the following circumstances of the Incarnation, namely, that God's Son took his human nature from her. The first question still remains: did she also merit *the Incarnation itself*?

This question does not concern Mary alone, but also all the other saints who preceded the Incarnation in time. Obviously nothing but the actual realisation of the divine decree is in question here. For it is utterly impossible that the good works of any creature whatsoever could be the cause, or even merely the occasion of God's decision that his Son should be born of a woman.

So that the only thing to be discussed here is whether anyone could have deserved the execution of this autonomous and freely-made divine decree. It is thus parallel to Mary's merits with respect to the obtention of the divine maternity for which she was gratuitously chosen.

It is also obvious that there cannot be any question of merits *de condigno* here. For if grace, which is the principle of merit, is insufficient to hold the balance between good works and the divine motherhood, then the same grace will surely be insufficient to create a balance with something of infinitely greater moment: the hypostatic union.

Here we must again put a question: if merits *de condigno* are lacking for want of equality, can there perhaps exist merits *de congruo*?

Renowned theologians have indeed supported the view that the patriarchs of the Old Testament merited the Incarnation *de congruo*. They distinguished carefully between the acquirement of grace and the intrinsic value of the grace acquired. The holy patriarchs obtained grace from God because of the Incarnation as final cause (read: in honour of Jesus Christ); but the grace once acquired contained such value in itself, that it sufficed to support merits which claimed the realisation of the decree. Incarnation and merits of the patriarchs stood in exactly the same relation to one another as Mary's divine maternity and her merits, or as our salvation and our merits: salvation, motherhood and Incarnation are the final cause of the merits but conversely they make the merits sufficient.

The theologians to whom we refer were in no way wrong in their thesis: the Incarnation or, better still, the incarnate Word, is the final cause of grace, of merits and of the whole of salvation; but they did not add, as we quite certainly do, that the incarnate Word is, besides that, the meritorious cause of all that exists. Light upon this is given to us in the Bull declaring Mary's Immaculate Conception a dogma. In the text quoted above (2, 1, §1) it is proposed to us as a matter of faith that Mary received this exceptional privilege 'with a view to the merits of Christ Jesus, the Saviour of the human race'. So that Mary received sanctifying grace, the principle of her merits, not only for the honour of Jesus (final cause), but also on account of his merits. The incarnate Word of God is the *meritorious cause of grace*, and therefore grace cannot be the principle of merit of the Incarnation: for different causes can influence one another, but never on the same plane. That would be self-contradictory.

In other words, here we have again to appeal to the truth that the principle of merits cannot be at the same time their fruit. As none of us can merit sanctifying grace (though we can of course merit its increase) because such a man would need to possess that grace in order to be able to merit it, and at the same time he would have to be without it in order to acquire it; much less can the Incarnation be a fruit of merits, as the incarnate Word himself is precisely that first principle of every grace and every merit.

Let no one now appeal to the fact that the patriarchs already received grace long before Christ was born, while he did not merit it until long after they were gathered to their fathers.

God is eternal: he knows no past and no future, but exists in the one indivisible now of eternity, to which every moment of time corresponds. Hence everything that happens in time, however far apart from other things also in time, is present in God.

At the time of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the merits of the Word incarnate were not less present to God than those of the patriarchs. There is therefore no imaginable reason that the merits of the latter should be able to make their

influence felt in their times but not those of Christ. But only one of these two things is possible: *either* the merits of the patriarchs move God—I am using human language—to execute the decree of the Incarnation; or else the Word incarnate induces God to give the patriarchs the grace by which they may merit. It is impossible to maintain both at the same time, as it would involve a contradiction in terms, and would thus be impossible even to almighty God. For in that case, the patriarchs would have to possess the grace in order to merit it, and at the same time be without it because it must come afterwards as fruit of what the patriarchs must merit. If then it is definitely established by the obvious meaning of the Bull declaring the Immaculate Conception a dogma, that the incarnate Word is the meritorious cause of all grace ever bestowed on men since the fall, then any possibility on man's side of meriting with respect to the fact of the Incarnation is utterly excluded. And it does not make the least difference here whether we mean merits *de condigno* or *de congruo*, for both depend on grace.

But if the Blessed Virgin could merit this special circumstance of the Incarnation, i.e. that it should come about through her, then there is a possibility that other circumstances of it were also merited *de congruo*. Hence it is generally accepted that God, for the sake of the prayers and good works, i.e. the merits, of the saints of the Old Covenant, and first of all Mary's, advanced the time when the decree of the Incarnation was to be carried out. The Incarnation thus took place earlier in time than would have been the case had it not been advanced. Therefore St Thomas writes: 'They did not pray for the Incarnation, which they firmly believed would come but they prayed that it might take place sooner'; just as he writes of Mary: 'The Blessed Virgin did not merit the Incarnation, but, presuming the Incarnation, she merited that it should happen through her.' (III Sent. 4.3.1. ad 4^{um} and ad 6^{um}.)

But if we take the word 'merit' in the metaphorical sense which we touched on above (a healthy place deserves to be dwelt in) then clearly the saints of the Old Covenant did merit the Incarnation, but then in the nature of things we

cannot inquire further about the kind of merits. We can attach no other significance to this metaphorical sense than that on man's side all was fulfilled which, according to God's ordinance, had to happen before the fulness of time had come.

If we put together all we have said in a short schema, we answer the question put broadly: did Mary merit the holy Incarnation of God's Son? by making the following distinctions:

- I. The Incarnation considered in its essence:
 1. in the order of purpose (the decree of the Incarnation): no.
 2. in the order of execution (the realisation of the decree):
de condigno: no.
de congruo: no.
 in a metaphorical sense: yes.
- II. The circumstances of the Incarnation:
 1. in the order of purpose (the choice): no.
 2. in the order of execution (the acquisition of motherhood):
de condigno: no.
de congruo: yes.

§3. *What Did Mary Merit for Us?* We have already pointed out the immeasurable distance between the value of Mary's merits and ours. But the difference will seem far greater upon closer inspection of the object of the merits.

On this point theologians frequently appeal to the well-known words from Pius X's encyclical *Ad diem illum*, which I translate as follows:

'As Mary excels all men in holiness and union with Christ, and was associated by Christ with himself in the work of man's salvation, she merited for us *de congruo*, as it is called, what Christ merited *de condigno*.'

I shall justify in detail the translation of *promeretur nobis* by 'merited for us' and not by 'merits for us'.

Bittremieux is quite right in saying that in Latin the present tense often takes the place of the past perfect, and that the use of the present tense in speaking of Mary and of the past perfect in speaking of Christ (*promeretur . . . promeruit*) in no way proves by itself that the Pope meant that Christ merited for us during his earthly life, but that now Mary is meriting for us in heaven.

Besides, it is incredible that the Pope should not have known that the opinion of some theologians about meriting in heaven was completely out of date.

Thirdly: the opinion as to Mary's redemptive merits did not come into being as a result of the Pope's words, but had already obtained right of citizenship among theologians as long ago as the sixteenth century. Moreover, in the same year in which the encyclical appeared (1904), a theologian well-known in Vatican circles, E. Hugon, published his *Marie Mère de grace*, and in it was able to call the aforesaid opinion a generally accepted axiom. This makes it most improbable that the Pope, in using the terminology of that axiom, and in alluding to it with the words *as it is called*, would be using it to cover an out-of-date opinion about heavenly merits.

There is however another consideration which must not be underrated. The different Popes, to whose authority the world appeals on this question, apply both the above-named phases of the work of Redemption to Mary, but join both phases of her co-operation with a causal conjunction. Leo XIII uses 'likewise': if Mary helped with the completion of the mystery of the Redemption, she likewise distributes the graces which continue to flow from it (*Adiutricem populi*). Everyone knows Benedict XV's words in *Inter Sodalicia* which have become famous: that one can rightly say Mary redeemed the human race with Jesus. *And for this very reason*, the redemptive graces are distributed by Mary's hands. Pius XI teaches categorically that the help of our Lady in our last moments preserves from eternal death, but that this is based upon the fact that the sorrowful Virgin shared the work of redemption with Jesus Christ (*Explorata res*).

We find the same thoughts in Pius X: Mary is distributor of graces because she earned them with Jesus.

In the encyclical we are discussing here (*Ad diem illum*), the Pope reminds us of the praise due to the Mother of God for giving birth to, feeding, bringing up, protecting and leading to the altar the Lamb for the sacrifice, and adds these splendid words:

'Hence the uninterrupted union in living and suffering between
 O

Mother and Son, so that the words of the Prophet apply equally to both: "My life is all grief, my years are but sighs", (Ps. xxx, 11.)

Next he speaks of the joy that filled Mary's soul in spite of her immense suffering as she stood by the Cross, joy because her only Son was sacrificed for mankind, and he continues: 'By this fellowship in pain and will between Mary and Christ, she merited most worthily to be the Restorer of the world, and therefore the Distributress of all the grace which Jesus won for us by his death and blood.'

Obviously we have here the same distinction: she suffered for us under the Cross, and therefore she distributes the treasures merited there. And Pope Pius repeats once more: 'In the measure of this union in suffering and anguish between Mother and Son, of which we spoke, it was given to the Blessed Virgin to be the mightiest Mediator and Reconciler of the whole world with her Son.'

With such praise, one must be prepared to find at the same time insistence upon the difference:

'Thus the source is Christ . . . but, as Bernard rightly says, Mary is the aqueduct, the neck, by which the body is joined to the head, and the head exercises its influence and power over the body.'

Next comes the text dealing with Mary's merits. Here however, besides the necessary distinction between Christ the source and Mary the aqueduct, we shall recognise the two phases:

'As Mary excels all others in holiness and union with Christ and is associated by Christ with himself in the work of the salvation of men, she merited for us *de congruo*, as it is called, what Christ merited *de condigno*, and she is the chief Distributor of the graces to be given.'

In view of all this, I consider my translation sufficiently proved. According to the Pope's words, Mary merited our salvation here on earth together with Jesus.

Now let us heed the tenuous distinction drawn by the Pope. He does not say, and he could not have said: Mary merited everything that Christ merited. But he draws the distinction: she merited *for us* all that Christ merited. The difference is so great that it is more difficult to prove that Mary did not merit than that she did.

For we must distinguish between the personal merits of the mediator and what he accomplishes in his official function, in this case, as mediator. For the peculiar position of a mediator brings with it that he stands outside both parties and is brought in precisely because, not being interested in the conflict, he can watch over the interests of both parties impartially. The fruits of his mediation do not benefit him, the mediator, but the parties in question. Of course parties may reward the mediator for his trouble, but this reward is not a fruit of his mediation; it results from his activity in the service of others.

If this is true of any mediator, then it will be also true of the mediator between an offended God and the men guilty of this offence. Jesus does not himself enjoy the fruits of his mediation: these consist in the reconciliation of God with men and of men with God. But he too is rewarded for his activity, by personal merits which concern himself alone. This is true for Mary also: she does not herself enjoy the fruits of her mediation: but like her Son, she earns by her activity, personal merits. So that we must distinguish:

- (a) Jesus's merits as a private individual,
- (b) Mary's merits as a private individual,
- (c) Jesus's merits as an official personality,
- (d) Mary's merits as an official personality.

(a) The merits which Jesus acquired for himself by suffering and dying are connected with the glorification of his body by the Resurrection and Ascension, and with the exaltation of his Name.

'Was it not to be expected that the Christ should undergo these sufferings, and enter so into his glory?' (Luke xxiv, 26).

'And then he lowered his own dignity, accepted an obedience which brought him death. . . . That is why God has raised him to such a height, given him that Name which is greater than any other name, so that everything . . . must bend the knee before the Name of Jesus.' (Phil. ii, 8-10.)

Jesus thus acquired these merits alone and for himself alone.

(b) The merits that Mary acquired by her life and suffering, consist first of all in the very same merits that we can acquire: increase of sanctifying grace, virtues and gifts of the Holy Ghost; eternal blessedness and its acquirement;

also increase of glory, including Resurrection and Assumption into heaven.

She earned these merits for herself alone: they are the fruits of her mediation, and so do not belong to what she earned for us. But, although Mary acquires these merits for herself alone, we cannot add that she earned them by herself, for these personal merits of Mary's are fruits of Jesus's mediation, as Mary's merits depend on Jesus's merits: 'this alone of all the names under heaven has been appointed to men as the one by which we must needs be saved.' (Acts iv, 12.)

(c) Jesus's merits as an official personage, i.e. the fruits of his mediation, are manifold. In the first place they regard Mary. For she is Jesus's masterpiece, as she alone received more than all the rest of us together. These fruits are: sanctifying grace by which Mary was conceived immaculate and in a position to merit; all the other gifts and privileges that Mary received, as well as the most divergent graces of help, the sending of the Holy Ghost, the joy of the Blessed Eucharist (2, 2, §2), her blessed death and resurrection, her assumption, her coronation in heaven, also her elevation to be Companion of the Mediator, as well as all she did or is now doing in that capacity on earth and in heaven. Jesus merited all that for her. But he did not merit for her the election to divine motherhood, any more than she could merit it for herself, for, as we have already said, this choice was part of the decree of the Incarnation.

The fruits of Jesus's mediation concern us also. Our predestination and all that follows on it: eternal life, sanctifying grace, virtues and gifts of the Holy Ghost, forgiveness after sin, graces of succour, means of grace, our merits and our works of penance, etc., all the many things that work together to make us blessed: 'We are well assured that everything helps to secure the good of those who love God, those whom he has called in fulfilment of his design.' (Rom. viii, 28.)

(d) Mary's merits as an official personage, and thus the fruits of her mediation are also included in this: she merited for us everything that Jesus merited. So that everything in

the above enumeration that we owe to our Lord, we have also to thank our Lady for. Not a single grace is bestowed upon us otherwise than for the sake of Jesus's and Mary's merits.

It is clear from this division into four, that Mary's merits, even with regard to their object, cannot be placed on the same footing as those of Jesus, for while the fruits of Mary's mediation are entirely for our benefit, the fruits of Jesus's mediation are both for Mary and for us.

Hence the difference between the fruits of their mediation is indescribably great: for the fulness of grace bestowed on Mary at her entrance into life excels immeasurably the final plenitude of all other saints put together. The principal object therefore of Jesus's mediatory merits is Mary, and after that comes our salvation and all that leads to it. Mary's share in the work of salvation concerns us only, and so remains far inferior to the immense work done by Jesus. How striking is the distinction made by Pius X: she merited for us, what Jesus merited. Here the most excellent and the most important part of the merits of salvation is reserved for Jesus alone, and that most excellent part is Mary.

And so we owe everything to Jesus and Mary, Mary owes everything to him, and he received everything from God: 'the Head to which Christ is united is God' (1 Cor. xi, 3).

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We have already spoken of the value of Mary's personal merits, in comparison with those of the other saints. As far as the value of her mediatory merits is concerned, there is one preliminary point that is quite indisputable: the unbridgeable difference between Jesus's and Mary's merits is that Mary's depend on God's free, sovereign, autonomous promise, and thereby on God's fidelity by which he pledged himself; but Jesus's merits do not depend on such a promise, but on God's justice, by which he is bound not only to himself but also to Jesus. Jesus's merits are thus absolute, whereas Mary's can only be so in a certain sense. Moreover, it must be repeated, the principle of Mary's merit is grace merited for her by Jesus, by which all her merits depend on his.

Having firmly postulated this, we may now, without robbing Jesus of anything at all, ask whether Mary's redemptive merits should be called merits *de condigno* or *de congruo*, i.e. whether the grace given to Mary sufficed or not to make a balance between her good works as Mediatrix and the fruits of her mediation.

My earlier publications prove sufficiently that I felt safe on the side of those theologians who express themselves in favour of *de congruo*:

(a). The opinion in favour of merits *de congruo* cannot be maintained unless it can be in one way or another made credible from the sources of revelation. But in these, although Jesus is indeed spoken of as being able to merit for all the members of the mystical body as its Head, there is no question of any others being able to do so.

(b). Merits *de condigno* depend on the balance between the deed accomplished and the reward; but equivalence knows no more or less: it either exists or it does not. So that if there be a balance between Jesus' merits and the redemption, there can be no balance between the same redemption and a lesser achievement than his. Thus Mary's merits can at most be rewarded *de congruo*.

(c). Pius X's text speaks explicitly of merits *de congruo*.

Yet I could not get rid of a very definite difficulty, which, unknown to me and independently of me, was made public by reviewers in a most gratifying manner. I name here with gratitude my old friend Professor J. Bittremieux (*Ephem. Theol. Lovan.*, 1937, p. 132) and my confrater Father Cuervo (*La Ciencia Tomista*, 1938, p. 418) who confronted me with the question: Is it possible to maintain that Mary was, so to speak, officially appointed by God to be Companion of the Mediator, and yet that she received no more grace than sufficed for her own salvation?

We said in fact, above, that grace makes our good works proportionate to the supernatural reward on account of which these good works make us worthy to receive that reward. But we receive sanctifying grace as private individuals, and therefore in virtue of that grace we can merit *de condigno* for ourselves alone; that grace holds the balance only between our good works and our own salvation, for it is given to us for that. But Jesus is more than a private individual: he is Head of the mystical body, the Church.

Hence the grace that he enjoys serves not only for his own sanctification but also for that of the whole mystical body. Consequently, just as we can merit salvation for ourselves *de condigno*, in virtue of grace bestowed on us as private individuals, so Jesus could merit salvation *de condigno* for all members of the mystical body in virtue of the grace due to him as Head.

We seem to be making a mistake in deducing from the fact that Jesus *alone* is Head of the mystical body, the conclusion that *he alone* was in a position to merit salvation for others *de condigno*. For when we examine more closely we are obliged to admit that Mary may not be considered exclusively as a private individual. We take our ground on the point that she is called by God to be Companion of our Mediator, fellow-worker with Jesus in the general redemptive causality. But it is a doctrine accepted by all Catholics that anyone chosen by God for a definite vocation is also given grace in accordance with it. Whoever thus accepts, rightly or wrongly, that God chose Mary to work out the salvation of mankind with Jesus, must likewise accept that God gave her grace in keeping with the work of saving all men. Hence if Mary in virtue of this divine appointment and the grace deriving from it merited with Jesus the salvation of all men—she merited for us all that Jesus merited—then we must also accept that these merits are different from any that we, who have not been called to such a position, could acquire. Mary's grace, principle of her merits, stands thus half-way between the grace given to us as private individuals, and that given to Jesus, Head of the mystical body. As Father Cuervo suggests, we could, on the analogy of the name given to Jesus's grace as the Head, *gratia capitalis*, call Mary's a social grace. Herewith any reason disappears for describing Mary's merits, depending on this not entirely individual grace, as merits *de congruo* to which we nevertheless have a right.

Mary's merits *de condigno*, with respect to the salvation of mankind, can therefore really be made admissible from the sources of revelation, for the latter teaches, not only that God always gives his grace in accordance with a person's vocation, but also that Mary is called to co-operate with

Jesus in a special way, where the working out of man's salvation is concerned. It is true that merits *de condigno* depend on equivalence, which allows of no more or less. Nevertheless we have shown (§1) that human merits with regard to God do not depend on geometrical equality, but on relative equality. For this reason the expression, merits *de condigno*, is not used univocally for Jesus's merits and those of mere creatures.

In the text we quoted, Pius X certainly speaks of merits *de congruo*. But in qualifying them as such he appeals with an explicit '*as it is called*' to the current opinion of theologians which is itself open to development. Moreover here one should reflect carefully, that theologians are unfortunately far from always drawing the line between merits *de congruo* and those we call absolute merits. Hence they not seldom speak of merits *de condigno*, where they really mean *merita simpliciter*. It would therefore be advantageous to use both terms for the sake of truth and clarity. Then in ascribing merits *de condigno* to Mary, the difference with Jesus's merits would be clear as daylight: Mary merited for us *de condigno*, but in a definite respect, what Jesus merited *de condigno* and absolutely. So that Jesus merited, in strict justice and superabundantly, what Mary could merit according to relative equality in virtue of God's promise. . . .

CHAPTER 3

MAKING SATISFACTION WITH JESUS

1. *Mary and Jesus*: The doctrinal letter of the Dutch hierarchy in which they instruct the Dutch ecclesiastical province on our Lady's place and task in the economy of salvation (August 6, 1943) contains the following paragraph: 'We thank God that the truth about our Lady's task in the redemption and in the sanctification of souls is penetrating more and more into the consciousness of the faithful. We have learnt to know her ever better as the companion of the Saviour who contributed her share to Jesus Christ's greatest act of satisfaction.'

We said above (3, 2, §1) that human merits and rewards are based, just like buying and selling, on strict justice. It is from an urgent sense of the duty of justice that the buyer must pay an equivalent price for his purchase, and that the employer must give a salary equivalent to the work done. The same urgent duty of justice demands that a thief should return what he has stolen; and that anyone guilty of wronging another should repair that wrong. If, then, we are required by justice to honour one another, it is again the same compelling duty of justice which claims that a man who has wounded another in his honour should make amends for the affront. Thus just as buyer and employer are obliged in virtue of justice to pay the full price and the full salary, to the extent to which the seller and the employee have a right to it, so also the man who has offended another must make amends for his offence in the full measure required by the right of the other. Hence it is not sufficient to do what is possible at the moment; even if one has already done what was possible, the wrong must be entirely repaired as soon as circumstances permit. One is obliged to repair the wrong entirely: one must make *full* satisfaction for the injury done.

Thus satisfaction is not repairing more or less, but making full amends, or, as people say, fully compensating for the violation of justice. The greater the affront received, the greater the satisfaction must be. This is the imperative duty of justice.

The magnitude or the enormity of the insult varies not only with its special character, but also according to the dignity of the person insulted. That is clear from mere experience. A word that might perhaps be considered slightly reprehensible if said to an equal might develop into a real insult if addressed to one's superior.

Hence, apart from the consequences to himself of man's sin—we mean the loss of heaven and the distortion of human nature—sin is immeasurably grave, because it is an insult to the Father of infinite Majesty. In actual fact we speak of the *infinite* malice of sin, and its penalty is, in at least one of its aspects, infinite, because it goes on for ever. . . .

Consequently, in the constraining duty of justice to repair wrong done, not only the man guilty of that wrong, but every other creature, not excepting the purest and highest, finds himself face to face with the most complete impossibility of making amends for sin.

In actual fact we use different gauges for measuring insult, injury to a man's honour, and for showing signs of respect: the insult is estimated according to the dignity of the person insulted, whereas marks of honour are judged by the dignity of the person presenting them. This is shown by experience: a single word of praise from a superior means a great deal more to us than a perfect eulogy from an equal. Not only is it so in fact, but it could not be otherwise. Signs of honour always imply giving testimony to someone's excellence (I, I, §6), but no testimony can exceed the value of the deponent himself. Now, every creature is made by God: it is enclosed within the limits of species and class appointed for it by God. However wide these frontiers may be, however noble the creature may therefore be, it is, and always will be, limited. The homage paid to God by the creature, i.e. the testimony given by this finite being to the greatness and majesty of its creator, will have a merely relative value, and could never

offset the infinite malice of sin. Therefore it is simply impossible for a man to satisfy for his own sins or those of others according to the demands of justice; and also equally impossible that any other creature, however rich and gifted we may choose to imagine it, could accomplish this task. The creature of course can do what lies in its power and then it is open to the insulted God to accept this insufficient reparation or not; similarly a vendor may in certain cases put up with a price that is too small, but that is a settlement he is in no way obliged to accept. . . .

Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, however, was able to offer the Creator the satisfaction strictly required for the sins of men. For in the face of infinite insult to God he could always offer an infinitely worthy homage.

It is perfectly true that in his human nature our Lord was Mediator, standing between an offended God and man who was guilty of the offence. But Jesus's humanity must never be thought of separately from his divine Person. It is true that he had two distinct natures, each with the qualities belonging to that nature, unmixed and indissoluble; nevertheless there were not two persons in him (I, I, §1), but only the divine Person. So that it is true that the homage offered to God by Jesus as man, and by his human nature, was and remained finite in the physical order, but because this homage cannot be separated from the Person who offered it, the infinite Majesty of the Person making the offering must irradiate it. In the moral order this homage is to be called infinite, i.e. no limits may be set to the value of this human homage offered by a divine Person. In a physical sense, the acts of worship performed by Jesus must be described as finite, because even Jesus's immeasurably rich human nature with which he made these acts was finite; but morally there are no limits, so that there is infinity, because the Person acting is infinite.

With reference to the homage itself, it does not in the least matter in what this act consists. The point is the dignity of the Person acting, dignity which is communicated to the action. Hence, if we may rightly sing of his divine blood: *cuius una stilla saluum totum mundum quit ab omni scelere*: 'one

single drop of which can cleanse a whole world from all its guilt', the same is true of one single sigh.

God, who hated sin infinitely because it was committed against his infinite divine Majesty, attached an infinite value to Jesus's cult whatever its form might be, because it came from a divine Person. But we must not throw light on the influence of the dignity of Jesus's Person from one side only, as though all distinction in value between Jesus's actions should be abandoned. We can honour a person in various ways: by words (praise, acclamation) by actions (bowing, standing up, giving preference to, going to meet, making room for, etc.) by things (monuments, pictures, presents). Jesus honoured God by voluntarily surrendering himself to the hands of his enemies, and allowing them to take his life. The contemplation of Jesus's Passion and death in so far as it can be called a sacrifice has its own place (3, 5, §1); for the moment, the point is that Jesus, in order to testify to God's infinite greatness as Creator and Ruler of the World, gave his own precious life in his honour. There was no question of this or that small gift, intended symbolically; nor of a sigh, but of the most precious thing at his disposal as man: his own life. This betrays a very special interior disposition in this Man, who, for his Father's honour and the happiness of mankind, does not shrink from the greatest sacrifice that could be asked of a man. And with this we touch on the subjective element in Jesus's satisfaction.

Objectively, we are considering a human act done by a divine Person. But this act already belongs to the supernatural order not only because it is performed by a divine Person, but also because this human being is in a state of grace. The Man Jesus possessed sanctifying grace in the highest degree thinkable (2, 2, §2). A quality of this grace in the strict sense is the theological virtue of charity, without which it cannot exist and which is itself not thinkable without grace. On the highest possible degree of sanctifying grace—unlimited grace—there follows a corresponding divine love, which is also unlimited.

Hence the divine cult, offered by Jesus to his heavenly Father, was a human action, flowing from the highest

sanctifying grace thinkable and the deepest possible charity, and so supernatural in the most perfect manner. But as a divine Person was the author of this act, the latter wins infinite moral value on its own level, i.e. in the supernatural order. If however the act had not been by grace in the supernatural order but merely in the natural order, then it would have had an unlimited moral value, but not on the level of the supernatural. This is why we have pointed out that, without sanctifying grace, Jesus himself would not have been able to earn a supernatural reward.

Hence the point here is not merely an act performed by a divine Person, but it is very definitely a human yet supernatural act performed by a divine Person. The estimate of the value of Jesus's divine homage must be made with a view to both elements: both his Person, of infinite Majesty, and his actions, flowing from his unlimited supernatural love of God and men. From whichever side it is looked at, his homage as God must be called infinitely precious, and for that very reason he was able to offer effective satisfaction for the infinite malice of sin. No one need object now that in this way Jesus's satisfaction, just like that of other men, is found to depend eventually on grace; for we can give the same answer as in the question of merits: the objection is valid but does not constitute a difficulty. We receive God's grace because he is merciful; consequently everything that depends on that grace presupposes God's mercy towards us. But the Man Jesus enriched himself with grace (3, 2, §1), and although the possession of grace was of great importance even to him, it does not in any respect reduce the value of his deeds. Jesus made satisfaction to God in the strength of grace, just as he merited strength with it, but because he possessed that grace in virtue of his own personal power, he made satisfaction with his own strength, just as he merited with his own power. Hence Jesus's satisfaction, like his merits, comes up to the requirements of justice. Therefore he was able to make satisfaction for our sins in the full sense, as he merited for us absolutely without any restriction.

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It should be clear from all this, that in offering his homage, Jesus had absolutely no need of help of any kind. In any case, God never needs anything or anybody. He does not need the farmer to provide us with corn, nor the baker to feed us with bread. What he actually does through the medium of creatures, he can do himself directly. The fact that he allows his creatures to take part in his benefactions does not make his work any better, but it does benefit those creatures, who obtain by it something they lacked before: the honour of being a cause, and in that more like God, the highest cause of all good.

So that if the Father makes an agreement with Jesus to give him Mary as 'a mate of his own kind' (Gen. ii, 18) it cannot be because 'it is not well that man should be without companionship'. Mary had nothing she could add to Jesus's work, as though she were needed 'to pay off the debt which the afflictions of Christ still leave to be paid' (Col. i, 24). Even without Mary's collaboration, nothing would have been lacking to Jesus's satisfaction, just as nothing was added to it by her collaboration. It is not Jesus but Mary who gained by it. It gives her the honour of being a cause, with respect to the salvation of all Adam's children. If then the bishops say of Mary that 'she was allowed to add her part to Jesus Christ's highest deed of satisfaction', we must reflect very carefully on these words and not turn: 'add her part to' into 'add a part on to'. That is quite a different matter. Mary did not add a part to Jesus's part as though only by adding one part to the other a sufficient total could be reached. No, she added her part, that is her 'bit', to Jesus's total, so that her part might in this way acquire a value which it did not possess on its own account. For now Mary is Jesus's partner: she fulfils an official function and it reaches higher than she would be able to do without that elevation. The important person is here Mary herself, whom Jesus has raised up to be a cause, subordinate to himself and dependent on him, in his work.

Her divine motherhood is her greatest treasure: all the other graces she has ever received in time or in eternity converge on this. They only serve to make her a worthy

Mother of God. And this grace also is for the same purpose.

Mary, as the blessed Virgin and Mother of God, was as a pure creature utterly powerless to offer God, for the sins of other human beings, any satisfaction that could compensate for the malice of the offence and so correspond to the demands of justice. This is clear from what we have said. Mary could offer God no reverence unlimited in value and thus infinite in the moral order. Rich as she was in divine treasures of grace, she was always enclosed within the limits of her wealth. Hence she could offer reparation only in the sense that God contented himself with what Mary offered. Yet this does not mean that her satisfaction is reduced to the level of ours.

Objectively, impersonally, hence apart from subjective ends, satisfaction is greater or less in proportion to the dignity of the person. Thus what gave such an immense weight to Jesus's satisfactions was the Majesty of his divine Person. But this applies here, too. It is by the very noble personality of God's Mother that her work has to be estimated. She is not only united to the Triune God by bonds of friendship like other saints, but she knows herself to be related to each of the three divine Persons (1, 1, §2). By these relationships Mary is assumed into the interior life of the Blessed Trinity, and raised to the limits of created possibilities: beyond, there is nothing but the hypostatic union. If we add to this that Mary, the glorious Mother of God, does not offer her satisfaction as a private person, but as an official personality appointed by God himself to be Companion of the Mediator, then the distance between Jesus and Mary must be strongly emphasised for the sake of clearness: his satisfaction is of infinite value because his Person is of infinite dignity, and Mary's satisfaction is not infinite because her personal dignity is not. That is right and expedient. But even then, we are not able to say, nor even to approach anywhere near a statement of how great the value of her satisfaction must be, since we cannot measure the majesty of her personality. But then we must be logical and call the value of the reparation offered by her as immeasurably and unspeakably great as her personality.

We have however considered Jesus's satisfaction not only

objectively but also in a subjective light. Just as we described as unlimited Jesus's treasure of grace, out of which flowed the homage he paid his Father, in the same way we must describe as boundless the treasure of grace and the gift of divine charity to Mary from which her reparation arises. She did not, like Jesus, receive grace in the highest possible degree, and therefore the divine charity deriving from her grace is bound to be far inferior to his love. Nevertheless Mary's fulness of grace was so immense that none of all God's saints can come anywhere near it (2, 2, §2).

Let Mary's satisfaction then remain far below that of Jesus Christ, both objectively as to the value of her personality and subjectively as to the intensity of her divine charity: it is nevertheless also true that her reparation, borne by her love and grace, illumined by her personal dignity of Mother of God and Companion of the Mediator, immeasurably transcends any thinkable satisfaction offered by any creature, however richly endowed.

§2. *Mary and us*: Compensation for wrong done is a simple requirement of justice; therefore sin remains unpardonable as long as at least the serious wish to make amends is not present. This is why such satisfaction, if not offered voluntarily, is exacted by legal compulsion. Thus where reparation is not offered freely (*satisfactio*: satisfaction), punishment is inflicted (*satispassio*).

By his Passion, Jesus offered God of his own free will the most splendid reparation thinkable, so that through him God was reconciled to us. And the whole burden of our guilt, all our indebtedness was taken away. Through Jesus Christ, man was now quite free: without sin and without punishment. Moreover he was restored to God's favour, tokens of which favour were bound to follow.

But if Jesus atoned so entirely for our sins and thereby removed all our culpability, why does the Church continue to preach penance and mortification? Is it then really true what non-Catholic Christians reproach us with, namely: that we are actually insulting Jesus by our penances, with which

we seem to be calling his satisfaction deficient? Must we really 'help to pay off the debt which the afflictions of Christ leave still to be paid'?

The Passion and death of Jesus is in truth the most complete cause of our salvation and therefore both of the forgiveness of sins and the remission of punishment and of God's innumerable graces. But that suffering belongs to the so-called general causes, which even if fully effective have no result except in those who submit to their operation in the requisite manner. Holy Church then may preach that Jesus's Passion suffices for the salvation of absolutely all mankind (Denzinger 1096), but she teaches as well: 'Truly although he died for us all (II Cor. v, 15) we do not all receive the benefit of his death, but only those to whom the merit of his Passion is allotted.' (Denzinger 795.)

What Jesus won for all by his Passion and death must be allotted to each one of them all. We have already spoken of this in 3, 1, §1. We therefore need something besides the Passion of Jesus, not as though it were not enough for our salvation, but because we require something to make us receptive to the action of that Passion, so that we may participate in its effects.

We learn from revelation how this receptiveness may take place in us, for it is written:

'All those who from the first were known to him (God), he has destined from the first to be moulded into the image of his Son, who is thus to become the eldest-born among many brethren.' (Rom. viii, 29.)

In other words: all our salvation is from Christ, but it is imparted to each of us only in the measure in which the heavenly Father recognises in him the image of his Son. The greater our likeness to Jesus, the greater our part in salvation will be.

But we win this likeness in the manner prescribed by God. In the first place we call attention to the sacrament of faith: baptism, by which we are buried with Christ in death (Rom. vi, 4). By baptism we become complete images of Jesus, and we acquire in the sacrament the greatest possible likeness to him: therefore baptism takes away all sin and all punishment and assures us of heaven. But as Christ died once only for

our sins (I Peter iii, 18), we cannot be made like him a second time by baptism. We can it is true acquire that likeness again sacramentally, but no longer perfectly, and therefore those who sin again after baptism must become like the suffering Christ *by suffering themselves* (iii, 49. 3 ad 2 um).

This is the most profound reason for preaching Christian penance and mortification. Not as though we were able with our own strength to satisfy for our sins (that is: to take Christ off the cross); not as though we had to complete the suffering of Christ which is incomplete in itself and would not be sufficient until united with ours (this is blasphemous); but because by suffering we become like our Saviour suffering for us and thus receptive to the fruits of his Passion: '(we are) heirs of God, sharing the inheritance of Christ; only we must share his sufferings, if we are to share his glory.' (Rom. viii, 17.) Quite apart, therefore, from all other advantages of suffering personally accepted or chosen, the weightiest and most irrefragable reason is this: by suffering we become like our suffering Saviour and hence his suffering becomes ours, and his reparation our reparation, so that we offer satisfaction for our sins through Christ our Lord.

But there are many who lack every resemblance to Jesus: they are not baptised; or else they have lost their part in him by apostasy and have relapsed into slavery to the devil; or else they keep their part in Jesus by the true faith, although imperfectly, but they prevent themselves from enjoying the fruits of their part by not doing their duty as Christians entirely or by not doing it at all: they are the sinners who believe.

Actually we can contribute something to the enlightenment of the unbaptised and the conversion of sinners, in order that Jesus's image may be found even in them. We can pray for them, but our prayer must be worthy to be heard and the only way to that end is to make it into Jesus's prayer. For that, we must support our prayers for the conversion of these people by our suffering. And this is surely the culmination: for Jesus not only suffered, but he suffered for others. And in this connection is it not remarkable that just those great saints who were personally the most guiltless gave

themselves up to such an extent to works of penance? And their aim was always the same: to resemble Jesus. Mary, the utterly immaculate, who bore the indescribably heavy redemptive Passion with Jesus, repeatedly asks us to pray for the conversion of sinners (Lourdes, Salette, Fatima), but calls our attention especially to the fact that these prayers must be accompanied by sacrifices. It is in this sense that we satisfy for sinners: our works of penance and mortification are to their advantage because these works support our prayers and in this way they may also be called meritorious. For we have said (3, 2, §1) that God gave us grace in order to arrive in heaven ourselves, but not to bring others to heaven. So that we can never merit for others *de condigno*. But we can obtain conversion for them *de congruo*.

But if the sinner has been converted, and his sins are forgiven and the eternal punishment remitted, we can help him to pay off the remainder of his debt of temporal punishment. This is the law of the communion of saints, on which eventually indulgences are based. For if any two men are in a state of grace, they are united by the bond of divine charity. In that case, mortification taken upon himself by one for the benefit of the other will be advantageous to both. The act benefits the one who does it because it is meritorious, i.e. makes him fitter for heaven; it is also beneficial to the other because it will serve, in virtue of the intention of the man who performs it, to pay the other's debt of punishment. By that mortification Jesus's Passion, in virtue of the oneness of divine charity, will be applied to the other to lessen his penalty. This too is the reason that moralists admit that a confessor can himself accomplish a greater or lesser part of the penance given to his penitent. For both are in a state of grace after absolution, and united by divine charity, so that what one does from charity may be put to the credit of the other. What we do through our friends, we seem to do ourselves. (c.G. 3: 158, 4: 55 ad 20 um and ad 23 um.)

Suffering for others, after the example set by Jesus, profits the mystical body by the application of redemptive causality to individual men, and in this sense we may say with St Paul: 'I am glad of my sufferings on your behalf, as, in this mortal

frame of mine, I help to pay off the debt which the afflictions of Christ leave still to be paid, for the sake of his body, the Church.' (Col. i, 24.)

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The great difference between Mary's satisfaction and ours must be evident from what we have explained here. For whether we accept in loving patience the suffering sent us by God; or whether we voluntarily seek suffering by taking penance and mortification upon ourselves; whether we do this for the conversion of sinners or for the enlightenment of the heathen, or for the relief of the souls in purgatory—in all these satisfactions, we are never anything but particular causes that convey the application of the general redemptive cause to individual persons.

But as to the Blessed Virgin and Mother of God, the bishops' letter states:

'We have learnt to know her better and better as the Partner of the Redeemer, who was allowed to add her share to Jesus Christ's greatest deed of satisfaction.'

Mary was appointed by God to be the Companion, the Partner, the '*socia*' of the Mediator. As his Mother, she bore with him in a very special way the sufferings by which he redeemed us. Her share lay in bearing the redemptive Passion with him; here she suffered not merely for the benefit of this or that human being, which we can do also, but as Partner of the Redeemer, i.e. as co-cause, dependent on him, of our salvation, and here, thus, she is general cause. With Jesus and in entire dependence on him, she bore the passion for the benefit of all Adam's children. But therefore her subordinate yet general causality must, just like that of Jesus, be applied to each and to all.

Therefore the suffering that we accept submissively from God's hand, or take voluntarily upon ourselves for love, is not merely the application of Jesus's redemptive causality, but also the application of Mary's co-causality.

But while Jesus's Passion is infinitely satisfactory, Mary's suffering lacks that infinite value: she could in reality satisfy only because God was willing to be content with it. And God was willing for the sake of Jesus, her Lord and ours. Satis-

factory value ascribed in this way to Mary's suffering, not only cannot diminish Jesus's power to offer satisfaction, but actually magnifies it. For just as God's glory is all the greater that he does not act as cause by himself, but also lends creatures the dignity of being causes, in the same way, Jesus's redemptive glory is all the more splendid because he willed to have a Partner, who was inserted by his power into the work of our redemptive causality.

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The best method of determining a position is the point where lines intersect. So we shall try to fix Mary's place on the plane of satisfaction by drawing two lines. For this, we compare her reparation first with that of Jesus and then with ours. In the matter of satisfaction, just as in the matter of merits, Mary stands with us in a definite relation with regard to Jesus, and with Jesus in another relation with regard to us.

Let us draw these lines again in this way:

1. Mary stands with us *facing Jesus*:

- (a) Jesus's merits and satisfactions are acceptable *per se*, because the principle of satisfaction and merit (i.e. sanctifying grace) belongs to Jesus by right on account of his personal power and dignity.

Mary's merits and satisfactions are on the contrary not acceptable *per se*, but only through Christ our Lord, as ours are. But she received sanctifying grace with a view to the merits of Christ Jesus, the Saviour of all mankind.

- (b) The merits and satisfactions of Jesus are simply so called (absolutely) because in virtue of Jesus's divine personality they rest on strict justice, so that the Father was under an obligation where Jesus is concerned.

In Mary's case, on the contrary, just as in ours, merit and satisfaction come under discussion only in a certain respect, i.e. granted God's free disposal by which he was bound to no one but himself.

- (c) Jesus's satisfaction is morally infinitely precious on account of the infinite Majesty of a divine Person; but Mary's is finite just like ours, because she is a mere creature.

Jesus's merits are called equivalent (*de condigno*) according to quantitative or mathematical equality with the reward, because the principle of this equality, sanctifying grace and divine charity, is in Jesus infinite in its order; but in Mary's

case, just as in ours, we can speak only of arithmetical or relative equality.

2. Mary stands with Jesus *facing us*:
 - (a) Mary's merits and satisfaction belong to general causality, because she merited and satisfied for us all. We, on the contrary, by our meriting and satisfying, can acquire nothing but the application of that general causality: we are therefore particular causes, efficient in separate cases.
 - (b) Mary's satisfaction is morally ineffably precious on account of the unspeakable dignity of the Mother of God; ours, on the other hand, is closely limited by the measure of our grace.
 - (c) Mary's merits for others may be called equivalent, because their principle, sanctifying grace, is given to her in accordance with her appointment as Partner of the Saviour; ours, on the other hand, can in relation to others never be considered as due to anything but God's gracious courtesy and condescension.
3. Hence the point of intersection of the lines of satisfaction is:

Mary's satisfaction has the same extension as that of Jesus's, because it is true of both: they did not make satisfaction for themselves, but exclusively for us. But the value of Mary's satisfaction is as much less as the unspeakable is than the positively infinite: as the relative is than the absolute: as the unacceptable *per se* is than the acceptable *per se*. Our satisfaction on the other hand is the application of Jesus's as well as Mary's satisfaction and consequently gains its value from both, although in a different measure and according to a different content.
4. The point of intersection of the lines of merit is thus:

Mary's merits have neither the same extension nor the same value as those of Jesus. For Mary merited only for us, Jesus on the contrary both for us and for Mary, who received for herself alone more than did all of us together. The value of Mary's merits is as far inferior to the value of Jesus's merits as her satisfaction is to his.

Our merits, on the other hand, are based on Jesus's merits as well as on Mary's and hence receive from both their value, although according to a different measure and content.

CO-REDEMPTRESS

§1. *The Payment of the Price*: Service and salary, like buying and selling, belong to the so-called contracts of exchange, but that does not mean that we can use the terms earn and buy as synonyms. For seller and buyer exchange things with one another, but he who earns gives his work in exchange for something else (3, 2, §1).

Therefore when we spoke of Jesus's merits, we were thinking of Jesus's activity by which he gained our salvation from the Eternal Father as reward for his work.

Now, however, we are considering a purchase by Jesus, inasmuch as he obtained our liberation from the slavery of Satan and got us the liberty of God's children by paying a price for this liberty: 'Surely you know . . . that you are no longer your own masters. A great price was paid to ransom you.' (I Cor. vi, 20.) And the great price that Jesus paid for our liberty was his own life: 'Jesus Christ . . . who gave himself as a ransom for them all.' (I Tim. ii, 6.) But since, according to Leviticus xvii, 11, 'it is the blood that animates all living things', in other parts of Scripture Jesus's blood is very aptly called a ransom:

'For you know well enough that your ransom was not paid in earthly currency, silver or gold . . . it was paid in the precious blood of Christ.' (I Peter i, 18-19.)

'For thou (Jesus) hast ransomed us with thy blood of every tribe, every language and every people and every nation and given us to God.' (Apoc. v, 9.)

'It is in him and through his blood that we enjoy redemption.' (Eph. i, 7.)

Man was created by God in a state of joy and freedom, but he lost his freedom by letting himself be enticed into sin by Satan (Gen. iii, 1-6). In other words, man bowed down of

his own free will before Satan, for that is what letting oneself be led astray means: submitting one's judgment of one's own free will to the judgment of the tempter. In this way, man submitted freely in the highest part of himself to Satan; and the latter, who had been aiming at this, pounced upon the bargain. He would never have been able to force man to this, but now that man submitted of his own accord, Satan held him firmly in subjection, and exploited his success in every possible way, torturing him in soul and body. And naturally man could not free himself again nor even put up any kind of a fight, and this is where the *possession* began, which appears so frequently.

Obviously God, the Almighty, could have prevented this incredible usurpation, but God judged it better not to intervene. For in this way man was justly punished for his rebellion and for taking sides with Satan against God, as it is written in Holy Scripture: 'to prove to them that a man's own sins are the instrument of his punishment.' (Wisdom xi, 16.) Let it then be entirely true, that the devil, on his side, was very unjust in keeping man in thrall; nevertheless it was just that sinful man should have to endure this since God allowed it as punishment for the sin against his Majesty. When therefore, as here, a ransom is mentioned in order to set man free from this tyranny, the price of it is in no way due to the devil, as some have thought, but to God who was the injured party and at the same time the punisher. (iii 48. 4 ad 3 um.)

Here we are speaking therefore of a purchase and a ransom, by which man is to be brought out of the slavery of sin. But before his sin, man had already enjoyed the liberty of the children of God, so that there is not only mention of buying, but rather of buying *back*. And now we can delimit more exactly the word redemption, and the word Redeemer also. In our ordinary speech—we have already touched on this slightly—we are wont to employ these words simply in order to signify the work of salvation. Nevertheless the word redemption alone implies a very special aspect of the work of salvation, just as do the words merits and satisfaction. We ought therefore to use this word as its Latin meaning

suggests: *emere* is to *buy*; *re-emere* is to *buy back*. For the sake of euphony we insert a consonant, and speak of redemption and redeemer: buying back and the man who buys back. So that after having given our attention to the two aspects of salvation that we call merits and satisfaction, we must study the aspect expressed by the term redemption or buying back from the slavery of the devil.

Unlike our merits, as we said above, those of Jesus depend in no way on a preceding promise made by God. That does not take away the necessity for supposing an agreement between the Eternal Father and Jesus such that the work on the one side and the wages on the other correspond. For no one enters the paid service of another without having an agreement that is binding on both parties. And it is the same with buying and selling: an agreement must be made as to what price should be paid for such and such an article. For it is not a matter of one person giving a present to another, and then demanding later on to be given in return an object of almost equal value. Perhaps the giver may have secretly had something of the kind in view, but since the recipient did not accept the gift for that purpose, the giver can never appeal to his present. It is in the very nature of a present that it should be given with no thought of requital in mind, while the nature of a price is that something quite definite is exchanged for it. But the equivalence of price and object demands, just like the equivalence of merit and reward, an intentional agreement between seller and buyer, for that is what adjusts the one to the other.

It is moreover necessary for a man who desires to act as a buyer in the full sense to offer a purchasing price that he possesses. For if a man concludes a purchase with money belonging to another, the real buyer will not be the one who pays the price materially and takes possession of the object itself, but the owner of the money, provided that he commissioned the purchase. For if anyone buys something with another's money without having the authority to do so, then the bargain is null and void: in that case there is no buyer. And that because the man who possessed the price had neither directly nor indirectly (i.e. as commissioning the

deal) any intentional agreement with the seller as to the transaction. Thus no one can be a real buyer unless he can in one way or another prove that the price belongs to him.

Now, Jesus offered his Father a price which belonged to him entirely: his own blood and his life which he could dispose of freely and without limit as he was a divine Person; and he offered to exchange it in order to obtain for us, poor prisoners, the freedom of the children of God. And God the Father accepted the price offered by Jesus for this purchase. Therefore Jesus is, in the fullest sense of the term the 'buyer-back' of our liberty, and that is what we mean when we call him our Redeemer.

Mary is the New Eve, associated with the New Adam in effecting our salvation: she stood by his cross as subordinate cause; with him she bore the suffering by which we were saved; she merited with him all that he merited and with him made satisfaction for the sins of us all. Therefore the question must arise as to whether Mary also had a share in the redemption of mankind on Calvary, and whether she not only merited with Jesus and made satisfaction with Jesus, but also redeemed with him.

Obviously we do not mean to ask whether, in addition to the price paid by Jesus, Mary added another payment on her own behalf. There was only one price paid for our redemption: Jesus's life. But this price was paid by Jesus, and therefore the question may be asked whether Mary collaborated or not in the payment of the price. She could add nothing to the price, but it is an open question as far as the payment of the price is concerned.

In reflecting on the different aspects of the work of our salvation, we are always being obliged to fix our attention again on the fact that we cannot make any difference between Jesus's different actions, as though, for example, some of them had been meritorious, others satisfactory, and others again redemptive. We do indeed distinguish various aspects of one and the same action. The same obedience unto death is both meritorious and satisfactory. The same action looked at from another point of view is also called redemptive. In other words, the action which makes reparation for our

offences and obtains grace for us from God, is at the same time the payment of the price and thus redemptive. The same is true of Mary's obedience: by it she earned with Jesus graces for us, and by it she offered satisfaction with him for our sins. And so we may ask whether Mary's obedience which was both meritorious and satisfactory also shows the aspect of co-payment of the ransom offered by Jesus. For in that case her obedience is redemptive also.

Modestus of Jerusalem gives the definition itself, in a remarkably clear phrase, when he says of Mary that through her we:

'are redeemed from the tyranny of the devil.' (Migne PG 86: 3287.)

St John Damascene greets her:

'Hail thou, through whom we are redeemed from the curse.' (PG 86: 658.)

St Bernard:

'Through her man was redeemed.' (*serm. 3 super Salve.*)

St Bonaventure:

'That woman (namely Eve) drove us out of Paradise and sold us; but this one brought us back again and bought us.' (*de don. Sp. S. 6; 14*)

St Albert the Great:

'And so she was the only one to whom this privilege was given, i.e. of sharing in the Passion. To be able to reward her for it, her Son wished her to share also in the merits of the Passion; and to make her a sharer in the benefit of the Redemption, he wished her to be his partner also in the suffering of the Passion: in order that she, as she was a helpmate in the Redemption, might also be mother of all by reparation. And as the whole world in indebted to God for his Passion, so all would be to their Queen for her compassion.' (*Mariale* 150.)

Leo XIII:

'We think of all the other extraordinary merits, by which she shared with her Son Jesus in the redemption of mankind. . . . She was not only present at the mysteries of the Redemption, but she was also involved in them.' (*Parta humano generi.*)

Benedict XV:

'In a similar way she suffered with her Son suffering and dying, and as it were died with him; to such an extent she renounced her mother's rights to her Son, and to satisfy God's justice sacrificed her Son as far as it depended on her, so that one may

justly say of her that she redeemed the human race with Christ.⁷ (*Inter Sodalicia.*)

Pius XI:

'For this apostolate, of a holy death, as it is called, cannot but bear abundant fruits, because it is practised under the patronage and with the intercession of our Lady of Dolours. For no one who is assisted by our Lady, above all at his last moment, could go to eternal death. This opinion of the doctors of the Church, which is so strongly in agreement with the feeling of the Christian people, and is confirmed by uninterrupted experience, is founded above all on this reason that the Mother of Sorrows was Jesus Christ's companion in the work of the Redemption: appointed Mother of all men, who were recommended to her in the last testament of divine love, she accepted them as her children and protected them with the greatest love. But we need not linger any longer on this point, as our predecessor Benedict XV of blessed memory made it clear with the most fitting words in his apostolic letter of March 22, 1918: (*Explorata res.*)

This text is surely especially important. Pius XI teaches us here categorically:

- (a) that our Lady's assistance in our last moments prevents us from dying without grace;
- (b) that this doctrine is: that of the Fathers of the Church, the feeling of the Christian people, uninterrupted experience;
- (c) that this teaching is founded on the fact that Mary was Jesus's companion in the Redemption as Mother of Sorrows;
- (d) Benedict XV made this clear in most fitting words, which we have already quoted.

So that we must understand the prayer of the same Pope in that light:

'O loving and merciful Mother, who when thy beloved Son was consummating the redemption of the human race on the altar of the cross didst stand by him in compassion as co-redemptress . . . preserve in us, we pray, and increase from day to day the most precious fruits of the redemption and of thy union with him in pain.' (*Osserv. Rom.*, April 20, 1935, p. 1.)

We have already pointed out that Mary's sufferings are most closely connected with those of Jesus, but other laws are valid here as in the case of the compassion of his faithful. Jesus's grievous suffering causes the commiseration of his faithful, but it is not Jesus's suffering that makes Mary suffer. The same thing that is the cause of his suffering is the cause of hers. We distinguish here two elements: the first

is psychical and concerns the spiritual reactions in Jesus and Mary; the other is the wrong done to Jesus. The psychical element is indeed different in each: just as Jesus and Mary have each a soul of his and her own, each of them also has personal spiritual reactions. But the other element is unique and complete: it is the evil which, striking at Jesus causes in both the same spiritual reactions. The evil that strikes Jesus so horribly is the long-drawn-out and violent destruction of his life, and the shedding of his precious blood. That suffering inflicted on Jesus by force—accepted by him of his own free will and not resisted—was in itself therefore the payment of the price of our redemption . . . for his life-blood was to be our ransom. But his life was surrendered and his blood shed in and by voluntarily endured redemptive torments. It was by suffering that Jesus paid. Now, Mary accepted the motherhood of the Man of sorrows, fully aware that this would bring upon herself an immense weight of suffering. In complete liberty, she consented to the anguish promised in Scripture, in order as Handmaid of the Lord to join with the Servant of God in redeeming his people from their slavery (1, 1, §5). But in that case Mary's suffering, which is interwoven in its whole nature with that of Jesus until it becomes an authentic bearing of his Passion with him, must also, of its very nature, become co-payment (to coin a word) of the price of our redemption.

There is here a deep and illuminating thought. If Jesus had chosen himself a co-worker in the redemption who was not his Mother, the person chosen might indeed have merited with him and satisfied with him, but could never have been able to redeem us with him. For such a partner could never have been able to bear with Jesus his own suffering. And as precisely that very suffering is the price of our freedom, such a partner would have been helpless here. Now Pius XI's words are so apt:

'This noble Virgin, conceived without original sin, was chosen as Mother of Christ, so that she might be his partner in the redemption of the human race.' (*Auspiciatus.*)

Yes, indeed! Mary is Jesus's Mother: her blood flows in his veins: both psychically and physically they are more

one than any other mother and child could be. Therefore one and the same cause can wound both at the same time: therefore she also, his Mother and co-worker, can pay the price together with him. Jesus, our Redeemer! Mary, our co-Redemptrix!

§2. *The Value of the Ransom:* The price of our redemption, from our being ransomed from slavery to sin and the devil to the liberty of the children of God, is all one: Jesus's blood and life. But that price was paid by Jesus in suffering voluntarily unto death out of obedience to the Father. Therefore the same action, his obedient and voluntary suffering, is called either merit and satisfaction or the price of our ransom, according to the angle from which we view it.

It is the same in Mary's case: she was able to co-merit with Jesus for us all that he merited; she was able to atone with him; she was also able to pay with him the price of our redemption. It is the same action, seen from another angle: namely, that of her voluntary and obedient consent to bear her Son's Passion with him.

We have repeatedly pointed out that the value of Mary's action as merit and satisfaction differs greatly from the value of Jesus's action. Unspeakably and immeasurably high as the value we ascribe to Mary's merits and satisfaction may be, they must remain infinitely far below those of Jesus, for he is a divine Person.

But now a new factor seems to make itself felt, for while in assessing merits and satisfaction, we took nothing but acts of virtue into consideration, here in this action another circumstance comes into play. We are no longer reckoning Mary's action alone, but what she offered God in her action: Jesus's life, the price of our salvation! In merit and satisfaction, the action may be the important part; but in buying, the most important thing is the price. And that price is one and indivisible, a price of infinite value: Jesus's life!

We have already pointed out that in order to function as buyer in the full sense of the word, we have to offer a price that is in our possession. If a man purchases with someone

else's money, the real buyer is not the man who literally hands over the money, but the owner of the money. The price of our redemption was actually the property of Jesus, the God-Man, but he had not received that life by creation, but by true birth. And although Mary, his Mother, always remained a Virgin, she did nevertheless for Jesus all that other mothers do for their children. Jesus therefore received his human life in the true sense from Mary. Hence it was a part of Mary herself, so that what Adam said of Eve might have been said by the New Eve to the New Adam: 'Here . . . at last is bone that comes from mine, flesh that comes from mine.' (Gen. ii, 23.)

For this reason Benedict XV was able to say of Mary in the text cited in §1, that she had renounced her *mother's rights to her Son*. And even if Mary's mother's rights to Jesus are to be understood to a very limited sense (2, 5, §1), they nevertheless show that Jesus's life which he gave as price of our redemption was, in one way or another, *something that was Mary's*. She was thus not merely the co-payer of a price that did not concern her any further. And therefore in the redemption of our liberty she was really concerned as co-Redemptrix.

Nevertheless we must not lose sight of the fact that *the manner in which* this price belonged to Jesus and to Mary must influence the value of Jesus's and Mary's redemptive action. Here we have to measure with a double scale.

The price of our redemption really belonged to Mary, but only indirectly, that is to say: by its source. Immediately it belonged to Jesus alone, as being not Mary's but Jesus's life. And that life was infinitely valuable; it was in the moral order inestimable, because it was the human life of a divine Person. Here it is not the life that gives value to its owner, but on the contrary, the owner of this life, a divine Person, gives worth to the human life that he has deigned to take. Exactly what gave its infinite value to the price of our redemption was the fact that it was something belonging to Jesus. In so far as it was Mary's it could not possess infinite value. The same price therefore represents a different value according to whether it is in Mary's or Jesus's hands. And

therefore precisely the same is true of the value of Mary's co-meriting our salvation, co-satisfying for our sins, co-redemption of the poor captives that we are: that value is immeasurably great, but not infinite.

As then Mary's action with respect to our ransom for two reasons—one concerning the payment of the price and the other the price itself of redemption—remains far below what had been appointed by God for our ransom, it is not possible to call her redemptress: Jesus is our Redeemer and no one else. Nevertheless Mary, called to this by God and his holy Christ, was able to bear the redemptive Passion with Jesus and so to pay with him in her way the same ransom, that came also from her. Therefore after the example of the Congregation of the Holy Office—which exists for the protection of the purity of our faith—we may name her truly our co-Redemptress. (A.A.S., August 12, 1913.)

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Not until now do we find ourselves face to face with the difficulty, that *Mary herself was also redeemed*. It was mentioned in 3, 1, §1, where we said that there was no way out of it.

This objection, which reappears time and again, has been expertly formulated by Professor Mag. Dr G. Kreling, O.P. He put it as follows:

'Must it not be explained how Mary can collaborate in the Redemption, since the Redemption is presupposed as a first principle in the salvific order? Is there no difficulty here as to the certainty that a cause in a definite order could have no causality with respect to that which is first principle in that order?' (*Studia Catholica*, 1935, p. 480.)

The difficulty is serious and firmly founded, for it is an established philosophical principle that no subordinate cause can have causal influence on what is a first principle in the same order: for in that case such a cause would at the same time be cause of itself, which is simply a contradiction in terms. There too is the reason that it has to be utterly denied that anyone could merit sanctifying grace: grace is the principle of merit, and so merit cannot be the principle of grace. We have even brought forward the same proof for the proposition that neither the saints of the Old Testament

nor Mary herself could merit the Incarnation. We said then: 'The Incarnate Word of God is the meritorious *cause of grace* and so grace cannot be the deserving principle of the Incarnation, because though various causes may influence one another, it can never be in the same line. That would be self-contradictory.' (3, 2, §2.)

If then we must admit that Mary is included in the order of the redeemed, we are establishing redemption as a first principle and we must then be careful not to state the opposite, i.e. that Mary might have been able to exercise causality with respect to the redemption, which would be the case if she were our co-Redemptress together with Jesus the Redeemer.

This difficulty is really serious and strongly founded. But its strength is, however, at the same time its weakness. Its proof contains its solution. It would be an utterly devastating objection to the theory, if it used the expressions *redeemed* and *redemption* univocally, but that is just what it does not do.

Moreover, I observe again, and this time emphatically, that when we speak here of redemption, we mean it in its very clear-cut sense, which I indicated expressly in the preceding paragraph: that of *re-emere*, 'buy back'. This word by itself expresses the special aspect of the work of salvation inasmuch as Jesus's life was the price paid for our liberation from the tyranny of Satan. But we do not take this word (which is just what the difficulty does) in the incorrect colloquial meaning which applies it without further explanation to the whole work of salvation. And it is only in this broad and insufficiently outlined meaning of redemption that the difficulty arises. As Mary profited in the greatest measure by salvation—for Jesus is, of course, her Saviour and *more* hers even than ours, because she received more than all of us taken together—it is not possible for her to be the *cause of it*. But that is not the question here. We are speaking of the redemption in the strict sense of the word: of our redemption or ransoming from our captivity.

We have said that salvation does not affect Mary in every respect: Jesus did not satisfy for Mary, for she is utterly

immaculate and was never stained by any sin, personal or original; so that we must vigorously deny that salvation could affect her as redemption in the strict sense defined above. Just as Jesus did not make satisfaction for her, because she was never a sinner, he did not redeem her either because she had never lacked the liberty of God's children and had never been in the slavery of sin. But just as he merited for her that grace should forestall sin in her, he also merited for her that the same grace should preserve her from slavery. Therefore the definition of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception does not speak of her Redeemer, but of her *Saviour*. Jesus is Mary's Saviour, and therefore her Redeemer in the general sense; but he did not ransom her; and is therefore not her Redeemer in the strict sense. Mary owes him her entire salvation—that is to say, her preservation—but not her redemption, that is, release from tyranny. She is certainly redeemed in the sense of preserved, but not redeemed in the sense of set free from slavery. But the latter is the whole point at issue: she is co-Redemptress in so far as she was able to help with Jesus in buying us, poor prisoners, back from the slavery in which we were languishing and giving us the freedom of God's children; but that in no way appointed her cause of her own preservation: but we say that, having been herself preserved by Jesus, she was able to help him to set us free—which is quite a different matter.

We rid ourselves therefore of the difficulty by saying: in the nature of things Mary could exercise no causal influence on her own salvation, but she could have influence with respect to the redemption in its strict sense, that is to say, our liberation and sanctification. And this can be seen in an even stronger light if we remember that the question to be settled by the Mediator was not between God and men, but between an *offended* God and men *guilty of the offence*. Mary, being preserved from all sin and never having been a sinner, stands outside both of the parties concerned in the dispute. Of course, it is because of her Son and through his merits that Mary is innocent, but that does not interfere with the fact of her innocence. All of us, whoever we may be, and however saintly we may become, were once sinners and in

the power of Satan; Mary alone was never a sinner and never in the power of Satan. That is an unbridgeable difference and therefore the cause of the one need not be the cause of the other.

An attempt is sometimes made to argue away the difficulty with examples which are, I admit, very suggestive. When a child is born of a slave, it will itself be a slave. It can of course be freed (by means of money), not only after, but even before birth, even before its conception: it will then not be a freedman, but a free-born child. But in both cases, its ransom will be the same. We see something similar when other things are bought: it is unnecessary to put off buying an object until it is made; one can likewise order it beforehand so that it will never have been the property of its maker. But in either case it will have been bought.

These examples are suggestive, but they are completely fallacious. The slave-owner really has a right to mother any child; they are his property (otherwise St Paul would not have demanded obedience of slaves, but would rather have recommended them to run away) and the maker really has a right to what his brain and hands have made. That right must, according to the virtue of justice, be recognised, and therefore a real price is asked and a real sale is necessary when the object in question changes hands. But the devil is no owner, but a usurper who is committing a wicked injustice by keeping human beings in slavery to himself. And he can do this only in so far as God does not prevent it so as to punish sin justly. But in Mary's case, God definitely prevented Satan's misuse of his power. So where a true and real—though, on the devil's part, unjust—slavery and captivity is under discussion for the rest of mankind, so far as Mary is concerned, this tyranny has been forestalled. Had God not intervened, however, Mary would have been a slave, as she could not have defended herself in any way.

The sin itself is not the slavery, but slavery is a consequence of sin. Our first parents deliberately subjected themselves in their intellectual judgment to Satan, who clinched the bargain by keeping man in subjection, as we have said in the preceding paragraph. Everyone therefore to whom original

sin is transmitted is caught up in his turn into slavery. As that natural inevitability of being conceived in original sin, was hindered in Mary's case by God's intervention, there was absolutely no question for her even of danger of slavery, and *a fortiori*, of being ransomed from something that did not exist.

In the same way that salvation did not reach Mary in the form of *satisfaction*, because she had never been in the state of sin, it did not reach her either as *redemption* because she had never been Satan's slave. Salvation concerns her only under the aspect of *merit*, because Jesus earned for her the grace of the Immaculate Conception, which in the nature of things prevented any danger of slavery.

* * * * *

Must we then look on the work of redemption, the salvation accomplished by Jesus, as twofold? As though he had first merited salvation for Mary, and after that redeemed us together with Mary?

Obviously we must not assume two actions done by the Saviour, the first of which would have concerned Mary only, and the other, us. Once only did he suffer unto death; we may understand Hebrews x, 14 even in this sense: 'by a single offering, he has completed his work, once and for all, in those whom he sanctifies.' But just as we distinguish in God's entirely simple will different 'decrees', we may assume different 'moments' in the indivisible Passion of our Lord.

We do that after all in other theological questions. Let us take one that lies close at hand: the Incarnation. The whole of this mystery was completed by the Holy Ghost in one single indivisible instant, and nevertheless we very correctly distinguish in it a sequence, a first moment and then others, not in order of time but in order of relevance. For we are obliged to represent that action as follows: that Jesus's body is formed first, next the soul is created in that body, and by it the body is assumed; next, the body united with the soul is raised to the supernatural order by the infusion of sanctifying grace; after which it is united with the Person of the Word, followed by the Beatific Vision. As far as time is concerned,

all this happens at the same moment, but not where the order of things is concerned, for there the bond of causality between them has to be taken into account.

So that in the Lord's work of salvation we must accept as before and after, not in a time sequence but according to the order of things. As the Holy Ghost in one single instant formed the body and created a soul in it, and united both with the Word, and nevertheless the soul is the cause of the assumption of the body; just so Jesus effected, as far as time is concerned, in one Passion, Mary's salvation and ours, and yet Mary's sanctification must be thought of first, and she is, with Jesus and in dependence on him, cause of our redemption.

Just as, long before the redemption, the saints of the Old Testament received an effect of the redemption—i.e. sanctifying grace—so too Mary, according to the very words of the infallible dogmatic declaration of her Immaculate Conception, received, 'in view of the merits of Christ Jesus, the Saviour of the human race', the sanctifying grace, that was the principle of all her supernatural activity. Thus when Jesus actually consummated the work of redemption, she stood by him in the splendour and the glory and the strength of this exceptional grace, in the perfect innocence she had never been without, in order to bear the redemptive Passion with him. Her sanctification and preservation was one effect of Jesus's Passion, our sanctification and liberation was another, but between these results themselves there was again a relation of cause and effect. In the same way our election is cause both of our merits and of our salvation, yet between both these effects there exists again a relation of cause and effect: the merits are cause of our salvation, for we earn them.

With these examples, I merely want to demonstrate that it is no special instance when we confess that Jesus merited Mary's salvation and that nevertheless she was able to effect our salvation with him. But it is always the same defective logic cropping up again in this difficulty: Mary is redeemed and we are redeemed: therefore she cannot have co-operated in the redemption because she would in that

case have effected her own redemption. This is an error, because the same word is employed here to cover two ideas. Just because Mary's redemption is a quite different matter from ours, she herself can have been redeemed (understand: preserved) by Jesus, and yet have collaborated with him in our redemption (understand: liberation).

CHAPTER 5

ATONING WITH JESUS

§1. *Jesus's Sacrifice*: The culmination of all Jesus's work of mediation between an offended God and the human beings guilty of the offence lies in reuniting men with God by restoring their original friendship, lost by sin: 'This, as always, is God's doing; it is he who, through Christ, has reconciled us to himself. . . .' (II Cor. v, 18.)

Just as an offended man allows himself to be placated, if we render him a service which he values more highly than he detested the offence, God was willing to be reconciled to us by Jesus's obedience in sacrificing his life to his Father in order to compensate for our disobedience. By obeying even to the death of the cross, Jesus made entire reparation for our disobedience and freed us from the burden of our culpability. Only where reparation is not willingly made for the wrong done, have sanctions to be imposed: where satisfaction is refused, punishment is incurred. But as the remission of punishment cannot take place as long as the guilt is not removed, forgiveness of sins must precede the satisfaction. Thus, along our line of thought, Jesus's Passion first frees man from the guilt of sin, next from the penalty, and thirdly it reconciles man with God. But it has yet a fourth result: as long as a person feels injured by the wrong done him, the man who has injured him will not dare to expect favours from him. It is impossible to be in anyone's favour, as long as one has not endeavoured to make amends for the wrong done. Hence the last effect of Jesus's Passion, God's favours, presupposes that reconciliation has taken place.

In our human way of thinking the results of Jesus's Passion would occur in the following sequence:

- (a) Jesus takes away our slavery to sin (and so we call it: redemption);
 - (b) Jesus effaces our culpability (and so we call it: satisfaction);
 - (c) he restores friendship between God and man (and so we call it: reconciliation);
 - (d) he obtains God's gifts of grace (and so we call it: merit).
- In order to see it all more clearly and to make the proof easier we have not kept to this order, but our first question has been as to the aspect we call merit; then as to the other called satisfaction; and lastly as to the very special point after which the whole work of salvation is so often called: the redemption.

We have kept the most difficult question for the last: was Mary able to collaborate in any way in our reconciliation with God? This aspect is the most difficult of approach because Jesus's redemptive suffering regarded from this point of view is called sacrifice (III, 48. 6 ad 3 um). So that the question becomes that of Mary's eventual co-offering of the sacrifice, which the High Priest of the New Covenant offered once and for all.

For the sake of clarity it is most important for us to consider the *sacrifice* first. St Augustine wrote somewhere that every act we do to cleave to God is a true sacrifice (*de civ. Dei* X, 6). Now it is a fact that every act of virtue, whatever virtue may have been its immediate cause, may be called an act of religion, since it is produced under the influence of the highest of moral virtues, the virtue of religion. If then all acts of virtue, in so far as they concern the honour and service of God, may be called acts of religion, we may say the same by using the name of the pre-eminently religious act: sacrifice. In fact the term sacrifice has become as widespread in ordinary speech as that of religious act, perhaps even wider as a result of its misuse! How often is one asked to make a little sacrifice for a crusade against tuberculosis, for the Red Cross, for a local group anxious to decorate the district for the national festival, or for all sorts of sporting occasions and other good works.

There is no doubt that in these and in other cases we can really speak of an act of virtue (on account of one's good intention) but not every act of virtue is a religious act: it

becomes such only in so far as it arises from the highest of the moral virtues, the virtue of religion. Thus a man who does not believe in God, or is indifferent to his honour, may give an unheard-of amount in alms, or risk his life from true patriotism, and so perform a genuine and admirable act of virtue, but this act of virtue cannot be a religious act and it is therefore in no sense a sacrifice. One who does not know God cannot serve him or make him a sacrificial offering. 'Nobody reaches God's presence until he has learned to believe that God exists' (Heb. xi, 6). In such cases the use of the term 'offering' in the sense of sacrifice is incorrect. But if the virtuous acts referred to are done in accordance with the daily intention expressed in the formula 'for the greater honour and glory of God', then they may be called indirect acts of the virtue of religion. The word 'sacrifice' is not out of place in that case, but it is not being used in its strict sense. However, speaking metaphorically, we may certainly call such actions sacrifices.

Consequently the word sacrifice may be used for actions that are the proper and immediate function of the virtue of religion. Thus a devout prayer is called a sacrifice (*vide* Ps. cxi, 2). Here the use of the term is right (not a misuse) and proper (not metaphorical) but analogous to the one act of the virtue of religion, to which the name properly belongs.

This act, to which the name 'sacrifice' is attributable in its fullest meaning, is one of the externally perceptible acts of the virtue of religion.

St Augustine expressed it thus: 'every visible sacrifice is the sacrament, that is the holy outward sign of an invisible sacrifice'. (*de civ. Dei*, 10, 5.) And St Thomas: 'the sacrifice that is offered up exteriorly, symbolises the inward and spiritual one by which the soul offers itself up to God.' (II-II, 85, 2.)

By sacrifice, as we are now using the word, we understand therefore: the interior self-surrender of the spirit through the understanding and the will, as a homage to God, expressed in the exterior ritually consummated cession of a sacrificial gift.

Hence the sacrifice must be estimated rather by the inner disposition accompanying it, symbolised by the exterior act, that is by the devotion of him who makes the sacrifice, than by the value of the thing itself that is sacrificed. Therefore Mary's offering of two doves which, as a poor woman, were all she had to give (Luke ii, 24 and Lev. xii, 8) was certainly of greater value than the offering of a woman in a better position who was bound to sacrifice a lamb and a dove.

It is a divinely revealed truth that our Lord and Saviour offered himself up to God on the altar of the cross in sacrifice as High Priest of the New Covenant. On this point we need only read chapters five to ten of the Epistle to the Hebrews. As long ago as the 3rd Oecumenical Council of Ephesus, this doctrine, derived from Holy Writ and from Tradition, was presented as of divine revelation (Denzinger 122).

Jesus's offering was his most beautiful and most splendid possession as a man: his life. Since it was richly endowed by grace as being the human life of a divine Person, it was so precious that its loss for a few days was much harder to bear than it would have been for an ordinary man to have to lose his life for ever (III, 46. 6 ad 4 um). It is worth while to notice in passing that, although Jesus's death was inflicted by violence, and its cause a grave crime the entire responsibility of which rested on the Jewish priests, nevertheless this Passion of the Lord, culminating in his death, was the sacred ritual of his sacrifice, symbolising Jesus's interior disposition towards his Father. It is true that the Passion was inflicted on him from without, but all the same 'he was ill-treated because he himself willed it' (Is. liii, 7). He endured everything of his own free will, for it was perfectly in his power in many ways to prevent all that suffering, and with it his death. That he did not prevent it, showed clearly and symbolised his inward frame of mind. He had affirmed in advance: 'No one can rob me (of my life); I lay it down of my own accord. I am free to lay it down, free to take it up again. That is the charge which my Father has given me.' (John x, 17-18.)

The sacred ritual, the sacramental ceremonies, with which Jesus, High Priest of the New Covenant, offered himself up

to the Father, was thus his freely endured Passion.

Like all other sacrifices, that of Jesus also must be more prized for its interior element than for its outward symbol, the sacrificial victim exteriorly offered.

Moreover this element is the most beautiful in Jesus's case. He suffered and died for love and obedience in order to repair by his suffering and death the honour of God which had been desecrated by mankind. The supernatural value of this love and obedience in the God-Man flows from the immense treasure of sanctifying grace which is their source. But as they were supernatural actions of a man who is God, the infinite dignity of the Person had to outshine even the actions themselves and make them in the Father's eyes not merely 'indescribably' but *infinitely* pleasing. And by this means, this magnificent homage offered to God in our name was able to reconcile us with him again. The wrong done to God and infinitely hated by him, because it was committed against him, was atoned for by an act of divine cult all the more valued by God that it was worship paid by an infinitely worthy, divine Person.

§2. *Mary's Help*: It is not difficult to prove the truth that Mary collaborated in one way or another in this reconciliation between God and man. The very fact that from the oldest times she was honoured as Mediatrix speaks for itself. How could this expression ever have been used if the very thing that gives a mediator the right to be so called, i.e. the bringing together of what was disunited, had to be excluded! So we find St Germanus of Constantinople calling Mary 'she who reunites those who were estranged'—a remarkably clearly expressed formula and wonderfully accurate (Migne PG, 98: 315). We also find different expressions stressing this very side of the work of mediation, such as: she who reconciles, cause of reconciliation, she who restrains God's anger, she who offers excuses for the guilty, she who finds reasons for leniency, peacemaker, etc.

Here I shall quote four Doctors of the Church:

St Bonaventure, O.F.M.:

'Abraham! You were willing to sacrifice your son, but you offered

a ram! But this glorious Virgin sacrificed her Son.' (*de don. Sp. S.*, 6:17.)

St Albert the Great, O.P.:

'She sacrificed her own Son and the Son of God for us all, freely consenting to his Passion; not as bread and wine are changed into his body and he is sacrificed under these species which are not naturally his, but in his own form, in which she had brought him into the world, just as he was made in his body from her own flesh and blood.' (*Mariale* 51.)

St Peter Canisius, S.J.:

'Truly great things were done to Mary by him who is mighty, so that she . . . sacrificed Christ as real and living victim for the sin of the world.' (*de Maria V. incomp.* 426,5.)

St Alphonsus Liguori, C.S.S.R.:

'During her whole life this sublime Virgin collaborated in the salvation of men through her love for them, especially when, on Mount Calvary, she offered up her Son's life to the eternal Father for our salvation.' (*Contra hereticos*, 25: 1.)

Now let us hear the voices of four Popes:

Leo XIII:

'By the Cross of Jesus stood Mary his Mother, to accept us as her children, she who, moved by her immense love, of her own free will herself sacrificed her Son to divine justice.' (*Fecunda semper*.)

Pius X:

'To this must be added in praise of the Mother of God not only . . . that she gave her own flesh, of which the sacrifice was then prepared for the salvation of men; but also the function of protecting and nourishing that sacrificial Lamb, and placing it on the altar at the appointed time.' (*Ad diem illum*.)

Benedict XV:

'In so far as it concerned her, she sacrificed her Son.' (*Inter Solalia*.)

Pius XI:

'May the sweet Virgin and Mother of God bless our desires and efforts. As she bore for us Jesus the Redeemer, fed him and offered him up as a sacrifice under the cross, she is and is piously called the Restorer by her mysterious union with Christ and by his utterly exceptional grace.' (*Miserentissimus Redemptor*.)

Very striking, too, is the short prayer that the Church places among the prayers in preparation for Mass:

'O Mother of pity and loving-kindness, most blessed Virgin

Mary, I . . . fly to thee in heartfelt love and confidence, entreating thy compassion. As thou didst stand by thy dear Son when he hung upon the cross, have pity and deign to stand by me too . . . and by all priests who are offering Mass this day, here and elsewhere throughout Holy Church. . . .

The *sicut . . . ita* cannot apply to the manner of this standing by, which is utterly different, but it does apply to the reality of this help. Just as truly as Mary stood by her Son when he was offering his sacrifice in a bloody manner without priests, may she stand by the priests, now that her Son has instituted his sacrifice to be offered in an unbloody manner by the hands of those same priests.

* * * * *

We have pondered how Mary as the true Mother of Jesus's body and soul had to suffer with him physically and morally (3, 1, §2), how her pain was inwardly connected with his, so that one and the same cause that made him suffer, made her suffer with him. Her anguish was very really bearing his with him. Naturally the reactions in Mary's soul differed from those in Jesus's soul; each of them had his or her own pain, grief and sorrow, because they both had a soul of their own, but these reactions, different in each, were produced by the same causes in each. Mary's own dolours were thus added to Jesus's own sufferings, but both bore and joined in bearing the same Passion. This made it possible for Mary's compassion to acquire, as co-payment for the ransom of our liberty, the character of co-redemption (3, 4, §1). But it was co-payment of the price that Jesus paid, and therefore did not add redemption to redemption! By her compassion, her bearing of Jesus's Passion with him, Mary was able to co-operate in the redemption accomplished by Jesus.

In like manner, on account of her interior union with Jesus, Mary's dolours also possess the character of collaboration with his unique sacrifice that reconciled mankind with God. Just as Mary was able to pay with Jesus the price of our redemption by bearing his Passion with him, in the same way she was able to offer up his sacrifice with him and so collaborate in reconciling mankind to God. There is no

question of Mary's offering another sacrifice as well as that of Jesus, just as there is no such thing as a ransom by Mary as well as by Jesus, but certainly there is collaboration by Mary in the offering of Jesus's sacrifice as well as in payment of the price. And therefore she is not only co-redemptress but equally co-reconciler.

In complete liberty she had accepted association with the redemptive Passion, as Handmaid of the Lord in the company of the Servant of the Lord (1, 1, §5), and therefore she collaborated with Jesus in offering his sacrifice, not only by her interior acquiescence and the renunciation of her mother's rights to the life of her Son, but also by her participation in the exterior ritual, the redemptive Passion freely borne.

Sacrifice is, as we said, built up of two elements, for what is offered outwardly is the sacrament, the sacred sign, the symbol, of the interior oblation by which the spirit offers itself. Both elements are an essential part of the sacrifice: the outward part would be by itself like a lifeless, soulless body, and the inward part alone would be like a disembodied spirit: the two together form the whole, just as only a body informed by a soul makes a human being. If Mary is partner of the divine Priest, as she is partner of the Redeemer, she must share both in the outward element, the sacred rites of the Passion, and in the interior element, signified by the exterior ritual.

There seems to be a difficulty here. We have said that the interior element consists in the surrender of the spirit by its intelligence and will in homage to God. It is beyond question that Mary, Mother of the suffering God-Man, can share in the exterior Passion and thus in the outward element. But how can she share in the inward element signified by the external one? For the surrender of Jesus's spirit by his intelligence and his will was so personal that Mary seems to have had no part in it! It may be said of course that Mary had in any case renounced her mother's rights, but that seems to me to concern merely the outward element; he can give his life as a symbol of his interior sacrifice, because his Mother acquiesces. . . .

In my opinion, we ought to fix our attention more upon

the fact to which the 3rd Oecumenical Council of Ephesus pointed:

'If anyone says that he offered himself up as a sacrifice for himself and not much more for us . . . let him be anathema.' (Denzinger 122.)

It is in *our* name, that Jesus, High Priest of the New Covenant, offers his sacrifice, as Head thus of the mystical body, the Church. Hence the exterior element symbolises Jesus's interior self-surrender precisely as Head of the mystical body. The sacrifice offered up outwardly is thus also symbolic of our interior surrender to God. If then Mary was able as Jesus's partner to collaborate with him in offering up his sacrifice, she is sharing not only in the symbolic exterior ritual, but also in the interior element symbolised: *her* interior surrender to God, but also *ours*. We have already pointed out (3, 2, §3) that Mary received sanctifying grace not only as a private individual, but as an official personality with a social function. We said:

'Whoever then accepts rightly or wrongly that God chose Mary to effect, with Jesus, the salvation of all men, must also accept that God gave her grace sufficient for effecting the salvation of all men. . . . Mary's grace, foundation of her merit, lies midway between the grace given to us as private individuals, and that of Jesus, Head of the mystical Body.'

Here we must carry the same line of thought further: Mary has also a share in the interior element of Jesus's sacrifice. In her free acceptance of the task of bearing the Man of Sorrow's Passion with him as his Mother, there lies not only a figure of her own surrender to God, but also the figure of *our* surrender, because we are the members of the mystical body of which Jesus is the Head and Mary the Mother. (See Conclusion.)

In 3, 4, §2 it is stated that, although Mary had no other price to offer for our ransom than that offered by Jesus, this same price represented quite another value in her hand than it did in his. This is true here again. The same victim differs in value according to whether it belongs to Jesus or to Mary: and this reason holds good as regards the value of the ransom of our freedom.

Mary's collaboration in the sacrifice of that victim also

differs from the sacrifice offered by Jesus, just as her collaboration in paying the price differs from the payment made by Jesus.

Hence, just as Mary's satisfaction, merits and co-redemption are neither in the order of strict justice nor equivalent to the result achieved, neither is her co-operation in the reconciliation. But just as her satisfaction, merits and co-redemption are for us of inestimable worth, so too is her co-operation in Jesus's sacrifice. Consequently we have a double claim to be reconciled to God: both on account of our Lord's Passion and on account of our Lady's co-Passion. In his own power he sacrificed himself for our advantage: in his power she sacrificed herself with him for our advantage.

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As Companion of the High Priest of the New Covenant, Mary was able to collaborate in the offering of the unique sacrifice, but she by no means offered a sacrifice independently: she is not a priest. She did not offer sacrifice any more than she suffered. Her Passion can be envisaged only as interiorly *one* with that of Jesus: it can be described only as co-suffering. Hence it is also not a sacrifice, but a co-sacrifice, co-operation in the sacrifice consummated by Jesus. Therefore Benedict XV says acutely in the text praised and quoted by Pius XI: 'In so far as it concerned her, she sacrificed her Son.' (*Inter Sodalicia*.) Just as Pius X in his well-known words about Mary's merit made the sharp distinction that she merited for *us* everything that Christ had merited, in the same way Benedict here makes an equally sharp distinction between what Jesus did and what Mary did.

St Albert the Great had already formulated it as follows: 'The Blessed Virgin was not admitted by the Lord into an office but into partnership and help.' (*Mariale* 42 and 165.)

Mary cannot be called a priestess in the true sense of the word, and hence we can here apply the words of St Thomas also:

'Such expressions ought not to be spread abroad as correct, but should be explained in their proper sense wherever they are used by the holy Doctors.' (III 4.3 ad 1 um.)

During the nineteenth century the title of Virgin Priest or Priestess came into use for Mary, and it looks as though Pius IX approved it in a letter of August 25, 1873, to Van den Berghe. Further, even in 1906 Pius X granted an indulgence for the invocation: 'Virgin Priest, pray for us'. But this invocation, contrary to the Pope's intention, gave rise to misunderstanding. Consequently the Church forbade the little pictures on which Mary is represented in the vestments of a priest (A.A.S. 1916, p. 146). The Supreme Congregation of the Holy Office forwarded a letter to the Bishop of Adria on March 10, 1927, to draw attention to the fact that an article had appeared in the review *Palestra del Clero* (a. 6, n. 6, p. 72), that was considered to be in contradiction with the above-named decree. The well-known theologian, Father E. Hugon, O.P., who had made enquiries on behalf of the editors, wrote on May 16, 1927: 'The Holy Office does not desire any further discussion of devotion to the Virgin-Priest.' (*Documentation Catholique*, 1928, n. 421 col. 809.)

Nevertheless what St Antoninus, O.P., Archbishop of Florence, teaches in his *Summa Theologica* (p. 4, t.15, c.10) remains true: 'Although, however, the Blessed Virgin Mary did not receive the sacrament of Holy Orders, she was nevertheless in possession of all the dignity and grace that is conferred by it.'

In the last section we quoted the short prayer in preparation for Holy Mass and we noticed that its *sicut—ita* refers indeed to the reality of Mary's help, but not to the manner of that help. This looks clearer now. For if we compare Jesus and Mary with regard to the causality of salvation, we cannot do better than recall what the Dutch Bishops taught in their letter of August 6, 1943:

'Just as she was conceived immaculate in view of Jesus's merits, so she performs in virtue of his merits alone, her task as co-redemptress and Mother of all men.'

We may say, in fact, with no fear of exaggeration, that Jesus did not need this co-operation. Without it his work would have lost nothing of its value, just as it did not gain in value by it. Mary alone gained by it: she received the dignity of being cause, for once God called her to be Companion of the Mediator, she became properly and truly
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cause of our salvation. Relatively to Jesus, she is the dependent, subordinate and accidental cause.

The most priestly function in the New Testament is the consecration of the bread and wine, by which Jesus's sacrifice is instituted (*Cat. Rom.* p. 2 n. 83), and so its salutary virtue is applied to us (Denzinger 938). Here too Jesus remains the chief Sacrificer, who offers himself up by the hands of the priests (Denzinger 940). The priests are living instruments: as instruments they are handled by the High Priest, but as living beings they have movement of their own. Jesus thus sacrifices through them, but they themselves sacrifice through Jesus. If the salvific virtue of the sacrifice of the cross is applied through the sacrifice of the Mass that they offer up, then these sacrificing priests are, in their highest priestly function, applying, and therefore particular or specific causes.

But Mary, appointed to help Jesus in bearing the redemptive Passion, is a *general* cause (3, 1, §1) in the same order in which the priest is merely a particular cause. Mary who helped Jesus stands unspeakably far beneath him: but the same Mary who assists the priest while he celebrates, stands unspeakably far above him, as far as only a *general* cause can rise above a particular one. She assisted Jesus, for she was able to co-operate with him in the general salvific causality; she assists the priest who is celebrating Mass because she merited for him the grace to celebrate worthily and now allots it to him. Hence the little prayer mentioned already continues: 'so that we, helped by thy grace, may be able to offer a worthy and acceptable sacrifice.' The priest may then invoke all God's saints in his preparation for Mass, their connection with him is purely accidental; but his attitude to Mary at his most priestly function is *essential*.

A priest's non-sacramental actions are directed to his sacramental ones; but all the sacraments find their consummation in the Sacrament of sacraments, the most Holy Eucharist. But as the consecration of the bread and wine is so closely connected with her, who was honoured by God with such a glorious rôle in the work of saving souls, the whole sacerdotal task, and hence also the person of the

priest, must be under Mary's special protection. Let it then be true that the consecrated priest possesses an effect of grace, that Mary does not formally possess—she can neither consecrate nor give absolution—on the other hand, all (the others) are inferior to Mary as particular causes are to the general cause in the same order. Hence too Mary is called the Mother of priests.

CHAPTER 6

MEDIATRIX OF ALL GRACES

§1. *The Completion of the Atonement:* Against the Jansenist heresy the Church taught as a divinely revealed truth that our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ suffered and died for all men without exception. Innocent X, and after him, Alexander VIII and Clement XI, were obliged to inculcate this afresh (Denzinger 1096, 1294, 1382).

St John had already stated clearly:

'He, in his own person, is the atonement made for our sins, and not only for ours, but for the sins of the whole world.' (I John, ii, 2.)

Also St Paul:

'God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself.' (II Cor. v, 19.)

'It is his (God's) will that all men should be saved and be led to recognise the truth.' (I Tim. ii, 4.)

This divine will cannot remain unproductive, but must have a real effect in the natural as well as the supernatural order. (*I Sent.* 46. 1. 1., *de Ver.* 23. 20 and ad 2um.) Therefore God's grace, contrary to the teaching of Calvin, is at the disposal of *all men*.

Notwithstanding all this, the Church confesses explicitly at the 19th Oecumenical Council of Trent:

'Although Christ died for us all (II Cor. v, 15) not all receive the benefit of his death, but only those to whom the merits of his passion have been applied. When Jesus addressed his *Consummatum est* to heaven and earth, his passion was indeed completed, but not his work. This had to be continued through the ages. When he died, a principle had been established, according to which the Father owed it to himself and to Jesus to reconcile individual human beings to the Godhead: to forgive their personal sins, to remit their punishment and to bless them. There was one condition: that these individual human beings should be submitted to

the action of this causality so that it might be applied to each of them in the necessary way, agreed upon and defined by the Father and Jesus.'

As we have already examined Mary's share in the universal salvific causality, there only remains for us to look more closely at her part in the *application of this universal causality* to individual human beings.

But just as the *one* reality of the universal causality has many aspects, so that we are obliged to treat separately of merit, satisfaction, redemption and atonement, so too the *one* reality of the application, which is the distribution of graces, presents different aspects, and we are therefore obliged to speak separately of mediation of graces, intercession and royalty.

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The notion *mediator* may be studied in its general character which must be present wherever and whenever mediation is mentioned; and consequently according to the special character of this or that special case. Therefore the Mediator between God and men, our Lord Jesus Christ, has attributes which belong to him in common with all other mediators, and other attributes which are to be found only in this particular case of mediation.

Speaking generally, a mediator must be a go-between accepted by two parties to effect their union by offering each of them something in the name of the other, to the satisfaction of both. But it is absolutely unnecessary for him to hand over personally what he has to offer. If a man for instance intervenes successfully in a strike, he will have made definite offers and concessions to the employees in the name of the employer, and to the employer in the name of the employees, but it is utterly unnecessary for him to pay out personally, for instance, the increase in wages agreed upon. Yet this would have to be done if it were a universal character of a mediator to hand out in person the fruits of his mediation. Nevertheless, what does not belong to the universal character of a mediator, might conceivably be required in a given concrete case of mediation.

This is so in the case of our Lord Jesus Christ. In this concrete case, he is obliged to act as Mediator between two parties not merely in order to bring them into agreement, but he must reunite them. For here we have a mediation between two parties who have to be reconciled.

Here we must emphasise a very important point: in the earthly Paradise God bestowed original justice on human nature as such in the persons of Adam and Eve, so that we rightly speak of the *state* of original justice; and since Adam and Eve deprived human nature of that grace by their sin, we also speak correctly of the *state* of fallen nature; but Jesus's reparation does not affect human nature, but only individual human beings. Human nature is not rehabilitated. And this explains why married people, baptised and living in a state of grace, produce, nevertheless, children who are tainted with original sin, a thing which would not occur if human nature had been rehabilitated. So that Jesus's mediation is not between God and fallen humanity, but between God and fallen men. There has to be reunion between God and individual men, but this takes place imperfectly in this life on earth. The sanctifying grace we receive in this life is an imperfect grace, not only because even those in the state of grace are constantly in need of graces of assistance in order to do good and avoid evil, but especially because sanctifying grace can be lost. It will not be perfect in us until we reach heaven where it will join each of us to God personally in an indissoluble union.

The mediation of the God-man, consisting essentially in the reconciliation of individual men with God, will not be ended until these individual men have attained the perfect grace of heaven. Benedict XV says therefore: 'The work of the Redemption is completed actually and forever in each human being by this gift (of a holy death) above all.' (*Inter Sodalicia*.)

Jesus's mediation between an offended God and the men guilty of the offence involves from the nature of things that it has not yet attained its end, and it is therefore no true mediation until it has reached every individual man and effected in him the perfect grace of heaven which cannot be

lost. Not until then are God and man reconciled.

It follows from this, or better it is implied in this, that the Mediator between God and men appears as universal cause of salvation not only by his life, passion and death, but he is himself the first distributor of graces. To be successful, his mediation must consist of two essential parts: the universal causality and its application to individual men. This is true for all who are saved: Jesus's distribution of grace is in the nature of things universal as far as the human beings are concerned who receive the grace, but it is also true for all the graces received by men. That is why Jesus's work will not be really finished until the last man qualified for salvation has entered heaven with body and soul.

Now it is a revealed truth that Mary has been appointed by God to be companion of the Mediator and united indissolubly with him by the closest of bonds (Pius IX, *Ineffabilis Deus*) in his complete victory over Satan. This being so, it is utterly unreasonable to exclude from this partnership precisely the application of the universal causality, unless, of course, this restriction were explicitly mentioned in the revelation. But the Church is far from being able to point to such a restriction. On the contrary she has been convinced from the earliest times that, as St Ephraim puts it:

'Through Mary all glory, honour and holiness, from the first Adam himself down to the fulness of the ages . . . has come and will come'. (Off. of Maria Mediatrix—4th lesson.)

We add here the witness of St Germanus, whose perfect definition of a mediatrix we have already appreciated:

'No one is ever set free from evil, but by thee, O immaculate above all; no one is ever granted any gift, except through thee, O most chaste; no grace of mercy is ever shown to anyone, but through thee, O most worthy of all veneration.' (Migne PG 98: 379.)

And now listen to St Cyril of Alexandria:

'We salute thee, O Mary Mother of God . . . through whom all creation after its captivity in the madness of idolatry, comes at last to the knowledge of truth; through whom holy baptism and oil of gladness are accorded to believers; through whom churches are founded all over the face of the earth; through whom the nations are brought to repentance.' (Migne PG 77: 991.)

St Albert the Great sums up everything when he says: 'The Blessed Virgin is very properly called "gate of heaven", for every created or uncreated grace that ever came or will ever come into this world came through her. . . . Likewise all good that ever came from heaven to earth and vice versa passed through her.' (*Mariale*, 147.)

Inasmuch as Jesus's activity as Mediator requires not only universal causality but also its application, because it is otherwise incomplete, Mary's activity as the Mediator's assistant must also be completed by the application of the general causality of salvation to each individual human being. For this reason the application—called distribution of graces—includes not only all the graces to be considered, but also all the human beings qualifying for them, and may therefore be called universal in this sense.

Hence we need not be surprised if the Popes not only do not yield in any way to the ancient witnesses of tradition in praising Mary as distributor of God's benefits, but also apprehend quite well the connection of the work of salvation here on earth and her collaboration with Jesus now in heaven.

Leo XIII:

'... so that she, who was handmaid in bringing about the mystery of salvation, might also be the handmaid of the grace that was to flow from it until the end of time. . . .' (*Adiutricem populi*.)

Pius X:

'By this union of suffering and volition between Mary and Christ she merited to become in the worthiest way the restorer of the lost world, and to that end, the distributor of all gifts.' (*Ad diem illum*.)

Benedict XV:

'... so that it may correctly be said of her that she redeemed with Christ the human race. As now, precisely for this reason, all kinds of grace that we receive from the treasury of the Redemption, are distributed as it were by the hands of the Mother of Sorrows herself. . . .' (*Inter Sodalicia*.)

Pius XI:

'O good and merciful Virgin, who didst stand compassionately by thy Son as co-redemptress when he was consummating the Redemption of the human race on the altar of the Cross . . . preserve in us, we beg thee, and daily increase the precious fruits of the Redemption, and of thy compassion.' (*Osservat. Rom.*, 29.IV.35.)

The incontrovertible connection shown by expressions such as: 'even so', 'therefore', 'for these reasons', teaches us that because Mary was permitted to do the one thing, i.e. co-operate in the universal causality of salvation, she also collaborates in the other, i.e. the distribution of graces. They are two essential parts of the one mediation: on which account they cannot be separated: both parts are necessary to the mediation. We are really dealing here with the consummation of the reconciliation between God and man. The companion of the Mediator between God and man cannot leave off her work half-way. Therefore it is really very striking that it is precisely in connection with the distribution of graces that we are wont to greet Mary as Mediatrix of all graces: for therein we really see the crowning point of the work.

§2. *The Distribution of Graces*: We can contemplate the Passion and death of our Lord and Saviour from different points of view and speak according to the angle from which we see them of merits, satisfaction, salvation, reconciliation.

But there is another aspect which we have not yet mentioned because we have to return to it here in considering the distribution of graces: we can also say that Jesus effected our salvation. It is the same thing again, but with a different stress. For in this case we are looking at the Passion in the light of Jesus's divine will: we are contemplating the instrument of our salvation. So much so that St Thomas attributes salvific causality not only to Jesus's Passion and death, but also to Jesus's burial, descent into hell, resurrection and ascension. We must understand this as meaning that Jesus's human nature, in which he became our Saviour, is the instrument of his Godhead, and in virtue of this has a specific influence on the accomplishment of our salvation.

This is really so obvious that, as Holy Scripture and Tradition concurred, the Church decided very early (at the 3rd Oecumenical Council of Ephesus) that:

'If anyone does not confess that the flesh of the Lord is life-giving . . . because it became the own flesh and blood of the

Word, which can vivify everything, let him be anathema.' (Denzinger 123.)

But the *manner* of this causality is quite another matter, and upon this theologians are divided. We shall not go deeply into it because it does not enter into our plan. We therefore simplify it as follows:

There are two ways of using the word cause. One is called the cause of something even if one has had no direct influence on the achievement of the effect, but has worked on the will of him who did produce the effect: e.g., one did this by giving that person definite advice, or by commanding him, persuading him, begging him, threatening him, or earning it as a reward from him. The important part is the influence on the will of the doer, not the working on the effect itself. According to the axiom, the cause of the cause is also cause of the effect, this influence on the will of the doer which makes him do, is rightly called causality; but, because it has not a direct influence on the effect, but only on the *will* of the doer, we call it moral causality. Many theologians hold the opinion that the instrumental causality of Jesus's human nature does not go beyond moral causality.

The other way of using the word cause consists in this, that what we call cause does exercise influence on the effect itself. Other theologians therefore think that Jesus's human nature—notice that we do not say his body, but his whole human nature, which includes his soul—is the instrument of his Godhead, so that something must result from the use of that instrument. The first group of theologians thus considers that while no direct influence goes out to the effect through the human nature of Jesus as instrument of his divinity, God produces this effect for the sake of what was done through human nature. The other group contends that the divine Person Jesus causes this effect *through* his human nature, as the instrument exercising influence on the effect. In their opinion, it is not *only* for the sake of what Jesus did through his human nature that grace is given to anyone, but that this grace is also given by means of the working of human nature.

And therefore St Thomas says:

'To give grace or to communicate the Holy Ghost is Christ's prerogative: he does so in so far as he is God, as author; but in so far as he is man, as instrument, because his humanity is the instrument of his Godhead. And therefore in virtue of his Godhead, his actions were salvific for us, especially by causing grace in us both by merits and by a certain activity.' (III 8.1 ad 1 um, Ver. 29: 4.)

Merit is a moral cause, without direct action on the effect; so if we take the activity named here to be moral causality, then exactly the same thing is affirmed in both parts of the sentence. Consequently he means by this activity the other, direct influence on the effect. This is why he says of Jesus's passion:

'Christ . . . as man, works through merit and activity, but instrumentally. For it has been said that the Passion of Christ is cause of our justification, both by merit and by activity; not after the modality of the chief cause, but after the modality of the instrument.' (III, 64.3.)

In speaking of the power possessed by Christ to work all kinds of miracles as God's instrument, two things are always excluded, namely: creation and annihilation. But if this activity is only moral, there is no reason for excluding these two: why should God not be able to create or annihilate anything at the request of the Man Jesus? So that St Thomas must certainly mean, that Jesus-God, the divine Person, uses his own human nature as an instrument in the fullest sense of the word in order, by means of this instrument, to exert his action on the effect.

Before St Thomas's time, it was generally thought that grace in the strict sense of the word was *created*. Just as God creates, i.e. makes out of nothing, the rational soul for every separate man, in the same way it was held that he creates grace anew every time. If that were true, Jesus's human nature could exert no influence here, for neither in creation nor in annihilation can an instrument be used. At present, however, the common opinion is that grace is not created but *made*, i.e. not out of nothing but out of something: it is, like all other qualities, evoked from the potentiality of the subject. In this the use of an instrument is surely possible. Therefore there is also no further reason for attributing moral causality (merit, prayers, etc.) to Jesus's human

nature, while at the same time refusing it the action of the instrument with direct effect on the result.

There are theologians who answer the question as to Jesus's application of universal redemptive causality by granting that in the distribution of graces Jesus's human nature is used as an instrument for causing grace in men. Evidently the same question will be put at once with reference to Mary: *how* does she distribute grace? Is it *only* by her prayers, or has she also (but if so, as God's instrument) action on the effect itself? Difficulties have been brought forward on this point on account of the sacraments, which were after all instituted in order to produce grace in us. But the fact that Jesus's human nature is here instrumental does not frustrate the effect of the sacraments, so there can be no reason why the insertion of another instrument should do so. The only question is whether, in the series: God (chief Cause), Jesus-Man (*causa instrumentalis conjuncta*), sacrament (*causa instrumentalis non-conjuncta*), Mary can be inserted as living *causa instrumentalis non-conjuncta*, and consequently whether she is such in actual fact.

Some have thought that this can be at least acceptable theologically; and others add that once we accept for Jesus's human nature and for the sacraments this causal action on the effect itself, we must, to be logical, accept it for Mary also.

Every instrument has its own kind of operation, proceeding from something in that instrument which is the principle by which the operation becomes effective. In the Man Jesus this principle by which he is the cause of grace is his own fulness of grace.

'As in all rational creatures Christ influences in one way or another the effect of graces, he is, according to his manhood, in a definite sense the principle of every grace as God is the principle of all existence. Hence, as all the perfection of being is concentrated in God, in the same way all the fulness and strength of grace is found in Christ, by which he can not only accomplish by himself the work of grace, but also bring others to grace, and on account of this he has the character of Head.' (Ver. 29: 5.)

This plenitude of grace in Jesus includes all the grace that is thinkable, and so he possesses grace in the highest measure in which it can be possessed (2, 2, §2).

St John wrote: 'We have all received something out of his abundance, grace answering to grace.' (John: i, 16.) Yet we did not receive out of his abundance in the sense that when he had given us of it, there remained less for him personally, as happens to a banker when he pays out of his own reserve of gold. Rather we received of Jesus's fulness, because in that abundance proper to him, he possessed the principle by which his human nature as instrument of his divine Personality can bring about grace in us.

Thus Jesus, again as God's instrument, could have given the apostles such a treasure of grace that they would have been able to communicate to men all the effects of the sacraments, without making use of these. They would have done it by a simple movement of their will, again in virtue of their own treasure of grace as the principle (III 64. 4) with which they effected the results of the sacraments.

We have already examined how Mary's abundance of grace must remain far below her Son's fulness. For Jesus had grace in the highest measure thinkable and Mary on the other hand had it in the highest measure in which she could have it. Moreover, results of grace received by others but not by Mary may be shown. Here we are thinking for example of the grace of the sacrament of Holy Orders.

If therefore we accept that Mary's mediation is universal, both as regards human beings and as regards the graces themselves, it seems difficult to admit for her a causality that would be more than simply moral. The hypothesis suggested above comparing the case of the apostles and the sacraments will not work because there is no mention in it of universal distribution of graces; but neither will the comparison with Jesus avail, for he possesses complete fulness of grace, and Mary does not. We may thus accept for Jesus and for the sacraments a causality with respect to grace with direct influence on the effect, and at the same time refuse it to Mary.

Nevertheless it seems to me that this reasoning is not correct. It may of course be that Mary's fulness of grace does not include all the effects of grace (2, 2, §3), but we must consider that it is not necessary for a cause itself to possess

formally what it operates in its effect. That is true only of the univocal causes, the effects of which are in the same order as themselves; but it is not true for analogous causes, for their effect is on a lower level. God does not see and hear as we do, but whatever perfection we have in these matters, he possesses, not formally, but in a higher manner by his intellect. We have shown that Mary did not receive grace as a private individual as we do, but as companion of the Mediator (3, 2, §3). Therefore the fact that Mary's fulness of grace does not extend to the *formal* possession of definite results of grace, cannot be quoted as against an ultimate causality with action on the effect.

I find another fault in this: Jesus has in actual fact absolute plenitude of grace. But he is the instrument through whom God distributes absolutely and universally all graces. This universality, however, differs from Mary's universal mediation of graces. The latter concerns us alone, while Jesus's mediation of grace concerns both us and Mary. Mary is Jesus's great masterpiece and she alone received more than all of us together. But her fulness of grace is also sufficient for her universal mediation of grace: which concerns us only. I therefore do not venture to exclude on the given grounds a *more* than moral causality in Mary's universal mediation of graces. The possibility of it seems to exist. The question is only: is this causality an actual fact? And since so many theologians still refuse this kind of causality to Jesus's human nature, I fear we shall find no arguments with which to prove the possibility of this causality in Mary to be an actual fact.

We saw above that according to St Thomas, Jesus the *man* is the instrument of the divine Person. I then remarked that he was speaking of Jesus's whole human nature and not merely of his body, as though, for instance, a material touch of his body were necessary. Therefore the Saint also recognises that in the hypothesis proposed earlier, the apostles would have produced the effects of the sacraments by a *movement of their will*.

For this reason I do not understand why people are now speaking, even in this context, about the *intentional* causality

introduced into sacramental doctrine by certain theologians. The question at issue is whether or not Mary in her universal mediation of grace is or is not a cause with direct action on the effect itself. If she is not, then she is merely moral cause, that is to say, God in that case always and everywhere grants every grace for the sake of Mary (for she merited for us what Christ merited, and she prays for us). If, on the contrary, she is really a cause with direct action on the effect, then God always and everywhere grants every grace *both* for Mary's sake *and* in addition by Mary as by an instrument. There is no other alternative possible.

SUPPLIANT OMNIPOTENCE

§1. *Completion of the Merits*: Merit and reconciliation may be different names for a single reality, the general salvific causality. Yet these two names are not synonyms, for they signify the same reality under different aspects. Therefore we may postulate something of salvific causality as merit, which could not be said of it as reconciliation, and vice versa.

The same is true for the application of salvific causality. Here too we find different names for a single reality, the distribution of graces, and these names are also not synonyms, for they throw light on the same reality from divergent angles. So that, as we can attribute something different to the Passion of our Lord, according as we designate it merit or reconciliation, in the same way we may ascribe something other to the distribution of graces according to whether we call it reconciliation or consummation of merits.

Hence, even if Mary's mediation of grace, of which we treated in the preceding chapter, could not take place otherwise than through her powerful intercession, it would still be true that the titles *Mediatrix* of all graces and *Suppliant Omnipotence* are no more synonymous than the names co-reconciliation and co-merit, so that they entirely justify separate consideration.

The word *prayer* may be taken in various senses, but the strictest meaning is: an exposition of our desire in the presence of God, hoping that he will fulfil it (III, 21.1). The point here is a desire of the will, the fulfilment of which is beyond our own reach and which we consequently present to God so that he may do what we ourselves cannot. We are speaking thus of the prayer of petition.

Such a prayer of petition may be explicit, when we give it expression by means of words from our lips or our minds; but it may also be a silent prayer, if we do not put the desire itself into words, but do or say something in which it is implicit. A striking example of a silent prayer was once given by a Rotterdam beggar. He did not want to be caught begging by the police, and for this reason had himself wheeled about in an invalid-chair. But he had hung a placard on his breast which read: 'It is most unfortunate to be blind and paralysed'. The man asked for nothing; he did not even affirm that he was himself blind and paralysed, and yet everyone saw in it an urgent prayer to give him an alms!

The prayer of petition, whether explicit or silent, made for love of God and in a state of grace, is a good work, and as such has the double property of being meritorious and satisfactory. Meritorious, in so far as it fits us for heaven; satisfactory, in so far as it lessens our culpability in God's eyes. But besides this, the prayer of petition has this speciality that does not belong to any other form of good work: it has what we call the power of impetration. This is very important, for we can certainly obtain by our prayers much that we do not deserve. After losing sanctifying grace by sin, for instance, we cannot start obtaining it again, but our prayers for mercy may well be heard. In like manner we cannot merit conversion for others, for the principle of merit, sanctifying grace, is immediately directed to our own salvation only, but we can certainly under definite conditions obtain conversion for others. (*vide* II-II, 83.15 ad 2um.)

In heaven, the saints no longer have merit or satisfaction at their disposal, but they can certainly pray. They can pray for themselves in so far as anything might be lacking to their own blessedness, but above all their prayer of petition will be intercession for us who are not yet in heaven. There is no possibility of doubting the reality of this intercession, for Holy Church teaches it explicitly (Denzinger 984). Moreover it is also obvious that the saints in heaven, just like us on earth, are bound by the divine virtue of charity to desire heaven for other men and consequently to pray for it.

The impetratory power of their prayers depends on a double foundation: on the one hand, on the free, divine acceptance of these prayers (II-II, 83.11 ad 1um en 83.15), for there is no question here of any kind of right, but of an entreaty. But on the other hand a reason may be given in support of this entreaty, and the merits of the saints may be the reason why their prayers are heard: they can intercede for us, because they merited this during their previous life. (III Sent. 18.1.2 ad 2um, II-II, 83.11 ad 5um.)

The hearing of a prayer, the granting of a wish, is, however, strongly influenced by the personal dignity of the suppliant. Therefore we also try to obtain the favourable reception of certain prayers by asking some influential person to put in a good word for us. Holy Scripture gives us a beautiful instance of this:

'Bethsabee made her way to king Solomon, to prefer Adonias's request; the king rose to meet her and bowed low, then he sat down on his throne again, and a throne was brought for her, the king's mother, to sit down at his right hand. There is a light request, she told him, that I would make of thee; pray do not disappoint me. Make thy request, mother, said he; I will not turn a deaf ear to it.' (III Kings ii, 19-20.)

The saints had to earn that personal dignity. They received sanctifying grace for nothing but they had to increase it by their merits: they therefore had to merit to become holier. And consequently they also earned heaven, that is the consummation of their sanctity and the impossibility of losing it. The complete development of their supernatural personal dignity will now render their intercession for us more powerful with God, and all the more powerful the higher they have merited to be ranked in heaven.

The merits earned by the saints in this life are thus in a certain sense the cause of what these saints now obtain for us by their intercession. But in other words and concretely: when St Anthony obtains by prayer the conversion of a sinner, we find a double causality with respect to this conversion on the part of St Anthony. The impetratory force of his prayer is the cause of this conversion, because God grants it on account of his petition; but St Anthony's merits also make their influence felt, because they are the

cause that enables that impetratory prayer to achieve its effect. For the sake of clarity, we should stress that St Anthony never merited the conversion which is the object of his intercession, but he merited that his prayers should be heard. The causality of his merits with respect to this conversion is no causality of merits as such, but it attains the conversion *only* through his prayers. Therefore we are wont to explain or interpret as prayer the merits of the saints, on which its impetratory power is based. Hence we may say that the saints are our intercessors in two ways: first, by their prayer in the strict sense, in so far as they offer to God's judgment their desires for our salvation and all that contributes to it; and secondly by prayer in its extended meaning, that is by their merits, which, while not prayer, are understood as such, for they are always in God's sight, supporting the prayers of the saints. (IV Sent. 45.3.2.)

In this way God hears the prayers of the saints on the one hand by his own free sovereign acceptance of them, and on the other hand on account of the merits that these saints now praying have obtained during their life on earth.

We have pointed out in 3, 2, §1 that in the sight of God all human merit is borne and supported by the merits of our divine Saviour. Everything, therefore, that is granted to us on the intercession of the saints is seen to be finally nothing but the completion of the merits of the Passion of our Lord. Not only because Jesus himself merited for us the very object of these saints' prayer, but also because he supports with his own merits those of the saints on which the impetratory power of their intercession depends. Hence it is not only the Church militant, but also the Church triumphant that is praying *through Christ our Lord*.

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While Jesus, the High Priest of the New Covenant, was still a traveller on earth, he did not only suffer for our salvation but he also prayed for it. He was not bound to pray, for, as we said, prayer is ultimately the expression of an impotent longing. But Jesus, the divine Person, could himself bring about whatever he wanted, with his human

will. Nevertheless it was not always possible for him to fulfil his human desires, and this is true especially of his ardent longing for our salvation. Hence although he did not need to pray, because as God he could accomplish everything himself, it was indeed possible for him to pray, because he could not do so as man. Therefore he did not consider it beneath him to make the simple prayer of impetration—undervalued nowadays by so many of the devout—the cause of our salvation. And in making that prayer, he humiliated himself by accompanying it with all the exterior appearances that accompany our prayer also. He prayed on his knees (Luke xxii, 41), lying prostrate (Matt. xxvi, 39), with loud cries and tears (Heb. v, 7).

Does Jesus still pray in heaven?

There are theologians who regard it as contrary to the Majesty of the Lord seated at the right hand of God to say that he prays either silently or explicitly. So that they do not allow any prayer to Jesus in the proper sense of the word, but exclusively something which they interpret as prayer: Jesus's bodily presence in heaven.

This interpretation seems to me utterly superfluous and impossible. In any case what is in the nature of things a silent prayer, and thus prayer in the proper sense, cannot also be prayer in an interpreted sense.

Contrary to everything that we all rightly expect to happen to us at our resurrection, Jesus willed to keep his sacred wounds in the hands, feet and side of his risen body. The Apostle Thomas was allowed to put his hand into the wound in the Lord's side and his finger into the wounds of his hands and feet (John xx, 24-29). There was a valid reason for Jesus's keeping those open wounds in his glorified body. The presence beside the Father's throne of a human nature thus glorified and yet pierced would be a sign for God: 'so that as he has raised human nature so high in Christ, he might also be merciful to those for whom the Son of God had taken human nature.' (III, 57.6.)

Here we have very clearly to do with a case of the prayer that we described above as silent. Far more eloquent than the silent prayer of the beggar is that silent prayer for us,

implicit in the presence before God's throne of Jesus's glorious but pierced human nature.

And this is all the more conclusive when we reflect that these wounds are in their very nature a sign of Jesus's decided will to receive what he has a strict right to obtain by virtue of these wounds inflicted on his human nature, a right based on the merits of his Passion. This presence is simply and naturally a silent but intensely eloquent declaration, written in blood and tears, of Jesus's desire for our salvation and for all that can lead to it. And therefore no sound reason can be produced against our admitting likewise an explicit prayer. Of course it may be incompatible with the Majesty of our Lord, seated on the right hand of the Power of God, to throw himself down in the dust now or to pray with great outcry and tears (*vide* St Gregory of Nazianzen, Migne PG 36; 122 and St Augustine, Migne PL 35: 1898), but it is not in this that the essence of prayer consists. The essential part is the human desire directed to God; which seems to be the minimum that Scripture teaches us:

'Of those other priests there was a succession, since death denied them permanence; whereas Jesus continues for ever, and his priestly office is unchanging; that is why he can give eternal salvation to those who through him make their way to God, he lives on still to make intercession on our behalf.' (Heb. vii, 23-25.)

'The sanctuary into which Jesus has entered is not one made by human hands, is not some adumbration of the truth; he has entered heaven itself, where he now appears in God's sight on our behalf.' (Heb. ix, 24.)

'Who will pass sentence against us, when Jesus Christ, who died, nay, has risen again, and sits at the right hand of God, is pleading for us?' (Rom. viii, 34.)

'Little children, the purpose of this letter is to keep you clear of sin. Meanwhile, if any of us does fall into sin, we have an advocate to plead our cause before the Father, in the Just One, Jesus Christ.' (1 John ii, 1.)

So that Scripture is speaking here of the sole priest, who remains unique because there is no reason for him to have successors in the priesthood, because he, unlike the High Priests of the Old Testament, is not prevented by death from continuing to exercise his priestly function: he is always living in order to come forward on our behalf. He is doing

that now, he is our advocate and intercessor now, even after, contrary to all expectation, we have sinned again.

Consequently we need not limit to the general causality of suffering the appeal with which the Church ends all her prayers, we may also relate it to its application to individual men by our advocate and intercessor, the ever unique and eternally active High Priest of the New Covenant: an appeal thus to Jesus's own deep human desire for our salvation, and for all that conduces to it, which he directs to God with his human intelligence, so that the Father may fulfil with him and with the Holy Ghost these desires of Jesus's Sacred Heart. . . .

§2. *Gate of Heaven*: We said that God's dear saints merited during their earthly lives to be heard now, but that they did not merit the graces they beg for us.

It is said of Mary, on the contrary, that she merited for us all that Jesus merited. Hence, just as no grace is actually gained for us by anyone unless it has been merited by Jesus, in like manner no one actually gains any grace for us, unless it was merited by Mary. Just as Jesus's merits are directly related to the object no matter who has prayed for it and got it, so Mary's merits are also directly concerned with it.

The relation of Jesus's and Mary's merits on the one hand and that of all the rest of the saints on the other is thus exactly the inverse: all the saints have merited to be heard, but none of them has merited the object obtained by prayer; Jesus and Mary on the contrary have indeed merited that object, no matter who prayed for it, but they did not merit to be heard.

What personal dignity ought Jesus to have merited that could have added anything to all the inalienable dignity he possessed from the moment of his Incarnation? So he did not merit being heard. Therefore at the closed grave of his friend Lazarus he prayed: 'Father, I thank thee, for hearing my prayer. For myself, I know that thou hearest me at all times.' (John xi, 42.)

The parallel with Mary is evident. For however many

and great were the graces and privileges given to her, none was greater than that of her being chosen as Mother of God. We have already drawn attention to it: what is in the case of other saints their final cause, namely the Beatific Vision in heaven, is in Mary's case merely a means to something higher, for all the graces bestowed on her, even the highest of all, have to serve this one purpose: to raise her in the worthiest possible way to be the Mother of God and related to the two other Divine Persons. The honour of the Blessed Trinity is directly concerned in this.

What then should Mary have been obliged to merit, that could have added anything to this supernatural person's grandeur? She is heard because she is the Mother of God, just as Jesus is heard because he is the Son of God. Hence neither Jesus nor Mary merited being heard.

At the same time this throws a reasonable light on some people's view; they think that Pius XII's well-known words about Mary's merits should be understood as implying that Mary at the foot of the Cross had merited gaining all graces for us *now*: ultimately that would have meant that she had merited being heard. It is not so. Like Christ, she is always heard for her own unearned, personal dignity of Mother of God.

Hence Mary is like Jesus in this and differs also from all other saints: she did not merit being heard, but she did indeed merit the object itself of her own and of other people's intercession. Here I must draw a conclusion. We saw in the last paragraph that Jesus's presence alone before the Father's throne is a silent prayer, because his human nature is a sign of his desire for our salvation and all that conduces to it. Well, besides Jesus, Mary is the only human being whose whole human nature, body and soul, has been assumed into heaven. In that human nature she bore, together with Jesus, the bitter redemptive Passion, and although she received no material wounds her glorified humanity is none the less a sign of her brave and motherly longing for our salvation and all that leads to it. So that her presence in heaven with soul and body is also a silent prayer.

To this is added as well Mary's explicit prayer. Jesus is a

divine Person who can indeed pray in his human nature, but is not obliged to pray. But Mary *must* pray for her wishes to be fulfilled.

According to the saying 'unknown is unloved', it is clear that for those whom we do not know intimately we cannot make intimate wishes, but can pray for them in general only. Hence the intercession of the saints must not be understood as though every saint prayed for all human beings separately. For those whom they do not know individually they can pray in general only, just as we too pray for the conversion of sinners in general and only especially for those we know as individuals. So that there is a close connection between the knowledge that the saints in heaven have of men and things, and their intercession. We must beware of the mistaken idea that their special kind of felicity would enable the saints to know all men individually with each one's personal interests.

To understand a truth, to have judgment, to know, all this is part of the perfection of our intellect, but to have knowledge or not of particular things which are indeed thus, but might just as well have been otherwise, has nothing to do with the perfection of our mind. I quote two telling remarks from St Thomas:

'It does not belong to the perfection of my intelligence to know what you want or what you think, but exclusively to know what is truth.' (I, 107. 2.)

'It does not belong to the perfection of my intellect to know things at a distance that do not concern me.' (*de Ver.* 9: 5 ad 6 um.)

To know the truth is to be able to judge; to know things and happenings can be at best erudition, but is often no more than ballast. Only with regard to things that concern me do I need to know anything. The nature of happiness—the plenitude of all good—does not involve knowledge by the saints of all kinds of individual people, things, facts and events: that is all ballast, which has nothing to do with their perfection, or with happiness: truth alone can perfect them. Happiness does indeed bring with it the fulfilment of all reasonable desires; hence they will know the particular things and events that concern them, for it is entirely reasonable for a man to desire to know what concerns him.

And doubtless a part of this will be that a saint knows the prayers made to him in people's hearts or by their lips. Consequently in their blessed Vision of the Godhead, the saints will know all prayers we address to them (II-II, 83.4 ad 2um) although it does not follow from this that they will support all those prayers by their intercession. They pray only for those things that they know will be granted by God through their petition. There will always be many persons and interests left, for whom or for which the saints do not pray separately, because they know nothing about them. And even when they do know of them, they do not always lend them the support of their own prayer.

We have said that the saints in heaven know only what concerns themselves personally about things, people, facts and events on earth, and this is true for Mary also, but the application of this rule to her produces a different result. It *limits* the knowledge and hence the impetration of the other saints, but in her case it *opens wide* the field of her intercession. She is the Mother of God and the companion appointed by God and his Christ for the Mediator. She is called to come forward with Jesus as his helpmate both in the general redemptive causality and in the application of it to individual men. She is thus personally interested in the whole work of salvation. It is extremely reasonable that she should wish to know what the fruits of the work of redemption are, and this not only in general but in particular cases. It is thus her part not only to know what are the needs and wants of individual men but also how to satisfy them. And so Pius XI prays as follows:

'O loving and pitiful Mother, who didst stand compassionately by thy dearly beloved Son as co-redemptrix, while he consummated the redemption of the human race on the altar of the cross . . . preserve in us, we pray, and daily increase the most precious fruits of the redemption and of thine own compassion.' (*Osserv. Rom.* 9.iv.35, p. 1.)

As regards the power of Mary's intercession, the difference from that of other saints is, if possible, even greater than as regards the field covered by her good offices. For the power of prayer depends on the one hand on its free and sovereign acceptance by God, and on the other hand on the merits of

the saints. But as we said, Mary, in order to be heard, has only, like Christ, to appeal to the fact that she has already merited what she is asking for. Consequently, God is already bound—not to Mary, but to himself—to hear and grant her prayer. For which reason it is impossible to refuse her. What is true for Jesus is true for her also: her intercession is the fulfilment of her merits. What she merited for men as general, although subordinate, dependent and accidental cause, is applied by her intercession to individual men. Her merits and intercession belong together, just as her share in reconciliation and mediation of grace belong together. And because, in contrast with other saints, she did not earn the right to be heard, but is always heard on account of her personal, unearned dignity of Mother of God, therefore her prayer is always absolutely acceptable to God, though both this acceptability and the power of her intercession are based again eventually on the merits of Jesus Christ, our Saviour and hers. . . .

St John Damascene testifies:

'O Mary, whose mediation is never refused, whose prayer is never denied . . . through you we obtain, as long as we linger in this crumbling world, the means to do good works, and we are released from our sinful actions; through you we shall attain after our death to our high and eternal God.' (Migne PG 96: 647.)

And St Anselm:

'Therefore I seek your help as being the best and most powerful, after your Son's, that this world can offer. . . . What all others can do with you, you are able to do alone without the others. . . . I seek you thus, I take refuge in you, and do help me in all this, I beg it of you humbly. If you do not speak, no one will help. But if you pray everyone will pray, everyone will help.' (Migne PL 158: 943/4.)

Leo XIII summarised this splendidly in writing:

'However many souls there may be occupying places among the inhabitants of heaven, which of them would dare to vie with the great Mother of God in obtaining grace? Who is better able to see in the eternal Word under what anxieties we are bowed and what we need? Who can be more sure of a favourable answer from God? Who can be compared with her in loving, motherly care? . . . Therefore the Church cries to her urgently, using the

same words with which she appeases God: "Have pity on sinners".'
(*Augustissimae Virginis.*)

We have already quoted the words of St Albert the Great: 'The Blessed Virgin is very properly called Gate of Heaven, for every created or uncreated grace that ever came or will ever come into this world came or will come through her. . . . Likewise all good that ever came from heaven to earth and vice versa passed through her hands.' (*Mariale* 147.)

This is why Christendom found for her who as creature is wholly powerless, the all-embracing name of '*Suppliant Omnipotence*'.

CHAPTER 8

QUEEN IN JESUS'S KINGDOM

§1. *The Completion of the Conquest:* God is so great and so far beyond our comprehension that he is literally ineffable. Hence, very often we are obliged to have recourse to pure metaphor when we wish to speak of him.

But when we say that God is a King, that is no metaphor. He is King in the highest and fullest sense of the word, more King than anyone ever was or will be on this earth. He is the *King of kings* who will summon before his tribunal all those who have ever been kings and demand from them an account of their kingship. The earth is his and the fulness thereof, and nothing can escape his direction.

The Father is King, and the Son is King and also the Holy Ghost.

But the Son is also a human being.

Nestorius's heresy was that in Christ there were not only two distinct natures, the divine and the human, but also two persons: besides the divine Person, there was, he alleged, a human person also. This meant the violent disruption of the mystery of the Incarnation, and at the same time Mary's deposition from her throne as Mother of God (1, 1, §1).

Consequently for the same reason for which we must confess, as we point to the Man Jesus: this man is God, we must also confess: this man is the King of kings. Hence the man Jesus Christ is King in the same way as the heavenly Father, but he is also King in another way.

In the course of history there have been many kinds of kings. There have been autocrats who ruled according to their own ideas, inspirations and will; there have been also constitutional kings, bound by the law of the land, which they had sworn to observe. There have been some who

called themselves emperors, counts or dukes, and nowadays we speak of presidents. But words are of little importance, for the point is the meaning we attach to them.

And the point we are stressing here is this: the great task, the mission, of the king is to watch over the general welfare of the people entrusted to him. He must rule, govern, lead the people to its ultimate end. Should the king forget this task, or rather offend against the general welfare, so that it no longer is his rule of conduct; should he seek his own personal interest or that of his family or party, then his royalty would degenerate into tyranny, and he would justly be stigmatised as a tyrant.

Jesus Christ, the man, is King. He won a people for himself in his own blood by his Passion and death (Acts iii, 28), and liberated it from tyranny and slavery. He freed that race from the intolerable yoke of Satan to make it free with the liberty of the children of God. And now he rules that liberated people with wisdom and care, leading it towards its common welfare, its common ultimate destiny.

Jesus rules just as the kings of this earth rule, through laws and regulations, to which sanctions are appended: and those who submit to him, who respect his regulations, who fulfil his will and serve their King will attain the common ultimate aim of this Kingdom, which Jesus himself, in the presence of Pilate, the representative of the great Roman empire, testified to be 'not of this world' (John xviii, 36), but with God in heaven. The common end of Jesus's people lies far higher than anything merely earthly: it is divine and eternal.

But Jesus also rules in a quite different manner from the kings of this world. For what king, however skilfully he leads his people to their common end by appropriate means, has ever given his subjects strength to obey his laws and regulations? That is what Jesus does. He not only commands, but also makes it possible to execute what is commanded. And here I am not thinking in the first place of the means of grace, the sacraments, but far more of those innumerable graces of assistance and other gifts which make of us faithful servants of his crown.

Jesus is a *law-giver*; this is declared a dogma of faith by the

19th Oecumenical Council of Trent (Denzinger 831), and Pius XI, in his magnificent encyclical *Quas Primas*, ascribes explicitly to him the threefold royal power, legislative, judicial and executive. Jesus exercised that legislative power by giving us divine revelation and showing us the way of salvation by word and example. Nevertheless the emphasis does not lie here. The main point and the whole force of the New Testament, which perfects the Old, is in the grace of the Holy Spirit. All that prepares the way and disposes man for grace, or has reference to the fruitful use of grace, is secondary. Hence in the New Testament, the teaching by word and example, whether about things that are to be believed or about things to be done, comes in the second place, while grace is put absolutely first. (I-II, 106.1.) Therefore for Jesus as law-giver it is far more important to enrich his people with the grace that gives the light of faith, and the strength to live according to that faith, leading the people thus to its goal by help from within, than it is to make exterior laws which merely prepare the way for grace, or point out how to use it well.

To try to assign a place, time or period in the work of salvation to Jesus's Kingship or to his royal actions is a mistake.

For some have wished to apply here the distinction that is made when contemplating Christ as Head of the mystical body, the Church. For in that case there is a distinction to be drawn between the personal influence that belongs to the Head alone, and the exterior direction that may fall to the lot of definite functionaries. (III, 8.6.) Now an effort is made to ascribe to Christ in his quality of King nothing but exterior influence, so as to reserve the inward influence strictly to Christ in his quality of priest. The error here appears from what we have said. To rule is to lead the people to its common ultimate aim, and therefore what that influence is to be must depend on this aim that dominates everything else. The notion of king or of ruling does not include that of a purely external influence, but neither does it exclude it: all that is asked is that the people should be led to their general welfare by suitable means—that is by

means adapted to the end. Whether the question is one as to solely exterior influence or also interior influence does not depend on the notion of king, but on the end to which the king must lead his people. Hence for the sake of the essentially supernatural welfare of the people over whom Jesus reigns, he must exercise, as King, interior influence. *Precisely as King*, it is more appropriate that he should give grace, which is of primary importance in the New Testament, than that he should make laws or publish them.

Others ascribe to Jesus in his quality of King nothing but the distribution of grace, and reserve the acquisition of it—thus the general redemptive causality—to him in his quality of Priest. This too is mistaken. Pius XI teaches in his encyclical that Jesus is King, not only by hereditary right, but in addition by having acquired his people by the Redemption. And St Thomas writes:

'The foundation of town or kingdom is also one of the king's functions; for many founded towns to rule over them, as Ninus did for Nineve and Romulus for Rome.' (*de reg. princip.* 1: 13.)

These and similar ascriptions are based on purely material distinctions. We must therefore adopt a different line of approach. Royalty and priesthood are functions, or, if it is preferred, services, and hence are distinguished from one another by the acts proper to each, and so ultimately by their proper objectives. That alone is formal. Now the proper objective of the kingly function is, as we have already said, the general welfare, which it is incumbent on the king to promote; while the proper objective of the priestly function is public worship, which is entrusted to the care of the priest. King and priest differ from one another as widely as the promotion of general welfare differs from the exercise of public worship. While the king is interested in the general welfare as such, the priest has charge of a very limited side of community welfare: their duties lie poles apart.

However, as several aspects may be found in one and the same action, there is no objection to ascribing an action under one of its aspects to Jesus in his function of King, and in another aspect to Jesus as Priest. As King it concerns him in so far as this action interests public welfare; as Priest in

so far as the same action serves to honour God publicly or to make known God's benefits to men.

Hence it is utterly superfluous to make distinctions between Jesus's actions, and to predicate of one group of them that it is royal and of another that it is priestly. It all depends on the point of view from which Jesus's acts are being considered, and in virtue of which these acts are being attributed to Jesus as King or Priest. And although it is therefore true that to pray for graces may indeed be the act of a king, but certainly not a royal act, it does not in any way follow from this that we must look for anything more than a formal distinction between mediation of grace and distribution of grace.

The attribution of general redemptive causality may thus be considered under various aspects and light may be shed from different angles, which is why we have already drawn attention to the fact that this application, i.e. the distribution of grace, seen as the completion of the reconciliation between God and man, is called: mediation of grace, and when seen as the consummation of merit, bears the name impetration. Here I wish to add to the above that the same distribution of grace, the same application of the general redemptive causality, when seen as the completion of Jesus's war with Satan, in which he redeemed us poor captives by conquering him, is Jesus's royal function. As King, Jesus began the battle of giants in which he snatched us from the grasp and yoke of the infernal usurper. As King, he led the people he had freed, towards the realisation of our common welfare in heaven, where our liberty as children of God will at last be indestructible.

In this way the distribution of grace, the application of general redemptive causality will take place first of all through him, who is at once our High Priest, our Advocate and our King. As High Priest he completes the reconciliation obtained by his sacrifice; as Advocate, he completes the merits acquired by obedience; as King he completes the conquest won over the eternal enmity of Satan.

We also call Mary our *Queen*. Holy Church has done so since the earliest ages, not only by giving the principles from

which we conclude her royalty, but also by explicitly confessing her royalty, her dominion.

Certainly Mary is often called Queen in a metaphorical sense, as we still do even now in her litany, to express the fact of her highly privileged elevation above all that makes apostles, martyrs, confessors and virgins great. She is also called Queen because she is the Mother of the King of ages and can exercise influence on the government of her Son. Thus St John Damascene says of her:

'In truth she is really and properly Mother of God and Sovereign and she who is both Handmaid and Mother of the Creator, rules over all creatures.' (Migne PG 94: 1162.)

Those theologians who accept Mary's immediate co-operation in the general redemptive causality (3, 1, §1) naturally go further. They recognise in Mary not only a royalty in the metaphorical or derived sense, but in the proper sense: Mary is a reigning sovereign. For it is true of her also that the full triumph over Satan that began with the general redemptive causality was completed by its application to individual men.

In this way the parallel with Jesus is quite complete. Once appointed by God to be the New Eve, Mary co-operated with the New Adam in the great work of man's redemption. With him, but quite independently of him, she was able to bear the suffering that saved us. In this redemptive causality, Mary merited for us with Jesus all that he merited; with him, she made satisfaction for our sins; with him she reconciled us again to God; but she also redeemed us from slavery with him. As he founded his kingship by making of us his own people whom he had freed from tyranny, so too did Mary, daughter of David, obtain her royalty by acquiring a people for herself: his people is also her people, because she co-operated with him in liberating it.

Just as he governs that people by leading it towards its ultimate end, so she too rules that liberated people by leading it with him towards its common end. His people is her people. She rules in Jesus's kingdom. Therefore St Albert the Great says: 'She is Queen of the same kingdom of which he is King.' (*Mariale* 165.) And therefore St Louis Grignion de

Montfort prays: 'That your kingdom may come, let Mary's kingdom come!' (*True Devotion* 217.) And in fact, when Mary governs in Jesus's kingdom, we may indeed speak thus: where Mary governs, there is the kingdom of Jesus.

§2. *The Queen of all Hearts*: The proposition that Mary is a reigning sovereign undoubtedly finds support among the witnesses of tradition. St Germanus of Constantinople prays thus to Mary:

'Do thou hold the helm of the Church's hierarchy, and bring it to quiet harbours, sheltered from the breakers of heresy and scandal. Clothe priests with the festal garment of justice and of tried, inviolate and earnest joy in the faith. Guide the sceptre of the orthodox emperors, who cling to thee above all purple and splendour of gold, above all jewels and precious stones, as to their diadem and royal robe and as to the most durable ornament of their kingdom, in peace and progress. Overthrow hostile, foreign peoples who blaspheme thee and the God born of thee, and stretch them prostrate at thy feet. In time of war help the army that always relies on thine assistance. Strengthen the subject people that they may persevere, as God commands, in the happy service of obedience. Crown this city, thy city, whose tower and foundations thou art, with the triumphs of conquest, and protect her, girdling her with strength. . . .' (Migne PG 98: 307-310.)

St John Damascene provides the reason for this confidence when he makes Jesus say to his Mother: 'You have given me what was yours; share now what is mine! Mother, come closer to your Son, and reign with him who was born of you and with you endured poverty.' (Migne PG 96: 759.)

St Anselm speaks thus to Mary:

'You are truly a Sovereign, for you issue commands to these and to all other saints, even to angels, to kings and temporal rulers, to rich and poor, masters and slaves, great and small.' (Migne PL 158: 944.)

St Bernardine of Siena enlarges upon this:

'As many creatures as serve the Blessed Trinity, serve the glorious Virgin also. For all creatures, whatever place they occupy in creation, whether spirits like the angels, reasonable beings like men, material things like the celestial bodies or the elements, everything in heaven or on earth, whether damned or blessed, all that stand under the sceptre of divine government, are subject to the glorious Virgin.' (*Sermo de B.M.V.*)

St Albert the Great reasons it out and in doing so confronts Mary with the Pope, who as the highest of ecclesiastical rulers is merely called 'servant of the servants of God', 'Whereas she is Queen and Sovereign of the angels; no servant of God's servants is this Empress of the whole world'. Hence there is a contrast in competence and authority: 'in her is the fulness of heavenly power for ever and in virtue of ordinary authority', and while the Pope 'has the fulness of power in this life, but none at all in heaven, nor in purgatory, nor in hell, the blessed Virgin has all power in heaven, in purgatory and in hell'. It is then also 'from the same rule and the same kingdom from which her Son takes the name of King, that she takes hers of Queen'. (*Mariale* 43.)

The difficulties made nowadays by Protestants against such a royalty in Mary, as though this were an insult to Christ, date from as long ago as Luther himself, and so it is Peter Canisius who answers them:

'What then is the wrong done to Christ by our calling his Mother Queen of heaven? Or is she a slave or a servant-maid in heaven? If she was his companion in suffering, why not then in consolation? If she suffered with him, why should she not be glorified with him, as St Paul argues? Why after enduring with him should she not reign with him?' (*de Maria incomparabili* 5: 13.)

The general welfare of his people that Jesus has to promote, is, as the preceding paragraph explained, supernatural in its essence, and therefore in Jesus's government the pivot must not be sought in temporal or non-supernatural things. In a king's government, the provision of suitable means to the end desired is the most important consideration. This end, supernatural in itself, requires supernatural means, and temporal means only in so far as they are useful to the supernatural ones. In the same way acquiring the means is more important than averting possible eventual hindrances. This last is of course necessary but secondary. Mary then may reign over devils but it is in order to protect her own people. She may reign over all kinds of creatures but it is in order to lead her people to its ultimate end. St Louis Mary Grignon de Montfort could therefore write:

'In heaven Mary rules over angels and saints. As reward for her deep humility God gave her the power and the task of reoccupying

with saints the empty thrones from which the rebel angels were cast down by their pride. It is the will of the All-Highest, who exalts the humble, that heaven, earth and hell should willy-nilly bow to the orders of the humble Mary, whom he has appointed to be Supreme Sovereign of heaven and earth, Commander-in-Chief of his armies, Treasurer of his riches, Distributor of his graces, Worker of his great miracles, Restorer of the human race, Mediatrix of men, Destroyer of God's enemies, and faithful Companion of his great works and triumphs.' (W.C. 28.)

But he also writes:

'Mary is queen of heaven and earth. . . . Just as the kingdom of Jesus Christ exists above all in man's heart and inmost soul, according to these words: the kingdom of God is within you (Luke xvii 21), so the kingdom of the Blessed Virgin exists especially in the innermost part of man, that is in his soul. So that it is chiefly in souls that she is more glorified with her Son than in all visible creatures, and that with the saints we can call her Queen of all hearts.' (W.G. 38.)

Mary's great task as Queen is to win hearts for God, and to guide her people for whose freedom she bore with Jesus the redemptive Passion, to its general welfare: the happiness of heaven. Therefore she reigns on earth, therefore also she reigns in purgatory. The application of the redemptive causality both on earth and in purgatory is her constantly progressing guidance towards the goal: heaven.

She reigns in heaven also, however, where the accidental glory of angels and men is increased by Mary. For until the day of the Last Judgment the saints will continue to receive fresh revelations, and also further joys from the growth in number of the citizens of heaven, as well as by the triumphs that the Church achieves through Mary's mediation. Angels and saints are ready to obey her orders and to be of service to her.

She reigns over hell, over the devils who harm men, and over their earthly underlings, who resist Christianity. Not one of them can undertake the least enterprise contrary to Mary's will.

We must not however look on Mary as an extension of divine Providence, as though she had to realise all that Providence lacks. What is true of the guardian angels is also true of her, Queen of all hearts: they carry out God's

decrees: they will not hinder what God permits, nor will they permit what God wishes to hinder.

As we said in the preceding paragraph, the king possesses a triple power: legislative, judiciary and executive. What is typical of Jesus's legislative power—and so also of his executive power—lies in the distribution of graces, by which the range of the laws of his kingdom is understood, and hearts are inclined to accomplish what they understand; and obviously it is just there that the Queen of all hearts shares the royal direction.

Yet we must not neglect to observe that a share is allotted to her in announcing, publishing, and promulgating these laws. And that not only, and not even in the first place, because, like Jesus, she shows by her example how God must be served, but above all because she appears as a *Teacher*.

Eadmer gives the following reason, among others, that Jesus wished his Mother to remain on earth after his Ascension:

'It seems to me moreover that her sojourn among the apostles, even after the Lord's Ascension, was necessary and useful for our faith; for although the apostles were instructed in all truth by the revelation of the Spirit himself, yet she, in the same Spirit, grasped in an incomparably deeper and clearer way, the depth of that truth, and thus much was revealed to them by her that she had learnt about the mysteries of our Lord Jesus Christ, not by ordinary knowledge but effectively and by experience.' (Migne PL 159: 571.)

Denis the Carthusian:

'Some think, and not at all unreasonably, that after the sending of the Paraclete, all Christ's apostles and disciples, when there was something to be done, and especially in doubtful cases, had recourse to Mary, as to a gentle Mother and very wise teacher, and often availed themselves of her direction. . . . For this is the only reason why this Virgin bearer of Christ remembered all that she learnt, saw or heard, pondering it in her heart, in order to communicate it at the right moment and instruct others in it.' (*Opera min.* 3: 529.)

St Peter Canisius:

'Rupert teaches that with reference to Mary's history as described in the Gospel, two moments are worth our special attention: a time of silence while Christ himself was teaching upon earth: and

a time for speaking after he had been taken up into heaven, and the cause itself required that the wisest of Virgins should not be silent but should speak, so that the apostles might be taught by her and the young Church built up. So that, after the coming of the Spirit of God who teaches all truth, Mary showed herself a trustworthy Mother in her task of speaking for the others, and imparted much that was salutary to the disciples, heads and members of the Church.' (*de Maria Deipara*, c. 19.)

St Albert the Great:

'And Mary, his mother, kept in her heart the memory of all this (Luke ii, 51). The saints say that she kept it all in order to communicate it when the right time came to the evangelists: hence the holy Virgin preached through the apostles.' (*Mariale* 79.)

Leo XIII also favours this explanation:

'After the initial solemnity in the Cenacle, she took her share in this special and difficult office and carried it out generously. Even then she took care in a marvellous manner of the first-fruits of Christianity, by her saintly example, her authoritative counsel, her gentle consolation, her powerful prayer; completely the Mother of the Church, the queen and teacher of the apostles, to whom she imparted the divine Words that she kept in her heart.' (*Adiutricem populi*.)

The Congregation of Sacred Rites referred to this in the decree adding to the Litany of Our Lady the invocation: 'Mother of Good Counsel, pray for us' (A.A.S. 627-628).

As far as the judiciary power is concerned, i.e. power to reward good and punish evil, we seem to have actually seen in John v, 22 and Acts x, 42 that this is strictly reserved to Jesus. He is King of Justice and Mary is not.

St Albert the Great says:

'She might be called Queen of France in the proper sense, who would truly and by right be ruler of all that is in France. But the Blessed Virgin is truly and by right ruler of all that is in God's mercy and is therefore in the proper sense Queen of Mercy.' (*Mariale* 43.)

St Louis Mary Grignon de Montfort writes:

'God the Son . . . says to her: Take Israel for your inheritance. It is as though he said: God, my Father, gave me for my inheritance all the races on the earth, all human beings, good and bad, predestined and rejected. I shall rule the former with a golden sceptre, the latter with a rod of iron; to the former I shall be a Father and Advocate, to the latter a just Avenger, and the judge of all. But you, my Mother, you shall have as inheritance and

property the elect alone, figured by Israel. You shall lead, direct and defend them as their Sovereign.' (W.G. 31.)

Is that why Pope Pius XII called Mary's royalty 'essentially maternal' in his well-known radio address to the Portuguese people? (*Osserv. Rom.* 14.v.46.)

From all that precedes, it is apparent that, although Mary is called queen in the sense of ruling sovereign, and her royal power extends over a vast field, yet she may not be considered as an independent queen. She is not the sort of queen who has no one but God above her. She has also the Man Jesus above her, for he is her King too. Mary rules over us alone, he rules over her and over us. She also merited for us, but he merited for both her and us. In other words, the parallel between Jesus and Mary, of which we have not been able to lose sight for a moment all through our reflections, must also be retained here. For, in fact, not Mary but Jesus redeemed us, and drove Satan from the territory he had usurped; Mary was permitted to redeem us with Jesus, she is co-redemptress, she shares in Jesus's full triumph over Satan. All she might do by the strength of the Lord with reference to the general redemptive causality was co-operation with him by suffering with him. Just as her co-suffering depended interiorly on Jesus's Passion, her co-operation is dependent on Jesus's work. And the same is just as true in the application of the general causality of suffering. Jesus is the first and highest distributor of God's mysteries and all others must necessarily depend on him:

'Because he is an instrument conjoined in person to the Godhead he has a definite preponderance and causality with regard to the instruments not so conjoined.' (III 64: 3.)

Mary's sovereignty, her guidance of the people to its common ultimate goal, cannot possibly be conceived as something self-subsisting. Just as her suffering was interiorly dependent on that of Jesus and was thus a 'compassion', so her government is interiorly dependent on Jesus's government and therefore 'co-government'.

In the liturgy, Holy Church herself suggests this definition of the position. For on the feast of Mary Mediatrix of All Graces (May 31) she applies to Mary the words spoken to

Joseph by Pharaoh as he raised him to a very high rank. Pharaoh hung his own precious collar around Joseph's neck, set his own royal ring on Joseph's finger, and appointed him over the whole land of Egypt; he himself was to remain above Joseph by his throne and supreme power alone: 'I am Pharaoh; but no one in all Egypt shall be free to move hand or foot without thy permission.' (Gen. xli. 44.)

With that Joseph was appointed vice-king of Egypt: Pharaoh remained king, but Joseph was really to rule under Pharaoh!

With these words: 'without thy permission no one in all Egypt shall be free to move hand or foot', Mary's position is very definitely outlined. Jesus remains Pharaoh. He is and remains King of his people, that he freed by his own strength and with his own blood, and is leading to its ultimate end in his own Name and by his own authority. But see! beside the King stands the Queen! Through all his work, she has stood beside him, thus now also. She co-operated with him in freeing that people, she co-operates with him now in leading it to its goal. Jesus is the King, but under him, in his Name and with his authority, Mary really reigns.

Therefore Pius X says: 'Christ is seated on high at the right hand of Divine Majesty; but Mary stands at his right hand as queen, the surest refuge and most faithful help of all in danger, so that there is nothing to fear and no reason to despair under her guidance, her leadership, her favour, her protection.' (*Ad diem illum.*)

CONCLUSION

THE MOTHER OF MEN

IN THE doctrinal letter of the Dutch episcopate, which we have already quoted several times, referring to 'our Lady's place and role in the salvific order' (6 viii, 43), we read:

'Holy Church, which is the *columna firmamentum*, pillar and foundation of truth, and which teaches us with a divine mandate and under the guidance of the Holy Ghost the truths of revelation, puts before us ever more urgently and clearly that Mary has won and will continue to win yet another triumph over Satan. She teaches us that the Redeemer's Mother is at the same time associated with the great work of redemption; that the opposition between her and the devil did not concern her only but at the same time the souls who had fallen by sin into slavery to the devil and were being constantly waylaid by him; also that she is able to collaborate with Jesus Christ not only in obtaining the grace of salvation but also in applying it. She, the Church, teaches us that God made Mary Mother not only of his only-begotten Son, but also Mother of men, Mother of divine grace, *Mater divinae gratiae*.'

Mary the Mother of men! This is a very ancient heritage from the days of primitive Christianity. The antithetic Mary-Eve parallel, of which we treated in 1, 2, §1, is a proof of this: for death comes through Eve, and life on the contrary through Mary. Mary is not our ancestress in our natural life: but Eve actually is the natural ancestress of the human race. We are dealing however with the very life in reference to which Mary is contrasted with Eve: the life of grace, that Eve lost for us but that was won back again for us by Mary. To the end that we might be reborn after having been born dead, Mary voluntarily contributed her share, as we gather from the name New Eve.

Therefore we need not be surprised to find Mary's motherhood of men expressly mentioned from the earliest

ages, e.g. in Origen (*praef. in Joh. I, 6*); St Ephraim greets her as Mother of us all (*serm. de S. Dei Gen. laud.*); St Augustine as the Mother of Christ's members (*de sanct. Virg. 6*); St John Damascene (*or. 2 in dorm. V. Mar.*) and St Germanus of Constantinople (*serm. I de dorm. Deiparae*) call her our Mother; St Peter Chrysologus speaks of the Mother from whom we now live by grace (*serm. 64*) and of Mother by Christ (*serm. 99*); St Anselm speaks of our Mother (*or. 52*) Mother of salvation, Mother of all who believe in Christ (*or. 47*), Mother of Mercy (*or. 49*).

Here we have nothing to do with a more or less felicitous application of the axiom: 'the cause of the cause is also cause of the effect', meaning that Mary, being the Mother of Jesus, who won life for us, is more or less cause of that life and is thus our Mother. No! the title is real and fitting: Mary is our Mother because we received our life from her also. Here we must not overlook the fact that Jesus the Man, in virtue of the objective of the Incarnation in this salvific order, 'is that head, whose body is the Church' (Col. i, 18) 'through whom the whole body is organised and unified' (Eph. iv, 16) so that 'we, though many in number, form one body in Christ, and each acts as the counterpart of another' (Rom. xii, 5). On account of her free acceptance of this motherhood by acts of faith, humility and obedience, the Fathers placed Mary in contrast with Eve as the cause of our salvation. She is the New Eve, given to the New Adam in order to win back with him our lost salvation.

From early centuries the foundation of Mary's spiritual motherhood was seen in this voluntary and virtuous acceptance of the Motherhood of Christ, who is Head of the Church. St Ephraim (II: 324, III: 607); St Cyril of Alexandria (*Encom. in S.M. Deip.*); Epiphanius (*hom. 5 in laud. S.M. Deip.*); St Germanus of Constantinople (*hom. in dorm. Deip.*).

St Augustine puts it thus:

'This woman alone is not only in spirit but also in body both mother and virgin: also mother in spirit, not of our Head, who is our Saviour . . . but mother of his members, which we are, for she collaborated for love so that the faithful who are his members might be born in the Church. . . .' (*de Virg. 6*.)

Therefore Pius X writes:

'In the same womb of the most pure Mother, Christ took flesh but also incorporated with himself a spiritual body, which was composed of those who were to believe in him. So that we may justly say: when Mary bore the Redeemer in her womb, she also bore in him all those whose life was enclosed in the life of the Redeemer. All of us then, who live in union with Christ as members of his body, and are, as the Apostle says, of his flesh and bone, have come from the womb of Mary, like a body joined to its head.' (*Ad diem illum.*)

No one doubts that Jesus effected our salvation by all the actions of his life, from the first act of the incarnate Word in the heart of Mary until his last sigh. Nevertheless, we are wont to say that the Lord redeemed us by his Passion and death, and we are right in saying so. Jesus's actions were certainly directed to our salvation, but not without his Passion, ending in his death. His life was, in the fullest sense of the words, crowned by his death, and therefore theologians are accustomed to say that Jesus's suffering and death stand in a formal relation to all the other acts, which, in other words, received all the consecration of that death.

We have also still to pronounce to Mary's acts which were of service in our salvation. All those acts were directed towards our salvation, but not without her co-operation on Calvary. It is inexplicable that saintly doctors and popes should repeat over and over again that Mary became the Mother of men under Jesus's cross. No one can become what he already is: being puts a stop to becoming, because things become only in order to be. Mary's free consent to being the Mother of the Redeemer, Head of the mystical body, the Church, is indispensable to her spiritual motherhood of men, but it is a beginning that finds its consummation in her dolorous co-bearing of the Passion by which we are saved.

Holy Scripture relates:

'Jesus, seeing his mother there, and the disciple, too, whom he loved, standing by, said to his mother, Woman, this is thy son. Then he said to the disciple, This is thy mother. And from that hour the disciple took her into his own keeping.' (John xix, 26-27.)

St Antonine of Florence writes in his *Summa of Theology*: 'Behold thy mother (John xix). The heavenly Sovereign, our

Lord Jesus Christ, seated upon the throne of his cross, by these words gives his Virgin Mother to John as his Mother, adopting John himself as son of his Mother . . . but as John, translated, means "in whom is grace", everyone called John, not by name only, but by what is implied in his name, that is to say everyone in whom there is sanctifying grace, is given the Virgin Mary as his Mother, so that he may be told: Behold thy Mother. . . . The Mother of God has become our Mother . . . indeed the best and most careful and most perfect of Mothers in every way. . . . As Christ awakened us to the life of grace (which is more perfect than our natural life) by his suffering on the cross, in the same way the Virgin Mary bore us in the greatest pain, when she was suffering with her Son, who endured immeasurable pain for us. . . . She bore us when compassionating in the highest degree with the Passion of her Son.' (p. IV, tit. 15, c. 2.)

The following speak in the same way: Origen (Migne PG 14: 31); St John Damascene (PG 96: 733); George of Nicomedia (PG 9: 1476); Ludolph the Carthusian (*Vita J.C.* p. 2, c. 63); Denis the Carthusian (*in evan. John. en.* 46); St Albert the Great (*Mariale* 29); St Bernardine of Siena (*de pas. Dom. serm.*) 51; St Lawrence Justinian (*de triumph. Chr. agone* 18); St Alphonsus Liguori (*Glories of Mary*, 3 *dolor.* §5); St Francis de Sales (*serm. pro parase.* 19) and many others as well. (*Vide Terrien, la Mère de Dieu et des hommes* II; 1, p. 271, note.)

The fact that such evidence is to be found in so great abundance gains an added importance from the explicit declarations of the Popes, which are quite positive.

Benedict XIV:

'The Catholic Church, guided in the pursuance of her teaching office by the Holy Ghost, has always professed to honour her with a solemn cult as the Mother of our Lord and Saviour, and as Queen of heaven and earth, and to surround her eagerly with all possible childlike piety and affection as a most lovable Mother, bequeathed to us by her dying Spouse in his last expression of his will.' (*Gloriosae Dominae.*)

And Leo XIII formulated it thus:

'The mystery of Christ's great love for us is shown very clearly in the fact that at his death he bequeathed his Mother to the disciple John, who would remember his last testament: Behold thy son. But in John, and this was always the feeling of the Church, Christ was personifying the human race, and especially those who would adhere to him by faith.' (*Adiutricem populi.*)

Pius XII:

'Free from all sin, personal or original, she, the New Eve, offered him up to the heavenly Father on Golgotha, together with all her maternal rights and love, for all her other children tainted by Adam's grievous fall. By this she, who was Mother of our Head according to the flesh, became by a new title of suffering and glory, the spiritual Mother also of all his members.' (*Mystici Corporis.*)

The redemptive Passion borne by Jesus and borne with him by Mary is a general cause and must be applied. Therefore Mary is called to complete with Jesus the work begun by distributing graces. She is not only Mother of men in a general sense, but she is the spiritual Mother of each separate human being, all of whom possess in Jesus their elder Brother, the firstborn among many. We owe our spiritual life to her co-operation, not only in general, but each of us personally. That is why Mary embraces in her care not merely human life, but the personal life of each individual.

The conclusion arrived at by the Dutch Hierarchy in the above-mentioned letter is therefore very striking:

'Thus Mary becomes truly the Mother of men through whom the just obtain life, by whose hands that life is carefully tended, who prays as *Omnipotentia supplex* for the preservation and the growth of that life, and who finally, as Queen, enthroned beside the King of glory, receives those who keep that life and crowns them for eternal life.'