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REFLECTIONS ON THE PROBLEM OF MARY'S PRESERVATIVE REDEMPTION

When Pius IX defined the Immaculate Conception on December 8, 1854, the Catholic world heaved a spontaneous sigh of relief. The age-old controversy had been, at long last, officially settled by the Supreme Magisterium. The acrimonious conflicts which had sharply divided Catholic scholars for centuries had finally come to an end. No more incertitude. No more time-wasting debates. No more sterile theological quibbling. Or so it was thought.

The ink of the Pontiff's signature on the memorable document had not as yet dried when theologians became aware that, while the formula of the definition did settle some aspects of the ancient dispute, numerous and important questions had remained unanswered. Could it be that some of the answers were "implied" in the text itself, or at least in the body of the document? A detailed analysis was not long in coming. Its underlying principle seemed to be that, if a defined dogma marks the end of the road for whatever falls under the direct object of the definition, it is also a point of departure from which we may embark into further elucidations and discussions on the ramifications of the dogma itself, on its repercussions on related doctrines. As expected, in order to suit each interpreter's taste, the most diverse and even contradictory meanings were attached to one and the same word in the papal text. The multiplicity of opinions along these lines is simply baffling, as we shall see.

The present paper is not intended to be an in-depth study of the various questions which have arisen in connection with the Constitution *Ineffabilis Deus*. Only a summary of these will be mentioned in the preamble. Our aim here is more modest; it is limited to only one question, namely, the nature of

Our Lady's preservative redemption as viewed by representative theologians, past and present.

Bearing in mind the specific purpose of these reflections, we divide our treatment as follows: *First*: A preamble on dogmatic and non-dogmatic teaching. *Second*: Various opinions on Mary's preservative redemption. *Third*: Some attempts to harmonize Mary's preservative redemption with her immunity from the *debitum peccati*.

PREAMBLE

DOGMATIC AND NON-DOGMATIC TEACHING

The official text defining Our Lady's Immaculate Conception reads as follows:

... We declare, pronounce and define that the doctrine which holds that the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, at the first instant of her conception was preserved immune from all stain of original sin by a singular grace and privilege of the Omnipotent God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the human race, was revealed by God and therefore must be firmly and constantly believed by all the faithful.¹

A good deal has been written on what is and what is not *de fide* in the above text, and various theological notes have been attached to some of the doctrines therein contained.² For

¹ Pius IX, *Ineffabilis Deus*, in A. Tondini, *Le Encicliche Mariane* (2nd ed., Roma, 1954) 54. On the exact date of the Bull, see the interesting observations of R. Laurentin, *Rôle du Saint-Siège dans le développement du dogme de l'Immaculée Conception*, in *Vgl* 2 (1956) 84-85. On the actual drafting of the document, cf. Crisótomo de Pamplona, O.F.M.Cap., *Elaboración de la definición dogmática de la Inmaculada Concepción*, *ibid.* 174-200.

² Ample treatment by J. Alfaro, S.J., *La fórmula definitoria de la Inmaculada Concepción*, in *Vgl* 2 (1956) 201-275; cf. also A. Wolter, O.F.M., *The Theology of the Immaculate Conception in the Light of "Ineffabilis Deus,"* in *MS* 5 (1954) 19-72.

our purpose, it will suffice to state clearly what we regard as dogmatic and non-dogmatic, without further explanation which would overlap with what we shall say in subsequent sections of this paper.

(I) It is *de fide*:

- (1) that Our Lady was immune from all stain of original sin;
- (2) that this immunity coincided with the first instant of her conception;
- (3) that this immunity was due to a singular grace and privilege of Almighty God;
- (4) that this immunity was granted to her in view of the foreseen merits of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the human race;
- (5) that this immunity was by way of preservation;
- (6) that Our Lady was *redeemed* by Christ.³

(II) The Church has *not defined*:

- (1) the nature of original sin from which Mary was immune;
- (2) that the expression "all stain" includes immunity from the *infectio carnis*, or from the *debitum peccati*, or from concupiscence;^{3a}
- (3) that the word "singular" is to be understood in the sense of "exclusive";
- (4) that the word "grace" is to be understood of sanctifying grace and not of a divine, gratuitous favor;

³ For Alfaro (*art. cit.*, 270-271) Mary's redemption is at least *proxima fidei*. For Wolter (*art. cit.*, 29) the word "Salvator" in the text is equivalent to "Redemptor." Cf. also O. Casado, *Mariología Clásica Española* (Madrid, 1958) 519-520; Pedro de Alcántara Martínez, O.F.M., *La redención preservativa de María*, in *EphM* 4 (1954) 247.

^{3a} According to J. F. Bonnefoy, O.F.M., the words themselves of the definition, considered in their proper context, imply Our Lady's double immunity from the *caro infecta* and from all *debitum peccati*. See his *Le Vén. Jean Duns Scot, docteur de l'Immaculée-Conception. Son milieu, sa doctrine, son influence* (Roma, Herder, 1960) 482-491.

- (5) that the word "privilege" is to be understood in the sense of a "dispensation" instead of an "exemption" from the law;
- (6) that the merits of Christ were foreseen *post praevisum lapsum*;
- (7) that Christ redeemed Mary *per modum redemptionis* (reduplicative), *per modum satisfactionis*, and *per modum sacrificii*;
- (8) that the word "revealed" is to be understood in the sense of *formal* (explicit or implicit) instead of *virtual* revelation.

Nevertheless, the fact that the above questions were left undefined by Pius IX does not mean that the body of the papal document does not throw light on them, and in some cases actually settles them. For example, we believe that the body of the Bull explicitly rejects the theory of the *caro infecta*; that it excludes, at least implicitly, the *fomes peccati* from Our Lady in the first instant of her conception; that it seems to imply that the term "grace" used in the definition refers to sanctifying grace, and not merely to a gratuitous favor;⁴ that it understands "original sin" in the same sense that the Council of Trent understood it.⁵ We believe, too, that there are strong indications in the Bull to the effect that Our Blessed Lady was predestined together with Christ *ante praevisum peccatum*; that she was immune from every necessity to incur original sin; and that the word "privilege" should be understood in the sense of an "exemption" and not a "dispensation" from the general law of sin.⁶ Since we have already tried to justify some of these assertions elsewhere,⁷ we may dispense with further elaboration at this juncture.

⁴ Cf., however, Alfaro, *art. cit.*, 264-265.

⁵ Cf. *D-Sch* 774-775; 788-792.

⁶ Alfaro, *art. cit.*, 273-274, says the word means only a singular favor.

⁷ J. B. Carol, O.F.M., *A History of the Controversy over the "Debitum Peccati"* (Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure, New York, 1978) 171-181.

Part One

VARIOUS OPINIONS ON MARY'S PRESERVATIVE REDEMPTION

The question, "Was Mary redeemed by Christ?" has received different answers through the centuries, as follows: (I) Mary was *not* redeemed; (II) Mary was redeemed *sensu proprio*; and (III) Mary was redeemed *sensu improprio*. The first two answers represent the two extreme positions, although not in every respect, as we shall see. The third answer may be regarded as the middle position. We shall recall the more representative theologians in each group.

SECTION I

THE DENIAL OF MARY'S REDEMPTION

For obvious reasons, we distinguish between the pre-1854 period and the post-1854 period.

(A) *Before the Definition of 1854*

According to the eminent Orientalist, Maurice Gordillo, S.J., Theophanes Nicaenus (d. 1381) and Nicholas Cabasilas (d.c. 1396) should be listed among those who deny that Mary was redeemed by Christ.⁸ In the references to Theophanes which we have seen,⁹ this is not clear, although it may well be implied in the manner in which this theologian explains Mary's unique predestination and creation.¹⁰ Cabasilas is more explicit when he writes: "Before the common reconciliation, she alone made

⁸ M. Gordillo, S.J., in *Vgl* 11 (1957) 482; Id., *Mariologia Orientalis* (Romae, 1954) 161ff.

⁹ Theophanes Nicaenus, *Sermo in SS. Deiparam*; ed. M. Jugie, in *Ltm* 1 (1935) 18.

¹⁰ Theophanes Nicaenus, *Sermo*. . . ; *ed. cit.*, 23, 93.

peace; or rather, she never had, *in any way*, need of reconciliation, since she was from the beginning the first in the choir of [God's] friends. . . ."¹¹

In the 17th century, during the period of heated controversy over the *debitum peccati*, the Jesuit Augustine Bernal (d. 1642) openly taught that, since Our Lady had always been immune from original sin and even from the necessity to contract it, she could not have been redeemed by Christ. According to the author, we may say that Mary was redeemed in the sense that she was preserved from the *actual* sins she could have committed during her life.¹² We shall return to Bernal later.

A similar view is upheld by the Carmelite Peter of St. John (d. 1684) in his work *Maria stellis coronata*. He bases it on the fact that Mary was predestined to be Christ's partner in the work of redeeming others.¹³ She was not freed from sin because she did not have any; she was not even preserved, since she *could not* have incurred original sin.¹⁴

The selfsame argument is used in a petition which Livius

¹¹ Nicholas Cabasilas, *Hom. in Annunt.* 3; PO 19, 486; cf. G. Eldarov, O.F.M.Conv., *La dottrina dell'Immacolata nei maestri francescani e nei teologi palamiti dei secoli XIV-XV*, in *Vgl* 4 (1955) 188. Cf. Gordillo, *L'Immacolata Concezione e lo stato di giustizia originale nella mariologia dei palamiti*, in *Vgl* 4 (1955) 180. The ref. is to Cabasilas, *Hom. in Nativ.*; PO 19, 473.

¹² A. Bernal, S.J., *Disputationes de divini Verbi Incarnatione*, disp. 10, sect. 3, n. 32 (Caesaraugustae, 1639). Cf. Martínez, *La redención y el débito en María. Siglos XVII-XVIII*, in *VyV* 12 (1954) 46; Casado, *op. cit.*, 366. A few years before Bernal, Mary's redemption seems to have been denied by Juan de Pineda, S.J. in his *Adventencias a el privilegio onzeno de los de el Señor Rey don Juan el primero de Aragón, en favor de la fiesta y misterio de la Concepción de la beatísima Virgen María sin mancha de pecado original* (Sevilla, 1617); cf. B. Prada, C.M.F., *La redención y el débito de María en la "Ineffabilis," en sus esquemas y en los votos de los teólogos*, in *EM* 17 (1956) 503; Casado, *op. cit.*, 353.

¹³ Petrus a S. Joanne, O.C.D., *Maria stellis coronata. . .*; Ms. Bibl. Desierto de las Palmas (1675) 140-141; cf. Ildefonso de la Inmaculada, O.C.D., *De Inmaculata B. V. Mariae Conceptione apud Carmeli Teresiani Ordinem* (Ephem. Carmel., Romae, 1956) 136.

¹⁴ Petrus a S. Joanne, *op. cit.*, 157-163.

Parladore, Bishop of St. Mark (Italy), addressed to Pope Pius IX urging him to define the Immaculate Conception as a dogma of faith. After quoting *Gal.* 4:4, he tells the Pope: "Ex quo liquet Filium Redemptionis opus perfecisse cum Matre, in Matre, per Matrem: quibus positus, est qui asserat Redemptione Redemptricem eguisse?"¹⁵

Another theologian who wrote just prior to the 1854 definition is Joachim Forn Roget, S.J., whose opus on the Immaculate Conception was finished in 1850.¹⁶ According to Francisco de Paula Solá, S.J., who unearthed the manuscript and gives us a detailed analysis of its contents, Forn clearly affirms that Our Lady did not need redemption, since she had been predestined and raised to the highest grace *ante praevisum peccatum*.¹⁷

(B) *After the Definition of 1854*

Only two years after the Bull *Ineffabilis Deus* was promulgated, Bishop John Theodore Laurent, Vicar Apostolic of Luxemburg, published his voluminous treatise on the mysteries of Our Lady.¹⁸ Because of her singular predestination before the prevision of sin—the author argues—it was utterly impossible for Mary to have any necessity to incur original sin. Besides,

¹⁵ Livius Parladore, *Votum ad Pium Nonum* (Neapoli, 1850); in *Pareri dell'episcopato cattolico ... sulla definizione dogmatica dell'Immacolato Concepimento della B.V.M.* 7 (Roma, 1852) lxiv; cf. lxxvi on Mary's predestination before Adam.

¹⁶ Joachim Forn Roget, S.J., *De veritate catholica Immaculatae Conceptionis B. Mariae Virginis disquisitio octo disputationibus comprehensa* (Ms.). Cf. F. de P. Solá, S.J., *Un libro inédito del P. Joaquín Forn, S.J. sobre el débito de María Virgen*, in *Vgl* 11 (1957) 315-332.

¹⁷ Solá, *art. cit.*, 332. According to G. Tonini, O.F.M.Conv., Mary's redemption is not an essential element of the definition. See his *votum* addressed to Pius IX in V. Sardi, *La solenne definizione del dogma dell'Immacolato Concepimento di Maria SS. Atti e documenti* (Roma, 1904) I, 187; cf. Prada *art. cit.*, 504.

¹⁸ J. T. Laurent, *Les mystères de la Sainte Vierge Marie, Mère de Dieu*, tr. from the German, two vols. (Bruxelles, 1857). The German edition: Mainz, 1856.

her role as Coredemptrix of the human race precludes her being redeemed by Christ.¹⁹

In our own Country, Mary's redemption was explicitly denied by Nebraska theologian J. J. Loughran in 1925.²⁰ He reasons that, according to the text of the definition, Our Lady was "preserved," not "redeemed."²¹ Besides, he insists, the words "intuitu meritorum . . ." of the definition do not mean "by the merits" of Christ, but only "in view of them."²²

The learned theologian Bienvenido Lahoz, O. de M., is sometimes listed among those who deny Our Lady's redemption. It is true that in 1945 he wrote: "It is evident that both the spirit and the letter of the words of the definition *ab omni originalis culpa labe immunem* exclude from the most holy Virgin all relationship to sin, and therefore, *all debitum and necessity of redemption.*"²³

However, in a paper written in 1950 for the International Mariological Congress in Rome, Father Lahoz explains that when he says the merits which preserved Mary were not subordinated to the commission of Adam's sin, he does not deny that they were "redemptive." His position is that the ultimate and primary reason and efficacy of those merits must be found, not in the Passion of Christ, but rather in the acquiescence of the divine Word to the mission proposed to Him by the Father. This acquiescence was meritorious on the part of the Verbum *qua tale* and had, in the mind of God, a logical priority in reference to the "redemptive" merits realized through the Pas-

¹⁹ Laurent, *op. cit.*, I, 17: "[Marie] n'avait pas besoin ni de justification ni de rédemption."

²⁰ J. J. Loughran, *The Theology of the Immaculate Conception*, in *ER* 72 (May, 1925) 518-521.

²¹ Loughran, *art. cit.*, 519; cf. 521.

²² Loughran, *art. cit.*, 519.

²³ B. Lahoz, O. de M., *La Santísima Trinidad y la Santísima Virgen*, in *Est* 1 (1945) 141. On this author, cf. J. M. Delgado Varela, O. de M., *A la Inmaculada por la negación del débito (Doctrina del P. Maestro Bienvenido Lahoz, Mercedario)*, in *Est* 12 (1956) 35-38.

sion.²⁴ Just how the second Person of the Most Holy Trinity, *qua talis*, can "merit" in reference to the first Person, is explained by the author in his *Segundo Cuaderno de Teología*, published in 1953.²⁵

Another Mercedarian, Father Thomas Tomás, has enthusiastically endorsed his religious confrere's thesis. He claims that the only viable theory to explain Our Lady's immunity from the *debitum peccati* is to conceive of the Incarnation as totally independent of Adam's sin, and to have Mary preserved through merits not subordinated to the commission of sin.²⁶ For him, like for Lahoz, the merits which rendered Mary immaculate were those of the Verbum *qua tale*, based on the Eternal Father's pleasure on account of the Word's acceptance of His mission.²⁷ In this manner, he believes, the words "intuitu meritorum . . ." of the Bull find a satisfactory explanation.²⁸

The Claretians N. García Garcés and J. M. Alonso, both former editors of the prestigious journal *Ephemerides Mariologicae*, have often been faulted with denying Mary's preservative redemption. It is true enough that Alonso, for example, wrote in 1951: "[Mary] cannot be redeemed."²⁹ And García Garcés in 1954: "... The idea itself of a preservative redemption was imprudently introduced during the immaculist debate as an expedient to shut the mouth of the adversaries."³⁰ And

²⁴ Lahoz, *El voto de sangre y el marianismo mercedario*, in *ASC* 7 (1952) 481-482.

²⁵ We have not been able to locate this work. A summary of the explanation is given by Delgado Varela, *art. cit.*, 54. Cf. also Lahoz, *El centenario de la Inmaculada Concepción*, in *La Inmaculada y la Merced*, I (Roma, 1955) 1-9; on p. 8 the author speaks of Mary's "anticipated redemption . . . through the merits of Christ."

²⁶ Tomás Tomás, O. de M., *Los méritos de Cristo y la exención del débito*, in *La Inmaculada y la Merced*, 1 (Roma, 1944) 104.

²⁷ T. Tomás, *art. cit.*, 130-131.

²⁸ T. Tomás, *art. cit.*, 133-134.

²⁹ J. M. Alonso, C.M.F., *Perspectivas mariológicas de hoy y de mañana*, in *EphM* 1 (1951) 237.

³⁰ N. García Garcés, C.M.F., *Sesión académica immaculista en la Gregoriana*, in *EphM* 4 (1954) 361.

he added: "But if the redemption has to be understood in relation to the sin [of Adam], since the *in quo omnes peccaverunt* of St. Paul must not be understood of Mary, neither should there be any difficulty in saying that the Virgin was not redeemed. This conclusion clashes neither with the substance of the dogma nor with the legitimacy of the conclusion, but with the repetitious ding-dong to which we have accustomed our ears."³¹

If the above statements, as they stand, sound somewhat radical, they must be understood in light of further explanations given by the author himself, explanations which have moved us to place him under another classification (cf. section III below).

Something similar must be said in connection with Alonso for whom, according to Dr. Casado, Mary's redemption is non-existent.³² The allegation is based on certain statements made by Alonso to the effect that Christ's causality in preserving Mary from original sin was an "elevating" (not a "redemptive") causality;³³ and that Mary's preservative redemption is a "fiction."³⁴ This last affirmation is, of course, unfortunate and regrettable. But the one about the nature of Christ's causality, if understood in the proper context and judged according to parallel passages, is not so radical as it sounds. We shall return to Alonso's views under section III below.

Finally, we note the strange position of Father B. del Mar-mol, O.S.B., according to whom the dogma of 1854 does not require us to believe in Mary's preservative redemption. On the contrary,—he states—the Bull portrays Our Lady as having been predestined to collaborate with her Son in the redemption

³¹ García Garcés, *ibid.*

³² Casado, *op. cit.*, 387.

³³ Alonso, *art. cit.*, 226-227.

³⁴ Alonso, *De quolibet debito a B. M. Virgine prorsus excludendo*, in *EphM* 4 (1954) 225. See a similar statement in his *Redempta et Corredemptrix*, in *Mm* 20 (1958) 85.

of others.³⁵ Frankly, we do not see why this unique predestination of Mary cannot be harmonized with her preservative redemption. We shall elaborate on this point later.

SECTION II

MARY WAS REDEEMED "SENSU PROPRIO"

Not every theologian understands the expression "*redemptio sensu proprio*" in the same way. For those who denied the Immaculate Conception, it was equivalent to "*redemptio sensu univoco*." Which explains why many of them, with unassailable logic, regarded a preservative redemption as a contradiction in terms. As for St. Thomas, it is clear that "*redemptio proprie dicta*" meant a "liberation from sin already incurred," as Father Llamera has reminded us.³⁶ And this position had its advocates as late as the 17th century,³⁷ in spite of the explicit pronouncement of Pope Sixtus IV to the contrary.³⁸

If the above-mentioned understanding was logical enough for the maculists of old, the same cannot be said of the immaculists. Their notions concerning what constitutes a redemption *sensu proprio* are as disparate as their notions concerning the *debitum peccati*. It would be almost impossible to give a definition of that expression which would be acceptable to all, at least *in praxi*.

Once it became evident that there was no univocity between Our Lady's redemption and ours, it became imperative to have recourse to analogy. And it is here that the confusion begins. The problem is not that there are, as everyone knows, different

³⁵ B. del Marmol, O.S.B., *Marie Corédemptrice. Eadmer enseigne-t-elle que Marie rachetante fut rachetée?*, in *Vgl* 5 (1955) 198.

³⁶ M. Llamera, O.P., *El problema del débito y la redención preservativa de María*, in *EM* 15 (1955) 216. Cf. St. Thomas, *In III Sent.*, d.3, q.1, a.1.

³⁷ Ms. A. H. N., Madrid, Inq. leg. 4451, f.13; cf. Casado, *op. cit.*, 349.

³⁸ Cf. Martínez, *art. cit.*, in *EphM* 4 (1954) 245.

kinds of analogy, but rather that there are different ways of understanding one and the same kind of analogy.³⁹

Let us take, merely on a provisional basis, and without wishing to decide on its legitimacy, the more or less standard definition of analogy of proper proportionality which is current in many of our manuals. This is that analogy which is had when the concept predicated of various objects is found intrinsically in all of them, but in a different manner or in various degrees of perfection. A plausible example might be: God *lives*, man *lives*, the cat *lives*, the plant *lives*. The concept of life is intrinsic to each, but obviously not in the same manner or degree of perfection.

When theologians say that Our Lady was redeemed *sensu proprio*, we assume they mean that there exists an analogy of proper proportionality between her redemption and ours. That is to say, the concept of "redemption" is found intrinsically in her redemption and in ours, though in a different manner. But what *is* the concept of "redemption"? Right here we come face to face with a problem which has divided scholars for centuries, a problem on which oceans of ink have been poured.

Let us be specific. If you affirm that the concept of redemption coincides with that of "ransoming" something or somebody already under captivity (whether *de jure* or *de facto*), you will be accused of returning to univocity, which you have already ruled out. If you claim that the concept of redemption has undergone a gradual evolution through the centuries and

³⁹ On the subject cf. P. Coffey, *The Science of Logic*, 1 (New York, N.Y., 1938) 43-44; G. P. Klubertanz, *Analogy*, in *NCE* 1 (1967) 461-465; B. Mondin, *Analogy (in theology)*, *ibid.*, 465-468; M. T. L. Penido, *Le rôle de l'analogie en théologie dogmatique* (Paris, 1931); R. McInerney, *The Logic of Analogy* (The Hague, 1961); A. Marc, *L'idée thomiste de l'être et les analogies d'attribution et de proportionnalité*, in *RNPb* 35 (1933) 157-189; I. M. Bochenski, O.P., *On Analogy*, in *Thom* 11 (1948) 424-447; E. Laurent, *Le rôle de l'analogie en Théologie Mari-ale*, in *BSFEM* 4 (1939) 103-104; A. B. Wolter, O.F.M., *Summula Metaphysicae* (Milwaukee, Wis., 1958) 124-130.

has to be understood according to a given context, you are faulted with playing the semantics game and ignoring Catholic tradition. If you identify the concept of redemption with the generic concept of "salvation" as opposed to redemption *redu-plicative* and redemption *per modum satisfactionis*, you will be accused of distorting the meaning of St. Thomas' soteriology.⁴⁰ If you contend, finally, that the concept of redemption implies only a *preventing* of someone's fall into a captivity which he should (or would, or might, or could?) fall, then how do you explain that *this* concept is found intrinsically in all the analogues involved? It does not take much perspicacity to grasp the complexity of the problem.

To be sure, after the dogmatic pronouncement of 1854, every Catholic must admit that the concept of redemption is in some way verified in the idea of a "preservation" from sin. The trouble is that the Church never settled the question as to whether the concept of redemption in this particular instance falls under the category of analogy of proper proportionality or rather analogy of improper proportionality. Hence, theologians are free to follow either opinion.

Whatever the solution of this problem, the fact remains that the theologians who teach that Our Lady was redeemed *sensu proprio* understand this expression in the most varied ways, as we shall see immediately. For the sake of convenience, we may divide them into two groups: (A) The theologians of the late 16th century and those of the 17th century who wrote when the question was profusely debated; and (B) the modern theologians who have revived the ancient controversy.

⁴⁰ Cf. Llamera, *art. cit.*, in *EM* 15 (1955) 187-188, 213. In his dissertation, *A Logician's Reflections on the Debitum Contrahendi Peccatum* (in *MS* 29 [1978] 181), the eminent American theologian, William H. Marshner, after establishing a parallel between the concept of creation (as explained by St. Thomas) and the concept of redemption, comes to the conclusion that "Mary can be called 'redeemed' simply because she does not of herself possess grace but has it from another (because there can be no creature to whom grace is connatural) and through the merits

(A) THE 16th AND 17th CENTURIES

The different ways of understanding a redemption *sensu proprio* during this period may be distributed as follows:

(a) *To be redeemed "sensu proprio" Mary needed a debitum proximum*

The first representative of this group is Francisco Suárez, S.J. (d. 1617). He states: "Certum puto convenire in eo nos omnes, Virginem scilicet immaculatam fuisse *proprie* et vere redemptam per Christum. . ."⁴¹ For this type of redemption, however, he claims it was necessary for Our Lady to be included in Adam's pact, to have sinned in him, and therefore to have incurred a *personal* debt of sin.⁴²

The Mercedarian Francis Zumel (d. 1606) agrees: "Si immaculata Virgo exciperetur a prima propositione dicente quod *omnes in Adam peccaverunt* ipso peccante et violante legem Dei, sequeretur aperte Beatissimam Virginem Mariam non fuisse *proprie* redemptam per Christum."⁴³

Rejecting Salazar's peculiar explanation of Mary's redemption, Dominic of St. Theresa, O.C.D. (d. 1660) neatly puts it this way: "Praedicta praeservatio a culpa ob similem aequivalentiam [non] nisi abusive et *impropriissime* potest redemptio nuncupari."⁴⁴ And again: ". . . conceptus [redemptionis] cum

of another (because all the grace which comes into the world has come through the merits of Christ)."

⁴¹ F. Suárez, S.J., *De vitiis et peccatis*, tr. 5, disp. 9, s. 4; *Op. omn.* 4 (Parisiis, 1856) 615ff.

⁴² Suárez, *ibid.*

⁴³ F. Zumel, O. de M., *In I-II D. Thomae commentaria*, q. 81, a. 3, d. unica (Salmanticae, 1596) II, 547; cf. V. Muñoz, O. de M., *Francisco Zumel (d. 1607) y la Inmaculada Concepción*, in *Vgl* 8/1 (1955) 76. Similarly, P. Cornejo, O.Carm. (d. 1618), *De Conceptione B. V. Mariae*, disp. 2, dub. 2, n. 2-3; *Opera theologica*, 2 (Pinciae, 1627) 232; cf. Casado, *op. cit.*, 363.

⁴⁴ Dominus a S. Teresia, O.C.D., *De vitiis et peccatis*, disp. XV, dub. 3; *Salmanticensis FF. discal. Collegii: Cursus theologicus* 4 (ed. Venetiis, 1678) 598.

veritate et *proprietate* salvari nequit sine respectu ad peccatum vel ad peccati debitum illius qui redimitur."⁴⁵

A manuscript entitled, *Si liceat secundum Alex. VII bullam sequi opinionem contrariam piae*, written shortly after the Bull *Sollicitudo* of Pope Alexander VII (1661), explains that mere generation is insufficient to create a debitum in Our Lady; she must have been included in the general law of sin (*debitum proximum*), otherwise she would not have been redeemed by Christ *sensu proprio*.⁴⁶

(b) *To be redeemed "sensu proprio" Mary needed only a debitum remotum*

To his students in Salamanca, the distinguished Dominican theologian Dominic Báñez (d. 1604) would allow: "Qui excipiunt Beatam Virginem a contractione originalis peccati debent concedere nihilominus et concedunt [?] Beatam Virginem vere et *proprie* fuisse redemptam ab originali peccato per merita Christi . . ." ⁴⁷ For this type of redemption the author requires only the equivalent to a *debitum remotum*.⁴⁸

For his religious confrere, Esteban Méndez (d. 1604), Our Lady was properly and truly redeemed by the Blood of the Savior and therefore, in some way, she must have been captive in Adam.⁴⁹ He explains that this captivity was due to the fact that, being a child of Adam, Mary received an "infected flesh."⁵⁰ Later on, however, speaking of her predestination, he frankly

⁴⁵ Dominicus a S. Teresia, *op. cit.*, n. 70; *ed. cit.*, 586. We know, of course, that, according to the author, the only *debitum* which safeguards Mary's redemption is the *debitum proximum*. Cf. *ibid.* dub. 6, n. 210-217; *ed. cit.*, 562-564.

⁴⁶ Ms. A. H. N. Madrid, Inq. leg. 4452; cf. Casado, *op. cit.*, 364-365.

⁴⁷ D. Báñez, O.P., *In I-II*, q. 81, a. 3; ed. Heredia, *Comentarios inéditos a la Prima Secundae de Santo Tomás* (Salamanca, 1944) II 260.

⁴⁸ Báñez, *ibid.*, 261.

⁴⁹ E. Méndez, O.P., *Doce libros de la dignidad altísima de la Virgen sacratísima* . . . (Barcelona. 1604) f. 145v.

⁵⁰ Méndez, *loc. cit.*

admits that "she was not involved in the universal law of sin."⁵¹ The reason, Méndez tells us, is that Our Lady was predestined to share her Son's mission of destroying sin.⁵²

(c) *To be redeemed "sensu proprio" Mary needed no debitum at all*

One of the earliest theologians to have clearly taught that a redemption *sensu proprio* does not imply a *debitum peccati* is Francisco de la Torre (Turrianus), S.J. (d. 1584). In the soteriological work of Christ, he distinguishes the "integral" sense from the "disjunctive" sense. The former embraces the entire historical process of salvation, while the latter refers to its several aspects. Salvation *per modum redemptionis* (reduplicative) is only one of these aspects; it does not concern Our Lady. How, then, was she redeemed? Her redemption *sensu proprio* consisted in her receiving from Christ the Redeemer an "elevating" grace.⁵³ This is verified in her because she had no necessity (*debitum*) to incur original sin.⁵⁴

Substantially the same view is shared by the prominent Alcalá theologian, Ferdinand Q. de Salazar, S.J. (d. 1646), who expands considerably on the subject. His position may be summarized as follows: Our Lady was redeemed by Christ *sensu vero et proprio*. For this, no true *debitum* is required in her; a mere *potentia peccandi* is sufficient.⁵⁵ The author claims, strangely enough, that even St. Thomas would agree with that.⁵⁶ Concretely, how was Mary redeemed? Salazar answers that it was not *per modum redemptionis* (reduplicative) but rather

⁵¹ Méndez, *op. cit.*, f. 180v.

⁵² Méndez, *op. cit.*, f. 148r; cf. f. 150r.

⁵³ Franciscus Turrianus, S.J., *Epistola de definitione propria peccati originalis...et de conceptione Virginis Matris Dei...* (Florentiae, 1581) 26-27.

⁵⁴ F. Turrianus, *op. cit.*, 32-34.

⁵⁵ F. Q. de Salazar, S.J., *Pro Immaculata Deiparae Virginis Conceptione defensio* (Compluti, 1618) 186-188.

⁵⁶ Cf. St. Thomas, *In I Sent.*, d. 45, q. 1, a. 3, ad e.

per modum meriti elevantis.⁵⁷ And she received her redemptive (elevating) grace in such abundance that it rendered her Co-redemptrix of all others.⁵⁸ As if anticipating an accusation of novelty, the author hastens to assure us that his views are neither new nor daring.⁵⁹ We shall return to this interesting author under section III.

While endorsing the essence of Salazar's theory regarding Our Lady's immunity from the *debitum peccati*, John Perlín, S.J. (d. 1638) feels that the basis of his confrere's thesis (i.e., the Thomistic view on the prevision of the fall) does not sufficiently safeguard Mary's true and *proper* redemption. Following the Scotistic orientation, he explains it by means of the *scientia media*, as Sánchez Lucero and Didacus Granado had done.⁶⁰ This expedient, he believes, safeguards both Mary's redemption *sensu proprio* and her total immunity from the *debitum*.

The position adopted by Ambrose Peñalosa, S.J. (d. 1656) coincides with that of Perlín on the specific problem now under discussion,⁶¹ although he has his own peculiar theory to exclude Mary from the pact of Adam while protecting her true redemption by Christ.⁶² In general, he explains Mary's redemption *sensu proprio* the way Salazar does.⁶³ The same applies to John Velázquez, S.J. (d. 1669).⁶⁴

Another Jesuit who wholeheartedly embraces Salazar's views

⁵⁷ Salazar, *op. cit.*, 185-186.

⁵⁸ Salazar, *op. cit.*, 184-185.

⁵⁹ Salazar, *op. cit.*, 198.

⁶⁰ Joannes Perlinus, S.J., *Apologia scholastica sive controversia theologica pro magnae Matris ab originali debito immunitate* (Lugduni, 1630) 191, 214-216. On the *scientia media*, see Part Two of this paper.

⁶¹ Ambrosius de Peñalosa, S.J., *Vindiciae Deiparae Virginis de peccato originali et debito illius contrahendi rigore theologico praestructae et a nemine hactenus ex professo discussae* (Antverpiae, 1650) 59-78.

⁶² Peñalosa, *op. cit.*, 158ff., Cf. Casado, *op. cit.*, 361-362.

⁶³ Peñalosa, *op. cit.*, 278-285. Cf. Carol, *op. cit.*, 91-93.

⁶⁴ Joannes A. Velázquez, S.J., *Dissertationes et adnotationes de Maria immaculata concepta* (Lugduni, 1633) 167-171; cf. 41-44.

is John Eusebius Nieremberg (d. 1658). For him, too, Our Lady was redeemed *sensu vero et proprio*,⁶⁵ but not in the same way the rest of us were redeemed. To be sure, the grace which sanctified Mary's soul in the first instant of her conception was owed to the Blood of Christ, but this grace was ordained to the redemption of others, i.e., it was intended to raise her to the role of Coredemptrix of mankind.⁶⁶

(B) MODERN THEOLOGIANs

The diversity of opinions existing among the theologians of the 16th and 17th centuries concerning the requirements of a redemption *sensu proprio* find a remarkable reflection in the speculations of modern theologians. Let us recall a few of the more representative, following the same distribution as above.

(a) To be redeemed "sensu proprio" Mary needed a *debitum proximum*

In his controversial book published in 1919, Father Norbert del Prado, O.P. (d. 1918) contends that Mary was redeemed *sensu proprio*; that this kind of redemption is verified only if she had incurred a *debitum proximum in her own person*,⁶⁷ that this redemption cannot be harmonized with her predestination *ante praevisum peccatum*,⁶⁸ and that the Bull *Ineffabilis*

⁶⁵ Joannes Eusebius Nieremberg, S.J., *De concordia debiti negati in Deipara cum gratia redemptionis; Opera parthenica*, pars V (Lugduni, 1659) 474.

⁶⁶ Nieremberg, *op. cit.*, 481-482; cf. 437-439. See Casado, *op. cit.*, 384-385. Note the recurrence of the same idea in Franciscan Bishop Joannes Serrano (d. 1637). *De Immaculata prorsusque pura sanctissimae semperque Virginis Genitricis Dei Maria conceptione* (Neapoli, 1635) 459. On this author, see Martínez, *La Inmaculada Concepción según las doctrinas de Juan de Cartagena y Juan Serrano (s. XVII)*, in *Vgl 7/2* (1957) 227-240.

⁶⁷ N. del Prado, O.P., *Divus Thomas et Bulla dogmatica "Ineffabilis Deus"* (Friburgi Helv., 1919) 379; cf. also 122, 179.

⁶⁸ N. del Prado, *op. cit.*, 136.

Deus clearly teaches that Mary was predestined *post praevisum lapsum*.⁶⁹ The opinion that Mary was preserved from the debt of sin "evacuaret terminum a quo ipsius redemptionis, ideoque ipsammet redemptionis rationem."⁷⁰ According to the author, it is still true (after 1854!) that "Beatissima Virgo aliquo modo mortua est morte peccati . . . Beatissima Virgo aliquo modo contraxit peccatum originale; aliquo modo incurrit peccati originalis maculam . . . [...] Haec est via D. Thomae."⁷¹ And, of course, Fr. del Prado attempts to show that the Immaculate Conception defined by Pius IX is the same Immaculate Conception taught by the Angelic Doctor.⁷²

While not going to the crude extremes of Father del Prado, our next witness, Father J. A. de Aldama, S.J., has some points of contact with the Spanish Dominican, and he arrives there through a strange process of fluctuation. In his allocution during the public debate on the *debitum* at the end of the International Mariological Congress in Rome (1954), Father Aldama, after confusing the *debitum conditionatum* with the simple conditional form,⁷³ told the audience that the *debitum* he requires in Our Lady is purely "extrinsic" to her.⁷⁴ He does not explain how it is possible for a person to be antecedently included in the moral headship of Adam (as he holds) without being intrinsically affected by it. In this connection he makes the astonishing statement that *all* theologians admit that Mary

⁶⁹ N. del Prado, *op. cit.*, 241-243.

⁷⁰ N. del Prado, *op. cit.*, 130.

⁷¹ N. del Prado, *op. cit.*, 311.

⁷² N. del Prado, *op. cit.*, 334-335. On p. 380 the author writes: "B. Virgo in primo instanti suae animationis fuit culpae originali *obnoxia*, id est, *habuit necessitatem personalem* incurrendi originale peccatum." Compare that with *Ineffabilis Deus* where Pius IX says of Our Lady: "*Numquam maledicto obnoxia*." Cf. Tondini, *op. cit.*, 44. See the vigorous reply to Father del Prado given by J. F. Bonnefoy, O.F.M., *Quelques théories modernes du "debitum peccati,"* in *EphM* 4 (1954) 272-276.

⁷³ With all due respect to the author, "contraxisset" is not exactly the same as "*debuisset* contrahere."

⁷⁴ J. A. de Aldama, S.J., in *Vgl* 11 (1957) 476-477.

should have incurred original sin.⁷⁵ Surely this must have been a *lapsus linguae*. The author himself acknowledges elsewhere that this is not so.⁷⁶

Later on, in a survey of opinions written for the Spanish journal *Salmanticensis*, in which our question is treated *ex professo*, Father Aldama explains his position in greater detail. Here are some of the relevant points.

He begins by stating that Our Lady's preservative redemption is not necessarily defined in *Ineffabilis Deus* as having been formally a redemption, although this is clearly taught in the body of the document as well as in Pius XII's encyclical *Fulgens corona*.⁷⁷ Mary was redeemed, not *sensu improprio*, but *sensu vero*.⁷⁸ This redemption is not safeguarded unless we posit a *debitum* in Our Lady. What kind of a *debitum*? According to Aldama, a *hypothetical* one will do.⁷⁹ If we say that Mary was not included in Adam's moral headship, then her redemption becomes an impossibility.⁸⁰ Besides, against Martínez and others, our author holds that all the soteriological elements are verified in Mary (i.e., she was redeemed *per modum meriti, per modum satisfactionis, per modum sacrificii, and per modum redemptionis*), although in her case all these elements must be understood *praeservative*.⁸¹

Finally, in the third edition of his *Mariologia*, Aldama admits that one *may* defend that Mary was not included in Adam, although he personally feels that her inclusion "aptior omnino videtur."⁸² In a word: Mary was subject to a debt of sin which

⁷⁵ Aldama, *loc. cit.*, 477.

⁷⁶ Aldama, *Boletín mariológico en torno a la redención preservativa*, in *Salm* 1 (1954) 764.

⁷⁷ Aldama, *art. cit.*, 766.

⁷⁸ Aldama, *art. cit.*, 767. As if *sensus verus* were incompatible with *sensus improprius*.

⁷⁹ Aldama, *art. cit.*, 771.

⁸⁰ Aldama, *art. cit.*, 772.

⁸¹ Aldama, *art. cit.*, 776-777.

⁸² Aldama, *Mariologia*, in *Sacrae Theologiae Summa...*, 3 (ed. 3,

was proximate, extrinsic and hypothetical, all at once.

One of the theologians who have made an in-depth study of our question is Father Emilio Sauras, O.P. In his opinion, those who understand Mary's preservative redemption *à la* García Garcés, Alonso, etc., are actually teaching a redemption which is "equivoca e impropia."⁸³ (Let us note, in passing, that "equivoca" is not the same as "impropia." It is either one or the other.) For the author, who holds that Mary was redeemed *sensu proprio*, a preservative redemption "does not make sense" unless Our Lady was included in Adam's moral headship and sinned in him (*debitum proximum personale*).⁸⁴ And Christ—the author adds—redeemed His Mother, not only *per modum redemptionis* (reduplicative), but even *per modum sacrificii praeservativi*.⁸⁵ Those who conceive the *debitum* as a mere *potentia peccandi* receive Sauras' warning: This is not "secundum doctrinam definitam."⁸⁶ In his system, the "disorder" which is associated with the *debitum*⁸⁷ must be, presumably, a personal moral disorder in order to make possible Mary's redemption as he understands it.

Although apparently undecided between the proximate and the remote debt, the eminent Orientalist Maurice Gordillo, S.J. is sure about one thing: "Quare, alterutrum seligendum nobis est: vel, debitum admittitur ut locus detur Christi satisfactioni, vel satisfactionem a redemptione praeservativa expungere. Id autem ipse admittere non audeo. Nam, ut Christus Mariam redimat, esse debet ejusdem redemptor *sensu vero et proprio*. Sed redemptor vere et proprie non videtur esse qui aliquem extra

Matriti. 1956) 360. There is a fourth edition, but it is now out of print. The author informs us that the third edition is "better" than the fourth.

⁸³ E. Sauras, O.P., *Contenido doctrinal del misterio de la Inmaculada*, in *EM* 15 (1955) 48.

⁸⁴ Sauras, *art. cit.*, 29.

⁸⁵ Sauras, *art. cit.*, 45-46.

⁸⁶ Sauras, *art. cit.*, 50-51.

⁸⁷ Sauras, *La Asunción de la Santísima Virgen* (Valencia, 1950) 148. See the critique by Martínez in *VyV* 12 (1954) 28, n. 23.

servitutem uticumque collocat, sed qui illum a servitute qua detinebatur vel detineri debuisset, oblata satisfactione, eximit."⁸⁸

(b) *To be redeemed "sensu proprio" Mary needed a debitum conditionatum*

The well-known Dominican theologian Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange feels that "secundum hanc Bullam [*Ineffabilis Deus*], B. M. V. non fuit solum praeservata per Providentiam, sed *proprie* redempta per merita Redemptoris universalis. Remanet igitur debitum saltem conditionatum incurrendi peccatum originale, si ab eo non fuisset praeservata per Christum Redemptorem."⁸⁹ He stresses the point: "Dixi *debuisset*; non dixi *debutit*, nec *debebat*, sed conditionaliter *debuisset*. Et hoc omnes possunt admittere."⁹⁰

A similar stand is taken by Father Joseph M. Simon, O.M.I. when he writes: "[La rédemption préventive] a pour effet de soustraire entièrement à ce même esclavage Marie, qui, en sa qualité de fille d'Adam, *aurait dû y tomber comme tous les autres*. [...] Et n'allons pas croire que cette préservation de toute tache n'a été qu'une rédemption au sens *impropre* ou métaphorique. Ce fut, au contraire, la rédemption la plus réelle . . ."⁹¹ And on the next page: "Ainsi le mot 'rédemption,' appliqué à Marie et à nous, prend des sens divers, qui sont encore des sens *propres* et nullement métaphoriques."⁹² The author is too optimistic when he proposes his *debitum conditionatum* as "une solution qui tient le juste milieu . . . culminant entre deux positions extrêmes."⁹³

⁸⁸ M. Gordillo, S.J., in *Vgl* 11 (1957) 482. Cf. also his *Mariologia Orientalis* (Romae, 1954) 89-90.

⁸⁹ R. Garrigou-Lagrange, *O.P.*, in *Vgl* 11 (1957) 460.

⁹⁰ Garrigou-Lagrange, *ibid.*, 458.

⁹¹ J. M. Simon, O.M.I., *L'Immaculée Conception et le concours salvifique de Marie*, in *Vgl* 10 (1957) 51.

⁹² Simon, *art. cit.*, 52.

⁹³ Simon, *art. cit.*, 50.

(c) To be redeemed "*sensu proprio*" Mary needed only a *debitum naturale*

Few theologians have devoted as much effort to elucidate the problem of Mary's preservative redemption in connection with the *debitum* as Father Marceliano Llamera, O.P. In a lengthy article on our subject, the talented author emphasizes the fact that, according to the definition of 1854, Mary's preservation from original sin constituted a redemption *sensu proprio*. Any explanation which compromises this truth must be rejected by virtue of the dogmatic definition itself.⁹⁴ He bases his contention on the fact that *Ineffabilis Deus* speaks of Mary as "sublimiori modo redempta," and that *Fulgens corona* clearly states that Christ "Matrem suam *revera* redemisse."⁹⁵

What kind of a *debitum* is sufficient to make possible Mary's redemption? Llamera endeavors to show that the *debitum personale* defended by his religious confrere Sauras, is not required for a personal redemption;⁹⁶ a *debitum naturale* suffices.⁹⁷ The author admits that his *debitum naturale* involves a "disorder,"⁹⁸ since before the constitution of Mary's person, her body and soul were *preordained toward sin*.⁹⁹

The strange thing about Llamera is this: he acknowledges that, according to St. Thomas, "in order to be redeemed *sensu proprio*, a person must be *liberated* from a sin *already incurred*."¹⁰⁰ Now, if his reasoning moves along the lines of Thomistic principles (and he repeatedly reminds us that it does), how can the author harmonize those principles with his theory that Mary's redemption *sensu proprio* is safeguarded by

⁹⁴ M. Llamera, O.P., *El problema del débito y la redención preservativa de María*, in *EM* 15 (1955) 212. For a similar opinion, cf. Prada, *art. cit.*, in *EM* 17 (1956) 546-551.

⁹⁵ Llamera, *art. cit.*, 213.

⁹⁶ Llamera, *art. cit.*, 203-204.

⁹⁷ Llamera, *art. cit.*, 212.

⁹⁸ Llamera, *art. cit.*, 218-219.

⁹⁹ Llamera, *art. cit.*, 214.

¹⁰⁰ Llamera, *art. cit.*, 216.

means of a mere *debitum naturale*? We note also, in passing, that toward the end of his paper, the author suddenly changes the tense of the *debitum*-verb from "*debía incurrir*" to the hypothetical "*hubiera incurrido*."¹⁰¹ Obviously, they are not the same thing, as we have explained elsewhere.¹⁰²

(d) *To be redeemed "sensu proprio" Mary needed no debitum at all*

In a very thoughtful article on our subject, the distinguished Capuchin theologian Alejandro de Villalmonite has this to say: "Bearing in mind these papal words,¹⁰³ and the common consensus of theologians which they [the papal words] presuppose and ratify, it is rash to deny that Mary was redeemed by the Passion of Christ in a 'proper and formal' sense; and those who favor a redemption *sensu improprio*, of extrinsic denomination and of a metaphorical tenor are not free of censure."¹⁰⁴ The analogy in question—the author insists—must be "proper, per intrinsecam denominationem; a true analogy of proper proportionality."¹⁰⁵

What is precisely the content of this redemption? The author answers: "Mary was redeemed by the Passion of her Son in a most perfect manner, *inasmuch as* the merits of her Redeemer-Son conferred on her the grace of the divine maternity which bestows on her a sanctity and a dignity which are ontologically supernatural and of the same hypostatic order to which her Son belongs."¹⁰⁶ The author argues at length, and very co-

¹⁰¹ Llamera, *art. cit.*, 222.

¹⁰² Cf. Carol, *The Blessed Virgin and the "Debitum Peccati": A Bibliographical Conspectus*, in *MS 28* (1977) 185. See likewise the conclusion of this paper.

¹⁰³ The reference is to "sublimiori modo redempta" of *Ineffabilis*, and "revera redemisse" of *Fulgens corona*.

¹⁰⁴ Alejandro de Villalmonite, O.F.M.Cap., *La Inmaculada y el débito del pecado*, in *VyV 12* (1954) 93.

¹⁰⁵ Villalmonite, *art. cit.*, 94.

¹⁰⁶ Villalmonite, *art. cit.*, 95.

gently, to show the repugnance of any *debitum peccati* in a person enjoying Mary's supernatural category.¹⁰⁷ It is a little surprising that the author, who has so stressed Mary's redemption *sensu proprio*, elsewhere states that her "preservation must be understood in a very broad sense."¹⁰⁸

Another Capuchin theologian who studied our problem in some detail is Father Crisóstomo de Pamplona (d. 1975). His position is briefly this: Our Lady was truly redeemed inasmuch as she was preserved from original sin. This redemption is not "una pura ficción o una redención nominal."¹⁰⁹ Those who understand Mary's redemption *sensu improprio* are out of harmony with the Supreme Magisterium of the Church. Their reason for rejecting a redemption *sensu proprio* is that they wrongly identify this redemption with a liberation from a sin already incurred.¹¹⁰ To bolster his contention, the author appeals to the words "revera redemisse", of *Fulgens corona*, forgetting that *sensu vero* is not necessarily the same as *sensu proprio*.

In a direct reference to J. M. Alonso, our author states: ". . . he who affirms that Mary enters the orbit of Christ's redemption [not as redeemed but] in her role as Coredemptrix, is not affirming what the Church teaches concerning Mary's redemption."¹¹¹ Does the redemption defended by Father Crisóstomo require a *debitum peccati* in Our Lady? Not at all. The only thing which is required and suffices is the *certitude* (not the necessity) that the person in question (i.e., Mary) would have incurred original sin if God had not intervened to impede the fall.¹¹²

¹⁰⁷ Villalmonete, *art. cit.*, 80-92.

¹⁰⁸ Villalmonete, *art. cit.*, 95-96.

¹⁰⁹ Crisóstomo de Pamplona, O.F.M.Cap., *La redención preservativa de María y el requisito esencial de la preservación*, in *EM* 15 (1955) 162.

¹¹⁰ C. de Pamplona, *art. cit.*, 160-161. The author forgets that the identification was made by St. Thomas. Cf. Llamera, *art. cit.*, 216.

¹¹¹ C. de Pamplona, *art. cit.*, 157.

¹¹² C. de Pamplona, *art. cit.*, 162. Basilio de S. Pablo, C.P., *Impresiones*

We would like to recall here two other theologians who explain Our Lady's preservative redemption *sensu proprio* but whose ideas regarding the *debitum* differ somewhat from those of the authors mentioned in the above paragraphs. They are: Father Evaristo de la Virgen del Carmen, O.C.D. and Father John Alfaro, S.J.

Solemnly warning that it is "very dangerous" to deny Mary's redemption, Father Evaristo declares: "What's more: we believe that one has to admit a *most proper* and formal redemption."¹¹³ An "equivalent" or an "eminent" redemption by means of only a sanctifying grace conferred on Mary without a relationship to the Redeemer *as such*, is not sufficient.¹¹⁴ According to this author, the only requirement of this redemption is a *debitum extrinsecum*, which means simply that Adam's sin, of itself, *tended* to reach Mary, even as it would have tended to reach Christ Himself if He had descended from Adam by way of seminal generation.¹¹⁵

Original sin, in our author's words, is "like a poison which is called lethal because it *can* produce death." Similarly, Mary's *debitum* existed only in causes altogether extrinsic to her, and these extrinsic causes *could* have affected her.¹¹⁶ Evidently, this "debitum" amounts to a *potentia peccandi*. So much so that, according to Father Evaristo, if anyone were to ask him whether or not Our Lady had a *debitum peccati*, he would answer in the negative. The reason is, he explains, that the truth of a statement increases in proportion to the propriety with which the thing predicated applies to the subject. Formulated dif-

de un independiente sobre la cuestión del débito, in *EphM* 5 (1955) 30 and 32, holds that Mary was redeemed *sensu stricto*, although he rejects all *debitum* in her.

¹¹³ Evaristo de la Virgen del Carmen, O.C.D., *Hacia la suma pureza de María Inmaculada. ¿Tuvo o no tuvo débito la Virgen?*, in *EM* 5 (1946) 305.

¹¹⁴ Evaristo, *ibid.*

¹¹⁵ Evaristo, *art. cit.*, 303.

¹¹⁶ Evaristo, *art. cit.*, 295.

ferently: a subject should be preferably denominated by reason of its inherent form rather than by reason of that which may apply to it by analogy or because of its relationship to others. That is why we say that man is a "living being," even though a man in a photograph is not.¹¹⁷

Another theologian who adopts a somewhat anomalous stand on this question is the distinguished Jesuit Father John Alfaro. In a remarkably well-documented lecture at the International Mariological Congress in Rome (1954), the author admits that *Ineffabilis Deus* does not affirm any antecedent necessity (*debitum*) on Mary's part to incur original sin; the dogma implicitly includes only a certain antecedent *possibility* to be stained by that sin.¹¹⁸ Then, during the public discussion held at the close of the same congress, he undertook to expand on the related question of Mary's preservative redemption. Here are his words:

"In the definition of the Immaculate Conception, the dogma of Mary's immunity from original sin is defined as a true and strict preservation." [. . .] "What is included in the concept of someone's preservation from original sin *sensu proprio et stricto*?"¹¹⁹ Taking exception to the opinion voiced by Father Martínez during the same debate,¹²⁰ Alfaro answers his own question as follows: "In order, therefore, to explain Mary's true preservation it is *not* sufficient to affirm that Mary is said to be truly preserved from original sin because it was *possible* for her to contract original sin, but it is necessary to affirm that, without that preservation, Mary would have *de facto* contracted original sin. Thus we arrive at the formula of Scotus, which Father Alcántara [Martínez] left out: 'contraxisset nisi fuisset praeservata.' This formula, taken by itself, says nothing expressly concerning a *debitum* or some antecedent necessity to

¹¹⁷ Evaristo, *art. cit.*, 306.

¹¹⁸ Alfaro, *art. cit.*, in *Vgl* 2 (1956) 273.

¹¹⁹ Alfaro, in *Vgl* 11 (1957) 470.

¹²⁰ Alfaro, *loc. cit.*, 463.

contract original sin; but it sufficiently affirms that only a certain antecedent possibility of incurring original sin does *not* safeguard the concept of a true and strict preservation from such a sin."¹²¹ Yet, in the very next paragraph, the author states: "God, then, could not foresee that Mary would contract original sin in the hypothesis of a non-preservation, *unless there had been some antecedent ontological necessity* that Adam's sin should be transmitted to Mary."¹²²

To sum up. According to Alfaro: (1) the dogma of a preservative redemption *sensu stricto* does *not* require an antecedent necessity to incur original sin; a possibility to incur is sufficient; (2) the dogma is *not* sufficiently explained by a possibility to incur original sin; it is necessary to say that Mary "would have" contracted it unless preserved; (3) this conditional form says nothing of an antecedent *necessity*; and (4) there *was* an antecedent necessity on Mary's part to contract original sin.

To say that the above is riddled with flagrant contradictions would be ungracious on our part. Let us say simply that we are slightly confused. In fairness to the author, we must add that the "necessity" of which he speaks is later explained as something "hypothetical" and "extrinsic" to Mary's person. Nevertheless, a necessity *is* a necessity, especially if it belongs to the "ontological" order, as Alfaro claims. And if it is only "hypothetical," then the whole consideration is automatically shifted to the realm of pure possibilities, which is precisely what the author wants to avoid.

On the second day of the public dispute, Father Alfaro was offered yet another opportunity to clarify his views. Just then, as luck would have it, the official tape-recorder unceremoniously broke down, and so the speaker's words could not be printed in the proceedings of the congress.¹²³ Father J. M. Delgado

¹²¹ Alfaro, *loc. cit.*, 471.

¹²² Alfaro, *ibid.*

¹²³ See *VGI* 11 (1957) 473, footnote.

Varela, O. de M., who was present during the entire debate, reports that, according to Alfaro, the dogmatic definition of 1854 positively excludes a redemption *sensu proprio* both as regards the preservation and the merits of Christ; but that the expository part of the Bull does teach a redemption *sensu vero et proprio* in reference to the Immaculate Conception.¹²⁴

From the testimonies adduced in this section we conclude that the expression "redemption *sensu proprio*" is susceptible of a wide variety of meanings. The opinions run the whole gamut, from those who identify it with "being liberated from sin already contracted" to those who contend that it can be satisfactorily harmonized with Mary's immunity from the *debitum*.

SECTION III

MARY WAS REDEEMED "SENSU IMPROPRIO"

By a redemption *sensu improprio* is meant here a redemption in an analogical sense under the classification of improper proportionality. According to a widely-accepted definition, this analogy is had whenever the concept predicated of various objects is found intrinsically in all of them, but properly in the principal analogue and improperly or metaphorically in the others. If we take this definition as a guide, the expression *sensu improprio*, as applied to Mary's redemption, would be equivalent to "in a transferred sense," or "in a broad sense," in contradistinction to "in a strict sense." Naturally, there will be various ways of expanding on this, as will be seen presently. But the point to bear in mind here is that, whatever the expression "*sensu improprio*" may mean according to different theologians, it is *not* the antonym of *sensu vero*, as we will have to stress on repeated occasions. A few representative authors will illustrate what we have been saying.

By a strange anomaly, one of the theologians previously cited

¹²⁴ Cf. Delgado Varela, *art. cit.*, in *EphM* 5 (1955) 197-198.

as defenders of a redemption *sensu proprio*, actually understands it *sensu improprio*. He is Francisco de la Torre, S.J. Even Augustine Bernal, S.J., who allegedly denied Mary's redemption, may well be understood as rejecting only a redemption *sensu proprio*. We need not repeat here the texts of these authors.

Turning to the contemporary scene, let us begin by clarifying the stand taken by Claretians Alonso and García Garcés. Everyone still remembers the stir created in certain quarters by their bold statements, reported under section (I) above. In our considered opinion, however, these two theologians do not deny Mary's redemption *sic et simpliciter*. What they reject is only a redemption *sensu proprio*.

Alonso, for example, writes: "... dicimus B. M. Virginem vere esse redemptam 'sublimiori ac perfectissimo modo,' quatenus vere in se fructus recepit redemptionis Filii."¹²⁵ And again: "Christus ergo vere redemit... suam Matrem, ipsam [ipsi?] applicando gratiam redemptivam..."¹²⁶ "[María fue] verdaderamente redimida."¹²⁷ Of course, the author explains that the effect of Christ's merits in Mary was not "*formaliter redemptivus*;¹²⁸ that the Savior's merits operated in her by way of an "elevating causality," considering that she had not been involved in Adam's sin, not even through a *debitum remotum*.¹²⁹ Specifically, Christ redeemed His Mother by making her the Coredemptrix of mankind.¹³⁰ In other words, Alonso is simply restating the theory long ago proposed by Salazar and others.

¹²⁵ Alonso, *art. cit.*, in *EphM* 4 (1954) 238.

¹²⁶ Alonso, *Num B. Virgo peccati debito fuerit obnoxia. Annotationes quaedam in publicam disputationem in Mariologico Congressu Internationali Romae habitam*, in *EphM* 5 (1955) 45.

¹²⁷ Alonso, *Redempta et Corredemptrix. El problema y su solución*, in *Mm* 20 (1958) 86.

¹²⁸ Alonso, *Perspectivas...*, in *EphM* 1 (1951) 226.

¹²⁹ Alonso, *art. cit.*, 227. Alonso's views are shared by M. Peinador, C.M.F. in *IdC* (Nov. 1954) 470; cf. Prada, *art. cit.*, 532.

¹³⁰ Alonso, *art. cit.*, in *EphM* 4 (1954) 39; *Mm* 20 (1958) 87; *EphM* 1 (1951) 237.

Only that what Salazar called a redemption *sensu proprio*, Alonso would call a redemption *sensu improprio*.¹³¹

Something similar may be said in connection with García Garcés. Take, for example, this clear statement: "We must not affirm [in Mary's case] a nominal redemption, but a *most true and perfect* redemption; not, however, understood *sensu univoco* and only in relation to sin."¹³² The author admits, further that Our Lady was redeemed "personally," though not in the etymological sense of the word "ransom."¹³³ In fact, according to him, it would be dangerous to deny Mary's redemption by Christ.¹³⁴

But in what precise sense was Mary redeemed? Having ruled out a redemption *sensu univoco* and *per modum satisfactionis*, García Garcés undertakes to explain two senses in which a "preservative redemption" may be understood. We translate literally: "If that expression means that the Virgin, as a creature, was defectible by nature and that, absolutely speaking, she *could* lack grace and fall [into sin], but that, owing to her predestination together with Christ, she is indebted to the Redeemer for everything she is, and to have been adorned with graces from the beginning, and to have been chosen as Co-redemptrix (*correstauradora*) of the fall of Adam, etc., we willingly grant that Mary was redeemed with a preservative redemption. But if that expression means that the Virgin *should* have appeared stained [with original sin] as a result of the fall of Adam, as if he had been the moral head of the Virgin, it seems to us that no theologian today can prove that. The grace which the Virgin receives already in her first instant projects her toward the divine motherhood and is superior to the grace of adoption which Adam would have communicated

¹³¹ Alonso, *art. cit.*, in *EphM* 5 (1955) 43.

¹³² N. García Garcés, C.M.F., *¿Debió tener la Santísima Virgen el pecado original?*, in *EphM* 5 (1955) 102.

¹³³ García, *ibid.*, 104.

¹³⁴ García, *ibid.*, 106.

to his descendants; but, above all, her first election or her predestination connects her with Christ rather than with Adam, of whom she becomes—we have already said it—restoration and medicine, not victim or miserable daughter."¹³⁵ In short: Mary was redeemed *sensu improprio*.

A strikingly different understanding of the problem is that proposed by Nicholas Assouad, O.F.M. His views are ventilated in connection with his peculiar theory regarding the *debitum*, a theory he bases on Our Lord's words, "... cui minus dimittitur, minus diligit" (*Lk.* 7:47) and St. Augustine's commentary, "... omnia non commissa, sunt dimissa ac si essent commissa."¹³⁶ From this the author concludes that, since Christ loved His Mother more than He loved anybody else, He must have "pardoned" her more than He pardoned the rest of us. Mary had a defectibility which is essentially inherent in every rational creature. Owing to this defectibility, Mary would surely have sinned, had she not been preserved. This is what Father Assouad calls a *debitum connaturale*.¹³⁷

In view of the above, Mary's redemption was a "rachat et pardon *sui generis*, sans univocité avec notre rachat."¹³⁸ Mary's was "une rédemption véritable, bien qu'*improprement* dite. . ."¹³⁹ Was this accomplished by bestowing on her a *gratia elevans* (as Alonso, García and others suggest) in view of Christ's merits? Most certainly not, says the author. "[Mary's initial grace is] right from the start (by a priority of nature) *medicinalis*, not,

¹³⁵ García, *Sesión académica*. . . , in *EphM* 4 (1954) 361.

¹³⁶ St. Augustine, *De verbis Domini; sermo* 99, 6, 6; *PL* 38. 598. Actually, the words which the Saint attributes to God are these: "Agnosce ergo gratiam ejus, cui debes et quod non admissisti. Mihi debet iste quod factum est et dimissum vidisti; mihi debes et tu quod non fecisti." We are grateful to Rev. William G. Most for the exact quotation and reference.

¹³⁷ N. Assouad, O.F.M., *La plus grande débitrice*, in *Mm* 16 (1954) 124. In his article *Lacune en Mariologie*, in *Mm* 19 (1957) 151, Assouad writes: "Au sens *univoque*, nul péché assurément, *nulle dette* de péché non plus, en la Vierge Marie; rien de tout cela, rien absolument."

¹³⁸ Assouad, *art. cit.*, *Mm* 16 (1954) 117.

¹³⁹ Assouad, *art. cit.*, *Mm.* 19 (1957) 149.

however, *sensu univoco*. Yes, *medicinal*, because there was a question of counteracting and neutralizing the 'evil' . . . of 'pec-
cabilitas;' a moral evil which was real, although *sensu im-
proprio*.¹⁴⁰

The author also wishes to clarify an important point. Re-
demption *sensu formali*, he insists, is incorrectly identified by
some with redemption *sensu proprio*. "For us, redemption *sensu
improprio* is not less formal than redemption *sensu proprio*."¹⁴¹
And he adds that the *sensus improprius* and the *sensus meta-
phoricus* are one and the same thing, just as *sensus improprius*
and the "sublimiori modo" of *Ineffabilis Deus* are one and
the same.¹⁴²

The name of Pedro de Alcántara Martínez is familiar to
those who have done serious reading on the question of Mary's
preservative redemption and related themes. No other modern
theologian has written more extensively on the subject.¹⁴³
It is, therefore, *de rigueur* to discuss his views here, at least in
a condensed fashion.

Father Martínez, too, believes that Mary was redeemed by
Christ only *sensu improprio*.¹⁴⁴ He stresses that this is a *true*
redemption.¹⁴⁵ For him, the fact of Mary's preservative redemp-
tion is "theologically certain," and in some respects, even im-
plicitly *de fide*.¹⁴⁶ But with the Angelic Doctor,¹⁴⁷ he distin-

¹⁴⁰ Assouad, *ibid.*

¹⁴¹ Assouad, *art. cit.*, in *Mm* 19 (1957) 150.

¹⁴² Assouad, *ibid.* The author gives several examples to prove that the
sensus verus and the *sensus improprius* are not mutually exclusive.

¹⁴³ Father Martínez (died on June 11, 1976) defended his doctoral thesis
entitled *Virgo Redempta* at the University of Salamanca (Spain) on June
19, 1953. See review in *EphM* 4 (1954) 143-145. On his numerous
Marian publications, see M. Acebal, O.F.M., *Biobibliografía del P. Pedro
de Alcántara Martínez y Senderos*, O.F.M. (d. 11-VI-76), in *EphM* 27
(1977) 111-119. The many articles by Martínez bearing on our subject
are listed in our book, *A History of the Controversy over the "Debitum
Peccati?"* (St. Bonaventure, N.Y., 1978) 222-223.

¹⁴⁴ Martínez, *art. cit.*, in *VyV* 12 (1954) 47-48.

¹⁴⁵ Martínez, *art. cit.*, in *EphM* 4 (1954) 249.

¹⁴⁶ Martínez, *art. cit.*, 251.

¹⁴⁷ *Summa Theol.*, III, q. 48.

guishes between *generic* redemption and *specific* redemption. The former refers to the salvific work of Christ as a whole, consummated through the Passion; while the latter refers to *one* of the partial aspects of the whole, namely, "ransom from sin," or as it is usually called, "*per modum redemptionis reduplicative*."¹⁴⁸ According to Martínez, the last-mentioned element does not, cannot, enter into the concept of Mary's personal redemption. The same must be said of the elements of satisfaction and propitiatory sacrifice.¹⁴⁹ Mary simply did not need any of them.

How, then, was Mary redeemed? *Per modum meriti* and *per modum praeservationis*, these two aspects coalescing into one, for all practical purposes. She was preserved from a sin she *could* (not *should*) have incurred. This type of preservation is, admittedly, "a broader concept of preservation."¹⁵⁰ More concretely, specifically and formally, Our Lady's redemption consists in her having been preserved from the headship of Adam in so far as this headship necessarily implied being included in the universal law in sin.¹⁵¹

The above thesis, which is substantially the same as that championed by Montalbanus in 1723,¹⁵² is based on the presupposition (ably argued by Martínez) that it is *metaphysically impossible* to have been included in the moral headship of Adam and to be conceived immaculate. It would entail a change of mind in an immutable God.¹⁵³ Some of the important consequences which logically flow from this thesis are spelled out by the author and deserve to be seriously considered.¹⁵⁴

Another talented theologian who has devoted long years of reflection and research to our question is Dr. Ovidio Casadó.

¹⁴⁸ Martínez, *art. cit.*, 251.

¹⁴⁹ Martínez, *art. cit.*, 253-254.

¹⁵⁰ Martínez, *art. cit.*, 255.

¹⁵¹ Martínez, *art. cit.*, 266.

¹⁵² On Montalbanus, cf. Carol, *op. cit.*, 135-144.

¹⁵³ Martínez, *art. cit.*, 264-265.

¹⁵⁴ Martínez, *art. cit.*, 266-267.

His monumental work, *Mariología Clásica Española*, written and published while still a Claretian, is a veritable classic in the field. On the specific point at issue here, the author's position may be briefly summarized as follows:

While disclaiming all partisanship in the current controversy,¹⁵⁵ Dr. Casado leaves no doubt in the mind of his readers as to where exactly he himself stands. Thus, e.g., he heaps the highest praise on Benedictine theologian B. del Marmol who claims that Mary's preservative redemption is not of the "essence" of the 1854 dogma; that, on the contrary, *Ineffabilis Deus* stresses Mary's divine motherhood, her unique sanctity, and her predestination to share her Son's victory over Satan.¹⁵⁶ According to Casado, nothing obliges us to interpret papal pronouncements by adopting certain criteria which are nothing but prolongations of ancient positions under which the maculists of old took refuge.¹⁵⁷

Some of Casado's statements would seem to indicate that he denies Mary's preservative redemption. And yet, he realizes that this cannot be done. We must safeguard—he reminds us—"the great magisterial principles," among which we find "the fact of [Mary's] redemption, as a preservation *ex meritis Christi*."¹⁵⁸

Are we dealing here with a redemption *sensu improprio*? The author does not use the expression. He doesn't have to. It is clear from his treatment that this is how he understands it. First, he recalls the ancient binomial *Redempta-Corredemptrix* and notes that, if the first term is taken as implying an essential and formal orientation toward original sin from which to be freed, then the opposition between the two terms is authentic

¹⁵⁵ O. Casado, *Mariología Clásica Española*, 1 (Madrid, 1958) 395: "En este planteamiento del problema no vamos nosotros a definir—cayendo en una postura que nos resulta incómoda en otros—cuál de las dos direcciones se debe elegir."

¹⁵⁶ Casado, *op. cit.*, 394. B. del Marmol, *art. cit.*, in *Vgl* 5 (1955) 198.

¹⁵⁷ Casado, *op. cit.*, 395.

¹⁵⁸ Casado, *op. cit.*, 404.

and indeed irreducible.¹⁵⁹ But the opposition vanishes—he believes—if we understand the term “*redempta*” in a transcendent sense, i.e., as meaning that Christ’s soteriological grace exerted such overwhelming efficiency in His Mother’s case that it *elevated* her to the role of being His co-worker in the redemption of others.¹⁶⁰ For this reason, Casado heartily agrees with M. J. Nicholas, O.P. for whom Christ’s Passion redeems Mary “in the sense that it obtains her creation *outside the solidarity* with human sin.”¹⁶¹ In other words, “Mary’s transcendence over the world of the redeemed is such that, even though she is redeemed, the nature of her redemption is superior to ours with a difference which is *more than specific*.”¹⁶²

As we have seen—and Dr. Casado openly admits it—the above solution is based on the doctrine of Mary’s Coredemption,¹⁶³ which the author regards as “Catholic doctrine,”¹⁶⁴ and hence as providing an absolutely valid method in this theological discussion. If Mary was predestined to overthrow the power of sin with and under Christ, then she *could not* have been involved in Adam’s sinful solidarity, neither proximately, nor remotely, nor in any real sense. The argument is not new. Dr. Casado knows better than anyone else—his whole book proves it—that it was used repeatedly for centuries by the defenders of the Immaculate Conception against their adversaries. Our theologian, however, following Salazar, Alonso and others, presses the line of reasoning to what he considers its ultimate and logical conclusion, namely, the identification of Mary’s passive redemption with her active Coredemption. Under *this*

¹⁵⁹ Casado, *op. cit.*, 406.

¹⁶⁰ Casado, *op. cit.*, 406-407.

¹⁶¹ Casado, *op. cit.*, 405. Cf. M. J. Nicolas, O.P., *La doctrine de la Corédemption dans le cadre de la doctrine thomiste de la Rédemption*, in RT 47 (1947) 24.

¹⁶² Casado, *op. cit.*, 407.

¹⁶³ Casado, *op. cit.*, 402.

¹⁶⁴ Casado, *ibid.*

aspect, the argument goes much farther than it did at the hands of most of its previous exploiters.¹⁶⁵

All the theologians mentioned in this section agree on two points: (a) Mary was redeemed only *sensu improprio*; and (b) she was never under any *debitum peccati*. Now, however, we must report on the somewhat anomalous case of Father Caspar Friethoff, O.P.

According to this learned Dominican, well-known for his gallant defense of Mary's Coredemption, Our Lady was redeemed only *sensu improprio*, and yet she was under a *debitum proximum peccati*.¹⁶⁶ To the objection raised by Dr. G. Kreling, O.P. that Mary could not be a Coredemptrix precisely because she herself had been redeemed,¹⁶⁷ Friethoff (Kreling's former student) answers by distinguishing between redemption *sensu stricto* and redemption *sensu latiori*. Mary, he contends, was not redeemed in the strict sense, but only in a generic sense. Christ did not redeem His Mother *per modum satisfactionis* or *per modum redemptionis* (reduplicative), but only *per modum meriti*.¹⁶⁸ This is exactly the same position he had taken years earlier in his book on Mary's Mediation.¹⁶⁹ The anomaly of this position lies in this: the theologians who favor a redemption *sensu latiori* do so precisely in order to eliminate the very thing Friethoff refuses to eliminate: the *debitum peccati* in Our Lady.

¹⁶⁵ We may refer here to Mannes D. Koster, O.P. for whom the *terminus a quo* of Mary's redemption was the *possibility* of incurring original sin. Cf. *Vgl* 11 (1957) 488-489. In his article, *Die Himmelfahrt Mariens gleichsam die Vollendung ihrer unbefleckten Empfängnis*, in *Vgl* 10 (1957) 112, he writes: "Im ersten Augenblick ihres Daseins befreite Gott sie daher aus diesem seinem ewigen Liebeswillen heraus von der *Notwendigkeit*, die Erbschuld sich zuzuziehen . . ." Cf. also Delgado Varela, *Una célebre discusión acerca del débito del pecado en la Virgen Santísima*, in *EphM* 5 (1955) 203.

¹⁶⁶ C. Friethoff, O.P., *A Complete Mariology*, tr. from the Dutch *Volledige Marialeer* (London, 1958) 59.

¹⁶⁷ G. Kreling, in *SC* (1935) 480.

¹⁶⁸ Friethoff, *op. cit.*, 227-228; cf. 230.

¹⁶⁹ Friethoff, *De Alma Socia Christi Mediatoris* (Rome, 1936) 132-133.

At the end of the above survey, the reader may expect a word or two concerning our own views on this matter. We shall state them succinctly.

(1) We believe, of course, that the opinion of those who deny Our Lady's preservative redemption *sic et simpliciter* is to be rejected as going counter to the official teaching of the Church definitively sanctioned by Pope Pius IX in 1854. No need to elaborate on the obvious.

(2) We believe that the *fact* of Mary's preservative redemption is not only "theologically certain," as some say, but *de fide definita*.¹⁷⁰

(3) We believe that the Church has not settled the much-disputed question as to whether Christ redeemed His Mother *sensu proprio* rather than *sensu improprio*.

(4) We believe that, although the expression *sensu proprio* has been used by many authors in an acceptable sense, nevertheless, the expression itself, *prima facie*, seems to connote a liberation from a sin already incurred,¹⁷¹ and hence it is preferable to avoid it in this context.

(5) We believe that Our Lady was redeemed by Christ *sensu analogico, analogia proportionalitatis impropriae*. The reason is that she had never been subjected (either *de jure* or *de facto*) to any "captivity" from which she could possibly be "liberated."

(6) We believe that, specifically and concretely, Mary's redemption consisted in this: that, by the overwhelming efficacy of the merits of Christ's foreseen Passion, she was preserved from being included in the *moral* headship of Adam. Hence,

¹⁷⁰ The same Pope who in 1854 defined the Immaculate Conception wrote in his *Quod jam pridem* (Sept. 25, 1863): "Ac definitivimus doctrinam quae tenet Beatissimam Virginem Mariam in primo instanti suae conceptionis fuisse singulari omnipotentis Dei gratia et privilegio, intuitu meritorum Jesus Christi Redemptoris humani generis... etc." Cf. *Acta Pii IX*, Pars I (Romae, 1863) III, 629. So much for those who claim that in the official text of the definition the Pope purposely used the term "Savior" instead of "Redeemer."

¹⁷¹ Cf. Llamera, in *EM* 15 (1955) 216.

she was preserved, not only from original sin itself, but also from every necessity to contract it.¹⁷² Our Blessed Lady, then, enters the Adamitic orbit for the same purpose that Christ does: not in order to be affected by our first parent's original transgression, but only to neutralize it and destroy it.¹⁷³

To the objection that, in the above theory, Mary could not possibly be redeemed, since it was impossible for her to incur original sin, we answer: There is a difference between *impossibilitas antecedens* and *impossibilitas consequens*. In Mary's case there was, of course, an antecedent possibility to sin inasmuch as it was possible for God not to preserve her from the moral headship of Adam. But once this preservation is established, it was indeed impossible for her to contract the sin of our first parent.

Another objection is that the *terminus a quo* of all redemption must be sin, otherwise the word "redemption" is meaningless. We agree. But a relationship to sin may be understood in various ways: (a) relationship to a sin already contracted; (b) relationship to a sin which *should* be contracted; (c) relationship to a sin which *may* be contracted; (d) relationship to a sin which will *certainly* be contracted unless there is a preservation; and (e) *relatio ad peccatum destruendum in aliis*. The last-mentioned relationship to sin is the only one verified in Christ and in Our Blessed Lady.

(7) We believe that it is an error to say (as some do) that *sensus improprius* is the antonym of *sensus verus*. They are not mutually exclusive. For example, Our Lord referred to Himself as being a "true vine" (*Jn.* 15:1), and yet He was ob-

¹⁷² Prada, *art. cit.*, in *EM* 17 (1956) 514 writes: "...hacia mediados del s. XIX, al definirse el misterio inmaculista, era sentencia casi unánime de los mariólogos la que sostenía como requisito necesario de la redención mariana la existencia de algún débito." The inaccuracy of the above statement will appear by checking the statistics given in our book, *A History...*, 228.

¹⁷³ The same thing had been said by Segovia in 1438 and by Catharinus in 1551. Cf. Carol, *op. cit.*, 19-20; 28-29.

viously speaking *sensu improprio*. Hence there is no contradiction when we say that Mary was redeemed *sensu vero sed improprio vel metaphorico*.

Admittedly, it is in the nature of a metaphor to be elastic enough to include at times that which is merely fictitious. This is the case, for example, when in popular parlance the improper sense is equated with a purely extrinsic denomination. But the metaphorical sense does not, *per se*, demand that it be so extended.

As a matter of fact, and by what may seem a strange paradox, that which is predicated *sensu improprio* is sometimes truer and more real than that which is predicated *sensu proprio*. Thus, for instance, when we affirm that "Christ is the Head of the Mystical Body," we are employing a metaphor. And yet, the reality of Christ's headship is of an immensely higher order than the reality of the concept "headship" in the statement, "My head is the uppermost part of my body." The relationship of Christ, as Head of the Church, to the members of the Mystical Body is vastly superior (in vital communications, for example) to the relationship of my head to the rest of my physical body.¹⁷⁴

To conclude. Redemption *sensu improprio* does not dilute the intrinsic concept of redemption. In its essential core it remains the same, unchanged. If its *material extension* is reduced, its *formal comprehensiveness and intensity* are considerably enhanced.¹⁷⁵ Which is precisely why the Pope can refer to Mary's redemption as being "more sublime," and "the most perfect."

As early as 1618 an eminent Jesuit theologian on the faculty of Alcalá University had voiced the same opinion. We translate him as literally as possible:

¹⁷⁴ On analogy as applied to Mary's Queenship, cf. Ildefonso de la Inmaculada, *La realeza y la corredención según la encíclica "Ad coeli Reginam,"* in EM 17 (1965) 363.

¹⁷⁵ Cf. Alonso, *art. cit.*, in *EphM* 5 (1955) 43.

Add also that some very grave theologians . . . by the same process by which they judged that they should affirm the Virgin's immunity from sin, seem to have attenuated also, little by little, the concept of redemption's propriety (I said *propriety*, not dignity); because what they take away from the rigor of her redemption, they add in glory and excellence. It was formerly said and established that the Virgin was free from all actual sin, and hence theologians were forced to devise yet another manner of redemption which was more noble but less strict, a manner which consisted in preserving from the guilt, while leaving the debitum to incur it. In our own country, with the increase of study and devotion toward the Mother of God, it has come about that grave theologians, with nobler thoughts about the Virgin, have dared to say that Mary, the Mother of God, did not even incur the debitum, either in herself or in Adam; and so, in a similar way, it will be necessary to devise a kind of redemption which, while *diminishing its propriety and rigor, may increase its dignity and glory.*¹⁷⁶

Part Two

ATTEMPTS TO HARMONIZE MARY'S REDEMPTION WITH HER IMMUNITY FROM THE DEBITUM PECCATI

The alleged conflict between Mary's redemption and her immunity from the debt of sin may be summarized as follows: If Our Lady was redeemed by the Passion of Christ, she must have been predestined *after* the prevision of Adam's fall, without which such a redemption is meaningless. In this event, by the time Christ's merits were applied to her, Mary must have been included in the moral headship of Adam, and hence under some necessity to contract original sin. Her redemption by Christ, therefore, means that she was preserved from a sin she *should* have incurred.

A multiplicity of answers have been suggested to meet the

¹⁷⁶ Salazar, *op. cit.*, 185, n. 124.

above objection. We will limit ourselves to a mere synopsis of the more significant "solutions" proposed since the 17th century. To simplify matters, the various theories may be reduced to the following four: the one based on the *scientia media*; the so-called "Thomistic" theory; the traditional "Scotistic" solution; and finally, the one proposed by the late Father Bonnefoy.

(A) *The "Scientia Media" Solution*

Already during the Council of Basel in 1439 Juan de Segovia had defended the thesis that, since Mary was predestined before all creatures (hence before the prevision of the fall), she could not have been included in Adam's pact concerning the transmission of grace.¹ The general objection to this thesis was that, since the redemption was not decreed until *after* the fall of Adam had been foreseen, Mary could hardly benefit from it if predestined *in signo priori*.

Gonzalo Sánchez Lucero (fl. 1616) endeavored to solve the problem by placing Christ's predestination as Redeemer *before* the prevision of the fall. But how is this possible? The author answers by having recourse to the *scientia media*. Christ was predestined—he explains—*ex praevisione culpae praevisae ex vi scientiae conditionatae*; that is to say, God saw, on a conditional supposition, what Adam would do *if* He created him. Thus God decreed, *in signo priori*, the remedy for the sin which would later take place in the supposition that God decided (with an absolute decree) to create man with all the events previously foreseen through the *scientia conditionata*. The order of predestinations, then, is as follows: *First*, Christ as Redeemer. *Second*, Mary as His Mother with all the graces befitting her. *Third*, all angels and men. *Fourth*, God decides that He will establish a pact with our first parent for the transmission

¹ Joannes de Segovia, *Septem allegationes et totidem avisamenta...*; alleg. 6; ed P. de Alva et Astorga (Bruxellis, 1644) 212.

of grace to his posterity, thus making him not only the physical but also the moral head of the race. Obviously, since Mary's predestination had anteceded the pact, she could not be involved in it. Her redemption, therefore, consisted in her exclusion from the pact.²

Tirso González de Santalla, S.J. (d. 1705), dissatisfied with the above, presents a variation of his own as follows: *First*, God decrees the coming of Christ *in carne passibili*, not as Redeemer *in actu secundo* (this would imply the volition of sin), but only *in actu primo*, that is, as capable of redeeming us in the event that sin takes place, as infallibly foreseen by means of the *scientia media*. *Second*, God determines that Christ will be ready to shed His Blood in the event that men sin. (This will on the part of Christ does not presuppose the *absolute* futurity of sin.) *Third*, God foresees *absolute* the death of Christ, since He knows through the *scientia media* that the Jews would kill the Savior. *Fourth*, out of love for Christ, God decrees the creation of the universe. *Fifth*, God makes Adam the head of the human race, but in view of the merits of Christ resulting from His acceptance of death, Mary is predestined to be His Mother and preserved from the pact. *Sixth*, God foresees the fall of Adam and decrees Christ as Redeemer *in actu secundo*. In this arrangement Our Lady's redemption (which consists in being preserved from the pact) did not take place through the prevision of Christ's death itself, but rather through His acceptance of it.³ Note that for Mary's exclusion from the pact, the author does not have recourse to the merits of Christ's Passion as foreseen through the *scientia media*, but rather to

² Gonzalo Sánchez Lucero, *Dos discursos teológicos en defensa de la Inmaculada Concepción*; seg. parte (Sevilla, 1617) f. 13-14. Cf. Martínez, *La redención de María y los méritos de Cristo*, in *EF* 55 (1954) 207-208. The same teaching is found in D. Granado, S.J., *De Immaculata B. V. Dei Genitricis Mariae Conceptione* (Hispani, 1617) 107.

³ T. González de Santalla, S.J., *Selectarum disputationum ex universa theologia scholastica*, 3 (Salmanticae, 1680) 103-104. Cf. Martínez, *art. cit.*, 222-224.

merits of Christ's acceptance of the Passion *absolute praevisa*.

Salazar and others had objected that the *scientia media* could not yield an absolute prevision of Christ's merits and hence left the problem unsolved. His religious confrere Philip Aranda (d. 1695) meets this objection by simply denying that the *absolute* prevision of Christ's merits is necessary. According to this author, the Incarnation has two final, total causes: the excellence itself of the mystery (which places it in God's mind independently of any other factor) *and* the remedy for sin. From this it follows: (a) that the Word would have become incarnate even if Adam had not sinned; (b) that the predestination of Christ as Redeemer preceded the *absolute* prevision of sin; (c) that Our Lady would have been the Mother of Christ even if Adam had remained faithful; and (d) that the grace of the Angels was due to the merits of Christ independently of His Passion, although consummated through it.⁴

Aranda claims that one and the same decree includes both the establishment of the pact *and* Mary's exclusion from it in virtue of the redemptive merits of Christ. For this, he says, an absolute prevision of those merits is not required; only a conditional one suffices.⁵ Thomas Muniessa, S.J. (d. 1696) wholeheartedly embraces the teaching of Aranda in this respect and exempts Our Lady from the pact (and therefore from the *debitum*) by means of the *scientia media*.⁶

(B) The "Thomistic" Theory

As expected, the proposal offered by the above-mentioned theologians was subjected to a vigorous critique by those who reject the *scientia media*. The first to do so was the distin-

⁴ Philippus Aranda, S.J., *De Divini Verbi Incarnatione et redemptione generis humani* (Caesaraugustae, 1691) 302-306; 339; 346. Cf. Martínez, *art. cit.*, 224-227.

⁵ Aranda, *op. cit.*, 339; 346.

⁶ Thomas Muniessa, S.J., *Disputationes scholasticae de mysteriis Incarnationis et Eucharistiae* (Barcinone, 1689) 174.

guished Jesuit, Ferdinand de Salazar (d. 1646). He pointed out that in the said theory the Word would have become incarnate even if Adam had not sinned, which is against Thomistic theology. Besides, it would be like saying that God, foreseeing the good use of grace through a conditional knowledge, is moved to grant grace (which is semi-pelagianism). Again, if God's decree were based on conditional merits, the decree itself would be conditional.⁷ In view of these difficulties, Salazar attempts to solve the problem by arranging the *signa rationis* in the divine mind as follows:

First, God decrees to create the universe and man in order to manifest His infinite goodness.

Second, God decrees to raise man to a supernatural level, and appoints Adam as physical and moral head of the race (theory of the pact). Adam's transmission of grace to this posterity, however, is conditioned on his obedience to the Creator.

Third, God foresees the fall of Adam and the involvement of all his descendants in his sin.

Fourth, God decrees the Incarnation with a redemptive purpose: the remedy of Adam's fall.

Fifth, God selects Mary to be the Mother of the future Redeemer.

Sixth, Through the merits of Christ and Mary, God predestines all the elect to grace and glory.⁸

On the basis of the above, Salazar argues as follows: Since Mary's existence was not determined by God until *after* Adam's fall had been foreseen, she was absent from the decree concern-

⁷ Salazar, *op. cit.*, 38.

⁸ Salazar, *op. cit.*, 106-107. We have called this theory "Thomistic," not because it is generally propounded by the followers of St. Thomas, but rather because it is based on the Thomistic thesis that the Incarnation was willed *post praevisum lapsum*. Strangely enough, Salazar claims that his theory is based also on the teaching of Duns Scotus. Cf. C. Balić, O.F.M., *La prédestination de la Très-Sainte Vierge dans la doctrine de Jean Duns Scot*, in *FF* 19 (1936) 127-130.

ing the transmission of sin. Hence it was impossible for her to be under any necessity (*debitum*) to incur that sin. The pact affects only and exclusively those persons whose existence had been determined before it, since God does not determine things *in confuso* but *in concreto*. But precisely because the redemption had already been foreseen by the time Mary's existence was decreed, she was able to receive its benefits.⁹

Salazar's views were substantially endorsed by some of his religious confreres, notably Juan Velázquez¹⁰ and Augustine Bernal.¹¹ In more recent times, Father Basilio de San Pablo, C.P. has defended a similar theory with remarkable cogency.¹²

Cardinal John de Lugo, S.J. (d. 1660), while agreeing with Salazar that Christ and Mary were predestined *post praevisum lapsum*, feels nevertheless that his Alcalá confrere does not sufficiently safeguard Mary's redemption. For him, the pact includes all who may *possibly* descend from Adam by way of normal generation, *except* the woman who will be selected by God to be the Mother of the Savior. Mary, then, *as a woman* (not as the future Mother of God) was included in the initial pact. It is only later, *in signo posteriori*, that she is chosen Mother of God *ex meritis Christi*.¹³ To make this possible, Lugo modifies Salazar's arrangement of the *signa rationis* as follows:

First, God decrees the pact which makes Adam the moral head of all those who will descend from him by way of seminal generation, *except* that woman who might be chosen as Mother of Christ, without any further determination.

⁹ Salazar, *op. cit.*, 171-180.

¹⁰ Joannes A. Velázquez, S.J., *Dissertationes ed adnotationes de Maria immaculate concepta* (Ludguni, 1653) 58.

¹¹ A. Bernal, S.J., *Disputationes de divini Verbi Incarnatione*, disp. 10, sect. 3 (Caesaraugustae, 1639) 79180.

¹² Basilio de S. Pablo, *art. cit.*, in *EphM* 5 (1955) 22-23.

¹³ Joannes de Lugo, S.J., *Disputationes scholasticae et morales, De mysterio Incarnationis*, II, disp. VII, sect. 3 (ed. Parisiis, 1768) 129-133.

Second, God foresees the fall and decrees the Incarnation as its remedy.

Third, through the merits of Christ, God selects Mary as His Mother and hence her preservation from the pact can be called a redemption.¹⁴

Lugo's religious confrere, Cardinal Sforza Pallavicini (d. 1667) finds the above explanation more satisfactory than that proposed by Salazar.¹⁵

(C) *The "Scotistic" Theory*

Although Blessed John Duns Scotus, O.F.M. (d. 1308) never wrote a single line on Mary's place in the order of divine decrees,¹⁶ his followers, based on the Master's well-known teaching concerning the predestination of Christ, have elaborated a theory of their own in which the Mother appears *uno eodemque decreto* with her Son in the eternal design of God. It is only in this sense that it is legitimate to speak of a "Scotistic" viewpoint in the present context.

We are not directly concerned here with the origin and early development of this theory.¹⁷ For the specific purpose of this essay it will be sufficient to recall some of the more representative Franciscan theologians who have *ex professo* expanded on the subject.

From the 17th century we select Thomas Frances Urrutigoyti, O.F.M. (d. 1682) who not only offers a valuable critique of the various opinions expressed up to his time, but exerts a notable influence on virtually all subsequent writers of the Franciscan School.

According to our author, the attempts made by Salazar and

¹⁴ De Lugo, *op. cit.*, 401-403.

¹⁵ Sforza Pallavicini, S.J., *Tractatus de primatu Petri*; Ms. Bibl. Casan. Romae, 2119, f. 230v; cf. Casado, *op. cit.*, 360.

¹⁶ Cf. Balić, *art. cit.*, 114ff.

¹⁷ For the background, Balić, *art. cit.*, 116-125; also Martínez, *art. cit.*, in *EF* 55 (1954) 201, n. 6.

later modified by Cardinal de Lugo safeguard neither Mary's redemption nor her preservation from the *debitum*. Salazar fails because, in his theory, Mary would not have existed if Adam had not sinned; therefore, her non-existence when she was about to be included in the pact could not be attributed to the redemptive merits of the Savior.¹⁸ De Lugo's variation does not solve the problem either, because at the moment when the pact is established, no woman was included, since no woman had yet been chosen as Mother of Christ.¹⁹

Urrutigoyti, then, proposes the following order in the *signa rationis*:

First, God decrees the Incarnation for its own intrinsic excellence.

Second, though the merits of the future Christ (independently of the Passion, not yet foreseen), God decrees the existence of Mary, but abstracting from the modalities of her existence.

Third, God decrees the existence of Angels and men, and makes Adam the moral head of those who will descend from him by way of seminal generation. (Since the modality of Mary's existence had not as yet been specified, she is not included in the pact.)

Fourth, God foresees the sin of Adam and of all his posterity, except the one who might be privileged.

Fifth, God decrees that Christ will come *in carne passibili* in order to redeem the human race, and he decrees also, conditionally, Mary's preservation from the debt of sin in the event that she proceed from Adam by way of normal generation.

Sixth, God decrees Mary's existence by way of normal generation, and applies to her the merits of the Passion lest her mode of generation involve her in Adam's moral headship.

¹⁸ Thomas F. de Urrutigoyti, O.F.M., *Certamen scholasticum expositivum argumentum pro Deipara ejusque Immaculata Conceptione* (Lugduni, 1660) 69-70.

¹⁹ Cf. Martínez, *art cit.*, 219.

In this manner, Mary's preservative redemption consists precisely in her being preserved from the *debitum*.²⁰

As can be easily seen, the basis of the author's solution lies in this: Mary's existence is the result of a double decree: the first, which concerns her existence generically, precedes the prevision of the Passion; but the second, which determines the concrete mode of her existence, is subsequent to the prevision of the Passion and the effect of it.²¹ Numerous Franciscan theologians of the 17th century, both before and after Urrutigoyti, adopted the same line of reasoning. There is no point in quoting them here.²²

According to Father Martínez, the main defect of Urrutigoyti's theory consists in this, that in the sixth *signum rationis* (which determines Mary's concrete existence) she was hindered from being included in the pact; if so, her preservation does not presuppose even a simple possibility of contracting the *debitum*, in virtue of her first predestination to grace.²³

Moving on to the 18th century, we find a noteworthy attempt by Salvator Montalbanus, O.F.M.Cap. (d. 1722) to solve the thorny problem. As we have said elsewhere,²⁴ the importance of this author can hardly be overestimated. His massive three-volume treatise constitutes a veritable encyclopedia on the subject. We can only summarize his position here and refer our readers to the extensive analysis undertaken by our confrere, the late Father Martínez.²⁵

We have already explained at some length Montalbanus' views on the *debitum*.²⁶ We have likewise seen that for him the

²⁰ Urrutigoyti, *op. cit.*, 75.

²¹ Urrutigoyti, *op. cit.*, 73-74. Cf. Martínez, *La redención de María según el P. Tomás Francés de Urrutigoyti*, in *VyV* 9 (1951) esp. 73-75.

²² Cf. Carol, *op. cit.*, 75-78.

²³ Martínez, *art. cit.*, in *EF* 55 (1954) 231.

²⁴ Cf. Carol, *op. cit.*, 135-136.

²⁵ Martínez, *art. cit.*, in *VyV* 12 (1954) 445-480; Id., in *E.F.* 55 (1954) 229-238.

²⁶ Carol, *op. cit.*, 136ff.

essence of Mary's preservative redemption consists in this, that her unique predestination *ante praevisum lapsum* made it impossible for her to be included in Adam's moral headship.²⁷ Coming now face to face with the difficulty of reconciling this position with Mary's redemption *per merita crucis*, our author proposes his solution by arranging the various *signa rationis* as follows:

First, God decrees the simple futurity of the Word's Incarnation for its intrinsic excellence, but abstracting from all circumstances.

Second, God decrees the existence of Mary as Mother of Christ (without determining its concrete modality) in virtue of the merits of Christ independently of the Passion.

Third, in honor of Christ as King and Mary as Queen, God decrees the creation of Angels, men and the universe, thus making Christ (and proportionately Mary) the meritorious cause of all the gifts to be granted to rational creatures. Anticipating sin as conditionally future, God determines Christ as Redeemer *in actu primo* and Mary as Coredemptrix. Then God decrees that all men, including Mary, will proceed from Adam by way of seminal generation.

Fourth, through the merits of Christ, God predestines all men and Angels to the supernatural state. But as regards men, God decides that their attainment of grace and glory will depend on Adam (whom He now makes the moral head of the race), by including their wills in his, relative to the observance or violation of a precept to be imposed on him. (Obviously, Our Lady could not be involved in this arrangement or pact with Adam without contradicting a previous divine determination concerning her sanctity.)

²⁷ Salvator Montalbanus, O.F.M.Cap., *Opus theologicum tribus distinctum tomis in quibus efficacissime ostenditur Immaculatam Dei Genitricem, utpote praeservative redemptam, fuisse prorsus immunem ab omni debito tum contrahendi originale peccatum, tum ipsius fomitem incurrendi* (Panormi, 1723) I, 190ff.

Fifth, God foresees the sin of Adam, committed physically by him and morally by his descendants included in his moral headship.

Sixth, God in His mercy decrees to redeem the human race through the Passion of Christ, who is now constituted Redeemer *in actu secundo*, with Mary as Coredemptrix also *in actu secundo*.²⁸

To those who argue that in the above arrangement Mary appears redeemed, but not by the merits of the Passion, Montalbanus answers: The merits of Christ should not be considered *praecisive*, but with all the circumstances and specifications with which they are actually connected. While there were in Christ certain merits which *in themselves* were not linked with the Passion, nevertheless, by divine disposition, these merits were included in the total and adequate scheme of redemption which *de facto* culminated in the Passion. Christ, in other words, acquired *jus ad praemium* by all His merits considered *per modum unius*.²⁹ The author insists that we cannot regard the various *signa rationis* in an isolated fashion and draw conclusions without bearing in mind every aspect of the total plan.

In order to illustrate the above, Montalbanus gives the following example: A certain master wishes to acquire a servant. First, he reflects on whether he will purchase him or not. Once this has been decided, he will think about the qualities the servant must have—age, talents, garments, etc. Now, it would be absurd to suppose that, in virtue of the first decision (i.e., before thinking about the garments), the master must have decided to purchase the servant naked.³⁰ Applying this (with the necessary nuances) to the predestination of Christ and Mary, we can see that the first *signum rationis*, while abstracting from the modalities of subsequent *signa*, contains them *virtualiter*

²⁸ Montalbanus, *op. cit.*, II, 445-449.

²⁹ Montalbanus, *op. cit.*, II, 448.

³⁰ Montalbanus, *op. cit.*, II, 429-430; cf. 443-444; 448-451.

and forms with them a total and integral plan.³¹

Among contemporary representatives of the above theory we may mention Father Alejandro de Villalmonste, O.F.M.Cap. who, following in the footsteps of his confrere Montalbanus, develops the line of argument with great skill and acumen.³²

It is only fair to note here that the "solution" we have been discussing is not entirely free from difficulties. The fact has not escaped its adversaries. Thus, for example, Norberto del Prado, O.P. endeavors to show that, while the Scotistic argumentation proceeds very logically, it nevertheless ends up by giving us a preservation from sin which turns out to be *non-redemptive*.³³ For his part, M. Llamera, O.P. is annoyed by all this "anthropomorphic succession" of decrees which he finds "irreconcilable with the efficacy and immutability of the divine will."³⁴ The sentiment is partially shared by Jesuit Aldama,³⁵ who, however, would not absolutely deny that Mary's redemption is safeguarded in the theory of Montalbanus and his followers.³⁶ Bonnefoy, though himself a Franciscan and a Scotist, points out that the traditional Scotistic view, for all its fascinating aspects, does not answer the problem satisfactorily. The idea of Christ being first predestined *in carne impassibili* and later *in carne passibili* seems to him to compromise God's immutability.³⁷

It may be mentioned in this connection that some of the exponents of the Scotistic theory, when face to face with the prob-

³¹ Montalbanus, *op. cit.*, 440; f. 448. For the similar views of Carlos del Moral, O.F.M. (d. 1731) in his *Fons illimis theologiae scoticae marianae* (Matriti, 1730), cf. Carol, *op. cit.*, 144 and 148 with pertinent bibliography.

³² A. de Villalmonste, O.F.M.Cap., *La Inmaculada y el débito del pecado*, in *VyV* 12 (1954) 49-101; Id., *Maria Inmaculada, exenta del débito del pecado original*, in *Vgl* 11 (1957) 94-136. Cf. *ibid.*, 486-487.

³³ N. del Prado, *op. cit.*, 309; cf. also 129, 137-161.

³⁴ Llamera, *art. cit.*, in *EM* 15 (1955) 180.

³⁵ Aldama, *art. cit.*, in *Salm* 1 (1954) 773.

³⁶ Aldama, *loc. cit.*, 774.

³⁷ J. F. Bonnefoy, O.F.M., *L'Immaculée dans le plan divin*, in *EphM* 8 (1958) 15.

lem it poses, frankly admit that they are, after all, dealing with a "mystery."³⁸ This admission leads Sauras and Llamera to the conclusion that the theory itself ought to be discarded as non-viable.³⁹ In our opinion, the conclusion does not necessarily follow. We have an analogous case in the question of harmonizing the Thomistic theory of the *praemotio physica* with man's free will. Would the fact that some 'mystery' is involved here lead our Dominican brethren to abandon their theory?⁴⁰ Again, in trying to conciliate the theological axiom "*principium meriti non cadit sub merito*" with the doctrine of Mary's Coredemption, many authors admit that some "mystery" is involved.⁴¹ Yet both Sauras and Llamera are staunch champions of Mary's Coredemption and at the same time firmly adhere to the above-mentioned dictum.

Be that as it may, we believe it is true, as Father Balić once acknowledged, that harmonizing the traditional Scotistic view with Mary's preservative redemption *per merita Passionis* remains to this day the "crux scotistarum."⁴²

(D) *The Bonnefoy Solution*

The shortcomings mentioned above have led some theologians to undertake yet another approach to the problem presented by the dichotomy *redempta-sine debito*. The attempt to be discussed presently is called the "Bonnefoy theory," not because its paternity should be attributed to this learned Franciscan, but because he is the one who has developed it fully and systematically with a solidly biblical and theological justification.⁴³

³⁸ E.g., A. de Villalmonde, *art. cit.*, in *VyV* 12 (1954) 98; Martínez, *art. cit.*, in *EphM* 4 (1954) 267.

³⁹ Sauras, *art. cit.*, in *EM* 15 (1955) 29; Llamera, *ibid.*, 180, 184.

⁴⁰ Cf. also García Garcés, *art. cit.*, in *EphM* 5 (1955) 96.

⁴¹ E.g., Friethoff, *op. cit.*, 136.

⁴² Balić, *De debito peccati originalis in B. Virgine Maria investigationes de doctrina quam tenuit Joannes Duns Scotus* (Romae, 1941) 95.

⁴³ Cf. Bonnefoy, *The Predestination of Our Blessed Lady*, in J. B.

Bonnefoy's overall purpose is to give us a theological synthesis which reflects the order of the universe corresponding to the divine plan. He first passes in review the various systems tried in this connection, and finds them wanting. He discards the Thomistic theory because it presents the *summum opus Dei* (the Incarnation) as depending on the fall of Adam and thus in contradiction to the maxim, "*Quanto aliquid est melius in effectibus, tanto est prius in intentione agentis.*"⁴⁴ The traditional Scotistic system is likewise rejected for reasons already mentioned. The middle-course positions are equally unacceptable because they either try to reconcile the Thomistic and the Scotistic views (an impossible task), or they have recourse to a multiplicity of "conditional" decrees,⁴⁵ or they endeavor to eliminate all the *signa rationis*, thus making the divine order unintelligible to the human mind.⁴⁶ The author then proceeds to outline the various steps (*signa rationis*) which constitute the *one single* decree governing the entire divine plan.

(1) According to Vatican I, the reason for all of God's works *ad extra* is the manifestation of His goodness.⁴⁷ Hence the starting point must be the Johannine assertion, "Deus caritas

Carol (Ed.), *Mariology* 2 (Milwaukee, Wis., 1957) 154-176; *Le place du Christ dans le plan divin de la création*, in *MJR* 4 (1947) 237-284; 5 (1948) 39-62; *La primauté absolue et universelle de N.S. Jésus-Christ et de la Très-Sainte Vierge*, in *BSFEM* (1938) 41-100; *A propos de la primauté du Christ*, in *VyV* 8 (1950) 228-235; *Marie dans l'Eglise, ou la primauté de la Sainte Vierge*, in *BSFEM* (1954) 51-73; *L'Immaculée dans le plan divin*, in *EphM* 8 (1958) 5-60; *La primauté du Christ selon l'Écriture et la tradition* (Rome, 1959) xii-467 pp. The last-mentioned item, a veritable masterpiece, is still available from Herder in Rome.

⁴⁴ St. Thomas, *Contra Gent.*, 2, c. 44, 1.

⁴⁵ Bonnefoy, *The Predestination...*, 156-158; also *art. cit.*, in *EphM* 8 (1958) 10-17. On p. 16 the author answers Molina's statement that the "instantia" (or *signa rationis*) of Scotus should be "exterminated." Actually, the so-called "instantia" which so aggravated Molina are not found in Scotus' *Ordinatio*, written by himself, but in the *Reportationes*, written by his students. Cf. Balić, *art. cit.*, in *FF* 19 (1936) 147-148.

⁴⁷ Conc. Vat. I, sessio 3, *Constit. de fide catholica*, c. 1; *D-Sch* 3002.

est."⁴⁸ Since "*bonum est diffusivum sui*," and since God is the sovereign Good, He decided to communicate Himself in a sovereign degree. This He did through the Incarnation.⁴⁹ Christ, then, is the first willed. That is why He is, according to St. Paul, the "firstborn of every creature,"⁵⁰ and according to the Sapiential text, "the beginning of [God's] ways."⁵¹ As the axiom of right reason has it, "the best effect is willed first." Besides, since Christ is the secondary final cause of all creation, we may reasonably assume that God wished to verify the maxim, "*Omnis ordinate volens, prius vult finem quam media*."⁵² In short, Christ's absolute primacy over all creation—a truth amply supported by Revelation⁵³—requires that He be the first of the predestined.

(2) Since, according to Scripture, "it is more blessed to give than to receive,"⁵⁴ God decrees the existence of Mary so that Christ may have a perfect beneficiary with whom He may share His own goodness and happiness. Thus Mary is first predestined to the fulness of grace *uno eodemque decreto* with Christ,⁵⁵ and then to the divine maternity.⁵⁶

(3) Since the reciprocal self-dedication of the future Christ and Mary would not exhaust "the unfathomable riches of

⁴⁸ *John* 4:8.

⁴⁹ St. Thomas, *Summa Theol.*, III, q. 3, a. 1.

⁵⁰ *Col.* 1:15.

⁵¹ *Prov.* 8:22 (in Hebrew).

⁵² Bonnefoy, *art. cit.*, in *EphM* 8 (1958) 24-25.

⁵³ Bonnefoy, *Le primauté du Christ...* (Romae, 1959) *passim*.

⁵⁴ *Acts* 20:35.

⁵⁵ Pius IX, *Ineffabilis Deus*; *ed. cit.*, 32. For the same teaching, see Pius XII *Munificentissimus Deus*, in *AAS* 42 (1950) 768; Vatican II, *Lumen gentium*, n. 61; Abbot *ed.*, 91; Paul VI, *Marialis cultus*, in *AAS* 66 (1974) 136; Paul VI, Address to the International Mariological Congress in Rome, May 16, 1975, in *L'Osservatore Romano* (English ed.) June 5, 1975. Cf. D. J. Unger, O.F.M.Cap., *Does the New Testament Give Much Historical Information About the Blessed Virgin or Mostly Symbolical Meanings?*, in *Mm* 39 (1977) 346.

⁵⁶ Bonnefoy, *The Predestination...*, 162-163.

Christ,"⁵⁷ God decides to give existence to other intelligent creatures on whom Christ and Mary may bestow of the plenitude of their love. Christ, then, would grant both men and Angels a share in His divine life through sanctifying grace.⁵⁸

(4) God decrees the creation of the material universe, destined to be the throne and footstool of His Son.⁵⁹

(5) Since it is more noble to dispense one's own gifts than those belonging to others, God decrees that Christ and Mary will earn (merit) such gifts for their beneficiaries.

(6) Since, according to Our Lord, the most excellent way to show one's love is to lay down one's life for the loved ones,⁶⁰ God decrees the sufferings and death of Christ with Mary's intimate share in them. Among the graces to be merited by Christ through His death, the first were those to be bestowed on His Mother at the first instant of her conception. The good Angels, too, owe to the "blood of the Cross" their final perseverance and their confirmation in grace. "For it has pleased the Father that in him all his fulness should dwell, and that through him he should reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or *in the heavens*, making peace through the blood of his cross."⁶¹

(7) Christ's gifts, however, will be all the more generous if the beneficiaries, far from possessing a right to them, have been guilty of demerit toward the donor. In other words, it is more perfect to *forgive* than to *give*. The very word "pardon," which is derived from Latin languages (French: *pardon*; Italian: *perdono*; Spanish: *perdón*) expresses this truth. The term is composed of the Latin *donum* (gift) and the particle *par* or *per* which denotes plenitude or perfection. "Pardon" therefore

⁵⁷ *Eph.* 3:8.

⁵⁸ Bonnefoy, *Christ and the Cosmos*, tr. by M. D. Meilach, O.F.M. (Paterson, 1965) 282ff.

⁵⁹ *Is.* 66:1; *Acts* 7:49.

⁶⁰ *John* 15:13.

⁶¹ *Col.* 1:19-20.

means "a perfect gift." In view of this, God decides to *permit* the fall of our first parents and all our personal sins, and to include the entire offspring of Adam (with the exception of Mary) in the original prevarication in order to make possible the Redemption (and Coredemption) from sin as the "perfect gift" to Christ's and Mary's beneficiaries.

We need not be shocked at the above explanation of the permission of sin. St. Paul himself endorses it when he writes: "For God shut up all in unbelief, so that he may have mercy on all."⁶² This passage arouses the reflection of the Apostle on "the depth of the riches, of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are his judgments and how unsearchable his ways!"⁶³ "It is evident that the Apostle feels he has come face to face with a mystery."⁶⁴

From among the several Fathers of the Church who have voiced the same truth, let us listen to St. Irenaeus (d.c. 209): "Cum prae-existeret Salvans, oportebat et quod salvaretur fieret, ut non vacuum sit Salvans."⁶⁵ In other words, the fall of man was permitted by God so that Christ (who had already been predestined as Redeemer) could have something to redeem us from.

This explanation of the divine plan meets all the demands of faith and reason. The hierarchy and subordination of created beings as enunciated by the Apostle are perfectly safeguarded: "Omnia vestra sunt, vos autem Christi, Christus autem Dei."⁶⁶ The lesser creatures are called into existence for the sake of the more perfect: "*Semper enim imperfectum est propter perfectius.*"⁶⁷ In this synthesis the hierarchy of being, which is one of final causality, exercises a natural and legitimate function, for

⁶² *Rom.* 11:32. See Bonnefoy's extensive commentary in *Christ and the Cosmos*, 331-336.

⁶³ *Rom.* 11:33-34.

⁶⁴ Bonnefoy, *The Predestination. . .*, 169.

⁶⁵ St. Irenaeus, *Adv. haer.* III c. 22; *PG* 7, 958.

⁶⁶ *1 Cor.* 3:22-23.

⁶⁷ St. Thomas, *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 105, a. 5.

"that which is first in the order of existence is also first in the order of intellection."⁶⁸

This entire synthesis is conducted on the assumption that theology is a *deductive* science, not a science *sensu proprio*.⁶⁹ The former does not require that every conclusion flow *necessarily* from the premises; it uses argument of fittingness. The latter, on the contrary, beginning with rational, self-evident principles, aims at truth-demonstration in the strict sense of the word. If this were the task of theology, then not only would it attempt against the freedom of God in His works *ad extra*, but there would be no more mysteries left in our religion. The sacred discipline would become a "theological rationalism."⁷⁰

The obvious advantages of this synthesis are these: (a) it avoids the flaws of other systems (i.e., retouching and modifying the divine decrees); (b) it eliminates the expedient of having recourse to those well-known "conditional" decrees which are nothing more than a *deus ex machina*; (c) it safeguards the basic principles of the *philosophia perennis* according to which, "*Quanto aliquid est melius in effectibus, tanto est prius in intentione agentis*"; (d) the inter-relationship of causality demanded by the ontological hierarchy of being is constantly respected. As St. Thomas put it: "That which is less noble is willed for the sake of that which is more noble; that which is less perfect [is willed] for that which is more perfect."⁷¹ Finally, the synthesis solves the age-old problem of harmonizing Mary's preservative redemption with her total immunity from the *debitum peccati*, since it shows Mary's redemption to have consisted precisely in being preserved from the moral headship of Adam *per merita Passionis Christi*.⁷²

⁶⁸ St. Bonaventure, *In Hexaëmeron*, c. 1, n. 13; *Op. omn.* V, 221b.

⁶⁹ Cf. Bonnefoy, *La nature de la théologie selon Saint Thomas d'Aquin*, in *ETL* 14 (1937) 421-446; 15 (1938) 491-516.

⁷⁰ Bonnefoy, in *EphM* 8 (1958) 23.

⁷¹ St. Thomas, *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 65, a. 2.

⁷² Bonnefoy, *art. cit.*, in *EphM* 8 (1958) 52-58.

It may be of some interest to note here that Pope Pius XII himself explicitly endorsed the basic principle of the above synthesis when he wrote to the universal Church: "Nullum igitur dubium est Mariam Sanctissimam dignitate sua omnes res creatas excellere itemque *super omnes* post Filium suum *obtinere primatum*."⁷³ Before being elevated to the throne of Peter he had said:

When speaking of Mary . . . the first thought that comes to our minds is this: God looked upon her from all eternity, *before every other creature*; He loved her, He selected her in order to render her rich with His gifts to the extent possible for a creature. *That is the mind of the Church* in attributing to Mary, with all the reservations demanded by faith, that which the author of Proverbs (8:22) has said of the Son of God: "The Lord has possessed me at the beginning of His ways, before any other creature."⁷⁴

In other words, *because* of her primacy with Christ above all other creatures, Mary's predestination was *prior* (*prioritate naturae*) to that of all others. The rest flows logically from that premise.

This section of our paper has been nothing more than a highly-condensed version of Father Bonnefoy's theory. This sketch, of necessity, has left out numerous details and elaborations to be found in the author's own extensive publications on the subject. We would urge the reader to undertake a serious study of these writings before making a final evaluation of the synthesis as a whole.⁷⁵

⁷³ Pius XII, *Ad caeli Reginam*, in *AAS* 46 (1954) 635.

⁷⁴ Card. Eugenio Pacelli, *Discorsi e panegirici* (ed. 2, Milano, 1939) 633. On this, see Bonnefoy, *Sa Sainteté Pie XII et la primauté du Christ et de la T.-S. Vierge*, in *SF* 12 (1940) 2-6.

⁷⁵ Of the items mentioned in footnote 43 above, we recommend in particular the massive work, *La primauté du Christ selon l'Écriture et la tradition* (Rome, Herder, 1959). Unfortunately, the English translation by M. D. Meilach, O.F.M. entitled *Christ and the Cosmos* (Paterson, 1965) is now out of print.

It remains for us to recall briefly some of the theologians who, in one way or another, have upheld the thesis underscored above, namely, that the *redemptive* Incarnation was willed by God *before* the prevision of Adam's fall.⁷⁶

In the 17th century we find Gonzalo Sánchez Lucero (fl. 1617) placing Christ's predestination as Redeemer *in primo signo rationis*. His treatment, however, is based on the *scientia media*.⁷⁷ The Jesuit John Eusebius Nieremberg (d. 1658) adopts substantially the same line of reasoning as Lucero.⁷⁸

According to John Prudencio, O. de M. (d. 1657), Almighty God, through the *scientia simplicis intelligentiae*, foresaw the fall of our first parents *as possible* and prepared the medicine of Christ's merits by predestining Him as Redeemer before the absolute prevision of sin. The Savior's merits were applied to Mary *in actu primo*, before Adam was foreseen. Hence Mary was truly redeemed and at the same time not included in Adam's moral headship.⁷⁹

A slight variation of this theory was proposed in 1722 by Francis Palanco, Ord. Minim. For him, Christ is the *finis cuius gratia* of all creation, but at the same time, He was predestined for our own benefit, since we are the *finis cuius utilitatis* of the Incarnation. The author rejects the plurality of divine efficacious decrees but allows that, if we must distinguish different decrees, then the first *in ordine intentionis* must be the one in which Christ appears *as Redeemer*. This, he says, is the greatest manifestation of God's goodness.⁸⁰

In more recent times, the theory championed by Bonnefoy

⁷⁶ We omit the Fathers of the Church mentioned by Bonnefoy in *EphM* 8 (1958) 34 because we have not checked their statements.

⁷⁷ G. Sánchez Lucero, *op. cit.*, 12-15.

⁷⁸ J. E. Nieremberg, *op. cit.*, 448-449.

⁷⁹ Joannes Prudencio, O. de M., *Commentarii super virginti quatuor primas quaestiones III Partis SS. Thomas* (Lugduni, 1654) 284; cf. Delgado Varela, in *EphM* 1 (1951) 519-521.

⁸⁰ F. Palanco, O. Minim., *Tractatus de divino Verbo Incarnato ad mentem Angelici praeceptoris*, 1 (Matriti, 1722) 303-304.

has found the endorsement of some theologians both within and without the Scotistic School. Note, for example, how Pedro de Alcántara Martínez, O.F.M. arranges the *signa rationis* in order to safeguard Mary's redemption and her total immunity from the *debitum peccati*: *First*, Christ's absolute predestination; *Second*, Mary's predestination as His Mother; *Third*, God foresees, *as possible*, the creation of Adam, the pact and the fall; *Fourth*, God foresees, *absolute*, the Passion of Christ as *preservative Redeemer*; *Fifth*, Mary receives her grace *intuitu meritorum crucis*; *Sixth*, God decrees the creation of Adam and makes him moral head of those who will proceed from him by way of seminal generation; *Seventh*, God decrees the Passion of Christ as *redemptio extractiva peccati*.⁸¹

Without mentioning Bonnefoy, the respected Claretian theologian J. M. Alonso follows the same line of reasoning when he writes:

Therefore, the order of execution, according to which sin is first permitted so that afterwards it may be the *conditio sine qua non* of the Incarnation, is not the true, real, ontological order, but merely the empirico-apparentialis. In the order of divine intention, which is the true and real theological order, that which is first in the intention is posterior in temporal execution. Therefore, we do not have first the permission of sin and later the Word's Incarnation, but first the causality of the Incarnate Word, and later the permission of sin so that the Word's Incarnation may appear more glorious.⁸² [. . .] The fall is permitted so that the Blessed Virgin Mary may become a Coredeptrix.⁸³

The former Master of the Sacred Palace, Father (now Cardinal) Luigi Ciappi, O.P. agrees with Bonnefoy that the "Pro-

⁸¹ Martínez, *La redención de la Santísima Virgen*, in *Vgl* 9 (1957) 40-41; Id., in *EphM* 4 (1954) 243-267. See Llamera's critique in *EM* 15 (1955) 183-184.

⁸² Alonso, *art. cit.*, in *EphM* 4 (1954) 227.

⁸³ Alonso, *loc. cit.*, 237.

positum Incarnationis salutiferae *praecessit*, in unico aeterno decreto providentissimi Dei, *praevisionem peccati*, non quidem ordine temporis, ut planum est, sed naturae et causalitatis finalis."⁸⁴ He even allows that the Blessed Virgin had a *final causality* as regards the creation of Adam, and an *exemplary, efficient (meritorious)* and *final causality* as regards the entire economy of human redemption.⁸⁵ And yet, in this very same context, the author affirms that Mary was *not* predestined independently of the prevision of sin.⁸⁶ It seems to us that if Our Lady was predestined *uno eodemque decreto* with Christ (as Pius IX taught) and Christ was predestined *ante praevisum lapsum* (as Ciappi holds), then Mary, too, must have been predestined before the prevision of the fall, especially since she is, under Christ, the final and exemplary cause of everything, as the author repeatedly stresses.

The reason for Ciappi's apparent refusal to draw the logical conclusion from his own premises is, of course, that he feels *some* debt of sin is required in Our Lady in order to safeguard her preservative redemption. What kind of a debt? A "conditional" one will do.⁸⁷ But it turns out this is a debt only in name. "Debitum enim conditionale *objective nihil est, cum fundetur in conditione quae actu non existit.*"⁸⁸ Which prompts us to ask: Did Christ, then, suffer and die for something which

⁸⁴ L. Ciappi, O.P., *De privilegio Immaculatae Conceptionis ac de praedestinatione Matris Dei Salvatoris juxta doctrinam S. Thomae de motivo Incarnationis*, in *Vgl* 6 (1955) 4-5.

⁸⁵ Ciappi, *art. cit.*, 7.

⁸⁶ Ciappi, *art. cit.*, 5.

⁸⁷ Ciappi, *art. cit.*, 7-9.

⁸⁸ Ciappi, *art. cit.*, 10. R. Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P. would agree with Bonnefoy as regards the place of Christ and Mary in the divine decree. Cf. *Motivum Incarnationis fuit motivum misericordiae*, in *Ang* 7 (1930) 289-302; *Causae ad invicem sunt causae*, *ibid.* 9 (1932) 2-42; *The Mother of the Savior and Our Interior Life* (Dublin, 1948) 23-29. However, like his religious confrere Ciappi, Garrigou-Lagrange attributes to Mary a *debitum conditionatum*. Cf. his allocution at the Mariological Congress in Rome, in *Vgl* 11 (1957) 458-460.

is *objective nihil*? for something which is purely a mental abstraction? One wonders whether so much precious time must be wasted trying to safeguard *that* kind of a redemption.

We have seen, over and over throughout this paper, that the expedient of the *debitum* constitutes the key factor in explaining Mary's preservative redemption. Let us, then, focus our attention on the theological absurdity of the expedient itself.

The rationale monotonously advanced by the debitist fraternity amounts to this: Owing to her descentance from Adam by way of natural generation, Mary *should* have been tainted with original sin, although *de facto* she was not, because of God's intervention at the critical moment.

We may point out that nature, of itself, does not demand that an individual be included in Adam's sinfulness. The reason is obvious: To constitute Adam as moral head of the race was equivalent to elevating him to the supernatural level, and "nature," by definition, cannot have any claim to be so raised. A *debitum* does not depend on a biological function such as seminal generation because a *debitum*, as Montalbanus reminded us, is a relation of the moral order since it determines a moral form in the subject. If seminal generation involved an exigency for the transmission of sin, it would involve also an exigency for the elevation to the supernatural order since the headship of Adam extends also to the latter. Besides, if generation involved a natural exigency, then God could not create a man without establishing the law of sin's transmission, because His concursus is never wanting in those things which are necessarily part of nature.

Nor does it help to say that, in point of fact and owing to a divine intervention, the general law was not actually applied to her, and thus she escaped the shame involved. It seems to

us that one incurs an infamy or a shame, not by the fact that one has actually gone to jail, but by the mere fact of having deserved it. During the entire period *before* her conception (i.e., in the mind of God from all eternity) Our Lady deserved to be tainted with original sin or she did not. It she did not, then it makes no sense to say that she "should" have been tainted. If, on the contrary, she deserved it, then she did incur the shame, but in that case the question naturally arises: Did God *change His mind* and render her "undeserving" in the first instant of her conception? Are we not dealing here with a metaphysical impossibility?

Father Llamera has tried to answer the above argument by claiming that it involves a *petitio principii*, since it identifies the *debitum* with the actual contraction of sin and applies to the latter what pertains only to the former.⁸⁹ We grant that they are, in fact, different. However, the force of the argument is based, not on their alleged identification, but rather on the *necessary* nexus between the two. If God decided from all eternity that Mary *should* contract original sin in the first instant of her conception, and then we find that in fact she does not contract it, what we want to know is this: what precisely happened to the original *shouldness*? It surely did not go into effect—this is *de fide* since 1854. Therefore, it must have been cancelled, thus implying a modification or change in God's previous arrangement, which is preposterous.

To the above observation Llamera would retort that the transmission of sin was not God's arrangement in the first place; God's original plan called for the transmission of grace, not sin, and it was Adam's fall that altered the divine plan.⁹⁰ To which it may be answered that, while the *commission* of sin depended exclusively on Adam's will, nevertheless, once the sin was committed, the laws governing its *transmission* were laid

⁸⁹ Llamera, *art. cit.*, in *EM* 15 (1955) 220; Roschini, in *Vgl* 11 (1957) 354-355.

⁹⁰ Llamera, *loc. cit.*

down by an act of God's will. Hence, the alleged *should-ness* or necessity on Mary's part to contract original sin does involve the divine will. And so our argument retains its force.

During the public debate on the *debitum* at the 1954 International Mariological Congress in Rome, there was a very enlightening exchange of views on this very point between Father Martínez, O.F.M. and Father Alfaro, S.J. Let us summarize their respective positions.

According to Martínez, if God made the granting of grace to Mary contingent on Adam's perseverance, once Adam sinned, he transmitted to Mary a nature deprived of original justice which she should have had. This would indeed give rise to a *debitum*. But this involves a contradiction because we have here two grants or concessions: one conditional ("I give you grace *if* Adam remains faithful"). Since the condition was not verified, the implied negative condition ("I will *not* give you grace *if* Adam falls") automatically becomes absolute. In this case we have a first decree efficaciously denying grace to Mary in the first instant of her conception, and later another decree granting her grace in the same instant. The contradiction is obvious.⁹¹

Alfaro, however, insisted that there was no contradiction. He pointed out that one and the same object can be the terminus of two divine decrees, one conditional, the other absolute. To prove it, he gave the following example. God sincerely wishes all men to be saved, but this salvific will is conditioned on man's final perseverance. Once God has foreseen their death in mortal sin as absolutely future, He absolutely wills that not all men be saved. No contradiction.⁹²

To which Martínez replied: I did not say that there was a contradiction between a conditional decree and an absolute decree. The contradiction I mentioned exists between two

⁹¹ Martínez, in *Vgl* 11 (1957) 463.

⁹² Alfaro, in *Vgl* 11 (1957) 473.

absolute decrees. Once Adam sinned, the decree which was originally conditional automatically became absolute ("I will *not* give grace to those under Adam's headship, including [ex hypothesi] Mary"). Then comes the second decree, also absolute, to grant grace to Mary in the first instant of her conception. Hence the contradiction between two absolute decrees.⁹³

The late Father G. M. Roschini, O.S.M. admitted that Our Lady was not included in the universal law of sin, but he added: "Mary *should* have been included," and it is this *shouldness* (this *debitum remotum*) that explains her preservative redemption.⁹⁴

But note Bonnefoy's observation: If we turn Roschini's proposition into the active voice, it reads: "Someone should have included Mary in the law of sin." Who is that "someone"? No one outside of God Himself has the power to include Mary or anybody else in the law of sin. Thus, if we wish to speak clearly, we must say: "God should include Mary in the law of sin." It is now up to Roschini to prove that the obligation to include Mary in the law of sin falls on God Himself. Can any theologian imagine a legislator superior to God and imposing an "obligation" on Him?

It is true that at times we say, "God *owes it to Himself* to do this or that," in order to express in human language the exigencies of divine attributes. In this sense we can repeat with a thousand witnesses of Catholic tradition: "God owed it to Himself to *exclude* His Mother from the necessity to incur original sin."⁹⁵ And the best proof of the statement is that He

⁹³ Martínez, *ibid.*, 477.

⁹⁴ Roschini, *Mariologia*, II/2 (ed. 2, Romae, 1958) 91.

⁹⁵ Although Bonnefoy does not mention it, the following text of St. Pius X confirms this. In *Ad diem illum* (in ASS 36 [1904] 456) the Holy Father writes: "Cur ita vero, nisi quod peccatum et Deus per infinitam oppositionem separantur? Hinc sane catholicae ubique gentes persuasum habuere Dei Filium... *debuisset*... ab omni originalis culpa labe praeservare immunem Virginem Matrem."

actually did it in the first instant of her conception.⁹⁶ Besides, we may add, if God was "obliged" to include Mary in the law of sin but did not in fact include her (as Roschini himself admits), was He then acting against His own "duty"?

But suppose we shift the "obligation" (or *should-ness*) from God to Mary, so that, not God, but she herself, being a child of Adam by way of seminal generation, was obliged to place herself under the law which would lead her to the eventual contraction of sin. What happens then? In that case, as the Dominican Cardinal Torquemada sharply remarked at the Council of Basel (1439), by the very fact that Mary did not actually contract original sin, she committed a sin inasmuch as she failed to do something which she was "obliged" to do.⁹⁷

And so, it seems that no matter how one tries to safeguard Mary's preservative redemption by attributing to her a *debitum peccati*, one invariably ends up in a blind alley.

CONCLUSION

At the end of the 1954 International Mariological Congress in Rome, Father Balić, in an obvious effort to conciliate debitists and antidebitists, suggested that both groups could endorse the following proposition: "*The Blessed Virgin Mary WOULD [not should] have contracted original sin if she had not been preserved.*"⁹⁸ This—he thought—would eliminate the mention of any *debitum* in Our Lady and at the same time sufficiently safeguard her preservative redemption. While Balić himself and a few others understood the above proposition in an *antidebitist* sense, others attached a debitist meaning to

⁹⁶ Bonnefoy, *art. cit.*, in *EphM* 4 (1954) 322-323.

⁹⁷ Joannes de Turrecremata (Torquemada), O.P., *Tractatus de veritate conceptionis* . . . (Romae, 1547) f. 65r-66r. Cf. Martínez, *La redención y el débito de María según Juan de Segovia y Juan de Torquemada*, in *RET* 16 (1956) 39.

⁹⁸ Balić, in *Vgl* 11 (1975) 499. The Latin reads: *B. Virgo Maria peccatum originale contraxisset, nisi praeservata fuisset.*

it. Result? Both groups returned home thinking that they had won a victory. Which proves that the proposition itself is ambiguous and, therefore, unsatisfactory as a solution. As García Garcés pointedly remarks in his well-balanced reflections on the whole affair, this is like the old "*Aio te, Aeacida, romanos vincere posse.*"⁹⁹ Who defeats whom?

For Delgado Varela, the "contraxisset" ("would have contracted") in Balić's proposition should be understood, not of a *debitum*, but of a mere possibility to contract original sin. The author illustrates this with an analogous case. In Christology—he says—we establish that Christ did not contract original sin because He was conceived virginally. On the basis of this, we may affirm that "He *would* have contracted original sin *if* He had not been conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit." Does that mean that we are thereby attributing a *debitum peccati* to the Savior? Certainly not. We are pointing only to the possibility that, *in a different order of things*, i.e., if Christ had been conceived seminally, His soul would have been tainted by sin.¹⁰⁰

But here the debitists interject: By stating that Mary did not contract original sin *because* she was preserved, you are implying a *debitum* in the event of a non-preservation. To which Basilio de San Pablo would retort: *Nego consequens*. By her conception, Mary enters the sinful family of Adam even as Christ does. But she enters with that other personality as Mother of God, a personality which has a claim on sanctifying grace. Now, this grace neutralizes—*de facto* and *de jure*—any

⁹⁹ García Garcés, *art. cit.*, in *EphM* 5 (1955) 110. Alonso (*EphM* 5 [1955] 42) writes: "At salva tantorum virorum reverentia, formula haec nimis erat impropria ut concordiam gignere potuerit; quinimmo appetissima videbatur a plurimis ut antiquam rei confusionem perpetuam faceret." R. Masson, O.P. agrees: "... formule assez large pour avoir des chances d' être acceptée par tous" (*Ang* 35 [1958] 105). Cf. also J. Galot, S.J. in *Vgl* 11 (1957) 467; A. B. Wolter, O.F.M., *art. cit.*, in *MS* 5 (1954) 69-70.

¹⁰⁰ Delgado Varela, *art. cit.*, in *EphM* 5 (1955) 192.

and every sinful derivation which may be implied in her Adamic filiation.¹⁰¹

There is another point which is sometimes overlooked in this connection. Underlying this entire controversy is the implied admission by the debitists that there are only two alternatives involved here, namely: to exist in grace *or* to exist in sin. But, as Irish theologian F. O'Neill opportunely reminded us, there is still another alternative, namely: *not to exist at all, if not in grace.*¹⁰²

In our considered opinion, however, about the most cogent argument against the Balić proposal is the one offered by Prof. William H. Marshner. According to this eminent philosopher-theologian, the proposition, "Mary *would* have contracted original sin if she had not been preserved," is theologically vacuous precisely because it is tautological. It is equivalent to saying that "if Mary had not been preserved from sin, she would not have been preserved from sin." This is, of course, only one of the interesting observations in Marshner's comprehensive thesis. His extensive—and brilliant—treatment of every facet of the *debitum*-question must be thoroughly assimilated in order to gain an adequate assessment of its devastating logic.¹⁰³

To recapitulate. In this essay we have briefly stated our position on what is dogmatic and non-dogmatic in the 1854 definition of the Immaculate Conception. We have also discussed the various opinions of theologians on whether Our Lady was redeemed *sensu proprio* or rather *sensu improprio*. We have,

¹⁰¹ Basilio de S. Pablo, *art. cit.*, in *EphM* 5 (1955) 23.

¹⁰² F. O'Neill, *The Blessed Virgin Mary and the Alleged Debt of Sin*, in *IER* 22 (1923) 82. O'Neill's article on the same subject is continued in *IER* 24 (1924) 56-73; 32 (1928) 73-83; 34 (1929) 33-48.

¹⁰³ Prof. Marshner's paper, *A Critique of Marian Counterfactual Formulae*, appearing in this same issue of *MS*, is entirely devoted to this question. See also, by the same author, *A Logician's Reflections on the Debitum Contrabendi Peccatum*, in *MS* 29 (1978) 134-187; Id., *Toward a Relational Theory of Our Lady's Co-redeemership*, in *EphM* 27 (1977) 417-418.

moreover, sketched several of the theological attempts to harmonize Mary's preservative redemption with her immunity from the debt of sin. And finally, we have endeavored to pinpoint some of the flaws inherent in Father Balić's proposal to bring together the dissenting parties in the age-old debate.

Our general conclusion, then, may be concisely formulated as follows: We believe that Our Blessed Lady was truly redeemed by the Passion of her Son and at the same time totally immune from the necessity to contract original sin. While the theologians of the anti-debitist camp are still divided concerning the exact manner of conciliating the alleged dichotomy, the gallant attempt undertaken by Bonnefoy and his followers seems to us to approach the problem with greater guarantee of eventual success than all the others mentioned in this study.

It should be clear that, from this our perspective, the Immaculate Mother of God emerges, not only as the peerless beneficiary of the Blood of the Lamb, but also as that unique creature whose remoteness from the sin of Adam is "*the greatest conceivable under God.*"¹⁰⁴

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¹⁰⁴ Pius IX, *Ineffabilis Deus*; ed. cit., 30.