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like Nergal in Babylonia,
 among the Canaanites,
 well-being. Such a complete
 might seem, for he who could
 it and, as a matter of fact,
 the beneficent god Shulmân
 is a protecting deity in North
 or . It seems more in keep-
 ing "of the he-goats," rather
 is not definitely assured; cp.
 (LXX) and *Χιμάρους* (LXX).
 would אלה. Our present in-
 terpretation, especially since the
 assumption in its very last lines
 is a fragment theologian, since it
 is a fragment, and Shamash and Yarah
 ne and citadel. Had the end
 of it, we might now possess
 a refer again to our lengthier
 of these gods, who, centuries
 ago in vain.

of Israel, (Baltimore: 2nd edit,

a 11; cf. G. A. Cooke, *op. cit.*,

1949

since it was composed some four months
 e less, the main historical problems are
 scription which have recently appeared in
 farcus, and the writer. The main difficulty
 d the legitimacy of his succession (cf. above
 t Hittite text before reaching a solution,
 ll Vida has kindly permitted him to copy
 ia dei Lincei: Io sono Azitawanda, figlio (?)
 a. Prof. Levi Della Vida's thought, then, is
 of king of the D.n.nlm, with his capital
 of all Cilicia (Quê), whose capital was

a's suggestion to read in the defective text
 (deed)." Likewise on p. 242, for Col. II, 19-
 sacrificio cruento decorre per tutte le liba-
 be understood as a sacrifice of libation

the absolute and construct infinitives them-
 , hence, at a quite early period.

DID SAINT JOHN SEE THE VIRGIN MARY IN GLORY?

DOMINIC J. UNGER

The news that the Holy Father is interested in a definition of the doctrine of Mary's corporal Assumption into glory was generally most welcome. Scholars immediately did some deep thinking about the proofs for such a definition. Numerous articles have appeared all over the world offering arguments for the Assumption from Scripture and Tradition. What Pius X had written on Apoc. 12:1, and what St. Lawrence of Brindisi had preached on it, immediately came back to my mind. Upon further investigation, I learned that many authors had referred Apoc. 12:1 to the Blessed Mother, and a good many of them had used it as an argument for the Assumption. In the past century some complete articles have been written on the subject, as we shall see. Still, because of the present interest in proofs for the Assumption, I thought it worth while to present the matter anew, and so to gather into one study the findings and opinions of the past.

To get our bearings let us give a summary of the twelfth chapter of the Apocalypse. As is well known, in the Apocalypse John gives us a series of visions which were accorded him while in exile on the island of Patmos. In the first two chapters he describes the conditions of seven churches of Asia Minor in his day. From chapter three on he gives us prophetic descriptions of the Church in general. Scholars are not agreed on the interpretation of these symbolic visions. But it seems to be getting more and more common to look upon each of the visions as a compendious history of the entire Church, at times stressing particularly the final struggle of Christ and His Church against Satan and his empire. Each vision covers the entire history under a different symbol. Each vision treats the same phases of the struggle of the Church against the worldly powers. Each vision stresses the central theme: the triumph of Christ over the idolatry and persecution of the worldly powers, symbolized by the Roman power. Nevertheless, John's visions look more toward the last struggle of the Church under the leadership of Christ, and her final triumph together with Christ. Let it be noted that in these visions not all the details need have a symbolic meaning. The details are often meant merely to emphasize the central theme, just as in Christ's parables.

Now, in the twelfth chapter, the Seer describes a very special vision. Scholars have recognized it as the central vision of the book. John saw a marvellous and miraculous sign in heaven: A woman all-glorious; a woman who was with child and about to give birth to the child, which caused her

great pains. There appeared on the scene a huge dragon. He stood before the woman with the hope of devouring the child as soon as he was born. The woman gave birth to the child, a male child who would rule the whole world invincibly. The dragon did not get the child because he was immediately caught up to God's throne. The woman herself fled into the wilderness where God had prepared a place for her, and where she would be taken care of.

Next, in John's vision, though not necessarily following the preceding in chronological order, a war broke out in heaven. Michael and his angels had to fight the dragon and his followers. Michael and his angels won, and the dragon, who is the ancient Serpent and Satan, with his followers were hurled from heaven to earth.

Then John heard a song of triumph in heaven to honor Christ, the Lamb, through whose Blood the saints were able to conquer. That was followed by a vision of how the dragon, after he had been hurled down, pursued the woman, and how she, with divine aid, fled to her place in the wilderness. When his attempt to kill her proved futile, he set out to persecute the rest of the offspring of the woman, those who kept the commandments of God and held fast to the testimony of Jesus.

Now who is this apocalyptic woman and who is her child and who are the rest of her offspring? It would have been convenient for us if John had deigned to interpret this for us as he did in regard to the dragon, who, he tells us, is the ancient Serpent (Gen. 3), Satan himself.

The history of the interpretation of this text shows us that there have been two main opinions in regard to the identity of the woman and her child. Some have held that John is describing the Church exclusively; he had no intention of speaking of Mary. The word picture does, of course, lend itself very well to Mary, and may piously be accommodated to her, but the Sacred Writer did not have her in mind. The second opinion claims that the Seer saw Mary and the Church in this picture of glory and of struggle against Satan. In other words, both were intended by John's words; both are contained in the scriptural sense of the words. But these authors differ considerably in terminology, when they explain how John intended both women in that passage.

We shall try to prove this second opinion. We would state it thus: The Woman of Apoc. 12 is both Mary and the Church in the literal sense: of Mary everything is true literally, primarily and eminently, intended so by the Holy Spirit and St. John, either inasmuch as she is the physical mother of Christ and/or inasmuch as she is the spiritual mother of Christians, of the Mystic Christ; of the Church these same things are true literally but secondarily inasmuch as the Church is the Mother of Christ and Christians. And these things are true of the Church precisely because Mary is the mother and exemplar of the Church; and so Mary and the

Church are in a sense one, in fashion that Christ the Head

The plan, then, of our study

I. First we shall prove that and as spiritual Virgin-Mother by the Holy Spirit and St. John this vision.

II. Moreover, supposing that of all Christians is the exemplar Christians, we shall prove that Spouse of Christ. This, too,

III. Thirdly, we shall explain intended literally by the Holy

IV. Fourthly, and this is to show that this passage is a summation of Mary.

I. THE WOMAN

The woman in glory giving of Christ and of Christians. In addition, (C) and the liturgy.

A. A

First Argument: The first Chapter Twelve of the Apocalypse content and context is based

1) The things predicated of
2) the male child identified
3) the sin of the Dragon as Mary and Christ;

4) John is describing the Apoc. 12 is the same as the

First Point: The things p To understand how some c must recall truths that are Virgin-Mother not merely c Mystic Christ, the Church; the Mystic Christ at the sa come the Mother of Christ, cal motherhood of Mary re her spiritual motherhood re quence, Mary's motherhood

MAN, WOMAN
& SNAKE

ge dragon. He stood before
ild as soon as he was born.
d who would rule the whole
ild because he was im-
oman herself fled into the
r her, and where she would

y following the preceding in
en Michael and his angels
Michael and his angels won,
and Satan, with his followers

eaen to honor Christ, the
ae to conquer. That was
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d tile, he set out to perse-
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of Jesus.

h is her child and who are
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Satan himself.

x shows us that there have
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d The second opinion claims
t is picture of glory and of
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n they explain how John

We would state it thus: The
Church in the literal sense: of
and eminently, intended so
much as she is the physical
the spiritual mother of Chris-
these same things are true
urch is the Mother of Christ
the Church precisely because
hurch; and so Mary and the

Church are in a sense one, both in reality and in this passage, after the
fashion that Christ the Head of the Church and the Church are one.

The plan, then, of our study is this:

I. First we shall prove that Mary as physical Virgin-Mother of Christ
and as spiritual Virgin-Mother of all Christians is designated in this text
by the Holy Spirit and St. John, and so St. John actually saw Mary in
this vision.

II. Moreover, supposing the doctrine that the Mother of Christ and
of all Christians is the exemplar of the Church as Virgin-Mother of all
Christians, we shall prove that the Woman is also the Church, the Virgin
Spouse of Christ. This, too, John realized from the vision.

III. Thirdly, we shall explain how both Mary and the Church are
intended literally by the Holy Spirit and John in this one text.

IV. Fourthly, and this is the final purpose of our study, we shall try
to show that this passage involves the fact of the corporal glorious As-
sumption of Mary.

I. THE WOMAN OF APOCALYPSE 12 IS MARY

The woman in glory giving birth to the male child is the Blessed Mother
of Christ and of Christians. We shall argue from (A) Scripture, (B) Tra-
dition, (C) and the liturgy.

A. Arguments from Scripture

First Argument: The first argument from Scripture is an analysis of
Chapter Twelve of the Apocalypse itself. And this argument from the
content and context is based on four points:

- 1) The things predicated of the Woman are true of Mary;
- 2) the male child identifies the Woman principally as Christ's Mother;
- 3) the sin of the Dragon-Satan identifies the Woman and her Child
as Mary and Christ;
- 4) John is describing the fulfillment of Gen. 3:15; or, the Woman of
Apoc. 12 is the same as the Woman of Gen. 3:15.

First Point: The things predicated of the Woman are true of Mary.
To understand how some of these things can be ascribed to Mary, we
must recall truths that are well known in Mariology: **First**, Mary is the
Virgin-Mother not merely of Christ but of all Christians, and so of the
Mystic Christ, the Church; and Mary conceived the personal Christ and
the Mystic Christ at the same time, namely, when she consented to be-
come the Mother of Christ, the Head of the Church. **Secondly**, the physi-
cal motherhood of Mary relative to Christ is the basis and exemplar of
her spiritual motherhood relative to all Christians. Thirdly, as a conse-
quence, Mary's motherhood in respect to Christ and to Christians is

practically one, somewhat after the fashion that Christ and the Mystic Christ are one.

Now, as to the explanation of particulars in this chapter, the word painting of the Woman, to picture whose glory the brightest lights of the firmament were needed, is such an apt portrait of Mary clothed in the grace and glory of her divine Son that the Christian eye has instinctively identified the Woman as Mary. Mary, who was full of the grace of her Son from the moment of her conception and who was filled with the glory of her Son at the moment of her entry into heaven, is aptly pictured as clothed with the sun, a metaphor of the Sun of Justice that Christ is. Mary, who is the Queen of heaven and earth is aptly represented as having the moon under her feet since the moon is a symbol of the changeable things of time. Mary, who is the Mediatrix, the teacher, the guide, the sanctifier of all souls, is rightly represented as wearing a crown of twelve stars, which represent the twelve Apostles, who, in turn, represent the entire Church. All souls have their grace from her; they are her "crown of glory" (1 Thess. 2:19).

The fact that John introduces the Woman as a great "sign" links her inescapably with the Virgin-Mother of the Messiah, who was offered by God through Isaias as a sign to King Achaz (7:14; cf. also Mt. 1:18-25). This has been noticed by very many authors.¹ John and his first readers realized that Mary was the fulfillment of the Isaian prophecy, that she was "the Sign." So John could not have missed the allusion to Isaias. Moreover, the absence of any man as cooperator in this conception and birth, clearly points to the Virgin who gave birth to Christ (Luke 1:32f; 2:7).²

The fact that the woman was in great pain while giving birth to her Child (Apoc. 12:2) has been the main reason why some authors have excluded the Blessed Mother from this text, because it was a sacred truth even in the earliest Church that Mary who gave birth to Christ as Virgin did so without the slightest physical pain. But those who defend that the woman is Mary, have found several rather simple, but quite correct, explanations of these pains relative to Mary. Already St. Albert the Great said there is reference here not to Mary's physical childbirth of Christ, but to her spiritual childbirth of all Christians, whom she begot amid great pain, particularly at the Cross, where through compassion with Christ she endured untold pains (cf. Luke 2:35).³ That quite adequately explains

¹ E.g., Ambrosius antipertus, O.S.B., cf. below footnote 37; and St. Albert the Great, *Comment. in Apoc.* 12:1 (Opera Omnia 38, 654).

² P. Gächter, S.J., "Die geistige Mutterschaft Marias. Ein Beitrag zur Erklärung von Johan. 19, 26f," *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie*, XLVII (1923) 425.

³ St. Albert the Great, *op. cit.*, p. 654b; cf. also St. Lawrence of Brindisi, O.F.M.-Cap., *Mariale, Sermo in Visionem Joannis*, n. 6 (Opera Omnia 1, 60).

the text of Mary, and *per se* to the text. It is strange that this was overlooked by authors who continue that explanation and to the conception and birth and, in a sense, that too was have suffered anguish at Jo on the road to Bethlehem, finding a decent home.

The woman fled from Satan prepared for her, where she (12:6). To what does this refer? Satan, operating through Her into Egypt (Mt. 2). And it is at least this flight into Egypt that describes the Woman's escape. John merely uses the idea of protection accorded to Mary, verified not in any single event general.⁴ Since the mention of the Apocalypse the mention of the wilderness is a historical fact, neither Scripture nor Tradition. Ascension, Mary lived with the woman here is not Mary. Jugie attempts to find an event but we think his idea impractical to exclude Mary from the chapter verified historically in the fact

⁴ M. Jugie, A.A., *La mort et la finale* (Studi e Testi 114: Città del Vaticano) fully than is usually done.

⁵ Oecumenius of Trikka, cf. H. J. de Vries, *On the Apocalypse* (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 1964), also Leonardus a S. Martino, (1764), p. 355, *petitio* 36.

⁶ Cf. E. B. Allo, O.P., *Commentary on the Apocalypse*. In apocryphal works of apocalyptic with persecutions as a figure of a idea from apocryphal works. The flight of Israel from Egypt (Ex. 12:17-30). cf. Jugie, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

⁷ Jugie, *loc. cit.*

that Christ and the Mystic

in this chapter, the word for the brightest lights of the portrait of Mary clothed in the Christian eye has instinctively been as full of the grace of her who was filled with the glory of heaven, is aptly pictured as St. of Justice that Christ is. She is aptly represented as having a symbol of the changeable, the teacher, the guide, the one wearing a crown of twelve, who, in turn, represent the crown her; they are her "crown

as a great "sign" links her to the Messiah, who was offered by Zech. 7:14; cf. also Mt. 1:18-25). For John and his first readers the Isaian prophecy, that she conceived the allusion to Isaiah's prophet in this conception and the birth to Christ (Luke 1:32f;

and while giving birth to her son, why some authors have, because it was a sacred truth, given the birth to Christ as Virgin. But those who defend that it is simple, but quite correct, already St. Albert the Great on the physical childbirth of Christ, and whom she begot amid great rough compassion with Christ. That quite adequately explains

in footnote 37; and St. Albert the Great (1264).

M. J. J. Ein Beitrag zur Erklärung der Apokalypse, XLVII (1923) 425.

St. Lawrence of Brindisi, O.F.M. Opera Omnia 1, 60).

the text of Mary, and *per se* there is no need of any other woman to justify the text. It is strange that this rather ancient and simple explanation was overlooked by authors who otherwise refer the chapter to Mary. We can continue that explanation and say that it was already through her consent to the conception and birth of Christ that Mary gave birth to Christians and, in a sense, that too was a childbirth in pain.⁴ For she certainly must have suffered anguish at Joseph's ignorance and anguish, and perhaps on the road to Bethlehem, and at Bethlehem there was anxiety⁵ at not finding a decent home.

The woman fled from Satan into the wilderness to a place that God had prepared for her, where she would be taken care of for 1,265 days (Apoc. 12:6). To what does this refer in Mary's life? Mary literally fled from Satan, operating through Herod, when she fled with Joseph and the Child into Egypt (Mt. 2). And it is probable that John had this in mind; at least this flight into Egypt must have given him the figure by which he describes the Woman's escape, as many authors note. Others claim that John merely uses the idea of a flight as a figure of speech for the divine protection accorded to Mary against Satan. This escape would then be verified not in any single event of Mary's life, but in her whole life in general.⁶ Since the mention of this flight to the wilderness follows in the Apocalypse the mention of the Child's being caught up into heaven, and since this latter seems to refer to the Ascension, some think the flight into the wilderness is a historical event that followed the Ascension. Now neither Scripture nor Tradition have recorded such a flight. After the Ascension, Mary lived with John. Consequently, these authors argue that the woman here is not Mary, but the Church. As we shall note again, A. Jugie attempts to find an event in the life of Mary after the Ascension,⁷ but we think his idea improbable. Still we do not think it necessary to exclude Mary from the chapter because of this flight. We saw that it was verified historically in the flight into Egypt, as many authors have ex-

Rumors of her own carrying

Flight to Egypt

⁴ M. Jugie, A.A., *La mort et l'Assomption de la sainte Vierge. Étude historico-dogmatique* (Studi e Testi 114: Citta del Vaticano, 1944), p. 26, brought this point out more fully than is usually done.

⁵ Oecumenius of Trikka, cf. H. C. Hoskier, *The Complete Commentary of Oecumenius on the Apocalypse* (Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1928), p. 138; cf. the text below. See also Leonardus a S. Martino, O. Carm. Disc., *Examina Scripturistica* (Candavi 1764), p. 355, *petitio* 36.

⁶ Cf. E. B. Allo, O.P., *Comment. sur Apoc.*, (Études Biblique, 1933⁴) p. XLIII: In apocryphal works of apocalyptic nature a flight into a desert is always connected with persecutions as a figure of a safe escape. However, John need not have taken his idea from apocryphal works. There was basis enough for it in Scripture; e.g., the flight of Israel from Egypt (Ex. 16; Ps. 78:24), the flight of Elias (1 Kgs. 17:6; 19:6); cf. Jugie, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

⁷ Jugie, *loc. cit.*

plained. And that flight can very aptly be here a symbol of her other personal escapes from the Dragon, or of her whole life on earth. Moreover, since Mary and the Church are practically one, inasmuch as Mary is the mother and exemplar of the Church, this flight might be ascribed to Mary though really it is experienced only by the Church. It is a fact that Mary, though in glory, is still persecuted in the Church, in the person of all Christians, whose Mediatrix and Mother she is, just as Christ is still persecuted and must flee from worldly powers (cf. Acts 9:2). We prefer that twofold way of explaining the passage of Mary rather than by saying, as many do, that, since Mary and the Church are spoken of in this chapter, not all things need be true of Mary, and so, even though the Woman is Mary in general, in this particular passage there is reference only to her image, the Church.

Second Point: The male Child born of the Woman identifies her principally as Christ's Mother. The fact that the Child is a male child is obviously true of the personal Christ. The fact that He will rule with an iron rod, that is, that he cannot be conquered, is a fulfillment of the prophecy of Psalm 2:8 (cf. Apoc. 19:13, 15-16), which definitely speaks of the personal Messiah, and can include others only by participation. In Apoc. 2:26-28 John seems to indicate that all Christians partake of this royal power of Christ spoken of in Psalm 2. Nevertheless, as was said, this is merely by participation; primarily and obviously and essentially it is true of Christ.^{7a}

The fact that her Child is said to be taken to heaven, seemingly, immediately after birth does not exclude Christ. This immediacy cannot be taken too strictly in any case, whether Christ or Christians are meant. Christians, when victorious over Satan, are taken to the throne of God only at death. So even for them the immediacy is not close. In fact, the idea fits Christ more obviously than Christians: he was taken to heaven in a marvellous manner through His Resurrection and Ascension, and is utterly untouchable by Satan. Of others this is true only through Christ.

According to some authors, this being caught up to heaven was verified originally through the Incarnation itself, through the union of the humanity with the divinity in Christ. And this would then be a symbol for all further elevations of Christ.⁸ We, however, do not like this explanation so well. Christ was already existent as God-Man when attacked by Satan and before being elevated to the throne of God. The above explanation would seem to suppose that He was mere man until He was elevated.

However, this being caught up to God's throne can be considered as

^{7a} J. B. Terrien, S.J., *La Mere de Dieu et la Mere des Hommes* (Paris: Lethielleux, 1902), 2^e partie, tom. 1, p. 75f.

⁸ Cf. Albert the Great, *op. cit.*, p. 656b.

having taken place the first in their time of probation, and Christ stayed in His planned. Whatever the value of the elevation to the Ascension,

Third Point: The sin of Lucifer betrays them as Mary and Christ as soon as it was born, but according to a very reliable tradition the angels were on probation when the Son of God to be King. Lucifer and his ilk refused, hurled from heaven. Lucifer was hurled from heaven because in his first sin that he was even though John would not certainly used it as a picture.

This attempt of Satan's to destroy paradise he tried to frustrate by despoiling him of sanctifying grace. John is evidently alluding to the promise of the Redeemer through Herod's attempt to kill the Child. However, over, the Devil continues to tempt the Child born into Christ. But, again, and as for the Devil's intention to get Christians ultimately on his side.

Fourth Point: Fourthly, John is describing the fulfillment of the promise and her Son who would be both the Apocalypse and St. Lawrence of Brindisi to the "Woman" precisely because of Genesis.¹¹ Again, John tells

⁹ Cf. L. Bello, O.F.M., *Ministerium Primatu atque Regalitate*, *Acta* 72; cf. p. 301a. J. B. Petit-Bonnet, *nostrum Jesu Christi et Causa Mariam*, Ambrosius a Saldo, O.F.M. Cap.

¹⁰ Terrien, *op. cit.*, p. 76f. And in *Anglican Difficulties* (New York)

¹¹ Lawrence of Brindisi, *op. cit.*

Here a symbol of her other whole life on earth. Moreover, inasmuch as Mary is the light might be ascribed to Mary Church. It is a fact that Mary, Church, in the person of all she is, just as Christ is still hers (cf. Acts 9:2). We prefer Mary rather than by saying, as spoken of in this chapter, even though the Woman is there is reference only to her

The Woman identifies her principle Child is a male child is object that He will rule with an eternal, is a fulfillment of the (16), which definitely speaks of others only by participation, that all Christians partake of same 2. Nevertheless, as was fully and obviously and essentially

to heaven, seemingly, immanent. This immediacy cannot Christ or Christians are meant. taken to the throne of God iacy is not close. In fact, the ans: he was taken to heaven reion and Ascension, and is s as true only through Christ. ght up to heaven was verified ough the union of the human- d then be a symbol for all do not like this explanation Men when attacked by Satan God. The above explanation an until He was elevated.

throne can be considered as
re es Hommes (Paris: Lethielleux,

having taken place the first time when Christ was presented to the angels in their time of probation, when Lucifer was hurled down from heaven and Christ stayed in His rightful place beside the Father, as had been planned. Whatever the value of this, the first explanation, referring the elevation to the Ascension, justifies our seeing Christ in this Child.

Third Point: The sin of Satan against the Woman and her Child betrays them as Mary and Christ. Satan was prepared to devour the Child as soon as it was born, but he was foiled. When did that take place? According to a very reliable tradition of the Fathers and theologians,⁹ when the angels were on probation after their creation, God showed them in vision the Son of God to become Man, who would be their Mediator and King. Lucifer and his ilk refused to acknowledge Him and were, in consequence, hurled from heaven. Note well that John tells us that Lucifer was hurled from heaven because of the sin described. But it was precisely in his first sin that he was thus hurled from heaven, never to return. So even though John would not refer directly to this sin in Apoc. 12:8f, he certainly used it as a picture of the event he wishes to describe.

This attempt of Satan's to devour the Child was also verified when in paradise he tried to frustrate the Incarnation in the race of Adam by despoiling him of sanctifying grace. Even here, it is interesting to note that John is evidently alluding to the story of Adam's and Eve's fall and to the promise of the Redeemer. The Devil also tried to devour the Child through Herod's attempt to kill Him when He was actually born. Moreover, the Devil continues trying to devour all Christians upon their being born into Christ. But, again, this is merely secondary in John's thought; and as for the Devil's intention, he really wants Christ; he attempts to get Christians ultimately only because of Christ.

Fourth Point: Fourthly, as the authors admit quite generally,¹⁰ John is describing the fulfillment of Gen. 3:15, where God promised the Woman and her Son who would be completely victorious over the Serpent. In both the Apocalypse and Genesis there is question of "the Woman." St. Lawrence of Brindisi tells us that he thinks John used the title "Woman" precisely because he wanted to allude thereby to the Woman of Genesis.¹¹ Again, John tells us explicitly that the Dragon he is speaking

Herod

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⁹ Cf. L. Bello, O.F.M., Min. Gen., "Litterae encyclicae de Universali Christi Primatu atque Regalitate," *Acta Ordinis Fratrum Minorum* LII (1933) p. 306b, f.n. 72; cf. p. 301a. J. B. Petit-Bornand, O.F.M.Cap., *Proludium de Primatu Domini nostri Jesu Christi et Causa Motiva Incarnationis*; translated from the French by Ambrosius a Saldo, O.F.M.Cap. (Barcinonae, 1902), pp. 173-202.

¹⁰ Terrien, *op. cit.*, p. 76f. And prior to him, Cardinal Newman, "Letter to Pusey," in *Anglican Difficulties* (New York: Longmans, 1920), pp. 67f.

¹¹ Lawrence of Brindisi, *op. cit.*, pp. 20f.

of is the ancient Serpent, Satan (Apoc. 12:9). So it seems most evident that the Woman he refers to is the Woman of Genesis. In Genesis a perpetual war between the Woman and her Seed on the one side and the Devil and his followers on the other side, is foretold. In the Apocalypse that war is described as being waged (12:4, 6, 13-16). In Genesis the Woman, together with her Seed, is promised victory. John tells us clearly that she is victorious over Satan (12:11). There might be an allusion to the "observe her heel" of Genesis 3:15 in "he stood before the woman" in Apocalypse 12:4.¹²

Now the Woman of Genesis is evidently the Blessed Mother; so the Woman of the Apocalypse is the Blessed Mother. And this conclusion is valid even for those who hold that Mary is meant in Genesis only in a spiritual though true scriptural sense. This allusion of the Apocalypse to Genesis is admitted by practically all authors, even by those who try to wiggle out of the consequence and maintain that the Woman of the Apocalypse is only the Church.

Second Argument from Scripture: A second scriptural proof, one of congruity, that John understood Mary as the Woman is derived from the circumstances of the author himself. We may not forget that John was the privileged Apostle to whom Christ recommended His Mother when He was dying, and John took her to his house and cared for her. Tradition has it that Mary lived some fifteen years after the Ascension of Jesus. Now according to the teaching of the Popes, it was the constant doctrine of the Church that Christ recommended Mary to John as her spiritual child, and John to Mary as his spiritual Mother (John 19:26f).¹³ That Mary grasped this meaning of Jesus' testament cannot be doubted. And if perhaps John did not get it at the Cross, Mary must certainly have explained it to him later. In fact, it would have been most improbable for them to live together so many years and never discuss a matter of so great importance to themselves. Moreover, it would seem that John could be so cryptic in his Gospel (John 19:26f) and in the Apocalypse (12:1) precisely because he had taught the doctrine of Mary's spiritual motherhood more than once to the people. How did men like St. Irenaeus grasp the doctrine so clearly only some fifty years later if John had not preached it more clearly in his oral instructions? Now if John knew of the spiritual motherhood of Mary and if he was describing the spiritual motherhood of

¹² H. B. Swete, *Commentary on the Apocalypse* (London), p. 147. It is interesting to note that St. Thomas of Villanova, when speaking of Apoc. 12:1 does not use "stood before," but "observes" of the Greek text of Gen. 3:15; cf. *De Assumptione Virginis*, concio II (Opera Omnia, Augustae Vindelicorum, 1757), 640C.

¹³ Cf. *Mary Mediatrix*, *Encyclical Letter of Pope Pius X* (Paterson, N. J.: St. Anthony Guild Press, 1948), p. 23, f.n. 7).

the Church in terms that Christians recognized the p a psychological necessity, have thought of Mary whi

B. Th

After having shown the context of Apocalypse 12 f prove our point from Trad overlook in a matter of th of this tradition, we must l letter on the occasion of t maculate Conception. We a solemn definition in reg that is no excuse for think and so can be disregarded emphatically, "no one is i the universal knowledge o the knowledge of all Cath correctness of his interpre his words:

'A great sign'—the Apostl favored—'a great sign appea the moon was under her feet 12:1). No one is ignorant that inviolate when she brought with Child, she cried out in l 12:2). So John saw the most travailing in a kind of myst the birth of us who are still perfect charity of God and t show the desire and love wit strives with unceasing praye

The Pope is evidently Mother. When he says th That, too, is the obvious

¹⁴ Gächter, *op. cit.*, p. 425 und sternenbekränzte Weib (1904) 677.

¹⁵ *Mary Mediatrix*, p. 16f. (1904) 449-462; or *American*

3). So it seems most evident of Genesis. In Genesis a person on the one side and the Devil on the other. In the Apocalypse that war is between the Son of Man and the Devil. In the Apocalypse the Woman, the Church, tells us clearly that she might be an allusion to the Church stood before the woman" in

the Blessed Mother; so the other. And this conclusion is meant in Genesis only in a allusion of the Apocalypse to the Church, even by those who try to say that the Woman of the

scriptural proof, one of the Woman is derived from the Apocalypse. Do not forget that John was the adopted Son of His Mother when she was born and cared for her. Tradition after the Ascension of Jesus. Mary was the constant doctrine of the Church to John as her spiritual Mother (John 19:26f).¹³ That cannot be doubted. And Mary must certainly have been most improbable to ever discuss a matter of so importance that John could not and in the Apocalypse (12:1) of Mary's spiritual motherhood. Men like St. Irenaeus grasp later if John had not preached that if John knew of the spiritual motherhood of the spiritual motherhood of

(London), p. 147. It is interesting speaking of Apoc. 12:1 does not use Gen. 3:15; cf. *De Assumptione de beatorum*, 1757), 640C.

Pope Pius X (Paterson, N. J.: St.

the Church in terms that fit the Blessed Mother so evidently that all Christians recognized the picture as a photograph of Mary, it would seem a psychological necessity, as Father Gächter, S.J., calls it,¹⁴ for John to have thought of Mary while writing this passage.

B. The Argument from Tradition

After having shown that it is quite in keeping with the contents and context of Apocalypse 12 for Mary to be the Woman, we can proceed to prove our point from Tradition, an argument we could never legitimately overlook in a matter of this kind. And as the first and foremost witness of this tradition, we must list a statement of Pope Pius X in his encyclical letter on the occasion of the fiftieth jubilee of the definition of the Immaculate Conception. We realize, of course, that the Pope was not making a solemn definition in regard to the interpretation of this passage; but that is no excuse for thinking the Pope's statement has little or no value and so can be disregarded or explained away. In fact, the Pope says very emphatically, "no one is ignorant." That means what he says belongs to the universal knowledge of Catholics. So if his interpretation belongs to the knowledge of all Catholics, can there be much of a doubt about the correctness of his interpretation? Is not it Catholic doctrine? Here are his words:

'A great sign'—the Apostle John narrates a vision with which he was divinely favored—'a great sign appeared in heaven: a Woman clothed with the sun, and the moon was under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars' (Apoc. 12:1). No one is ignorant that this Woman signified the Virgin Mary, who remained inviolate when she brought forth our Head. The Apostle continues: 'And being with Child, she cried out in her travail and was in the anguish of delivery' (Apoc. 12:2). So John saw the most holy Mother of God already enjoying happiness, yet travailing in a kind of mysterious childbirth. What birth was it? Clearly, it was the birth of us who are still detained in exile and are yet to be generated to the perfect charity of God and to eternal happiness. And the labors in the childbirth show the desire and love with which the Virgin on her throne watches over us and strives with unceasing prayer to complete the number of the elect.¹⁵

The Pope is evidently not merely accommodating this to the Blessed Mother. When he says that John saw her in glory, he meant that literally. That, too, is the obvious intention of the Pope when he says, "No one is

¹⁴ Gächter, *op. cit.*, p. 425 and 428; cf. also L. Fonck, S.J., "Das sonnenumglänzte und sternenumkränzte Weib in der Apokalypse," *Zeitschr. kath. Theol.*, XXVIII (1904) 677.

¹⁵ *Mary Mediatrix*, p. 16f. For the Latin text see *Acta Sanctae Sedis*, XXXVI (1904) 449-462; or *American Ecclesiastical Review*, XXX (1904) 402-415.

ignorant that." He would hardly use such an emphatic expression to introduce a mere accommodation.

In saying that no one is ignorant of that truth did the Pope exaggerate, as some authors seem to think, who claim the opinion is not well founded in Tradition? Let us examine Tradition. We shall either cite verbatim or give an analytic summary of all the ancient and medieval and modern authors that we could find who wrote on the topic. Then the reader can see for himself how universal the interpretation was and is.

In the second century there is extant only one explicit reference to this chapter, and that is in Pastor Hermas (ca. 140-155 at Rome). Hermas relates, in vision 4, ch. 1, how he was met by and saw a monstrous beast. In Chapter Two he tells how shortly after the beast had past him, he was met by a virgin who was decked out as a bride, and that by the aid of former visions he recognized this virgin to be the Church; so he became more joyful.¹⁶ Now, even though Hermas does not refer explicitly to the Apocalypse, he seems evidently to allude to the beast and the woman of Apoc. 12, and so is telling us that he considers the Woman to be the Church. As is quite clear, this sort of testimony does not exclude the Blessed Mother from Apoc. 12:1, nor is it an argument that this was the only interpretation in that century.

Our next witness is St. Hippolytus, who flourished in the first part of the third century at Rome. He quotes Apoc. 12:1-6, 13, 17, and then explains:

By the Woman, then, "clothed with the sun," he meant most manifestly the Church, clothed with the Father's Words, who shines more brightly than the sun. And by "the moon under her feet," he shows her adorned, like the moon, with heavenly glory. And the words, "upon her head a crown of twelve stars" point out the twelve Apostles by whom the Church was founded. And the words "being with child, she cried out in her travail and was in the anguish of delivery" mean that the Church will not cease to bear from her heart the Word that is persecuted by the unbelieving in the world. "And she brought forth," he says, "a male child, who is to rule all nations"; by which is meant that the Church, always bringing forth Christ, the perfect male Child of God, who is declared to be God and man, teaches all nations. And the words "her child was caught up to God and to His throne" signify that he who is always born of her is a heavenly King, and not an earthly one; even as David also declared of old when he said, "The Lord said to my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool."¹⁷

What St. Hippolytus says is clear. The Woman is the Church, who gives birth to Christ Himself in each soul. He does not refer to Mary or to her

¹⁶ Pastor Hermas, *Visio* IV, ii (editio Funk, *Patres Apostolici* I, 380).

¹⁷ St. Hippolytus, *De Christo et antichristo*, LX f. (MPG 10,780f).

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¹⁸ St. Methodius of Oly
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giving birth to Christ. But it is worth noting that he does not argue explicitly against the Blessed Mother or Christ. He could even be said to suppose that interpretation as the basis of the one he gives.

Next we turn to St. Methodius, Bishop of Olympus, who died in 311, and so flourished at the end of the third and beginning of the fourth century. He is exhorting virgins when he says:

The Spirit will soon be present who drives away the clouds of the most wicked one, if you do not fear the ambushes of the dangerous Serpent, just as your Mother, who in heaven gives birth to the male Virgin. So I have decided to speak to you more clearly about that woman, and the times demand that I do so now. [He quotes Apoc. 12:1-6, then continues.] This is a summary for you about the woman and the dragon. [He admits that the interpretation is difficult and then proceeds.] The woman who appeared in heaven clothed with the sun, and with a crown of twelve stars, and at whose feet lies the moon, who is in labor and in pain when about to give birth to her child, she, O virgins, properly speaking and according to the demands of reason and understanding of the truth, is your Mother. [Having quoted Is. 60:1-4 he continues.] She is the Church, whose children will, after the resurrection, come from all sides in a great concourse and gather together in her lap. She it is who has received as a stole the light which knows no setting, and rejoices clothed with the splendor of the Word.¹⁸

Then he explains that the male Child is not Christ, but the faithful, because John speaks of those who are being born or who will be born, but Christ was already born long ago. Moreover, Christ was not taken to heaven when born lest he should be devoured by the Dragon, but was born to endure the Dragon's attack and so overcome him. Christians can be called the male Child, because they are formed according to Christ. Later he repeats that the woman is the Church.

Since Methodius expressly says that the Child is not Christ, he would certainly not admit that the woman is Mary in any sense. However, his reason why the child is not Christ is flimsy. John is writing of his visions, in which he certainly tells not merely of present and future, but also of past events. Besides, that this male Child is the Mystic Christ is not the obvious or primary meaning. Moreover, the immediacy of being taken into heaven after birth is not to be taken so strictly. Methodius does not say how there is closer immediacy in his own explanation; as a matter of fact there is not. Furthermore, the purpose of Christ's coming to overcome Satan and his escape from Satan to heaven are not contradictory. So we would say that Methodius' interpretation is based on a false exegesis, not on Tradition. And what is of importance for us: though he does not

¹⁸ St. Methodius of Olympus, *Symposion* VIII, iv (MPG 18, 143f; CGS, Bonwetsch, p. 85).

say expressly that some held the Woman to be Mary and the Child, Christ, he clearly implies that. In other words, there was in his day a current opinion which held that Mary is the Woman. Methodius opposes that on flimsy exegetical grounds.¹⁹

About this same time there was a Latin writer, St. Victorinus, who seems originally to have hailed from Greece and was bishop of Pettau in Jugoslavia. He died in 304. Explaining the Apocalypse 12:1ff, he wrote:

He who was born of her, without seed, owed nothing to death; and therefore the Dragon could not devour Him, that is, detain Him in death; for on the third day He arose again . . . and "was caught up to God and to His throne," as we read in the Acts of the Apostles, at His Ascension. . . . The Woman clothed with the sun and with the moon under her feet . . . is the ancient Church of the Fathers and Prophets and of the Saints and of the Apostles, who groaned and was in anguish because of her desire, until she had seen that Christ had taken a body from her race, the fruit promised of old to herself from her people according to the flesh. "Clothed with the sun" signifies the hope of the resurrection and the glory of the promise. The moon signifies the change [casus] of the bodies of the saints because of the debt of death, which can never be lacking. . . . The crown of twelve stars signifies the choir of the Fathers according to the birth of the flesh, from whom Christ was to take flesh. . . . "Being caught up to the throne" . . . the Ascension.²⁰

So Victorinus seems to suppose that Mary is the Woman in the background, else he has a mixture that is hard to understand. For the Child is the personal Christ in his personal birth and Ascension, supposing his physical Mother as the Woman. Again, his interpretation relative to the Church, does not seem to destroy the tradition about Mary as the Woman. He most likely did not speak of Mary because he did not understand clearly the doctrine of Mary's spiritual motherhood.

Next we have a rather valuable testimony from St. Epiphanius, who lived from about 315 till 403. He is speaking of Mary's Assumption.

But if any think that I am in error, let them investigate the traces of Mary in the Scriptures, and they will find there no mention of her death, neither whether she died or whether she did not die, nor whether she was buried or was not buried. And with regard to the journey of John when he set out for Asia [Minor], nowhere do we read that he took the holy Virgin with him. For here Scripture is simply silent in order not to lead away the mind to astonishment by matters of exceeding marvel. For my own part I do not dare to speak, but, while I have my own thoughts, observe a like silence. Still, though we are unable to certify her death, we may perhaps find some trace of that holy and blessed one that bear upon it [death]. For there is, on the one hand, what Simeon says to her, "Thine own soul also a

¹⁹ Cf. Th. Livius, *The Blessed Virgin in the Fathers of the First Six Centuries* (London: Burns and Oates, 1893), p. 339f.

²⁰ St. Victorinus, Bishop of Pettau, *Scholia in Apoc.* (MPL 5, 336).

sword shall pierce, that the . . . the other hand, St. John tells . . . against the Woman who had . . . her the wings of the eagle, and . . . not seize her. This then may . . . that she did not die; neither . . . passing the human mind, has . . . and most sublime vessel, that . . . pertain to the flesh. Whether . . . she had been buried, yet she . . . flesh". But who would be so . . . phemous and unworthy thou . . . and utter with his lips what . . . prefer, instead of singing hymns . . . insulting and injurious to the . . . the most honored.²¹

The mind of Epiphanius . . . glory also with the body. . . . some manner translated in . . . indicated in the prophecy . . . death might be indicated . . . At any rate, if she died, . . . was in the tomb. For our . . . Apocalypse to be Mary in . . . interpretation was common.

In a homily which has . . . have the same explanation . . . glory:

O holy Virgin, Mother of . . . the heavens, "a Woman clothed . . . heavens, A Woman bearing . . ."

St. Augustine (354-430) . . . Psalm 142, interprets our . . . Head of the Church, he says . . .

Christ was born of a virgin . . . By "the desert" [*solitudo*], I . . . gave birth to Him who was . . . this Woman is the ancient Church . . .

²¹ St. Epiphanius, *Haereses* . . . op. cit., p. 344f.

²² Ps. Epiphanius, *Homilies* . . .

sword shall pierce, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed"; and on the other hand, St. John tells us in the Apocalypse that the Dragon hastened against the Woman who had brought forth the male child, and there were given her the wings of the eagle, and she was taken into the desert that the Dragon might not seize her. This then may well be fulfilled in Mary. So I do not decide nor say that she did not die; neither will I vouch that she died. For Holy Scripture, surpassing the human mind, has left the matter in suspense for the sake of that precious and most sublime vessel, that no one should think concerning her of things that pertain to the flesh. Whether then she died at all we do not know. And even though she had been buried, yet she remained incorrupt [literally "was not conjoined to flesh"]. But who would be so mad as to be willing to give vent to any such blasphemous and unworthy thought, to open his mouth, give liberty to his tongue, and utter with his lips what comes from an evil mind? Who is there that would prefer, instead of singing hymns to her and glorifying her, to entertain thoughts insulting and injurious to the holy Virgin and not rather honor that vessel of all the most honored.²¹

The mind of Epiphanius is clear. He does not doubt that Mary is in glory also with the body. But he is not sure whether Mary died or was in some manner translated into glory without death. That she died might be indicated in the prophecy of Simeon. That she went to heaven without death might be indicated in the escape of the Woman of the Apocalypse. At any rate, if she died, her flesh remained incorrupt the short time it was in the tomb. For our matter, he clearly considers the Woman of the Apocalypse to be Mary in glory and thereby implies that in his day this interpretation was commonly accepted.

In a homily which had been wrongly ascribed to St. Epiphanius we have the same explanation: the Apocalyptic Woman is clearly Mary in glory:

O holy Virgin, Mother of eternal Light [Christ] . . . O Marvellous miracle in the heavens, "a Woman clothed with the sun." O marvellous miracle in the heavens, A Woman bearing the light in her arms.²²

St. Augustine (354-430) in a sermon to the people, while explaining Psalm 142, interprets our passage of the Church. Speaking of Christ the Head of the Church, he said:

Christ was born of a virgin in the desert [*solitudo*] as we heard in the Apocalypse. By "the desert" [*solitudo*], I believe, because he *alone* was so born. For this Woman gave birth to Him who was to rule the people with an iron rod (Apoc. 12:5f). But this Woman is the ancient city of God, of whom it is said in the Psalm: "Glorious

²¹ St. Epiphanius, *Haereses*, n. 78, 11 (MPG 42, 716); cf. the comments of Livius, *op. cit.*, p. 344f.

²² Ps. Epiphanius, *Homilia 5 in laudes S. Mariae Deiparae* (MPG 43, 483CD).

things have been said of thee, city of God." This city had its beginning from Abel himself, just as the evil city from Cain. . . . And so also that Woman is clothed with the sun, with the very Sun of Justice, whom the wicked do not acknowledge. . . . Rightly does she have the moon under her feet, because she spurned the mortality of the flesh that grows and decreases.²³

In this mystical explanation of the Apocalypse, St. Augustine does not mention Mary, but he can hardly be said to exclude her.

There is extant an explanation of the Apocalypse which at one time was ascribed to Augustine, but is today recognized as a compilation of ideas and passages from Augustine's works. The unknown author interprets the Woman to be the Church.

He says the Church has under her feet her part [*partem suam*], that is, lying men and wicked Christians. . . . The twelve stars can be understood of the twelve Apostles. Being "clothed with the sun" signifies the hope of the resurrection, on account of what was written: . . . (Mt. 13:43). The great red Dragon is the Devil, who seeks to devour the son of the Church. . . . And in her travail. . . . Being in child labor she was in anguish of delivery. . . . For the Church always gives birth amid pains, she always begets the members of Christ.²⁴

Again, this unknown author gives a possible explanation of the passage in referring it to the Church, but he does not expressly exclude Mary.

²³ St. Augustine, *Enarratio in Ps.* 142 (MPL 37, 1846).

²⁴ Ps. Augustine, *Expositio in Apoc. B. Joannis*, hom. 9 (MPL 35, 2433).

(To be continued)

THE STANDARDS

There is a verse in the . . . differently by different au . . . up to now. The verse in . . . patient of Hus says "I sh . . . as the *hol*." There is no d . . . the happiness of a longer . . . word *hol*? Perhaps moder . . . of southwestern Asia will . . . examine the different view . . . probable we shall finally . . . evidence.

The interpretation of th . . . the LXX, who translate . . . ally means "the trunk" . . . apparently fits the text of . . . the text under considera . . . tree might grow: "*radix* . . . *missione mea*" (19). Mor . . . that passage of the Psal . . . text of Job; "*Justus sicut* . . . classical in Holy Writ.²

Fr. à Lapide says that . . . *Italica*, "almost all old au . . . view."³ Such is the view . . . tributed to Lactantius. S . . . at length: "*Habet quidem* . . . *differt; omnis namque ar* . . . *sed crescendo superius a*

¹ A Lapide, *Commentaria in*

² Cf. *Cant.*, 5; 11; 7; 7; *Ecclesi* XIII, interprets this express . . . *enim, inquit* (Ps. XCI, 13), ' . . . II, col. 811).

³ A Lapide, *op. et loc. cit.*,