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THE THEOLOGY OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION IN THE LIGHT OF "INEFFABILIS DEUS"

The term "theology" rather than "dogma" was used designedly in the title of the paper assigned to me to permit greater latitude in discussing problems closely allied to the dogma but not actually defined by Pius IX in the Bull *Ineffabilis Deus*. To keep from straying too far afield, however, I have limited the scope of this paper to the following objectives: (1) to indicate, on the one hand, precisely what was defined by the dogmatic Bull of December 8, 1854, and on the other, what questions were not settled by the definition; (2) to discuss briefly some of the principal theological opinions on two special problems connected with the Immaculate Conception, namely: (a) the manner in which this truth of our Catholic faith was revealed, and (b) the question of the *debitum peccati*. The paper, consequently, falls into three principal parts, the first of which treats the content of the dogmatic definition.

I

The Content of the Definition

Though the Bull as a whole is an authentic pronouncement by one who was the voice of the living magisterium of the Church and hence merits the special respect of all who claim to be Catholics,¹ nevertheless it is only the formula of definition and not the historical-doctrinal exposition preceding it that, in the words of Le Bachelet, "has the guarantee of papal

¹ Cf. Pius XII, *Humani generis*, in *A.A.S.*, vol. 42, n. 11, Sept. 2, 1950, p. 567 f; E. Dublanchy, *Infailibilité du Pape*, in *D.T.C.*, vol. 7, col. 1705; J. V. Bainvel, *De magisterio vivo et traditione*, Paris, 1905, pp. 104-107; E. D. Benard, *The Doctrinal Value of Ordinary Teaching of the Holy Father in View of the Humani Generis*, in *Proceedings of the Catholic Theological Society of America*, vol. 6. 1951, pp. 78-107.

infallibility and demands an act of faith.”² Consequently, it is to this formula of definition we must turn to discover just what Pius IX defined in regard to Our Lady’s Immaculate Conception. The pertinent passage reads as follows:

We, by the authority of Jesus Christ our Lord, of the Blessed Apostles, Peter and Paul, and by Our Own, declare, pronounce and define that the doctrine which holds that the Blessed Virgin Mary at the first instant of her conception, by a singular privilege and grace of the omnipotent God, in consideration of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Savior of mankind, was preserved free from all stain of the original fault, has been revealed by God, and therefore is to be firmly and constantly believed by all the faithful.³

From these clear and forceful words of the Supreme Pontiff we can readily determine precisely what was defined and what was not defined regarding the following aspects of the Immaculate Conception: (a) the nature or object of this privilege, (b) the recipient or subject, (c) the source of the privilege and the manner in which it was conferred, and finally (d) the type of certitude involved.

a. *The Nature or Object of the Privilege*

Pius IX describes Mary’s unique privilege with the words “the Blessed Virgin Mary . . . was preserved free from all

² X. Le Bachelet, *Immaculée Conception*, in *D.T.C.*, vol. 7, col. 1204; see also col. 848.

³ “Auctoritate Domini Nostri Jesu Christi, beatorum Apostolorum Petri et Pauli ac Nostra declaramus, pronunciamus et definimus, doctrinam, quae tenet, beatissimam Virginem Mariam in primo instanti suae Conceptionis fuisse singulari omnipotentis Dei gratia et privilegio, intuitu meritorum Christi Jesu Salvatoris humani generis, ab omni originalis culpae labe praeservatam immunem, esse a Deo revelatam, atque idcirco ab omnibus fidelibus firmiter constanterque credendam.” *Official Documents Connected with the Definition of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the B. V. Mary*, Baltimore, John Murphy and Co., 1855, p. 53.

stain of the original fault." This negative formulation of Mary's prerogative is delicately worded. On the one hand, it definitely excludes from our Blessed Lady any taint of sin as such, yet says nothing about the essential nature of this "sin of origin." Still less does it decide whether Mary's immunity from the "hereditary stain" extends beyond what is sin in the formal sense of the word.

To interpret Mary's privilege fully, of course, a theologian must adopt some definite theory as to the nature of original sin.⁴ Our intention, however, is to indicate merely the minimal positive doctrine implied by this negative wording in the formula of definition. We ought to note, therefore, at the outset that the phrase "stain of the original fault" *as a whole* designates the state in which the descendants of Adam find themselves on their entry into the world. Or to put it another way, the "original fault" in question is Adam's personal sin, whereas the "stain" is its social effect existing in his offspring as something proper to each.

Though the Church has never defined the precise nature of original sin,⁵ she has corrected a number of erroneous theories regarding its essence, penal consequences and mode of transmission. Thus, for instance, she condemned the exaggerated views of the sixteenth century reformers and the errors of Michael Baius who held that original sin involved an intrinsic corruption of human nature or identified it with concupiscence.⁶ According to the Council of Trent, concupiscence, which remains after baptism, is not truly sin but is called such by St.

⁴ J. Keuppens, *Mariologiae Compendium*, 2 ed., Antuerpiae, 1947, p. 54: "Intima natura hujus privilegii pressius describi nequit nisi prius quis amplexus fuerit determinatam sententiam circa essentiam peccati originalis."

⁵ It is clear from the acts of the Council of Trent and the Vatican Council that the fathers had no intention of settling the theological controversy as to whether the privation of sanctifying grace is the essence or only the formal element involved in the privation of original justice. Cf. e.g., A. Gaudel, *Péché Originel*, in *D.T.C.*, vol. 12, col. 591.

⁶ *D.B.* no. 1055, 776, 742, 743.

Paul because it is from sin and inclines to sin.⁷ In addition, the Church has determined a number of essential consequences or effects of original sin such as the privation of original holiness and justice, the death of the soul and not only that of the body,⁸ enslavement to sin and the devil, so that by nature we have become unclean and children of wrath.⁹ In addition, the Church has indicated how these effects of our sin of origin are removed. By our baptism into the death of Christ, nothing of condemnation remains in us but we are interiorly reborn becoming new creatures,¹⁰ so that we "pass from that state in which a man is born a child of the first Adam to the state of grace and of adopted sonship through the Second Adam, Jesus Christ, our Saviour."¹¹

In view of all this, we can say that even though the formula of definition expresses Mary's prerogative negatively, it implies certain positive consequences in the present supernatural order, namely, that from the first instant of her existence her soul was resplendent with interior grace and holiness and that she enjoyed divine friendship as a child of God. These positive aspects are referred to frequently throughout the historical-doctrinal sections of the Bull. Noteworthy, for instance, is the quotation from Alexander VII declaring that "by the preventing grace of the Holy Spirit . . . the soul of the Blessed Virgin Mary at its creation and infusion into the body was endowed with the grace of the Holy Spirit."¹²

⁷ Sess. V, can. 5: "Hanc concupiscentiam, quam aliquando Apostolus peccatum [*Rom.* 6, 12ss] appellat, sancta Synodus declarat, Ecclesiam catholicam numquam intellexisse, peccatum appellari, quod vere et proprie in renatis peccatum sit, sed quia ex peccato est et ad peccatum inclinat. Si quis autem contrarium senserit: A.S. (*D.B.* no. 792).

⁸ Sess. V, can. 1, 2. *D.B.* no. 788, 789.

⁹ Sess. VI, cap. 1. *D.B.* no. 793.

¹⁰ Sess. V, can. 5. *D.B.* no. 792.

¹¹ Sess. VI, cap. 4. *D.B.* no. 796.

¹² *Ineffabilis Deus*: "Praeveniente scilicet Spiritus Sancti gratia . . . animae beatæ Mariæ Virginis in sua creatione, et in corpus infusione, Spiritus Sancti

We might note in passing that the negative formulation also has the advantage of leaving open the question of the degree of grace Mary possessed at the moment of her conception.¹³ It is for theologians to speculate on the extent of the gifts God gave to her who in the words of Pius IX was "more beautiful than beauty, more gracious than grace, more holy than holiness, . . . who has become the dwelling place of all the graces of the Holy Spirit, and who, God alone excepted, is superior to all."¹⁴

The term "all stain" has been interpreted in various ways. Some see in it an explicit or at least implicit exclusion of concupiscence (*fomes peccati*)¹⁵ or even of Mary's indebtedness to sin (*debitum*).¹⁶ However, in view of the acts of the Special Commission appointed by Pius IX to draft and to discuss the wording of the Bull, this interpretation does not seem justified.¹⁷ The advisability of including in the definition some *gratia donatam, et a peccato originali praeservatam fuisse.*" *Official Documents*, pp. 30-31.

¹³ Regarding the dispute about the degree of Mary's initial grace see L. Baudiment, *De quelques outrances de la théologie mariale contemporaine*, in *L'Année théologique*, vol. 6, 1943, pp. 105-115; P.-E. Vadeboncoeur, *Quelle est cette outrance?*, in *Revue de l'Université d'Ottawa*, vol. 16, 1946, pp. 209*-226*; J. Keuppens, *op. cit.*, p. 40; Roschini, *Mariologia*, 2 ed., vol. 2, pars. 2, Romae, 1948, pp. 129-133.

¹⁴ *Ineffabilis Deus*, p. 46.

¹⁵ L. Janssens, O.S.B., *Summa theologica; de Deo Homine*, Freiburg im Breisgau, 1902, vol. 2, p. 41: "Cur igitur definitio dogmatica loquitur de *omni* originalis culpae labe? Istud *omne* vix aliud significare, praeter vulnera peccati originalis, ac praesertim concupiscentiae fomitem, qui in Adamo post lapsum excitatum, per generationem transmissus, corpora immediate inficit."

¹⁶ F. O'Neill, *The Blessed Virgin Mary and the Alleged Debt of Sin*, in *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, vol. 22, 1923, pp. 70-83; A.R., *The Immaculate Conception and the "Contracting of Sin"*, in *The Ecclesiastical Review*, vol. 72, 1925, pp. 76-82.

¹⁷ Le Bachelet, *op. cit.*, col. 846, 847; Keuppens says of the absence of concupiscence: "Thesis haec, quamvis certa, non includitur in ipsa definitione dogmatis Immaculatae Conceptionis." (*op. cit.*, p. 61); C. Balić, while denying all debt of sin in Mary, significantly does not appeal to this passage. Cf. *De debito peccati originalis in B. Virgine Maria*, in *Antonianum*, vol. 16, 1941, pp. 205 ff.

statement regarding Mary's immunity to concupiscence and the absence of the *debitum* was still a subject of discussion in the meeting of the Bishops and Cardinals held barely two weeks before the proclamation of the Bull, and in view of the lack of unanimity of opinion on the subject they agreed not to add anything regarding the *fomes peccati* or the *debitum* to the definition.¹⁸ Le Bachelet points out that if we wish to give some special significance to the *omni* in the expression "all stain," though there is no need to do so, we could refer it to the twofold aspect sin possesses, namely the moral stain which implies a state of sinfulness or divine displeasure and the physical stain which consists in the privation of sanctifying grace.¹⁹ Since Mary's privilege, however, is frequently referred to elsewhere in the Bull without the addition of this adjective,²⁰ the use of *omni* in the formula of definition seems to be primarily for the sake of emphasis. The only thing then that we can infer with certainty from the expression is that it excludes what is truly sin.

¹⁸ Bishop Francis Bruni, for instance, requested that the words *sed etiam a fomite et concupiscentia praeservatam et immunem fuisse* be added to the formula of the definition, but the ensuing discussion did not result in any agreement, so the matter was dropped. A group interested in having Mary declared free of all indebtedness to sin was responsible for the inclusion in *Pareri dell'Episcopato Cattolico*, (vol. 5, p. 663 ff) of the dissertation of an unnamed Oratorian priest from Venice in which the author endeavors to establish this thesis. Peter Biancheri, a priest of the Congregation of the Mission, suggested that the description of Mary's privilege include mention of her immunity from the need of contracting sin as well as of her preservation from sin itself but this proposal did not meet with general favor and the motion was dropped. Cf. Sardi, *La solenne definizione del dogma dell'Immacolato Concepimento di Maria Santissima*, (Atti e documenti), vol. 1, Roma, 1904-1905, pp. 528, 532; Le Bachelet, *op. cit.*, col. 1202.

¹⁹ *Op. cit.*, col. 846.

²⁰ For example, *ab ipsa originalis labe plane immunis* (p. 21), *praerogativa immunitatis ab hereditaria labe* (p. 24), *sine labe originali conceptam* (p. 25), *a macula peccati originalis, praeservatam immunem* (p. 28), *a peccato originali praeservatam* (p. 30), *praeservatam omnino fuisse ab originis labe* (p. 34), etc.

b. *The Subject of the Privilege*

The recipient or subject of the privilege is indicated by the words "the Blessed Virgin Mary at the first instant of her conception." Once more the acts of the Congressus of Bishops and Cardinals called by Pius IX to examine the final draft of the Bull help us to clarify the meaning of these words. The original wording read *anima beatissimae Virginis cum primum fuit creata et in suum corpus infusa*.²¹ One of the Bishops, however, moved that the formula of definition assert the privilege of the person of the Blessed Virgin and not merely of her soul. In seconding this motion, Cardinal Pechi, Bishop of Gubbio, insisted that by all means the wording should be such as to avoid reviving the distinctions of the scholastics as to whether the body or the soul of Mary was the precise subject of the privilege.²²

The words "at the first instant" were inserted to exclude the theory that a moment existed between the creation and infusion of Mary's soul into her body on the one hand, and its subsequent sanctification on the other. Pius IX refers earlier in the Bull to "those who, in order to overthrow the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin, devised a distinction between the first and second moment of the Conception and then asserted that the Conception was indeed venerated, but not that of the first instant and moment."²³

Though the term "conception" is not qualified in any way, the earlier formula *anima cum primum fuit creata et in suum corpus infusa* taken from the Apostolic Constitution *Sollicitudo* of Alexander VII as well as the fact that the privilege is granted to Mary as a person, indicates that it is the so-called "passive conception" that is referred to. "Conception can be understood

²¹ Sardi, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 243 f.

²² Le Bachelet, *op. cit.*, col. 1203.

²³ On this controversy, cf. Perrone, S.J., *De Immaculato B. V. Mariae Conceptu disquisitio theologica*, in *Pareri dell'Episcopato Cattolico*, vol. 6, pp. 338-344; Le Bachelet, *op. cit.*, col. 1173 ff.

in two ways," Benedict XIV declares. "For conception is active, in so far as the saintly parents of the Blessed Virgin, uniting in the marital act, accomplished those things which led to the formation and organization of her body and its disposition to receive the rational soul to be infused by God. The infusion of the soul and its union with an adequately organized body is commonly called passive conception. This occurs at the very instant the rational soul is united to a body comprised of all its members and organs." Explaining the meaning of the Marian privilege, he goes on to say: "We are not speaking here of active but of passive conception, which is declared to be pure and immaculate, for the Virgin was free from original sin by the sanctifying grace which God imparted to her in the first moment of her conception when the soul had been granted to the body with its members."²⁴

Theologians have disputed whether the human soul is infused at the moment spermatozoon and ovum fuse (immediate animation) or only after the foetus has developed sufficient organization to warrant a rational soul (mediate animation). The immediate animation theory originated, according to Dorlodot,²⁵ in the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Louvain in the seventeenth century and is the most common

²⁴ *De Festis*, lib. 2, cap. 2, n. 1: "Conceptio dupliciter accipi potest. Vel enim est activa, in qua Sancti B. Virginis parentes opere maritali invicem convenientes, praestiterunt ea quae maxime spectabant ad ipsius corporis formationem, organizationem et dispositionem ad recipiendam animam rationalem a Deo infundendam; vel est passiva, cum rationalis anima cum corpore copulatur. Ipsa animae infusio et unio cum corpore debite organizato vulgo nominatur Conceptio passiva, quae scilicet fit illa ipso instanti quo rationalis anima corpori omnibus membris ac suis organis constanti unitur. . . . Non hic de activa Conceptione sermo est, sed de passiva, quae pura et immaculata fuisse dicitur . . . per gratiam sanctificantem quam Deus illi indidit in primo Conceptionis momento, cum anima corpori jam membris suis instructa fuit." Cf. also Perrome, *op. cit.*, p. 331.

²⁵ Henry de Dorlodot, *A Vindication of the Mediate Animation Theory in Theology and Evolution*, edited by E. C. Messenger (Westminster, Md., Newman Press, 1950), p. 271.

theological opinion today.²⁶ The mediate animation theory, which the scholastics took over from Aristotle,²⁷ postulates that the embryo passes through a series of stages having, as St. Thomas puts it, "a nutritive soul from the beginning, then a sensitive soul, and finally a rational soul."²⁸ The initial stages of development, called technically "inchoative passive conception," were believed to take forty days for the male and eighty for the female according to the common interpretation.²⁹ With the advent of the rational soul (consummated passive conception) conception was considered complete. Recently, on scientific grounds, the theory of mediate animation has been adopted by some Catholic theologians.³⁰

Those who subscribe to the mediate animation theory, if they do not postulate some exception in her case, as Aquinas did for the soul of Christ,³¹ would stress that the Immaculate Conception is to be understood of Mary's passive consummated conception.

Though some have tried to find support for the immediate animation theory either from the definition of the dogma in the *Ineffabilis Deus*, or at least from the Church's practice of celebrating the feast on December 8th, just nine months to the

²⁶ It underlies the practice prescribed by Canon 747: "Curandum ut omnes fetus abortivi, quovis tempore editi, si certo vivant, baptizentur absolute."

²⁷ *De generatione animalium*, II, 3 (736a 35ss); *De historia animalium*, IV, 3.

²⁸ *Summa theologica*, I, q. 118, a. 2 ad 2: "Dicendum est quod anima praeexistit in embryone a principio quidem nutritiva, postmodum autem sensitiva et tandem intellectiva. . . . Cum generatione unius semper sit corruptio alterius necesse est dicere quod tam in homine quam in animalibus aliis, quando perfectior forma advenit fit corruptio prioris; ita tamen quod sequens forma habet quiddam habebat prima, et adhuc amplius. Et sic per multas generationes et corruptiones pervenitur ad ultimam formam substantialem, tam in homine quam in aliis animalibus.

²⁹ Cf. A. Chollet, *Animation*, in *D.T.C.*, vol. 1, col. 1309.

³⁰ Cf. E. C. Messenger, *Theology and Evolution*, part 2, pp. 219-332 for a thorough discussion of the problem.

³¹ *Summa theologica*, III, q. 34, a. 2 ad 3.

day from that of Mary's Nativity (September 8th),³² it is generally agreed that Pius IX had no intention of deciding this question.³³

c. *Source of the Privilege*

The source of the privilege and the way in which it was conferred are indicated in the words: "By a singular privilege and grace of the Omnipotent God, in consideration of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of mankind." The singularity or uniqueness of Mary's privilege strikes us if we but compare it with the original justice of Adam and the angels, with the grace that flooded the soul of Christ from the first moment of its existence, or with the redemptive grace granted to the rest of mankind.

Like the justification of Joseph or the patriarchs of the Old Testament, Mary's sanctifying grace was in anticipation of the merits of her Son. The grace life of the New Eve was the first fruit from the lanced side of the New Adam, as it were. On the other hand, it differed from that restored to our first parents or that given to the rest of mankind in that Christ redeemed Mary by way of preservation, not reparation. Hers was the fruit of a perfect act of mediation, as Duns Scotus put it.³⁴

³² Confer Bishop Browne's review of Messenger's *Evolution and Theology*, in *The Irish Ecclesiastical Record* (May, 1932) and the discussion that followed in the same magazine (September and November issues of the same year); reprinted in *Theology and Evolution* part two, chapter 5, pp. 284-300.

³³ A. Chollet, *op. cit.*, col. 1319: "Quoique l'Église célèbre ce mystère le 8 décembre, cependant elle n'a jamais voulu définir par là que l'âme de Marie ait été créée et unie au corps au moment même de l'acte de la fécondation." See also Le Bachelet, *op. cit.*, col. 846.

³⁴ *Oxon.* 3, d. 3, q. 1: "Perfectissimus enim mediator habet perfectissimum actum mediandi possibilem respectu alicuius personae, pro qua mediatur; ergo Christus habuit perfectissimum gradum mediandi possibilem respectu alicuius personae, respectu cuius erat mediator; respectu nullius personae habuit excellentiorem gradum quam respectu Mariae; igitur, etc. Sed hoc non esset nisi meruisset eam praeservare a peccato originali." In C. Balić, *Ioannis Duns Scoti Theologia Mariana Elementa*, Sibenici, 1933, pp. 22-23.

Though the formula of definition does not expressly use the word "redemption," theologians from Scotus' time on commonly interpret Mary's preservative grace in this way. Pius IX himself infers one notion from the other earlier in the Bull: "The Most Holy Mother of God, the Virgin Mary," he writes, "because of the foreseen merits of Christ our Lord, the Saviour of mankind, was never subject to original sin, but was preserved entirely free from the original sin and therefore was redeemed in a more sublime manner."³⁵ Inasmuch as Mary was a daughter of Eve, a child of Adam, she, too, needed a redeemer. Indeed, as Scotus expressed it, she had an even greater need of a redeemer.³⁶ Her immaculate conception put her most deeply in debt to Christ and on this score her grace differed from His. Theologians commonly point to another difference between Christ and Mary, in that the God-man escaped the original stain in virtue of His virginal birth. Conversely, Le Bachelet declares, "The assertion that Mary was indebted to a grace of preservation for the privilege of being exempted from the common law presupposes objectively and in the thought of the Roman Church that the Virgin had been begotten like other descendents of Adam and that she had a father according to the flesh."³⁷ *Salvo meliori iudicio*, this conclusion, reasonable though it be in itself, is neither implicitly or explicitly contained in the formula of the definition nor is it a matter of faith. We can still accept the fact that generation plays a decisive role in the propagation of original

³⁵ "Omnes pariter norunt quantopere solliciti fuerint Sacrorum Antistites vel in ipsis ecclesiasticis conventibus palam publiceque profiteri, sanctissimam Dei Genitricem Virginem Mariam ob praevisa Christi Domini Redemptoris merita numquam originali subjacuisse peccato, sed praeservatam omnino fuisse ab originis labe, et idcirco sublimiori modo redemptam." *Official Documents*, p. 34.

³⁶ *Loc. cit.*, pp. 35-36, "Maria maxime indigisset Christo ut redemptore . . . illa magis indiguit mediatore praeveniente peccatum, ne esset aliquando ab ipsa contrahendum et ne ipsa contraheret."

³⁷ *Op. cit.*, col. 847.

sin, as the Council of Trent insists,³⁸ without taking the expression *ex semine Adae* so literally. Christ, too, we must remember, is of the seed of David though born of a virgin and His title to grace has nothing to do with His virginal birth.³⁹ The interpretation of Le Bachelet, still held by many theologians, seems to attribute too physical and carnal a nature to what is essentially a moral disorder inherited because Adam is the moral as well as the physical head of the human race. For all its refinement, then, this view seems rooted in the same theories that gave birth to the popular misconception of the seventeenth century that St. Ann conceived Mary *ex osculo, non ex semine Joachimi*.⁴⁰ Whatever be the intrinsic merits of the various explanations of the propagation of original sin, Pius IX had no intention of deciding this controversial question in the *Ineffabilis Deus*.

d. *The Certitude of the Privilege*

The words of Pius IX, "We by the authority of Jesus Christ, Our Lord, of the Blessed Apostles, Peter and Paul and by Our Own, declare, pronounce and define . . ." indicate that he is speaking *ex cathedra*, invoking the fullness of his infallible Magisterial power. In declaring that the Immaculate Conception "has been revealed by God and, therefore, is to be firmly and constantly believed by all the faithful" the Holy Father indicates that the Marian privilege is an object of divine faith.

The most significant thing here from a theological view-

³⁸ Sess. VI, c. 3: "Nam sicut revera homines, nisi ex semine Adae propagati nascerentur, non nascerentur iniusti, cum ea propagatione per ipsum, dum concipiuntur propriam iniustitiam contrahunt." *D.B.* 795.

³⁹ Christ's fundamental title to grace is the hypostatic union.

⁴⁰ Thomas Campanella, O.P. (d. 1639) writes: "Alii dicunt Annam, beatæ Virginis matrem, concepisse ex osculo, non ex semine Joachimi ut quidam Sermonarius franciscanus, vocatus DORMI-SECURE; id quod Ecclesia et doctores pro fabulosa haeresi habent." Quoted by Le Bachelet, *op. cit.*, col. 1144.

point is the expression *a Deo revelatam*. As Le Bachelet remarks, it stands out in bold relief when we compare it with the wording which figured in the first text of the Bull: *catholicae ecclesiae doctrinam cum sacris litteris et divina et apostolica traditione cohaerentem*.⁴¹ At the same time, it creates a genuine problem, for according to Catholic principles the whole of the deposit of revelation is to be found in Scripture and the apostolic tradition. Yet an even cursory study of the discussions preceding the drafting of the Bull reveals the serious disagreement as to how the truth was revealed and where the revelation is to be found. The arguments themselves that were finally incorporated in the Bull have provoked criticism from non-Catholic exegetes and historians of dogma or patristic literature. Even in Catholic circles they have led to controversies which have continued to the present time.

These facts prompted Le Bachelet to make the three following observations. "The fact that a truth is contained in the deposit of revelation is one thing," he writes, "the manner in which it is contained is another. The revelation of a truth may be either explicit or implicit, and correspondingly the truth can be contained in the deposit of revelation either explicitly or implicitly. Whatever we can know of the case of the Immaculate Conception, it is clear that in the formula of definition Pius IX limited himself to affirming the fact that it was revealed (*esse a Deo revelatam*) without either specifying the way it was revealed or indicating how the Marian privilege is contained in these primitive sources.

"Secondly, the fact that a truth is contained in the deposit of revelation is one thing; the explicit belief and profession of this truth in the Church is quite another. The two questions are not in the same order; the first pertains to the objective realm, the second to the subjective order. Now there is no necessary parallelism between the two in the sense that what is

⁴¹ *Op. cit.*, col. 847; cf. Sardi, *op. cit.*, vol. 2. p. 38.

actually contained in the one is always expressed in the other. Not even for explicitly revealed truths is there any such strict concordance; all the more, then, would it be unreasonable to demand this concordance of other truths. For it can well happen that the profession or explicit belief does not manifest itself or even that it does not actually exist in the beginning either because of a doubt as to whether the truth in question is really contained in the deposit or because the reason for it was not known before. Hence the question of whether or not an explicit belief in the privilege of the Immaculate Conception existed in the beginning is not a question of principle to be settled *a priori*; it is a question of fact in the solution of which the careful study of ancient testimonies plays a marked role. This question of fact was no more defined by Pius IX than the other as to whether the dogma defined is contained explicitly or implicitly in the basic sources of revelation.

“Thirdly, the dogma itself is one thing, and the proofs adduced for it another. The Bull *Ineffabilis Deus*, in addition to the formula of definition, contains a whole preceding section of historical-doctrinal explanation which serves as the rational preamble to the pontifical declaration. Three classes of proofs appear therein. 1. From Holy Scripture, 2. from tradition, and 3. from the propriety of the glorious privilege. In the formula of definition itself Pius IX does not specify anything about the absolute value of these proofs or their influence in the formation and development of the pious belief. It is true nonetheless,” Le Bachelet adds wisely, “that a Catholic theologian in explaining and defending the dogma defined will not set aside these sources where the Magisterium of the Church sought the *raison d’être* of its acts. Apart from these sources, would he not be constructing his theoretical explanations and defense of dogma in the clouds or from fantasy? All the more inexcusable would such a procedure be since the objections of the adversaries of the Marian privilege strike not only the

doctrine itself but particularly the sources of this doctrine as expressed in the Bull."⁴²

This brings me to the first of the special problems.

2. *How Is the Immaculate Conception Revealed?*

According to Le Bachelet, the theologian has a triple task, to determine whether the Immaculate Conception was explicitly or implicitly revealed, to establish whether it was explicitly believed and professed from the earliest times, and finally to evaluate the arguments used in the *Ineffabilis Deus*. I suppose any adequate answer to our question would require a thorough treatment of these three points. Obviously, this is beyond the scope of this paper and would duplicate material in the papers that follow. For the arguments used in the Bull, as Le Bachelet remarked, can be reduced to three: theological reasons of propriety, the Scriptural proofs and Tradition. Now the argument of fitness infers the Marian privilege from her dignity as Mother of Christ, the divine Redeemer, a point Father Mullaney will discuss in his paper on the connection between Mary's Immaculate Conception and her other prerogatives. The two Scriptural arguments that stand out in a special way are those based on the Protoevangelium (*Gen.* 3, 15) and the Angelic Salutation (*Luke* 1, 28, 42). Whatever is to be said of their independent value as Scriptural proofs, the fact remains that the disagreement among the consulting theologians and Bishops discouraged the Pope from using them in this fashion. As Bishop Malou, a member of the Commission, notes: "He does not insist on the testimonies of Scripture as if they formed an argument apart, but unites them, so to speak, to the testimonies of the Fathers who have determined their meaning."⁴³ Thus they pertain to the argument from

⁴² *Op. cit.*, col. 847-848.

⁴³ J. B. Malou, *L'Immaculée Conception de la très sainte Vierge Marie, considérée comme dogme de foi*, vol. 1, Bruxelles, 1857, p. 246.

tradition. But tradition, as Pius IX uses it in the Bull, is taken primarily in the sense of an active living organ manifesting, transmitting, sanctioning the belief and the cult of the Immaculate Conception. The testimonies of the Fathers, implicit or explicit, general or particular, the celebration of Mary's feast in the East and West, the common belief of shepherds and faithful encouraged more and more explicitly by the supreme Magisterium and culminating in the Pope's decision "to ratify and define by Our supreme authority the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin"—all these elements are fused into a single argument in which the deciding factor is the authority of the infallible Magisterium.⁴⁴ Any detailed discussion of these proofs, then, would seem to risk encroaching on the ground covered by the papers dealing explicitly with the argument from the liturgy, the doctrine in the Eastern and Western Churches and in the Magisterium.

That is why I have chosen to approach the problem of the revelation of the Immaculate Conception from a broader viewpoint, that of the evolution of dogma. For it seems to me that only against the backdrop of some definite theory of doctrinal growth can we give a meaningful answer to our question, or understand the full grandeur and the historic significance of these words of Pius IX: "We by the authority of Jesus Christ . . . and by Our Own, *declare, pronounce and define* that the doctrine . . . *has been revealed by God.*"

Though the expression "evolution of dogma" was formerly eschewed as savoring of modernism, it has come into general acceptance in Catholic circles.⁴⁵ As Father Galvin points out in his *Critical Survey of Modern Conceptions of Doctrinal Development*, the problem of the evolution of dogma springs from two facts that form a seeming antinomy. The first is the essential stability of Catholic doctrine. As the *Ineffabilis Deus*

⁴⁴ Le Bachelet, *op. cit.*, col. 1207 f.

⁴⁵ Cf. Marín-Solá's discussion of this problem, *L'Evolution homogène du Dogme catholique*, 2 Fr. ed., vol. 1, Fribourg, 1924, pp. 1-4.

expresses it, "The Church of Christ, watchful guardian that she is and defender of the dogmas deposited with her, never changes anything, never diminishes anything, never adds anything to them." And yet, as the Holy Father goes on to explain, there is the fact of growth.⁴⁶ And the perplexing thing about this growth, as Father Galvin notes, is that the "Living Magisterium has integrated in its faith doctrines which before they were defined, had apparently been unknown, or in some cases even denied."⁴⁷

The Immaculate Conception seems to be an accepted instance of this and it serves as a crucial test-case for the plausibility of any theory of doctrinal development. The first draft of the Bull made by Father Perrone provoked opposition because the formula of the definition created the impression that an explicit belief and profession of the mystery went back to the earliest times: *constantem fuisse et esse catholicae ecclesiae doctrinam*.⁴⁸ Three of the five theologians appointed to revise it objected that texts alleged by Perrone either did not go back to the first centuries or else they asserted nothing more than virginal purity. The storm of opposition in theological circles during the Middle Ages and the prudent and prolonged reserve of the Popes, they insisted, all argued against the idea that the doctrine was always the constant teaching of the Church. However, the words of the definition could be understood of an implicit profession—Perrone himself seems to have

⁴⁶ *Official Documents*, p. 36: "Christi enim Ecclesia, sedula depositorum apud se dogmatum custos et vindex, nihil in his unquam permutat, nihil minuit, nihil addit, sed omni industria vetera fideliter sapienterque tractando, si qua antiquitus informata sunt, et Patrum fides sevit, ita limare, expolire studet, ut prisca illa coelesti doctrinae dogmata accipiant evidentiam, lucem, distinctionem, sed retineant plenitudinem, integritatem, proprietatem, ac in suo tantum genere crescant, in eodem scilicet dogmate, eodem sensu eademque sententia."

⁴⁷ J. J. Galvin, S.S., *A Critical Survey of Modern Conceptions of Doctrinal Development*, in *Proceedings of the Catholic Theological Society of America*, vol. 5, 1950, p. 46.

⁴⁸ Le Bachelet, *op. cit.*, col. 1203.

meant nothing more⁴⁹—and so the disputed phrase *constantem fuisse* remained in the six subsequent drafts. Nevertheless, at the November meeting of the Bishops the objections sprang up once more. Criticism was directed specifically against either the authenticity or the probative force of the texts cited. Archbishop Kenrick was one of the principal opponents of the idea of a formal primitive tradition. One of the Cardinals declared heatedly, “I cannot comprehend how one can affirm and reaffirm that the pious belief is manifested during the first ages of the Church by clear and unquestionable testimonies, or that the tradition always existed.” The end result was that the contested words disappeared in the eighth draft and the definitive text of the Bull.⁵⁰ When a number of the Bishops protested that many of the texts taken from the Fathers or early Church writers did not apply to Mary’s Conception at all, Bishop Malou explained that to affirm Mary’s holiness in an indefinite way is to affirm implicitly her Immaculate Conception and that these are to be considered only as indirect proofs.⁵¹

It is not only Harnack⁵² and the rationalists who could find no historical evidence for an explicit belief of Mary’s Immaculate Conception in the early Church. In the *Sylloge degli argomenti da servire all’estensore della Bolla dogmatica* drawn up by the Special Commission appointed by Pius IX we read: *Non est diffitendum inter Patres ceterosque scriptores, qui vetustioribus Ecclesiae aetatibus vixere, nondum repertos qui apertis verbis affirmaverint beatissimam Virginem sine originali peccato esse conceptam.*⁵³

The Marian interpretation of Genesis 3, 15 also presented

⁴⁹ See his explanation in *De Immaculato B. V. Mariae Conceptu*, p. 369.

⁵⁰ Le Bachelet, *op. cit.*, col. 1204; cf. Sardi, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, pp. 208 ff.

⁵¹ Le Bachelet, *op. cit.*, col. 1202.

⁵² *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, 3 ed., vol. 3, Freiburg im Breisgau, 1894-1895, pp. 584 ff, 669 f; A. Stap, *L’Immaculée Conception*, Paris, 1869.

⁵³ Sardi, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 48.

problems.⁵⁴ Is it true that only a few Fathers and these relatively unimportant, adopted the Christological and Mariological interpretations? The question is still under dispute.⁵⁵

Considerations such as these have made the more critically-minded theologians cognizant of the need of a satisfactory theory of doctrinal development that would not compromise the conviction that the Immaculate Conception has always been the property of the Church, an essential part of the original deposit of faith she possessed at the death of the last of New Testament writers. The current solutions suggested are not always mutually exclusive and have been variously classified.⁵⁶ For our purposes it is convenient to differentiate two broad lines of thought, one postulating an explicit revelation, the other an implicit revelation. The latter classification in turn includes a number of theories that differ rather profoundly.

⁵⁴ Some, like Bishop Tizzani, objected to the use of Gen. 3, 15 in the Bull at all. Cf. Sardi, *op. cit.*, pp. 679 f; vol. 2, pp. 38 ff.

⁵⁵ See: L. Drewniak, O.S.B., *Die mariologische Deutung von Gen. 3, 15 in der Väterzeit*, Breslau, 1934; H. Lennerz, S.J., *Duae quaestiones de Bulla "Ineffabilis Deus,"* in *Gregorianum*, vol. 24, 1943, pp. 347-366; G. M. Roschini, O.S.M., *Sull'interpretazione patristica del Protoevangelo (Gen. 3, 15)*, in *Marianum*, vol. 6, 1944, pp. 76-96; idem, *Ancora sull'interpretazione patristica del Protoevangelo (Gen. 3, 15)*, *ibid.*, vol. 8, pp. 293-399; Lennerz, *Consensus Patrum in interpretatione mariologica Gen. 3, 15?*, in *Gregorianum*, vol. 27, 1946, pp. 76-96; W. Goossens, *De cooperatione immediata Matris Redemptoris ad redemptionem objectivam*, Paris, 1939, pp. 95-99; F. Ceuppens, O.P., *De Mariologie biblica*, vol. 4 in *Theologia biblica*, Torino, 1948; idem, *Quaestiones selectae ex Historia Primaeva*, Taurini, 1948, pp. 195 ff; T. Gallus, S.J., *Patres Ecclesiaeque Scriptores in Bulla Pii IX "Ineffabilis Deus,"* in *Divus Thomas*, vol. 52, 1949, pp. 77-82; idem, *Interpretatio Mariologica Protoevangelii (Gen. 3, 15)*, Romae, 1949; D. Unger, O.F.M.Cap., *The First Gospel Gen. 3, 15* (Franciscan Institute Publications, Theology Series, No. 3), St. Bonaventure, N. Y., 1954, pp. 46 ff; etc.

⁵⁶ R. Dragnet, for example, speaks of the *historical*, the *logical or dialectical*, and the *theological* methods (Cf. *L'évolution des dogmes in Apologétique*, edited by M. Brillant, M. Nédoncelle, J. Coppens. 2 ed., Paris, 1948, pp. 1095-1122); J. J. Galvin, S.S., *op. cit.*, uses the same division; J. Duhr, S.J., *L'évolution du dogme de l'Immaculée Conception*, in *Nouvelle Revue Théologique*, vol. 73, 1951, pp. 1013-1032, modifies Dragnet's division somewhat in that he considers the *logical* and *dialectical* two distinct methods.

a. *The Theory of Explicit Revelation*

Under this heading we can put what Professor Draguet calls the "historical method."⁵⁷ It appears in various forms, one of which we find in Marín Solá as part of a more general theory we shall return to later.⁵⁸ To safeguard the substantial identity of subsequent doctrinal development with the original deposit of revelation, Marín Solá declares that "according to traditional theology, the Apostles enjoyed the special *privilege* of having received by infused light an *explicit* knowledge of divine revelation, a knowledge superior to that which all theologians or even the entire Church enjoys or will enjoy to the end of the world."⁵⁹ All the dogmas, defined or yet to be defined, were known by the Apostles immediately, formally and explicitly, not merely mediately, virtually or implicitly. This explicit knowledge was not passed on to the Church, however, except by way of general principles, written or oral, so that the Church had to rediscover through the aid of the Holy Spirit what is implicitly contained in these revealed principles.⁶⁰ From the standpoint of the original apostolic knowledge, then, we should rather speak of diminution and regression than of dogmatic progress.⁶¹

Applying this notion to the Immaculate Conception, we would explain the absence of any solid evidence for an express belief in this Marian privilege on the assumption that the Apostles did not impart it to the post-apostolic age except by way of such general principles as Mary's unusual purity and holiness, her divine maternity, and so on.

Such a theory is plausible only in the abstract; it falls apart when we put it into concrete factual terms. Is it conceivable that the Apostles would have neglected to impart to the early

⁵⁷ Draguet, *op. cit.*, p. 1109.

⁵⁸ See the *dialectical theory* of implicit revelation below.

⁵⁹ *L'évolution homogène*, vol. 1, pp. 56-57.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 58-60.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

Church a knowledge of one of Mary's most glorious privileges so that it was rediscovered only after a long and painful process? Or if we take a more probable assumption that the Apostles did transmit the doctrine explicitly to their followers, then how can we explain or excuse the Church for letting this clearly revealed doctrine become so obscured that when the question of Mary's Immaculate Conception was explicitly broached by the medieval schoolmen a great number of learned doctors of the Church, and not the least important, did not see their way clear to accepting it? ⁶² Is it not ironical that one of Mary's great devotees, Bernard of Clairvaux, wrote against the Immaculate Conception (and who will seriously maintain that it was merely the cult and not the novelty of the doctrine that worried him) because "the Church knows nothing of it. Reason does not establish it nor is there any ancient tradition to commend it. Are we more learned or more devout than the Fathers?" ⁶³

Of the so-called "traditional" character of the theory, Draguet observes that it is a curious brew of modern notions mixed with ingredients taken from theological ideas of the sixteenth century that in turn are a no less curious mixture of medieval elements which the scholastics, however, understood in an altogether different manner. ⁶⁴ But what is more serious to his mind is the fact that the real problem still remains un-

⁶² Draguet, *op. cit.*, p. 1110.

⁶³ *Epistola 174, ad canonicos Lugdunenses*: "Unde miramur satis quod visum fuerit hoc tempore quibusdam vestrum voluisse mutare colorem optimum, novam inducendo celebritatem, quam ritus ecclesiae nescit, non probat ratio, non commendat antiqua traditio. Numquid Patribus doctiores, aut devotiores sumus?" in *P.L.*, 182, 333.

⁶⁴ Draguet, *op. cit.*, p. 1110: "Il y aurait beaucoup à dire sur cette théorie, sur les raisons dont on la prétend appuyer et sur son caractère soi-disant traditionnel. On verrait notamment qu'elle constitue un curieux amalgame de conceptions modernes avec certains éléments de la théologie du xvi^e siècle, créés au moyen âge, mais auxquels les scolastiques avaient été loin de prêter pareille signification. Disons seulement que cette théorie accumule bien des *invraisemblances*."

solved. It is not enough to establish the substantial identity of the present day teaching of the Church and the mind of the Apostles. We must also defend the continuity of that doctrine and its possession by the Church in the post-apostolic age.⁶⁵

Another line of speculation that can be grouped under the historical method is the assumption that the seeming absence of an explicit belief in the early Church is due solely to the absence or loss of documents. In his remarkable *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, Cardinal Newman weighs this theory in the balance of historical criticism. "Another hypothesis for accounting for a want of accord between the early and late aspects of Christianity is that of the *Disciplina Arcani*, put forward on the assumption that there has been no variation in the teaching of the Church from first to last. It is maintained that doctrines which are associated with the later ages of the Church were really in the Church from the first, but not publically taught, and that for various reasons: as, for the sake of reverence that sacred subjects might not be profaned by the heathen; and for the sake of catechumens, that they might not be oppressed or carried away by a sudden communication of the whole circle of revealed truth."⁶⁶

But scholar that he was, Newman was not satisfied with such an explanation. While it might account for some of the apparent variation and doctrinal development that embarrasses the critically-minded historian, "yet it is no key to the whole difficulty, as we find it, for obvious reasons:—because the variations continue beyond the time when it is conceivable that the discipline was in force, and because they manifest themselves on a law, not abruptly, but by a visible growth which has persevered up to this time without any sign of its coming to an end."⁶⁷ The *Disciplina Arcani* might account

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ H. Newman, *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, 2 ed. 13th impres., London, 1906, p. 27.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

for the absence of loss of a document, but hardly for the absence or loss of a doctrine. And Bernard's complaint was precisely on this score. The Church had taught him to sing the praises of all the other prerogatives of Mary. *Sed et ortum Virginis didici nihilominus in Ecclesia.*⁶⁸ The real difficulty, however, as Draguet points out, is not merely the absence of positive testimony in favor of a doctrine such as the Immaculate Conception but the positive testimonies against or contrary to the doctrine. This is difficult to reconcile with the assumption of an explicit tradition rooted in an explicit revelation.⁶⁹

Some have sought to explain the origin of such contrary testimony and opposition to a doctrine which the Church at a later date declares definitively was always hers and is contained in her original deposit of revelation as follows. Dogmas pass through three stages of development. In the beginning the Church is in the peaceful possession of her truths. But as a fuller realization of the implications of these truths develop, scientific doubts arise, leading to controversies and even to the denial of the truth in question by learned theologians. Finally, as the fruit of much discussion and dispute the doubts are solved and the truth confirmed by solemn definition.

Though such a development may account for the existence of some of the dogmas in the Church today, it does not seem to explain the facts in the case of the Immaculate Conception. The great doctors of the thirteenth century were hardly ignorant of tradition. It seems strange that despite their great devotion to Mary and their desire, in the words of St. Bernard, to hold fast and to pass on what they have received from the Church,⁷⁰ it seems strange, I say, that they had no inkling that

⁶⁸ *Op. cit.*, in *P.L.*, 182, 333.

⁶⁹ *Op. cit.*, p. 1111. For some of the positive testimonies frequently cited as contrary to the Immaculate Conception, see Perrone, *op. cit.*, A. Stap, *L'Immaculée Conception, Etudes sur l'origine d'un dogme*, Paris, 1869.

⁷⁰ *Loc. cit.*, "Ego vero quod ab illa [sc. Ecclesia] accepi, securus et teneo et trado; quod non, scrupulosius fateor, admiserim. Accepi sane ab Ecclesia illum diem cum summa veneratione recolendum, quo assumpta de saeculo

the Church had always professed this doctrine. Why was it that St. Bonaventure, whose heart would not permit him to condemn those who held the Immaculate Conception, sided reluctantly with its opponents because this view was "the more common, the more reasonable, the more secure; the more common, because almost everyone holds that the Blessed Virgin had original sin . . . , more reasonable [because it can be inferred from the doctrine of Augustine] . . . more secure, because it is more in harmony with a love for the faith and with the authority of the Saints. It is more in accord with the latter because the Saints when they speak of this matter except Christ alone from the general law which declares: All have sinned [Rom. 5, 12]." ⁷¹

To escape difficulties such as these, theologians generally have come to admit the Immaculate Conception is only implicitly revealed. Indeed, this was the prevalent opinion among the theologians and Bishops at the time the Bull was issued.⁷² It is easy enough to dispose of the problem of the Immaculate Conception with the pat formula: Its formal appearance in the Church is simply a case of an implicit truth becoming explicit. (But this seemingly simple solution masks some rather profound difficulties. Just how does an implicit truth become explicit? This is the core of the problem. Some of the principal solutions are the following.

b. *Theories of Implicit Revelation*

The first school of thought is described as the *theory of logical development*.⁷³ In essence it limits divine faith to truths

nequam, coelis quoque intulit celeberrimorum festa gaudiorum. Sed et ortum Virginis didici nihilominus in Ecclesia, et ab Ecclesia indubitanter habere festivum atque sanctum; firmissime cum Ecclesia sentiens, in utero eam accepisse ut sancta prodiret."

⁷¹ *Sent.* III, d. 3, p. 1, a. 1, q. 2, *Opera Omnia*, vol. 3, Quaracchi, 1887, pp. 67-68.

⁷² Le Bachelet, *art. cit.*, col. 1203.

⁷³ J. Duhr, *art. cit.*, p. 1018.

formally revealed either expressly or implicitly. All so-called virtually revealed truths, that is, those deduced by reason of some purely rational principle and known technically as theological conclusions do not pertain to divine faith.⁷⁴

The proponents of this theory appeal to the acts of the Special Commission of Pius IX. Among the characteristics sufficient for the definition of a dogma, the Special Commission of Pius IX lists that of *virtual immediate revelation*.⁷⁵ This, it explains, occurs in two instances, first when one or more revealed propositions contain the truth in question. For example, from the revelation that Christ is true God and true man it follows that He has both a human and a divine will. Or from the two revealed truths: "God is triune" and "Everything is one in God, save where the relation of origin intervenes," it follows that the Holy Spirit proceeds from both Father and Son as from a single principle. The second case of virtual and immediate revelation cited by the Commission concerns a truth so intimately connected with other dogmas that its denial would entail necessarily and immediately the falsity of other revealed truths. For example, the distinction of mortal and venial sin could not be denied without conflicting with the truths that there is such a thing as mortal sin and yet not all sin is incompatible with the state of grace. Or to claim that the efficacy of the sacraments depends on the personal holiness of the minister would entail the denial of the *ex opere operato* efficacy of the sacraments and the truth that Christ is their primary minister. As Lennerz observes, it is clear that a virtually revealed truth, as understood by the Commission, is what we would call a formal, but implicitly revealed doctrine. It is not taken in the contemporary meaning of a theological conclusion, for all the premises are revealed.⁷⁶ It is a simple

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ Cf. Sardi, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 791 ff; Le Bachelet, *art. cit.*, col. 1200.

⁷⁶ H. Lennerz, S.J., *Duae quaestiones de Bulla "Ineffabilis Deus,"* in *Gregorianum*, vol. 24, 1943, pp. 361-364.

unfolding of a truth already contained in an obscure, confused and implicit manner in some other truth that is formally revealed in a clear, distinct and explicit fashion. Like the explanation above, of which it is a precision, this theory, too, admits three stages in the development or unfolding of a dogma. First the dogma is not thought of in explicit terms. Later on a controversy is occasioned by the explicit denial of the doctrine either by someone within or without the Church. After much discussion and debate a dogmatic definition results.⁷⁷

Critics object that this theory assumes a certain amount of explicit knowledge in the beginning. Otherwise, why would doubts or controversies arise? Consequently, it falls heir to the weakness of the explicit revelation theories.⁷⁸ Furthermore, these critics point out, the attempt to discover the Immaculate Conception at least implicitly in certain texts of Scripture or Tradition in this narrow sense of "implicit" leads to a forced exegesis, the substitution of one's own viewpoint for that of the ancient writers or an amplification of the meaning of statement as understood by these writers themselves. As an instance, Father Duhr cites the case of those who, eschewing all recognized rules of exegesis, insist on reading the Immaculate Conception into the literal text of the Protoevangelium or Angelic Salutation. The parallel between Mary and Eve, so frequently alluded to by the Fathers and ecclesiastical writers, is often treated in this same fashion. Eve, they argue, came from the creative hands of God immaculate; Mary, however, is the New Eve; ergo, she, too, is immaculately conceived. But if the notion of the Second Eve, as they understood the term, implicitly includes Mary's Immaculate Conception, why did these writers themselves not recognize it? No one, Father Duhr comments, could vary this traditional theme with more virtuosity than Bernard of Clairvaux; yet he remained a decided

⁷⁷ Card. Franzelin, S.J., *Tractatus de divina traditione et Scriptura*, Romae, 1870, pp. 238-247; Duhr, *op. cit.*, p. 1018.

⁷⁸ Draguet, *art. cit.*, p. 1111.

opponent of the belief. Similarly, Augustine is frequently cited as a defender of the Marian privilege despite his assertion that Christ *alone* by reason of His miraculous conception and virginal birth escaped the contagion of original sin.⁷⁹

What makes this theory of development of dogma seem insufficient in the case of the Immaculate Conception, though it may well account for the appearance of other dogmas, is that the great doctors of the Middle Ages were known precisely for their ability to make explicit the interconnection of revealed truths, to realize the implications in Scripture. Now, when confronted with text like Genesis 3, 15, the Angelic Salutation, or with the tradition of the Fathers (and who will say that they did not know that tradition), why did these men not discover the Immaculate Conception if it follows by a simple reasoning process from these notions? Why did they regard it rather as opposed to Scripture, particularly to the Apostle's teaching that all had sinned in Adam and all were redeemed by Christ? The only answer seems to be, not that they did not see the relation, but that the premises *as they understood them* did not contain the conclusion in any necessary way. Or, to put it another way, the fact that *post factum* we can draw the Immaculate Conception, or the Assumption, from the idea of the enmity between the woman and the serpent is because we have a far clearer and more precise knowledge of what that enmity means, a knowledge that cannot be explained simply on the basis of an analysis of the concept as Adam perhaps would have understood it or as the medieval schoolmen conceived it.

The second school of thought Duhr calls *dialectical*.⁸⁰ Briefly, it maintains that theological conclusions in the technical sense of a conclusion from revelation with the aid of at

⁷⁹ Duhr, *art. cit.*, p. 1019; B. Capelle, O.S.B., *Le pensée de saint Augustin sur l'Immaculée Conception*, in *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale*, vol. 4, 1932, pp. 401-423.

⁸⁰ Duhr, *art. cit.*, p. 1020.

least one purely rational premise can be defined as revealed. Perhaps the crudest form of the dialectical theory is that of M. Tuyaerts,⁸¹ the essence of whose position is summed up by De Lubac in the twofold thesis: All theological conclusions can be defined and they alone can be defined.⁸² Tuyaerts' oversimplified solution to such an extremely complex problem met with general opposition.⁸³

A more plausible and refined form is that presented by the Spanish Dominican Marín Solá under the title of the homogeneous evolution of Catholic dogma.⁸⁴ With the exception of the Apostles, to whom Marín Solá attributes the special explicit knowledge we referred to above, dogmatic progress affects the Church as a whole. It is not simply the individual theologians or the faithful but the entire Church that passes from a stage of implicit to explicit knowledge of a given doctrine. Dogmas which appear later are contained in the primitive revelation in such a manner that if the revealed principles are analyzed sufficiently in themselves the dogmas become apparent. Christian piety and the *sensus fidelium*, which follow a kind of intuition rather than rigorous reasoning, play a role in this development but only an accessory one.⁸⁵ The essential point is that at least *post factum* it is possible to show that these

⁸¹ M. Tuyaerts, O.P., *L'évolution du dogme*, Louvain, 1919.

⁸² H. de Lubac, S.J., *Le problème du développement du dogme*, in *Recherches de Science religieuse*, vol. 35, 1948, p. 130.

⁸³ Cf. for instance, A. Gardeil, *Bulletin d'introduction à la Théologie*, in *Revue des Sciences philosophiques et théologiques*, vol. 9, 1920, p. 658; vol. 11, 1922, p. 689; or the reviews by H. Riedinger, in *Revue pratique d'Apologétique*, vol. 34, 1922, pp. 689-691; and J. Rivière, in *Revue des sciences religieuses*, vol. 2, 1922, pp. 186-188.

⁸⁴ His ideas first appeared in a series of articles in the *Ciencia Tomista* from 1911 to 1919 and were elaborated in book form in *La evolución homogenea del dogma católico*, Madrid-Valencia, 1923. We quote, as above, from the second French edition, *L'évolution homogène du dogme catholique*, 2 vols., Fribourg, 1924.

⁸⁵ *L'évolution homogène*, vol. 1, pp. 330-331.

developments can be deduced in a strictly logical or syllogistical fashion from some revealed notion.

Such a theory, it is claimed, safeguards the substantial identity of Catholic doctrine, for in the syllogism the conclusion is revealed not as something new, but rather as something always present potentially in the premises. It is the task of theology and the theologians to draw on the potential of revealed premises and make explicit their implications. Such conclusions are first known simply as truths that are theologically necessary and certain, and for this no infallible pronouncement of the Magisterium is needed. The latter is required for these dogmatically certain truths to take on the formal character of a truth of divine faith. And once they are defined as revealed by God, they become the basis for further doctrinal development.

Applying this theory to the Immaculate Conception, Marín Solá explains how this prerogative of Mary is contained implicitly in the formal notion of the *theotokos*. The Blessed Virgin, he writes, is the *worthy Mother of God*. From this principle, however, it is possible to deduce not only the dogma of Mary's immunity from all actual sin but also the dogma that she was preserved from all stain of original sin. Now the Mother of God certainly has a right to the highest degree of purity compatible with redemption by Jesus Christ (this, he points out, was the Scotistic contribution). Now original purity joined to a personal *debitum* (this was the Thomistic contribution) is compatible with redemption in Jesus Christ. Therefore, the Mother of God has the right to original purity joined to a personal *debitum*.⁸⁶

This theory of Tuyvaerts and Marín Solá has been criticized on several counts. For one thing, the more conservative-minded theologians insist, the Church has never claimed that a theological conclusion drawn from one principle known from

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 329.

reason and another from faith can be defined as revealed by God and to be believed by divine faith. Furthermore, since one of the premises of such a conclusion is not part of revelation, does not the conclusion add to the content of the original deposit? Marín Solá himself recognized the cogency of this second objection and for that reason appealed to the theory of the special revelation made to the Apostles we referred to above. Apart from the improbability of this assumption for the Immaculate Conception in particular, it still remains to be shown that any dogma in general and the Immaculate Conception in particular have been defined as a theological conclusion.⁸⁷

But whether the Church can define a theological conclusion as revealed by God or not, or whether there is such a fundamental difference between the logical and the dialectical methods,⁸⁸ we can still ask: Does the notion of worthy Mother of God contain the idea of the Immaculate Conception in a strictly logical and *necessary* way? Rather significant is the fact a number of Marín Solá's earlier Dominican confrères contested this very point. Cardinal Torquemada at the Council of Bâle insisted vehemently that "the singular privilege of the divine maternity does not imply in any way that of her preservation from the original fault. Scripture, when it mentions the maternity of the Virgin, does not insinuate that she had been removed from the ordinary course of common life."⁸⁹ Cajetan knew well the distinction between the *debitum* and the *reatus peccati*, as Duhr points out. He knew further that the privilege could be reconciled with redemption. Was it only that he

⁸⁷ Duhr, *art. cit.*, p. 1021 f.

⁸⁸ Draguet, for instance, puts the logical and dialectical methods on a par. From the standpoint of formal logic, there is a sound basis for so doing, since the use of any reasoning process, even where both premises are revealed truths, still introduces or assumes the validity of some rational principle of propositional or class calculus.

⁸⁹ *De veritate conceptionis B.M.V.*, pars XI, c. 15, London, 1869, pp. 681-684; cited by Duhr, *art. cit.*, p. 1023.

was uncertain that Mary was a worthy Mother of God? For if the Immaculate Conception follows by strict logical necessity from these notions, why did Cajetan not recognize it as certain and not merely probable? ⁹⁰ As Perrone pointed out to Pius IX, the difficulty or objection which men like Torquemada, Cajetan, Melchior Cano and others had to the Immaculate Conception was the fact that it had no apparent physical or metaphysical connection, as he calls it, with any expressly revealed truth in Scripture or Tradition and, therefore, could not be deduced from it of necessity.⁹¹

This is the common complaint against either of the two preceding explanations. The simple analysis of terms such as the Mother of God or the Scriptural texts like *Gen. 3, 15*, *Luke 1, 28*, and so on, or the concept of the New Eve, as the Fathers seemingly understood the term, does not justify the deduction of the Immaculate Conception in any rigorously logical fashion. It is significant that the theologians who drew up the arguments to be used in the *Ineffabilis Deus* recognized this fact only too well. Perrone, whose influence on the first as well as the final draft of the Bull is generally recognized,⁹² deserves to be quoted at length.

“Ac primo Ecclesiam posse aliquid definire, quod *implicite* in revelatione divina continetur, sive id explicatione conceptuum indigeat, sive id legitima ac necessaria argumentatione inde sit deducendum, atque hoc vel ex duabus de fide praemissis propositionibus vel una quae ex fide sit, altera vero quae ex naturali ratione sit evidens licet non *physica* aut *metaphysica*, sed morali tantum evidentiâ nexus pateat, prout piae adsertores sententiae affirmant, vix in dubium revocari posse videtur. Siquidem primo evidentiâ quoque *moralis* veram illationis

⁹⁰ Duhr, *art. cit.*, p. 1023.

⁹¹ Perrone, *op. cit.*, p. 514.

⁹² Le Bachelet, *art. cit.*, col. 1199; Unger, *op. cit.*, p. 56; see also the acknowledgment of Pius IX in the introduction to *De Immaculato B. V. Mariae Conceptu disquisitio theologica*.

necessitatem gignit, imo et metaphysicae ipsi evidentiae quandoque aequipollet. Deinde si res secus esset minus in Ecclesia iudicis controversiarum necessitas appareret. Nam si illos excipias, qui destinato animo ea etiam ipsa impugnant, de quibus liquido aperteque constat, cordati omnes sanique iudicii viri ea lubenti animo admittunt, quin ullam de iis controversiam moveant. Ad haec, nimis inde coarctaretur supremi illius magisterii munus, quod Christus Ecclesiae suae concredidit, et quo ipsa de controversiis quibusvis iudicare, easque dirimere potest. Demum ejusmodi sentiendi ratio componi haudquam potest cum ea agendi ratione, qua Ecclesia usa identidem est. Etenim haud paucae dogmaticae definitiones sive a Conciliis oecumenicis, sive a romanis Pontificibus editae sunt, quae eo, quem sententiae istius patroni postulant, evidenti nexu destitutae erant, adeoque illius vi edi minime potuissent, quod nefas est dictu.”⁹³

Without denying the usefulness of the historical and logical methods, the proponents of the third theory have tried to clarify what is involved in this additional step whereby the Church defines a dogma of which—naturally speaking—she has, in the words of Perrone, only moral certitude that it is connected with Scripture and tradition. As this learned theologian assured Pius IX, it is precisely because the Church is not simply a natural society but is invested with the supernatural teaching authority of Christ Himself that she can step in, and has stepped in, to define doctrines in which the “evident connection” with revelation demanded by the logical or dialectical theory is absent. Because the third explanation of how the implicit becomes explicit stresses the supernatural aspects involved, it is usually called the *theological* solution.⁹⁴ Perhaps

⁹³ Perrone. *op. cit.*, pp. 521-522.

⁹⁴ Draguet, *art. cit.*, p. 1117; Galvin, *art. cit.*, p. 47. Duhr speaks of it as “solution psychologique: prise de conscience toujours plus nette et plus ferme” (*art. cit.*, p. 1023).

it is not as novel or modern as some of its opponents insist. At any rate, its roots are found already in the writings of Moehler (1796-1838) and it received its essential expression in Cardinal Newman's classic *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*. Draguet, one of its modern exponents, admits that his version is but a precision of Newman's theory.⁹⁵

From a negative viewpoint it stresses the inadequacy of a purely logical or dialectical conception of the unfolding of the original deposit of revelation entrusted to the Church; from a positive viewpoint it accentuates the living character of the Church and its ideas. As biological growth cannot be explained mechanically in terms of physics and chemistry alone, though these factors play an essential role therein, so neither can the psychological growth of the embryonic truths present in the *depositum fidei* be explained in terms of the equally mechanical process of logic or dialectics.

To clarify this point, we might recall that any problem of pure or formal logic can be performed mechanically by an electronic computer. In a matter of seconds, Eniac or Edvac can punch out all the possible logical implications of the initial data fed into the machine. From the standpoint of the theological theory we could say that if such a machine had existed at the time of the apostles or at least at the time of the ante-Nicene Fathers and they had fed into such a machine notions such as "full of grace," "enmity between the woman and the serpent," "lily among thorns," etc. (*in the sense that these terms were explicitly understood in their day*), the computer would not come out with the answer of the Immaculate Conception. The simple reason is that the conceptual meaning we attribute to these words is fuller, richer, clearer than that of the early Christians. That is why our present gloriously reign-

⁹⁵ Cf. W. J. Burghardt, S.J., *The Catholic Concept of Tradition in the Light of Modern Theological Thought*, in *Proceedings of the Catholic Theological Society of America*, vol. 6, 1951, p. 55 f; Draguet, *art. cit.*, p. 1117.

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ing Holy Father, Pius XII, in his encyclical *Fulgens corona gloriæ* could write: "If these praises of the Blessed Virgin Mary be given the careful consideration they deserve, who will dare to doubt that she who was purer than the angels and at all times pure, was at any moment, even for the briefest instant, not free from every stain of sin?"⁹⁶

Simonin in his interesting observations on the notions of "implicit" and "explicit" declares pointedly that the implicit is not contained within the explicit but rather outside it. The explicit notions of an earlier age can be likened to a cone of light surrounded by a zone of half-light that merges gradually with the darkness. The implicit source of dogmas later to become explicit is to be sought in this twilight fringe of the original mystery revealed.⁹⁷ Mary's purity and sinlessness were revealed in a general and undefined way. Only gradually did the Church, shepherds and faithful, come to realize that this purity implies not only virginal purity but also purity from all actual sin and even from original sin. But neither Chrysostom nor Augustine, for example, understood the full richness and beauty of the ideas which they had a hand in transmitting.

The theological solution postulates that the process whereby the implicit becomes explicit is not a drawing out, so much as a filling in; not exhausting the content of what was given explicitly, clearly and formally, so much as adding details to what was revealed in outline; not an analysis but an amplification. But does this not destroy the traditional notion of doctrinal stability? Is it not tantamount to abandoning the claim that the Church "never changes anything, never diminishes anything, never adds anything" (*Ineffabilis Deus*)?

This is indeed the most serious objection to the theological

⁹⁶ *A.A.S.*, vol. 45, Oct. 8, 1953, p. 580.

⁹⁷ H. Simonin, O.P., *Implicite et explicite dans le développement du dogme*, in *Angelicum*, vol. 14, 1937, pp. 126-145; *La théologie thomiste et le développement du dogme*, in *Revue Thomiste*, vol. 18, 1935, pp. 537-556.

theory.⁹⁸ By way of answer its defenders stress the following points:

1. The absolutely fixed and static idea of Catholic doctrine as these objectors conceive it, is a Protestant, not a Catholic notion. The Church is not something dead and embalmed in ancient Christianity; it is a living thing, the Mystical Body of Christ. Christ lives on in the Church and the infallible Magisterium He instituted is the guarantee that the doctrinal development of the germinal ideas of revelation will not be a transmutation or decay but a genuine process of maturation. Is the Virgin who stood beneath the Cross not the identical person whom St. Ann nursed at her breast? Is it not the same Christ Who was born in the stable, Who startled the Rabbis by His learning at the age of twelve and Who changed water into wine at Cana? Living ideas also grow, yet remain somehow identical, true to themselves. In the language of Pius IX, "*in suo genere crescant*" (*Ineffabilis Deus*). As Newman put it, they follow a definite law. "Young birds do not grow into fishes, nor does the child degenerate into the brute, wild or domestic, of which he is by inheritance lord. Vincentius of Lerins adopts this illustration in distinct reference to Christian doctrine. 'Let the soul's religion,' he says, 'imitate the law of the body, which as years go on, develops indeed and opens out its due proportions, and yet remains identically what it was. Small are a baby's limbs, a youth's larger, yet they are the same.'"⁹⁹

2. Objectively speaking, dogma never changes, for each dogma later defined is present in some germinal idea contained either in Scripture or in tradition as a *source* of revelation. The full meaning of the Scriptural texts or the principles or propositions communicated orally by the apostles or inspired

⁹⁸ Cf., e.g. C. Boyer, S.J., *Qu'est-ce que La Théologie? Réflexions sur une controverse*, in *Gregorianum*, vol. 21, 1940, pp. 255-266; Marín Solá, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

⁹⁹ *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, chapter 5, section 1, p. 172.

writers is something really intended by God and hence pertains to the real sense of the words of revelation. This richer meaning has been called by various names and classified in different ways either as proper sense, or typical, or spiritual, or fuller, allegorico-dogmatic, messianic sense, etc.¹⁰⁰ The name is not important. What is generally agreed on is that this is not simply an accommodated sense but *real* and yet it is not something that a simple philological exegesis or purely historical study of the documents of the ancient Church will reveal. But just as the inspired writers of the New Testament in virtue of their personal infallibility could disclose an additional and hitherto unsuspected meaning in the Old Testament (e.g., typical or prophetic sense), so the Church in virtue of its infallible Magisterium can declare that a given text of Scripture, such as Genesis 3, 15, actually has a fuller meaning *intended really by God* but which was not always recognized as such, any more than were all the Messianic types of Christ that Matthew found in the Old Testament recognized by the Rabbis.

The process whereby the Church comes to recognize this fuller meaning is not by personal inspiration in the person of the Holy Father in the sense of a new revelation. It is nevertheless the result of the action of the Holy Spirit which Christ gave to the Church with the assurance: "He will teach you all the truth" (*John* 16, 13). It appears as a gradual development or attitude of mind in which the *sensus fidelium*, so difficult to define, has an important role. It is the work of both the Church teaching and the Church taught; popular piety and the work

¹⁰⁰ Cf. e.g. J. Coppens, *Nouvelles réflexions sur les divers sens des Saintes Ecritures*, in *Nouvelle Revue Théologique*, vol. 74, 1952, pp. 3-20; Duhr, *art. cit.*, p. 1030; T. Gallus, *Sensus allegorico-dogmaticus, sensus literalis Protoevangelii (Gen. 3, 15)*, in *Verbum Domini*, vol. 27, 1949, pp. 33-43, and *Scholion ad Protoevangelium Gen. 3, 15*; *ibid.*, vol. 28, 1950, pp. 51-54; F. M. Braun, *La Mère des fidèles*, Tournai, Paris, 1953, p. 21; D. Unger, *The Use of Sacred Scripture in Mariology*, in *Marian Studies*, vol. 1, 1950, pp. 77-102, and *The First-Gospel Genesis 3:15*, esp. bibliographical appendix, pp. 325-355.

of theologians. Many factors are involved and the precise steps of development are not always apparent. The important thing is that the development does take place and that it is not a chance development but is intended by divine Providence and falls under the action of the Holy Ghost. Not only is the Spirit of Truth required to explain the growth of such a germinal idea but He is required to assure the Church that the development has reached its term and can be defined. Now, one of the marks of true development is what Newman calls the logical sequence. But the logical character of the doctrine is not understood in the sense of the logical or dialectical theory of development. As Newman explains, "Logic is brought in to arrange and inculcate what no logic was employed in gaining."¹⁰¹ In other words, once the idea is present, it appears as a logical conclusion or outcome of the germinal source.¹⁰² Once the full meaning of the Immaculate Conception was grasped, does it not seem to follow logically enough from the idea of perfect enmity expressed in Genesis 3, 15, or from the divine maternity, and so on? Yet when we examine this *nexus* carefully it is not what Newman, and Perrone after him, called metaphysical or physical certitude, i.e., a rigorously logical unfolding of an idea. The certitude is moral.¹⁰³ And that is why a purely scientific or historical exegesis will not explain it. What an historical study will do, however, is reveal—at least in many instances—the various steps or stages of doctrinal growth so that *post factum* we can see how the original idea has grown and how the mature doctrine is an unfolding of the original idea.

3. To emphasize the essential or substantial identity of

¹⁰¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 191.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 195: "A doctrine, then, professed in its mature years by a philosophy or religion, is likely to be a true development and not a corruption, in proportion as it seems to be the logical issue of its original teaching."

¹⁰³ Newman, *op. cit.*, pp. 52, 112; Perrone, *op. cit.*, p. 521; see also T. Lynch, *The Newman-Perrone Paper on Development*, in *Gregorianum*, vol. 16, 1935, p. 432.

the deposit of revelation with the doctrinal developments of a later age, the advocates of this theory often appeal to two other notions, that of Christ as the global object of revelation¹⁰⁴ and of tradition, not only as a source of revelation but as the active rule of faith identified with the living Magisterium of the Church. Christ is God's gift to humanity *par excellence* (*Rom.* 8, 33); He is the whole of dogma, the fullness of life and truth. He is the revelation of the Father (*John* 14, 9). He is also the revelation of all else, for He is the mystery of which St. Paul speaks, hidden for ages but revealed in the fullness of time. In this Bonaventurian notion of theology,¹⁰⁵ Christ is the all-embracing mystery from which every other revealed truth can be derived. As Duhr explains it, every truth capable of being defined must be not only revealed but figure as an integral part of the "Mystery of Christ." This mystery is the whole plan of redemption or salvation; this is the one grand *revelatum per se*. If we do not know the unfathomable riches of this mystery which surpass all human understanding for all time to come, we know Christ at least in outline. All dogmas so far defined or yet to be defined are related to it. This is their "Christian context." The notion of the Trinity, the whole of Christology, all the dogmas dealing with the fall, the redemption, the nature of the grace life and the manner in which it is imparted, the Mystical Body, and so on are all integral parts of the grand "economy of salvation." Mariology ties in with this plan because God willed to realize the work of redemption through the co-operation of the New Eve, the Mother of the Eternal Word.¹⁰⁶

The permanent living contact with this Mystery of Christ

¹⁰⁴ F. Tuymans, S.J., *Le progrès du dogme*, in *Nouvelle Revue Théologique*, vol. 71, 1949, pp. 692-695; Duhr, *art. cit.*, pp. 1025-1026; De Lubac, *Le problème du développement du dogme*, in *Recherches de Science religieuse*, vol. 35, 1948, pp. 156 ff.

¹⁰⁵ Cf., e.g. the plan of the *Breviloquium* of St. Bonaventure.

¹⁰⁶ Duhr, *art. cit.*, p. 1027.

is tradition as a living organ identified with the infallible Magisterium. Tradition is a living transmission of a living idea.¹⁰⁷ The Apostles preached Christ, they explained the mystery hidden for ages, and the Church continues to preach and to explain and clarify this grand mystery. In this sense, as Father Burghardt points out,¹⁰⁸ tradition in essence is the preaching of the Church in which we can distinguish the doctrine preached (the mystery of Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever), the preacher or teaching Church (the Magisterium viewed as a body of men, the Apostles and their successors down the ages) and the act of preaching (exercise of the function of teaching, the Magisterium *qua* Magisterium). The latter is not a sheer verbal repetition of the preaching of Peter or a mere echo of Scripture. The teaching Church *as such* does not look to the past but looks within, to her own living consciousness of the doctrine confided to her and nourished within her by the Spirit of Truth.¹⁰⁹ However, the *consensus fidelium*, the mind of Christ, which the Holy Father consults before proceeding to the definition of a dogma like the Immaculate Conception or the Assumption is not the factor that guarantees the revelation of the doctrine but the infallible decision of the Magisterium. The reasons or arguments used in a dogmatic Bull like the *Ineffabilis Deus* are the basis, we might say, for the moral certitude or conviction that the truth is definable, that the doctrinal development is mature and the time ripe for definition. If the Holy Father were to include, let us say, the Scriptural proofs in the definition itself, then there would no longer be any question that the doctrine is contained therein according to the mind of God. But even apart from such a solemn or *ex cathedra* declaration the presumption is already

¹⁰⁷ Duhr, *loc. cit.*; V. Bainvel, *L'histoire d'un dogme*, in *Etudes*, vol. 101, 1904, p. 626.

¹⁰⁸ W. J. Burghardt, *art. cit.*, p. 65.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 67; see also F. Tuymans, *art. cit.*, p. 698; Duhr, *art. cit.*, p. 1028.

there that such is the genuine meaning of the Divine Author of Scripture, for their very presence in such a Bull according to the theological explanation manifests a willingness on the part of the teaching Church to accept them in this meaning. But this attitude of mind is itself one of the things to be attributed to the inner working of the Spirit of Truth in the Mystical Body. For this reason the theologian is justified in going beyond the strict philological exegesis or the historico-grammatical rules of interpretation of Scripture and using in addition norms that derive from the actual ordinary teaching of the Church.¹¹⁰ It was from such theological consideration rather than from scientific norms of exegesis that the general acceptance of Genesis 3, 15 in a Marian sense came about.

Apart from the absolute merits or weaknesses of the theological solution, it does seem to provide the more plausible or intelligible explanation of the development of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. The three problems posed by Le Bachelet, for instance, are easily answered from this viewpoint. The apparent absence of any express knowledge of this Marian privilege in the first centuries (which disconcerted so many of the theologians and Bishops and prompted the controversy over the inclusion of the phrase *constantem fuisse*) is wholly compatible, for instance, with the assertion of Pius IX: "This doctrine always existed in the Church as a doctrine that has been received from our ancestors and has been stamped with the character of revealed doctrine."¹¹¹ It is contained in the undefined but definable fringe of the central mystery, Christ the Redeemer, announced already in a veiled way in the Proto-evangelium. Perhaps it is not without significance that the very opening lines of the Bull call attention to Mary's relation to that "mystery hidden for ages." This, Pius IX explains, is the fundamental reason why God "filled her with an abun-

¹¹⁰ Burghardt, *art. cit.*, pp. 71-72.

¹¹¹ *Ineffabilis Deus*, p. 20.

dance of all heavenly gifts from the treasury of His divinity, in such a wonderful manner that she would always be free from absolutely every stain of sin."

The dispute whether Genesis 3, 15 constitutes an independent proof or whether it must be taken like the Angelic Salutation in connection with the Patristic interpretation loses much of its significance. The infallible Magisterium had the divine mandate to make clear the full meaning of these terms and this Magisterium is itself the active voice of tradition, the living rule of faith. Not only do these two texts contain the doctrine but also those which Le Bachelet calls "inefficacious or secondary." Speaking as a scientific exegete and historian he may well claim that the latter are accommodations.¹¹² But why does Pius XII in the *Fulgens corona gloriae* say that the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception was handed down by the holy Fathers in a sufficiently clear manner when they asserted that she was a lily among thorns, immaculate, always blessed, etc.? Bishop Malou pointed out that also the general affirmations of Mary's purity implicitly assert her Immaculate Conception. If the Fathers themselves, however, did not have a clear recognition of the Immaculate Conception in explicit terms, as reliable historians insist, then should not the objective source be sought in the Scriptural text itself which they quoted and apply to Mary? The very words of revelation they used to praise her purity, it would seem, imply the privilege. How else can we explain the words of the *Fulgens corona gloriae*: "If these praises of the Blessed Virgin Mary be given the careful consideration they deserve, who will dare to doubt that she who was purer than the angels and at all times pure, was at any moment, even for the briefest instant, not free from every stain of sin?"

The dispute as to how many Fathers of the Church Pius IX had in mind as explaining Genesis 3, 15 in a Marian sense

¹¹² Le Bachelet, *art. cit.*, col. 864.

also loses much of its emphasis. The negative canons laid down by the Special Commission are significant. It is not necessary, the Commission pointed out, in what concerns tradition, that we possess a series of Fathers and testimonies going back to apostolic times, or that the doctrine was always professed, at least implicitly, by the greater number. The celebrated expression of Vincent of Lerins, *Id teneamus, quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus creditum est*, is true in what he asserts. It is not to be taken in an exclusive sense, however, as though the Church could not define a truth to be of divine faith without it first having been believed everywhere and by everyone.¹¹³ Applying the canons to the case of Genesis 3, 15, the Special Commission concluded that while the words *Ipsa conteret caput tuum* do not provide a solid foundation, the expression *Inimicitiam ponam inter te et mulierem* does. And regarding the Patristic interpretation, they did not appeal to an explicit affirmation but to "*una tradizione allusiva a quel luogo*," that is, to a tradition that manifests itself by allusion to the fall of man in the first Adam and Eve and the common victory of the new Adam and Second Eve.¹¹⁴ Whatever be the proximate source or inspiration of this interpretation, it is sufficient that in the designs of Divine Providence it did appear and that it continually grew from what Father Gallus calls the "relatively more common view"¹¹⁵ to a genuinely common interpretation that received official sanction in the pronouncements of the Magisterium.

The Special Commission in its *Sylloge degli argomenti da servire all'estensore della Bolla dogmatica* listed as more or less distinct arguments patristic tradition, the feast of the Con-

¹¹³ Sardi, *op. cit.*, p. 791 ff; Le Bachelet, *art. cit.*, col. 1200.

¹¹⁴ Sardi, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 796; Le Bachelet, *art. cit.*, col. 859.

¹¹⁵ T. Gallus, *Interpretatio Mariologica Protoevangelii* (Gen. 3, 15), Romae, 1949, p. 203.

ception and the sentiment of the universal Church, sanctioned more and more emphatically by the Magisterium. The order and manner in which Pius IX used these in the Bull takes on significance. The whole is presented as a single argument from tradition with the official acts of the living Magisterium as the decisive factor. Taught by the Holy Spirit, the Church propagated the cult, protected and approved of it, gradually clarified the precise meaning and object of the feast of the Conception, proscribed the interpretation which equated Conception with sanctification after the infusion of the soul, forbade the contrary doctrine to be defended publicly and eventually to be held even privately, and so on.

All these things are intelligible in the light of the theological explanation of how the Immaculate Conception was formally, yet implicitly, revealed by God. Far from being a canonization of popular superstition with no objective basis in Scripture or tradition, as Adolph Harnack maintained, judging from purely natural standards of historical criticism,¹¹⁶ we know from theological reasons that the doctrine is in truth revealed and is found "recorded in the Divine Scriptures according to the judgment of the Fathers; which was handed down by so many most important testimonies of these Fathers; which was expressed and celebrated in so many illustrious monuments of venerable antiquity; which was proposed and confirmed by the weighty and deliberate judgment of the Church" (*Ineffabilis Deus*). But that such was the case we know for certain in the last analysis because of an Infallible Magisterium which can "declare, pronounce and define."

This brings us to the second of the special problems left unsolved by the *Ineffabilis Deus*, that of Mary's so-called "indebtedness to sin."

¹¹⁶ *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, 3 ed., vol. 3, Freiburg im Breisgau, 1897, p. 584, note 2.

tween the *debitum* and the *actum peccati* as *apud veteres inaudita*, the recognition of this distinction, in essence at least, goes back further than Cajetan to whom it is sometimes attributed.¹²⁷

The real roots of the theory of the *debitum*, as some of the more perspicacious authors of the sixteenth century were quick to point out,¹²⁸ are to be found in the Augustinian notion of original sin and its mode of transmission. Actual concupiscence or the passion accompanying the generative act is somehow the cause of the stain of original sin. From the Traducianist viewpoint, Augustine would say that stained in body and soul, the parents transmit this stain to the body and soul of their child. From the Creationist viewpoint, the African Doctor modified this to the extent that the body, tainted in and by the very act of generation, transmitted, as it were, this stain to the soul at the moment of the latter's infusion into the body.¹²⁹ This theory of the *caro infecta*, which served at least as an instrumental cause of the contraction of original sin, was used by the opponents of the Immaculate Conception to show why Mary could not be sanctified *ante infusionem animae*, nor *in instante infusionis*. For if her flesh were purified either before, or even in the moment of conception, there would have been no need of redemption.¹³⁰

As these rather crude notions of sin and the mechanics of its transmission were refined, the *debitum* itself lost something of its character as a physical entity associated intimately

codex Bibliotheca Vaticanae, Vat. lat. 6433, fol. 31r; cited by Balič, *op. cit.*, 206.

¹²⁷ Cf. e.g., Peter Aureoli's distinction between the *de jure* et *de facto* contraction of original sin. *Tractatus Petri Aureoli*, in *Quaestiones Disputatae de Immaculata Conceptione B. Mariae Virginis*, Quaracchi, 1904, pp. 47-48.

¹²⁸ Cf., e.g., Salvator Montalbanus, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, passim.

¹²⁹ A. Gaudel, *Péché originel*, in *D.T.C.*, vol. 12, col. 589.

¹³⁰ Cf., e.g., the interesting study of C. Friethoff, O.P. *Quomodo caro B.V.M. in originali concepta fuerit*, in *Angelicum*, vol. 10, pp. 321-334.

with a *qualitas morbida in foetu*.¹³¹ It came instead to be regarded primarily, if not exclusively, as an *obligatio quaedam moralis* arising from the law of solidarity binding the descendants of Adam with their moral head. Even here, however, there was no uniformity of opinion regarding the precise nature of this obligation.¹³²

Because of the various interpretations given to the *debitum* in general, or to the remote and proximate *debita* in particular, it is not surprising to find that many have denied that any indebtedness to sin exists at all, or at most, the *debitum* is only remote. The majority of theologians, with some notable exceptions, still espouse some theory of a *debitum* for the simple reason that, like Cajetan or Catharinus, they consider it the minimum condition required to safeguard the universal redemption.¹³³

The limited scope of this paper precludes any extensive treatment of the problem of the *debitum*, but I would like to note the following. The essential notion, as the word *debitum* itself implies, seems to be that of a need or necessity. This necessity was originally conceived as something physical, that is, having a physical, albeit instrumental, action which gives rise to original sin and whose necessary causality had somehow to be impeded by grace. The *debitum* in this theory also had something of a real, shall we say, positive entity, for what is purely negative cannot exercise any causality. With more refined notions of the nature of sin and its mode of propagation the idea of legal action replaced that of physical action and the necessity or *debitum* itself was regarded as an obligation arising from a moral law. However, as some theologians

¹³¹ Peter Aureoli, O.F.M. alludes to this concept in his treatise on the Immaculate Conception. Cf. *Tractatus Petri Aureoli*, cap. 2 in *Quaestiones Disputatae de Immaculata Conceptione Beatæ Mariæ Virginis*, Quaracchi, 1904 (Bibl. Francis. Scholastica Medii Aevii, vol. 3), p. 49.

¹³² Salvator Montalbanus, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 306 ff.

¹³³ Le Bachelet, *art. cit.*, col. 1156 ff; Balić, *op. cit.*, p. 205 f.

point out, we might question the appropriateness of speaking of the *debitum* as an obligation. Is anyone obligated or obliged to contract sin? ¹³⁴ Sin is essentially a negation, or more precisely, a privation—a lack of something that should be there. We ought to bear in mind, then, that necessity has somewhat different implications when applied to something negative and to something positive.

The problem of the debt or *debitum*, at any rate, can be more clearly discussed from the positive standpoint. What *should be present* in Adam's children is original justice, the principal, if not essential constituent of which, is sanctifying grace. Whatever be the exact nature of original justice, ¹³⁵ for our purpose it suffices to admit that if sanctifying grace is present at the moment of conception, there is no original sin and conversely, if original sin is present, sanctifying grace is absent. According to God's original decree, if we may so speak, if Adam had been faithful (the antecedent condition), then all of his posterity *by that title* were to receive grace at the moment of their conception. In such a case, all men would have been indebted to Adam for their justice or justification. Original justice, then, is the true *debitum*; it is the something that should, that ought to be present. And this *debitum*, note, would exist in those who possessed original justice as well as in those who would have lost it through their own personal sin, or in the present order, who have actually lost it through the sin of Adam. This loss of the title to original justice, however, is not of itself original sin. For even after original sin is wiped away by baptism, regenerate man still has no title to grace through the first Adam. His title is in and through the new Adam. Neither does the subsequent loss of baptismal innocence through actual sin constitute a state of original sin. The cardinal or central notion of the sin of origin seems to be

¹³⁴ Cf. Salvator Montalbanus' interesting observations on this point, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 302 ff.

¹³⁵ Cf. A. Gaudel, *op. cit.*, col. 591 ff.

a privation of original justice. However, the expression "original justice" is itself ambiguous. It can mean justice (grace) *at the moment of origin* or it can mean justification or grace *because of one's origin*. Original sin, then, would seem to involve a double negation, first, the loss of a title to grace *in virtue of one's origin* (i. e., as a descendant of Adam) and secondly, the absence of sanctifying grace (and whatever else may be considered as a part of the essence of original justice) *at the moment of origin or conception*.

In such a case, the lack of grace at the moment of conception is a privation and a fault (*culpa*). It is a moral defect, but a fault for which the person *in* fault is not *at* fault. He is *in culpa sed non culpabilis*, as the saying goes.¹³⁶ It is Adam who is at fault, for because of his infidelity, the grace which should have been there is not there. Redemption never restores original justice in the sense of justice *by reason of origin*—neither in us nor in the Blessed Virgin. The title of the baptized to grace is not generation, but regeneration of water and the Holy Spirit. We are justified not because we are incorporated in Adam, the moral as well as physical head of the human race, but because of incorporation in Christ. This latter holds for Mary as well as for ourselves.

Now if we accept this notion of original justice and original sin, we can see that there were various possible ways which God could have chosen to preserve Mary from contracting original sin. He could have given grace in simple gratuity at the moment of her conception, or He could have given it in virtue of some title, e. g., her relation to the Redeemer Christ. In the first instance, Mary would not have been redeemed nor would her grace have been given *intuitu meritorum Christi*.

This, I believe, illustrates a rather subtle point, namely, that there is no true need or necessity of contracting sin in Mary unless two conditions are verified. One, that she lost

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, col. 502.

her title to grace in Adam; the other, that God determined not to give her grace at the moment of her conception. Only then would Mary necessarily have contracted original sin. The lost title to grace in Adam, as such, only made sin possible; in no sense did it make it necessary.

In like manner we can describe the need for redemption. The necessity arises from two factors, the loss of the title to grace as sons of Adam and the fact that God freely determined to give grace to his posterity only *intuitu meritorum Christi*.

To put it another way, the possibility of original sin makes redemption through Christ possible; this possibility coupled with the fact that under no other conditions will God give grace at the moment of conception to a son or daughter of Adam makes redemption necessary if such a one is to be preserved from contracting original sin.

Returning to the problem of Mary's *debitum*, we can say that Mary as a daughter of Adam would have been entitled to grace at the moment of her origin *in virtue of her origin*. And this would remain true no matter how many other titles she might or might not have to grace at the moment of origin. If we might use an analogy from physics, we could say that if an electric bulb is wired to two batteries connected in parallel, each battery could be called a separate "title" that the bulb has to light, for in such a case either battery individually suffices to light the bulb, yet the combined voltage of both batteries is no greater than that of one. Either battery may be removed without causing the light to go out. In a word, though the presence of either battery necessitates the presence of light, by a physical necessity the absence of either singly does not necessitate darkness or the absence of light.

Applying this to Mary, we could say that redemption could be necessary—and actually was necessary, in the plan of divine Providence—without sin being necessary. In other words, Mary had a need for grace lest sin stain her soul. She

was indebted to Christ for her justice. She had a true *debitum justitiae*. But did she ever in any true sense of the word have a need for sin? Was she truly indebted to Adam for sin? Was hers a *debitum peccati* or even a *debitum debiti peccati*? It would seem more correct to speak of being indebted to Adam for the possibility of sin, in the sense that he lost one title she might have had to grace. If this is all that is meant by *debitum*, there seems to be no difficulty in admitting such a *debitum* in Mary. But if by *debitum* we understand a true need or necessity, whether physical, metaphysical or moral, we must say that the very fact that God determined to preserve Mary from sin itself destroys the "necessity" of contracting sin. Consequently, we should not confuse the need for grace with the need for sin. A negation (or privation) is necessary only if all positive reasons for the presence of what is lacking are absent.

Mary lost one title to the grace of an immaculate conception but she gained another. The very fact that the *Ineffabilis Deus* cites Mary's relation to Christ the Redeemer as her title to grace at the moment of conception, a title she possessed as it were from all eternity in the plan of Divine Wisdom, is it meaningful to speak of a need, a necessity, an obligation to contract sin? When Keuppens argues, for instance, a *debitum* must have been present in Mary, otherwise redemption would have no term,¹³⁷ we might answer that redemption is a positive action whose term is the granting of grace.

To sum up the matter, then, we can say that if by *debitum* we imply some kind of necessity, be it metaphysical or of a physical nature, be it a moral obligation or even an attenuated form of compulsion based on what is fitting or what ought to be, Mary never seems to have had any genuine *debitum*. It was grace, not sin, that she *should* have had. But if by *debitum* we mean nothing more than what is expressed by this simple

¹³⁷ *Mariologiae Compendium*, p. 64.

unreal conditional proposition "Mary *would* have contracted sin, had she not been redeemed," we can admit a *debitum*, but then somewhere along the way we seem to have lost the original connotation of the word.

These are, then, some of the important questions raised, directly and indirectly, by the memorable document of Pius IX. While it is true that the papal pronouncement shed considerable light on a few theological problems, no one will deny that many others were left (purposely, no doubt) *in statu quo*, as it were. In the preceding pages we have endeavored to elucidate only a few aspects of these unsettled questions; the limited space at our disposal allowed no more.

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Exchange of Views on Father Wolter's Paper

The discussion, led by Father Kenneth Dougherty, S.A., centered chiefly on the relative merits of the various theories of doctrinal development. *Father B. Kelly, C.P.*, questioned whether Marín Solá's syllogistic proof was in good Aristotelian form. Father Wolter admitted it was not the first or perfect figure of the syllogism and that even so far as the second figure goes, "rubrics" would require an inversion of the premises. However, he added, the proponents of the dialectical or logical theories take "logical inference" in the broad sense of any consequence valid according to the laws of formal logic and do not confine it to the rather limited sphere of the Aristotelian syllogism.

Father Connell, C.S.S.R., suggested we distinguish between the explanatory and illative syllogism. The latter would be a genuine deduction from two premises involving a purely rational principle; the former could be considered merely to be an instrument for analyzing or revealing what is contained in the major premise. In this sense we could say that the richness of the notion "worthy Mother of God" could be analyzed in such a way as to reveal the Immaculate Conception to be implicit therein. In this way, the dangerous charge of adding something new to the ob-

jective deposit of faith, a point seemingly common to both the dialectical and theological explanations, would be avoided. Father Wolter admitted that Father Connell had singled out the crucial point in any developmental theory, *viz.*, how can subjective growth in knowledge of a doctrine be reconciled with the objective integrity and stability of the deposit of faith. But he considered that this point was safeguarded as well, or perhaps better, by the third theory as by the others. The distinction of the two types of syllogisms insisted on by the theologians would hardly be acceptable to the modern logician, for even the explicative syllogism somehow accepts the validity of syllogistic inference which itself can be regarded as a rational conclusion deducible from a calculus of classes, for example, or from a propositional calculus. On this score, the radical difference between the logical and dialectical theories could be questioned. Furthermore, he regarded expressions like "the richness of the notion 'worthy Mother of God'" as ambiguous. Is this richness something objective or subjective? All theories, including the theological, admit that objectively (i.e., according to the mind of God revealing) the expression *theotokos*, for instance, implies the Immaculate Conception. The question, however, is this. Is the meaning of this term as *subjectively understood by the early Christians* so rich that it merely has to be analyzed to reveal the Marian privilege or does the subjective notion or understanding, as it were, have to be enriched and to grow under the guiding influence of the Holy Spirit until it becomes more commensurate with the objective mind of God and the fuller meaning originally intended by the Divine Author becomes apparent?

Father Biasotto, O.F.M., suggested an analogy between the discovery of the Immaculate Conception in the objective deposit of faith and Newton's discovery of the law of gravitation which objectively existed even prior to Newton's day. Father Wolter, however, questioned the propriety of speaking of the law of gravitation as objectively existing. What is objective is a certain behavior or *modus agendi* characteristic of bodies. This is subjectively described by some mathematical formula called a "law," "theory," etc. As such, Newton's law of gravity, in the language of the physicist Duhem, is only a symbolic representation and approximate description of the actual relationships obtaining between phenomena. It is of a provisional nature, as is clear from the fact that it was further perfected by corrections derived from Einstein's general theory of relativity. Systematically, then, the Newtonian "law" is mathematical formula ($f = g \frac{m m'}{d^2}$) from which Kepler's laws of planetary motion and Galileo's law of falling bodies can be deduced. It is "discovered" by what Driesch has called "inventive deduction" or by a process Professor K. Herzfeld has rather aptly described as an "inspired guess." While a fact like the Immaculate Conception might be likened to the objective behavior of bodies, there is a fundamental difference

between, let us say, the Scriptural revelation of the Immaculate Conception in Genesis 3, 15 and the Newtonian description of the behavior of bodies. Where the latter is only an approximation and is of a provisional character, the Scriptural words are perfectly suited to express the meaning God intended them to have. The full meaning of the text in Genesis, however, was not recognized immediately by man, and to this extent, perhaps, we could admit some validity to the analogy of the gravitational law. The subjective formulation of Newton had to be enriched and perfected. This required another "inspired guess" on the part of Einstein. It is interesting to note, too, that while the Newtonian law can be deduced from the general relativity equation, the theory of general relativity cannot be deduced from the equation of Newton. In like fashion, the full and perfect meaning of Genesis 3, 15 as implicitly containing the Immaculate Conception according to the theological explanation is not something that can be deduced from the meaning, shall we say, that Adam and the early Christians attributed to this Biblical text, but the converse is true. Also the perception of the fuller meaning is the result of what we might call, in a somewhat truer and more precise fashion, "an inspired guess," for in the last analysis the recognition of this very *real* Marian sense of the Protoevangelium according to the theological explanation, is the work of the Holy Spirit. "Many things yet I have to say to you," Christ told His apostles before He died, "but you cannot bear them now. But when He the Spirit of truth, has come, He will teach you *all* the truth" (*John* 16, 13).

Father Shea, of Darlington, N. J., pointed out that the *Humani Generis* itself indicates that even so-called positive theology is not to be put on a par with mere history and on this score, perhaps, we have some justification for the theological method. Altaner, for instance, made the mistake of being a pure historian and thus failed to discover the doctrine of the Assumption in the primitive sources of revelation. *Father Juniper Carol, O.F.M.*, added that it was a similar historicism in regard to the Immaculate Conception that caused A. Stap, a Catholic priest in Paris, to apostatize and write against the *Ineffabilis Deus* on the grounds that the Fathers rejected the Marian privilege. *Father Thomas Plassman, O.F.M.*, observed that in regard to the Immaculate Conception it is Tradition rather than Scripture that carries the burden of proof. *Father Vollert, S.J.*, commented that the Scholastics who opposed the Immaculate Conception could not have taken a different stand than they did until Duns Scotus had made the proper distinctions.