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THE CREDIBILITY OF THE SCAPULAR PROMISE

PARS DISSERTATIONIS
AD LAUREAM
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INTRODUCTION

The year nineteen hundred and fifty-one was celebrated by Carmelites as the seventh centenary year of the Brown Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. According to Carmelite tradition, Our Lady appeared to the General of the Order, St. Simon Stock, holding in her hands the Scapular of the Order. She said, "He who dies in this will not suffer eternal fire." This tradition, known as the "Scapular promise," is the mainspring of the devotion of the Brown Scapular, which has enjoyed widespread favor in the Church from the seventeenth to the twentieth century. A second promise of the Blessed Virgin has also been associated with the Brown Scapular of Carmel. It concerns release from purgatory soon after death. According to tradition, the Blessed Virgin appeared to Pope John XXII, March 3, 1322, and said: "I, the Mother of Grace, shall descend on the Saturday after their death (i. e., the devotees of the Scapular) and whomever I shall find in purgatory, I shall free; so that I may lead them unto the holy mountain of life everlasting." Because of the allusion to Saturday, this promise has become known as the "Sabbatine Privilege."

Although the Scapular devotion has flourished among the faithful, particularly since the early seventeenth century, both privileges have been the constant object of controversy. The Sabbatine Privilege was referred to the University of Salamanca in 1569, to the Holy Office and to the University of Bologna in 1609, and to the University of Paris in 1648. The promise of eternal salvation was remanded to the Holy Office in 1635. The decisions of these authorities were favorable to the Scapular privileges on canonical and theological issues. But in 1642 John Launoy initiated a controversy over the historical authenticity of the privileges which carried into the twentieth century. Articles on the Scapular in such learned works as *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, and *Enciclopedia ecclesiastica* rendered judgments that were unfavorable to the historicity of the Scapular promises. In view of this situation, it was evident that the celebration of the seventh centenary of the Scapular would have to be accompanied by appropriate critical evaluations of the Scapular tradition.

Accordingly plans were made in 1948 for up-to-date studies of the Scapular devotion. The historicity of the Marian promise of eternal life to St. Simon Stock was entrusted to Bartholomew F. M. Xiberta, O. Carm., of the theological faculty of St. Albert's international college, Rome. The spirituality of the Scapular devotion was to be studied by Enrico M. Esteve,

VIDIMUS ET APPROBAVIMUS

Romae, apud Pont. Athenaeum " Angelicum ",
die 24, mense iunii, anno 1950

Petrus LUMBRERAS, O. P.
Angelus WALZ, O. P.

IMPRIMI POTEST

Fr. Kilianus HEALY, O. Carm.
Prior Generalis O. Carm.

Romae, die 14 maii 1963

IMPRIMATUR

E Vicariatu Urbis, die 18 iunii 1963.

ALOYSIUS Card. Provicarius

O. Carm., likewise of the theological faculty of St. Albert's college. It appeared to the present writer that a third study would be required to round out fully the evaluation of the Scapular devotion. This study would concern itself with the relationship between the historicity of the Scapular promises and the spiritual values of the Scapular devotion. The writer undertook this task in a dissertation towards the degree of Doctor of Sacred Theology at the Pontificium Athenaeum Angelicum. The dissertation was defended June 23, 1950. It was entitled "The Credibility of the Scapular Promises", since faith in the historical reality of the promises of the Blessed Virgin was the essential issue of discussion for three centuries. The approach to this question of the credibility of the promises was to be essentially theological, with all due consideration being given to historical evidence and method.

The dissertation was divided into six chapters. The first chapter was an investigation into the debates over the historicity of the Scapular promises in the seventeenth and again in the early twentieth centuries. The study of these debates uncovered the fact that the relationship between the historicity of the Scapular promises and the spiritual value of the Scapular devotion was a key issue of the controversy among scholars. Since the spiritual value of the Scapular devotion was a more profound question than the historicity of the Scapular promises, the second chapter was devoted to a study of the norms laid down by the Church and the opinions of theologians concerning the place of private revelations in popular devotions. Chapter three turned to the historical question of the authenticity of the Scapular promises. It was pointed out that the tradition of the promises existed long before the development of scientific historical method, that the documentary question had proved to be complex, and that errors of evaluation had been made by critics unfamiliar with medieval Carmelite history and literature. Historical judgment had therefore to be made cautiously and on the basis of sound critical norms. The fourth chapter made application of the considerations of chapters two and three to the Scapular promise, while the fifth chapter attempted the same application to the Sabbatine Privilege. The concluding chapter evaluated the contributions of various authors on the Scapular devotion from both an historical and theological standpoint, and concluded to the credibility of the Scapular promises.

The present summary of the dissertation confines itself to the question of the promise of eternal life for those who die in the Scapular, made according to tradition by the Blessed Virgin to St. Simon Stock about 1251. Consideration of the Sabbatine Privilege has been omitted, since no critical work on the historicity or the theology of the Sabbatine Privilege was undertaken for the seventh centenary of the Scapular nor have these questions been since examined. In the fall of 1950, some months after the writer's

defense of the dissertation there appeared the work of Bartholomew F. M. Xiberta, O. Carm., *De Visione Sancti Simonis Stock*, which offered a complete treatment of the historicity of the Scapular promise. In 1953 the theological study of the Scapular devotion by Enrico M. Esteve, O. Carm., *De valore spirituali devotionis S. Scapularis*, made its appearance. Both these works confined themselves, except for passing references, to the tradition of the Scapular promise to St. Simon Stock. The present writer has incorporated into this summary of his own study the pertinent findings of these authors on the history and theology of the Scapular devotion. Other relevant material pertinent to his argument that has since appeared has also been included.

The author owes special thanks to Peter Lumbreras, O. P., who directed the dissertation; to A. Walz, O. P., first reader, whose criticisms on historical questions have modified certain positions of the author; and to the Most Reverend Kilian Lynch, O. Carm., prior general at the time of the writing of the dissertation.

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THE CREDIBILITY OF THE SCAPULAR PROMISE

I - THE SCAPULAR DEVOTION AND HISTORICAL CRITICISM

The books of Bartholomaeus F. M. Xiberta, O. Carm.¹ and Enrico M. Esteve, O. Carm.² are a terminal point in the study of the origin and development of the Scapular devotion. Xiberta has treated exclusively the historical authenticity of the "Scapular promise," i. e., the tradition of the appearance of the Blessed Virgin to St. Simon Stock, according to which she pledged that those who die clothed in the Scapular will not suffer the eternal punishment of hell. The author has provided a survey of the controversies over the historicity of this tradition, has presented all the documentary evidence pertaining to it, and finally has evaluated the historical trustworthiness of the tradition. Particularly noteworthy in Xiberta's study is the discovery of manuscript evidence that permits the identification of the source from which the traditional account of the appearance of the Blessed Virgin to St. Simon Stock derives.³ This source is the Carmelite *Catalogus Sanctorum*, the earliest manuscript copies of which date from the late fourteenth or early fifteenth centuries. While the existing copies of the *Catalogus* were in all probability preceded by earlier types,⁴ nothing is determinable about the precise date of earlier examples of the *Catalogus* and more especially about their content.⁵ Thus historical evidence is lacking that the tradition of the Scapular promise was current among the Carmelites of the thirteenth century.⁶

¹ *De visione sancti Simonis Stock*, Romae, 1950.

² *De valore spirituali devotionis S. Scapularis*, Romae, 1953.

³ Cf. *De visione*, 172-194.

⁴ Xiberta, *De visione*, 205-207, compares the contents of the extant copies of the *Catalogus*, notes the addition of material to it, and concludes that the earliest known form contains evidence of a still more primitive version.

⁵ Xiberta, *ibidem*, argues that the prototype of the *Catalogus*, which would have incorporated the account of the Scapular vision, dates from the early decades of the fourteenth century. The author's case has strength, but must await further manuscript evidence before it can be advanced with certainty.

⁶ The Chronicle of William of Sandwich, which has been dated 1291, makes an allusion to an appearance of the Blessed Virgin to the Prior General

The absence of thirteenth century evidence substantiating the tradition is a deficiency in a stream of documentation that is entirely favorable to the historicity of the tradition. On the other hand, Xiberta has been able to adduce evidence eliminating a legendary creation of the Scapular promise in the fourteenth century: the essential details in the narrative of the apparition of the Blessed Virgin are found to be invariable, and the context in which the apparition is set is the prayer of St. Simon Stock rather than the Scapular or the Carmelite habit.⁷

This actual condition of the evidence concerning the tradition of the Scapular promise — a narrative clearly traceable to the mid-fourteenth century, but whose origin, author, and source are enshrouded in darkness — raises certain questions requiring thoughtful reflection: (1) Has the condition of the historical evidence in reality been improved through research into the tradition? (2) Do Carmelite authors remain justified in continuing to maintain the historicity of the promise of the Scapular? It will be one of the purposes of this study to attempt the answer to these questions.

A very important issue, also to be considered in these pages, has been raised by Esteve in his treatise on the theology and spirituality of the Scapular devotion. This question concerns the relationship between the history and the spiritual value of the devotion. Is the value of the devotion diminished should the claim of Carmelite tradition concerning the Marian apparition and promise of the Scapular be a false claim? Esteve has outlined the structure of the devotion as comprising three elements: (1) the material Scapular itself (the material elements); (2) the Marian symbolism of the Scapular, express-

of the Order. The reference seems clearly to be to St. Simon Stock. Authors have used this evidence both for and against the tradition of the Scapular promise, not mentioned in this narrative. Cf. Xiberta, *De visione*, 98-99, for the pertinent passage of the Chronicle, and 212-216 for his discussion of the question. The Chronicle is no longer a piece of thirteenth century evidence for the Scapular vision since it appears to date from the late fourteenth century. On this point, cf. Rudolf Hendriks, O. Carm., *La succession héréditaire (1280-1451)*, in *Les Études Carmélitaines: Élie le prophète*, 2 (1956), 54.

⁷ Xiberta in *De visione* has not taken into consideration the literary characteristics of the earliest known narrative of the Scapular vision except to point out the simplicity of the account. Literary analysis can contribute to our understanding of the historical development of the tradition. This analysis will be undertaken in the course of our discussion of the historical question.

ed in the Marian devotion of Carmel (element *formale quod*); (3) the Marian promise annexed to the Scapular (element *formale quo*).⁸ According to this conception of the theological structure of the devotion, the Marian promise is an element integral and necessary to the devotion. The author, however, has left unclear in what sense the historical veracity of the Scapular promise is a necessary element in the theological structure of the devotion.

Esteve points out the necessity of distinguishing between the historical question concerning the Scapular (i. e., its *origin*) and the doctrinal question (i. e., the Scapular *devotion*). The historical question concerns the degree of certitude, ascertained from a critical study of documents, with which the apparition and promise of the Virgin may be held as objective fact. The doctrinal question involves determining, on the basis of revealed truths of faith, how the Scapular devotion fosters true Christian piety. The author follows the view of St. Thomas as developed by modern theology that private revelations have solely a *practical purpose*: they are directives for human acts. Since they add nothing to the content of divine revelation, but are rather concrete applications of revealed truths, Esteve concludes that the principal question concerning the Scapular is *doctrinal*, not historical. The true foundation of the Scapular devotion is not to be found in the historicity of private revelation, but in Catholic doctrine concerning true Marian piety.⁹

The author, however, does not draw out the full implications of the distinction between the origin of the Scapular and the devotion of the Scapular. In the course of this practical application of this distinction, he remarks, "It is a delusion to think that the Scapular devotion can survive if its two privileges of final perseverance and of prompt liberation from purgatory are eliminated. Even if it did by chance survive, it would be deprived of its greatest values."¹⁰

The position of the author leaves two questions open to discussion: (1) In what sense is the historicity of the Scapular promise necessary to the theological structure of the Scapular devotion? (2) On the hypothesis that the Scapular promise is historically false, does the Scapular devotion in any way diminish in its spiritual value?

⁸ *De valore*, 122-123.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 363.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 4-16.

The Plan of This Study

This study will first present a summary of the positions taken against the Scapular devotion by its principal opponents, John Launoy and Herbert Thurston, S. J.¹¹ The summary will not consist in a detailed examination of the arguments of these authors. Rather its aim is to indicate *the nature* of their arguments. The writings of Launoy and Thurston are here viewed in the light of two questions: (1) What proof or evidence did these writers demand before they would concede the validity of the Scapular devotion? (2) Why did they require these proofs or evidence? Our aim is to grasp the argument of these authors *in its totality*. Once we have ascertained how each of these authors conceived the Scapular question from the standpoint of both history and theology, we shall be in position to discuss the historical and theological questions posed above.

The Position of Launoy

The argument of Launoy against the validity of the Scapular devotion was based on the concept of *contemporaneous evidence*. He applied this principle of historical criticism to the theological judgment of the vision of St. Simon as well as to the question of its historical veracity. In the preface to each of his works on the Scapular devotion he declared that his purpose lay in "determining the origin of the so-called privileged scapular."¹² In *De Viso* he provided a summary of his argument against the devotion which clearly reveals how he conceived the problem of the origin of the Scapular:

As often as I have treated this matter, I have consistently pointed out that it is a question of fact, requiring the application of the rules governing historical truth. Consequently, recourse to ancient documents is necessary to determine whether or not this event occurred. Only such evidence could provide a trustworthy basis for an apparition of such great moment. In brief, there is no trustworthy author who has recorded this apparition. On the contrary, it was not reported by contemporary or quasi-contemporary writers and a judgment then rendered by the prudent

¹¹ For a complete list of the writings of these authors on the Scapular, cf. the bibliography at the beginning of this work.

¹² *De viso, Preface*, 2. Cf. *Dissertatio duplex, Preface*, 1: "in examinanda privilegiati, ut vocant, Scapularis origine."

concerning the truth of the vision. So that the thing would have the requisite authority, such is plainly necessary, not only in ordinary questions of fact, but especially when it is a question of the visions of pious men.¹³

These remarks of Launoy indicate that in his view it was not only an unsatisfactory state of documentation for the vision of St. Simon that required contemporaneous evidence. Rather theological reasons made contemporaneous evidence particularly necessary. Since the vision was a preternatural event — Launoy argued — evidence had to be produced that competent contemporaries of St. Simon had rendered a favorable verdict on the theological truth of the vision. Further, the "great moment" of the words of the Virgin, namely, their pertinence to the salvation of souls, was an additional reason why the historical truth of the vision had to be verified by contemporaneous evidence.

In this first book Launoy had already judged that a certain type of contemporaneous evidence from the time of St. Simon was impossible to acquire. Quoting from Gerson the criteria to be applied to a visionary for the discernment of true revelations from false, he argued that, since St. Simon was dead and there was no evidence of such an investigation by his contemporaries, these criteria could no longer be effective in the case of the saint, "...since (they) can be applied to no one except the living person into whose vision an inquiry is made. What can be done in the case of Stock, who died long ago, and for whose vision there is no contemporary witness?"¹⁴ In view of this stringent position, it is understandable why Launoy could assert, "It is perfectly evident that this vision of Stock cannot stand."¹⁵

Launoy attempted to fortify his position by appeal to the principle that piety must be based on truth. In a letter dedicating his second book to Cardinal Barberini, he wrote, "...truth and piety cannot and must not be disassociated. ...piety is built on truth."¹⁶ True piety could not be motivated by the tradition of the Scapular promise, for "...piety must be united to truth or severed from falsity — the scope is identical."¹⁷ Applying this principle to the Scapular Confraternity, he urged that the pope take into consideration the Carmelite position that the Confraternity was based on "the apparition of the Virgin and the gift of the Scapular as its primary foun-

¹³ *Ibid.*, 41-42.

¹⁴ *Dissertatio duplex*, 50.

¹⁵ *De viso, Epistola*, 6.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 51.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

dation."¹⁸ Since the decree of Paul V permitting the Carmelites to preach the Sabbatine Privilege did not mention the vision of St. Simon and since Launoy's dissertations had shown the falsity of the vision, Carmelite preachers had to be silent about it, for the Christian faithful would otherwise be exposed "to error and superstition, by which true religion is destroyed."¹⁹

Greater insight into Launoy's insistent demand for contemporaneous evidence may be gained from an examination of the book of Gregory Nazienzen of St. Basil, O. C. D., *L'Adoption des Enfants de la Vierge dans l'Ordre et la Confraternité de Notre Dame du Mont Carmel*, published at Paris in 1641. In the opening pages of *De Viso*, Launoy acknowledged that the critique of the Scapular devotion in his first work, the *Dissertatio Duplex*, had based itself on Gregory's *L'Adoption*.²⁰ A comparison of Launoy's position with that of Gregory reveals how the former had actually attempted to subvert the arguments Gregory had advanced in favor of the Scapular devotion.²¹

The first example concerns the question of documentary testimony to the vision of St. Simon. Gregory first listed the *Fasciculus tripartitus* of John Paleonydor, published in 1495;²² but on the next page, he observed, "Whoever would desire the ancients can also be satisfied — as John Grossi of Toulouse, General of the Carmelites — who wrote the book called the *Viridarium* two hundred years ago, namely, in 1424."²³ In *Dissertatio Duplex*, Launoy had made it a main contention that Paleonydor was the first authority offered by the Carmelites. It is dif-

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 215.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 1-2: "Eorum itaque veterum & cum primis recentium Antonii Casanatensis, & Gregorii Nazianzeni a sancto Basilio, qui visum illud omni studio confirmarunt nuper, diligentiam secutus credideram, e Carmelitis Paleonidorum fuisse primum, qui Stochii visum litteris prodidisset... deceptum me fateor. Quis vero maiorem admisit culpam, deceptus, an deceptores..." Mark Anthony A. Casanate, O. Carm. devoted seven pages to the Scapular in his book *Carmeliticis decoris paradisus* (Lugduni, 1639). His treatment was eulogistic, as a eulogy of the Order was the purpose of his work. For his exaggerations, the book was placed on the Index.

²¹ In *L'adoption*, 5, Gregory may have assigned the broader motive of Launoy that inspired this attack on the Scapular devotion: "If men badly informed take the liberty to decry abuses which they say slip into these things, which are in their opinion fictions, it is reasonable to take the necessary steps to aid them in their principal purpose, which is to remove or to prevent the abuses claimed by them. Nevertheless, we have not yet perceived them."

²² *L'adoption*, 651.

²³ *Ibid.*, 652.

ficult to believe that this assertion could have been due to an oversight, for Launoy had made the appeal to Paleonydor a foundation-stone of his argument against the Scapular devotion. Since Launoy set great store by authority, it seems he preferred to criticize the work of Paleonydor rather than that of the Carmelite General, Grossi.²⁴ Moreover, he oversimplified the position of Gregory by ignoring the latter's comment that one could not simply dismiss the vision of St. Simon as unhistorical, since it formed part of the tradition concerning him: "For observe that we know, by the account of the same authors" (i. e., Grossi, Paleonydor, Vatican Codex lat. 3813), "the revelation, the life, the profession and the generalship of St. Simon Stock: it follows that one who recounts any one of these may also write of the other. Otherwise, one may rightly inquire why these authors are believed trustworthy on one count and liars and imposters on another."²⁵

It is also evident from Gregory's *L'Adoption* why Launoy took so stringent a position concerning the theological judgment of the promise of the Scapular. In a chapter entitled "Approbation of the Confraternity by Cardinals" Gregory quoted the decree of the Congregation of Rites which explicitly named Cardinals Torres and Bellarmine as approving the Carmelite breviary. This approbation, Gregory pointed out, included the lessons for the feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, wherein the vision of St. Simon together with the Scapular promise were recorded.²⁶ Completely ignoring these facts, Launoy urged that Bellarmine "would never have admitted this vision of Stock."²⁷ He based this observation on a citation from Bellarmine's works to the effect that the Church was not ruled by new revelations, but retained only those handed down by apostolic tradition.²⁸ In defense of the Carmelite preaching of the Scapular promise, Gregory related the investigation by the Holy Office in 1635 of the life of St. Simon in the Vatican Codex and its permission to continue preaching it.²⁹ This clear illustration of ecclesiastical approval was likewise

²⁴ Thus Launoy appealed to certain Carmelite authorities who had not recorded the Scapular vision (*De viso*, 10-18): Philip Ribot, John of Chemineto, William of Sandwich, Thomas Walden.

²⁵ *L'adoption*, 634.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 655.

²⁷ *De Viso*, 65.

²⁸ *Ibid.* Launoy cites Bellarmine to this effect: "Non enim novis revelationibus regitur Ecclesia, sed in iis permanet, quae tradiderunt illi, qui ministri fuerunt sermonis."

²⁹ *L'adoption*, 649. Cf. also Esteve, *De valore*, 72-73, for data on this investigation by the Holy Office.

ignored by Launoy. He took the position that the vision was not "examined by the wise" in the time of Simon Stock.³⁰ Finally, in his chapter, "Propositions Shedding Light on the Promise of the Virgin, he who dies in this", Gregory taught that every such promise was *ipso facto* conditioned on perseverance in the service of Christ. He developed his argument at length from scripture, tradition, and the authority of St. Thomas.³¹ Nevertheless, Launoy asserted that the promise of eternal salvation was a false revelation, since in the account of the vision in Grossi and Paleonydor no conditions of a good life were laid down.³²

Launoy's position against the Scapular devotion was constructed to offset the arguments of Gregory in the *L'Adoption*.³³ Since Gregory had offered the *Viridarium* of the Carmelite General, Grossi, written in the early fifteenth century, as a principal witness to the vision of St. Simon, Launoy demanded *thirteenth century testimony*. Since Gregory had indicated that a favorable theological judgment concerning the orthodoxy of the Scapular promise had been made in the approbation of the Carmelite breviary and by the examination of the Holy Office in 1635, Launoy required evidence of such a judgment in the times of St. Simon. Whereas Gregory insisted that the promise necessarily presupposed the conditions of a Christian life, Launoy declared that these conditions should have been stated by the revelation itself.

The Position of Thurston

Thurston's main intent was to offer a critique of the historical documentation presented by Benedict Zimmerman, O. C. D. for the historicity of the vision of St. Simon.³⁴ Thurston pointed out that the two principal documents used by Zimmerman did not appear to be authentic.³⁵ He then suggested a legendary origin for the tradi-

³⁰ *De viso*, 48.

³¹ *L'adoption*, 756-770.

³² *De viso*, 62.

³³ It is a remarkable fact that nowhere does Launoy directly take up the arguments which Gregory offers in favor of the devotion.

³⁴ For a complete list of Thurston's articles on the Scapular tradition, cf. the bibliography at the beginning of this study.

³⁵ These documents were the so-called fragments of Peter Swanyngton and an account of the Scapular vision attributed to Sibert de Beka in the early fourteenth century by the sixteenth century Carmelite, John Bale. Zimmerman acknowledged his error in attributing an account of the Scapular vision to Sibert

tion of the Scapular promise: "Can we with these facts before us regard the story of St. Simon Stock's vision as anything more than a pious legend?"³⁶

Thurston viewed the historicity of the Scapular promise as a question of theological import. He offered a series of observations on this point. Since in the promise itself no conditions were stipulated, this fact was all the more reason for sound historical evidence: "Are we justified in declaring that the unqualified promise of salvation made to those who wear the Scapular till death rests upon a basis which is historically sound?"³⁷ Further, the very magnitude of the promise necessitated historical investigation: "Is it asking too much that before preaching to the faithful so momentous a promise as that attached to the Scapular we should submit it to the ordinary tests enjoined alike by prudence and historical criticism?"³⁸ The formal canonization of Simon Stock, or at least the beginnings of a formal process, might inspire some confidence in the tradition of the vision: "If St. Simon Stock had ever been canonized, or if his cause had been examined into and reported upon by the Roman authorities, the matter would be somewhat different. We know that in the case of St. Simon even this guarantee is entirely absent."³⁹ Finally, he professed himself appalled by the view of Zimmerman that the original vehicle of the promise was the Carmelite habit rather than the scapular alone: "How can we infer with any confidence that the promise of assured salvation made to those who have faithfully worn till death the habit of a religious order, submitting thereby to the innumerable deprivations which the mere wearing of such a habit entails — how can we safely infer, I ask, that the promise will be extended to all who only fulfill their part in the compact by a sort of legal fiction, wearing at no inconvenience to themselves, two tiny morsels of cloth under their dress?"⁴⁰ Thurston suggested that these observations should be taken into consideration by preachers of the Scapular devotion, who

de Beka: cf. *Monumenta historica carmelitana*, Lirinae, 1907, 343. He maintained the substantial authenticity of the Swanyngton fragments until his final study of the Scapular tradition in which he set them aside as spurious. Cf. *De Sacro Scapulari Carmelitano*, in *Analecta Ordinis Carmelitarum Discalceatorum*, 2 (1927-1928) 71-73.

³⁶ *The Origin of the Scapular: A Criticism*, in *The Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, 16 (1904) 59.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 60, note 4.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 71.

should be guided by "a certain reserve in proclaiming on Our Lady's authority, that the wearing of our familiar Brown Scapular may be regarded as a sure pledge of salvation."⁴¹

The position of Thurston was that the "unqualified promise" of so "momentous" a character, i. e., pertaining to eternal salvation, attached to a simple practice of wearing "two tiny morsels of cloth,"⁴² required more convincing historical documentation than Zimmerman had been able to present. His position was not unsimilar to that of Launoy, who had also argued that the very pertinence of the promise to eternal life rendered historical documentation all the more necessary.

The Objections to the Scapular Devotion

The objections to the Scapular devotion offered by Launoy and Thurston were an admixture of historical and theological criticism. In the view of Launoy, the promise of the Scapular was unacceptable without thirteenth century documentation. Without such evidence the faithful were led into a superstitious and erroneous belief in the vision of St. Simon. While Thurston did not take so stringent a position as Launoy, he urged that the actual state of the evidence pertaining to the vision of St. Simon was unsatisfactory from the viewpoint of historical criticism. As long as this situation obtained, the proposal of the Scapular promise to the faithful led them into a certain spiritual danger.⁴³

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*, 71. Thurston inclined to make a direct connection between the physical wearing of the material Scapular and the grace of final perseverance, as appears clear from his pejorative description of the Scapular itself. He described it as follows: "two small pieces of brown cloth first (coming) into fashion," *ibid.*, 74; "two little fragments of cloth," *ibid.*; "two small pieces of cloth joined with strings," *Scapulars*, in *The Month*, 149 (1927, I) 481; "string-scapular", *Scapulars*, in *The Month*, 150 (1927, II) 46; finally, "familiar double pendant with its pictures," *Scapulars*, in *The Month*, 149 (1927, I) 485.

⁴³ Neither this objection of Thurston nor Launoy's charge that the cult of the Scapular promise constituted a superstition was considered on theological grounds by the defenders of the Scapular devotion. Carmelite authors of the seventeenth century, however, did offer a concrete argument against the opinion of Launoy: that the very facts of the Scapular devotion constituted evidence that the cult of the promise was not superstitious. Philibertus Fesayus in *Duplex*

Since it was the express objective of both Launoy and Thurston to protect the faithful from a religious practice each considered of doubtful value, it becomes necessary to ascertain from what source the spiritual value of the Scapular devotion is guaranteed. In view of the fact that the *magisterium* has laid down norms for the evaluation of popular devotions, these norms must be taken as the guiding principles for the solution to the historical and theological questions posed by Launoy and Thurston.

The Magisterium on Pious Traditions

In the *Motu proprio*, "Sacrorum antistitum", St. Pius X spoke in particular of traditions concerning sacred relics and apparitions or revelations. In the case of relics, he cited the decision of the Congregation of the Council in 1896 that ecclesiastical authority was to discontinue the veneration of relics only when there existed arguments for their falsity that were certain.⁴⁴ Thus pious traditions were to be treated with respect.⁴⁵ In the case of traditions of apparitions or revelations, St. Pius X also cited the decision of the Congregation of the Council in 1877: "Such apparitions or revelations have been neither approved nor condemned by the Apostolic See, but only permitted as piously to be believed by human faith alone, according to the tradition which they bear, confirmed by suitable testimonies and witnesses."⁴⁶

These directives of St. Pius X reveal that the mind of the *magisterium* is not in accord with the stand taken by Launoy against

privilegium sacri scapularis, Aquis Sextiis, 1649, 63, is typical of the seventeenth century Carmelite defender of the devotion: "... that it (i. e., Launoy's position) is contrary to common opinion, to the opinion of theologians, to very ancient tradition, to the ... Cardinals of the Congregation of Rites, to reason and to propriety."

⁴⁴ AAS, 2 (1910) 665: "Reliquias antiquas conservandas esse in ea veneratione in qua hactenus fuerunt, nisi in casu particulari certa adsint argumenta eas falsas vel supposititias esse."

⁴⁵ Cf. the comments of P. Séjourné, *Reliques*, in *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, XIII, c. 2374.

⁴⁶ AAS, 2 (1910) 665: "Eiusmodi apparitiones seu revelationes neque approbatas neque damnatas ab Apostolica Sede fuisse, sed tantum permissas tamquam pie credendas fide solum humana, iuxta traditionem quam ferunt, idoneis etiam testimoniis ac monumentis confirmatam."

the Scapular devotion. The absence of contemporaneous evidence substantiating the tradition made it necessary, in the view of Launoy, to cease preaching the Scapular promise. The position of St. Pius X, however, is that pious traditions remain in possession as long as "suitable" evidence supports them.

This teaching, however, is in no way intended to exclude the application of the principles of historical criticism to pious traditions. St. Pius X made this point clearly enough when he directed bishops to forbid debates over the authenticity of pious traditions in journals whose purpose was to nourish piety.⁴⁷ This directive reserves discussion of historical questions connected with pious traditions to technical publications.

These rules of St. Pius X are advantageous both to popular devotions that have become firmly established and to the science of historical criticism, whose free inquiry into the origin and development of popular devotions remains unimpaired.⁴⁸

The Magisterium on Private Revelations

The *Motu proprio*, "Sacrorum antistitum," also dealt with the question of apparitions or revelations, the traditions of which occasion popular devotions. St. Pius X drew the important distinction between the *relative* cult, which concerns the tradition of the apparition or revelation, and the *absolute* cult, which is directed to the person of the saints honored by the tradition of the apparition. Concerning the relative cult, St. Pius X observed, "...the cult of any apparition, according as it respects the fact itself and is called *relative*, always has the implicit condition of the truth of the fact."⁴⁹ Thus the Church's

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 664: "Probari non posse in catholicorum scriptis eam dicendi rationem quae, pravae novitati studens, pietatem fidelium ridere videatur, loquaturque novum christianae vitae ordinem, novas Ecclesiae praeceptiones, nova moderni animi desideria, novam socialem cleri vocationem, novam christianam humanitatem, aliaque id genus multa."

⁴⁸ They also allow for developments in the field of criticism, due to the discovery of new evidence and to the elimination of error in the interpretation of evidence. This point is well illustrated by the history of the criticism of the Scapular tradition.

⁴⁹ *AAS*, 2 (1910) 665: "Nam Apparitionis cuiusvis religio, prout factum ipsum spectat et *relativa* dicitur, conditionem semper habet implicitam de veritate facti..."

approval of a devotion occasioned by the claim of private revelation necessarily involves the presumption of the historic truth of the revelation. Nevertheless, the approbation of the devotion itself is not motivated exclusively, or even primarily, by the private revelation, or relative cult, but rather by the absolute cult. St. Pius X continued, "...according as (the cult) is *absolute*, however, it is always based on the truth, for it is borne toward the persons of the Saints who are honored."⁵⁰

This teaching of St. Pius X, which finds the essential value of popular devotion in the absolute rather than the relative cult, effectively responds to Launoy's objection to the preaching of the Scapular promise in the absence of evidence contemporaneous with St. Simon Stock. Launoy urged that the historical difficulties concerning the authenticity of the Scapular promise exposed the faithful to "error and superstition."⁵¹ This objection would certainly be correct if the whole, or essential, value of popular devotion derived from the historical truth of private revelation. For in this case one would have to be in possession of that degree of moral certitude concerning the truth of the revelation which would exclude reasonable fear of error. Otherwise, as Launoy contended, true religion would be destroyed.⁵² For one would be uncertain of the object of one's cult. In popular devotion, however, the primary object of one's cult is *the teaching of the Catholic faith*, concerning which there is no doubt.

A. Poulain, S. J. notes several examples where the Church has clearly distinguished between the absolute and relative cult when permitting both feasts and devotions:

... The revelation itself continues on the footing of a pious opinion, having nothing obligatory about it. But its results are of service to souls; this is what the Church looks to.

This reserve on the Church's part appears in the institution of the Feast of Corpus Christi. Urban IV sets forth the reasons in a special Bull, and it is only at the end that he makes a vague and very brief allusion to the revelations that had asked for the institution of this Feast. They only occur as accessories.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*: "...prout vero *absoluta* est, semper in veritate nititur, fertur enim in personas ipsas Sanctorum qui honorantur."

⁵¹ *De viso*, 215.

⁵² *Ibid.*: "Accedit quod si non ita moneant, Christianus populus in errorem, & superstitionem, qua vera tollitur religio, traducetur."

The public cultus rendered to the Sacred Heart was brought about by revelations to Blessed Margaret-Mary. But it contained in itself all that was necessary for approval; so that the revelations merely suggested the idea. They are not even mentioned in the Mass for the Feast.

In 1832 the Miraculous Medal was circulated everywhere, following upon Sister Labouré's visions, but leaving the verdict regarding these visions on one side. It was merely stated that this devotion was good in itself. And it was the same in 1846 with the Scapular of the Passion, due to the revelations made to Sister Andriveau. Pius IX approved it at once, without insisting upon any official inquiry into its origin.⁵³

It is clear both from the formal teaching of St. Pius X and from the actual practice of the Church in approving devotions taking their origin in private revelations that it is the mind of the Church to base such devotions on the value of the absolute cult. It follows, then, that these devotions are founded on the dogmatic teachings of the Catholic faith, and not upon the historical fact of private revelations, however important the historical truth of the private revelation may be in itself. Unfortunately, this theological foundation of the Scapular devotion is completely overlooked in the criticisms of Launoy and Thurston. It will be helpful here to outline briefly the traditional teaching of Carmelite authors on the theological foundation of the Scapular devotion.

The Scapular and the Spiritual Maternity of Mary

It has been well established that the Belgian Carmelite of Ghent, Arnold Bostius, was responsible for the first full formulation of the theological foundation of the Scapular devotion.⁵⁴ His work *De patronatu et patrocinio B. V. Mariae in dicatum sibi Carmeli Ordinem*, written in 1479, synthesizes the medieval Carmelite Marian tradition.⁵⁵ In the teaching of Bostius, the Scapular is a "pledge of a unique adop-

⁵³ *The Graces of Interior Prayer*, translated by Leonora L. Yorke Smith, London, 1928, 382.

⁵⁴ Cf. Elisée de la Nativité, O. C. D., *La littérature Mariale du Carmel au XIV et au XV siècles*, in *Le Carmel*, 23 (1938) 201-204; and Eamon R. Carroll, O. Carm., *Arnold Bostius and the Scapular*, in *The Sword*, 14 (1950) 342-353.

⁵⁵ Esteve, *De valore*, 56-59; Eamon R. Carroll, O. Carm., *The Marian Theology of Arnold Bostius*, O. Carm., Roma, 1962.

tion" from the "most affectionate Mother of our salvation."⁵⁶ These observations of Bostius, which clearly posed the doctrine of the spiritual maternity of Mary as the foundation of the Scapular devotion, charted the path followed by seventeenth century Carmelite authors.

How integral a part of the Scapular devotion the doctrine of Mary's spiritual maternity became in the seventeenth century is reflected in the title of Gregory Nazienzen of St. Basil's book, "The Adoption of the Children of the Virgin into the Order and Confraternity of Our Lady of Mount Carmel." Gregory's concept is that the spiritual maternity of Mary, which affects all the members of the Church, is rendered concrete and meaningful in the devotion of the Scapular. His teaching of Marian adoption in the Scapular Confraternity he explained as follows:

... The Scapular can and must serve the purpose and the intention for which it was given by the Blessed Virgin and for which it is distributed by the authority of the Church: that is to say, as a sign of mutual love between the Mother of God and those who wear it; as a means of exciting our devotion toward God and His most holy Mother; as a reminder of our obligations; as a keepsake of the promise of the Virgin, who, since she is the common Mother of all the just, the Refuge of sinners, the Succour of all men, has deigned to indicate it, and to give this sign of their good will to those who try, and who desire, to serve God and honor His Mother with special devotion and filial love; to these also on her part she promises a particular assistance to the end that the means of salvation will be fruitfully applied to them, and that they will not come to die in the state of mortal sin.⁵⁷

For Carmelite authors of the seventeenth century, the Scapular devotion was a profession of Marian filiation.⁵⁸ The Marian filiation symbolized in the wearing of the Scapular meant in practice imitation of the virtues of Mary.⁵⁹ This Marian devotion reposed on the solid foundation of a sacramental life. Reception into the Scapular Confraternity was accompanied by Confession and the reception of Holy Communion.⁶⁰ Only then did investiture in the Scapular take place as "a habit given by the Blessed Virgin, and as having a special blessing, with the authority of the Church, and the power which Jesus Christ has given its head and His Vicar on earth."⁶¹

⁵⁶ From Bostius' panegyric on the Scapular promise. For the text, cf. Xiberta, *De visione*, 155-158.

⁵⁷ *L'adoption*, 748.

⁵⁸ Esteve, *De valore*, 199.

⁵⁹ Cf. the citations in Esteve, *De valore*, 193-199.

⁶⁰ *L'adoption*, 769.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

Thus in practice the Scapular devotion, so vehemently impugned by Launoy, was orientated toward the absolute cult, i. e., the value of true Marian devotion.⁶²

II - THE HISTORICAL QUESTION

The opinion that has reigned in scholarly circles concerning the historicity of the tradition of the Scapular vision was well expressed by Lancelot C. Sheppard:

...Early Carmelite history in England from 1242 until c. 1300 is equally obscure. Save for one or two facts — the chapter of Aylesford in 1247, the change of mantle, a few dates of foundation — there is little evidence to help us. Particularly is this true about the vague figure who has come to be known as St. Simon Stock. His legend is a mass of contradictions, and there seems hardly any contemporary evidence that will allow us to bestow the name Simon upon him. In this connexion it would be interesting to know on what grounds it is proposed to celebrate in 1951 the Seventh Centenary of the Scapular Vision — that other thorny question in Carmelite history.⁶³

Sheppard's exaggeration concerning the historicity of the very name, Simon, of the recipient of the Scapular vision was corrected by Bartholomaeus F. M. Xiberta, O. Carm.⁶⁴ In general, however, Sheppard's remarks aptly reflect the critical difficulties which have beset the historical evaluation of the historicity of the Scapular tradition. Our purpose here is to present simply and clearly the present knowledge of the historical origin of the tradition, and then to indicate those objections to the historicity of the tradition that have been resolved.

⁶² It would be interesting to study eighteenth and nineteenth century writings on the Scapular to determine if the Scapular promise began to be taught without adequate explanation of the values of true Marian devotion. Thurston's view of the devotion, pointed out in note 42, may have been the net result of a false emphasis on the Scapular promise itself.

⁶³ *The Origin of the Carmelites*, in *The Downside Review*, 68 (1950) 75-76.

⁶⁴ *Why We Celebrate the Centenary of the Vision of St. Simon Stock*, in *The Downside Review*, 69 (1951) 74-81.

The Historical Origin of the Scapular Tradition

The earliest extant account of the Scapular vision reads as follows:

The ninth (saint) was St. Simon of England, the sixth General of the Order. He continually besought the most glorious Mother of God to defend with a privilege the Order of Carmelites, which enjoys the special title of the Virgin. He prayed very devoutly:

Flower of Carmel,
Vine Blossom-laden.
Splendor of heaven,
Child-bearing maiden,
None equals thee!
O Mother benign,
Who no man didst know,
On all Carmel's children
Thy favors bestow
Star of the Sea.⁶⁵

The Blessed Virgin appeared to him with a multitude of angels, holding in her blessed hands the Scapular of the Order. She said, "This will be for you and for all Carmelites the privilege, that he who dies in this will not suffer eternal fire," that is, he who dies in this will be saved.

St. Simon, while visitating the province of Gascony, died in the convent of Bordeaux, where his body rests. And therefore he is called by some St. Simon of Gascony, by others St. Simon of Bordeaux; but he is more rightly called St. Simon of England, where he was born.⁶⁶

This account of the Scapular vision is taken from the Carmelite Sanctoral, or *Catalogus Sanctorum*, published in 1507 at Venice in *Speculum Carmelitanum*, the first printed collection of Carmelite documents. Xiberta has shown that of the six copies of the *Catalogus* known to be extant, that in the *Speculum* is the earliest copy. A comparison of the contents of the extant catalogues reveals that all are of later origin than the Sanctoral contained in *Speculum Carmelitanum*.⁶⁷ This Sanctoral was certainly composed in the fourteenth

⁶⁵ The translation of the *Flos Carmeli* is that of Joachim Smet, O. Carm.

⁶⁶ The Latin text may be found in Xiberta, *De visione*, 283.

⁶⁷ Xiberta. *De visione*, 172-181.

century; for it antedates the earliest manuscript copy of the Carmelite Sanctoral, which dates from about 1400.⁶⁸

Precisely at what period in the fourteenth century this earliest known account of the Scapular vision was composed cannot as yet be decisively determined. Xiberta argues for a date between the early decades of the fourteenth century and the mid-fourteenth century.⁶⁹ In our judgment the evidence is too tenuous to insist upon this conclusion. We merely point out here a number of observations made by Xiberta to indicate that the origin of the tradition itself — apart from the question of the actual date of composition of this earliest account — cannot be restricted to the fourteenth century.

The tradition of the sanctity of St. Simon was not a late development among the medieval Carmelites, for he is listed in the earliest Carmelite Sanctoral with the Priors of Mount Carmel, not with saints who died in the West.⁷⁰ While the composition of the first *Catalogus Sanctorum* of the Order cannot be dated exactly, it is at least in existence by 1370.⁷¹ The tradition of St. Simon and the Scapular vision was in existence before this time, since the *Catalogus* is a compilation from sources.⁷² If the original *Catalogus* dates from the early decades of the fourteenth century, as Xiberta maintains, the tradition of the Scapular vision must again be admitted to be earlier than the *Catalogus*. These observations show that it is not possible from a critical standpoint to assert that the tradition of the Scapular vision was *not* current in the thirteenth century.⁷³

A further important factor in the critical evaluation of the tradition of the Scapular vision is the characteristics of the earliest known account as a hagiographical notice. The Scapular vision forms the

⁶⁸ The earliest known manuscript copy of the *Catalogus* is located in the National Library in Paris, *ms. lat.* 5615. The full text is provided by Xiberta, *De visione*, 295-307. Paleographers, consulted by Xiberta, date the manuscript as more probably of the late fourteenth century, but possibly of the early fifteenth century. Cf. Xiberta, *ibid.*, 199.

⁶⁹ *De visione*, 205-211.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 207.

⁷¹ This date is conservative but we prefer it because it rests solidly on the manuscript copy of the *Catalogus* noted in note 68.

⁷² Xiberta, *De visione*, 208.

⁷³ The date of the Scapular vision does not form part of the tradition. The allusion in the Chronicle of William of Sandwich to an appearance of the Blessed Virgin to the Prior General would place the Scapular vision in 1251. Cf. Xiberta, *De visione*, 270.

core of this hagiographical notice. It is the only constant element in the tradition concerning St. Simon.⁷⁴ Later accounts of the saint add embellishments to his life which may well be classed as legendary: his life of solitude in a tree-trunk, his miraculous election as Prior General, certain miracles attributed to him, his death at the age of one hundred.⁷⁵ The fact is that the first known account of St. Simon places all the stress, not on his office as General of the Order, or on his sanctity, or miraculous power, but on the Scapular vision. This feature of the earliest form of the tradition suggests that literary analysis would shed more light on its nature.

The presence of the *Flos Carmeli* in the narrative of the Scapular vision appears to be highly significant. Zimmerman supposed St. Simon Stock to be its author "beyond all doubt."⁷⁶ This judgment may well be questioned. For if one takes the position that St. Simon is "beyond all doubt" the author of the *Flos Carmeli*, it follows — the historical evidence being identical — that he could equally as well have been the author of the Scapular privilege itself. It seems more probable that this highly literary and devotional poem was inspired by the tradition of the Scapular privilege of eternal salvation. The poem was composed to commemorate the tradition of the apparition concerning the Scapular privilege. This poetic touch in the narrative is some indication that the tradition of the Scapular vision may well have antedated the composition of the *Flos Carmeli*.

A second feature of the narrative that may be considered from a literary standpoint is the nature of the prayer attributed to St. Simon. The saint is depicted as praying for a "privilege" "to defend" the Carmelite Order. It is true that the Order underwent a trying period of readjustment during and after the generalate of St. Simon.⁷⁷ But it is noteworthy that the account of the Scapular vision does *not* draw any connection between the apparition of Mary and any specific difficulties encountered by the Order in the time of Simon Stock.

⁷⁴ No hagiographical notice on the saint omits the Scapular vision and promise of eternal life. There is, then, no uncertainty in the tradition on this point.

⁷⁵ Xiberta's analysis indicates that these details are later embellishments of the hagiographical notice. Cf. *De visione*, 208-210.

⁷⁶ *Monumenta*, 322.

⁷⁷ For a discussion of the Order's difficulties at this time, cf. Xiberta, *De visione*, 223-230.

Such a claim is made only in later accounts of the vision, and is clearly legendary.⁷⁸

This analysis would indicate that the apparition of Mary occurred only in the general context of the Order's difficulties, and in this context would have originally been understood to teach *perseverance in the Order*.⁷⁹ In the late middle ages, the term *privilege* "possessed a twofold implication: it meant that special protection would be given by the 'lord' one served, in return for the service."⁸⁰ In its earliest form, the tradition of the Scapular vision taught loyalty to the Order in return for the special patronage of Mary.⁸¹ Within the Order itself, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the Scapular was not so much a sign of Marian devotion as it was the pledge of Mary's patronage over the Order.⁸² It was actually Arnold Bostius who orientated the tradition of the Scapular vision toward the actual practice of the Scapular devotion through imitation of Mary.⁸³ This reorientation laid the foundation for greater stress on the words traditionally attributed to Mary, "He who dies in this will not suffer eternal fire," as a pledge of salvation in the context of Marian devotion.⁸⁴ The develop-

⁷⁸ It first appears in the *Vita s. Simonis Stock* written by Menaldus of the Rosary (ob. 1508). According to Menaldus, the Scapular vision occurred in the midst of the Order's difficulties with "prelates and curates". Cf. Xiberta, *De visione*, 119. Menaldus was very likely inspired by the use of the term *communire* in the traditional narrative. His data on the nature of the difficulties seems without doubt taken from the Chronicle of William of Sandwich.

⁷⁹ Due to the fact that the Council of the Lateran (1215) prohibited the establishment of new religious Orders, the Carmelites were not everywhere accepted and found it necessary to obtain several papal Bulls confirming the Rule and protecting their rights. Papal rescripts in 1262 and 1274 enjoined the Friars Minor and the Cistercians not to accept those who left the Carmelite Order. Cf. Zimmerman, *De Sacro Scapulari Carmelitano*, in *Analecta Ordinis Carmelitarum Discalceatorum*, 2 (1927-1928) 79.

⁸⁰ Du Cange, *Glossarium mediae et infimae latinitatis*, 6 (1938²) 510-511.

⁸¹ Cf. Eamon R. Carroll, O. Carm., *The Marian Theology of Arnold Bostius*, 32. The author develops evidence to show that Bostius' teaching that Mary is patron of the Order in consequence of the Scapular vision is rooted in the social structure of the Middle Ages.

⁸² Mary's patronage of the Order is explicitly stated in the Constitutions of 1294: "Ordinamus quod in omni confessione beata virgo patrona nostra specialiter invocetur..." Cf. Ludovicus M. Saggi, O. Carm., *Constitutiones Capituli Burdigalensis anni 1294*, in *Analecta Ordinis Carmelitarum*, 18 (1953) 184.

⁸³ Esteve, *De valore*, 57.

⁸⁴ Bostius' panegyric on the Scapular is as follows: "Quemadmodum audaces latrones agnitis regis insigniis deterrentur ut fugiant, ita sane prae-

ment of the Scapular tradition from the fourteenth to the late fifteenth century (the time of Arnold Bostius) reflects two stages: the pre-Bostius period, when the apparition to Simon Stock is understood as an indication of Mary's special protection of the Order so that it may achieve its key goal: the salvation of its members; and the period beginning with Bostius when the Scapular comes to be understood as a means of Marian devotion and a sign of predestination.⁸⁵ The words of the *Flos Carmeli*, "Carmelitis da privilegia", which seem so peculiar to our minds, are actually a prayer for the patronage of Mary, understood in the medieval sense. They are clear evidence that in the mind of the medieval Carmelites the words attributed to her in the Scapular tradition express primarily her patronage of the Order, the chief effect of which is the salvation of its members. It was left for Bostius and his followers to emphasize the subjective response to this Marian protection of the Order, and to interpret the words, "He who dies in this will not suffer eternal fire", as a Marian promise of eternal salvation for the devout wearers of the Scapular.

We may now summarize the state of the evidence concerning the Scapular vision and promise of eternal salvation. The earliest known account of this Marian apparition to St. Simon Stock comes from the *Catalogus Sanctorum* of the Carmelite Order. Although its actual composition cannot be dated precisely, this earliest known narrative

terribile est demonibus hoc caelestis Imperatricis donarium, signum salutis, salus in periculis, adoptionis singularis arrha, foedus pacis, pactum sempiternum, et pignus amoris sui ineffabiliter virtuosum, exhilarativum castarum mentium, et omni praeconio multipliciter extollendum, tam insigne armorum suorum praesidium, scuti tam defensivi nobile munimentum, cuius ut castrorum acies ordinatum semper timetur omne praesidium." For the text, cf. Xiberta, *De visione*, 157.

⁸⁵ In *L'adoption*, 790-791, Gregory found it necessary to respond to the letter of a person who objected to calling the Scapular "a sign of salvation": "Let us say, then, that it is for our Lord to institute the Sacraments. These are the efficacious signs of salvation. And although he can communicate... nevertheless, not having communicated this power either to the Virgin or to the Church, it is logical to infer that the Virgin has not given the Scapular to institute a new Sacrament in the Church. But it does not follow that she cannot give it as a sign of salvation which has another relationship to salvation and to grace than the Sacraments instituted by Christ. As devotion to the Virgin is a sign of salvation, without being a Sacrament, so the Scapular... is a sign of salvation and not a Sacrament." The author continues, making other excellent observations, but these are too lengthy to be cited here.

certainly dates from the fourteenth century. It is necessary, however, to draw a distinction between this fourteenth century composition and the tradition of the Scapular vision. For the fourteenth century narrative is a partly poetic, stylized account, indicating that the apparition and promise of eternal salvation which it commemorates was an existing tradition prior to this fourteenth century composition.

Objections to the Historicity of the Scapular Vision

The objections to the historicity of the Scapular vision have been as follows: (1) that the Scapular was not always considered to be the garment designated by the Blessed Virgin as the "vehicle" of her promise;⁸⁶ (2) that Carmelite authors of the fourteenth century are silent on the tradition of the Scapular vision;⁸⁷ (3) that no sixteenth century evidence of the Scapular devotion exists;⁸⁸ (4) that the unsatisfactory state of the documentary evidence pertaining to the tradition of the Scapular promise suggests an origin in medieval legend.⁸⁹

Concerning the vehicle of the Marian promise, Benedict Zimmerman wrote as follows:

...It is a fact that the Order did not attach great importance to the Scapular throughout the whole of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and even the greater part of the fifteenth century. Let the reader recall that nothing is found of it in ancient Constitutions and in the Acts of the Chapters... From these facts I conclude that the vision, with the promise of eternal life, was made in favor of those who wear the habit of the Order.⁹⁰

Zimmerman concluded that the "Scapular" privilege was originally associated with the Carmelite habit as such, not with the Scapular in particular. However, the evidence of the Carmelite Constitutions of 1294, of 1324, and of 1357 disproves this conclusion of Zimmerman.⁹¹

⁸⁶ Zimmerman, *Monumenta*, 343.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ Herbert Thurston, S. J., *Scapulars*, in *The Month*, 149 (1927, I) 481-482.

⁸⁹ Herbert Thurston, S. J., *The Origin of the Scapular: A Criticism*, in *The Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, 16 (1904) 59.

⁹⁰ Zimmerman, *Monumenta*, 342-343.

⁹¹ For the Constitutions of 1294, cf. note 82; the Constitutions of 1324 were published by Zimmerman, *Monumenta*, 20-114; and those of 1357 by

These Constitutions use the terms "habit" and "Scapular" interchangeably. In the description of the ceremony of Profession in each of these Constitutions the term "habit" means "Scapular."⁹² The Constitutions of 1357 state explicitly that the Chapter of Montpellier in 1287 "reserved and retained the Scapular as the habit of its Order *ut prius*," i. e., as before this Chapter.⁹³ Contrary to the conclusion of Zimmerman, the Carmelite Constitutions from the thirteenth century attach to the Scapular the importance of being the "habit" of the Order.⁹⁴

In support of this contention that no special significance was attached to the Scapular by the Carmelites from the thirteenth into the fifteenth century, Zimmerman appealed to the silence of certain Carmelite authors of this period:

The silence of authors impresses me still more. It is not impossible that William of Coventry and others did write of it (i. e., the Scapular as the sign of the promise), even though the words attributed to them belong to other writers. And we can find satisfactory explanations as to why John of Venice and other chroniclers passed over the miracle. But we cannot possibly explain why John Baconthorpe and John of Hildesheim, writing on the habit *ex professo* and at length, should have been silent on so important a subject, if as a matter of fact they knew anything of it at all.⁹⁵

This judgment of Zimmerman rested on the assumption that the fragments of Peter Swanyngton, published by John Cheron, O. Carm.

Antoine Marie de la Présentation, O. C. D., *Constitutions des Frères de Notre Dame du Mont Carmel faites l'année 1357*, Marechal, 1915.

⁹² In the Constitutions of 1294, the rubric for the ceremony directs the Prior General to bless "capam et scapulare." After the candidate makes his profession, the Prior General then gives him the "habitum," and afterwards the "capam." It is clear that only two garments are in view. Since the cloak could hardly be confused with the Scapular, it is evident that scapular and habit are synonymous terms. Cf. Saggi, *Constitutiones*, 152-153. The same pattern in terminology is followed by the Constitutions of 1324. Cf. *Monumenta*, 50-52.

⁹³ Antoine Marie de la Présentation, *Constitutions*, 9.

⁹⁴ The Chapter of Montpellier (1287) replaced the striped mantle with the white cloak, and directed that the cloak be left open so that the Scapular might always be clearly visible. It is not possible to determine if the latter directive was in any way influenced by the tradition of the Scapular vision.

⁹⁵ *Monumenta*, 343.

in 1642, were authentic documents.⁹⁶ According to Fragment I, St. Simon Stock promulgated the Scapular promise throughout the Order; and according to Fragment II the Scapular devotion came into existence almost immediately after the occurrence of the apparition of Our Lady.⁹⁷ In view of this supposedly true historical context of the early existence of the Scapular devotion among the laity, it was indeed puzzling, as Zimmerman observed, that Carmelite authors of the fourteenth century had seemingly nothing to say concerning the apparition of Our Lady to Simon Stock and the promise of eternal life.

The realization that the fragments of Peter Swanyngton are not authentic⁹⁸ has removed the foundation for the argument from silence derived from Carmelite authors of the fourteenth century. This argument was predicated on the supposition, derived from the fragments, that the Scapular devotion was already on its way to becoming a major Marian devotion even during the lifetime of St. Simon Stock. Actually, the Scapular devotion seems to have arisen among the laity on a significant scale only in the time of Arnold Bostius, i. e., in the latter half of the fifteenth century.⁹⁹

⁹⁶ There is no doubt that the fragments are spurious documents. Cheron's motive in publishing them may perhaps have been due to his disagreement with Launoy on the necessity and value of contemporaneous evidence for the Scapular vision. In *Privilegiati Scapularis vindiciae*, Burdigalae, 1642, 9, he stressed the fact that the visionary alone could be the witness to a preternatural apparition: "Etenim cum visio sive ocularis sit, sive intellectualis aut imaginaria, illi soli cui fit, et nulli alteri ut plurimum, observatur: nemo vere testificari potest Deum, aut B. Virginem, aut Angelum, aut Daemonum huic aut illi viro apparuisse." He also urged that sheer human testimony to visions was insufficient to authenticate them; the more important judgment concerned their nature, *ibid.*, 12: "De aliis rebus primo disputantur an sint, et ita quales sint. Ordo revelationum et visionum postulat, ut cum aliqua proponitur, quaestione an sit, indiscussa, recurratur ad stateram sanctuarii, qua examinetur qualis sit."

⁹⁷ Cf. Xiberta, *De visione*, 127, for the end of fragment II, which relates that after St. Simon converted a dying sinner through prayer and the placing of the Scapular on the sick person, there was a great demand to be affiliated to the Order and to wear its habit until death.

⁹⁸ Seventeenth century writers on the Scapular made use of the fragments in order to resolve Launoy's demand for contemporaneous evidence. An exception was Philibertus Fesayus, *Duplex privilegium Sacri Scapularis Ordinis et Confraternitatis gloriosae Virginis Mariae de Monte Carmelo* (Aquis Sextiis, 1649).

⁹⁹ The manuscript copy of the *Catalogus* in the National Library in Paris, mentioned in note 68, contains a notice that King Edward II (1284-1327) and

Throughout the fourteenth and first half of the fifteenth centuries, the account of the Scapular vision remained in the framework of the hagiographical notice on St. Simon Stock. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries it was not customary for Carmelite authors, when writing on the habit of the Order, to include mention of the Scapular vision. Rather they were preoccupied with defending the change from the striped to the white mantle at the Chapter of 1287.¹⁰⁰ The first Carmelite author to utilize the tradition of the Scapular vision to defend a change in the Carmelite habit is Thomas Bradley, writing about 1440.¹⁰¹

The silence of Carmelite authors of the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries on the Scapular vision is clearly due to two factors: (1) the non-existence of the Scapular devotion outside the Order; and (2) preoccupation with explaining and defending the change from the striped to the white mantle. This silence, however, is only relative, for it is in the fourteenth century that the tradition of the Scapular vision is constantly handed down in the *Catalogus Sanctorum* of the Order.¹⁰²

Thurston objected that even as late as the sixteenth century there is no evidence that the laity wore the small scapular:

If good, positive evidence were forthcoming that lay-folk at the beginning of the sixteenth century were accustomed to wear two small pieces of cloth joined with strings, there would of course be an end of the matter. But, so far as I can learn, no such evidence has yet been produced by any of the defenders of the scapular tradition who during the last three hundred years have written on the subject.¹⁰³

Henry, Duke of Lancaster (ob. 1361) wore the Scapular. Whatever may be the authenticity of this observation, it does indicate that at the time this manuscript was written (at least by the early fifteenth century), the wearing of the Scapular by certain of the laity was not unknown. The remarks of Arnold Bostius in 1479 show that the wearing of the Scapular was quite widespread in his time. Cf. Xiberta, *De visione*, 113. However, it seems that until after Bostius the Scapular was worn merely in affiliation to the Order rather than as an active Marian devotion.

¹⁰⁰ Xiberta, *De visione*, 243.

¹⁰¹ Bradley went even further, arguing that the Scapular itself was changed by the Scapular vision. Cf. Xiberta, *De visione*, 108, for Bradley's remarks.

¹⁰² Prior to the mid-fourteenth century little evidence pertaining to the Scapular vision is to be expected, since there was little literary activity within the Order before this period. Cf. Rudolf Hendriks, O. Carm., *La successione*, 34-75.

¹⁰³ *Scapulars*, in *The Month*, 149 (1927, I) 481-482.

This objection is not relevant to the historicity of the Scapular vision. For the origin of the Scapular devotion among the laity is an entirely different question from the existence of the tradition concerning the Scapular vision within the Carmelite Order. The existence of the tradition in the hagiographical notice on St. Simon Stock certainly precedes the development of the Scapular devotion among the laity.¹⁰⁴

Thurston further objected that the story of the Scapular vision could easily have originated in medieval legend:

It is obvious that to those who twitted them with a change in their attire, it was very convenient to reply that their religious dress had been given by Our Lady herself; and an interval of thirty years or more between the supposed date of the vision and the assumption of the white mantle would not have caused much difficulty in that uncritical age.¹⁰⁵

The fact is, however, as has been indicated above, the only Carmelite author to connect the Scapular vision with a change in the Carmelite habit was Thomas Bradley, who ran counter to the previous Carmelite tradition.¹⁰⁶ Thurston also suggested the possibility that the medieval Carmelites propagated the Scapular promise in order to defend the title of the Order, "The Brothers of the Blessed Virgin Mary."¹⁰⁷ However, John Horneby, who defended the Marian title of the Order at the University of Cambridge in 1374, made no appeal to the tradition of the Scapular promise. Nor, almost a century later, does Thomas Bradley make such an appeal when he discusses the Marian title of the Order.¹⁰⁸ Thurston's suggestions for the possible

¹⁰⁴ This fact is clear from the late origin of the notice on the wearing of the Scapular by the laity. Cf. note 99.

¹⁰⁵ *The Origin of the Scapular: A Criticism*, in *The Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, 16 (1904) 70-71.

¹⁰⁶ Bradley clearly indicated that he opposed previous Carmelite tradition on this point. See the citation from Bradley's *Tractatus de fundatione*, Bartholomew F. M. Xiberta, O. Carm., *Annotationes circa statum quaestionis de Sacro Scapulari*, in *Analecta Ordinis Carmelitarum*, 10 (1939) 403, note 51. Bradley cites the works of certain Carmelite authors and remarks, "...all of which seem to oppose me on this matter."

¹⁰⁷ *The Origin of the Scapular: A Criticism*, in *The Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, 16 (1904) 72.

¹⁰⁸ Xiberta, *De visione*, 150; and *Annotationes circa statum quaestionis de Sacro Scapulari*, in *Analecta Ordinis Carmelitarum*, 10 (1940) 527.

manner in which a legendary tradition of the Scapular promise could have arisen do not withstand the test of historical criticism.

Benedict Zimmerman, O. C. D. proposed a relationship between the tradition of the Scapular vision and a story concerning Blessed Jordan in the *Vitae Fratrum* of the Dominicans.¹⁰⁹ Blessed Jordan, who had drowned, appeared to one of his brethren to say, "Do not be disturbed, dearest brother. I am Jordan over whom you hesitate; and all who serve the Lord Jesus Christ to the end will be saved."¹¹⁰ In the opinion of Zimmerman, Simon Stock was inspired by this story concerning Blessed Jordan to console his Carmelite subjects by "telling them that the Blessed Virgin Mary promised him in a vision that he who persevered in the habit and died in it would be saved."¹¹¹

One cannot deny the sheer possibility of an historical relationship between these stories concerning Blessed Jordan and the tradition of the Scapular promise. But it must be admitted (1) that dying in the religious habit is not the issue concerning Blessed Jordan; (2) that no mention is made of the Blessed Virgin in the same story; (3) that the explanation of Zimmerman is a reconstruction of the mind of Simon Stock that is simply imaginative. The only element in common between the story concerning Blessed Jordan and the tradition of the Scapular vision is salvation. But even here the stories differ considerably. In the case of the story concerning Blessed Jordan, the recipient of the vision is *preoccupied* with personal salvation. This factor is altogether absent in the tradition of the Scapular vision. In view of these essential differences, there is simply no probability that the two stories were in reality connected.

Conclusions concerning the Historical Question

We are now in position to respond to the historical problem which has been raised by criticism of the tradition of the Scapular promise. Has research into the tradition improved the condition of the historical evidence concerning the historicity of the promise?

¹⁰⁹ *De Sacro Scapulari Carmelitano*, in *Analecta Ordinis Carmelitarum Disalceatorum*, 2 (1927-1928) 77.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 80. Lancelot C. Sheppard, *The English Carmelites*, London, 1943, 13-14, considers it very possible that this story concerning Blessed Jordan is the origin of the Scapular tradition. In a private letter, Zimmerman denied he intended to impute a pious fraud to St. Simon Stock. Cf. Xiberta, *De visione*, 72.

This question must certainly be answered in the affirmative. The source of the tradition of the Scapular promise has been positively identified as the *Catalogus Sanctorum* of the medieval Carmelites. The *Catalogus* was composed, on conservative estimate, by the second half of the fourteenth century. It is not at all implausible that its notice on St. Simon Stock reflects good tradition.¹¹² Its hagiographical content is simply and clearly related, reflecting none of the confusions concerning the vehicle of the promise suggested by modern historical criticism. Finally, critical examination of the evidence results in entirely satisfactory explanations for the silence of Carmelite authors of the fourteenth century concerning the Scapular promise and for the absence among medieval Carmelites of motivations of self-defense that could account for a legendary origin of the Scapular tradition.

The single weakness in the evidence favoring the historicity of the Scapular tradition is the absence of thirteenth century documentation which would reveal that the Carmelites of this period knew of, and accepted as authentic, the tradition of the Scapular vision. The absence of this contemporaneous evidence leaves open the possibility of a legendary origin of the Scapular tradition in the thirteenth or early fourteenth centuries. This possibility may prevent critical historians from rendering a judgment in favor of the historicity of the Scapular tradition that is unqualified.¹¹³

Nevertheless, Carmelite authors remain justified in maintaining the historicity of the Scapular vision. Although the degree of moral certitude for the historicity of the vision is somewhat lessened by the absence of thirteenth century evidence, no historical evidence exists in the concrete that casts serious suspicion on the authenticity of the Scapular tradition. Taken as a whole, the evidence favoring the historicity of the tradition amply fulfills the requirement laid down by St. Pius X: that pious traditions be supported "by suitable testimonies and witnesses".

¹¹² On the subject of tradition and legend in the field of historical criticism, cf. Gilbert J. Garraghan, S. J. A. *Guide to Historical Method*, edited by Jean Delanglez, S. J., Fordham University Press, 1940, 259-281.

¹¹³ Cf. *ibidem*, 261, who requires several parallel and independent series of witnesses to a tradition. These parallel witnesses are lacking to the Scapular tradition.

III - HISTORY AND THE SPIRITUAL VALUE OF THE SCAPULAR DEVOTION

To what extent does the spiritual value of the Scapular devotion depend on the historicity of the Scapular promise? In 1648, Thomas Aquinas of St. Joseph, O. C. D., writing against Launoy's first book, *Dissertatio Duplex*, observed: "...the Confraternity is based on this apparition of the Virgin and the gift of the Scapular as its primary foundation."¹¹⁴ Launoy maintained that to take this position would be to expose true religion to error and superstition.¹¹⁵ Thurston urged that historical difficulties concerning the Scapular tradition dictated a certain reserve against proclaiming "that the wearing of our familiar Brown Scapular may be regarded as a sure pledge of salvation."¹¹⁶ We turn our attention now to consideration of the question of the historicity of the Scapular vision and promise and the spiritual value of the Scapular devotion.

The Essential Relativity of Private Revelations

Concluding from the actual practice of the Church in its manner of approving devotions and feasts connected with private revelations, Poulain points out the essentially relative character of the revelations:

We have seen...how the matter must be examined by the sober light of reason and submitted to *prudent* and *learned* men. In this way, if the advice received by the revelation is followed, and if, later on, this revelation should be recognized as false, there will be no reason for regretting the work that has been undertaken. All that the revelation will have done will be to have *suggested* an idea; it will have been accepted, as would have been the case if it had come from a person endowed neither with authority nor any special guarantees. It is merely the *occasion* of any decisions that are taken.

As a matter of fact, the Church has not proceeded otherwise in instituting certain feasts or devotions which have had their origin in a revelation. The revelation itself continues on the footing of a pious opinion, having nothing obligatory about it. But its results are of service to souls; this is what the Church looks to.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ *Pro sodalitate sacri Scapularis adversus duplicem dissertationem Ioannis de Launoy, theologi Parisiensis, dissertationes duae apologeticae*, Tutellae, 1648, 2.

¹¹⁵ Cf. note 19.

¹¹⁶ Cf. note 41.

¹¹⁷ Poulain, *The Graces*, 381-382.

The relationship of private revelation to public revelation has been elaborated by several theologians. Private revelation provides "an occasion for the Church to recall to all the faithful, to all men, truths unquestionably addressed to the whole human race."¹¹⁸ Even though private revelation is by definition not addressed to all men, the Church may propose the content of the revelation to all men by instituting a feast or devotion. In these cases, the feast or devotion is based on the revealed dogmas of faith; the private revelation merely suggests the feast or devotion. Private revelation may thus be an aid to the Church to stress those teachings of public revelation which are of special utility to the spiritual life of men:

These supernatural illuminations appear as an extraordinary means which Providence employs to instill powerful impulses in humanity; to speak only of the Church, it is aided in this way to dispense wisely to the faithful the divine treasures of which it has the keeping and which at a particular epoch it had perhaps left dormant.¹¹⁹

Private revelations may give to a devotion its characteristic note or spirit, and thus influence the faithful to make certain teachings of faith effective in their spiritual lives:

When they have helped to delimit and to fix the precise object of a devotion, the revelations have been able to penetrate it with a characteristic spirit: thus the visions of Paray-le-Monial have introduced into our devotion to the Sacred Heart that accentuated note of reparatory love which has led many modern souls to total generosity. Visions organize Christian piety by orientating it toward definite practices: the Holy Hour and First Fridays encourage the frequent and fervent use of the Eucharist; the act of consecration fixes the attention on the fundamental disposition of devotion.¹²⁰

Although the characteristics of devotions are influenced by private revelations, the actual content of the devotion remains independent of the private revelation:

The history of public cult preserves many traces of such interventions. Not that private revelations have furnished the object of a feast or the

¹¹⁸ *Questions de science ecclésiastique*, in *L'ami du clergé*, 48 (1931) 5.

¹¹⁹ *Les révélations privées*, in *Collationes Dioecesis Tornacensis*, 34 (1938-1939) 583-584.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.* 585.

content of a devotion (all their dogmatic data proceed from public revelation); but they have launched the movement which was bound to end in the establishment of a feast.¹²¹

The views of theologians on private revelations may be summarized as follows: (1) The Church may avail itself of the opportunity of private revelation to propose to the faithful, through a devotion or feast, a truth already contained in public revelation; (2) even though the devotion or feast receives its characteristic from the private revelation, all the dogmatic content of the devotion or feast rests on public revelation. Private revelation, then, is merely *occasional* and *practical*. These views accord with the teaching of St. Thomas:

At different times there have not been lacking those having the spirit of prophecy, not indeed to propose new doctrines, but for the direction of human acts.¹²²

The content, therefore, of devotions deriving their origin in private revelations is the teachings of faith, or public revelation, which the revelation privately given suggests. In this way, the private revelation is elevated from the plane of human faith to the plane of divine and Catholic faith, as has been observed:

...the human authority of the private revelation is reenforced and transformed by the divine authority of public revelation, and the piety of the faithful will find there a more solid support and a more substantial nourishment.¹²³

These observations would seem to compel the conclusion that no devotion in the Church derives its spiritual value from private revelation, but only from public revelation, or the dogmas of faith. Private revelation is of its very essence *relative*: that is, it bears its essential relation not to its own historicity, but to the dogmas of faith, which elevate its content from the plane of human faith to the plane of supernatural faith.

The Essential Relativity of the Promise of the Scapular

According to the earliest hagiographical notice on St. Simon Stock, the Blessed Virgin appeared to him holding the Scapular of the Carmelite Order in her hands. She said to him, "This will be for

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² II^a II^{ae} Q. 174, ad 3.

¹²³ *Questions de science ecclésiastique*, in *L'ami du clergé*, 48 (1931) 5.

you and for all Carmelites the privilege, that he who dies in this will not suffer eternal fire."¹²⁴ These words express the single condition that the Scapular be worn continually until death.¹²⁵ For perseverance in the wearing of the Scapular until death, they pledge the grace of a happy death, or the gift of final perseverance.¹²⁶

To determine the spiritual value of the devotion of the Scapular, which has arisen historically from the tradition, it is necessary to take into account the essential relativity of private revelation. Applied to the Scapular devotion, this relativity of private revelation means that the spiritual value of the devotion in no way derives from the historical truth of the apparition of Mary to St. Simon Stock and her words concerning the wearing of the Scapular. This conclusion is in accord with the teaching of St. Pius X: "Such apparitions or revelations have been neither approved nor condemned by the Apostolic See, but only permitted as piously to be believed *by human faith alone*..."¹²⁷

The truth of private revelation, no matter how well established, does not rise above the level of human authority (in the last analysis the authority of the visionary) and consequently can be the object only of human faith. But it is not on the foundation of human faith that the Christian life is lived and salvation attained. Salvation is attained on the basis of divine and Catholic faith, infallibly proposed by the teaching Church. It is necessary, then, that the revelation traditionally attributed to St. Simon Stock be elevated to the plane of Catholic faith. Since this revelation alludes to truths concerning the role of the Blessed Virgin in man's salvation, it must be understood in the light of the spiritual values inherent in true devotion to Mary.

This adherence to the truths of faith, even in the face of private revelations personally received, is most strongly insisted upon by St. John of the Cross:

¹²⁴ Xiberta, *De visione*, 273-275, establishes that these words are the earliest form of the promise, perhaps without the addition, "i. e., he who dies in this will be saved."

¹²⁵ For the development of this concept, cf. Esteve, "Gestatio s. Scapularis: usus constans et continuus," *De valore* 132-153.

¹²⁶ On the grace of final perseverance and Marian devotion, cf. Esteve, *De valore*, 276-358.

¹²⁷ Cf. note 46 for the Latin text.

...if... as touching our faith, there be revealed to us anything new, or different, we must in no wise give our consent to it, even though we had evidence that it was spoken by an angel from Heaven. For even so says Saint Paul, in these words: *Licet nos aut Angelus de coelo evangelizet vobis praeterquam quod evangelizavimus vobis, anathema sit.*

Since, then, there are no more articles to be revealed concerning the substance of our faith than those which have already been revealed to the Church, not only must anything new which may be revealed to the soul concerning this be rejected, but it behooves the soul to be cautious and pay no heed to any novelties implied therein, and for the sake of the purity of the soul it behooves it to rely on faith alone. Even though the truths already revealed to it be revealed again, it will believe them, not because they are now revealed anew, but because they have already been sufficiently revealed to the Church.¹²⁸

The teaching of St. John of the Cross is most clear in this passage: private revelations that touch upon dogmas of faith are to be evaluated in the light of the teaching of the Church. There is no reason to exempt the Marian promise of the Scapular from this doctrine of John of the Cross. While the Scapular is to be esteemed for its Marian privileges,¹²⁹ the promise of eternal salvation is to be understood from the teachings of the Church concerning Mary's role in the salvation of men.

Since the spiritual value of the Scapular devotion is theologically independent of the historicity of the Marian promise to St. Simon Stock, it is necessary to ascertain what place this revelation really occupies in the structure of the Scapular devotion.

The Theological Structure of the Scapular Devotion

The theological structure of the Scapular devotion must be determined on the basis of the teaching of St. Pius X, explained above, concerning the two elements that make up Catholic devotions: the absolute and the relative cult.

¹²⁸ Silverio de Santa Teresa, O. C. D., *The Complete Works of Saint John of the Cross*, translated and edited by E. Allison Peers, (3 v., Westminster, Maryland, 1935), I, 192.

¹²⁹ Xiberta, *De visione*, 25, makes the interesting observation that the Scapular promises are accepted by the faithful not so much because of historical evidence, but because they are judged suitable to the power and goodness of Mary.

The absolute cult in the structure of the Scapular devotion comprises the following elements: (1) veneration of Mary, the Mother of God; (2) hope for her special protection at the hour of death for the eternal salvation of the soul; (3) faith in Mary's role as spiritual mother of men and in her mediation of grace, as these doctrines are taught by the Church.¹³⁰

The relative cult comprises a single element; the tradition of the Marian promise of eternal salvation for one who dies in the Carmelite Scapular. This Marian promise is the object of human faith, is accepted with the permission of the Church, and is supported by suitable evidence.

Since the Marian promise of eternal salvation for one who dies in the Scapular can be the object only of human faith, and since, as a private revelation, it must be necessarily directed toward those teachings in public revelation which elevate it to the plane of supernatural faith, it becomes clear that the promise of eternal salvation cannot transcend the role of a *motive of piety* in the structure of the Scapular devotion. The promise of the Scapular proposes veneration of the Mother of God; it invokes hope in her special protection at the hour of death; and it teaches faith in her special role of intercession for man's salvation. But the validity of the veneration of Mary, of hope in her special protection, and of faith in her role of intercession derives solely from the teaching of the Church. For without the teaching of the Church one would have no way of knowing that these elements of the Scapular devotion, suggested by private revelation, constitute a true cult of Mary willed by God.

To maintain properly the balance of the Scapular devotion accurate stress must be placed on the value of true devotion to Mary, as taught by the Church¹³¹ (the absolute cult) and on the tradition of the Marian promise to St. Simon Stock (the relative cult). Stress on the absolute cult in the structure of the Scapular devotion permits full use of all that the Church teaches concerning Marian cult.¹³² Stress on the

¹³⁰ On the veneration of Mary in the Scapular devotion, cf. Esteve, *De valore*, 406-421; on the virtue of hope and the Blessed Virgin, *ibid.*, 358-361; on faith in Mary, *ibid.*, 193-261.

¹³¹ That one who practices true devotion to Mary cannot be eternally lost is the teaching of Benedict XV, *Inter sodalicia*, AAS, 10 (1918) 120, and Pius XI, *Explorata res est*, AAS, 15 (1923) 104.

¹³² Cf. Esteve, *De valore*, 381-398, for a synthesis of the fundamental principles.

relative cult supplies the motivation for the practical application in the spiritual life of the values of Marian devotion. Perhaps the most forceful statement concerning the necessity of maintaining this balance was composed by Bishop Guy de Rochechouart, of the See of Arras, in the seventeenth century. Although his observations are lengthy, they merit citation here:

One could never sufficiently exhort the faithful to devotion to Our Lady. It is an abundant source of graces, benefits, and blessings for those who practice it with true and sincere piety; and it cannot be doubted that the respect shown to the Mother is most agreeable to the Son. To oppose this devotion because some abuse it is to open the door to error and to prohibit one of the most valuable practices in the Church. Have not prayer, the Sacrament of Penance, even the very body of Jesus Christ been subjected to abuses? What then is our duty? The abuses must be corrected; the faithful must be instructed in order to preserve them from the snares of illusion; the way in which they are to walk must be marked out for them; the errors into which an indiscreet zeal can lead must be pointed out to them so that they may be able to avoid them.

However holy, however exalted be the cult which we owe to the Blessed Virgin, it is certain that it has limits, and that these can be infringed by excess as well as by defect. The Church has at all times condemned both the one and the other extreme. She cannot tolerate the weakening of devotion of Our Lady on some vain pretext, or that one should oppose either what the tradition of the centuries has established or the devotions which she herself has authorized by attaching graces to them. But she condemns no less strongly that indiscreet zeal which, under the guise of honoring the Blessed Virgin, confounds in some manner her cult with that of God; which fails to distinguish between the confidence due to Him and due to her, but speaks of both with a certain equality which is intolerable to religion and which leaves no room to differentiate between them. Such are those exaggerated expressions and odious comparisons which often lead into one extreme persons who are anxious to avoid the other; which furnish the enemies of religion with pretexts and arguments to combat it, which often turn away those who are on the brink of conversion, and which give grounds to their blasphemies against the just and holy cult of the Blessed Virgin. Neither method nor matter is lacking to praise her, honor her, and to make known the justice and the holiness of her cult without doing so at the expense (if I may use the term) of that which is due to God.

It is easy to give rules on this matter. The Church and the Fathers have spoken. Let us not transgress the limits which religion prescribes for us. Let us speak as they have spoken; let us not draw consequences

which they have not drawn, which they could not have even envisioned, and which sane theology cannot endure. That would no longer be their language; it would be ours. Let us hold to the devotions which the Church approves; let us follow the practices she authorizes; let us enter into them in her spirit; let us not fear to be led astray or to be the victims of excess as long as we march with her. Rather let us fear to be led astray, and let us consider even that we are already led astray when, having lost sight of her guiding light, we march according to our own inspiration. Everything that is new in the Church, every voice other than hers remain suspect until she has approved it.

On this principle one can establish with assurance and without fear of deception that the Confraternity of the Scapular is a good and holy thing. It is but to follow the spirit of the Church to exhort the faithful to place themselves in the condition of profiting from the graces which the Church has attached to it by a great number of indulgences; it is but to follow the spirit of the Church at the same time to mark out clearly for them the conditions which she requires of a holy and penitent life, so as not to cast them into a vain confidence and a false presumption.

One must also regard the Confraternity of the Scapular as a Christian custom, and a holy association of many persons intending to honor the Blessed Virgin by wearing a certain habit through which they signify their determination to dedicate and consecrate themselves to her service. If they do so in fact, in truth, and with fidelity, they may hope, through the succour and assistance of this Mother of grace and mercy, not only for particular graces during life and at death, but also that the pains which their sins have merited may be diminished, and their eternal good advanced by the merit of the indulgences which the Church has here attached for those who find themselves in the condition required to gain them.

True devotion does not consist in exterior ceremonies alone; it consists in loving God, in serving Him, in adoring Him in spirit and in truth. To love and to honor the Virgin for love of Him is also to love and to serve Him. All worship, all love, every act of religion is reduced to Him: for He is its center and its end.¹³³

This episcopal statement is a very accurate assessment of the theological structure of the Scapular devotion: the devotion aims to inculcate the dogmatic truths, proposed by the Church, which lead to true veneration of, and devotion to, Our Lady; the Scapular promise is employed to teach what true devotion to Mary consists in, and to warn against

¹³³ The original text in French is in M. Gregorio Seratrice, O. Carm., *Orazioni, ragionamenti panegirico-morali, e novenario della Ssma Vergine del Carmine*, Torino, 1787, 181-189.

false devotion. Thus a proper balance is achieved between the value of absolute cult towards Mary arising from divine revelation itself and the relative cult arising from private revelation as a motive of piety.

We may now give a clear answer to the first theological question posed at the beginning of this study: In what sense is the historicity of the Scapular promise necessary to the theological structure of the Scapular devotion? The historicity of the Scapular promise is necessary to the structure of the Scapular devotion as a motive of piety. * If from an historical standpoint there were inadequate grounds to propose the tradition of the Scapular promise as worthy of credence, the Scapular devotion would cease to exist. The termination of the devotion would not be due, however, to the danger of spiritual loss incurred by the faithful because of the distinct possibility of the falsity of the tradition of the Marian promise; it would be due simply to the lack of adequate motivation to embrace this concrete form of reliance on Mary's special intercession for the salvation of men.

We may conclude, then, that the historical truth of the Marian promise of the Scapular is necessary to the theological structure of the Scapular devotion. This necessity, however, stems only from the fact that the Church presupposes the truth of private revelations that have historically resulted in devotions. Traditions of private revelations must be supported by suitable evidence in order that they be accepted as motives of piety for the faithful. According to the teaching of St. Pius X, which distinguishes between the absolute and relative cult in devotions, one who holds to this distinction in the make-up of popular devotions "*will be free from all fear.*"¹³⁴

Does this position that the Scapular promise is only a motive of piety in the theological structure of the Scapular devotion diminish the necessity of historical evidence validating the historicity of the promise?

The Necessity of Historical Evidence for the Scapular Promise

Historical criticism of the tradition of the Scapular promise induced certain authors to depreciate the necessity of historical evidence that would substantiate the Scapular promise. A. Boudinhon wrote, "Let me add that I do not consider the value of the Scapular to de-

¹³⁴ *AAS*, 2 (1910) 665.

pend on the reality of the celebrated vision."¹³⁵ Benedict Zimmerman, O. C. D. adopted a similar view: "Let those who doubt the utility of critical investigation remember that popular devotions like the Scapular derive their value and effect, not from a more or less obscure origin, but from the approval of the Church which endows them with privileges and indulgences. Consequently, no matter what the historical foundation may be, the devotion itself remains integral and intact."¹³⁶

R. Sbrocchi has objected that these opinions are "a means of escape from defending critically the historicity of the vision."¹³⁷ Against Boudinhon Sbrocchi argues that the Scapular devotion does not depend on the historical fact of the vision *for its essential value*; but it does depend on the historical fact of the vision *for its own proper value*, which is *maximi momenti*.¹³⁸ This proper value, according to Sbrocchi, is "the fact that the Blessed Virgin expressly affirmed to Simon Stock *an entirely special promise, pertaining only to wearers of the Scapular, which the Carmelites can and must hope for as an entirely particular pledge directed to final perseverance (to be obtained from God)*."¹³⁹ The weakness in Sbrocchi's argument is the failure to explain the nature of the "proper value" in the Scapular devotion. This proper value is private revelation, the truth of which can be determined only from historical evidence; but this private revelation does not form the dogmatic basis of the Scapular devotion on which its spiritual value rests. Boudinhon does not explain the reason for his statement that the value of the Scapular does not rest on the vision. But no doubt he had in mind the dogmatic basis of the devotion, which derives from the Marian teaching of the Church; and in this sense his statement is correct.

Against Zimmerman's position that the approbation of the Church guarantees the spiritual value of the Scapular Sbrocchi objects that *dogmatic* criteria cannot be used to establish an *historical* event.¹⁴⁰ The author points out that Pius XII appeals to tradition when alluding to the Scapular vision.¹⁴¹ This observation is correct, for Pius XII

¹³⁵ *La vision de saint Simon Stock*, in *Revue du clergé française*, 36 (1903) 636-637.

¹³⁶ *De Sacro Scapulari Carmelitano*, in *Analecta Ordinis Carmelitarum Discalceatorum*, 2 (1927-1928) 70.

¹³⁷ *De Sacro Carmelitico Scapulari*, in *Ephemerides Mariologicae*, 2 (1952) 50.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 49.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 50.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 49.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

followed the usual practice of the Church already stated by St. Pius X, and pointed out above: "Such apparitions or revelations have been neither approved nor condemned by the Apostolic See, but only permitted as piously to be believed by human faith alone, according to the tradition which they bear, confirmed by suitable testimonies and witnesses." Zimmerman, however, was not contending that the sanction of the Church constituted a solid argument for the historical truth of the Scapular vision. He was merely pointing out that the spiritual value of the Scapular devotion was guaranteed (on a dogmatic basis) by the authority of the Church; and this validity of the devotion was independent of the judgment of critical historians of historical truth of the Scapular vision.

Finally, Sbrocchi contends that *historical* proof for the vision of Simon Stock is "almost absolutely necessary" to establish solidly the proper value of the Scapular devotion.¹⁴² He explains: "For the Scapular devotion is undoubtedly based on the truth of (Mary's) Meditation, *but only remotely and fundamentally; proximately, however, and particularly* on the promise of the Mother of God to Simon Stock."¹⁴³ However, it is clear from the teaching of St. Pius X and of theologians that the Scapular devotion, as all devotions, is based on dogmatic truth *proximately* rather than remotely. The Scapular vision is not a *foundation* of the devotion in the dogmatic sense, but rather the *occasion* utilized by the Church to propose the devotion, and the *motive* by which the faithful are led to embrace it. It is inexact to say that historical proof for the Scapular vision is "*almost* absolutely necessary". It is exact to say that historical proof for the Scapular vision is absolutely necessary in order that suitable evidence underlie the motive of piety which leads to the practice of the devotion.

IV - THE SCAPULAR PROMISE AND THE SCAPULAR MEDAL

In 1910 St. Pius X issued a decree permitting the substitution of a specially designed medal for all the cloth scapulars except those of Third Orders. This decree honored the Scapular of Carmel with particular mention when it stated that the Sabbatine Privilege was included among the spiritual favors annexed to the wearing of the medal. However, the lack of a like reference in the decree to the

¹⁴² *Ibid.* 50

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

Scapular promise of eternal salvation occasioned doubt that St. Pius X included this benefit among the spiritual favors that could be gained by the wearer of the medal.¹⁴⁴

These pages will be devoted to determining the place of the Scapular medal within the theological structure of the Scapular devotion.

An authorized English translation of the decree on the Scapular medal follows:¹⁴⁵

It is certain that the holy Scapulars are greatly efficacious in fostering devotion amongst the faithful and stimulating them to good resolutions; hence Our Most Holy Lord Pius X, by divine providence Pope, although earnestly desiring that the faithful may continue to wear, as before, the Scapulars and in the same form as hitherto, still, in order that the pious custom of being enrolled in them may constantly increase, seconding the petitions sent to him on the subject, and after taking the opinions of the Most Eminent Fathers Cardinals Inquisitors General, was graciously pleased, in an audience granted to the Assessor of the Supreme Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office on 16 December of the current year, to decree as follows:

For the future all the faithful already inscribed or who shall be inscribed in one or other of the real Scapulars approved by the Holy See (excepting those which are proper to the Third Orders) by what is known as regular enrollment, may, instead of the cloth scapulars, one or several, wear on their persons, either round the neck or otherwise, provided it be in a becoming manner, a single medal of metal, through which, by the observance of the laws laid down for each scapular, they shall be enabled to share in and gain all the spiritual favours (not excepting what is known as the Sabbatine Privilege of the Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel), and all the privileges attached to each.

The right side of this medal must show the image of Our Most Holy Redeemer Jesus Christ, showing His Sacred Heart, and the obverse that of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary. It must be blessed with a separate blessing for each of the scapulars in which the person has been enrolled and for which the wearer wishes it to suffice. Finally, these separate

¹⁴⁴ Three authors have argued against the inclusion of the Scapular promise among the spiritual favors annexed to the medal: Nino Minella, writing in *Patria Brasileira* for August 17, 1911; Affonso Maria, O. Carm., *O Escapulario do Carmo e a medalha*, Pernambuco, 1939; Benignus Dissel, O. Carm., *Scapulare, signum promissionis*, in *Vinculum Ordinis Carmelitarum*, 2 (1950) 34-38.

¹⁴⁵ The translation is taken from P. E. Magennis, *The Scapular Devotion*, Dublin, 1923, 46-48.

blessings may be given by a single sign of the cross, either in the act of enrollment immediately after the scapular has been regularly imposed, or later at the convenience of those enrolled, it matters not how long after the enrollment or in what order they may have taken place; the blessing may be given by a priest other than the one who made the enrollment, as long as he possesses the faculty, ordinary or delegated, of blessing the different Scapulars... the limitations, clauses, and conditions attached to the faculty he uses still holding their force. All things to the contrary, even those calling for special mention, notwithstanding.

Given at Rome at the seat of the Holy Office, 16 December, 1910.

The Silence of the Decree on the Scapular Promise

Affonso Maria, O. Carm., urged that the failure of the decree to include the Scapular promise in its wording is clear evidence of its exclusion from the spiritual benefits annexed to the wearing of the medal. The author writes: "We do not deny that the pope can communicate the great promise to the medal; we only affirm that he has not intended to do so. And the whole power of our argument rests on this reasoning: if Pius X expressly named the Sabbatine Privilege... *a fortiori* he should have expressly named the great promise, being as it is a grace unique in its genus, assuring the eternal salvation of the soul. Nonetheless, Pius X made a clear reference to the Sabbatine Privilege, but none to the great promise? Why? What is the significance of it?"¹⁴⁶

The absence of the Scapular promise from the wording of the decree is not as significant as the author argues. Mention of the Sabbatine Privilege in papal documents was already traditional, whereas no express mention of the Scapular promise had been made in a papal document prior to the decree of 1910.¹⁴⁷ In view of these facts, one can say that the decree of St. Pius X *could* have named the great promise. One cannot say, however, that it *should* have named it. It would suffice if the decree *implicitly* included the Scapular promise.

Father Affonso attempted to rule out the possibility of an implicit inclusion of the promise in the following words of the decree: "Ser-

¹⁴⁶ Affonso Maria, *O Escapulario*, 97.

¹⁴⁷ The first such reference is in the Apostolic Letter of Pius XII, *Neminem profecto latet*, in 1950. Cf. note 152. On this point, cf. also Bartolomeo Xiberta, O. Carm., *Scapulare e medaglia*, in *Il Monte Carmelo*, 29 (1943) 19.

vatis propriis cuiusque eorum legibus, favores omnes spirituales (*sabbatino*, quod dicunt, scapularis B.M.V. de Monte Carmelo *privilegio* non excepto) omnesque indulgentias singulis adnexas participare ac lucrari possint ac valeant." In his opinion the words "all spiritual favors and all indulgences" are to be interpreted in terms of a hierarchy of spiritual benefits attached to the Scapular: partial indulgences, plenary indulgences, the communication of spiritual benefits, general absolution at the moment of death, membership in the Confraternity, an alliance with the Blessed Virgin, preservation from physical evils, the Sabbatine Privilege, the great promise. Since the highest grace mentioned in the decree is the Sabbatine Privilege, the even higher grace, the promise of eternal salvation, is excluded.¹⁴⁸

However, the phrase *favores omnes spirituales omnesque indulgentias* does not envision scapular benefits in the kind of hierarchy, *a minore ad maiorem*, proposed by Father Affonso. The more important benefits are alluded to first, and among these the Sabbatine Privilege is said to be *not excepted*. The phrase, "*sabbatino*, quod dicunt... *privilegio* non excepto", refers to the Sabbatine Privilege in its traditional concept: as having its origin in a private revelation to Pope John XXII. These words of the decree are intent upon making it clear that despite the origin of the Sabbatine Privilege in private revelation the privilege may be gained by one who makes the substitution of the Scapular medal. It is not the case, as Father Affonso claims, that the decree delimits the unique benefits of the Carmelite Scapular to the Sabbatine Privilege. Rather it expressly affirms that the unique character of this privilege — its origin, according to tradition, from the Virgin herself — is not an obstacle to its being annexed to the Scapular medal.¹⁴⁹

The express mention of the Sabbatine Privilege in its character as a private revelation clearly indicates that it is not the intention of the decree to exclude the Scapular promise because it originates in private revelation. However, one must look elsewhere in the decree

¹⁴⁸ Affonso Maria, *O Scapulario*, 86-88.

¹⁴⁹ Dissel, *Scapulare*, 37, attempts to escape the implication of the inclusion of the Sabbatine Privilege among the spiritual favors conceded to the medal by arguing that the Sabbatine Privilege is granted to the wearer of the medal only in so far as the Church can grant indulgences. This position cannot be maintained in view of the clear wording of the decree, "*Sabbatino*, quod dicunt, Privilegio", an obvious allusion to the tradition that this privilege originated in a revelation to Pope John XXII.

for positive evidence of the intention to include the promise among the benefits annexed to the wearing of the medal, a point to which we shall return later.

Papal Jurisdiction and the Scapular Promise

Certain authors have attempted to formulate a decisive argument against the attachment of the Scapular promise to the wearing of the Scapular medal. Their appeal is to the nature of the graces involved in this transfer: prompt liberation from purgatory and eternal salvation itself, or the grace of final perseverance. These graces are bestowed by divine right. The pope cannot designate religious objects whose use would win such graces.

Father Minella contends that the term *favores omnes spirituales* in our decree can be understood only of spiritual favors emanating from papal bulls, briefs, and decrees. These spiritual favors never include the grace of predestination, as does the Scapular promise. Consequently, the decree on the Scapular medal could not have intended to annex the great promise to the wearing of the medal, for the bestowal of this grace lies outside papal jurisdiction.¹⁵⁰

Benignus Dissel, O. Carm. advances a similar view. He argues that the grace of final perseverance, as a grace, exceeds the power of the pope to bestow. Since the Scapular promise permits one to hope for the grace of final perseverance, St. Pius X could not have extended the promise to the medal.¹⁵¹

In the opinion of both authors the only manner in which the Scapular promise could be annexed to the medal is by actual transference of the grace of final perseverance from the Scapular to the medal. The wording of the decree of St. Pius X, however, does not substantiate this opinion. According to the decree, enrollment must take place in the *cloth Scapular*. It is this enrollment in the cloth Scapular that entitles one to the spiritual favors and indulgence peculiar to each scapular. At any time after the enrollment a properly blessed Scapular medal may be substituted for the cloth scapular. This substitution is an interpretation of the material condition required for the gaining of the spiritual favors and indulgences of the scapulars.

¹⁵⁰ Father Minella's argument is cited in full from *Patria Brasileira*, August 17, 1911, by Affonso Maria, *O Escapulario*, 93-94.

¹⁵¹ Dissel, *Scapulare*, 35.

The material condition is the continual wearing of the cloth scapular, which the decree declares is fulfilled after enrollment by wearing on the person a properly blessed scapular medal. The decree does not actually transfer the spiritual benefits of the scapulars to the medal. It is rather an authentic and authoritative declaration that the material wearing of the cloth scapular as a requisite condition for the gaining of its benefits is adequately fulfilled by the substitution of the Scapular medal.

The express mention in the decree of the Sabbatine Privilege as not being excluded from the spiritual benefits annexed to the medal well illustrates that papal jurisdiction is here employed, not to transfer graces, but to interpret a material condition for the gaining of spiritual benefits.¹⁵² The small Scapular of Carmel, after enrollment, signifies actual membership in the Confraternity of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. It acquires this significance only from the authority of the Church, which has the power to determine the religious habit. In the decree on the Scapular medal, St. Pius X, in virtue of his authority as Supreme Pontiff, recognized as a legitimate sign of membership in the Scapular Confraternity a medal which would replace the cloth Scapular after proper investiture. As the replacement for the Scapular of Carmel, the medal is an authentic and valid sign of membership in the Scapular Confraternity, and one therefore remains entitled to all the spiritual favors and indulgences of this Confraternity, not excluding the Sabbatine Privilege. The decree does not transfer the Sabbatine Privilege from Scapular to medal, but rather permits a change in the material sign of membership in the Scapular Confraternity.

Since the Sabbatine Privilege is not excluded from the spiritual favors annexed to the Scapular medal, even though it is a grace bestowed by the Blessed Virgin, one cannot urge that the Scapular promise could not have been annexed to the Scapular medal on the ground that it is a unique grace deriving from the intercession of the Blessed Virgin. It remains only to inquire if the decree on the Scapular medal yields evidence that the Scapular promise also is included among the spiritual favors annexed to the medal when it is

¹⁵² There appears to be no necessity to explain the material change from Scapular to medal by appeal to the Church's power over the sacraments, as does Patrick Morrisroe, *Medal-Scapulars* in *The Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, 28, Series 4 (1910), 643. This explanation posits the Scapular as a quasi-sacrament and wrongly suggests that in some manner it is effective of grace.

substituted after proper investiture and with the proper blessing for the Scapular of Carmel.

The Purpose of the Scapular Medal

For some years prior to the decree on the Scapular medal, Pius X had been granting the faculty, conceded as a rule to missionaries at private audiences, to impart to a medal the privileges and indulgences of the scapulars.¹⁵³ By 1909 a formula of petition for this faculty had been drawn up by the Sacred Congregation of Rites. Significantly, this formula of petition contained the phrase, "absque ullo Indulgentiarum et privilegiorum, quibus respective ascripti fideles perfruuntur, detrimento..."¹⁵⁴ Taking note of the concession of this faculty by the Holy See, Patrick Morrisroe observed, "In permitting the substitution of the medal for the scapular the Holy See evidently meant to accord to the former all the privileges belonging to the latter."¹⁵⁵ Nevertheless, he advised that the medal not be used to replace the Scapular of Carmel because two of its privileges "are piously believed to have their source in revelations made to individuals and to be conditioned on observances that were dictated from a supernatural source."¹⁵⁶

In the decree itself on the Scapular medal it is made plain that the permission to substitute the medal for the scapular is not restricted to the faithful in missionary areas; this permission is granted to *all the faithful*: "For the future all the faithful already inscribed or who shall be inscribed in one or other of the real Scapulars..."¹⁵⁷ The

¹⁵³ Magennis, *The Scapular Devotion*, 40.

¹⁵⁴ Cf. *Periodica de religiosis et missionariis*, ed. by A. Vermeersch, S. J., 5 (1913) 349.

¹⁵⁵ Morrisroe, *Medal-Scapulars*, 28.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁷ John Mathias Haffert, *Scapular or Scapular-Medal?* in *The American Ecclesiastical Review*, 104 (1941) 452-453, places undue restriction upon the freedom of American Catholics to substitute the medal: "... only with regard to strapless garments is there question of the scapular medal being permissible to Americans in place of the scapular of Carmel. In all other cases, the value of personal opinion about validity of a substitution practically disappears... for, by decree after decree, the Holy See has made it extremely convenient to wear the original scapular." The existence of the covered scapular in no way lessens freedom to substitute the medal. On this point, cf. note 171.

decree likewise states St. Pius X's motive in granting the permission: "seconding the petitions sent to him."¹⁵⁸ Finally, the decree indicates the purpose of the new legislation: "in order that the pious custom of being enrolled in them may constantly increase..."

These statements of the decree make it most clear that St. Pius X had adequate reason to judge that the scapular devotions would be greatly fostered among all the faithful by the permission to substitute the medal. Such was the precise purpose of his decree. It is evident also from the express mention in the decree of the Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and the Sabbatine Privilege that he had in view this scapular particularly because of its two privileges originating in private revelation. He surely was aware that to exclude the Scapular promise from the medal, while granting the Sabbatine Privilege, would defeat the very purpose of the decree itself, namely, to increase "the pious custom of being enrolled." It must be conceded, then, that if St. Pius X *could have* annexed the Scapular promise to the Scapular medal, he clearly intended to do so. We have seen above that the manner in which the decree annexes spiritual favors and indulgences to the Scapular medal constitutes no obstacle from the standpoint of papal jurisdiction to the annexing of the Scapular promise to the Scapular medal.

In view of these considerations, it can be concluded with certainty that it was the actual intent of the decree on the Scapular medal to include the Scapular promise among the spiritual favors to be gained when the medal is substituted for the cloth Scapular.

The inauguration of the Scapular medal by St. Pius X was received with a certain degree of astonishment.¹⁵⁹ This legislation, however, is in accord with the place of the Scapular promise in the theological structure of the Scapular devotion. The Scapular is merely the reminder of the Marian promise of eternal salvation. It is a mere symbol, or sign, of the grace of final perseverance. In no way does

¹⁵⁸ These petitions were made by bishops, superiors general, and priests. Cf. the formula of petition drawn up by the Sacred Congregation of Rites in *Nouvelle revue théologique*, 42 (1910) 385.

¹⁵⁹ Previously, legislation on the material and ornamentation of the cloth scapular was meticulous. Cf. Magennis, *The Scapular Devotion*, 36-40; and the query concerning the Scapular medal posed prior to the decree of 1910 in *The Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, 27, Series 4 (1910) 639-641.

it effectively produce this grace. As a reminder of the Marian promise, it directs its wearer to those teachings of faith which inspire veneration of Mary, faith in her maternal role, and hope in her special protection. The Scapular medal, as the substitute for the Scapular of Carmel, should motivate similar piety.¹⁶⁰

It should be noted, finally, that the decree on the Scapular medal expressly denies that it is the intention of St. Pius X to eliminate the Scapular in favor of the medal: "although earnestly desiring that the faithful may continue to wear, as before, the Scapulars and in the same form as hitherto..." This statement of the decree produces a certain tension between the complete freedom with which the substitution of the medal may be made¹⁶¹ and the papal recommendation of the cloth Scapular. In practice, the faithful should be instructed, certainly when the pastoral care of the faithful requires it, on their freedom to substitute the Scapular medal without anxiety. But at the same time the superiority of the cloth Scapular as a motive of piety should be firmly impressed upon them.¹⁶² Thus will the pas-

¹⁶⁰ Carmelite authors have constantly viewed the Scapular medal as a less apt stimulant to piety than the cloth Scapular since the medal lacks the tradition and the distinctive characteristics of the Scapular. Cf. the joint statement of the Fathers General of both Orders of Carmel, *The Scapular and the Medal*, in *The Sword*, 11 (1947) 87-94.

¹⁶¹ Both the background of the decree and the decree itself indicate clearly that the faithful are under no *obligation* to prefer the Scapular to the medal. In 1909, Albert Missone, Procurator of the missions of the Belgian Congo, posed the following question to St. Pius X: "Can all the faithful substitute the medals in the place of the scapulars for reasons of cleanliness or convenience only, without anxiety as to their proper motives?" The reply was in the affirmative. Cf. *Periodica de religiosis et missionariis*, 4 (1913) 349. The decree itself does not require of the faithful recourse to a confessor or any other authority for the substitution of the medal. Vermeersch, commenting on the decree, observed, "... even a light reason in the substitution of the medal for the Scapular (is) sufficient to ensure complete conformity with the Pontiff's intention." Cf. *Analecta Ordinis Carmelitarum*, 2 (1911-1913) 65.

¹⁶² The superiority of the Scapular over the medal is explained by Bartolomeo Xiberta, O. Carm. in *Scapolare e medaglia*, in *Il Monte Carmelo*, 29 (1943) 19: "... the Scapular is characteristically the 'mantle of Mary'; ... by no order of transfer can all this be but imperfectly derived from the medal, since the medal, although it can have the nature of a distinctive badge and remembrance and is therefore more suitable for the external profession of our interior sentiments, is not so suitable for the development of these sentiments in the

toral aim of St. Pius X be fulfilled: to give the faithful freedom to employ the Scapular medal when in their judgment circumstances require it, so that their use of the cloth Scapular itself may be fostered.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Launoy and Thurston based their criticism of the Scapular tradition on perceptible weaknesses in the documentary evidence pertaining to the vision of St. Simon Stock. Each of these authors, however, was motivated to impugn the historicity of the Scapular vision, not solely because of deficiencies in the historical evidence, but because each believed that the questionable historicity of the Scapular promise of eternal salvation would jeopardize the spiritual welfare of the faithful.

The assumption of these authors that the spiritual value of the Scapular devotion rested in some measure on the historicity of the Scapular promise affected their judgment on the historical evidence to be required as well as on its actual condition. For Launoy only contemporaneous evidence for the vision of St. Simon could adequately safeguard the spiritual condition of the devotees of the Scapular. He extended the requirement of contemporaneous evidence to include the theological judgment on the orthodoxy of the Scapular promise by the saint's contemporaries. Thurston was led to a pessimistic assessment of the historical evidence: he suggested that the Scapular tradition was legendary in origin. This view was certainly premature at the time, since the document traditionally advanced by Carmelite authors had not been studied by either Zimmerman or Thurston.¹⁶³ Nevertheless, the attitude of pessimism concerning the historicity of the tradition prevailed, and exerted an adverse effect upon the Scapu-

sight of God. These interior fruits the Scapular medal does not produce except in so far as it reminds us, by its blessing and purpose, of Mary's Scapular mantle."

¹⁶³ This document was the account of the Scapular vision in John Grossi's *Viridarium*, which Xiberta succeeded in tracing to the *Catalogus Sanctorum* of the Order. Cf. *De visione*, 95-96.

lar devotion itself. The state of the question was aptly described by Gabriel Wessels, O. Carm.:

For some years now, the question of the Scapular has been the subject of a spirited discussion which has tended to diminish the ardor of the devotion. Although no solid argument militates against the tradition, debates and doubts have resulted in this deterioration. What is to be done about it?¹⁶⁴

This study has indicated that the question of the historicity of the Scapular promise and the spiritual value of the Scapular devotion are not related questions. The contrary assumption of Launoy and Thurston is not sustained by the teaching of the *magisterium*, by the actual practice of the Church in approving devotions, or by the view of theologians on private revelation. The spiritual value of the Scapular promise is to be sought *exclusively* from the teaching of the Church on the spiritual values inherent in true Marian devotion. This conclusion has important implications for the critical study of the Scapular.

The critical study of the Scapular tradition concerns itself with the historical authenticity of the apparition of the Blessed Virgin to St. Simon Stock and her promise of eternal life for those who die clothed in the Scapular. In approving the Scapular devotion the Church does not prescind from the historical truth of the Scapular promise, but rather presumes its historicity. According to the teaching of St. Pius X, "...the cult of any apparition...always has the implicit condition of the truth of the fact."¹⁶⁵ On the other hand, when approving a devotion connected with private revelation, the Church does not necessarily intend to vouch for the historical truth of the revelation.¹⁶⁶ Such is the rule laid down by St. Pius X, "Such

¹⁶⁴ *Documenta antiqua de S. Scapulari*, in *Analecta Ordinis Carmelitarum*, 2 (1911-1913) 119; *ibid.*, 6 (1927-1929) 324.

¹⁶⁵ Cf. note 49 for the Latin text.

¹⁶⁶ Necessary exceptions occur when claims of apparitions affect the public order. Ecclesiastical authority must then judge the credibility of these claims, so that the faithful may have a sound norm of faith. The author of *Les révélations privées*, in *Collationes Diocesis Tornacensis*, 34 (1938-39) 425-426, provides sound advice to be given the faithful when claims of apparitions are made: "The role of religious authority must first be recognized and accepted by them. Every announcement of apparitions or of other marvelous facts powerfully interests the public, provoking strong reactions of opinion. Among partisans of the "supernatural", convictions often based on insufficient evidence grow into

apparitions or revelations have been neither approved nor condemned by the Apostolic See, but only permitted as piously to be believed by human faith alone. . . ."¹⁶⁷ The Church's presumption of the historical truth of the revelation is based on "the tradition which (it) bears, confirmed by suitable testimonies and witnesses."¹⁶⁸ This judgment accepts the tradition pertaining to the revelation as an adequate basis for the assent of human faith to the fact of the revelation. The evidence for the tradition, however, is not evaluated scientifically when the Church approves a devotion occasioned by private revelation unless special circumstances require it.¹⁶⁹ The Church approves the devotion on dogmatic grounds, and is content to permit the acceptance of the revelation on testimony which is reputable.¹⁷⁰ In the case of the Scapular promise, the Church permits its acceptance by the faithful on the basis of Carmelite tradition.

collective manifestations of devotion which launch the powerful reactions of mob psychology.

The good of religion is involved in all these movements: the purity of faith, the sound orientation of piety, peace of mind, the good name of the Church must be protected for the present and the future.

Thus ecclesiastical authority, conscious of its spiritual mission and counting on the special aid of God, lays claim to its exclusive competence to bring to bear on these questions the definitive, official judgment."

¹⁶⁷ For the Latin text, cf. note 46.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁹ When the public good is threatened by false claims of apparitions and revelations, the Church is quick to investigate and condemn such claims. For an example, see the decree of the Holy office in *AAS*, 26 (1934) 433 which reprobated alleged apparitions in Esquioga, Spain as devoid of supernatural character, and declared the books pertaining to them as *ipso jure* on the Index.

¹⁷⁰ While the Church as a rule does not vouch for the historical authenticity of private revelations, there have been certain exceptions. The encyclical letter of Leo XIII, *Annum Sacrum*, spoke of the command to propagate the cult of the Divine Heart, which St. Margaret Mary "had divinely received". Cf. *AAS*, 21 (1889-1899) 646. The decree of the Congregation of Rites on the heroicity of the virtues of St. Bernadette spoke of the various apparitions of Our Lady to her, of the command to pray for sinners, to kiss the ground, to do penance, to have the priests build a chapel, and finally of the words of the Virgin, "I am the Immaculate Conception". Cf. *AAS*, 14 (1923) 593. Certain aspects of the revelations to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque and to St. Bernadette were approved by these statements as historically authentic. Such positive approval for the Scapular promise does not appear possible due to the lack of historical documentation.

This position of the *magisterium* in granting approval to devotions occasioned by private revelation makes clear the goal of the critical historian in studying the tradition of the revelation. This goal is to determine the historical truth of the relative cult in the devotion, i. e., the authenticity of the claim of the Scapular revelation to St. Simon Stock. The Church has presumed this authenticity in view of the existing tradition, but has not examined the question critically. Launoy, therefore, was quite correct in initiating the critical study of the tradition of the Scapular promise. So also in modern times were Thurston and Zimmerman on solid ground in evaluating the documentary evidence pertaining to the Scapular tradition. However, Launoy and Thurston introduced a needless controversial element into the historical study of the Scapular promise by supposing that their conclusions, which were adverse to the historicity of the promise, placed in question, not simply the historical truth of the relative cult in the Scapular devotion, but the spiritual value of the devotion itself. The correction of this faulty theological viewpoint permits the historical study of the Scapular tradition to be carried out with dispassionate objectivity.

Despite the doubts expressed by some historians over the historical authenticity of the Scapular promise, the *magisterium* has continued to allow its presentation to the faithful.¹⁷¹ In the last analysis, the state of the evidence, even after three hundred years of discussion, excludes the possibility of a definitive judgment for or against the authenticity of the Scapular promise. Due to the absence of thirteenth century evidence, this definitive judgment cannot be made. Nevertheless, critical study of the tradition has placed its origin in a very clear light: the hagiographical notice on St. Simon Stock, which dates from the fourteenth century. The objections against the historicity of the tradition have been satisfactorily answered in terms of concrete evidence. It must be admitted that from the viewpoint of critical history the apparition of the Blessed Virgin to St. Simon Stock with the Scapular promise is probably an authentic tradition.

¹⁷¹ As is evident from the Apostolic Letter of Pius XII, *Neminem profecto latet*, which made explicit reference to the tradition of the Scapular promise: "Neque enim agitur de re parvi momenti, sed de vita aeterna capessenda ex ea, quae traditur, promissione Beatissimae Virginis: agitur videlicet de summo omnium negotio deque modo ipsum tute peragendi." Cf. *AAS*, 42 (1950) 390.

Finally, it should be observed that the element of uncertainty concerning the historicity of the Scapular promise, brought to light by critical historians, has borne good fruit: their critical work has brought to the forefront the question of the true foundation of the spiritual value of the Scapular devotion. Since the spiritual value of the devotion has been found to lie in the dogmatic teachings of the faith concerning true devotion to the Blessed Virgin, it follows that the real strength of the devotion resides in these dogmatic teachings, not in the historicity of the private revelation. Writers on the Scapular devotion should consider it their primary task to develop this "intrinsic value of the Scapular devotion."¹⁷²

¹⁷² Bartholomaeus F. M. Xiberta, O. Carm., *Annotationes circa statum quaestiones de Sacro Scapularis*, in *Analecta Ordinis Carmelitarum*, 10 (1938-1940) 529, made this suggestion. The suggestion could hardly be put into effect as long as it was thought that the spiritual value of the devotion was in some way dependent on the historicity of the Scapular promise.

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