THE DIGNITY AND VIRGINITY OF THE MOTHER OF GOD

M M

WEST BADEN READINGS

in philosophy and theology

THE DIGNITY AND VIRGINITY OF THE MOTHER OF GOD

by

FRANCIS SUAREZ, S.J.

Disputations I, V, VI from *The Mysteries of the Life of Christ*

translated by

RICHARD J. O'BRIEN, SJ.

WEST BADEN COLLEGE

West Baden Springs

Indiana

IMPRIMI POTEST

Josephus M. Egan, S.J., *Provincial*

NIHIL OBSTAT

Rev. Merwin Lenk, *Censor Librorum*
April 21, 1954

IMPRIMATUR

Edward Cardinal Mooney, *Archbishop of Detroit*
May 4, 1954

EDWARDS BROTHERS, INC.
ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

CONTENTS

DISPUTATION VI

INTRODUCTION

The three Marian disputations here translated into English for the first time originally appeared in one of Suarez* best known theological works, De Mysteriis Vitae Christi (The Mysteries of the Life of Christ). Actually, the true title of the work is Commentariorum ac disputationum in tertiam partem Divi Thomae tomus secundus (The Second volume of the Commentaries and Disputations on the Third Part of the Summa Theologica of St. Thomas). But this huge work of more than a thousand double-column folio pages subsequently became most widely known by the short title derived from the first three words of the long subtitle: Mysteria vitae Christi et utriusque adventus ejus accurata disputatione ita complectens ut et Scholasticae Doctrinae studiosis et Divini Verbi coneionatoribus usui esse posset (Comprising an accurate discussion of the Mysteries of the Life of Christ and of both of His Comings so as to be useful as well to students of Scholastic theology as to preachers of the Divine^ord).[1]

Suarez spared no pains in achieving this double objective. From the philosophical and theological points of view he treated the mysteries of the life of Christ more fully than had ever been done before. Even as late as 1940 the

[1]Commentariorvm, ac Dispvtationvm in Tertiam Partem Divi Thomae. Tomvs Secvndvs. Mysteria vitae Christi, et vtriusque adventus eius accurata disputatione ita complectens, ut et Scholasticae Doctrinae studiosis, et Diuini Verbi concionatoribus vsui esse posset. Auctore Patre Francisco Svarez, Societatis Jesv, in Collegio ejusdem Societatis Academiae Compultensis Sacrae Theologiae Professore, Ad Rodericvm Vazqvez de Arze supremi Senatus Regij in Hispania Praesidem dignissimum. Cum gratia, et Priuilegio Regis Catholici, Complvti. Ex Officina Joannis Gratiani, Anno 1592.

distinguished Dominican scholar Pere J. M. Voste, O. P., remarked in his Commentarius in Summam Theologicam S. Thomae, De Mysteriis Vitae Christi, (III, Q.XVII-LIX)[2] that although the first twenty-six questions of St. Thomas's treatise on the Incarnation had many excellent commentators, the second half of St. Thomas's treatise, questions twenty-seven to fifty-nine, had few exponents indeed. These thirty-three questions on the mysteries of the life of Christ were not touched on at all by John of St. Thomas, Gonet, the Salmanticenses; not even the older or modern authors who wrote special treatises on the Incarnation commented on them. *Francis Suarez," the eminent Dominican continues, "must be mentioned as the first to give an extended exposition of this part of the Summa Theologica (III, q. 27-59) and from a biblical and patristic point of view as well, with immense erudition."[3]

Suarez published The Mysteries of the Life of Christ at Alcala in 1592, just two years after the appearance of his De Incarnatione, his first published work. At the time Suarez was forty-four years of age and had been teaching for twenty-one years, philosophy for three years and theology for eighteen. As a teacher he was known and admired in the famous universities of the Spain of his day, Salamanca, Segovia, Valladolid, Alcala; and he had but recently returned from a period of teaching at Rome. The doubts, hesitation, and apprehension which he voiced in the preface to the De Incarnatione are replaced in the preface of The Mysteries of the Life of Christ by a spirit of confidence because of the universal acceptance of the previous volume. Never afterwards did he express similar hesitations; and by the time of his death he had published thirteen volumes and had prepared another fourteen which were published posthumously.

The Mysteries of the Life of Christ are then the first fruits of Suarez' speculation and teaching. Indeed, in the

2J. M. Vosté, O.P., Commentarius in Summam Theologicam S. Thomae, De Mysteriis Vitae Christi (III Q.XXVII-LIX), editio altera, Romae, 1940.

3Ibid., v.

opinion of Father Galdos, S. J., "the intrinsic value of this work would justify the title of Doctor Eximius subsequently bestowed on him by Pope Benedict XIV."[4] Taken as a whole, The Mysteries of the Life of Christ are the most complete of all Suarez' writings; and in the words of Father Astrain, S. J., "no one can be more universal than he, since he gathers all the streams of knowledge from the Fathers through the Middle Ages to the end of the sixteenth century."[5] It is enough to say that with the exception of the Disputationes Metaphysicae no other work of Suarez has had more editions, the most recent being the fifteenth in 1860. With justice could Pope Pius XII at the quadricentenniai of the Gregorian University in October 1953 propose to its students and professors as an example to emulate "one of the theologians of the early period of your University, Francis Suarez, who after St. Thomas must rightly be accounted one of the greatest students of sacred theology."[6]

But The Mysteries of the Life of Christ is especially important for its contribution to Mariology. About a third of the entire work is devoted to a study of the Mother of God and her prerogatives. In his preface Suarez explains this seeming disproportion. "When it is a matter of considering the sublime dignity, the unequaled virtues, the wonderful life and glories of the Blessed Virgin, who could be so sterile in thought or speech and so inarticulate as to hasten quickly over the subject with parsimonious treatment? It often seemed to me—if you will pardon the complaint—that our theology has in this fashion been too brief and concise, whereas the dignity and scope of the subject, which carries with it so much delight, knowledge, and usefulness, justly demands from a theologian far different treatment. Hence I have treated the subject of the Most Blessed Virgin more fully. . . ."[7] Indeed, the eighteen disputations devoted to

4Romualdo Galdos, S.J., Misterios De La Vida de Cristo, Version Casteliana, 2 vols., Biblioteca De Autores Cristianos, Madrid, 1949, xix.

5Antonio Astrain, S.J., Historia de la Compama de Jesûs en la Asistencia de Espana, Madrid, 1913, VI, 64.

6Acta Apostolicae Sedis, 45(1953) 684.

7Suarez, De Mysteriis Vitae Christi, Vives, 1860, " Ad Lectorem", vi.

the Blessed Virgin constitute a complete Mariologia Suareziana.

It was Suarez' contention that a study of the questions relating to the Blessed Virgin was not alien to Scholastic theology just because the famous Scholastics had not treated these questions at greater length. Indeed, he felt that after the knowledge of God and Christ there was for the theologian no knowledge more useful or worthy than that of the Mother of God. Nor could he understand why theologians would investigate so carefully the grace of the angels, their merits, state of life, glory, other gifts of knowledge and grace, their ministries and functions and not at the same time treat with far greater effort and care the dignity, grace, knowledge, merits, and unique beatitude of the Queen of angels.[8] Suarez set himself to fill in these lacunae in the doctrine of the earlier Scholastics by inserting disputations on these questions at appropriate places within the scheme of his commentary on the various articles of the third part of the Summa Theologiae of St. Thomas. Thus while The Mysteries of the Life of Christ reveal that Suarez set apart and reverenced St. Thomas far beyond any other Doctor of the Church, Suarez at the same time expanded and amplified the Mariology of his master. Even Gabriel Vasquez, Suarez' rival at Alcala and often his most bitter critic, was thoroughly impressed with the treatment of the Blessed Virgin in the De Mysteriis. "Suarez has rendered an outstanding service to sacred science," he remarked, "when he used the Scholastic method and submitted to strict theological criticism all the questions relating to the life of the most pure Virgin Mary, Our Lady."[9]

The result of Suarez' effort was the first attempt in Scholastic theology to give a separate and comprehensive treatment based on theological sources of the questions about Mary. True, St. Albert had his Mariale; but Suarez' work is an encyclopedia of Scripture, the Fathers, the Councils, and previous theologians and thus goes far beyond

[8]Ibid., Praefatium, 2.

[9]Nieremberg, Varones ilustres de la Compania de Jesus: El Padre Gabriel Vazquez, quoted by Roui De Scorraille, S7j., François Suarez, 2 vols., 1912, I, 257.

the scope of St. Albert's treatise. Moreover, Suarez is more cautious than St. Albert in his use of arguments based on types of Mary in Scripture and in his use of the accommodated sense. Indeed, it would not be rash to say that most of the great modern Mariologies are obliged to Suarez for their matter, manner of treatment, and source material.

A comparison of Suarez and two modern Mariologists whose works have recently been translated into English, Scheeben and Garrigou-Lagrange[10], will serve to highlight certain further values of Suarez' work. They for good reasons condense their treatment of Scripture and the Fathers; Suarez cites these sources at length. Moreover, he gives greater space to the elucidation of privileges and graces of Mary that are dogmatically certain, while the other two give more space to speculative questions. Finally, Suarez follows a more historical order of treatment—a point that has both its advantages and its drawbacks. However since Suarez was not writing a Mariology but The Mysteries of the Life of Christ, his order of treatment was imposed on him.

As one indication of the wealth of material Suarez has gathered it might be pointed out that in the three brief Marian disputations translated here, Suarez cites upwards of one hundred and fifteen distinct authors, both Fathers and theologians, many of them the authors of numerous treatises which are cited profusely.

The first, fifth, and sixth disputations have been chosen for translation since they treat what Suarez and most Catholic theologians consider Mary's fundamental privileges, that of Mother and Virgin. These two privileges form the core of the mystery of Mary, the Virgin Mother of God. Consequently, it was felt that the translation of the first, fifth, and sixth disputation would prove most useful and practical to the general reader. Moreover, these three

[10] M.J. Scheeben, Mariology, trans, by Rev. T. L. M. J. Geukers, 2 vols., Herder, St. Louis, 1946; Father Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., The Mother of the Savior and our Interior Life, trans, by Bernard J. Kelly, C.S. Sp., D.D., Herder, St. Louis, 1948.

disputation taken together give a fair sample of the theological method Suarez employs in his other Marian disputations.

Accuracy, precision, and fidelity to the original have been the main objectives of the translator while still attempting to keep English idiom and striving to preserve some of the literary flavor of the citations from the Fathers. The translation was made from the Vives edition of 1860,[11] although the recent Spanish translation[12] has occasionally been consulted to settle doubtful points since the editors of that translation had recourse to and based their work on copies of the first and fourth editions as well as Suarez's original manuscript still preserved in the Library of the University of Salamanca.

Although some of the longer paragraphs have been divided in accord with modern style, the divisions of the text and the paragraph numbering of the Vives edition has been preserved to facilitate reference to the original Latin text. The marginal captions of the first edition which the Vives edition inserted in italics into the body of the text have been kept as separate paragraph headings.

The modern custom of citing references in separate notes rather than including such within the text as was Suarez' custom has been adopted in the interest of readability. These references have not been checked for accuracy, but are given simply as they appear in Suarez' text. Where he does not give specific references, none are given here. However, his method of citing chapter and book has been standardized, abbreviated titles completed, the names of authors written out in full, and Scripture references given according to both chapter and verse. The Rheims-Douay version has been used for all quotations from Scripture.

[11] R. P. Francisci Suarez, S.J., Opera Omnia, vol. 19, De Mysteriis Vitae Christi, Vives, Paris, 1860.

[12] Misterios De La Vida De Cristo Del P. Francisco Suarez, S.J., Version Castellana por eT P. Romualdo Galdos, S.J., 2 vols, Biblioteca De Autores Cristianos, Madrid, 1949.

May this tribute of the Fathers and theologians of the past to the great Mother of God add to the knowledge and affection of Mary's children of today who during this Marian Year celebrate the holy and immaculate Conception of their Mother.

Richard J. O'Brien, S.J.

West Baden, April 22, 1954
Feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Qieen of the Society of Jesus

a

DISPUTATION I

THE DIGNITY OF THE MOTHER OF GOD IN GENERAL

At the beginning of the treatise on Christ and the Incarnation, I established first His Divinity and Incarnation since these were the bases of all discussion about that mystery. Similarly, these disputations on the Blessed Virgin should begin with a consideration of her Divine Maternity, an explanation of the nature and extent of this dignity, and an analysis of her predestination for this role. Since these are the sources of all our doctrine on the Virgin, I shall discuss them in the present disputation.

SECTION I

WHETHER THE BLESSED VIRGIN WAS TRULY AND PROPERLY THE MOTHER OF BOTH GOD AND MAN

1. This question first began to be discussed in the Church soon after the beginning of the fifth century at the time of the Council of Ephesus. Although prior to this the heretics who denied that Christ was either true God or true man with a real human body concluded logically that the Virgin was not the true mother of either God or man, Nestorius was the first who, while believing in both the divinity and humanity of Christ, dared to maintain that the Virgin Mary was not the Mother of God in the true and proper meaning of the word.[1] The source of this error was either his denial of the true union of the human nature with the Divine Word and the consequent true and real communication of idioms or at least his denial that this union took place in the womb of the Virgin. Thus, since she had neither conceived nor given birth to God, the Blessed Virgin, although the Mother of Christ, was not the Mother of God.

2. The truth is that the Blessed Virgin was in the real and proper sense the Mother of God. And this the Councils of Ephesus, Chalcedon, Constantinople II[2], Constantinople IV[3], the Lateran Council under Martin I[4], and many others

[1] This is clear from the history of the Council of Ephesus; Vincent of Lerins, Contra profanas vocum novitates; Cassian, De incarnatione, I & II; Theophylactus, In Joannem, 9; Canisius, De Beata Virgine, 22, indicates that some heretics are involved in the same error even today.

[2] Council of Constantinople II, act. 4 & 11.

[3] Council of Constantinople IV, act. 4 & 7.

[4] Council of the Lateran under Pope Martin I, can. 3.

defined. But to prove this truth by proper principles, I must make several suppositions.

THE VIRGIN MARY THE TRUE MOTHER OF CHRIST.

3. First, the Blessed Virgin was really the mother of this man, Christ. This is expressly stated in John (2:1), "And the mother of Jesus was there," twice in Luke (1:43), "And whence is this to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" and (2:34) "Simeon. . .said to Mary his mother," and in Matthew in both the first and second chapters: "take the child and his mother" (1:20).

You will object: Similar texts can prove that Joseph was the father of Jesus. The reply to this objection rather clarifies the truth because Luke (3:23) adds, "being (as it was supposed) the son of Joseph,"—a remark never made of the Virgin. Furthermore, the Gospels never speak of Joseph having generated Christ; whereas they do say that the Virgin conceived and gave birth to a son. As Irenaeus observes,[5] the frequent Gospel references to Christ as "the Son of Man" confirm this. Moreover, the use of the phrases "Son of David" or "Son of Abraham" have a similar force; for through generation by the Virgin Mother Christ has descended from them. Thus, Isaias (11:1) says, "And there shall come forth a rod out of the root of Jesse: and a flower shall rise up out of his root." As the blossom is truly brought forth by the tree, so is Christ brought forth by the Virgin.[8] This argument loses no force even if we should understand Christ to be the rod.[7] It has, I say, the

[5]Irenaeus, Adversus haereses, HI, 32.

[8]Jerome, In Isaiam; Pope Leo, De nativitate, Sermo 4; Ambrose, De Benedictionibus patriarcharum, 4, De Spiritu Sancto I, 5, De institutione virginis, 9; Augustine, Sermones de tempore, 3; Chrysostom, In psalmum 22; Origen, In Leviticum, Horn. 12; Tertullian, Adversus Marcionem, m, 8; Contra Judaeos, 9; Rupert of Deutz, In Isaiam, II, 6, De victoria Verbi, XI, 28 & 52.

[7]Clement of Alexandria, Paedagoga, I, 9; Chrysostom, In Matthaeum, Hom. 30; Origen, In Numeros, Hom. 9; Hilary, In psalmum 2, in the words "Regi eos in virga ferrea"; Ambrose, Sermo 54; Cyril of Alexandria, In Isaiam.

same force, because Christ was not of the root of Jesse except mediately, through the Virgin.

4. Second, that Christ is the son of the Virgin is confirmed by His own words to her when He was dying on the cross: "Behold thy son" (John 19:26). For as Augustine[8], Chrysostom[9], and Cyril of Alexandria[10] remark, by those words He taught that we should honor and care for our parents. Thus Christ recognized and honored the Virgin as His Mother and even in His last hour showed His great care for her. Cyprian also comments on this: "Now you are swayed by tender affection for Your Mother. This marriage-chamber of Your human nature You entrust to Your beloved steward; zealously do You provide for the Blest of Women apostolic patronage, and enjoyn on the disciple the faithful service of the Virgin."[11] Ambrose says, "Christ bore witness to this on the cross and between His Mother and His disciple apportioned the loving duties of mother and son."[12] Finally, Jerome treating of the subjection of Christ to the Virgin says, "He reverenced the Mother whose Father He Himself was, He honored the nurse whom He had nursed. He recalled His birth in another's womb and His hours in another's arms. Thus, when He hangs upon the cross, He entrusts to His disciples the parent whom before the cross He had never given up."[13] Gregory Nazianzen beautifully teaches this same truth.[14]

REPLY-WHY CHRIST CALLS THE VIRGIN WOMAN, NOT MOTHER.

5. You will object; What about the passage in John (2:4) —and others also—where Christ calls the Virgin woman,

[8] Augustine, In Joannem, Tract. 119.
[9] Chrysostom, In Joannem, Hom. 84.
[10] Cyril of Alexandria, In Joannem, XII, 34.
[11] Cyprian, De cardinalibus Christi operibus, caput or concio "De resurrectione Christi."
[12] Ambrose, Epistola 82 in fine.
[13] Jerome, Epistola 47 de vitando suspecto contubernio.
[14] Gregory Nazianzen, Oratio 51 or Epistula 3 ad Cledonium, prope initium.

but never Mother? And even a greater difficulty: Why in Matthew (12:48) does Christ seem to deny His Mother with the words: "Who is my mother?"

The reply to the first objection is that Christ spoke that way because it accorded with His reserve and dignity and "because", as Augustine says, "He wanted to give us an example." For He said, "call none your father upon earth" (Matthew 23:9). Moreover, as Nicholas of Lyra observes, perhaps in that passage from John (19:26), Christ avoided addressing the Virgin as Mother to save her feelings.

But in the other passage from John (2:4) Christ so acted in order to call attention to the fact that the work and miracle which the Virgin requested was proper to the divine power and not to the human nature which alone He had taken from His Mother as Augustine points out.[15] Or, to be sure, just as He called Himself the "Son of Man" so by a figure of speech, Christ addressed the Virgin as woman to indicate that she was that woman through whom the harm wrought by the first woman would be repaired.

6. The answer to the second objection is that by those words Christ did not deny His Mother but corrected those who inopportunely kept breaking in on His discourse. Second, He taught that no work of God should be omitted because of relatives. Third, He wanted to bridle the boastfulness of those who gloried in their blood relationship to Himself by indicating that without a spiritual bond this was of no avail, and, indeed, that this spiritual bond was in itself a thing of great value. This is about the way Chrystostom[16] and Augustine[17] explain the passage. So too speaks Tertullian in a passage[18] in which he masterfully turns these verses against the heretics in vindication of the Faith.

[15]Augustine, In Joannem, Tract. 8; De fide et symbolo, 4.
[16]Chrysostom, In Mattheum, Hom. 45.
[17]Augustine, De sancta virginitate, 3; De fide contra Manichaeos.
[18]Tertullian, De Carne Christi, 7.

7. Fourth, Hilary[19], Gregory the Great[20], and Ambrose[21] add that Christ by such an action indicated that the Church which believed would be preferred to the synagogue of which He was a member according to the flesh.

8. The second supposition I make is that the human nature of Christ at the very same instant in which it was perfectly formed in the womb of the Virgin and began its existence in the world, was at that very instant taken up and united hypostatically to God. This was clearly explained in the previous volume.[22] Consequently, we conclude that this man, Christ, was always, from the very first moment of His conception, the God-Man. Never did He exist as mere man. Since these truths were sufficiently established in the passage cited, it will not be necessary to add anything further here.

THE BLESSED VIRGIN TRULY AND PROPERLY THE MOTHER OF GOD.

9. Third, from what has been said the truth of the statement under discussion is easily concluded; that is, that the Blessed Virgin is truly and properly the Mother of God. The propositions I have already explained prove this. Since the Virgin conceived and gave birth to God, she is, therefore, His Mother. My previous arguments establish the truth of the premises. Since she conceived this man and since the man conceived was God, she therefore conceived God.

Holy Scripture also states this truth outright. For in Galatians (4:4) the Son of God is spoken of as "made of a woman." In Romans (1:3) He is referred to as "made. . .of the seed of David, according to the flesh." Luke (1:35) has "the Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." He "shall be called" such, Luke says, not by a false title but by a true one, not only after His birth from the womb, but in His very conception within the womb. It

[19] Hilary of Poitiers, In Mattheum, 12.
[20] Gregory the Great, In Evangelia, Hom. 3.
[21] Ambrose, In Lucam, VI.
[22] Suarez, De Incarnatione, disp. 16, sect. 1.

was of this conception the angel spoke and explained that the power of the Holy Spirit would accomplish it because, as Cyril of Alexandria observes[23], truly God Himself was to be conceived. Isaias (7:14) further confirms this: •Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son: and his name shall be called Emmanuel" "which being interpreted is, God with us," as Matthew (1:23) explains.

Finally, Elizabeth confirms this truth by her words, "And whence is this to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" (Luke 1:43). For as John Damascene points out, [24] the word "Lord" indicates a Divine Person. And Gregory the Great says, "The same Virgin is spoken of as both Handmaid of the Lord and Mother. She is the Handmaid of the Lord because the Word, only-begotten before all ages, is equal to the Father. But she is Mother because in her womb by the Holy Spirit and of her flesh was He made man.'[25]* Below he adds the reason already touched upon: "for flesh was not first conceived in the womb of the Virgin and afterwards the Divinity entered into this flesh, but immediately the Word became flesh." The same doctrine is taught by Gregory in his Moralia[28] and in other places.[27]

Moreover, all the other Fathers of antiquity speak in the same way. In the Liturgies of James, Basil, and Chrysostom she is often called "the undefiled Mother of Our God." Gregory Nazianzen says, "If anyone does not believe Holy Mary to be the Mother of God, he is cast off from God."[28] Athanasius wrote a book or sermon about the Most Holy Mother of God. Irenaeus[29], Ephiphanius[30], and Cyril of Alexandria[31] also wrote of her. Augustine has his sermon

[23]Cyril of Alexandria, De fide ad reginas citing Athanasius, De Incarnatione Christi.
[24]John Damascene, De fide orthodoxa, HI, 12.
[25]Gregory the Great, Registrum Epistolarum, IX, 61.
[28]Gregory the Great, Moralia, XVm, 27, post medium.
[27]Ibid, 35.
[28]Gregory Nazianzen, Oratio 51 (Epistola 1 ad Cledonium).
[29]Irenaeus, Adversus haereses, HI, 27 & 32.
[30]Epiphanius, Haereses, HI, 78.
[31]Cyril of Alexandria, Contra Nestorium, Hom. 6.

on the Annunciation[32] and many others; Pope Leo, his Letters[33]. Because of her Motherhood the Fathers also address the Virgin as "throne, marriage-chamber, tabernacle, temple of God," and by similar titles which will be found here and there throughout their works.

One last confirmation is afforded by what has already been said about the communication of idioms. For God is dead because this man is dead. Therefore, God is conceived and born, and is, indeed, the son of the Virgin, because this man is her son. Conversely, therefore, the Virgin as she is the mother of this man, is the Mother of God.

In the last place one can add a speculative argument or argument from congruity. Granted that God wished to communicate Himself to men in as many ways as possible and to contract with men all forms of relationship compatible with Divine perfection, one way, and that very perfect, presents itself, that God should be not only man but also the son of man (i.e. the son of a human person, Mary) and that some created human person (Mary) be joined to God as closely as possible in the line of personality. Accordingly, not only human nature in Christ, but also a created human person in the Virgin was exalted above the choirs of Angels.

REPLY TO OPPOSING ARGUMENTS.

10. Many difficulties concerning this truth immediately occur. They can be understood only in the light of the way in which the Blessed Virgin conceived Christ the Lord. Thomas treats this subject most fully in the questions which follow, [questions thirty-one to thirty-four.] Therefore, I shall postpone a consideration of these difficulties until I come to those passages. But to the basic argument for the opposite opinion the answer is clear from what has already been said. For that argument rests upon the false supposition that Christ was conceived as mere man before His human nature was assumed by the Word.

[32]Augustine, Sermo 2 de Annunciatione.
[33]Pope Leo. Epistola 83 & 97.

DIFFICULTY.

11. But some would have it that these heretics err also by inference. For even had the aforementioned heretical view been true, these men are of the opinion that the Word and God could still truly be called the son of Mary, since to be called a person's son it suffices to assume the nature generated by that person. The arguments in support of this position are that the formal term of generation is nature itself, that a man is always the same in nature even though he should change his subsistence, and finally that the same relation of sonship residing in the supposit by reason of its human nature would always be retained.

REPLY-THE WORD CANNOT PROPERLY BE SAID TO BE THE SON OF THE VIRGIN UNLESS THE UNION WITH THE HUMAN NATURE TOOK PLACE AT THE MOMENT OF CONCEPTION IN THE WOMB OF THE VIRGIN.

12. Despite the reasons adduced, the opinion just cited remains to my mind unproved. For it is my opinion that if the union with human nature had not taken place at the very moment of conception in the womb of the Virgin, the Word of God could not properly be called the Virgin's Son. This doctrine is well explained by Thomas[34] and can clearly be gathered from all the Fathers cited above. For all of them in their condemnation of Nestorius suppose as a basic principle that the union occured in the very moment of human conception. The words of Gregory Nazianzen are unmistakable: "If anyone should assert that a man was formed and afterwards that this man put on God, he is worthy of condemnation; for this would not be the generation of God but a subterfuge."[35]

For example, if the human nature of Christ were not at the time of His death united to the Word even though it were united after the Resurrection, we could not truly speak of the death of God. Similarly, if at first a mere man existed, sinned, and afterwards this same human nature were assumed by the Word, we could not truly say that God had

[34]Aquinas, Summa Theologica, HI, q. 35, a. 4.
[35]Gregory Nazianzen, Oratio 51.

sinned. For communication of idioms is based upon the hypostatic union. Therefore, there can be no communication of idioms in whatever precedes union in another supposit since the communication takes place within the same person, not between different persons.

13. Secondly, since in the proposed solution the Word would in no way have been the object of the Virgin's conception or generation, we could not consequently speak of the Word being conceived or born of her. Neither could we call the Word, son, nor the Virgin, mother of God. Consequently, for this denomination or communication it is not enough to assume the nature produced by another; but this assumption must occur in such a way that the person who assumes the nature is somehow the object of the very act of conception or generation, so that he take on the nature in the very way in which it is capable of being taken on. Nor would this occur unless the nature were assumed in the very moment of conception. Therefore, it is not enough that, formally speaking, the same human nature or man should remain; for the term of generation is the supposit, the human nature as it subsists here and now. From these considerations we can formulate the obvious reply to the basic assumption of the opposite view.

Later on I shall speak of the relation of sonship and whether it would remain in the assumed nature. Here it suffices to point out that either the relation does not remain, or that in the present instance it does not remain in such wise that it can denominate God or the Word. For this relation does not remain in its entirety as before; nor was that upon which it was based, passive generation, ever terminated or assumed by the Word.

DIFFICULTY.

14. But from this source arises a grave and pertinent difficulty. Since the whole action of the Virgin had as its object a human nature which existed according to priority of nature before it was assumed by the Word, and since the assumption which followed took place not by reason of any action of hers but solely by the will and operation of God, she cannot, for this reason, be called the Mother of God.

This conclusion is clearly correct for several reasons. First, she in no way caused God to become man; just as one who enkindled fire and did not apply it to wood, could not be said to have caused the wood to burn. Second, in this instance the order of nature and the chronological order seem to correspond. For if after the completion of the Virgin's action God had held off the assumption for some time, the Virgin could not be called the Mother of God even if, as has been shown, the assumption followed thereafter. Therefore, the same holds true in the order of nature; for this denomination hinges not so much on time as on the natural connection of actions. Third and finally, the Word could otherwise be said to have changed by a change which took place with priority of nature in the human nature. Moreover, the Word could also be said to have been caused or effected.

15. Because of this main difficulty the solution can be offered that the Blessed Virgin brought about by true and physical efficient causality the union of the human nature with the Word. But this solution, as has been pointed out[38], is less well founded and unsatisfactory. For granted that the Blessed Virgin effected this union, she would have only done so as an instrumental cause and not as a mother who generates. Therefore, this kind of efficient causality does not explain how the Blessed Virgin is the Mother of God.

REPLY-HOW THE BLESSED VIRGIN BY CONCEPTION IS TRULY AND PROPERLY THE MOTHER OF GOD.

16. Another solution should therefore be given. For the Blessed Virgin truly and properly to be called the Mother of God it suffices that she concurred as mother (whether she concurred actively or passively does not concern us here) at that precise moment in time when the soul of Christ was united to His body. For in that very moment, I maintain, the soul and body of the human nature were united to the Word. Similarly, the Jews, on the other hand, are said to have killed God because by their action the

[38]Suarez, De Incarnatione, disp. 8, sect 1.

union of soul and body was dissolved and consequently the human nature as such was separated from the Word. In both instances the reason mentioned by Thomas[37] applies. For birth or generation just as any operation, is properly predicated of a supposit.

A good explanation of this can be had if one accepts as proved the matter already discussed[38]; namely, that the body and soul of Christ were first united according to priority of nature with the Word before being united to each other. Thus the body and soul of God by reason of the action or concursus of the Blessed Virgin were united not only to compose a human nature but to compose this man; and the Blessed Virgin, as the mother of this man, was in consequence of the communication of idioms, the Mother of God. In like manner in the generation of other men a subsistent soul is created first according to priority of nature and at once united to the subsistent body by the act of the one who generates, so that properly not this human nature but this man is generated. Similarly in the Resurrection of Christ, the whole operation concerned the union of the soul to the body. None the less, by that union God is said to have arisen. For by that action the subsisting body and soul were united by the subsistence of God; and, as a consequence, by force of this union God became man.

WHY THE VIRGIN MARY CANNOT BE CALLED A CAUSE OF GOD.

17. These explanations should easily clarify everything mentioned in the previous difficulty except the last inference. The brief reply to this is that in all correctness God can be said to have been born or conceived of a Virgin. For generation, as already explained, or conception has the supposit as its term. We do not, however, as frequently remarked in the first volume[39], speak of His being changed. For change properly denotes a subject not a term. Moreover that "change* whereby the human nature was united to the Word preceded according to priority of nature the

[37]Aquinas, Summa Theologica, HI, q. 35, a. 1.
[38]Suarez, De Incarnatione, disp 17, sect. 1 & 2.
[39]Ibid.

actual union itself. Thus, God is not spoken of as caused or effected since He is not "made" in an absolute sense; but He is "made man." For the same reason the Blessed Virgin must not be called in the absolute sense the cause of God since the word "cause" does not fix limits to producing or making. But when we say Mother of God, by the word "mother" we fix upon human generation by which God made man came forth from a Virgin. Confer what has been said above about the communication of idioms.

SECTION II

WHAT THE EXTENT OF THE DIGNITY OF THE MOTHER OF GOD IS AND HOW OTHER GIFTS OF GRACE ARE ITS CONCOMITANTS.

1. We can conceive and explain this dignity in two ways: first, absolutely and without qualification from a consideration of what it is in itself; second, by a comparison with other graces or supernatural dignities. I shall briefly pursue both of these methods.

NATURE AND EXTENT OF THE DIGNITY OF THE MOTHER OF GOD CONSIDERED ABSOLUTELY.—FLESH TAKEN BY CHRIST FROM THE VIRGIN NEVER PUT ASIDE. -PHYSICAL PERFECTION WHICH THE DIGNITY OF MOTHER ADDS TO THE PERSON OF THE VIRGIN.

2. First of all, it seems that this maternal dignity should be considered absolutely, in its moral rather than in its physical aspects. For physically her role as mother implies only the following functions.

First, the Blessed Virgin concurred in a real and proper sense to fashion a body for God. Second, a portion of the substance of her virginal body, from which the body of Christ was first formed and by which it later grew, so long as it was nourished by His Mother's blood or milk, was accordingly, united hypostatically to the Word of God. For

this reason Peter Damian says, "Although God is present in other things in three ways, in the Virgin He is present in a fourth and special way; that is, by identity. For He is one with her. Hence, let every creature hush and quake with fear. For who would dare to scan the infinite extent of this great dignity?"[1] And Augustine insists: "The flesh of Christ is the flesh of Mary."[2] "Further on he adds, "The flesh of Christ, although glorified by the resurrection, still remains that which He took from Mary."[3]

From this we can easily believe that the flesh which Christ took from the Virgin was never entirely dissipated or consumed by the continuous action of natural heat, but always remained entirely intact and united to the Word of God. Both speculative arguments and what we know of physiology seem to point to the truth of this opinion. For the substance of His flesh was perfectly formed, of moderate quantity, and was taken from the most pure blood of the Virgin.[4] Again, during the time of His infancy—for food is easily digestible and assimilation occurs practically with no difficulty at all—very little of her substance was lost by the process of nutrition. Especially was this true in the case of Christ Who was nourished by a bland and suitable diet, ubere de coelo pleno, as the Church chants. We might speculate in a not dissimilar vein about the rest of Christ's life; for the whole period was either a time of growth or a state in which the basic humors remained practically intact without undergoing any dissolution. Finally, it is indeed probable that this occurred by a special providence and by the will of Christ Himself.

Third, in addition to the exercise of this type of causality or concursus the Virgin acquired nothing else real or physical by reason of this dignity except the real relation of Mother to Christ the God-Man. For nothing else can be invented or devised.

[1]Peter Damian, Sermo de Nativitate Mariae.
[2]Augustine, Sermo de Assumptione Virginis, 5.
[3]Ibid.
[4]Translator's note: cf. Aquinas, Summa Theologica, HI, q. 31, a. 5, ad 3; q. 33, a. 2, ad 2.

Fourth, from what has been said we may prudently judge the Virgin possesses in the moral order the highest and most exalted position of dignity because of her unique relationship and closeness to God. It also follows that she possesses a unique right to all the goods of God her Son, as I shall explain in the following pages.

In order to set forth better the extent of this dignity, let us proceed in the second half of this section to compare it with the dignity of grace and adoptive sonship. For there is no need to compare this dignity with any other dignity since it is evidently less than that of the hypostatic union and beyond any other dignity which does not formally include grace or the friendship of God.

DIFFICULTY.

3. A difficulty arises concerning the dignity of grace. For the saints seem to prefer this dignity to that of the Mother of God. Augustine says, "More blessed was Mary when she conceived in her mind than in her womb.*5 Further on he adds, "More fruitfully did she bear in her heart than in her flesh.*8 Again he says, "The title of Mother, even in a virgin, is earthly in comparison with the heavenly intimacy achieved by those who do the will of God*7—that is, by grace. Justin maintains that the Blessed Virgin should be more extolled for the virtue by which she merited to be the Mother of God than for the very dignity of that Motherhood itself.8 Indeed, such seems to have been the opinion of Christ Our Lord when to the woman who exclaimed, "Blessed is the Womb that bore thee,* He replied, "Yea rather blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it* (Luke 11:27-28). It was as if He plainly said this latter blessedness is to be preferred to the former. Similar words are found in Matthew (12:48,50): "Who is my mother and who are my brethren. . .whosoever shall do the will of my Father.® Cyprian in commenting on this passage remarks, "Christ preferred to His Mother hearers of the

'Augustine, De sancta virginitate, 3.
'Ibid.
7Augustine, Epistola 38.
'Justin, Ad Orthodoxos, q. 136.

word and the poor in spirit'[9]—a statement which must necessarily be understood as applicable not to the persons but to the duties and functions involved.

A final argument can be drawn from my previous remarks. For the dignity of Motherhood adds to the person of the Virgin only a certain relation to God or man; whereas the dignity of adoptive sonship adds grace, glory, all the virtues, true sanctity, and moreover makes a man a friend of God and guiltless in so far as it excludes sin. Thus the relation of adoptive sonship which ensues regards God in so far as He is God. Therefore, the dignity of grace is greater than that of the Divine Motherhood.

4. On the contrary, however, this dignity of Mother is of a higher order. For in some way it pertains to the order of the hypostatic union since it intrinsically regards that union and has a necessary relationship with it. For this reason Augustine says, "The heart cannot conceive nor the tongue express the result of this grace and dignity.'[10] And Bernard[11] in various ways enlarges on the dignity pointing out that it infinitely surpasses anything short of God that man can conceive. Laurence Justinian says, "She excels others in dignity in direct proportion to her nearness to the Word.*[12] Anselm speaks in the same vein especially at the beginning of his work On the Excellence of Blessed Mary: "I stand trembling in great fear as I sigh to behold, in some way or other—at least with the blurred vision of my heart—the transcendent excellence of the Blessed Mother of God who surpasses all created things save only the Man-God.*[13] "H this alone were related of the Holy Virgin, that she is the Mother of God, she would exceed every conceivable

'Cyprian, Sermo de Passione Domini.
[10]Augustine, De Assumptione Virginis, initio.
"Bernard, Sermo de Assumptione; De Nativitate Virginis; In "signum magnum'; In "missus est', Hom. 2.
"Laurence Justinian, Sermo de Purificatione; Sermo de Assumptione.
"Anselm, De excellentia Beatae Mariae.

sublimity short of God.*[14] Cyril of Alexandria[15] and Origen[18] have similar passages.

This view [that the Divine Maternity is a greater dignity than that of grace and adoptive sonship] is strengthened by the fact that all the Fathers reckon that the Blessed Virgin received on account of her dignity as Mother not only surpassing grace, but that all the graces, virtues, gifts and privileges of grace divided and alloted among all other saints were gathered together in this one Virgin. Consequently Bernard remarks, "We cannot suspect that what was bestowed on only a few mortals was denied so great a Virgin.*[17] For this reason a certain ancient writer, who through modesty called himself "The Amateur* teaches that all spiritual gifts are found in their most perfect form in the Blessed Virgin.[18] In proof of this Bonaventure has recourse to the text of Ecclesiastes (1:7) "All the rivers run into the sea, yet the sea doth not overflow.* For all these varied gifts exceed neither the capacity of Mary nor the dignity of her Motherhood. In support of this position Bonaventure[19] cites Augustine and Bernard who in one of his sermons has a good deal which is here to the point.[20] Augustine favors this opinion,[21] and John Damascene uses the same principle.[22] Athanasius says the Blessed Virgin was full of grace since she "abounded in all graces.*[23] The reason for this, he maintains, was that "From you came forth our God, Who freely bestowed on you every grace.* Thus Cyprian says, "the fullness of grace was

14Ibid., 2.
15Cyril of Alexandria, De fide ad reginas.
18Origen, Homilia 1.
17Bernard, Epistola 164.
18Anon., De contemplatione Beatae Mariae, 2 (Bibliotheca Sancta, Tomus I).
19Bonaventure, Speculum Mariae, 5, 6, 7.
20Bernard, Sermo de Nativitate Domini, (a dubious work); Sermo de Beata Maria, (also a dubious work).
21Augustine, Sermo 17 de Nativitate Domini (Sermones de tempore, Serm. 2ÏJ7
22John Damascene, Oratio 1 de Dormitione Virginis.
23Athanasius, Sermo de Sanctissima Deipara.

due the Mother.*[24] Sophronius also remarks, "On others to a degree but on Mary the fullness of grace completely poured itself out.*[25]* Peter Chrysologus[28] and Laurence Justinian[27] employ the same words. Peter Damian in a similar sermon while explaining the text "Who is she that goeth up. . .as a pillar of smoke of aromatical spices, of myrrh and frankincense, and of all the powders of the perfumer?* (Canticles 3:6) says: "All the powders of the perfumer were compounded in the Virgin when the commingling of all the virtues in her consecrated for Him a most sacred marriage chamber; and if the Spirit in some degree came upon others, the whole fullness of grace came upon Mary." Similarly Ambrose, whom Bonaventure cites,[28] maintains that it is the peculiar characteristic of the Virgin "to abound in every grace.* In like manner Jerome in his explanation of "and he as a bridegroom coning out of his bride chamber* (Psalms 18:6) says: "For holy Mary is hailed as full of grace, since she conceived Him in Whom all the fullness of the divinity dwells corporally.*[29] Nicely to the point is the remark of Methodius, "O fortunate one who has Him for your debtor Who loans to us all. For to God all of us are in debt; but to you even He owes, since He has said: Honor thy father and thy mother. Thus to obey the very decree which He Himself promulgated and to surpass others in His observance, He pours out on His Mother every grace and honor.*[30] Consequently, Albert the Great[31] says it is a principle perfectly clear from its terms that the graces of all the saints were bestowed on the Virgin more perfectly. And by "terms* I understand "Mother* and a "Son*, Who is God Himself and the source of all grace. Moreover, such is the understanding of all

24Cyprian, Sermo de Nativitate Christi.
25Sophronius, Sermo de Assumptione (among the works of Jerome).
28Peter Chrysologus, Sermo 143.
27Laurence Justinian, Sermo de Assumptione Virginis.
28cf. also Ambrose, De institutione virginis, 13 &14.
29Jerome, Epistola 104 ad Principiam de expositione psalmi 44.
30Methodius, Oratio de Purificatione.
31Albert the Great, De Beata Maria, 69, 70, 71.

theologians, Thomas[32], together with Cajetan, Antonius of Florence[33], Durandus,[34] and others.

Therefore the dignity of the Mother of God in comparison with other created graces is like the first form in relation to its characteristic qualities. Conversely, other graces are in comparison with it like dispositions in relation to form. Therefore, this dignity of Mother is more excellent, just as form is more perfect than its characteristic qualities and dispositions. Otherwise, on the supposition of the Divine Maternity being the lesser dignity, the Saints would have been mistaken in concluding therefrom the presence of a greater and more excellent grace.

5. In determining the solution of this question one should note that the Virgin's maternal relationship with Christ as man can be considered in precision from His dignity as an uncreated person and regard paid only to the sublimity of grace and sanctity in the Virgin. So considered, it is true that the Virgin possesses no dignity or excellence capable of comparison with that of grace; for then she is not considered as the Mother of God. It would seem that in this way a not unsatisfactory explanation can be given of those words of the Saints in which a spiritual conception of Christ seems to be preferred to the corporeal. And those words of Christ: "Yea rather blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it* (Luke 11:28) can be understood in a similar sense. For the woman who had called the womb of the Virgin blessed did not at all consider Christ's divinity. In an entirely different manner, therefore, must this dignity be regarded in so far as it is a certain unique union with God, "an affinity with God" as Thomas and Cajetan neatly term it.[35] Under this aspect the Divine Maternity and the adoptive sonship can scarcely be compared; for they belong to different orders, and each excels the other in certain respects.

[32]Aquinas, Summa Theologica, III, q. 27, aa. 5 & 6.
[33]Antoninus, Summa Theologica, IV, tit. 15.
[34]Durandus, In m Sententiarum, d. 3, q. 2.
[35]Aquinas, Summa Theologica, II-II, q. 103, a. 4, ad 2.

IN WHAT SENSE THE DIGNITY OF ADOPTIVE SONSHIP CAN BE PREFERRED TO THAT OF THE MOTHER OF GOD.

6. However, if a precise comparison be made in such a way that one dignity is entirely separated from the other, one can say, first of all, that the dignity of adoptive sonship is to be preferred. This has been proved by the arguments for this position. From such a consideration one can state with reason that if the dignity of Mother would be without grace and the adoptive sonship, it would be far better and preferable to be a son of God than His Mother. In this sense the words of Augustine and the other quotations given above can be correctly interpreted.

DIGNITY OF THE MOTHER OF GOD GREATER THAN THAT OF ADOPTIVE SONSHIP.-GOD BESTOWS THE VARIOUS PRIVILEGES OF GRACE IN PROPORTION TO FUNCTION.

7. Secondly, however, the dignity of the Mother of God, considered in its moral relationships in so far as it includes whatever in any way is due to it from its nature and according to the disposition of Divine Wisdom, is of greater dignity than that of adoptive sonship. This statement is sufficiently substantiated by the proofs advanced in support of this latter alternative. Thomas[36] also favors this opinion and maintains that this dignity is in its own order infinite since it is the highest type of union with an infinite person. Nor is this a mere bodily union alone, but a spiritual union also. For granted that this union arose by the conception of flesh, nevertheless this union in some way has God Himself as its term. Therefore, Thomas says[37] that on account of the dignity of this union a more excellent form of veneration is due the Virgin than the other Saints "since by her action she more closely attains the limits of the Divinity."

This is Thomas' opinion; and reason arguing from what has been said reaches the same conclusion. For just as[37]

[36] Ibid., I, q. 25, a. 6, ad 4.
[37] Ibid., II-II, q. 103, a. 4, ad 3.

the supreme degree of grace and glory is due the human nature of Christ because of the union involved, so in just proportion, because of the Divine Maternity, a certain plentitude of grace is due the Virgin. According to Thomas, "in the Virgin there was a fullness of grace proportionate to such a dignity."[38] Augustine speaks in the same vein: "Thus do we know the great grace that was given her from the fact that she merited to conceive and give birth to God."[39] Sophronius says: "It was fitting that the Virgin pledged to fulfill such a function should be full of grace, she who gave glory to the heavens and God to the earth."[40] Anselm,[41] Ildephonsus,[42] Richard of St. Victor,[43] and all those cited above speak in the same way. Moreover, in subsequent discussion of the sublimity of the Virgin's grace I shall adduce many further citations from the saints.

Reason confirms these other arguments. For the gifts of grace, although most perfect in themselves, are, nevertheless, given by God as perfections necessary for the performance of tasks which have reference to God. Especially does God bestow them when He Himself places a particular individual in such an office or position of dignity. For this reason God bestowed such numerous privileges of grace on John the Baptist since he was to fulfill the function of Precursor according to Luke (1:76) "for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways." Moreover the Apostles received an abundance of grace for a similar reason: "By whom we have received grace and apostleship . . ." (Romans 1:5). And in the Book of Numbers (11:17) God said to Moses: "And I will take of thy spirit and Will give to them"—namely, to the seventy men. For after the office was shared with them, it was fitting that the spirit and divine help should also be shared with them. Finally, that her supreme excellence was, in a way, due to her dignity as Mother can be explained by the fact that it is fitting

[38]Ibid., HI, qTT a. 10.
[39]Augustine, De natura et gratia, 37.
[40]Sophronius, Sermo de Assumptione.
[41]Anselm, De conceptu Virginis, 18.
[42]Hdefonsus, De Virgine Maria, 2.
[43]Richard of Saint Victor, De Emmanuel, I, 26.

that a mother be honored by her son. Indeed, by reason of her maternal dignity she has a unique right to the goods of her Son. Therefore, her dignity as Mother is, in a certain sense, the reason and source of her dignity in grace and somehow contains this latter dignity in an eminent way according to the disposition of Divine Wisdom. Therefore, from this aspect the dignity of the Divine Maternity is more excellent; and a Virgin's being chosen to be Mother of God should in itself be considered a greater favor on God's part than, let us say, Peter's being chosen for glory since the former choice contains the latter virtually and in a more eminent way.

SECTION m

HOW THE BLESSED VIRGIN WAS PREDESTINED TO THE DIGNITY OF MOTHER OF GOD

In this question one can in due proportion treat all the matter previously discussed in regard to the predestination of Christ[1] and many of the usually discussed problems regarding the predestination of other men. However, in order to cover the matter which is pertinent to our present subject briefly, let us presume the general principles which we previously ascertained to be either certain or more probable.

THE VIRGIN CHOSEN FROM ALL ETERNITY TO BE THE MOTHER OF GOD.

2. First of all, it is certain that the Blessed Virgin, prior to any consideration of her own merits, was, from all eternity, chosen and predestined both to grace and glory and also to the dignity of Mother of God. This is based partly on the certain view which holds that all predestined men are chosen independently of their own merits, and partly on the arguments by which we showed that Blessed Virgin in no way merited to be chosen the Mother of God.[1]

[1]Suarez, De Incarnatione, in q. 1, a. 3.
[2]Ibid., disp. 8.

Indeed, this is the truth which the holy Fathers are at pains to inculcate when they teach that the Word chose a Mother for Himself and that she was from all eternity pre-ordained by His Will alone. Such is the opinion of Augustine[3] and Bernard[4]; and in this sense Cyprian, by a figure of speech, calls the Virgin "Vessel of Election."[5]*

THE BLESSED VIRGIN CONSEQUENTLY PREDESTINED TO SUCH GREAT GRACE AND GLORY SINCE CHOSEN TO BE THE MOTHER OF GOD.

3. Secondly, according to the way we are forced to conceive things, the Blessed Virgin was chosen and predestined according to a priority of reason to be Mother of God before she was chosen and predestined to such great grace and glory. This conclusion is evident if one grants what was said in the preceding section and what was explained in regard to article 3 concerning such conceptual stages.® Therefore, the Blessed Virgin was predestined to such great grace and glory because she was chosen to be the Mother of God. For the order of execution reveals the order of intention. Actually this great grace and glory were given the Blessed Virgin to endow her with the dispositions appropriate to the Mother of God. Therefore, she was chosen for such grace and glory because she had previously been chosen to be the Mother of God.

THE VIRGIN DIRECTLY CHOSEN FOR GLORY AND MOTHERHOOD BEFORE ANY KNOWLEDGE OF ORIGINAL SIN.

4. Thirdly, I conclude that the Blessed Virgin was chosen both for Motherhood and for such degree of glory independently and entirely without reference to any foreknowledge of original sin. This is the unanimous teaching of those who maintain an analogous position on the

[3]Augustine, De peccatorum meritis et remissione, II, 25.
«Bernard, In "missus est", Hom. 2.
[5]Cyprian, Sermo de Nativitate Christi.
"Suarez, De Incarnatione, in q. 1, a. 3.

predestination of Christ.[7] The proof is rooted in my statements on the aforementioned article 3.[8]

First, since it is very likely that all the predestined were chosen for grace and glory previous to any foreknowledge of original sin, it is, therefore, all the more certain that the Blessed Virgin was chosen for glory in the same way and consequently in the same way also for the Divine Maternity. This second conclusion is clear from the already proven fact that in the order of finality the election to the Divine Maternity came first. The first conclusion is proved by the fact that there is no order among the elect but that all are chosen together in one and the same conceptual stage; or if one aspect of order can be considered, the choice of the Blessed Virgin rather preceded than followed the choice of the others because of its greater sublimity, greater importance, and regard for God's greater glory. Thus, Bernadine of Siena says, "You were predestined in the mind of God before every other creature that you might bring forth God Himself as Man."[9] He cites this thought from Anselm. Rupert of Deutz has the same.[10]

A second proof is that since Christ the God Man was predestined or chosen before any foreknowledge of original sin, therefore so was His Mother. This conclusion is substantiated by the fact that independently of other considerations He was predestined not only to be Man, but also the Son of Man. For the mode of His incarnation, namely that He should be conceived in the womb of a Virgin and as God should have a mother on earth, does not include any imperfection flowing from sin. Therefore, it falls under that intention or choice as it is understood to precede any foreknowledge of original sin. For this reason Holy Church applies to the Virgin the words which I already explained in their application to Christ: "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His ways"[8] (Proverbs 8:22) and the text: "From

7cf. especially Pietro Galatino, De arcanis catholicae veritatis, III, 1.
8Suarez, De Incarnatione, in q. 1, a. 3.
9Bernardine of Siena, Sermo 51 de Beata Virgine, 4.
10Rupert of Deutz, In Cantica, II.

the beginning and before the world, was I created" (Ecclesiasticus 24:14). For the Mother was not separated from the Son even in the divine election. This seems to be the implication of Andrew of Crete when he says in reference to the Blessed Virgin. "This states the depths of the divine incomprehensibility. This is the purpose which was conceived before all ages."[11]

Further speculative arguments may be added. First, if the grace and glory of the angels was intended directly by God before the prevision of any sin, is there not even greater reason for Him to so intend the most sublime grace and glory of the Blessed Virgin, and consequently her dignity as Mother? Second, since this dignity is unique and distinct from every other created dignity, therefore, independently of anything else, it pertains to the completed perfection of the works of God. Therefore, it was directly intended. Third, since in this way the Divine Favor towards the human race shines more brilliantly—for God was not content merely to assume a human nature but also wished to honor a created human person as far as compatible with created personality—God, therefore, directly intended both of these. Fourth, if the generation of other men is directly intended (as with Augustine and Thomas I have proved above), is there not greater reason for the human generation of Christ from His Mother being directly intended? Fifth, since before sin a woman was made from man alone according to the direct intention of God, so the generation of a man solely from a woman, a thing no less remarkable, ought to be directly intended because of the perfection of the divine works which results from a certain admirable diversity. The basis of this argument is found in Pope Leo and in the other Fathers whom I have cited.[12] To these the names of John Damascene,[13] Cyril of Jerusalem,[14] and Augustine[15] may be added.

[11] Andrew of Crete, Sermo de Assumptione.
[12] Suarez, De Incarnatione, disp. 3, sect. 1.
[13] John Damascene, De fide orthodoxa, IV, 15.
[14] Cyril of Jerusalem, Catacheses, 12.
[15] Augustine, Sermo 7 de Nativitate.

OBJECTION

5. On the contrary, just as in the case of Christ, so in the case of the Blessed Virgin the saints frequently declare that she was predestined to be the Mother of God on the condition of sin. Thus, Augustine after extensive praise of the Blessed Virgin concludes: "Thus, in the person of Our Lord Jesus Christ the Virgin Mary accepted all the consequences of nature, to be a support of all women who fled to her, and thus to restore all women just as Our Lord Jesus Christ, the New Adam, restored all men.'[17] Even more clearly does Augustine state this in his explanation of the Magnificat: "Eve because of pride was rejected; but Mary because of her humility was chosen."[16] Justin Martyr, says, "A Man was born of a Virgin so that by the same path whereby disobedience entered through the serpent's deceit, forgiveness might follow."[18]

This argument has support. For it follows that previous to forseen original sin, God had pre-decreed the whole series of generations from Adam to the Virgin. For the Blessed Virgin could not in a natural way be of the seed of Adam, and in a natural manner descend from Adam, unless through these parents and progenitors. The conclusion, however, seems difficult to believe.

REPLY.

6. As for the Fathers, I reply that in these and similar passages the basic reason and order of this predestination is not set forth but the proximate end intended by God in the execution of His decree. This is evident from the words of Justin and the previous quotations from Augustine. They are speaking not of the election, but of the manner in which it is carried out. Augustine, although in the second passage he uses the word "election", is, nevertheless, only speaking of it in so far as its effect is concerned. This is clearly proved by the fact that he says Mary was chosen "because in humble submission to her Maker she called herself a handmaid." However, it is certain that if we would

16Augustine, Sermo 1^ de Nativitate.
17Augustine, Super canticum Magnificat.
18Justin, Dialogus cum Tryphone, satis post medium.

speak of the election which was first in the order of intention: Mary was not chosen because she was going to be humble, but rather the grace was granted to her to be humble because she was chosen. Actually, however, she brought about the effect of that election because through humility she fittingly disposed herself.

In regard to the confirmatory proof—although that inference hinges upon a physical question; namely, could this individual be generated naturally of other parents—howsoever that question be answered, I grant its logical consequence. For the consequences are true and not difficult to accept, granting the divine foreknowledge and the efficacy of the divine will. This can easily be proved from what I have said on the already cited third article.[19]

IF MAN HAD NOT SINNED, HOW WOULD THE VIRGIN BE THE MOTHER OF GOD?

7. Fourth, from what has been said one can conclude what reply should be given to the question: If man had not sinned, would the Blessed Virgin be the Mother of God. I reply that if we take into consideration only that first election, by which the Blessed Virgin was chosen independently of other considerations to be the Mother of God, by reason of it she would have been the Mother of God, even if man had not sinned, just as there would have been other men and their descendents. For that choice and its motive in no way involved anything necessarily dependent upon sin. All the speculative arguments first adduced suggest this. If, however, to this choice be joined the whole plan of Divine Providence and at least the conditioned foreknowledge of future sin, then truly it can be said that sin was necessary in order that the Blessed Virgin be the Mother of God. This doctrine is substantiated by what I have said in discussing a similar question concerning Christ Our Lord. In due proportion it is based upon the same reasoning.

DIFFICULTY—REPLY—IF GOD HAD BECOME MAN INDEPENDENTLY OF SIN, HOW WOULD HE ASSUME A GLORIOUS BODY FROM THE WOMB OF THE VIRGIN?

[19]Suarez, De Incarnatione, in q. 1., a. 3.

8. There remains, however, a difficulty about the first part. For if man did not sin and the Word became man, He would not assume flesh from His Mother's womb. Therefore, neither would the Blessed Virgin be the Mother of God, nor could she of herself be chosen as Mother except on the condition of sin. The antecedent stands. For if God became man independently of the condition of sin, He would assume from the outset a perfect and glorious body. And conception within the womb of a mother is incompatible with such perfection.

I reply, first of all, that what is supposed in the argument does not of itself intrinsically fall within the ambit of that election. Nor from such an election is this necessarily inferred. For God could have become an immortal man, not in the state of glory, but in that state which wayfaring men would have had if Adam had not sinned. For of itself it was fitting that Christ be a wayfarer with the condition of His body accommodated to man's state so that He could merit for man and by His example point the way to happiness.

I add that Augustine[20] doubts whether men, if man had not sinned, would have been conceived so small and helpless that they are able to use neither their tongue nor members. "For in spite of the small capacity of the womb," he says, "the Omnipotence of the Creator could at once make unborn children full-statured." Therefore, if such was the opinion of Augustine in regard to all men, not improbably could one advance the opinion that even if Christ were to be conceived glorious and fully formed, this would in no way interfere with His issuing from His Mother's womb:—especially since, given that type of immortal life in which after a certain time set by God men would be transferred to beatitude, the Blessed Virgin immediately after the conception of her Son could easily be glorified in both body and soul together with her Son. Therefore, there is no reason why we should say that the dignity of the Mother of God, of itself, or necessarily, is dependent upon sin.

[20]Augustine, De peccatorum meritis et remissione, I, 27 & 28.

DISPUTATION V

THE INTEGRITY OR CORPORAL VIRGINITY OF THE MOTHER OF GOD

After the treatise on the conception and sanctification of the Blessed Virgin it follows that in accord with appropriate order something should be said of the state or way of life which she chose in this world—or rather for which she was chosen. Thomas seems to have accomplished this in this and the following question by his discussion of her states of matrimony and virginity.[1] Thus, at the same time he prepares the way for the discussion of the Son's conception to which both these states were in some way ordered. But since virginity is both more perfect than matrimony and precedes it, I shall discuss virginity first.

Here two things should be distinguished: the one, as it were, the material element which consists in bodily integrity without experience of any sexual pleasure derived from intercourse or voluntary sexual activity; the other, as it were the formal element, which is the resolve to preserve virginity and never experience the sexual pleasure mentioned above. I treat of the first element here and shall speak of the second in the following disputation.

[1] Aquinas, Summa Theologica, III, qq. 28 & 29.

SECTION I

WHETHER THE BLESSED VIRGIN BY CONCEIVING CHRIST LOST HER VIRGINITY OR CORPORAL INTEGRITY

THE PLACE IN THE TEMPLE OF SOLOMON DEDICATED TO VIRGINS.

1. The question supposes first of all that the Blessed Virgin really and truly conceived in her womb Christ the God-Man. This is the obvious consequence of the already established principle that she was the true Mother of God and Christ. Further on, this will be thrashed out more fully. The second supposition is that the Blessed Mary remained a virgin up to the time of the conception of her Son. This is certainly a matter of faith from the words of Luke (1:26-27) *the angel Gabriel was sent. . .to a virgin espoused to a man.* From this text it is clear that she was a virgin at the time of her marriage to Joseph. The proof for this is to be found first of all in the principle already mentioned—namely, that she had never sinned; and secondly in the teaching of the Fathers on the kind of life the Blessed Virgin led before her marriage. For in her third year she had been offered in the temple and for eleven years had lived there among the virgins. For according to Cedreuus there was in the temple a secret spot, close to the altar, where only the virgins were accustomed to dwell. Among these virgins the Mother of God lived until her marriage and lead a life angelic rather than human as Ambrose[2], Gregory of Nyssa[3], George of Nicomedia[4], John

[1]George Cedreuus, Historiarum compendium.
[2]Ambrose, De virginibus, I & II.
[3]Gregory of Nyssa, Oratio de ortu Salvatoris.
[4]George of Nicomedia, Oratio de oblatione Virginis in templo.

Damascene[5], Andrew of Crete, and others already cited, discuss at length. (Later on I shall return to a discussion of this subject.) That she remained a virgin from the time of her espousal to Joseph until the visit of the angel, the words of the angel already quoted clearly prove.

2. Certain heretics granted all this and maintained that the Virgin conceived Christ by Joseph and thus in conception lost her virginity. This was the teaching of the Ebionites, Clement of Rome informs us[8]; and in the same passage he indicates that they were Jews. According to Epiphanius[7] they observed the Law of Moses, and he too attributes to them the same error concerning Mary's virginity, although he adds that their doctrines about Christ were various and changing. Perhaps, it was for this reason that Irenaeus[8] in treating of the sect says nothing of this particular error but merely states that Ebiones did not hold the same doctrine about Christ as did Cerinthus. Then in chapter twenty-five he makes Cerinthus and Carpocrates the authors of the heresy[9]. Tertullian[10] thought the same. So too did Eusebius,[11] Epiphanius,[12] Augustine, John Damascene, Isidore,[13] Theodore,[14] and Nicephorus.[15] These last two indicate that Ebiones preceded the other heretics. This, however, makes little difference, for these heretics were about the same. According to Epiphanius[18] the error was afterwards taken up by Theodotus. As we shall see, there is almost no basis for the heresy.

[5]John Damascene, De fide orthodoxa, IV, 15.
[8]Clement of Rome, Constitutiones, VI, 6.
[7]Epiphanius, Haereses, 30.
[8]Irenaeus, Adversus Haereses, I, 26.
[9]Ibid., 25.
[10]Tertullian, De praescriptione haereticorum, 48; De Carne Christi, 18; De virginibus velandis, 6.
[11]Eusebius of Caesarea, Historia ecclesiastica, III, 21.
[12]Epiphanius, Haereses, 26 & 27.
[13]Isidore of Seville, Catalogus haeresum.
[14]Theodore of Cyrus, Haereticorum fabularum compendium, II.
[15]Nicephorus the Confessor, Breviarium historicum, ΓΠ, 3.
[18]Epiphanius, Haereses, 54.

VIRGINITY OF MARY CLEARLY INDICATED IN SCRIPTURE.

3. First of all, I assert that the Blessed Virgin conceived Christ Our Lord not by the seed of man but by the power and operation of the Holy Spirit. This is an article of Faith. It is proved, first of all, by the Gospel of Matthew: *. . . she was found with child, of the Holy Ghost" (1:18), ". . . for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost" (1:20), "And he knew her not till she brought forth her firstborn son. . ." (1:25), and the Gospel of Luke: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee and the 0ower of the Most High shall overshadow thee" (1:35).

Augustine[17] tells us that the Arians falsely interpreted this passage and made a distinction between "Holy Ghost" and "power of the Most High" as though the two were separate. According to them the Holy Ghost disposed the matter by cleansing and sanctifying the Virgin. But the "power of the Most High", that is, Divine Wisdom, formed the body of Christ. This interpretation, although it does not run counter to our present argument and is in some sense probable[18], nevertheless, taken in the sense intended by the heretics—namely, as dividing the works of the Trinity and denying that the Holy Ghost formed the body of Christ—is heretical since it proceeds from an error about the mystery of the Trinity and contradicts the testimony of Matthew.

4. The Old Testament affords a second proof of the above proposition. The classic text is that of Isaias (7:14) "Behold a virgin shall conceive. . .* which I shall discuss at length in the next section. Here I shall employ other texts, less obvious, but sufficient to confirm the truth, especially if taken together with their exegesis by the Fathers.

First, there is Genesis (3:15) wherein Christ is called the "seed of the woman" although no mention has been made of a husband. Both Irenaeus[19] and Cyprian[20] ponder this

17Augustine, Contra Maximum, III, 17.
18As we shall see in commenting on Aquinas; Summa Theologica, HI, q. 32, a. 1.
19Irenaeus, Adversus Haereses, IV, 78.
20Cyprian, Testimonia ad Quirinum.

omission. So also Tertullian[21] and Augustine in their explanation of the promise contained in Psalm 131:11 "Of the fruit of thy womb I will set upon thy throne" observe that "the womb" is mentioned not "the thigh" since Christ was to be conceived of a woman not of a man. Irenaeus also points this out.[22]

The second text is the law imposed in Leviticus (12:2): "If a woman having received seed. . . ." For since there would be a woman who would conceive without seed, that phrase "having received seed," was added lest she be included under the law. This is the explanation of Origen,[23] Basil,[24] Theophylactus, Bede,[25]*Eusebius of Emesa, Bernard, and Laurence Justinian.[28]

The third text is taken from Isaias (53:2): "And he shall grow up as a tender plant before him, and as a root out of a thirsty ground." Both similes set forth this mystery. For as a tender plant or shoot arises from the tree alone without any admixture of the seed of another, so, according to Origen, is Christ from the Virgin.[27] Moreover the virginal womb, as Jerome explains, is called "a thirsty ground" since "it was not moistened or defiled by any human seed". Jerome further observes that Aquila translated this as "an untrodden land" so as to set forth even more plainly the marvelous conception of the Virgin. However, others explain the comparison of Christ to a tender plant growing up out of thirsty ground as a sign of His birth in poverty amid humble wretched surroundings. This interpretation can be drawn from Tertullian[28]; nor should it be slighted since the interpretation is a good one and favored by the Septuagint, which in the new edition reads: "We have announced Him like a little one in his sight and like a root

[21]Tertullian, Adversus Marcionem.
[22]Irenaeus, Adversus Haereses, m, 18.
[23]Origen, In Leviticum, Hom. 8.
[24]Basil, In Isaiam, 7.
[25]Theophylactus and Bede, In Lucam, 2.
[28]Laurence Justinian, Conciones de Purificatione.
[27]Origen, In Genesim, Hom. 17.
[28]Tertullian, Adversus Judaios, 14; Adversus Marcionem, III, 7& 17.

in thirsty ground.® However, the first interpretation is also a good one and squares perfectly with the text.

The fourth text is taken from Isaias (19:1): . .the Lord will ascend upon a swift cloud", that is "one not burdened down with any human seed® as Cyril and Jerome say—although they admit this is only the figurative meaning. Especially Ambrose[29] and Anselm[30] approve this figurative way of speaking.

As a fifth text we can add the words of Jeremias (3:22): •For the Lord hath created a new thing upon the earth: a woman shall compass a man.® He employs the word •create* to show that God alone is the author of this conception and calls it a "new thing* since it would not take place in the usual manner nor be the work of man. This is the interpretation given by Jerome,[31] Cyprian,[32]*Augustine," and Bernard.[34]

The sixth text is Daniel (2:34) wherein Christ is called ·. . .a stone cut out of a mountain without hands®, that is, from a Virgin without the work of man, according to the interpretation of Irenaeus,[35]*Augustine,[38] and Jerome.[37] In another passage[38] Jerome comments on the terrible blasphemy of the heretic who interpreted that mountain as the devil to which human nature adheres through its vices. But vice could not occur in the human nature of Christ; therefore, His human nature cannot be said to be cut out of the devil but was rather taken from the Virgin, who,

[29]Ambrose, De institutione virginis, 13.
[30]Anselm. In Matthaeum, 2.
[31]Jerome, In Jeremiam, 31.
[32]Cyprian, Sermo de Nativitate.
[33]Augustine, Sermones de tempore, Serm. 9.
[34]Bernard, In "missus est®, Hom. 2.
[35]Irenaeus, Adversus Haereses, m, 28.
[36]Augustine, In Joannem, Tract. 9; In I Canonicam Joannis, Tract. 1.
[37]Jerome, In Danielem, 2; Epistola 22 de custodia virgimtatis. Here Jerome comments on the phrase "to exchange hands in marriage* in the light of the verse from Canticles (2:6): "His left hand is under my head, and his right hand shall embrace me.®
[38]Jerome, Epistola 75 contra Vigilantium.

according to the beautiful illustration of Gregory the Great,[39] is justly represented by the word "mountain® by reason of her excellence. This is, moreover, the explanation given by Justin;[40] and he tells us how some of the Pagans adapted this prophecy to the myths about their gods.

Last of all let us not omit the text from Proverbs (30:18): "Three things are hard to me, and the fourth I am utterly ignorant of"; namely, "the way of a man with a young woman® (31:19). For although the more common reading in the Vulgate is "in youth®, nevertheless, the first reading is occasionally found in the Vulgate text. Furthermore the Hebrew word in question is "alma®, which means virgin. Moreover this reading is preferred by Nicholas of Lyra, who understands this passage as referring to Christ's conception. Jansens follows Nicholas, and Galatino[41] draws the same meaning from the Hebrew. Moreover, Ambrose[42] thinks the entire passage refers to Christ and that even in the words "The way of an eagle in the air. . .* piety can find a reference to the mystery of Christ's conception.

THE VIRGINITY OF MARY PREFIGURED IN SCRIPTURE.

5. The third scriptural argument can be built up from the types of this mystery. First, Adam is said to have been formed of the virginal earth by the work of God alone. Cyril of Jersalem[43] and Augustine[44] call attention to this. Ambrose says, "Adam was born of virgin earth, Christ was generated by a Virgin Mother. Adam's mother earth had not yet been broken, the privacy of Christ's Mother was never violated by concupiscence. Adam was fashioned from dust by the hands of God, Christ was formed in the womb

[39]Gregory the Great, Regula Pastoralis, I, 1.
[40]Justin, Dialogus cum Tryphone, prope medium.
[41]Pietro Galatino, De arcanis catholicae veritatis, VU.
[42]Ambrose, De Salomone.
[43]Cyril of Jerusalem, Catacheses, 12, post medium.
[44]Augustine, Sermo 5 de Nativitate.

by the Spirit of God."[45]*Maximus,[48] Irenaeus,[47] and Basil[48] use the same analogy.

The second type was Melchisedech, who, according to Hebrews (7:3), was "without father and mother" since Christ as God did not have a mother and as man lacked a human father. In this vein wrote Lactantius[49] and others whom I have already cited on this point.[50]

The third type, according to Augustine[51] and Bernard,[52] was the blossoming rod of Aaron (Numbers 17:8).

The fourth type, says Augustine,[53] was the Law written on the Tablets by the Finger of God (Deuteronomy 9:10).

The fifth type, according to the same Doctor, was "the bread which the earth produced in the desert and whose seed no ploughman had sowed in the ground." (Exodus 16).

The sixth type, according to Ambrose[54] and Bernard,[55]* was the fleece of Gedeon which was full of heavenly dew and watered all the earth (Judges 6:37-40). Hence the Psalmist says: "He shall come down like rain upon the fleece." (Psalm 71:6).

The seventh type was the unconsumed burning bush. (Exodus 3:2). Gregory of Nyssa treats this well,[58] Bernard more at length,[57] and best of all Origen.[58]

All the sterile women who conceived miraculously are the eighth type. Chrysostom[59] asserts that they foreshadow the mystery.

[45]Ambrose, Sermo 37.
[48]Maximus the Confessor, Homilia 3 de Nativitate.
[47]Irenaeus, Adversus Haereses, III, 31.
[48]Basil, In Isaiam, 7.
[49]Lactantius, Divinae institutiones, IV, 12, 13, 14.
[50]Suarez, De Incarnatione, in q. 22.
[51]Augustine, Sermones de tempore, Serm. 18.
[52]Bernard, In "missus est", Hom. 2.
[53]Augustine, In Deuteronomium.
[54]Ambrose, Sermo 13.
[55]Bernard, In "missus est", Hom. 2.
[56]Gregory of Nyssa, De vita Moysis, 7.
[57]Bernard, Sermo "signum magnum".
[58]Origen, Homilia 1, passim.
[59]Chrysostom, In Genesim, Hom. 49.

6. The fourth argument is the tradition and authority of the Church. For all the Councils which treat of the Incarnation before all else presuppose and define this mystery. This can be seen in the Councils of Ephesus, Chalcedon, Constantinople II, III, Toledo I, VI, XI, and throughout many other Councils.

The arguments I have already adduced from the Fathers are sufficient. But in addition I will point out several of the more classic texts such as that of Gregory Nazianzen which says: "If anyone should say that Christ passed through the Virgin as through a channel, and was not at one and the same time divinely and humanly formed in her—divinely, because without the intervention of a man; humanly, because in accordance with the law of human birth—he is cut off from God."[60] See also Augustine,[81] Fulgentius,[82] Ignatius of Antioch,[83] Clement of Rome,[84] Ambrose,[85] Hilary,[88] and Tertullian.[87]

7. Fifth, to make this mystery more readily acceptable and easy to believe, the Saints make use of various examples drawn from nature. Evodius[88] uses the example of a worm, which grows from wood, and is generated apart from any sexual union. He accommodates for his purpose the verse of Psalm 21:7: ". . .I am a worm and no man". Lactantius[89] collects similar instances of animals which

[60] Gregory Nazianzen, Oratio 51 (Epistola 1_ ad Cledonium)
[81] Augustine, Epistola 3 to which Augustine himself refers the reader in his Enchiridion, 34.
[62] Fulgentius of Ruspe, De Incarnatione et gratia, 6.
[63] Ignatius of Antioch, Epistula ad Magnesianos; Epistula ad Smymenses.
[54] Clement of Rome, Constitutiones, VII, 36.
[65] Ambrose, De institutione virginis, 14.
[66] Hilary of Poitiers, De Trinitate, X. Here Hilary says that in I Corinthians~T15:47) Christ is called "the heavenly man" because of His conception by the Holy Spirit.
[57] Tertullian, Apologeticum, 21.
[88] Evodius, Epistula 3 ad Augustine, (to be found among the Letters of Augustine.)
[63] Lactantius, Divinae institutiones, TV, 12.

are generated without sexual union. Ambrose especially employs the example of a vulture. He says, "What will they say, who are accustomed to laugh at the mysteries of our Faith when they hear that a Virgin gave birth? Now we observe that the Lord prefigured this in nature in many ways in order to illustrate the beauty of the Incarnation, and establish its truth."[70] Basil[71] has a similar passage on the words: "Let the waters bring forth the creeping creature. . ."(Genesis 1:20), and on the text from Isaias (7:14). See also Augustine.[72]

8. The sixth argument is drawn from reason and speculation. The strongest a priori argument is based on the will and omnipotence of God, to Whom ". . .no word shall be impossible", (Luke 1:37) as the Angel said. This possibility can also be proved with ease both from the other things God has done and from the very fact that this conception implies no contradiction or intrinsic inconsistency. On the contrary, there are many considerations of fittingness to be urged.

First of all, it is fitting lest Christ or His human nature be liable to original sin by reason of conception. For this state of affairs would not have accorded with the dignity of His person, and hardly could have been consistent with His mission as Redeemer. So speak Augustine,[73] Fulgentius,[74] and Thomas.[75] However, I have said "Christ' or "His human nature' because, as Anselm explains,[76] in so far as Christ signifies the God-Man, regardless of how He was conceived, He could not have been touched by original sin, since the term of conception was a Divine Person, who would make that human nature holy and exclude all stain of sin. This would occur because of the union. But this union

70Ambrose, Hexaemeron, V, 20.
71Basil, Hexaemeron, Hom. 8, satis post medium.
72Augustine, De bono conjugali, 2; De mirabilibus sacrae Scripturae, m, 2.
73Augustine, De peccatorum meritis et remissione, III, 12.
74Fulgentius of Ruspe, De Incarnatione et gratia, 4.
75Aquinas, Summa Theologica, TII, q. 38, a. 3.
78Anselm, Cur Deus homo, 16.

notwithstanding, if conception had occurred by the seed of a man, by that very fact, and the condition of the human nature, (understood as first formed with a priority of nature before being united to the Word) such a conception would of itself have been liable to original sin. Consequently, it was not fitting that the human nature to be assumed by the Word be the fruit of such a conception, but rather should be the result of a conception which would be completely free from the influence of original sin. This is the argument which Anselm brilliantly pursues.[77]

Secondly, it is fitting that the Son of God be conceived not of human but, as it were, of divine seed, that is, by the Holy Ghost.^ Thus Maximus,[78] Tertullian,[79] John Damascene,[80] and Chrysostom[81] say that in the conception of Christ the Holy Spirit took the place of seed. Thomas says the same.[82] But this manner of speaking, however, displeased Jerome;[83]*and his opinion is correct if one speaks of seed in the proper sense, either as something separate from the substance of the person of the agent, or as something considered as a material cause. Other Fathers however speak of seed only in so far as it is an effective force, which in this conception, they maintain, ought to have been supplied by the Holy Spirit.

The author of the Unfinished Commentary on St. Matthew proposes our third line of reasoning in the following words: "For it was not fitting that the only begotten Son of God Who was born not for Himself, but for men, should be born in the ordinary human way. For man is born of flesh to be subject to corruption. But Christ was born to heal corruption. Therefore, just as it was not logical that corruptible man be born of the incorruptibility of virginity, so it was not logical that the Son of God Who was bom to heal

77Anselm, De conceptu Virginis, 11-18.
78Maximus the Confessor, Homilia 3 de Nativitate Domini.
79Tertullian, De Carne Christi, 12.
80John Damascene, De fide orthodoxa, EH, 2.
81Chrysostom, Opus imperfectum in Matthaeum, Hom. 1.
82Aquinas, Summa Theologica, ΠI, q. 32, a. 2.
83Jerome, Epistola 17 ad Parnasum; De explanatione Symboli (a dubious workT

corruptibility, should be born of the contamination of intercourse."[84]

Fourth, it is fitting that as a woman was made from man alone, so also, a man should be begotten only of a woman. Thus argued Cyril of Jerusalem[85] and John Damascene.[86] Thomas proposes other fitting and probable reasons which can be read in his works and which are cited further on.[87]

OBJECTION-REPLY.

9. I can see no scriptural objection which could be raised against the above conclusion, except the first and second arguments advanced by Thomas in article one.[88] To these objections to our conclusion, Thomas gives quite adequate answers. Reason, however, can raise the objection [that it follows from our position] that Christ's conception was not natural, but supernatural. This conclusion, however, in addition to being directly against the opinion of Ambrose,[89] seems evidently incorrect since on that supposition Christ's conception would not have been a true human conception.

I reply that Ambrose clearly taught in the passage cited that rather was it the Virgin's conception without seed of man which was beyond nature. Moreover, the rest of the saints account this one of the great miracles of God. Especially Pope Eutychianus[90] and Anselm[91] mention this; and Isaias, in the verse: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive. . .' (7:14) accounts this a unique and divine sign. Moreover, it was in order to show that this was a work of divine omnipotence, that the angel said: "Because no word shall be impossible with God* (Luke 1:37). The reason for this is clear; for the principle and manner of this conception were beyond nature, although the term of the conception and the

"Chrysostom, Opus imperfectum in Matthaeum, Hom. 1.
"Cyril of Jerusalem, Catacheses, 2, prope finem.
"John Damascene, De fide orthodoxa, IV, 15.
87Aquinas, Summa Theologica, III, q. 31, a. 4.
"Ibid., ID, q. 28, a. 1.
"Ambrose, De Incarnationis Dominicae sacramento, 6.
90Pope Eutychianus, Epistola _1.
91Anselm, De conceptu Virginis.

material substance used to accomplish it were natural. Thus Ambrose says that many things in this conception were according to nature. For the body formed in this conception was natural; it had dispositions connatural to a human body; it began its existence and was nourished in the womb of the mother in a natural way. In this sense the conception of Christ was truly a human conception in regard to its matter and term, but not, as I have said, in regard to its manner and efficient principle. A fuller explanation of the points pertinent to this conclusion is to be found in Thomas' reply to the fourth and fifth objections of the same first article.

10. Consequently, I maintain secondly, that the Blessed Virgin in conceiving a son neither lost her virginity, nor experienced any venereal pleasure/ This proposition is also an article of faith, contained in the Creed, Scripture, and Fathers cited above.[f] It follows also from what was said above, that it was not necessary for the Holy Spirit to break the virginal hymen in order to accomplish His work. For the Spirit does not act through bodily organs. His substance and power, are everywhere inferiority present, so that He can there act without causing any separation in an intervening body. Furthermore, it did not befit the Holy Spirit without any cause or utility to produce such an effect, or to excite any unbecoming movement of passion.) On the contrary, the effect of His overshadowing is to quench the fire of original sin as Cyprian[92] and Bernard[93] point out.

11. At this point the scholastics are accustomed to inquire whether a virgin could conceive naturally.[94] It is not my intention to discuss a subject foreign to my purpose. This much is altogether certain, that human conception cannot take place naturally without the seed of a man since a woman does not have power to effect human generation at all or has it at best incompletely.

92Cyprian, Sermo de Nativitate.
93Bernard, Sermones super "missus est", passim.
94cf. Aquinas, Quodlibetales, VI, a. 18; Richard of Saint Victor, In II Sententiarum, d. 20; Marsilius de Inghen In II Sententiarum, d. 20, q. 13; Alfonso Tostado, Opusculum in Isaiam, 7:14: "Ecce Virgo concipiet."

12. From this and the preceding conclusion, I infer with Bernard: "That troublesome weariness with which all pregnant women are burdened, she alone did not experience who alone conceived without pleasure."[95] Previously Augustine had beautifully expressed the same thought. "Her womb is full, and the Virgin is unconscious of it; although heavy with child, she rejoices in her wholesome lightness, for the Light which she had within her could not be heavy."[96] Fulgentius[97] uses the same words.

OBJECTION.

13. Against this second conclusion (cf. 11 supra) Thomas directs his third argument based on the words of St. Paul ". . .God sent His Son, made of a woman. . ." (Galatians 4:4). For "made" means conceived, as Tertullian[98] observed, and as Ambrose indicates in his phrase, "to be made of a woman by taking on flesh".[99] Augustine has the same.[100] Other Fathers in their texts read "born of a woman", as Cyprian[101] and Irenaeus.[102] Ibis is just as great a difficulty, especially if it refers to birth in the womb; but the same difficulty remains with birth from the womb; for, as I shall point out, even that was from a virgin.

I reply with Thomas that the word "woman" indicates sex, not the loss of integrity. Thus the angel in his approach to Mary before she conceived, implicitly addresses her as woman: "Blessed art thou among women" (Luke 1:28). Tertullian points this out in the work cited above. The same observation can be made of Elizabeth's use of the identical words (Luke 1:42). Moreover, Luke used the same word in reference to Martha whom the Church considers to have been a virgin: ". . .a certain woman named Martha received Him into her house" (Luke 10:38). Indeed

"Bernard, Sermo "signum magnum".
99Augustine, Sermo 11 de Nativitate.
97Fulgentius of Ruspe, Sermo de laudibus Virginis.
"Tertullian, De virginibus velandis, 6.
"Ambrose, De fide, I, 6; cf. also Sermo 5 In psalmum 118.
100Augustine, Contra Faustum Manichaeum, XX1U, 7.
101Cyprian, Ad Quirinium, Π, 8.
102Irenaeus, Adversus Haereses, ΓΠ, 18.

Ambrose[103] considers the woman the Lord cured of a flux of blood to have been a virgin. And Augustine[104] observes that in the second and third chapters of Genesis, Eve, as soon as she was formed, while still a virgin, was called "woman" (Genesis 2:21-22; 3:passim). Jerome[105]*and Origen[108] make the same observation. The latter, moreover, calls attention to the fact that the word "woman* can be a sign of age, just as "man* not only indicates the male sex, but sometimes connotes more mature years, beyond the age of puberty. "Thus woman," Origen says, "indicates one of the feminine sex, somewhat older, already capable of marriage." Cyril of Alexandria[107] makes the same point; and it is also evident from the text in Genesis (24:39) . .if the woman will not come with me,* etc. For the woman here mentioned was without doubt a virgin, ready indeed for marriage. In this light we can understand Tertullian's calling Mary "woman* on account of her marriage to Joseph, and Augustine's statement that she was called •woman* because of her conceiving a son. In conclusion, I would add that Paul was probably alluding to the passage in Genesis (3:15): "I will put enmities between thee and the woman. . in order to indicate that the Blessed Virgin was that long awaited woman, who was to bring salvation to the world. Thus, she can be called "woman", in a striking way by a trope in which a common name is put for a proper one, as I pointed out in the first disputation.[108]

[103]Ambrose, De Salomone, 5.
[104]Augustine,~De fide contra Manichaeos, 22; Sermo 65 de verbis Domini.
[105]Jerome, Adversus Helvidium.
[108]Origen, In Leviticum, Hom. 8.
[107]Cyril of Alexandria, In Leviticum, VHI, in principio.
[108]Suarez, De mysteriis vitae Christi, disp. 1, sect. 1.

SECTION II

WHETHER THE BLESSED VIRGIN LOST HER VIRGINITY IN BEARING HER SON.

1. The first error made in this matter was that the Blessed Virgin, although she remained a virgin in the conception of her Son, lost that virginity in giving birth to Him. So thought Jovinian. For, although Jerome, in writing against him, is silent on this particular error of his, Augustine, nevertheless, calls it to our attention, and says that this heretic held that opinion, "lest by saying that Christ was born without impairing the virginity of His Mother, we should profess with the Manicheans that Christ was an apparition."[1] Ambrose[2][3] mentions the same error, although he does not refer to Jovinian by name. But from the letter of Siricius to Ambrose and from Hdefonsus[4] there is sufficient evidence that Jovinian was the author of this heresy. Later, in Germany, according to the account of Jean of Tritheme[5] for the year 1310, the Lollard heretics under the leadership of Walter Brute also followed Jovinian's lead. And Sander[6] maintains that the Protestants today hold the same opinion. So too he indicates Bucer and Molinaeus fell into the error.[7] What is more, certain sayings of the Fathers which I shall hereafter explain can be cited in favor of the heresy.

2. The second opinion which can be considered here is that of Durandus. Although orthodox on the subject of Mary's virginity, Durandus, since he considers the compenetration of two bodies impossible, maintains that the

[1] Augustine, De Haeresibus, 82; Contra Julianum, I, fere in principio.
[2] Ambrose, Epistola 81.
[3] Ambrose, Epistola 80 (Siricius ad Ambrosium).
[4] Hdefonsus, De virginitate Mariae, 1.
[5] Jean Tritheme, Chronicon.
[6] Nicholas Sander, De visibili monarchia ecclesiae, Haereses, 163.
[7] Ibid., Haereses, 87 & 219.

organs and natural channels of the body of the Most Holy Virgin were able to dilate without any rupture or separation, so that she could give birth in a way similar to that in which Augustine[8] and Thomas[9] thought man in the state of innocence would have been bom if that state had continued. Peter Paludanus[10] considers the opinion of Durandus a probable one, even though he embraces its contradictory as the safer of the two. To determine the truth I must here assume that the Blessed Virgin in a true and proper sense gave birth to Christ, a fact which I shall later prove in my discussion of question 35[11].

MARY REMAINED A VIRGIN DURING CHILDBIRTH.

3. I maintain first of all, that the Blessed Virgin in giving birth to a son not only did not lose her virginity, but preserved her integrity completely unblemished.

The first proof is drawn from one Scripture text alone. (Another text I shall remit to the next section.) This text is the one from Isaias 7:14: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear. . . ." All the Greek and Latin Fathers employ the words to confirm this mystery: Irenaeus,[12] Justin,[13] Eusebius,[14] Epiphanius,[15] Gregory of Nyssa,[16] Basil,[17]

[8]Augustine, De civitate Dei, IV, 26.
[9]Aquinas, Summa Theologica, I, q. 98, a. 2, ad 4.
[10]Peter Paludanus, In Libros Sententiarum, q. 44, d. 3, a. 2.
[11]Suarez, De mysteriis vitae Christi; in q. 35.
[12]Irenaeus, Adversus Haereses, HI, 9, 18, 21, 24, 26; IV, 40.
[13]Justin, Dialogus cum Tryphone, longe post initium.
[14]Eusebius of Caesarea, De demonstratione evangelica, VII, 2; Historia ecclesiastica, V, 8.
[15]Epiphanius, Haereses, 30, prope finem; Epistola Athanasii ad Epictetum quoted in Haereses, 77.
[16]Gregory of Nyssa, Oratio in sancta Christi Nativitate, circa principium.
[17]Basil, Homilia 25 de humana Christi generatione; In Isaiam, 7.

Tertullian,[18] Cyprian,[19] Rufinus,[20] Jerome,[21] Ambrose,[22] and Augustine.[23]

OBJECHON-REPLY.

4. There are two ways in which one can evade the force of this proof. First, one can deny along with the Jews that this prophecy referred to Christ. For He was neither called Emmanuel, nor as a child did He fight against the king of Assyria, nor receive the power of Damascus, nor the spoils of Samaria—all of which are prophesied in this passage. But should one object to these adversaries that no one else was born of a virgin, they concede the point. What they deny is that the text should read a "virgin" would give birth. They say that the Hebrew word in question, "alma", means rather maiden or young woman. Thus they apply the prophecy to Ezechias and his mother.

But first of all, it is plain that this application of the text cannot stand. For as Jerome points out Ezechias had been bom at least nine years before this prophecy of Isaias.

Second, the word "alma" in other passages in Scripture means "virgin*. For in Genesis (24:16) Rebecca is called "alma" before her marriage. This the Latin translator turns as "virgin". Nor is any other meaning found in Scripture. Further, Jerome says that this word has the special meaning of a "virgin ready for marriage," that is, one who has already reached a suitable age. It is also said to mean a "secluded virgin." And there are also those who say the word "alma* if unaspirated means a "marriageable virgin," but aspirated, as it here is in the Hebrew, the word means one who "always remains a virgin." Furthermore, the Septuagint and the Chaldaic Targum translate the word as "virgin*.

Third, apart from this explanation the sign alleged by

18Tertullian, Adversus Judaeos, 9; De Carne Christi, 23, in fine; Adversus Marcionem, III, 3.
ieCyprian, Contra Judaeos, II, 9.
20Rufinus, Commentarium in Symbolum.
21Jerome, In Isaiam, 7; Contra Jovinianum, I, circa medium.
23Ambrose, Epistola 81.
"Augustine, Sermo 2 &^4 de Nativitate.

the prophet would be trifling and worthless. For what sort of sign and how remarkable a prodigy would it be for a young woman who has had intercourse to give birth to a son? Fourth, the Hebrew interpretation of Isaias rather refutes the adversaries. For who was ever Emmanuel, except Christ Who truly was and was called by the name of *God-with-us." For the prophet regarded the fact and true meaning, rather than the mere use of the title. Moreover, what infant laid waste Damascus and Syria, if not Christ?—not it is true, according to the strict literal sense. But these words cannot be given a wooden interpretation (the letter without the spirit kills), and, as Tertullian shrewdly points out, will not be fulfilled literally in the case of any man, but metaphorically. Yet they will be fulfilled in the literal sense intended provided you understand them as the world, hell, and the universal sway of the demon.

OBJECTION.

5. The second way of evading the proof for Mary's virginity is that employed by the heretics. (Erasmus too leans to that opinion.) They maintain that since virginity is removed by childbearing the two ideas are to be understood not in a compound but divisive sense, that is, that she who was a virgin will give birth, not that in giving birth she retains her virginity. On this account even Jansens[24] says that the words of Isaias alone do not sufficiently prove that a virgin would give birth while preserving her virginity.

First of all, however, if these words are interpreted in a divisive sense, as applied to childbearing, they must be understood in the same sense when applied to conception since the same context says: *Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son* (Isaias 7:14). The consequences of such understanding of the text are absurd, as the argument already alleged proves. For what sort of prophetic sign or portent would it be if one who had been a virgin conceived and gave birth—an argument most frequently employed by the saints cited above.

Second, the words of Matthew (1:22-23): "Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled which the Lord spoke by

^Cornelius Jansens, Concordia Evangelica, 5.

the prophet saying: Behold a virgin shall be with child and bring forth a son. . .' give an express interpretation of~the text. Here Matthew plainly indicates that Isaias prophesied that the Virgin, while retaining her integrity, would conceive and give birth. For Matthew offers the words of Isaias as further proof of the fact that Christ was conceived of the Holy Spirit./ Consequently, many are of the opinion that these are not just the words of the Evangelist alone but of the angel who spoke to Joseph and convinced him of the Virgin's miraculous conception. Such was the opinion of Chrysostom, Theophylus, Euthymius, Irenaeus,[25]*Ambrose,[25] and Augustine[27]. Jerome and Anselm, however, think that the words are only the Evangelist's—a point of small importance as far as we are here concerned.

6. Second, additional confirmation for our position are several of the types and other veiled indications which, as I have already mentioned, foreshadowed in the Old Testament Mary's virginity. Many of them deal with not only her conception but also her moment of childbirth. Besides, those words of the Psalmist: "For thou are he that hast drawn me out of the womb. . ." (Psalm 21:10) are customarily applied. For they indicate, says Cyril of Jerusalem,[28] that Christ came forth from the womb in an extraordinary manner by Divine Power. Thus Augustine says: "What does that text mean, 'thou art he that hast drawn me out of the womb' if applied to Jesus Himself whom the Virgin generated? Does it refer to the Virgin's giving birth while still preserving her wondrous virginity so that when God is said to have accomplished what was there done so marvelously, the occurrence seems credible to all?"[29]

7. Third, this truth is the tradition of the Fathers and defined by the Church. The places where it is to be found are the same as those cited in the preceding section.

[25]Irenaeus, Adversus Haereses, TV, 40.
[28]Ambrose, Epistola 81.
^Augustine, Sermo 14 de Nativitate.
[28]Cyril of Jerusalem, Catacheses, 12.
[29]Augustine, Epistola 120, c. 12.

Especially confer Popes Leo[30], Hormisdas,[31] and Agapitus.[32] "Without the power of the Word," says Agapitus, "the Virgin would neither have conceived nor given birth; and without true flesh, the infant would not lie wrapped in swaddling clothes."[33] John Damascene[34] and Theodoret of Cyrus[35]*say the same.

8. Here one could also mention the Fathers who say that there was in the temple a place where virgins used to pray separately from the married women and that the Blessed Virgin was accustomed to go there even after childbirth. This can be read in Basil[38], Gregory of Nyssa[37], Origen,[38] Cyril of Alexandria[39], and Theophilus[40]. Moreover, they maintain that Zachary was killed by the Jews for defending Mary's integrity.

9. Fourth, to persuade the pagans the Fathers employ proofs drawn from the prophetic Sybilline books and profane history. This can be observed in Lactantius[41], Eusebius[42], Augustine[43]. Canisius[44] has gathered a large number of these proofs from far and wide. But especially Epiphanius in his Life of Jeremias[45] recounts that the Egyptians had learned from that prophet that all their idols would fall to the ground at the moment when a godlike virgin who had

30Pope Leo, Epistola 10, c. 21; Sermo 4 & 5 de Nativitate.
31Pope Hormisdas, Epistola 1 ad Justinianum Augustum, 3.
32Pope Agapitus, Epistola ad Antimum.
33Ibid.
34John Damascene, De fide orthodoxa, IV, 14.
35Theodoret of Cyrus, De Providentia, Serm. 10.
38Basil, Homilia de humana Christi generatione.
37Gregory of Nyssa, Homilia de humana Christi generatione.
38Origen, In Matthaeum, Tract. 26.
39Cyril of Alexandria, Adversus Anthropomorphitas, 27.
40Theophylus, In Matthaeum, 23.
41Lactantius, Divinae institutiones, IV, 6 & 18.
42Eusebius of Caesarea, De vita Constantini, IV.
43Augustine, De consensu Evangelistarum, I, 20; De civitate Dei, XVIII, 23; Oratio contra Judaeos, Paganos, et Arianos (tom. *GT.*
44Canisius, De Beata Maria, II, 7.
45Epiphanius, Vita Jeremiae.

given birth would enter their land with her child. Also well known is the story of the gold plate found in the time of Constantine with the inscription: "Christ is born of a virgin." Thomas too recalls this[46] and makes mention of other marvels which God worked in proof of this truth[47]. Confer Bonaventure[48], Antoninus of Florence[49], and Alfonso Tostado[50].

10. Fifth, the main argument is the Divine Will; an argument which supposes that this mystery implies no contradiction. Nor do I now consider it profitable to refute Durandus' arguments for the impossibility of the compénétration of bodies. For these arguments are not hard to handle, and they are treated elsewhere. Moreover, later on in discussing Christ's resurrection I shall briefly touch upon these points. But I can offer the following suasive reasons for this divine arrangement.

First, it was not fitting that the Word of God should deprive His Mother of that integrity which, since He was God, He could easily preserve, perfect, and make holy. Thus Ignatius of Antioch says, "It was fitting for the Creator to resort to birth not in the ordinary, but in an unusual and marvelous way befitting the Maker of all things[51]." Cyril of Alexandria[52] has almost identical words; and Augustine[53] says that Christ was born in this way "so that human birth would prove Him a man and perpetual virginity would prove Him God." For this reason Proclus of Cyzicus argues: "If she who gave birth had not remained a virgin, neither would He Who was born appear as anything other than mere

[48]Aquinas, Summa Theologica, Π-Π, q. 2, a. 7, ad 3.
[47]Ibid., m, q. 36.
[48]Bonaventure, Tractatus de quinque festivitatibus pueri Jesu, 2. (Tom. 2, Opusculum)
[48]Antoninus of Florence, Historiarum opus, I, 5.
[50]Alfonso Tostado, Prologomenon in Genesim, 7.
[51]Ignatius of Antioch, Epistola 13 ad Heronem.
[52]Cyril of Alexandria, Contra Julianum Imperatorem, Vm, non longe a fine.
[53]Augustine, Sermo 7 de Nativitate.

man."[54] Theodore of Ancyra[55] uses the same argument.

Finally, for the same reason, Pope Leo says, "Nor does she believe it detrimental to her modesty that she is soon to be the Mother of God."[58] Further on he adds, "It was fitting that the birth of the Savior in no way impaired the Virgin's integrity, for the issue of Truth was the defense of modesty[57]." And in his second sermon Leo says, "Begotten by a new type of birth He was born of a Virgin without impairing His Mother's integrity; for such a beginning becomes the future Savior of men Who in His Person would bear a nature of human substance, but Who would not know the weaknesses of human flesh.[58]" "Do not consider," Leo continues a little further on, "the condition of her who gives birth, but the free will of Him Who is bom; for He was born in that manner which He desired and made possible."[59] And again, "It behooved Incorruption in being born to guard the natural integrity of His Mother; and it behooved the indwelling power of the Divine Spirit to preserve the sanctuary of modesty and the holy dwelling so pleasing to Himself. For He had determined to raise up the fallen, to restore the broken, and to bestow a modesty proof against the allurements of the flesh so that virginity, which in some cannot be retained because of child-bearing, in others might be an object of imitation by confessing it in their second birth."[80]

These last words bring out another suasive argument which Gregory Nazianzen also touches upon: "Christ was bom of a virgin; therefore cultivate virginity, my dear women, so that you may be mothers of Christ."[81] A little further on he hints at another similar reason in these few

"Proclus of Cyzicus, Homilia de Christi Nativitate, in the Council of Ephesus (Tom. 6, c. ÏT.

"Theodore of Ancyra, the Council of Ephesus (Tom. 6, c.10 & in appendix 5, c. 2).

58Pope Leo, Sermo 1 de Nativitate.

57Ibid.

58Pope Leo, Sermo 2 de Nativitate.

56Ibid.

80Ibid.

"Gregory Nazianzen, Oratio 38 de Nativitate, in principio.

words: "Motherhood should be honored; but virginity preferred.w82 Thus Ambrose says, "Christ chose for Himself the special gift of virginity and showed the effect of integrity; He Himself was the exemplar of what He had chosen in His Mother.*83 Cyril of Jerusalem says, "He was born to make virgins; all the more so should He preserve the Virgin's body."84 And Augustine says, "Let us love chastity above all things, for it was to show that this was pleasing to Him that Christ chose the modesty of a virgin womb."®5 And again: "Christ by being born of a virgin preferred to commend virginity rather than command it.*®8 John Damascene87 also mentions this reason. Irenaeus88 and Fulgentius89 give a final reason: As the downfall of human nature stemmed in the beginning from a virgin, so it was fitting that through a virgin salvation should come to men.

11. From the teaching of certain of the Fathers who maintain that Christ opened the womb of His Mother in being born it may be objected that they think that the Virgin's privilege lies in this that while the womb of other women is opened in conception, the womb of the Virgin was opened in giving birth. Thus they explain that the law laid down in Exodus (13:2) and Numbers (8:passim) "Every male opening the womb shall be called holy to the Lord" (Luke 2:23) should be understood of Christ in a sense altogether unique. Thus Epiphanius says, "It is He who truly opened the womb of His Mother.*70 So also Chrysostom, Gregory of Nyssa, and Amphilochius71. Origen72, Theophylus73, Ambrose74,

0*Ibid., satis post medium.
83Ambrose, Epistola 81.
84Cyril of Jerusalem, Catacheses, 124.
65Augustine, Sermones de tempore, Serm. 11.
88Augustine, De sancta virginitate, 4.
87John Damascene, De fide orthodoxa, IV, 25.
58Irenaeus, Adversus Haereses, HI, 33.
89Fulgentius of Ruspe, De duplici Christi Nativitate.
70Epiphanius, Haereses, 78, circa finem.
71Chrysostom, Gregory of Nyssa, and Amphilochius of Iconium, Homiliae de Purificatione seu de occursu Domini.
72Origen, In Lucam, Horn. 14.
73Theophylus, In Lucam, 2.
74Ambrose, In Lucam, II, caput de circumcisione et oblatione Salvatoris.

express the same view. So, too, that very obscure and difficult text of Tertullian[75] which adds that Paul said "made of woman" not of a virgin since "she knew the pain married women experience from the opening of the womb." Erasmus[76] seems to have understood and believed all these texts in their surface meaning and therefore held a false view of this mystery.

IN WHAT SENSE CHRIST IS SAID TO HAVE OPENED THE WOMB OF HIS MOTHER

12. I reply that in Sacred Scripture "to close the womb" means in the proper sense of the term to render or leave a woman barren or sterile. (Genesis 20, 29, 30; I Kings) Therefore, "to open the womb" will, on the contrary, mean to bestow fertility upon her. In this sense, therefore, must we explain the holy Fathers when they say that "Christ opened the womb of His Mother," that is, that He made her fruitful—a thing which no other son was able to do for his mother. Moreover, this metaphor is employed in order to spell out the fact that Mary's childbearing and Christ's birth were true and real and not just seeming or unreal. This explanation I take from Jerome who says: "Only Christ opened the closed gates of the virgin womb which, nevertheless, remained perpetually shut."[77] By these words, I am sure, no one of sound mind would think that Jerome wanted to say that Christ first broke through the Virgin's hymen in order to come forth and afterwards, as it were, mended and restored it to its original state. Such an understanding of the matter is indeed stupid, foreign to the mind of so great a Doctor, and altogether out of harmony with the Virgin's honor and integrity and Christ's power and majesty.

Therefore, Christ "opened* the gates while leaving them closed, since He gave fruitfulness and the power of giving birth with perfect integrity unimpaired. It is as if one said that Christ opened His sepulcher by leaving it shut; since He makes use of it when closed, as if it were open; so

[75]Tertullian, De Carne Christi, 23.
[76]Erasmus, In Lucam, 2.
[77]Jerome, Dialogus adversus Pelagianos, II.

Amphilochius neatly explains.[78] Similarly Euthymius says: "Only Christ supernaturally opened what was not yet opened and preserved it naturally closed."[79] Similarly Ambrose said Christ came forth from the womb of the Virgin "as water came forth from the rock.'[80] From this passage the mind of Ambrose is sufficiently clear; and Thomas explains Gregory of Nyssa in almost the same way.[81] Moreover, the other difficulties are solved according to the same principle. For although Tertullian is obscure; nevertheless, from his book De Carne Christi[82] it is sufficiently clear that he was orthodox on the question of the Virgin Birth.

I suggest, however, that first of all we should not use that manner of speaking without adequate and clear explanation since it is metaphorical and easily capable of creating a false impression. Therefore, the aforementioned law is to be given not a literal but a mystical interpretation. For properly the phrase "son opening the womb® refers to all first-born delivered in the usual way. For granted that the womb is partially opened at the time of conception, nevertheless, in the first birth the rupture of the hymen is, as it were, completed and finished. Thus the law about all the first-born was understood to apply not only to men but also to animals.

NO CHANGE WAS MADE IN THE WOMB OF THE VIRGIN IN GIVING BIRTH TO CHRIST.

13. I maintain, secondly, that Christ came forth from the womb of His Mother without any dilation, change, or injury of the Virgin's body. He came forth in a way similar to the way He came forth from the sepulcher or joined His disciples when the doors were shut, not by by-passing, dilating, or changing the intervening bodies in any way, but simply by passing through them by a process of compénétration. In my judgment this conclusion is certain. \

78Amphilochius of Iconium, Homilia de Purificatione.
79Euthymius Zigabenus, In Lucam, 2.
80Ambrose, Epistola 81.
81Aquinas, Summa Theologica, HI, q. 37, a. 3, ad 1.
82Tertullian, De Carne Christi, 20.

My first proof is the common agreement of all theologians with the exception of Durandus. These men, moreover, truly voice the mind of the Church; for this explanation of the mystery is the intellectual conviction and belief of all the faithful.

Second, all the Fathers make a great deal of this miracle of the Virgin Birth. But if this occurred only through a dilation of the organs, or if it had been no more remarkable than what would have been the mode of birth in the state of innocence, then it would have been certainly a small miracle if truly one at all.

The premises of this argument are established by the words of Augustine[83] and the Council of Toledo[84] on this particular miracle: *If there were another instance, this would not be unique. Let us, therefore, admit that God is able to do that which we must admit we cannot search out." Again Augustine says: "Let Faith believe this, and the mind neither seek an explanation nor consider the unknown incapable of belief, nor believe the undiscovered to be absurd."[85] Ambrose prefers the miracle of the birth from the Virgin to the miracle of Christ's resurrection.[86] And Cyril of Alexandria says: "O marvelous occurrence! This miracle leaves me lost in admiration."[87] Sophronius maintains this is one of the greatest miracles of the divine power.[88] All of these men explain the miracle with illustrations of Christ's coming forth from the sepulcher in spite of the stone barring the way, and of His coming among His disciples when the doors were shut. Gregory the Great[89],

"Augustine, Epistola 3.
[84]Council of Toledo XI, in principio.
[85]Augustine, Contra Felicianum Arianum, 8.
"Ambrose, De institutione virginis, 5.
[87]Cyril of Alexandria, Homilia contra Nestorium, in the Council of Ephesus.
[88]cf. also the Letter in the Council erf Constantinople m, actio 6.
"Gregory the Great, Homilia in Evangelia, Hom. 26.

Augustine[90], Chrysostom[91], Proclus of Cyzicus[92], and Thomas[93] explain it the same way.

Third, the opinion of Durandus greatly detracts from the Virgin's purity and integrity which the Fathers maintain was not only in no way diminished, but, they insist, increased in the birth of her Son. Thus Gregory of Nyssa says: "The Light of God having assumed flesh of a Virgin shone upon men, yet preserved her in complete integrity with the freshness of her virginity unchanged."[94] Augustine goes even to greater lengths: "At His birth her bodily integrity increased rather than decreased; her virginity grew rather than vanished."[95]* Peter Chrysologus beautifully remarks: "Who goes in and comes forth and Whose entrance and exit leaves no trace is a Divine Dweller not human."[90] Further on he adds: "At your conception and at your childbirth modesty increased, chastity grew, integrity was strengthened."[97] Even more openly does Guarino say: "In no way did the King of Glory relax the bonds or cause expansion."[98] Nicephorus of Constantinople in his Letter to Pope Leo III writes: "The Virgin, who in a supernatural and ineffable way gave birth, He conserved as a virgin after her childbearing with her natural virginity in no way changed or impaired."[99] Proclus of Cyzicus says: "As man, Emmanuel unbarred the gates of nature; but as God, He in no way profaned or burst asunder the bars of virginity. Just as He entered the womb through hearing, so in a similar way did He leave it. He was born as He

[90]Augustine, Sermones de tempore, Serm. 18, 156, 160.
[91]Chrysostom, De symbolo, Hom. 2.
[92]Proclus of Cyzicus, Homilia de Christi Nativitate in the Council of Ephesus, circa finem.
[93]Aquinas, Quodlibetales, VI, a. 8; In IV Sententiarum, d. 44, q. 2, a. 3.
"Gregory of Nyssa, De vita Moysis.
[95]Augustine, Sermones de tempore, Serm. 15.
"Peter Chrysologus, Sermo 142.
[97]Ibid.
"Guarino da Verona, Homilia 2 de laudibus Virginis.
"Nicephorus the Confessor, Epistola ad Leonem HI Papam in the acts of the Council of EphesusTTom. 5, c. 22).

was conceived; He Who entered without organic change, came forth without change."[100]

Fourth, this arrangement was in itself most befitting and also easy for the Divine Omnipotence. Once this is granted, one can easily understand how the Blessed Virgin was able to give birth to her Child without the intervening organs presenting any obstacle. For it was by divine power that there was no obstacle to Christ's body compenetrating and passing through these organs without changing or dislodging them.

OBJECTION—REPLY.

14. You will object that the natural passages are too narrow to contain a child's body unless either these passages dilate or the child's body be compressed, as it were, or sustain compénétration of its members. But this argument seems to tell more strongly against EXirandus. For it is more difficult to understand how a solid body of considerable extension can pass through the pores of another intervening body because of expansion without tearing or penetration.

I reply that Christ could, perhaps, in some more excellent and miraculous way unknown to us, place the members of His body within those narrow passages without any expansion.

Second, if perhaps some type of compénétration of the members in question occurred, it should be understood that this took place without any imperfection or change in the external form. Or if this seems difficult, we can say with Alfonso Tostado[101] that the Body of Christ came forth through the natural channels of itself and, as it were, directly. But if it was necessary for some members of His Body to pass through other parts of the Virgin's body, this occurred since it implies no imperfection nor detracts from true childbearing or birth. But on the question of this mystery it is safer and more in accord with Christian

[100] Proclus of Cyzicus, Homilia de Christi Nativitate, in the Council of Ephesus.

[101] Alfonso Tostado, Paradoxa quinque, I, 56 & sqq.; In Matthaeum, 1, q.

modesty to admit that Christ came forth from the womb of His Mother in some ineffable and incomprehensible way than curiously investigate the precise way in which this occurred.

SECTION m

WHETHER AFTER CHILDBIRTH THE BLESSED VIRGIN ALWAYS PRESERVED HER VIRGINITY

1. I take as a basic assumption that although virginity in so far as it pertains to morals and virtue is, according to Thomas,[1] not lost except by a voluntary rupture of the virginal seal or voluntary loss of seed, nevertheless, virginity in so far as it signifies physical virginity or integrity can be lost by any breaking of the virginal seal whether it be voluntary or not, licit or illicit. For this virginity, of which I shall now treat, consists in natural perfection and bodily integrity alone.

2. I presume, therefore, that the Blessed Virgin did not lose her physical virginity by any force, involuntary compulsion, illicit intercourse, or in other extraordinary way such as occasionally occurs through the use of medical instruments in cases of necessity. All of these possibilities are most unseemly; nor has even any heretic ever ascribed them to the Virgin; nor, as I have shown above, did the Virgin ever perform a shameful act. I have, moreover, proved that she was never sick; and finally it is certain that God would not have permitted the Blessed Virgin to be subject to such force or necessity. The whole question, therefore, comes to this: did the Blessed Virgin, voluntarily and by a morally good act, such as the act of marriage, lose her virginity.

The heretics, called Antidicomarianites, that is, "Adversaries of Mary," maintain that after the birth of Christ,[1]

[1]Aquinas, Summa Theologica, II-II, q. 152, a. 1; Quodlibetales, VI, a. 18.

the Blessed Virgin conceived other sons by Joseph. According to Jerome[2] the author of this heresy was Helvidius. Ildefonsus[3] and Augustine[4] say the same. But Origen[5] and Hilary,[6] who were prior to Helvidius, mention this heresy. Jerome in writing Against Helvidius admits that Tertullian slipped into this error even before Helvidius and stingingly cites Tertullian's De Monogamia[7], De Carne Christi[8],* and other passages. This error was almost dead when twenty-five years ago Stemberger stirred it to life. Many of the Reformers have followed him as Prateolus® and Canisius[10]* relate.

AFTER CHILDBIRTH MARY REMAINED A VIRGIN.

3. I maintain that the Blessed Virgin preserved her virginity perpetually and never knew man. This is an article of Faith. It is proved, first of all, by a single text from the Old Testament; Ezechiel (44:2): "This gate shall be shut. It shall not be opened and no men shall pass through it: because the Lord the God of Israel hath entered in by it." This passage, by a metaphor, it is true, refers literally to the Most Holy Virgin. So testifies Jerome[11] in commenting on this passage. Moreover, this is the view of other Fathers who employ the text to establish the truth of this mystery; namely, Jerome himself[12], Augustine[13], Ambrose[14],

[2]Jerome, Adversus Helvidium.
[3]Ildefonsus, De virginitate Mariae, 2.
[4]Augustine, De haeresibus, 84.
[5]Origen, In Lucam, Hom. 7.
[6]Hilary of Poitiers, In Matthaeum, can. 1.
[7]Tertullian, De monogamia, 8.
[8]Tertullian, De Carne Christi, 23.
[9]Prateolus (Gabriel Dupreau), De vitis, sectis, et dogmatibus omnium haereticorum elenchus alphabeticus, "Luke Stemberger."
[10]Canisius, De Beata Maria, II.
[11]Jerome, In Ezechielem, 44.
[12]Jerome, Dialogus contra Pelagianos, II.
[13]Augustine, Sermones 2 & 14 de Nativitate.
[14]Ambrose, Epistola 81.

Chrysostom[15],* John Damascene[18],* and others. Furthermore, this interpretation fully squares both with the sense and context of the quotation. For that.gate, it is stated, will forever remain closed "because the Lord. . .hath entered in by it." For this reason the phrase is added: "And it shall be shut for the prince" (Ezechiel 44:2-3)—that is, in his honor and reverence. Our doctrine is confirmed by the words of the Virgin: "How shall this be done. . ." (Luke 1:34). They manifest an intention of perpetual virginity as we shall consider at greater length in the next disputation.

Not a few of the Fathers advance the argument that Christ hanging on the cross entrusted His Mother to John with the words "Behold thy Mother" (John 19:27); and John in turn to His Mother with: "Behold thy son" (John 19:26). Both from the fact and words themselves we can clearly conclude that she had no other sons by Joseph. Otherwise it seems she would have been commended to them rather than to John. Consequently, Christ spoke in the singular number: "Behold thy son" (John 19:26)—that is: Behold him whom you should have in place of your only son. This argument can be found in Ambrose[17], Epiphanius[18], and Jerome[18].

4. Second, this truth is especially found in tradition, in the consent and definition of the Church. For in the Councils the Mother of God is frequently called "ever Virgin immaculate." Thus in the Second[20] and Third[21] Councils of Constantinople are found the words "the virginity of Mary, inviolate before, in, and after childbirth." The same doctrine is found in the Second Council of Nicea[22],* the Council of the Lateran under Pope Martin I[25], the Decretal Letter

[15]Chrysostom, Homilia de Joanne Baptista.
[18]John Damascene, De fide orthodoxa, IV715, etc.
[17]Ambrose, In Lucam, 1; Epistola, 70.
[18]Epiphanius, Haereses, 78.
[18]Jerome, Adversus Helvidium.
[20]Council of Constantinople, II, can. 6.
[21]Council of Constantinople m, act. 11.
[22]Council of Nicea II, act. 3.
[25]Council of the Lateran under Pope Martin I, can. 3.

of Pope Siricius and the Roman Synod,[24] and in the Letter of Ambrose and the Council of Milan.[25]

This tradition is confirmed as Augustine points out[28], by the fact that in the universal Church the name "Virgin", stated absolutely, is customarily used as a proper name of the Mother of God. Thus Epiphanius says, "Who in any age ever dared pronounce the name of Mary, and upon being questioned did not at once add the word "Virgin"? For from her very names, the marks of her virtue shine forth.*[27] Indeed this is the way she is referred to in the Apostles' Creed: "born of the Virgin Mary." And this is the way the Fathers so often speak at the Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon. So, too, speak Athanasius[28], Hilary[29], Maximum[30], and of set purpose Jerome in his letter to Eustochius[31] wherein he beautifully discourses on the modesty and chastity of the Virgin. Similarly Gregory of Nyssa[32] and Basil[33] say that Mary was married to Joseph by a divine dispensation in order that he might guard her reputation and virginity, not that he might beget sons by her.

I must, however, make some comment on a later statement of Basil's. For when he has recounted the opinion of those who hold that after the birth of Christ Mary had not denied her husband marital relations, he says: "For our part, however, even though such a view is not at variance with this doctrine of faith—for virginity was necessary only until the birth of Christ was accomplished, and we need not

[24] Decretal Letter of Pope Siricius and the Roman Synod.
[25] This is Epistola 80 of the letters of Ambrose. It is also to be found in Tome I of the Council.
[26] Ambrose, Epistola 81; De institutione virginis, 7.
[27] Augustine, Enchiridion, 34.
[28] Epiphanius, Haereses, 78.
[28] Athanasius, Sermo de Sanctissima Deipara.
[29] Hilary of Poitiers, In Matthaeum, can. 1.
[30] Maximus the Confessor, Homilia de cruce et sepultura Domini.
[31] Jerome, Epistola 22 ad Eustochium de custodia virginitatis.
[32] Gregory of Nyssa, Oratio de sancta Christi Nativitate, circa medium.
[33] Basii, Homilia 25 de humana Christi generatione.

be too anxious to bring into line with this doctrine everything that happened thereafter—still lest those who love Christ be forced to hear that the Mother of God ever ceased to be a virgin, we think these arguments suffice.*[34] By these words Basil seems to indicate that this truth does not pertain to the certitude of Faith. But since I am convinced that this truth was always believed with the firmest faith, I believe that the passage from Basil must be explained as referring only to the mystery of the Incarnation which, together with the miraculous conception and birth of Christ, is not directly contradicted by the present error, although on other grounds the opinion is contrary to the Faith and tradition of the Church. Hence Augustine says, "It must be believed with firm faith, nor can we acquiesce in the blasphemy of Helvidius.*[35][36]

WHY THE GOSPELS CALL CHRIST FIRST-BORN.

5. Third, suitable arguments from reason can be advanced. Thomas touches upon four of the best ones here in his third article/® The first argument is based on a consideration of Christ.

It was fitting that as He was the Only Begotten of the Father, He should be the same of His Mother. Nor does it make any difference that Mattaew (1:23-25) calls Him "the first-born. . .of a Virgin*; for in Sacred Scripture, as John Damascene, Thomas, and others have observed, this phrase does not always indicate a relation to a second child but only a denial of a prior one—just as when the Law commanded that the first-born should be offered, without doubt this was understood to apply to the only-begotten as well, Cyril of Alexandria[37] points out in proving that Christ alone is the Son of God that in the Gospel of St. Luke Christ the Lord is sometimes called "first-born* for this reason that He was allotted the first place among many brethren although He was born of one who was always a virgin.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Augustine, De ecclesiae dogmatibus, 69.

[36] Aquinas, Summa Theologica, HI, q. 28, a. 3.

[37] Cyril of Alexandria, De fide ad reginas, Π.

The second argument is based on a consideration of the Holy Spirit. For it was not fitting that the tabernacle of the Holy Spirit should be defiled by human seed.

The third argument is based on a consideration of the Virgin. In the words of Pope Siricius eit would have been a sign of an incontinent and ungrateful spirit to surrender a virginity divinely preserved and pollute the marriage chamber of Christ's conception."

The fourth argument is not dissimilar and is based on a consideration of Joseph who, as the Gospel points out, was eminently just and possessed a thorough grasp of all the mysteries. Consequently, it is not at all likely that he would have presumed to touch the Blessed Virgin. On this account Bernard says that chastity was prefigured in the Patriarch Joseph.

The fifth argument is that it was fitting that the counsel of virginity should be most perfectly observed not only by Christ but also by His Mother in order that she might be the most perfect model of virginity of all the virgins of the New Law. For this reason the holy Fathers address her as "Leader, Teacher, Virgin of virgins."

OBJECTION-REPLY-THE SENSE OF "UNTIL" IN HOLY SCRIPTURE.

6. Against Mary's virginity Helvidius urges the passage from Matthew (1:18,25) "When his mother Mary was espoused of Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child, of the Holy Ghost. . . .And he knew her not till she brought forth.her. . .son." The first conjunction in the passage, "before", indicates that they intended intercourse and for this reason had been married; the second conjunction in the passage, "till", indicates that after the birth of Christ Joseph knew her.

The Fathers reply that each conjunction merely asserts what had not happened at that time and does not at all affirm what was to take place in the future or what did take place. Consequently, the meaning of the first conjunction is "before they came together"; that is, without their union, as if one said in our ordinary way of talking, "Before I heard Mass, I left." This conjunction would not indicate that afterwards one heard Mass or that one had the intention

of hearing it. Thus Matthew (6:8) says ". . .your Father knoweth what is needful for you, before you ask him"—that is, even without your asking him. So Thomas in commenting on this text[38] argues from Jerome.[39]

The meaning of the other conjunction, "until", is the same; for it only denies that anything took place up to that time. Augustine[40] treats this at great length using as a proof the words of Psalm 109:1, "Until I make thy enemies .. . ," and other similar passages. In these instances it is worthy of note that this conjunction indicates especially the time at which something which did not occur would have been thought most likely to have occurred. For instance, Genesis (8:6-7) says: "Noe sent forth a raven: Which went forth and did not return, till the waters were dried up. . ." For if the raven were to return at all, certainly it would have come back while the waters were covering the land. For after the land dried, there would be no reason for it to return. Therefore, when Scripture says that the raven did not come back until the land was dry, this does not affirm that the raven afterwards returned, but rather takes for granted that it surely did not return later. Thus, in the text in question intercourse with the husband is denied until the Son's birth since during that period it might have seemed necessary. But of the time thereafter, intercourse is not affirmed; indeed it is clearly supposed that much less would it have occurred then. Over and above Jerome, Basil, John Damascene, Epiphanius, and others already cited, this is the point made by Ambrose[41], Gregory the Great[42], Augustine[43], Bernard[44], Chrysostom[45]*(whom Theophylus and Euthymius follow), and Anselm[45]. Moreover, I am convinced that this is the literal interpretation.

[38]Aquinas, Summa Theologica, III, q. 28, a. 3.
s'Jerome, Adversus Helvidium.
[40]Augustine, De diversis questionibus, LXXXIII, 69.
[41]Ambrose, De Noe et area. 17.
[42]Gregory the Great, Moralia, Vm, 40.
[43]Augustine, De Trinitate, I, 8.
[44]Bernard, In Canticum, Hom. 72.
«'Chrysostom, In Matthaeum, Hom. 5.
[48]Anselm, In I ad Corinthios, 15.

Some explain "before they came together" not in reference to the marriage couch, whereon they never came together, but in reference to their dwelling together in the same house, the manner in which they afterwards did come together. Similarly the phrase "he knew her not" is applied not to carnal but to mental knowledge. For before the Virgin bore her Son, Joseph did not sufficiently realize her dignity and excellence. In this knowledge Joseph afterwards made great progress, as Epiphanius[47] and Chrysostom[48] point out.

But these explanations do not please me—the first, because the word "come together" means more than dwelling in the same house, especially since I am of the opinion that at that time Mary and Joseph had already dwelt together; the second, because it does not satisfactorily square with the context. Much less semblance of truth has the interpretation which Thomas[49] quotes from Hilary (but which I have not been able to find in that author); namely, that the text should be applied to the sense of sight—that is: just as Moses could not be looked upon because of the brilliance of his countenance neither could the Blessed Virgin while she carried her Son in her womb.

SECTION IV

HOW CAN CHRIST BE SAID TO HAVE HAD BROTHERS IF HIS MOTHER ALWAYS REMAINED A VIRGIN

1. One of the principle arguments upon which Helvidius relied was the Gospels' frequent mention of certain brothers of Christ who he maintained were the Virgin's sons by Joseph. Therefore, it is necessary to explain carefully who these men were and why they were called the brothers of Christ. Thomas touches the matter in this article in the reply to the fifth and sixth objections[1].

[47]Epiphanius, Haereses, 78.
[48]Chrysostom, Opus imperfectum in Matthaeum, Hom. 5.
[49]Aquinas, Catena aurea.
[1]Aquinas, Summa Theologica, ΓΠ, q. 28, a. 3, ad 5 & 6.

2. The first opinion on this question was that of Helvidius who asserted that these "brothers of the Lord" were the sons of the Blessed Virgin; for since Christ as man did not have a father, Helvidius thought that these men must necessarily have been the sons of Christ's Mother in order to be called His brothers.

3. The second opinion, held by some eminent Fathers, was that these men were the sons of St. Joseph not by the Blessed Virgin but by another wife whom he had married before the Virgin. Thus it happened that these men were called "brothers of the Lord" in the same way that Joseph was called His father; namely, by appellation, common opinion, and "as it were by a certain adoption" as Augustine[2] sometimes puts it. Those who maintain this opinion assert that before Joseph married the Virgin Mary he had one or perhaps several wives by whom he begot James, the brother of the Lord, and his brothers. The argument for this view is probable; it seems to be the common tradition of the Church reflected in numerous, ordinary paintings that Joseph was already an old man when he married the Virgin. Therefore, it is not likely that throughout all that time he abstained from marriage since in the Old Law continence was not esteemed or reverenced. Therefore, during that period he married a wife by whom he probably had children; for in those days sterility was a kind of disgrace. Consequently, it may be believed that God did not deprive him of this favor.

This was the common opinion of the Greek Fathers, the one taught by Epiphanius[3], Theophylus,[4] and Euthymius[5] and Oecumenius[6]. Eusebius of Cesarea[7] and Nicephorus[8]

[2]Augustine, Contra Faustum Manichaeum.
[3]Epiphanius, Haeresea, 51, ante medium; Haereses, 78; Anchoratus.
[4]Theophylus, In Matthaeum, 26 & 27, In Joannem 19; In ad Galatas, 1; in I ad Corinthios, 9.
[5]Euthymius Zigabenus, In Mathaeum, 12 & 27; In Joannem, 19.
[6]Oecuminius of Tricca, Commentaria in Acta Apostolorum, in principio & c.2.
[7]Eusebius of Caesarea, Historia ecclesiastica, II, 1.
[8]Nicephorus the Confessor, Breviarium historicum, I, 7 & 21; II, 3; HI, 10.

held the same; the latter, moreover, cites Hippolytus of Porto in support of the view.[9] Origen[10]* maintains that this opinion was hit upon to protect the perpetual virginity of Blessed Mary. Gregory of Nyssa[11] says the same.

Of the Latin Fathers Hilary[12] and Ambrose[13] taught it. Nor does Augustine contradict Ambrose in his explanation of the same Epistle[14] when in the form of a disjunction he states: James, the brother of the Lord, should be understood to be either a son of Joseph by another wife or a relation of His Mother Mary. Platina in his Life of St. Peter[15]* follows the same opinion although he states it in a disjunction, as I shall explain further on. Origen, however, adds that this opinion took its rise from a certain Gospel of the Hebrews, ascribed to Peter or James, but which Innocent P® and Augustine[17] certify was written by the heretic Seleucius.

4. A third opinion can be recounted here which asserts that these men were called "brothers of the Lord" because they were sons of the Virgin's sisters and grandsons of St. Anne. But further on a more suitable place for discussing this opinion will occur.

5. I maintain that these brothers of the Lord were not the sons of the Blessed Virgin, and this position is not only held with the certitude of faith and tradition but also can be proved from the Gospels. The first part of the assertion is established by the preceding section where it was proved that the Mother of God forever remained a virgin. The latter part of the proposition is proved by the fact that from the Gospels one can establish that those called "brothers"* had another mother than the Virgin.

[9]Ibid, II, 3.
[10]Origen, In Matthaeum, 13.
[11]Gregory of Nyssa, Oratio 2 de Resurrectione Christi.
[12]Hilary of Poitiers, In Matthaeum, can. 1.
[13]Ambrose, In ad Galatas, 1; De institutione virginis, 6.
[14]Augustine, In ad Galatas, 1.
[15]Platina, Vita D. Petri.
[16]Pope Innocent I, Epistola 3 ad Exuperium, 7.
[17]Augustine, De fide contra Manichaeos, 38.

This is proved as follows. In John (19:25) we read that there were by the cross three women, the Mother of the Lord, her sister Mary of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalen. Matthew (27:56), however, and Mark (15:40) enumerate "Mary Magdalen, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee or "Salome*, as Mark says. But it seems certain that the mother of James and Joseph (who in other places are called "brothers of the Lord") was not the Mother of God.

First, wherever the Mother of God is mentioned with the other women, she is listed first in accord with her dignity as in John (19:25), or at all events, in the last place and uniquely marked off from the others as in Acts (1:14): "with the women, and Mary, the mother of Jesus." Second, this is confirmed by the fact that Matthew (28:1) when describing the resurrection of Christ says: "And in the end of the sabbath, when it began to dawn towards the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalen, and the other Mary to see the sepulchre." Here it is evident that this other Mary was the one whom Matthew (27:56) had called "Mary the mother of James and Joseph" and about whom he had added the verse: "And there was there Mary Magdalen and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre." (Matthew 27:61) This is even more clearly inferred from Mark (16:1) and Luke (24:10). Therefore, that "Mary the mother of James* (Mark 15:47) was not the Blessed Virgin. Moreover, argumentation establishes this conclusion. For of the two Marys, Mary of Magdalen is more prominently mentioned. She is described as having a more fervent faith and charity and enjoying the privilege granted by Christ of seeing Him before the others on the day of the Resurrection. This is clear from Mark (16). But if Mary of James had been the Blessed Virgin, Mary Magdalen would not have been preferred in any of these ways.

A third argument, moreover, is the fact that it is unbelieveable that the Blessed Virgin would have been one of the women who with such anxiety went to anoint the dead body of Christ on the day of the Resurrection. For (as can be gathered from the very fact of their going and the Gospel account) although those women acted in a holy way, nevertheless, they had an imperfect faith and labored under

great ignorance concerning the mysteries of Christ. Furthermore, according to Luke (24:11), the news related by this Mary of Joseph and the other women seemed nonsense to the Apostles. But who can believe the Apostles would have been so senseless as not to have shown her greater faith and respect if she had been the Mother of the Lord. Thus Bernard[18] in treating of the Passion of the Lord says the Mother of God was not preoccupied with the dead body of the Lord, for she had a most firm faith in His resurrection and had been taught and instructed in all the mysteries by the Holy Spirit. Moreover, it seems to be the common belief of the Church that the Blessed Virgin awaited at home the glorious arrival of her Son, and there merited to enjoy the sight of Him before anyone else.

The fourth argument is the good point Thomas makes here in the third article in answer to the sixth objection[19]: that the Gospel gives the Blessed Virgin no further identifying name name except that derived from her Son. For she is addressed as "the mother of Jesus," or "of whom Jesus was born." Thus Luke, who in his Gospel (24:10) names the other Mary "Mary of James," in the Acts (1:14) calls "Mary, the mother of Jesus." For this reason Ignatius addresses her as "Mary of Jesus" since this was her greatest dignity. Why, then, without any mention of Christ should she be called the "mother of James and Joseph," if the same person were "the mother of Jesus"?

Fifth and finally this is the teaching of the Fathers: Jerome[20], Bede[21], Thomas[22], and Euthymius[23] who call the opposite opinion "absurd."

6. The plain conclusion of the foregoing is the one to which I have been moving; namely, that James and Joseph were not sons of the Blessed Virgin but of the other Mary.

[18]Bernard, De Passione Domini, 2.
[19]Aquinas, Summa Theologica, HI, q. 28, a. 3 ad 6.
[20]Jerome, In Matthaeum, 12 & 27; Adversus Helvidium; De viris illustribus, "Jacobus."
[21]Bede, In Marcum, IV, 44.
[22]Aquinas^ In Joannem, 11, lect. 4.
[23]Euthymios~Zigabenus, In Matthaeum, 27, c. 68.

Nevertheless they are called "brothers of the Lord." Therefore, this title is not taken from the fact that they were born from the same womb as the Lord. The same line of argumentation applies to everyone else to whom this title is given in Scripture.

7. My second conclusion is that some of the early Greek Fathers erred in thinking that the Blessed Virgin was the Mary who came with Magdalen to annoint the body of Christ on the day of the Resurrection. Of this mind were Gregory of Nyssa[24], Theophylus[25], and Nicephorus[28]; and Sedulius indicates that he shared their view when he says that on the day of the Resurrection the Virgin went early in the morning to anoint the body of the Lord[27]. But this opinion is entirely unfounded, as I have pointed out.

However, it should be understood that these authors did not agree with Helvidius; for they do not say that the Blessed Virgin was called the "mother of James and Joseph* because she gave birth to them, but because she was the spouse of St. Joseph whose children they were. Thus, Nicephorus is inconsistent when he says that this Mary of James was the wife of the Apostle Jude and thinks that the Mary who went with Magdalen to the sepulcher was not Mary of James. This contradicts the Gospel account; but on the subject of these women Nicephorus has many remarks which are without any authority or basis whatever.

8. Third, from the foregoing I draw the probable conclusion for use later on that Mary of Cleophas, the sister of the Virgin, whom John (19:25) mentions is the same person whom the other Evangelists call "Mary of James and Joseph.* This is the opinion of Jerome[28], held by Thomas[29],

"Gregory of Nyssa, Oratio 2 de Resurrectione Christi.
[25]Theophylus, In Matthaeum, 26 & 27; hi Joannem, 19; In ad Galatas, 1; In I ad Corinthos, 9.
"Nicephorus the Confessor, Breviarium historicum, I, 33.
''Sedulius, Carmen Paschale, V, circa finem.
"Jerome, Adversus Helvidium.
[28]Aquinas, In ad Galatas, 1, lect. 5.

and shared by Chrysostom[30] who identifies Mary of James as a sister of the Mother of the Lord.

It is clear that in John (19:25) Mary of Cleophas is called "the sister of the mother of the Lord." This relationship is proved by the fact that apart from the Blessed Virgin and Mary Magdalen the Gospels mention no other women followers of Christ called Mary with but one exception. For the mother of the sons of Zebedee is never called "Mary" but only "mother of the sons of Zebedee." This fact also can be quite clearly inferred from the Gospel of St. Matthew which speaks of "Mary Magdalen and the other Mary' (28:1). This points to the fact that throughout the whole business of the Passion and Resurrection of Christ with the exception of Magdalen no one but this other Mary is mentioned—for, as I have already said, in this passage there was not, nor could there have been any reference to the Blessed Virgin.

Therefore, the Mary whom Matthew and John mention was the same person. Consequently, Mary of James is the same person who is addressed by the other name of "Mary of Cleophas." For in Scripture women are sometimes designated by the name of their children and sometimes by the names of their husbands. Thus, the woman who is called "the mother of James and Joseph" is also called "Mary of Cleophas" since she was, perhaps, his wife as I shall later point out. Moreover, according to the accounts of Eusebius[31] derived from Hegesippus, of Nicephorus[32], and of many of the ancient writers, this Cleophas was the brother of Joseph, the Spouse of the Virgin. This should be noted down for its bearing on the points I shall discuss.

JOSEPH, THE SPOUSE OF MARY, WAS ALWAYS A VIRGIN.

9. I maintain, secondly, that those whom the Gospel calls brothers of the Lord were not begotten by Joseph, the Spouse of the Virgin, nor for this reason were they called

[30] Chrysostom, In Matthaeum, Hom. 19.
[31] Eusebius of Caesarea, Historia ecclesiastica, m, 10 or 11.
[32] Nicephorus the Confessor, Breviarium historicum, I, 33, m, 9.

by that title. Bede[33], Theodore[34], and Anselm[35]*teach this conclusion.

It is proved first of all by the testimony of all of those Fathers who teach that Blessed Joseph was a virgin. Jerome says: "The conclusion remains that he who merited to be called the Father of the Lord, remained a virgin with Mary."[38] Augustine in a sermon on the Nativity portrays the angel speaking to Joseph as follows: "Keep, therefore, Joseph, with Mary your wife a common bodily virginity for of virgin bodies is born the strength of angels. Let Mary be the spouse of Christ in the flesh with her virginity preserved; be thou the father of Christ by your care for chastity and honor."[37] Further on he continues: "Rejoice, Joseph, in the virginity of Mary, you who alone merited to possess the virginal affection of your spouse because by the merit of virginity you have been separated from the embrace of a wife, that you might be called the Father of the Savior."[38] In these words Augustine not only teaches this truth but points out the most fitting reasons for it. Rupert of Deutz[39] teaches the same and establishes it both by the argument that it was fitting that he remain a virgin who "merited to be called the Father of the Lord" and by the fact that Joseph was to be the guardian of the virgmity of Mary. Thomas[40] shows how fitting this was by the argument that if the Lord did not want to entrust his Virgin Mother to any but a virgin, how could He have allowed her spouse not to be and steadfastly remain a virgin. Bernard[41] expresses the same opinion; even more clearly is it taught by Hugh of St. Victor[42]. Peter Damien[43] says

[33]Bede, In Joannem, 2; In Marcum, 6; In Lucam, 9.
[34]Theodore of Cyrus, In ad Galatas, 1.
[35]Anselm, In Matthaeum, 12.
[3i]Jerome, In Matthaeum; Adversus Helvidium, in fine.
^Augustine, Sermo 14 de Nativitate^
[38]Ibid.
^Rupert of Deutz, De gloria et honore Filii hominis, I.
[40]Aquinas, In ad Galatas, lect. 5.
[41]Bernard, In "missus est", Serm. 2, circa finem.
[42]Hugh of Saint Victor, In ad Galatas, q. 5.
[43]Peter Damien, Epistola 11, 4.

this is "the faith of the Church"; that is, the universal and pious belief. Finally, this is the common opinion of the Scholastics in commenting on the Fourth Book of the Sentences: Peter Paludanus[44], John Mayor[45]* and others to whom I shall refer in commenting on the following article[46] where Thomas states that Joseph along with Mary vowed virginity. It is also the opinion of Gerson[47] and Lipomanus in his Life of St. Joseph.[48]

The second proof of this conclusion is that from what has been said it is evident that the mother of James and Joseph, the brothers of the Lord, lived at the same time as the Blessed Virgin. Consequently, it is not likely that she was the wife of Joseph or that he had two wives living at the same time. First, although in the Old Law it was sometimes permitted to have two wives at the same time, it is not clear that the custom continued up to the time of Christ; nor is it probable that Joseph would have made use of the disposition, especially since he was a poor man and would not easily have been able to support such a large family. Second, it was not fitting that the Blessed Virgin should have as her companion a wife of the same husband, or have a husband who would share his affection and allegiance with another. But what would have been most unbecoming would have been that at the very time Joseph was living with the Virgin he would have been having relations with another. Third, another wife would have been a great hindrance to him in the services and obligations for which he was chosen. For it was necessary that he be unencumbered and free of all other cares and obligations so as to be able to be of service to the Virgin and the Child Jesus, journey with them, etc. Fourth, it seems that one can satisfactorily infer from the words of the angel: "Joseph, son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife. . .* (Matthew 1:20) that Joseph had only one wife, and to be particular, one called Mary. Consequently, Mary of James was

44Peter Paludanus, In IV Sententiarum, d. 30, q. 2 ad 2.
45John Mayor, In IV Sententiarum, d. 30, q. 4.
46Aquinas, Summa Theologica, m, q. 29, a. 4.
47John Gerson, Sermo de Nativitate Mariae, consideratio 3.
48Luigi Lipomanus, Vita Sancti Josephi.

not the wife of St. Joseph. Therefore, neither were her children begotten by St. Joseph. For I presume that they were legitimate and that Joseph, the just man, was not guilty of fornication.

The third proof of my conclusion is that the Gospels present other parents of these brothers of the Lord besides Joseph. For James the Less, a "brother of the Lord" is called "James the son of Alphaeus" (Matthew 10:3; Mark 3:18; Luke 6:15; Acts 1:13). In these passages the other James, James the Great, is called "James of Zebedee"; and it is evident that he was so called because he was Zebedee's son, as is clear from Matthew (27:56). For the purpose of such a phrase in Scripture as "Alexander of Philip" (I Machabees 1:1) is to give the son the surname of the father. Therefore, he is called "James of Alpheus" because he was the son of Alpheus. Consequently, he was not the son of St. Joseph. For who would be so rash as to say that Alpheus and Joseph were the same person or that the Spouse of the Virgin had two names or in the Gospel was addressed in a way other than Joseph?

OBJECTION-REPLY.

10. Someone will say that this reasoning presumes that James of Alpheus is the same person who is called the "brother of the Lord"—a point, perhaps, which not everyone will admit.

I reply that here a difficulty is thrust upon me which must be treated later. Consequently, I now but briefly remark the utter truth of this presumption which will become clearly evident from a comparison of Matthew 10:3, Matthew 13:55, and Acts 1:13. In these passages James of Alpheus is numbered among the Apostles, and one James the Apostle is said to be a "brother of the Lord." This man is clearly none other than "James of Alpheus"; for all agree that James of Zebedee was not called the brother of the Lord.

A similar line of reasoning can here be adduced from the fact that Simon, one of the brothers of the Lord, was the son of Cleophas according to the account of Eusebius[49]

[49]Eusebius of Caesarea, Historia ecclesiastica, m, 10 & 16 otherwise 11 & 13.

which is based on Hegesippus, an early and important writer. Nicephorus[50] says the same. It is clear, moreover, that Cleophas was a distinct person from Joseph, and was, so the story goes, his brother. The usual reply is that Simon was the natural son of Joseph but called the legal son of Cleophas whose wife Joseph had married to raise up seed for his brother according to the Law of Deuteronomy (25:5-6). But this reply clearly runs counter to the meaning intended by Hegesippus and Eusebius who without doubt are speaking of a natural son. And, secondly, this solution is an unfounded invention. Furthermore, not all sons begotten by a brother were in accordance with the Law designated by the name of the dead brother, but only the first son as is clear from Deuteronomy (25:6) and Augustine's[51] explanation of the passage. The other remarks expressed in the second opinion about the age of St. Joseph will be examined in connection with question 29.[52]

11. Third, I maintain that these brothers of the Lord were so called only because of some blood relationship, true or fancied, which they had with Christ the Lord according to the flesh. This is the opinion of Jerome[53], Augustine[54], Bede[55], and others to whom I shall refer below. This position follows necessarily from what has been said; for, as Jerome puts it, Scripture is accustomed to use the name "brother" in four ways. First, in the proper and strictest sense of the term when the men are truly natural brothers as Jacob and Esau. This way we have already excluded. Second, in the broadest sense when they are brothers by affection or love as Christ called the Apostles His "brethren" (John 20:17). Third, also in a wide sense when they are brothers by race or tribe as Deuteronomy (17:15) calls all Israelites "brothers." However, in the present

"Nicephorus the Confessor, Breviarium historicum, JH, 2 & 9.
51Augustine, In Deuteronomium, q. 46.
52Aquinas, Summa Theologica, IΠ, q. 29.
"Jerome, Adversus Helvidium.
54Augustine, Contra Faustum Manichaeum, XXH, 35; In Joannem, Tract, 10 & 28.
55Bede, In Marcum, Π, 23; In Lucam, 30.

instance, as is immediately evident, these two ways do not suffice since in these ways all Jews can be called brothers of Christ. There remains a fourth and middle way; namely, when men were called "brothers' because of some special close kinship. For this phrase occurs frequently in Scripture as is evident from Genesis (13:8;11) where Lot and Abraham are called "brothers" although it is clear from Genesis (11:27) that Iot was the nephew of Abraham. Other instances easily come to mind and can be found in Jerome[58], Augustine[57], and Epiphanius[58].

It but remains to declare what sort of kinship existed between those who were called the "brothers" of Christ and Christ Himself. It used to be commonly considered that these brothers of the Lord were cousins of Christ, the sons of the Virgin's sisters. For they say that Anne, the Virgin's mother, after the death of Joachim married another man named Cleophas. By him she gave birth to Mary of Cleophas, the mother of James and of the other brothers of the Lord. At Cleophas* death, Anne again married yet another; namely, Salome. By him she bore a third daughter who, they maintain, is called in the Gospel "Mary of Salome," the mother of the sons of Zebedee, John the Evangelist and James the Great. This is the explanation proposed by the Ordinary Gloss on the first chapter of Galatians and by Hugh of St. Victor[59] whom John Eck[80] follows. Moreover, it is the opinion favored by Bede[81] who says that Mary of James was the "maternal aunt of Christ" and therefore the natural sister of the Virgin. The Interlinear Gloss on Acts (1:13-14) says the same. Finally, in John (19:25) Mary of Cleophas is expressly called "the sister of Mary" the Virgin. Moreover, I have said above that she is the same person as Mary of James. Furthermore, Jerome[82]

58Jerome, Adversus Helvidium.
57Augustine, De civitate Dei, XVI, 19.
^Epiphanius, Haereses, 39.
59Hugh of Saint Victor, In ad Galatas, q. 5.
80John Eck, Sermo de festivitate sanctae Annae.
81Bede, In Acta Apostolorum, 1.
82Jerome, Adversus Helvidium; In Matthaeum, 12 & 27; De viribus illustribus, "Jacobus."

plainly teaches that this Mary of James was the sister of the Virgin; and Isidore[83] says the same.

THE VIRGIN THE ONLY CHILD OF JOACHIM AND ANNE.

13. But this opinion has not the semblance of truth nor does it rest on even a probable basis. For, first, as I have shown from the ancient tradition of the Fathers, Anne was sterile up to the time of her old age. Only then by a divine gift did she conceive the Virgin. Who, therefore, can believe that after the birth of the Virgin and Joachim's death she went on to a second and third marriage? Second, I have already shown from the Gospels that apart from the Blessed Virgin and Mary Magdalen there is mention of only one other Mary. Therefore, there is no basis for introducing two others.

And while one could, perhaps, by a different explanation admit two other Marys, that is, by distinguishing, as does Gregory of Nyssa[64] whom others follow, Mary of James from Mary of Cleophas, still what in this opinion is said about Mary of Salome is completely impossible and ill considered. For in the Gospels this woman is never called Mary but simply "Salome" as is clear from Mark (15:40). Nor is this a man's but a woman's name as Jerome correctly points out and the writings of Josephus, Hegesippus, and the other historians make clear. For as "Joanna" is derived from John, so is "Salome" from Solomon; and it is likely, as Origen[65] observes, that Salome was the mother of the sons of Zebedee. For Matthew (27:56) and Mark (15:40) seem to mention the same three women; the one calls the third woman "the mother of the sons of Zebedee"; the other calls her "Salome". But that this woman was the daughter of Blessed Anne and that the sons of Zebedee were Christ's cousins is a pure fabrication without proof from Scripture or any early history.

Third, it was fitting that the Blessed Virgin be the only child of her mother so that it would be more clearly

[83] Isidore of Seville, De ortu et obitu Patrum.
[64] Gregory of Nyssa, Oratio 2 de Resurrectione.
[65] Origen, In Matthaeum, Tract. 35, sub fine.

evident that she had been miraculously conceived in the old age of a sterile woman. Moreover, so we see was the case of the more famous persons conceived in this way as Isaac, John the Baptist, and others.

Fourth, neither Jerome nor any of the early Fathers teaches the story of the three Marys, the three daughters of Anne. For Jerome and the other early Fathers cited above say that only Mary of Cleophas was the sister of the Virgin, as does the Gospel. Neither do they mention another sister, nor does the Gospel. How she was a sister they do not explain. She need not, however, be a natural sister in the first degree. For just as I have explained abcve that men who are cousins or blood relatives are called "brothers* in Scripture, so also women are called "sisters* because of kinship in some degree. Moreover, I would add that even though we should admit Anne had another daughter besides the Virgin, it would be more fitting to maintain that she was the daughter of Joachim, rather than fabricate the story of Anne's second and third marriage, so inconsistent with her dignity, temperance, and the love she must have had for the Blessed Virgin.

However, neither would I consider true the possibility that Joachim had another daughter. For almost all the early Fathers in their explanations of the first chapter of Matthew and Christ's genealogy either teach or presume that the Blessed Virgin was the only daughter and heir of her father, Joachim; and this is befitting her dignity. Finally, if a table of ages and dates were carefully worked out, one could easily see that Simon, one of the brothers of the Lord, who later succeeded James as Bishop of Jerusalem and who according to Eusebius[88] was finally martyred in the tenth year of Trajan's reign, at the age of one hundred and twenty. . .this Simon, I say, clearly would have been quite a few years older than Christ—a fact in open contradiction to the preceding opinion; [namely, that he was the son of the Blessed Virgin's sister.] For since the Blessed Virgin conceived as soon as she was old enough to conceive, if Simon were the son of the younger sister of the Virgin he would necessarily have been conceived after

[88]Eusebius of Caesarea, Historia ecclesiastica, m, 10 & 26.

Christ. Almost the same argument can be used in regard to James who died in the seventh year of Nero's reign, sixty-three years after the birth of Christ, if what Epiphanius[67] says is true; namely, that he was crowned with martyrdom in his ninety-sixth year. And by almost the same argument one can reach the conclusion that John the Evangelist was not the son of the third sister of the Virgin. For he should have been born several years after Christ; but it is clear that he died in the beginning of the reign of Trajan, one hundred years after the birth of Christ, when he was already in his ninety-ninth year. Consequently, with good reason does Thomas[68] reject this account of the three daughters of Anne. Euthymius[69], Theophylus[70], Jansens[71], Canisius[72], and Cano[73] take the same position.

WHOM DOES THE GOSPEL CALL "BROTHERS OF CHRIST" AND IN WHAT SENSE.

14. Fourth, we do not know how closely those called "brothers of Christ" were related to Him nor even whether they were real relatives by blood or only so considered. If we are to rely upon human history, the only conclusion we can arrive at is that these men were thought to be cousins of Christ on the side of Joseph, His putative father. This is explained as follows.

According to Eusebius[74] and Hegesippus, as I recounted above, Cleophas was the brother of Joseph, the spouse of the Virgin; and Simon, the brother of the Lord, was the son of Cleophas, as I proved from the same authors. Mary, the mother of James and Joseph, is identical with the so-called Mary of Cleophas; for she was his wife. Therefore, as Joseph was thought to be the father of Christ, in the same way Cleophas could be considered Christ's paternal uncle

67Epiphanius, Haereses, 78.
68Aquinas, In ad Galatas, 1, lect. 5.
69Euthymius Zigabenus, In Joannem, 9.
70Theophylus, In Joannem, 9.
71Cornelius Jansens, Concordia, 143.
72Canisius, De Beata Maria, I, 4, circa finem.
73Melchior Cano, De locis theologicis, XI, 5, ad 2.
74Eusebius of Caesarea, Historia ecclesiastica, HI, 11.

and his children Christ's cousins. Consequently, for this reason these cousins could be called "brothers of Christ." This opinion and explanation is drawn from many of the authors already cited and from Chrysostom[75] who says that James the brother of the Lord was called "brother of the Lord" as Joseph was called His father. However, I wonder why Chrysostom in this passage numbers John among the "brothers of the Lord" since in the Gospel he is never given this name. Augustine[78] too approves this explanation. This also helps us to understand why Mary of James was called the "sister" of the Virgin. For, undoubtedly, both women were the wives of two brothers. Therefore, they were called each others' "sisters".

DIFFICULTY.

15. On the topic under discussion only one difficulty remains and I must not omit it here. In the Gospel James the Less, the brother of the Lord, is called "James of Alphaeus." For this reason I maintained above that he was Alphaeus' son. Therefore, how can I now say that he was the son of Cleophas? At this point the knotty problem forces itself upon us: Was James of Alphaeus the same person as James the brother of the Lord, called the "Just", and constituted by the Apostles the first Bishop of Jerusalem. It is the opinion of very prominent authors that these were distinct men and that, therefore, there were not just two but three men called by the name of James, two from among the twelve Apostles; James of Alphaeus and James of Zebedee, and a third surnamed "the Just and brother of the Lord."

This opinion is drawn from Clement of Rome's[77] Recognitions in which he often seems to distinguish James the brother of the Lord from the two Apostles called James. But since these books are considered apocryphal, the opinion finds more clear and probable foundation in the

75Chrysostom, In Actu Apostolorum, 1; In Matthaeum, Hom. 5.

78Augustine, Questiones 17 in evangelium secundum Matthaeum, q. 17.

77Clement of Rome, Recognitiones.

authority of Clement himself who seems to include James among the seventy-two disciples by the words: "We who were made worthy to be witnesses of His coming with James the brother of the Lord, and the other seventy-two and the seven deacons."[78]

But this last quoted citation also can be explained. For more clearly in Book Six does Clement list individually the twelve Apostles and among them James of Zebedee and James of Alphaeus; and thereafter he adds "James the brother of the Lord and Paul."[79] The very same thing is expressed in the Mass-formula employed by the Ethiopians in one of the prayers of intercession through the Apostles and other saints. Epiphanius[80], Dorotheus[81], and Nicephorus[82] held this opinion. Cyril of Jerusalem[83] implies it; and Jerome[84] holds it. Indeed, all seem to incline to it who maintain as Chrysostom, Theodore, Theophylus, and the others cited above that James the Less was the son of Alphaeus, but James the brother of the Lord, the son of either Joseph or Cleophas. Pope Anacletus[85]*also favors this opinion in the passage where he says that James the brother of the Lord was ordained the first Bishop of Jerusalem by the Apostles Peter, John, and James. Anacletus, therefore, indicates that James was not one of the Apostles; for below he adds that all the Apostles had received equal power from Christ. Thus, the common opinion is that all were immediately ordained bishops by Christ or the Holy Spirit. Therefore, James who was ordained by the Apostles was not of the number of the Apostles.

Moreover, the Decree for the Bulgars of Pope Nicholas I[88] favors this opinion when it says that those Churches

78Clement of Rome, Constitutiones Apostolicae, II, 59.
79Ibid.,VI, 12 & 14.
"Epiphanius, Haereses, 76.
81Dorotheus, Synopsis.
82Nicephorus the Confessor, Breviarium historicum, II, 44.
"Cyril of Jerusalem, Catacheses, 14.
"Jerome, In Isaiam, 17; ha ad Galatas, 1.
85Pope Anacletus, Epistola decretalis, 2.
"Pope Nicholas I, Epistola ad rescripta Bulgarorum, 92 (quoted by Francisco Torres in a scholion on Clement, VI, 10, p. 81).

should be considered as Patriarchal in which it is clear the Apostles had their Sees; namely, "Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch*. Further on the Decree adds, "The Church of Jerusalem is also to be held in honor.* Therefore, the Pope believed that the James who had his See there, had not been an Apostle. Finally, it would seem that this position can be inferred from I Corinthians (15:5-8) where Paul speaking of Christ after the Resurrection says: "And that he was seen by Cephas, and after that by the eleven. Then was he seen by more than five hundred brethren at once.... After that, he was seen by James, then by all the apostles. And last of all, he was seen also by me, as by one born out of due time.* These words seem to mark off James from the Apostles. If this view is correct, the difficulty referred to is easily solved. For since these were different persons, although called by the same name, there is nothing surprising in their having different fathers, namely, Alphaeus and Cleophas.

REPLY TO THE ARGUMENTS OF THE OPPOSITE OPINION.

16. The other opinion is that there were only two disciples and Apostles of the Lord called James; and, therefore, James the Less and James of Alphaeus, surnamed "the Just and the brother of the Lord,* Apostle and first Bishop of Jerusalem, were one and the same person. Without doubt, this view is more correct and better established, as Jerome[87] proves at length. Eusebius[88] holds this position along with Clement of Alexandria[89] and Isidore[90]. Chrysostom agrees and says that James the brother of the Lord was an Apostle[91], that James of Alphaeus was stoned by the Jews[92], and that James of Alphaeus and Jude Thaddaeus were brothers.[93]

[87] Jerome, Adversus Helvidium.
[88] Eusebius of Caesarea, Historia ecclesiastica, II, 1.
[89] Clement of Alexandria, Stromata, VI.
[90] Isidore of Seville, De ortu et obitu Patrum.
[91] Chrysostom, In Joannem, Hom. 47.
[92] Chrysostom, In Matthaeum, Hom. 42.
[93] Ibid., Hom. 33.

Moreover, this opinion can be inferred first of all from Paul in Galatians (1:19) where he calls James the brother of the Lord an Apostle: "But other of the apostles I saw none, saving James the brother of the Lord" since in Scripture no one is called an Apostle except the Twelve and Paul. Moreover, in Galatians (2:9) Paul calls this James a pillar of the Church along with Peter and John thereby indicating that he was of the same dignity and authority. Consequently, in the Council of the Apostles (Acts 15:13) James pronounces sentence with Apostolic authority.

Moreover, our Canonical Epistle written by James was without doubt written by James the Bishop of Jerusalem. This is the common opinion of everyone as is clear from Jerome[94] and Eusebius.[95] For it was written from Jerusalem to the dispersed Jews; nevertheless, in its title and in the Council of Trent[96] James the Apostle is stated as the author—a fact further confirmed by Jerome[97] and Epiphanius[98].

Third, especially pressing is the authority of the Church. She celebrates only one feast of James the Less and says that he was James of Alphaeus, an Apostle, the brother of the Lord, and killed by the Jews with a fuller's mallet.

Fourth, there is Jerome's argument that the Gospel calls them "James the Less" and "James the Great" so they can be distinguished and recognized. But this relationship is between two only. If there were more, they would not be sufficiently differentiated by this means. Finally, history tells us in what provinces the other Apostles preached, where they died and were crowned with martyrdom; but of James of Alphaeus we read nothing at all. (For Nicephorus' remarks[99] are baseless and lack authority.) This omission indicates that it was to this James that the Jerusalem Church was entrusted and that he remained there until martyrdom. This James, therefore, is identical

"Jerome, De viris illustribus, "Jacobus.*
95Eusebius of Caesarea, Historia ecclesiastica, II, 22.
"Council of Trent, Session 4.
97Jerome, Dialogus contra Pelagianos, II.
"Epiphanius, Epistola ad Joannem Hierosolymitanum.
"Nicephorus the Confessor, Breviarium historicum, II, 40.

with the brother of the Lord, a fact that can be clearly inferred from the account of Hegesippus quoted by Nicephorus.[100]

These arguments if correctly weighed are of greater weight than those proposed for the opposite opinion. For the passage from Paul (I Corinthians 15:5-8) does not affect the case at all. For after the Resurrection Christ could appear now to James alone and now to all the Apostles together. And this is what Paul recounts. Consequently, from Paul one cannot infer that James was not an Apostle. So too Paul says that Christ appeared to Peter by himself and he later says that He appeared to the Apostles. Cyril of Jerusalem, already cited on this passage, speaks in the same way. Jerome, indeed, corrects his own opinion. The passage from Clement of Rome is, perhaps, corrupt; for those books are not considered complete and incorrupt in all particulars. And the other Greek writers cited on this passage do not carry much weight in historical matters. Anacletus' remark about James' ordination should be understood to refer not to consecration or the power of Orders, but to the special appointment and assignment whereby the Church of Jerusalem was entrusted to the special care of the Apostle James so that he became its proper and special Bishop. According to Chrysostom[101] he did not receive this office immediately from Christ but from Peter. Finally, the passage from Nicholas I tells rather in favor of our position; for he grants that the Church of Jerusalem was a patriarchal See, although he ranks the Church of Antioch higher because of Peter's authority.

REPLY.

17. With the foregoing opinion established, the proposed difficulty can, in consequence, be answered in several ways. First of all Jerome followed by Bede maintains that it is probable that Mary the mother of James was not called "Mary of Cleophas" because she was his wife, but was called so because of her father or family. This is not a very

[100]Ibid., II, 22*Γ*
[101]Chrysostom, In Joannem, Hom. 87.

pleasing solution; for it has no historical basis and is, moreover, inconsistent with the passages cited from Hegesippus and Eusebius. Others, as Caesar Baronius, maintain that the four brothers of the Lord listed in the Gospel were not of one single family but that James and Joseph were brothers, the sons of Alphaeus and Mary, whereas Simon and Jude were the sons of the other Mary and Cleophas. But this solution is also displeasing both because it is unfounded and employs without reason the distinction of the two Marys, and because Jude, the brother of the Lord, is considered to be the same person as Jude the Apostle, the author of the canonical Epistle, who calls himself the "brother of James." Thus in Luke (6:16) Jude the Apostle is called "Jude of James."

It would seem that the difficulty can be answered in either one of two ways. First, we could say that Alphaeus and Cleophas were one and the same person under two different names, such as frequently occurs in Scripture, or that doubtless his proper name was Alphaeus and his surname Cleophas after his "clan or family," as Jerome says. This too seems to be what Chrysostom[102], Theodore[103], and Theophylus[104] imply when they say that James was the son of Cleophas and in the Gospel is called James of Cleophas. For although as far as the actual words go, he is never called by this name; he is practically so addressed when he is called "James of Alphaeus."

The second way out of the difficulty is that this Mary first wed Alphaeus and by him bore James and Joseph, but that later, when Alphaeus died, she married Cleophas and by him had Simon .and Jude. Thus it happened that all were spoken of as the sons of Cleophas and consequently brothers of the Lord even though James was really the natural son of Alphaeus. This way of explaining the problem pleases Thomas.[105] It is probable, although not certain.

[102]Chrysostom, In ad Galatas, 1.
[103]Theodore of Cyrus, In ad Galatas, 1.
[104]Theophylus, In ad Galatas, 1.
[105]Aquinas, hi ad Galatas, 1, lect. 5.

But whatever is said on this point does not affect that upon which I have chiefly been intent. For regardless of what opinion is held on this question, it must be maintained that these brothers of the Lord were sons neither of Mary nor of Joseph but only real or putative kinsmen of Christ.

DISPUTATION VI

THE VIRGINITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN IN SO FAR AS IT CONCERNS VIRTUE OF SOUL

Although that aspect of virginity which is, as it were, its material element pertains to the body, nevertheless its form, or perfection, as Thomas teaches[1], resides in the soul and consists in the will to preserve integrity and chastity. And although it is true that virginity itself is not lost by the internal resolve of intercourse or of experiencing the sexual pleasure consequent upon sexual activity but only when that intention issues in an external act of this nature, nevertheless, by such an intention there is lost much of the perfection and integrity of the virtue of virginity which resides in the soul. Therefore, to the perfection of this virtue pertains a certain perpetual element and, as it were, steadfastness in the will to preserve virginity. Consequently, it remains to inquire whether as in body so also in soul the Mother of God possessed the highest and most complete perfection of virginity.

[1]Aquinas, Summa Theologica, II-II, q. 152.

SECTION I

WHETHER THE BLESSED VIRGIN ALWAYS HAD THE RESOLVE OF PRESERVING VIRGINITY

1. I presuppose that there is no question of an intended illicit act contrary to chastity; for Faith which teaches that the Virgin was without sin most clearly teaches that she never violated or diminished the virginity of her soul by a resolve or desire of this kind. There is, therefore, question of a morally good and permissible act of the will such as a maiden's will to contract and consummate marriage. For the heretics of our day say that before the conception of her Son the Blessed Virgin intended to consummate marriage and for this reason had contracted it, although afterwards acting on a revelation from God she changed her mind. Their basic position is that such a resolve of never having intercourse would be, apart from a divine dispensation, against the law of nature: "Increase and multiply' (Genesis 1:28). But this starting point is heretical, contrary to the perfection and the counsel of virginity taught by Paul (I Corinthians 7), and against the natural law. For that law obliges no one to contract marriage except in the extremities of the common need. Apart from this necessity it is, speaking absolutely, a matter of counsel to prefer chastity to marriage.

2. Consequently, apart from heresy, there can seem to be other grounds for doubt. For, first of all, since the Blessed Virgin had the intention of contracting marriage and therefore of giving to another dominion over her body, she necessarily also had as a consequence the intention of rendering the marriage debt to her spouse when he requested it. For according to the law of justice the one necessarily follows upon the other.

Second, the Virgin's intention should always have been directed not only to the merely licit, but also to the better

good since always whatever she perceived was more pleasing to God she made the object of her desires and resolves. But in that dispensation, the intention to remain a virgin was not better. For according to Thomas[1], under the Old Law marriage was better than virginity. This seems especially true in the case of those women who were of the tribe of Juda because of the hope for a Messiah. Augustine[2] says that in those early times holy men were under obligation to use marriage to propagate the people of God from whom Christ was to be born. He repeats the argument[3] when discussing the words of Deuteronomy (25): "Cursed be him who has not raised up seed in Israel"—words, however, which are not in the Vulgate edition. Thus, it seems that such a resolve would not have been licit, since the women of that time had a special precept to devote themselves to childbearing as is clear from Exodus (23:26): "There shall not be one fruitless nor barren in thy land," and Deuteronomy (7:14) "No one shall be barren among you of either sex..."

THE VIRGIN ALWAYS HAD THE INTENTION OF PRESERVING VIRGINITY.

3. I maintain, nevertheless/that the Blessed Virgin from the time she attained the use of reason had the firm and unconditional resolve to preserve perpetual virginity^ Thomas[4] implies this conclusion when he says that the Blessed Virgin "always had virginity in desire." He is not speaking of the imperfect desire, usually called "velleity"; for this act is not sufficient for perfect virginity since of itself it does not exclude the opposite act of the will; nor is there any reason why the act should be imputed to the Blessed Virgin with this imperfection. Therefore, the subject of discussion is a deliberate act of the will and efficacious love of chastity on the part of the Virgin. This is the opinion taught by the Master of the Sentences[5],

[1]Aquinas, Summa Theologica, III, q. 28, a.4.
[2]Augustine, De bono conjugali, 9.
[3]Augustine, Contra Faustum Manichaeum, XIV, 13.
[4]Aquinas, Summa Theologica, III, q. 28, a.4.
[5]Peter Lombard, Libri Sententiarum, IV, d. 30.

Bonaventure", Scotus[7], the Collectorium of Gabriel Biel[8],* Richard of St. Victor**, John Mayor[10],* Durandus[11], Soto[12], Alfonso Tostado[13], Henry of Ghent[14], Albert the Great[15], and Hugh of St. Victor[16]. In the following section I shall prove this from Scripture and the Fathers; now I employ reason alone.

First, the most perfect degree of the virtue of chastity and virginity should be attributed to the Blessed Virgin. For this becomes the Mother of God as the universal Church and her holy Doctors perceive; especially, since next to Christ she was to be the most perfect exemplar of both exterior and interior chastity, as Ambrose[17] beautifully explains. But the resolve of preserving perpetual virginity pertains to such perfection. Therefore.

Second, from childhood the Blessed Virgin was moved, as we have seen, by the Holy Spirit to love that which was better and more pleasing to God and as far as she was able to accomplish it. But according to the testimony of SL Paul (I Corinthians 7) virginity is, absolutely speaking, better and more pleasing to God. Paul cites reasons which most aptly apply to the Blessed Virgin; namely, that a virgin always thinks on the things of the Lord, that she is body and soul completely dedicated to God, and does not have a divided heart, etc. Therefore, we must believe that under this influence of the Holy Spirit the Virgin loved this state and resolved to embrace it.

"Bonaventure, In IV Sententiarum, d. 30, a. 2, q. 2.
[7]Scotus, In IV Sententiarum, d. 30, q. 2, a. 2.
"Gabriel Biel, Collectorium in IV Sententiarum, d. 30, q. 1, a. 2, post 6 conclus.
•Richard of Saint Victor, In IV Sententiarum, d. 30, a. 2, q. 1.
[10]John Mayor, In IV Sententiarum, d. 30, q. 4.
[u]Durandus, In IV Sententiarum, d. 30, q. 2.
^Dominic Soto, In IV Sententiarum, d. 30, q. 2, a. 2, ad 1.
[ls]Alfonso Tostado, In Matthaeum, 1, q. 30.
"Henry of Ghent, Quodlibetales, IX, q. 11.
[13]Albert the Great, De Beata Maria.
"Hugh of Saint Victor, De perpetua virginitate Mariae, 1.
[17]Ambrose, De Virginibus, II.

OBJECTION.

4. One will object that perhaps at that time it was not better to preserve virginity; for, although in itself virginity is better, nevertheless, at that time it was forbidden.

REPLY.

5. For this reason some think that before she learned by a special revelation that it was pleasing to God that she preserve perpetual virginity, the Blessed Virgin never conceived an absolute resolve to abstain from the acts of marriage but had only a conditional desire to preserve virginity if she knew it were pleasing to God. And this they think was Thomas'[18] opinion. But if you should ask when the Blessed Virgin began to realize that her virginity pleased God, they are not able to give any certain or well-founded answer. Therefore, even were I to admit that the Virgin was not able to have this absolute resolve without a divine revelation by which she perceived either that God had dispensed her from the obligation of the law which then obliged all to procreate children or that for other reasons this law did not bind her, still, one would be obliged to maintain that the Blessed Virgin had this revelation from the beginning, from the moment she was able to consider maturely chastity and her state in life.

For it is certain that she had made this absolute resolve of virginity before the message of the angel. This is indicated by the words "How shall this be done, because I know not man?* (Luke 1:34), words which we shall consider later on. Logically, therefore, one must admit that she received that revelation before the announcement of the angel, if the revelation was needed for her to make her resolve licitly. Consequently, since there is no more reason for favoring one time rather than another, it is also more logical to say that she had this revelation from the beginning rather than from any later moment since this regards the Virgin's greater perfection and there is no reason to doubt such an occurrence. This conclusion is not without confirmation. For otherwise, if there had

"Aquinas, Summa Theologica, m, q. 28, a. 4.

been a law obliging procreation, and the Virgin for some time thought she was obliged by that law, she ought to have had the intention of observing that law as she did others; and thus during that period she would have had the intention of generating children rather than of preserving virginity. Consequently, one could say that given this will and intention she contracted marriage and remained in that attitude until she afterwards perceived the will of God. All of these considerations greatly detract from the perfection of her virginity.

IN THE OLD LAW THERE WAS NO PRECEPT FORBIDDING CHASTITY.

6. However, I further maintain that in the Old Law there was no precept obliging each and all to beget children or forbidding chastity. This truth can clearly be gathered from Jerome[19] and the other Fathers whom I shall quote shortly. It is taught by Alfonso Tostado,[20] Soto, and Medina. It is proved first of all, by the fact that either this was a natural precept — but this is not true, since at that time the human race was already sufficiently propagated; and even though many might observe virginity, others could sufficiently conserve and increase the people of God and the human race—or it was a positive divine precept proper to the Law--but this is not true, since no such precept is found in the whole Law. For the testimony of Exodus (23:26) and Deuteronomy (7:14) do not contain a precept but a promise. For as God promised to that carnal people rain in season and the fruits of the earth if they kept the Law, so did He promise the procreation of their children. Thus Deuteronomy (7:14) after the words: "No one shall be barren among you of either sex..." adds "neither of men nor cattle." However, a precept could not be imposed upon beasts. Moreover, all the words in this passage and even in the section which precedes it, contain temporal promises.

Finally, one might make this observation on the passage: that it is one thing not to be sterile; not to refrain from wedlock is something else. The latter can be subject

[19]Jerome, Contra Jovinianum, L
[20]Alfonso Tostado, In Leviticum, c. 30, q. 32.

matter for a precept since it is within the power of man; the former cannot be commanded since it is not within the power of man's will but is either a natural or a special gift of God. Thus in Exodus (23:26) after the words: "There shall not be one fruitless nor barren in thy land," God adds: "I will fill the number of thy days" so that we might understand that both were promises of a divine gift. So, too, for just the opposite reason God also threatened sterility to those who transgressed the Law. Hence the saying in the Old Law which the Fathers sometimes quote: "Cursed is the sterile man who does not make seed in Israel"—as can be read in Jerome[21] and Augustine[22]. This must be understood in the way in which sterility is opposed to fertility; namely as a punishment, or in the sense of Deuteronomy (25:5-10) that a brother unwilling to marry the wife of his dead brother to raise up his seed was branded with a certain infamy. Therefore, there is no basis for asserting a precept of this kind.

This is confirmed by the fact that in Isaias (56:4-5)God promises to the "eunuchs", that is to the virgins and those observing chastity who at the same time keep the other divine commands, "an everlasting name and a better place in his house." This is the explanation of Augustine[23], Jerome[24], and Cyril of Alexandria[25]. Therefore, virginity is not against the will or command of God. Moreover, according to Bernard[26] the passage indicates that sterility was no dishonor before God, although among the people of that race it was considered somewhat disgraceful. Nor did Thomas[27] plainly teach that this precept existed in the Old Law, although in his reply to the first difficulty he does have the words: "It seemed to be forbidden by law not to take care to leave seed upon the earth." In these

[21]Jerome, In Isaiam, 56.
[22]Augustine, Contra Faustum Manichaeum, XIV, 13.
[23]Augustine, In Isaiam, 56.
[24]Jerome, In Isaiam, 56.
"Cyril of Alexandria, In Isaiam, V.
"Bernard, In "missus est", Hom. 3.
^Aquinas, Summa Theologica, III, q. 28, a. 4.

words he makes no unqualified assertion; but says that it could have appeared so since such a precept is in a way hinted at and seems consonant with the state of the Law and its promises. Consequently, although in The Sentences[28] Thomas speaks in almost the same way as he does here,[29] nevertheless, in another passage in The Sentences[30] he plainly teaches that after the sufficient propagation of mankind and the race which worshipped God, one would not sin who under the Mosaic Law preserved virginity since such a person would not be going against but beyond the precept

THOSE IN THE OLD LAW WHO WERE ZEALOUS FOR VIRGINITY.

7. From the foregoing I infer that it was not only licit for the Blessed Virgin apart from a special revelation to have the firm and absolute intention of preserving virginity but that this was the better and more advisable thing. This is proved by the fact that although in the state of integrity the state of continence would not have been better (for at that time what I might call the animal actions and the burdens of marriage and children would have been no hindrance at all to spiritual perfection—as Thomas thinks[31]); nevertheless, in the state of fallen human nature virginity is of its very nature superior and more desirable as a moral good. For it more powerfully draws man away from sensible love and pleasure and earthly cares and worries. Therefore, since there was no special prohibition against virginity in the Old Law, virginity was of its very nature the better and more advisable thing, especially after the chosen people had been sufficiently propagated. Consequently, even for the Blessed Virgin this was the better and more perfect thing. For it makes no difference that she was, as it were, in the state of integrity and therefore could give herself without any spiritual hindrance to the acts of carnal generation. This, I say, would not keep the preservation of virginity from being for her the better

[28] Aquinas, In IV Sententiarum, d. 30, q. 2, a. 1, ad 1.
[29] Aquinas, Summa Theologica, III, q. 28, a. 4.
[30] Aquinas, In IV Sententiarum, d. 32, a. 2, ad 2.
[31] Aquinas, Summa Theologica, I, q. 98, a. 2, ad 3.

thing, since virginity is of itself, and by reason of its object, better although perhaps not necessary for the Virgin because of her special gifts of grace.

Similarly, the Blessed Virgin had no need to afflict and mortify her flesh in order to observe chastity; and yet it is certain that she employed corporal afflictions as something in themselves better, other things being equal, and more consonant with the state of fallen nature. Moreover, she did this because although she lacked the spark of concupiscence, she had a corruptible body capable of being weighed down and burdened by bodily labors and cares. On this account the state of virginity was better for her, even for her spiritual perfection. Finally, although she enjoyed a special privilege, nevertheless, she perhaps did not always realize the fact, and therefore forever resolved upon what is of itself better for weak and fallen man. Most of all for the sake of others it behooved her to settle upon that type of life which in itself would be more excellent- just as we have seen in the case of Christ Our Lord Who was even freer from all concupiscence.

The truth of our position is confirmed by the fact that many holy men in the Old Law observed virginity as something more excellent. Ignatius of Antioch[32] certifies this of Jeremia, Elias, and others. Ambrose[33] also mentions Elias; and John Damascene[34]*adds the three young men to this number, in a passage wherein he fitly remarks of Daniel's body that it was so "hardened by virginity that the teeth of the beasts were unable to fasten upon it." Jerome too makes this observation[38] and classes Daniel among the virgins.[38] Moreover, it is clear that John the Baptist observed virginity; and yet he was considered by the Jews a man of outstanding holiness and perfection. Epiphanius[37] makes the same observation about James the brother of

[32]Ignatius of Antioch, Epistola ad Philippenses.
[33]Ambrose, De virginibus, I, in principio.
[34]John Damascene, De fide orthodoxa, IV, 25.
"Jerome, Contra Jovinianum, L
"Jerome, In Jeremiam, Prologus.
^Epiphanius, Haereses, 30.

the Lord and says at that time "even the Jews esteemed virginity." Moreover, we know from Josephus[38]: that among the Jews the Essenes had a great reputation for sanctity and among other reasons, because they observed perpetual chastity.

Augustine never denied the liceityof virginity in the Old Law but says that in those early ages of the human race it behooved "holy men to make use of the rights of marriage at least to the extent that was requisite in order to propagate the people of God from whom the Savior would be born."[39] Never, however, did he say that it would not have been more advisable for many to observe virginity especially at that period when the Old Law had already been of long standing and the people of God had been sufficiently propagated. He indicates[40] that a brother was obliged at that time to raise up seed for his dead brother. However, it is not necessary to understand this as a precept properly speaking since there was none in the Law. Nor was it so to be understood as to forbid abstention from marriage. But if a brother did desire to marry, perhaps it would be more advisable for him to take the wife of his brother.

Therefore, there could have been absolutely no obstacle to prevent the Blessed Virgin from always having loved and resolved upon the preservation of virginity more efficaciously than any other save Christ alone.

OBJECTION—REPLY.

8. But someone finally will say that the Virgin could fear that her virginity would prevent the coming of the Messias if perhaps His Mother was supposed to have been born of her. But there is no reason why this fear should have kept her from her resolve of virginity. For she was most prudent and wise and therefore realized that it was her function to love and choose what was more perfect. Nor could the divine providence and promise thereby be obstructed since if anything else were divinely ordained,

38Josephus, Antiquitates, XΠI, 8; De bello Judaico, Π.
39Augustine, De bono conjugali, 9; Contra Faustum Manichaeum, XIV, 13.
40Augustine, De bono conjugali, 22; Contra Faustum Manichaeum, XXXH, 10.

it was easy for God to change her will and inspire another course of action. Moreover, she experienced that she was being directed by a special providence of the Holy Spirit; especially in whatever pertained to holiness and perfection. Thus, she did not doubt that the love of virginity with which she was on fire was from the Holy Spirit; and if anything else were to be more pleasing to God, she trusted that she would be taught and governed by Him just as she had experienced during the whole span of her life. Finally, since she was versed in the Scriptures, she well knew that Christ would be bom of a virgin. Therefore, she could just as well fear that by losing her virginity she would hinder the coming of Christ. Since she was humble and prudent, she did not pay attention to any of these things but was intent on the greater perfection which is found in virginity. As a result, nothing can be found or imagined to keep her back from the resolve of virginity.

9. These remarks have sufficiently disposed of the second source of doubt proposed at the beginning of this section. The first difficulty will more conveniently be answered in the following section. Here I maintain only that the resolve to consummate marriage is not of the essence of marriage as Augustine[41] and the chapter in Gratian[42] point out. How the lack of this intention is not against justice, will be shown in a section and disputation further on.

SECTION II

WHETHER THE BLESSED VIRGIN CONFIRMED BY VOW HER RESOLVE TO PRESERVE VIRGINITY AND WHEN SHE DID SO

1. Heretics who deny the resolve, reject even more strenuously any vow; but there is no reason why we should dispute with them any further. Of Catholics who deny the

[41]Augustine, De bono conjugali, 25.
[42]Gratian, Decreta, II, C. 27, q. 2, c. 2, "Sufficiat.*

vow, the denial is usually ascribed to Master Martin.[1] But in the passage cited he says only that Mary decided either by vow or by simple decision of mind that she would observe perpetual virginity. Although in this passage he does not decide on one alternative, at least he does not reject either. Moreover, in his following pages he speaks with such devotion and learning about Mary's virginity that he seems rather to affirm the vow. Therefore, there is no dispute among Catholics whether or not Mary vowed virginity. That, we can take for granted here, because it will immediately be proved in the discussion about the time at which she took this vow. Hence the whole dispute turns upon the time when she took it.

2. The first opinion is that she pronounced the vow together with Joseph after having contracted marriage with him, and not before. This was the opinion of Soto.[2] Durandus[3] leaves the matter doubtful. Alfonso Tostado[4] is also cited. The basis of this opinion is that such a vow pronounced before marriage would at least prevent the marriage from being contracted licitly since "for those vowing virginity not only marriage but even the wish to marry is worthy of condemnation."[5] Thus Jerome[6] speaking of Tiberianus reprehends him because "like a dog going back to its vomit he gave in marriage his daughter, a virgin vowed to Christ." Confirmation can be drawn from the fact that at that time her vow did not concern a greater good. But this confirmation is without force as will be evident from what was said in the preceeding section.

3. The second opinion distinguishes between an unconditional and a conditional vow and affirms that before the marriage contract, indeed even from the time she attained the use of reason the Blessed Virgin pronounced the vow

[1]Master Martin, De Temperantia, q. 5, de virginitate.
[2]Dominic Soto, In IV Sententiarum, d. 30, q. 2, a. 2, ad 2.
[3]Durandus, In IV Sententiarum, d. 30, q. 2.
[4]Alfonso Tostado, In Matthaeum, 1, q. 30.
[5]Gratian, Decreta, II, C. 27, q. 1.
[6]Jerome, De viris illustribus, "Tiberianus".

of virginity with the proviso that God did not decree otherwise for her. But her unconditional vow she made only after her espousal to Joseph. This is the opinion held by Thomas both here[7] and in his Commentary on the Sentences.[8] It is followed by Capreolus[9], Peter Paludanus,[10] Richard of St. Victor,[11] and John Mayor.[12] Soto professes to hold the same position but by his explanation practically subverts it and changes its meaning entirely by understanding a conditional vow as the desire to make a vow. However, not a few other writers take the opposite extreme and so explain the vow as practically to admit that it was unconditional from the beginning. The view of Augustine expressed in the chapter "Beata Maria..."[13] is cited no less for one side of the question than for the other. But that chapter is not to be found in the works of Augustine, and it speaks so vaguely as to fit any opinion.

THE NUMBER AND KINDS OF CONDITIONAL VOWS.

4. In explaining both the opinion of Thomas and the problem itself attention should be paid to the fact that one can understand in two different ways a vow with the condition "if it shall please God." First, it can be understood as a condition which suspends the obligation of the vow until the condition is fulfilled: that is, that the Blessed Virgin vowed to preserve virginity as soon as God would reveal to her that this was His good pleasure. Such seems to have been Soto's understanding of this condition since such a vow differs little from the desire of a vow. And although such a vow truly adds something, nevertheless, in itself it is not a prudent thing so to take a vow as to

[7]Aquinas, Summa Theologica, EII, q. 28, a. 4.
[8]Aquinas, In IV Sententiarum, d. 30, q. 2, ad 1.
[9]Capreolus, In IV Sententiarum, d. 30, q. 1.
[10]Peter Paludanus, In IV Sententiarum, d. 30, q. 2.
[11]Richard of Saint Victor, In IV Sententiarum, d. 30, a. 1, q. 2.
[12]John Mayor, In IV Sententiarum, d. 30, q. 4.
[13]cf. Gratian, Decreta, II, C. 27, q. 2, c. 3, "Beata Maria."

make it depend upon a condition and, as it were, expect a future revelation from God. Therefore, it is not likely that this was what Thomas meant; nor can we prudently attribute such a proviso to the Virgin. For truly, such a manner of taking a vow seems to be a way of tempting God and of searching too inquisitively into His will. Especially would this be true if the subject matter of such a vow were at the time forbidden. For it would be as if someone should now vow to commit suicide if God would reveal that this pleased Him. But if, perhaps, it be maintained that the Blessed Virgin took a vow in that way at the special instigation or revelation of the Holy Spirit and because from great familiarity with God she was accustomed to these divine revelations and felt that she was in a unique manner ruled by God in almost all particulars--if this, I say, should be maintained, it would be without any solid reason and but sheer speculation. It would be more appropriate to say that from the very beginning the Blessed Virgin learned from the same Holy Spirit that her virginity pleased Him and, therefore, at once consecrated it by vow.

A condition can be understood in a second way, which does not suspend the obligations of a vow, but which, as it were, limits the vow "until it is clear that God wants something else." The sense of such a condition would be: I vow and oblige myself to preserve virginity so long as God does not reveal to me that something else pleases Him. This way of making a vow is in itself a good one; and if the condition be explicitly stated, it indicates a soul perfectly submissive to God. Moreover, on this count such a condition, according to the teaching of Peter Paludanus, perhaps adds some perfection; namely, a special act of obedience. However, even if this condition were not added, by its very nature it is implicitly included in every vow. Consequently, such a conditional vow actually differs little from an unconditional vow.

THE VIRGIN TOOK AN UNCONDITIONAL VOW OF CHASTITY BEFORE THE CONCEPTION OF HER SON-OBJECTION-REPLY.

5. Having established these premises so as to begin from what is more certain, I maintain first of all that the

Blessed Virgin took an unconditional and perfect vow of chastity before the conception of her Son. Thomas affirmed this in his reply to the first objection[14]; and other theologians mentioned in the previous section and soon to be cited again agree on the point. Moreover, it can be drawn from Gratian[15]*and from the holy Fathers whom I shall at once quote.

Firstofall, it is based on the words of the Virgin herself when she replied to the angel who announced she would conceive a son: "How shall this be done, because I know not man?" (Luke 1:34). These words do not indicate doubt, as we have discussed at length against the heretics, but clearly show that not only had the Virgin formed a resolve not to know man, but also that she was so bound or impeded that she could not licitly do so. For even though up to that time she had not known man— even supposing she had formed the resolution — yet if it were still completely within her discretion to know man licitly by her own free choice, there would have been no reason why she should so anxiously ask: "How shall this be done?" (Luke 1:34). For the angel could easily have replied to her that she was free to know man in order to conceive a son. Therefore, the meaning of these words is "I do not know man;" that is, it is not permissible for me to know him, nor is this any longer up to my will.

From such an understanding of these words Augustine[18] deduces the existence of a vow. Bernard says that by these words the Virgin disclosed "an inflexible resolve of chastity,"[17] that she was not in doubt but sought for a way which would not contradict her virginity.[18] Ambrose[19] had previously declared the same although not as straightforwardly. Similarly Anselm in his homily[20] on the Gospel text: "Jesus

[14]Aquinas, Summa Theologica, ΠI, q. 28, a. 4, ad 1.
[15]Gratian, Decreta, C. 27, q. 2, c. 2, "Sufficiat" and c. 3, "Beata Maria"
"Augustine, De sancta virginitate, 4; Sermo 24 de Nativitate.
[17]Bernard, Sermo 4 de Assumptione, circa finem.
"Bernard, In "missus est", Hom. 4.
"Ambrose, In Lucam, IL
[20]Anselm, Homilia, IX.

entered into a certain town" (Luke 10:38) while considering the words ("How shall this be done"] remarks that the Blessed Virgin was surprised because "she certainly knew that she would never know man." Here she indicates that she had a divine revelation; and in another passage he declares even more openly the presence of a vow: "the Mother of God consecrated her virginity to God."[21] Bede is of the same opinion when he says the Blessed Virgin "showed by that word the resolve in her mind, for she who was the first of all women to do so had bound herself to that great virtue,"[22] that is, to virginity. Here by the use of the words "bound herself" Bede indicates her vow. But the most clear and beautiful statement is that of Gregory of Nyssa[23] whom I shall shortly mention. Heretics despising the Fathers, dodge in various ways the force of this passage by saying that the Virgin did not ask about the manner of her conception but either doubted, or struck senseless and beside herself had not paid sufficient attention to what the angel was saying. But these impieties I have already sufficiently disproved. Moreover, the very answer of the angel makes it sufficiently plain that the Blessed Virgin in a simple prudent manner had inquired how this would come about.

Other Catholics object that the Blessed Virgin could have understood that she would conceive at once in that very moment and therefore even without a vow she could have asked "How shall this be done" (Luke 1:34). But this too is silly; for the angel announced without any qualifications, "Behold thou shalt conceive...and shalt bring forth (a son)* (Luke 1:31) and did not say, "You will conceive at once." In Scripture the begetting of children was often revealed to others, for instance to Zachary (Luke 1:13) and Abraham (Genesis 18:10); and yet none of them thought that the child would be begotten suddenly and at once and in any other than the ordinary way. Therefore, none of them inquired as did the Blessed Virgin since for them it

[21]Anselm De excellentia Virginis, 4.
[22]Bede, In Lucam, I, 1.
[23]Gregory of Nyssa, Homilia de sancta Christi Nativitate.

was permissible to generate children in the normal way. Zachary, it is true, doubted because of the impotency of his old age. Thus, between his words and the words of the Blessed Virgin and the reply of Gabriel to each of them there is a great difference as we considered above. Add to this the fact that if the Virgin had understood or even suspected from the words of the angel that she should suddenly and at once conceive, on the same principle she would have thought that in the same moment she would give birth. For the angel at the same time had said, "Behold you shall conceive...and bring forth." But this latter supposition is plainly false and absurd. Therefore, the former supposition is also a baseless fabrication.

OBJECTION-REPLY.

6. Others maintain that the Virgin could have at once understood that it was the conception of the Messias which was announced to her, for the very dignity of the words of the angel sufficiently indicated this. Therefore, since she was, for the rest, very well versed in Scripture, she at once believed that she was the virgin who would conceive since she already believed from Isaias (7:14) that the Massias would be born of a virgin. This objection is truly a difficult one, for it seems to deprive her previous words of their force. For if the Virgin already grasped the mystery, there was no reason why she should have been anxious about her virginity. Therefore, she did not utter these words from anxiety about her virginity but only to inquire about the manner in which this event was to occur.

Nevertheless, the answer can be given that when the Blessed Virgin made this statement, she did not yet know that the conception of the Messias was being announced to her since the angel does not seem to have sufficiently explained the divinity of her son until the words "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee. And therefore also the Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." (Luke 1:35) For in these words he plainly unfolds the mystery. Up to this point the angel had been more obscure since in the other revelations too wherein Abraham or Manue were promised a son (Judges 13:2) it was foretold that he would

be a great and distinguished man etc. Furthermore, since the Virgin was so very humble, perhaps, she did not at once comprehend her own sublime dignity. Thus Augustine, after the words of Mary already cited, has the angel address her as follows: "Remember, Mary, the virgin who was to give birth, of whom you read in the book of Isaias. Rejoice and be glad for you have merited to be that virgin. You are the virgin there prefigured. Behold you will conceive in your womb, not of man, but of the Holy Spirit."[24] Immediately, Augustine concludes, the virgin replied: "Behold the handmaid...."

Moreover,another reason is the fact that if the Virgin already knew that she would conceive without the aid of man, there was no reason for her to have questioned further, since the immediate consequence was that she should believe that her Son would be conceived by divine power. And to inquire further was nothing else than to search the divine mysteries with excessive curiosity. Certainly, if she wished to ask whether she herself would contribute anything to this marvelous work, she would not say: "How will this be?" but: What should I do? Nor would she give her reason: "because I know not man" but would rather say: Since it is not necessary to know man. Nor would the angel reply by instructing her that this son would be conceived without the action of man. As a matter of fact not only does the angel teach this but gives the reason; namely, that this man would be Holiness Itself and the true Son of God.

Therefore, it but remains for me to state that at the very first word of the angel the Virgin at once thought—as was natural and obvious—of the natural way of conceiving and since this was not permitted because of her vow asked: "How shall this be done?* And this is the way Athanasius[23] explains the passage.

But that which is particularly annoying in this reply is the admission that the Blessed Virgin did not perceive in the words, "Behold thou shalt conceive...etc." (Luke 1:31) that the conception of the Messias and of the Son of God

^Augustine, Sermo 2 de Annuntiatione.
"Athanasius, Sermo de Sanctissima Deipara.

was being made known to her. For, as I shall maintain further on[26], the words of the angel indicate this meaning clearly enough. Therefore, it is not likely that the Blessed Virgin did not understand them since she was already perfectly composed, especially after the Angel had said, "Fear not, Mary," and since she who was so highly gifted and so enlightened concerning things divine was listening most attentively with complete recollection. Therefore, when she replied, "How shall this be done?" (Luke 1:34) she had already believed. But she would not have believed unless she had first perceived what was being said to her.

For this reason some say that the Blessed Virgin did not necessarily know beforehand that the Messias was to be conceived of a virgin. But this is most unsatisfactory, for it runs counter to both the teaching of the Saints and the perfection of the Blessed Virgin. For she had perfect faith in this mystery and understood Isaias whom she read. With more probability could one say that although she knew it beforehand, she did not at once direct her attention to all the details. This is the view advanced by Augustine in the passage cited above. It is probably true on the basis of the arguments already adduced and disposes of the difficulty well enough.

Nevertheless, Ambrose is clearly of the opinion that when Mary asked this question, she had already understood and believed that she would conceive and give birth as a virgin. "For she had read this in Isaias (7:14)," Ambrose says, "and therefore, she believed it would occur. But how this would happen, she had not read previously."[27] But if one should wish to assert this view, it can still be maintained that she did not know how this was to occur and whether, nonetheless, she would conceive by the action of man. For God could have joined both spouses together in the way some say would have occurred in the state of innocence; namely, that women would conceive of men and give birth without any impairment of their physical integrity. Therefore, since she did not know how this would occur, she could have been worried at the prospect

[26]Suarez, De mysteriis vitae Christi, in q. 30, a. 4.
[27]Ambrose, In Lucam, II, c. de Mariae interrogatione.

of physical intimacy; for whatever form it might take, it would be irreconcilable with her vow and resolve. Or finally, one can say that although in her own heart the Virgin understood the mystery, in order to manifest outwardly her inflexible resolve, she acted as if she did not understand it so that the angel might testify with divine authority the mode of her conception. In this way John the Baptist acted in a similar instance when he sent messengers to ask Christ "Who art thou?"

7. Moreover, out of motives of piety but with no more than probability, the text, "the angel Gabriel was sent...to a virgin espoused to a man," is customarily accorded some weight in confirmation of this truth. For this unconditional designation as "virgin", especially in connection with the word "espoused", does not point to just any ordinary integrity but to an inflexible virginity consecrated to God. Some indication of this is the fact that although she had been espoused some months before, she still remained a virgin. The reason which confirms the truth of the fact that she vowed her virginity is none other than the one touched upon by Thomas; namely, that virginity confirmed by vow is more pleasing to God in so far as it is more perfect, more consecrated, and more unchangeable. The reason for her having taken her vow of virginity at that time [namely, before the conception of her Son,] is that "the grace of the Holy Spirit knows no delay" as I shall at once explain more fully.

8. I maintain secondly, that the Blessed Virgin pronounced the vow before contracting marriage with Joseph. This is the common opinion of theologians: Peter Lombard[28]; Richard of St. Victor[28], Bonaventure[30], John Mayor[31], Scotus[32], Albert the Great, Henry of Ghent, and almost all the rest of the Scholastic theologians cited in the preceding

[28]Peter Lombard, Libri Sententiarum, IV, d. 30.
[29]Richard of Saint Victor, In IV Sententiarum, d. 30, a. 2, q. 1.
[30]Bonaventure, In IV Sententiarum, d. 30, q. 2.
[31]John Mayor, In IV Sententiarum, d. 30, q. 4.
[32]Scotus, In IV Sententiarum, d. 30, q. 2.

section. It is the opinion of Hugh of St. Victor[33] and seems to be the view of Augustine[34] who infers Mary's vow of virginity from her reply to the angel and adds: "But because the customs of the Jews took no cognizance of virginity, she was espoused to a just man who would not violently draw her away from her aim but would rather guard what she had already vowed."

Although in this passage it is not stated that this was an unconditional vow, there is sufficient indication that it was the same vow which she had at the coming of the angel and after her marriage. Gregory of Nyssa[35] has the same idea in a passage wherein he first of all says that the Virgin was given to Joseph not that he might take away her virginity but rather that he might conserve and guard it. Gregory then gives the reason: "because it was proper that the flesh dedicated and consecrated to God should be preserved inviolate as a sacred shrine." The other Fathers cited above, even though they do not say so distinctly, are of the opinion that the Virgin's vow of chastity was not more recent than her resolve. Indeed, the same reason holds for both; for just as a vow ought to concern a greater good, so did her resolve, as I have shown.

But if we should admit that the laws and customs of that day did not permit virginity or at least did not consider it a greater good, either we shall have to deny to the Virgin both the resolve and the vow not only before but also after her marriage—which is completely wrong—or certainly we shall have to say according to this opinion that with the divine will and counsel she sought after and vowed virginity. On this supposition it would be more probable and more logical to say that she had this divine relation before her marriage rather than after it. Consequently, as a vow of itself and by its very nature seems to be in opposition to the fidelity and justice of marriage, so is the resolve not to render the marriage debt in conflict with the same virtues. For what is more unjust than to be in debt without the disposition and intention of paying it.

[33]Hugh of Saint Victor, De perpetua virginitate Mariae, 1.
[34]Augustine, De sancta virginitate, 4.
[35]Gregory of Nyssa, Homila de Nativitate.

Therefore, if from the beginning the Virgin had the unchangeable resolve of virginity, she could not without changing her resolution have contracted marriage unless she had received a divine illumination and revelation by which it was clear to her that Joseph would never request the debt but rather would consent to this resolve of virginity. Granted this revelation, matrimony is neither incompatible with the resolution nor with the vow. That the Blessed Virgin had this revelation before she contracted her marriage is the plain teaching of Gregory of Nyssa[36], Bonaventure[37], and almost all the Fathers.

Therefore, on the basis of this revelation she could with equal reason have contracted marriage even if she had previously pronounced the vow. Therefore, there is no reason to doubt that she did take the vow. First, since she always loved chastity with the greatest affection, it is consequently likely that as far as she was able she brought it about that her resolve be unchangeable, such that she could not revoke it of her own will. For she always strove to imitate the purity of the angels and wished to make unchangeable by her voluntary promise that which for them is unchangeable by nature. Second, in this way the virginity of Mary was always more perfect and pleasing to God. Third, since many virgins almost from the cradle consecrated themselves to God by a vow of chastity, all the more, therefore, must we believe this of the Queen of all virgins, who is their mistress and most perfect exemplar.

9. Consequently, Anselm says, "A Virgin sensitive and refined, of royal lineage and most beautiful, directs her whole attention, all her love, all her zeal to the consecration of her soul and body to God by perpetual virginity. For she knew that the more sacredly she kept her virginity the more sublime would be the way she would draw near to Him Who is the most chaste of all, Who is indeed chastity itself. Thus by embracing what she knew was more acceptable to God she went beyond the Law."[38]

[36] Ibid.
[37] Bonaventure, Meditationes vitae Christi, 3.
[38] Anselm, De excellentia Virginis, 4.

I do not think it necessary to dispute in great detail about the condition "unless something else please God" which I have explained some pages back. For, as Peter Paludanus, Scotus, and others correctly observe, that condition, even if expressly added, does not destroy the force and perfection of an unconditional vow since such a condition is implicit in every vow. Indeed, in every promise such a relation to the will of the person to whom the promise is made is implied; for if the person does not accept the promise or releases from it or does not want the thing promised, the obligation ceases. When promises are made to God, this same relationship obtains, not only for the reason I have just given, but also because He is the Supreme Lawmaker and Lord Who can dispense and render null and void every such obligation. But whether the Blessed Virgin when she pronounced her vow, was content with this condition as implicit in the vow itself or whether in her heart she formulated the condition distinctly is uncertain and does not seem to be of much importance. Consequently, if Thomas, as Peter Pauludanus interprets him, wanted to make this point only, I would easily agree with him since, perhaps, it adds something of perfection, especially if from the beginning God's disposition regarding her body had not been revealed to the Blessed Virgin. But if from the beginning she had been informed, as is probable, by a revelation of the Holy Spirit concerning God's will in this regard, such a condition was no longer necessary since the divine will was already clear to her.

REPLY.

10. I have nothing further to say against the basic assumptions of the opposite opinions since in view of what has been said they lose their force. Some, indeed, say that since before marriage the Blessed Virgin was under the authority of her parents, she could not or at least ought not to have taken a vow, especially since they could have immediately declared it null and void. Moreover, it is likely that her parents would not have consented to such a vow because she was, as is believed, the only child and also because at that time virginity was regarded as a disgrace and meant the loss of one's good name.

In reply to this difficulty I maintain first of all that according to the Church tradition related by Gregory of Nyssa and others the Virgin's parents were very holy. Consequently, there is no reason to doubt their consent even if it were necessary; for they were neither especially anxious about the continuation of their lineage nor dependent upon the opinion and judgment of men. Bernard has the Virgin speak words which can also be put on the lips of her parents: "It is better that I suffer censure than violate chastity; for although I see censure: I do not see sin. For what is censure, but the reproach of men?*[39]

Moreover, I would add that although sterility at that time resulted in a certain loss of good name for those who led a normal married life, perhaps voluntary chastity was not similarly regarded, as can be gathered from what I have recounted above.

Finally, it is likely, as the chapter[40] from Augustine relates, that the Virgin took a vow in her heart but did not

[39]Bernard, In "missus est", Hom. 3.

[Editor's Note: The fuller text of Bernard, in English, might help to clarify Suarez* selective quotation: "O cruel necessity and heavy yoke upon all the hapless daughters of Eve! If they become mothers they shall suffer anguish, and if they remain sterile they shall be accurst. The pain debars them from motherhood, the malediction from sterility. What will thou do, O prudent Virgin; who hast heard and read of this? Affliction awaits thee, if thou bringest forth; if thou remainest barren, the curse. Which, then, wilt thou choose, O prudent Virgin?'I am straightened,' she seems to say,'on every side. Yet it is better for me to incur the malediction by remaining a virgin, than to conceive by concupiscence and to bring forth in pain. On this side I behold a curse indeed, yet no sin; on that I see both sin and torment. Moreover, what is this curse but the reproach of men?' *]

[40]Gratian, Decreta, II, C. 27, q. 2, c. 3, "Beata Maria."

express it orally until, already espoused, she pronounced her vow together with her husband. Consequently, there was no reason for her to consult her parents since she was ruled by the Holy Spirit and was certain that what she vowed was more pleasing to God. Nor was there any reason for her to fear that her vow would be declared null and void since her parents did not know of her vow and since even if they had come to know of it, they would not have dared to alter the will of a daughter of whose sanctity and special direction by the Holy Spirit they were thoroughly aware.

SECTION JU

WHETHER THE BLESSED VIRGIN WAS THE FIRST TO VOW AND PRESERVE VIRGINITY

THE VIRGIN WAS THE FIRST TO VOW VIRGINITY.

1. This question can be understood to refer either to the chronological order or to the order of dignity and perfection in chastity; and understood in either sense the question can be disposed of rather quickly.

For first of all in regard to the chronological order, although there were, as we have seen, many who observed chastity before the Blessed Virgin, no one is believed to have taken such a vow. This is the opinion of Bernadine who accomodates the text of Psalm 44 "After her shall virgins be brought to the king...9 (Psalm 44:15). "For she alone,* he says, "claims the first place for herself.*1 And Rupert of Deutz says, "You were the first to pronounce the vow of virginity.*2 "The first woman to do so,* Bede remarks, "took care to bind herself to this great virtue.*3 Previously Ambrose, too, had indicated the same truth by

'Bernadine of Siena, In "missus est," Hom. 2 and 3.
2Rupert of Deutz, In Cantica, HI, finem.
'Bede, In Lucam, 1.

his words: "O Mary most distinguished, who raised up the standard of holy virginity and bore aloft the banner of unspotted virginity loyal to Christ."[4] Jerome says, "For me, virginity is consecrated in Mary and in Christ."[5] And an argument can be drawn from what Epiphanius says was the custom of the ancient Church, namely, to vow virginity to God "in honor and in imitation of the Blessed Virgin."[6] Alfonso Tostado,[7] Ludolf of Saxony,[8] and Thomas Walden,[9] who cites Bede, teach the same.

Practically no arguments based on reason can be adduced to substantiate this opinion since it is principally an historical point. At best one could surmise that which Thomas mentions here[10] in his answer to the second objection. Since the vow of virginity pertains to the state of perfection, it was fitting that under the law of grace it should first be realized in Christ and His Mother.

DIFFICULTY.

2. The foregoing opinion, indeed, poses a difficulty. For since it is clear that many men and women observed virginity before the Mother of God, how can it be clear that none of them promised virginity? First, there is the difficulty of Elias, Daniel, and others whom I recounted from Ignatius, John Damascene, and the other Fathers. Second, there is the difficulty of Mary the sister of Moses whom Ambrose considers a virgin and whose virginity Gregory of Nyssa[12] attempted to deduce from Sacred Scripture since she was never designated by the name of her husband but always by that of her brothers. Third, an objection can be raised concerning the daughter of Jephte whom some consider to have been consecrated to God by vow.

[4]Ambrose, De institutione virginis, 5.
[5]Jerome, Epistola 3 ad Eustochium, longe a principio.
[6]Epiphanius, Haereses, 78.
[7]Alfonso Tostado, In IV Regum, 18, q. 19.
[8]Ludolf of Saxony, Vita Christi, I, 2.
[9]Thomas Walden, De Sacramentis, II, 130, who cites Bede.
[10]Aquinas, Summa Theologica, III, q. 28, a. 4, ad 2.
[11]Ambrose, De virginibus, I, in principio; Exhortatio ad virgines.
Gregory of Nyssa, De virginitate, 9.

For thus do Francis Vatable and others explain the passage in Judges (11:31-40). For they do not think that the father sacrificed his daughter to God by killing her but by consecrating her virginity to God. A fourth difficulty can be raised from the Jewish Essenes who, as I have already mentioned, observed virginity and since they lived after the fashion of religious, very likely took that vow. Among the Pagans there are the vestal virgins who vowed virginity to a false god. Why, therefore, should we deny that some of the faithful who loved virginity vowed it to the true God? Moreover, this is in no way incompatible with the imperfection of the Old Dispensation and the Natural Law. For in these dispensations there were nevertheless some holy men, even though quite few in number, who kept the life of perfection and of the counsels.

REPLY.

3. I have no other reply to these difficulties except that this is an uncertain point and does not much pertain to the praise of the Mother of God. That she did take a perfect vow of virginity pertains to her perfection; that no one before her did so, does not exactly concern the praise of her excellence. This much, however, is certain: that from Sacred Scripture one cannot conclude that any one else took this vow before the Virgin. In this sense at least, it is certain that she was the first to vow virginity. Moreover, she can be called the first to be proposed as a model and exemplar of this vow. And this I believe is the meaning of the holy Fathers. I would add, however, that it is possible that she was actually the first [to take the vow;] for all the difficulties against this can easily be disposed of. As for the Prophets, I confess the existence of a vow is uncertain and unknown; nevertheless, since it is not stated in writing that they did take the vow, and since in those periods such a vow was not customary, they probably did not take one.

4. As for the second difficulty about Mary the sister of Moses, though it be true that she remained a virgin, nevertheless, it cannot therefore be inferred that she vowed virginity. Moreover, what is said concerning her virginity is

uncertain. For Josephus[13] says that Hur was the husband of this Mary and Beseleel her son. Consequently, a simple reply to the argument of Gregory of Nyssa is that Scripture designates the sister of Moses by the name of her brothers rather than by the name of her husband not because she did not have a husband, but because her brothers were outstanding in dignity and authority.

JEPHTE'S ACTION CONCERNING HIS DAUGHTER.

5. As for the third difficulty about the daughter of Jephte, although I would admit the explanation given above, it does not prove anything. For his daughter neither vowed virginity nor kept it willingly but in her own words "bewailed her virginity."* Moreover, neither did the father vow the virginity of his daughter but vowed to sacrifice to God what should first meet him on his return home. And because his daughter was the first who came forth to meet him, he wished to keep his vow, this explanation maintains, by sacrificing her, not as one would a beast but in a manner becoming a human person, by dedicating her to the service of God. Thus it came about that she remained unwed.

Secondly, the common explanation of the Fathers, which is said to be the truer one, is that Jephte sacrificed his daughter by killing her. Whether he did this rashly or at the instigation of the Holy Spirit I shall not further discuss here. Confer Chrysostom[14], Athanasius[15];* Augustine[16], Jerome[17], Epiphanius[18]; Ambrose[19], Philo[20], Josephus[21], and the Council of Frankfort[22]

[13]Josephus, Antiquitates, III, 2 and 6.
"Chrysostom, Homilia de Jephte.
"Athanasius, Synopsis Scripturae sacrae.
*Augustine, Quaestiones in Judicum, q. 49; Quaestiones novi et veteris Testamenti, q. 43.
[17]Jerome, Contra Jovinianum, I.
"Epiphanius, Haereses, 55.
"Ambrose, De officiis ministrorum, II.
[20]Philo, Antiquitates Biblicae.
[21]Josephus, Antiquitates, V, 12.
"Council of Frankfort, Pars II.

6. As for the fourth difficulty about the Essenes, it is indeed reported that they observed chastity, but not that they vowed it or preserved it perpetually or unchangeably. One may confer Josephus[23] and Epiphanius[24]. The same can be said of the vestal virgins; for according to Alexander of Alexandria[25] and Ambrose,[26] after a certain period of time they married.

Lastly, in regard to the final difficulty, although the proof shows nothing inconsistent in such a conjecture, nevertheless, there are no grounds for saying that this actually occurred.

MARY THE MOST PURE OF ALL CREATURES.

7. Secondly, in regard to dignity and perfection, I maintain without the least hesitation that among all pure creatures the Mother of God held the first place in the perfection of virginity. This conclusion is clearly established by the common teaching of the Fathers and by everything which has already been said. Reason declares the same. For Mary's virginity in so far as its resolve and animating spirit are concerned was more efficacious and more ardent precisely as it proceeded from greater charity and grace. As for its unchangeableness, she confirmed her resolve with a perfect vow. In intention she had acted from the most perfect love of God and of purity. In execution she so perfectly preserved her vow that she was completely devoid of every contrary motion of repugnance. What is more, she roused others to chastity, as I have shown above from the holy Fathers. Therefore, she held the primacy in the perfection of her virginity.

Finally, she was completely devoid of anything which could lessen the perfection of her virginity. For even marriage itself, which in others is usually directed to the removal of virginity, in her case was instituted for virginity's protection, witness, and honor. Moreover, she had all the accompanying virtues, temperance, humility, and

[23]Josephus, De bello Judaico, II, 7.
[24]Epiphanius, Haereses, 16.
[25]Alexander of Alexandria, Dierum genialium, V.
[26]Ambrose, De virginibus, I.

others, which were able to increase the perfection of her virginity. Finally, her virginity was directed by God to the highest possible purpose. For it was directed to the generation of a son, something indeed most remarkable, and to the consecration of a marriage chamber to God from which having become man He would be born. Nothing more perfect or more excellent can be conceived.

OBJECTION-REPLY-IN WHAT SENSE A SOLEMN VOW WAS NECESSARY.

8.rYou will object: virginity consecrated to God by solemn vow is more perfect than virginity consecrated by a simple vow. But the Blessed Virgin did not have a solemn vow of continence because she was not thereby rendered incapable of contracting marriage and because this solemnity, as the Pontiffs have taught, was introduced after the time of Christ and rather by the authority of the Church.

I reply that this solemnity in itself is not necessary for the perfection of virginity. It is, indeed, very useful and fitting in the case of imperfect men eager for perfection and yet quite unstable. But for the Blessed Virgin who was always in the state of perfection and whose soul was unchangeably fixed in virtue this extrinsic solemnity was not necessary nor even fitting. For as I shall shortly point out·* [in disputation VII, "The Marriage of the Virgin with Her Spouse St. Joseph,"] it was necessary for her to contract a marriage which not only would not interfere with the perfection of her virginity, but would rather promote it.