

# M A R I O L O G Y

---

BY REV. M. J. SCHEEBEN

---

TRANSLATED BY REV. T. L. M. J. GEUKERS

---

VOLUME ONE

---

B. HERDER BOOK CO.

15 & 17 SOUTH BROADWAY, ST. LOUIS 2, MO.

AND

33 QUEEN SQUARE, LONDON, W. C.

1946

**ALL RIGHTS RESERVED**

*Printed in U.S.A.*

**NIHIL OBSTAT**

*Sti. Ludovici, die 5. Maii, 1945*

*Fr. Innocentius Swoboda, O.F.M.*

*Censor Librorum*

**IMPRIMATUR**

*Sti. Ludovici, die 7. Maii, 1945*

*✠ Joannes J. Glennon, S.T.D.*

*Archiepiscopus*

*Copyright 1946*

**B. HERDER BOOK CO.**

*Second Impression*

*Vail-Ballou Press, Inc., Binghamton and New York*

## Translator's Preface

**O**NE of the outstanding characteristics of the Catholic Church as contrasted with most of the other Christian groups is undoubtedly her devotion to Mary. The Church in her guidance and doctrine could leave unquestioned the fact that the faithful themselves, particularly the great mass of ordinary Catholics, have a number of special practices of their own to venerate the Blessed Mother. Here we are not faced with a more or less unreasoned expression or outgrowth of popular belief. It is an important fact that in the official liturgy the Blessed Virgin Mary occupies a place of honor, and that in the Catholic Church no other single article of faith has been so much developed and enriched in the course of centuries as the doctrine about Mary. Although the dogmatic definition of the Immaculate Conception is, relatively speaking, still of recent date, among the theologians there are some who are already zealously occupied in endeavoring to obtain the dogmatic definition of the Blessed Virgin's bodily assumption into heaven and of her universal mediatorship of grace.

Among Protestants it has become a proverb that the Catholic Church is no longer a Church of Christ, but a Church of Mary. This is not the place to show the falsity of their judgment. It is sufficient to point out how the concept of Christ, which has faded more and more in the

Protestant Churches through denial of His divinity, has been retained in all its purity in the Catholic Church, and how this concept of Christ, precisely through its divine excellence, keeps vivid the veneration of His mother as truly Mother of God. Far from diverting attention from Christ, the veneration of Mary has proved the most striking guaranty of the purity of belief in the incarnate Word.

This close relationship between faith in Christ and the veneration of Mary is felt instinctively, as it were, by every Catholic. The modern believer who wishes to account for this feeling will undoubtedly find numerous indications of it in most religious handbooks. No other theologian, in our opinion, made such sound researches into the dogmatic foundation of the Catholic devotion to Mary or elucidated it so profoundly, as Scheeben. With the deep and synthetic view that marked him as one of the greatest religious thinkers of the last century, he incorporated the Catholic doctrine regarding Mary into the whole of Catholic dogmatic theology. In doing so he showed in an unexcelled way how the veneration of Mary takes root in the deepest soil of Christian belief. His Mariology not only is the best explanation known to us, of the doctrine about Mary, but it also gives a deeper insight into the most important truths that ennoble and comfort Christian life.

A brief glance at the life and endeavors of this master will facilitate a fuller understanding of the originality and enduring value of his work.

#### THE THEOLOGICAL WORK OF SCHEEBEN

Matthias Joseph Scheeben was born March 1, 1835, at Meckenheim near Bonn. He finished the study of the humanities at the age of seventeen and presented himself for

the priesthood in the diocese of Cologne. Since he had already given evidence of possessing more than ordinary talents at the grammar school, he was sent to Rome for his seminary studies. For seven years he lived there among the students of the Collegium Germanicum, garbed in the vivid red cassock peculiar to this college, which even yet attracts attention in Rome. He followed the lectures in philosophy and theology at the papal Gregorian University, which, like the Germanicum, was under the direction of the Jesuits. At that time Father A. Delacroix, a Fleming, was rector of the Germanicum.

In this excellent educational center Scheeben could follow the lessons and profit by the influence of such men as Liberatore, Secchi, Perrone, Cerciali, Passaglia, Franzelin, Ballerini, Patrizi, Kleutgen and Schrader. Passaglia worked with Schrader at a new publication of Petavius' *Dogmata theologica* and tried to make the positive method find acceptance again in theology, while Kleutgen, whose first two parts of the *Theologie der Vorzeit* appeared in 1854, ushered in a fruitful return to St. Thomas and old Scholasticism. A fellow student of Scheeben, Father Tilmann Pesch, could tell later how the gifted Rhinelander applied himself with exceptional zeal to the study of St. Thomas. During his whole life Scheeben kept a grateful memory of the Germanicum and his professors at Rome and continued to hold them in sincere affection.

On December 18, 1858, Scheeben was ordained priest by Cardinal Patrizi, and in the summer of the following year he returned as doctor of theology to his fatherland. After a year as rector and teacher of religion at the boarding-school of the Salvatorian Sisters at Muensterreifel, he was appointed by Cardinal Archbishop John von

Seissel as professor in dogmatics at the seminary of Cologne. There he remained until his too early death, July 21, 1888.

During the twenty-eight years of his professorship Scheeben displayed an amazing energy. In his very first year he published a booklet, in which he translated into fluent German the most beautiful texts of the Fathers of the Church and the finest writings of poets in regard to Mary. He also wrote an article in the periodical *Der Katholik* on "The doctrine of the supernatural and its significance toward science and life." In it appear these noteworthy words, which indicate the leading motive of his whole dogmatic work of later years: "The doctrine of the supernatural, taken in all its depth and extent, penetrates Christianity in all directions; it alone gives to Christianity its really divine, specific, and mysterious character; it forms the center of the glorious system of its mysteries."

The following year, the twenty-six-year-old theologian published his first masterpiece: *Natur und Gnade*. Professor Grabmann, who brought out a new edition in 1922, testifies about it as follows: "The young professor accomplished here a work which, in view of the contemporary condition of theology, we must call an exceptional scientific achievement, and it remains of the greatest importance to our own time, for the solid structure of thought and its beneficial influence on will and life."

In this book there appears clearly the great underlying idea of the supernatural, which rules the author's whole thought and life, and the typical characteristics of his theology. It shows a close continuity of thought with the whole preceding theological tradition, with which he be-

came thoroughly acquainted, having special preference for the speculative nature of the Greek Fathers. A second feature is his exceptional speculative ability and masterly skill in penetrating the religious doctrines in their deepest connections, ramifications, and conclusions, and in elucidating the inner order and sublime beauty of dogma. He thoroughly understands the art of developing in every respect the philosophical ideas and doctrines of service to theological speculation; and here the philosophy of St. Thomas serves him as a standard. A third feature is his keen sense of asceticism and mysticism giving the *theologia affectiva* its proper sense and high value of life.

That the book sounded a new note in the theological world of that time, is evident from the lengthy criticism, laudatory in every respect, by Professor Aloysius Schmid in the *Theologische Quartalschrift* of Tuebingen, to which the editor subjoined the following remark: "The review lying before us will make the readers acquainted with a theological trend that is to the liking of many at the present time because of the combining of the mystical with the speculative element. One keeps this view of its timeliness in mind as an explanation for the acceptance of it in this periodical."

That very year Scheeben published another book which gave an enlightening view of the serious preparatory work that he spent on his *Natur und Gnade*. It is a republication, provided with numerous personal remarks, of a Latin booklet by an Italian Jesuit of the eighteenth century, Antonius Casini, entitled *Quid est homo*.<sup>1</sup> In it the doctrine about the possibility of a purely natural state and the

<sup>1</sup> *Quid est homo, sive controversia de statu purae naturae, qua ratio simul et finis oeconomiae Dei erga homines supernaturalis uberrime demonstratur ex Patrum praesertim sententia*, Moguntiae (Mainz), 1862.

essence of the supernatural are set forth according to the teaching of the Fathers. Scheeben warns us that he looked up in the original works the texts which had been often incompletely cited by Casini, that he left out the inconclusive quotations and substituted others for them, indicating this substitution by an asterisk. When we consider that it contains several hundred texts of the Fathers, we get an idea of the gigantic work behind it. We also understand how Scheeben acquired his amazing knowledge of the Fathers of the Church.

Scheeben wished not only to win back the professional theologians to the study of the supernatural life, which was pushed so much into the background through the rationalist influence of the period of Enlightenment; he also dreamed of acquainting the Christian people with the treasures of the life of grace on a larger scale. He possessed, however, no ability for the task of popularizing his writings. Therefore he conceived the idea of adapting into German the splendid booklet of a Spanish Jesuit with a German name, Joannes Eusebius Nieremberg (d. 1658). This adaptation proved to be such a free translation that we may almost speak of it as an independent work. It appeared in the following year under the title: *Die Herrlichkeiten der gottlichen Gnade*, and became our author's most popular book. It went through ten editions, four before Scheeben's death, the last in the year 1925. It was also translated into various languages.

This book is the first work of Scheeben which was published by Herder at Freiburg. He had met the gifted publisher in September, 1861, at Ostend. Benjamin Herder, then forty-three years old, became a true friend of Scheeben, and their correspondence throws much light upon

the origin of Scheeben's books and upon the method of his work.

At first Scheeben intended to edit still other writings of Nieremberg for the German public. In the meantime, however, he had started a work in which his brilliant gifts could be better utilized: a synthetic exposition of the most important mysteries of Christianity. The first fruits of it appeared under the form of a series of nine articles in *Der Katholik*, 1861 and 1862. About the middle of October, 1864, he finished the great work, 772 pages. It was published in 1865. Grabmann, who calls it "eine grosstat der theologischen Spekulation," says: "It brings before the mind's eye in an amazing fashion the fullness of Christian truth, visualized as a unity, centered in the mystery of the Blessed Trinity. It is no mere copy of the great medieval syntheses, it is not an attempt to reproduce any past, it is a masterpiece pointing to the future."

Alas, minds were not yet prepared for such a high flight. The work was given a cool reception. It throws a sad light upon the condition of theology in the Germany of those days. For example, we read the following criticism, by Wenzeslaus Mattes, who had written the article "Mysterien" in Wetzer and Welte's *Kirchenlexicon* (1st ed.). To him Scheeben's book is not one about mysteries, but a mystery itself. "Through the whole work," he says, "there reigns such an indistinctness, confusion, and unintelligibility that it is almost impossible to read it through to the end. So the author will have worked practically in vain; some will read passages in the book, no one, except possibly the critics, will read it through. Even this may be doubtful." At first, therefore, the book did not sell well: Scheeben did not live to see a reprint.

It speaks well for the broad mind of Herder, truly an exceptional man, that he did not thereby lose faith in Scheeben but urged him on immediately to new publications. From a letter of November 25, 1866, we learn that Scheeben intended to turn out a book on moral theology in Latin, "which would complete Gury by its thoroughness and scientific character." This thought seems to have occurred to him, because at the end of 1866 the editorship of the *Kölner Pastoralblatt* came to him, or rather, as he expressed it himself, "he was sentenced to it by the wishes of higher authority." But in May, 1867, he made known to Herder that this plan seemed to him unworkable on account of his professorship in dogmatic theology.

In the meantime a new plan had matured in him, which was at once endorsed enthusiastically by Herder: a complete Handbook of Dogmatic Theology. The letter in which he expressed himself about it to his friend Herder, is of great importance, as he sketches in it the relation of his book to the theological works then current in Germany. It is to be concise and at the same time as rich as possible in positive and speculative theology; strictly scientific and based on the classical masters. The ideal had been aimed at before but not attained.

Encouraged by Herder's decision to introduce the new dogmatics into his *Theologische Bibliothek*, Scheeben started to work. He worked on it with entire devotion for twenty long years, the last of his life, but left this standard work unfinished as St. Thomas did his *Summa theologica*. It reached three thick volumes of a thousand pages each. After Scheeben's death Atzberger added a fourth volume to it, to complete the exposition of the dogma in accord

with the doctrines of the Church, the sacraments, and the eschatology.

At first neither Scheeben nor Herder had thought that the book would attain such proportions and would require so many years of work. In their correspondence we see how, time and again, the publisher urged limitation and speed, but how, in spite of this, the brilliant theologian, driven, as it were, by his intellectual power, still continued to extend his researches, in every subdivision subjecting each question anew to a thorough preparatory study, and as progress became slower the work grew in length. The battle about the Vatican Council and the infallibility of the pope, into which he threw himself with heart and soul, required all his energies. It began with a pamphlet against Döllinger, followed by several others. After that he took over the editorship of the periodical *Das ökumenische Konzil von 1869*, ushering in its second year of publication, 1870, with a foreword signed by himself and with "far upward of 5,000 subscriptions." After the Council he continued this publication until 1882 under the title *Periodische Blätter*. Most of the anonymous articles are from his pen.

At the end of 1872, to Herder, who is impatiently awaiting to print the first volumes of the *Dogmatic Theology*, he writes that, "precisely through the working out of these articles a new concept of the entire doctrine about the teaching authority of the Church has come to my mind. I therefore had to rewrite this entire chapter a third, and in part a fourth, time." The preface of the first volume is dated June 21, 1874, the feast day of St. Aloysius, patron of the Germanicum. In this date, the sixth centenary of

the deaths of the two princes of medieval theology, the holy doctors Thomas and Bonaventure, he sees a favorable sign: those two masters also worked victoriously at the temple of sacred science during an extremely stormy period.

This first volume contains as the first book (pages 8–419) a remarkable introduction to theology, under the significant title, *Theologische Erkenntnislehre*. In it the objective principles of this knowledge are studied first, namely, the divine revelation, laid down in Sacred Scripture and tradition, and the teaching authority of the Church. After that the theological knowledge by itself as *intellectus fidei*, in the function of faith, is analyzed. An outline of the history of theology is added to this (pages 419–62). Professor Grabmann, who incorporated these pages of Scheeben into his *History of Theology*, does not hesitate to say that this historical summary, “with its rich content and strongly marked characteristics of personalities and schools of thought, gives evidence of an amazing command of the entire preceding theology.” The doctrine about God in His unity and trinity is included in these introductory dissertations (pages 463–906).

More than three years passed before Scheeben was ready with the sequel. As yet he could deliver only one part of the second volume; the preface is dated December 8, 1877. The second part was again three years in coming, May 2, 1880. Here we find as the third book the doctrine “regarding God in His fundamental and original relationship to the world, or the doctrine of the foundation of the natural and supernatural order” (pages 1–514). The fourth book deals with “sin and the kingdom of sin as a contradiction of the supernatural order and as combating

it" (pages 515–684). After a thorough study of sin in general, it treats of the sin of the angels and original sin. Book five, which could be included only in part in the second volume (pages 685–941), deals with the redemption of fallen mankind by Christ. It was November, 1882, before the first part of the third volume could appear. These 629 pages are the continuation of book five about the work of redemption by Christ.

The fifth and last chapter (pages 455–629), finally deals with Mariology: "The virginal Mother of the Redeemer and her relationship to the work of redemption." We return to this subject in the second part of this Introduction.

The second part of the third volume was now five years in coming. Scheeben complains in the Preface about "the frequent sicknesses by which he was repeatedly forced to interrupt the work completely, or to continue it when he was only partly recovered." This section (pages 631–1005) contains the sixth book: "The redemption realized in the individual through the justifying grace of Christ." A part of this doctrine about grace must be left for the fourth volume on account of its extent. The Preface says: "The material for it is practically all collected, sorted, and put in order; therefore the following volume will be able to appear within a very short time, if God spares me." God did not preserve his health. On July 21, 1888, before a year had passed, when Scheeben was only fifty-two years old and was at the zenith of his genius, he was called by God out of this world. It seemed that God wished to impress the whole world with the lesson which Scheeben had expressed to Herder in his letter of November 29, 1881, as follows: "As so often in the past, the Lord let me again

feel strongly that He is not in need of anybody, for He makes a person unfit for work precisely when that person is at his best." His loyal friend, Benjamin Herder, joined him in heaven the very same year.

Although the *Dogmatic Theology* of Scheeben, ambitiously planned, remained incomplete, it may still correctly be called, with his other works, a *monumentum aere perennius*, which marks its author as one of the greatest, perhaps the greatest, dogmatist of these latter times. However, Scheeben did not exercise on his contemporaries the influence that we would expect in view of his many talents. The interest of the theologians, particularly in Germany, went in another direction; the exact scientific study of exegesis, patrology, and history of dogma forced speculative theology to the background. After Scheeben's death, his works, except the "Glories" and the "Mysteries," were little read, if they did not indeed fall into complete oblivion. Only in later years there sprang up, together with the liturgical movement and under its influence, a general urge to live the dogma more vividly, and consequently there followed a more profound and speculative insight into the mysteries of faith. The result was a spontaneous return to Scheeben. The appreciative introduction of Professor Grabmann preceding the reprint of *Natur und Gnade*, edited by him in 1922, indicated and at the same time partially caused this return. Karl Eschweiller, who in a perhaps somewhat too broad synthesis contrasted Scheeben as a representative of a "theology from faith" with Hermes as a "theologian from reason," also contributed toward renewing the appreciation of Scheeben among modern theologians.

In 1935, on the occasion of the hundredth anniversary

of Scheeben's birth, the renewed interest in his theological work was clearly expressed, particularly during the festivities organized in his honor in Cologne by the *Katholische Akademikerverband*, in Freiburg by the publishing company of Herder, in Rome by the alumni of the *Germanicum*.<sup>2</sup>

On this occasion the students of the *Germanicum* were received in audience by the Pope. Pius XI recommended to them in warm words the study of Scheeben's theology and the imitation of his priestly virtues. He describes the "high and brilliant" theology of Scheeben with these remarkable words: "The entire theology of Scheeben bears the stamp of a pious ascetical theology; as another great theologian, Franzelin, said: 'I like ascetical books with much theology and dogma, and dogmatic books with much asceticism.' This is as it should be."<sup>3</sup>

In this concise outline of Scheeben's theological studies we could touch only the most important points. To be complete we really should have a look at his contributions to various periodicals and the *Kirchenlexicon* (second edition), and also at his controversies, reviews, and so on. The little we have mentioned may be sufficient, however, to put the Mariology, which we will now study more closely, in its place in the whole of his work.

### SCHEEBEN'S MARIOLOGY

The Mariology is generally considered the most beautiful and original part of Scheeben's *Dogmatic Theology*. His uncommon knowledge of the Fathers of the Church

<sup>2</sup> See memorial volume, *M. J. Scheeben, alumno suo eximio, centesimo ipsius redente natali, Collegium Germanicum Hungaricum*, Rome, 1935.

<sup>3</sup> See the circumstantial account of this audience in *Osservatore Romano*, March 11, 1935.

and theologians and the creative talents of his genius are therein demonstrated most brilliantly. All this is based on a deep and fervent devotion to the holy Mother of God, of which his first work, *Marienblutten*, already gives evidence. In his *Glories of Divine Grace* he dedicated a splendid chapter to "the grace and dignity of the Mother of God," after he had besought the grace of God in the Preface "through the intercession of the Immaculate Virgin, first-born daughter and at the same time Mother of Grace."

From the time of the writing of his *Mysteries of Christianity*, the plan of his Mariology was always in his mind. He writes: "Before leaving the mystery of the God-man we must turn our gaze to her from whom He received His humanity, and where He became one with the human race. We must show that that heart where all began and from which the divine Savior extends His sanctifying and life-giving power over the whole body of the redeemed, had itself to remain pure, redeemed in such a super-eminent way as to be almost a new creation; really a second Eve, whose life arose again afresh from the side of her heavenly Bridegroom."

However, Scheeben must for the present give up the development of these beautiful thoughts on account of the size of his book. But, to continue the reader's orientation in some degree in the matter of the doctrine regarding Mary, he refers in a note to "the rich theological contents of the work of Nicolas concerning the Blessed Virgin." He means *La Vierge Marie et le plan divin* of August Nicolas, 1807-88; Karl Reiching had translated the four volumes into German immediately after their appearance. By this one citation Scheeben shows that he

esteems the work very highly; in his later Mariology he will take many intuitions of this lay theologian and will give them a dogmatic foundation.

It may be evident from the following how deeply Scheeben had thrown himself body and soul into the doctrine concerning Mary long before he could work out his Mariology proper. In one of the most solid articles, which he gave in his periodical, *Das ökumenische Konzil*, in defense of papal infallibility, he dedicated not less than forty pages to a parallel between this recently defined truth and the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, both considered splendid "manifestations of the supernatural nature of Christianity." J. Schmitz, who republished them recently, though separately, calls them "a gem of Mariology."

Consequently, in the working out of his *Dogmatic Theology* we are not surprised that Scheeben could not be content even with his extensive contemplations on the divine motherhood in the course of his Christology, and could not take leave of the study of the redemption without dedicating a separate chapter to "the virginal Mother of the Redeemer and her relation to the work of redemption." No wonder, then, that, under the urge of his fervent love for Mary, this fifth chapter of the Christology developed into a monumental treatise, which up to the present has remained unsurpassed. In the Preface to the third volume of the *Dogmatic Theology* he admitted that the size of the Mariology had become considerably greater than he himself had expected and announced. To excuse the delay in publishing his sequel to the Christology, he himself points to the *moles laboris* it entailed and to the fact that, with regard to the Mariology "in the form in which I

thought I must conceive and develop it, practically no examples were at my disposal, that could lighten the labor of laying the foundation, and of consistently carrying through the main thought."

We cannot resist the temptation to quote here the following passage from his Preface, in which he presents, as it were, his Mariology to the reader.

"Mariology can and must be considered a link connecting the doctrine of the Redeemer and His work with that of the grace of Christ and its distribution by the Church. Mariology, thus conceived, is called to occupy an important place in the system of dogmatic theology. From this viewpoint it appears as the development of the profound concept manifested in the early Christian era, which ideally beholds Mary in the Church, and the Church in Mary (Apoc. 12:1). . . . As a treatise on the personal bride of Christ and the personal mother of mankind, Mariology becomes a rich source from which light is shed on the doctrine of the Church as a supernatural organism. . . . Hence the treatise on Mary, so dear to the heart of the faithful, must be treated scientifically, to avoid possible critical errors of spiritual writers and sacred speakers, which damage religion itself. For the real sources and principles of theology constitute the sound foundation for solid piety."

Scheeben, therefore, is indeed aware that he is performing pioneer work: great merit is due to him for having changed the Mariology into a scientific whole, forming an independent part of dogmatic theology. In this we see, as it were, two main ideas that give Scheeben's Mariology its originality and a lasting significance. First of all he realized that the exposition of the truths which revelation

teaches us about Mary should have an independent position in the theological system; secondly he discovered a principle that gives to that treatise on Mary the strict unity and close cohesion of a really scientific system. We will elucidate separately these two points somewhat more fully, hoping thus to guide the reader along the line of thought, which is not always easily followed in Scheeben's Mariology.

### I. MARIOLOGY AS AN INDEPENDENT TREATISE IN DOGMATIC THEOLOGY

To understand the reasons prompting Scheeben to plan the Mariology as an independent treatise in dogmatic theology, we must go back for a moment to his exposition of the essence of theology in the First Book. Theology is there presented to us as the scientific knowledge of God and divine things, based on revelation, as it is given to us by the Church. It is a formal science, as it systematizes revealed data through reason, under the influence of the light of faith, into an essentially coherent organic whole according to a principle of unity. That principle of unity, from which "theology," doctrine about God, derives its name, is God, the absolute Good, and consequently is infinitely fruitful and communicative. Theology considers this fruitfulness and a communicativeness first of all in the Trinitarian life that unfolds on account of the divine nature itself, and secondly in the supernatural life that pours itself out into creation by virtue of the divine love.

A theological treatise is not any subdivision taken at random of that compositum of truths, grouped about this thought of God; it must also formally be an organic member of that system. It should, therefore, in its turn show a

systematic unity by itself and have an organic connection with the main whole. The question, then, of whether Mariology can and must be considered an independent treatise in dogmatic theology, comes to this: Do the revealed data about Mary really form a vital point in the organic whole of dogmatic truths?

The answer depends on the position we ascribe to Mary in the work of redemption, i.e., the position of mediation and intercession of the supernatural life on behalf of mankind. If we attribute to Mary no other significance than that she is the physical instrument of the Incarnation of the Son of God, she can, of course, appear in theology only on the occasion of the Incarnation. In that case a space can be given to Mary only in a first chapter of the Christology, which, as in the *Pars tertia* of the *Summa* of St. Thomas, would bear the title: *De ingressu Christi in mundum*.<sup>1</sup> Most theologians who follow the plan of the *Summa* in their scheme of exposition, have therefore inserted at that place alone a treatise on the privileges of Mary. This does not mean, however, that these theologians, any more than St. Thomas, have limited the greatness of Mary to her bodily motherhood; to the extent that they were guided by the living tradition of the Church, they had to treat in that narrow space the privileges of Mary, which no longer corresponded to the limiting title.

Mary's significance, limited solely to her physical function of mother, was advanced and maintained only by Protestants. Hence their complete failure to comprehend the Catholic devotion to Mary. Scheeben sketched in clear outline their attitude toward Mary. To those among them who no longer accept the godhead of Christ and have

<sup>1</sup> IIIa, q. 27, Praeambulum.

dropped the supernatural character of Christianity, Mary is obviously nothing more than an ordinary woman, and the virginal conception is a mere legend. But even to those Protestants who still believe in the dogma of Nicaea, Mary is simply and solely the woman to whom the Redeemer owes His human existence. Consequently she can be compared only with the earth, of which the first man was formed; she is to them in no way at all the new Eve beside the new Adam. This all follows logically from the Lutheran concept, according to which human nature is only a "lump of clay," on which grace has no interior hold and which therefore cannot cooperate with the latter. From this also follows, linked with it, their concept of the Church, in which they are able to see only an aggregate of persons justified by faith and not at all the visible organ of the grace of redemption. Therefore it does not astonish Scheeben that the reformed Churches in his time, apparently in agreement, all rejected at the same time the dogma of the Immaculate Conception and the infallibility of the pope. He quotes the significant words of a Protestant, that Catholics defend and glorify in Mary their concept of the Church as mother and mediatrix of grace.

In their laudable attempts to reconcile these stray brethren to the concept that the Church has of Mary, some Catholics went to meet the Protestants somewhat too far at times. A prominent modern theologian, whose sharp criticism of Scheeben's Mariology we must also mention, Professor Bernhard Bartmann, may serve as an example. In a valuable work in apologetics, he refutes the Protestant allegation that Christ Himself was the first opponent to the veneration of Mary. His detailed study of the so-called disparaging words of Jesus to Mary, certainly de-

serves every attention, even if we do not always agree with the explanation given. However, we cannot follow his opinion in the assertion taken from the last chapter, that Mary's entire dignity is conclusively expressed in the title "Theotokos." From this the writer concludes that, except for the fact that she gave life to the Redeemer, no other part was intended for her in the economy of salvation than that of intercession with the application of the merits of redemption, in the same manner as the other saints in heaven, she being in that case at their head. The profound contemplation of Scheeben regarding Mary's cooperation, subordinate to Christ, in the work of redemption, is consequently dismissed with a slighting remark about the "Roman Mariologies" that had influenced him. We must hasten to say that Bartmann abandoned this narrow view of the matter, in his later writings, as will appear further.

The concept of the Mother of God, as it is approved by the Church today and lives in the hearts of the faithful, extends far beyond the boundaries of the idea that sees in her only the instrument of the Incarnation. Modern theologians must deal with defined, or at least commonly believed, truths regarding Mary, which can scarcely be deduced from the simple fact that she was the means by which Christ entered the world. In a complete dogmatic theology one must speak, for instance, of her Immaculate Conception, perpetual virginity, absolute sinlessness; of the "hyperdulia" due to her, of her mediatorship of grace, and of her bodily assumption into heaven.

Many authors treat these privileges of Mary apart from the Christology proper and present them in other treatises, as exceptions to general rules, e.g., as exemption

from original sin in the treatise *De Deo creante et elevante*, as anticipation of the resurrection in eschatology, as a special kind of *dulia* in the *De cultu sanctorum*. Apparently they have not yet recognized the fact that Mariology should have an independent place in dogmatic theology. Others group together all these truths about Mary (her divine maternity and her other privileges) in a single treatise entitled "Mariology," and publish it separately. However, a mere compilation of theses referring to one and the same subject matter is not, on that account, a theological treatise, but is called more correctly a monograph, such as one might write, for example, about St. John the Baptist or St. Joseph.

As long as we do not reduce the privileges of Mary to one organic whole, in which a vital point in the economy of salvation receives a rounded exposition, we cannot speak of a formal treatise of theology. Thus it is apparent that a Mariology is possible only when we ascribe to Mary, apart from her significance as physical mother of the Redeemer, an active role beside her Son in the very work of redemption.

We have already indicated sufficiently that Scheeben viewed the Mariology from this broader point of view. Moreover, it is quite evident from the title he gave to this part of his *Dogmatic Theology*, "The virginal Mother of the Redeemer and her relation to the work of redemption." We still wish to emphasize briefly the justification for this standpoint in the light of modern theology. Up to the present the Church has not defined anything regarding the cooperation of Mary in the work of redemption. During the last decades a powerful movement has arisen among theologians to obtain a dogmatic definition of

Mary's universal mediatorship of grace. However they do not yet agree about the best formulation. This is not the correct place to pursue the question further. It is enough to refer the reader to the book *Marialia* by Cardinal Bitremieux.

In general, not only the great mass of the laity, but also, in numerous instances, the ordinary teaching authority honors Mary with such titles as the following: the new Eve, Mother of divine grace, Mother and Queen of Christians, Mediatrix, Coredemptrix. Whatever may be the exact degree of theological certainty belonging to those various names, one thing at least may be affirmed with certainty, that under all those expressions there lies a basic truth, which the Church maintains as an inalienable part of the *depositum fidei*. We think that we cannot formulate that basic meaning better than in the words of Professor Bartmann himself, taken from a much discussed article, in which a more profound study of the tradition regarding Mary led him to abandon the negative thesis of his book mentioned above. He remarks: "The Fathers do not stop at the fact that Mary gave the Redeemer to the world, . . . they ascribe to her a certain personal, moral participation and cooperation in her Son's work of the redemption as well. . . . These ideas must have been spread throughout the Church of the second century, since Justin already presents them in such a solid form, and they found a general continuance in tradition." After he has traced this tradition, beginning with the patristic writings, through Scholasticism, on to the latest papal documents, he comes to the following conclusion: "One may consider it a dogma, held in the Church since the oldest times

of Christianity, that Mary is for us mediatrix of the grace of salvation."

We may therefore safely consider as *de fide* this concept of the participation of Mary in the work of redemption, taken by Scheeben in its entirety as the foundation of his Mariology; and this concept establishes sufficiently the perfect right of Mariology to be treated as an independent treatise of theology.

## 2. THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE OF MARIOLOGY

The fact that theologians have now generally come to realize that Mariology must be conceived as an independent theological treatise, proves that the problem of the basic principle of Mariology holds the center of interest.<sup>2</sup> Nothing can contribute more to the understanding of the lasting value and originality of Scheeben's basic thesis than a glimpse of the most important solutions, which were presented following his. We can take as a guide in this the remarkable study of Professor C. Feckes, who at present occupies Scheeben's chair in the Cologne seminary, and is attached with heart and soul to the ideas of his great predecessor.

It was evident that the first truth, which would be considered the main principle of Mariology, must be the title *Theotokos* (Mother of God), which expresses Mary's highest dignity and which had already been declared a dogma at the Council of Ephesus. Suarez had declared that the divine motherhood is the foundation of all Mary's privileges and had formulated the following thesis:

<sup>2</sup> See Bittremieux, *Marialia*, pp. 313 f.

“Comparatur haec dignitas matris Dei ad alias gratias creatas tamquam prima forma ad suas proprietates, et e converso aliae gratiae comparantur ad ipsam sicut dispositiones ad formam.”<sup>3</sup> On the first Mary-days at Tongerlo, Belgium, in 1931, Professor C. Philips treated of “the divine motherhood as the source of all Mary’s privileges.”<sup>4</sup> Monsignor Ianotta evinces the same conviction in the title he gave to his recently published Mariology: *Theotocologia*.<sup>5</sup>

However, if we examine how these authors connect the various privileges of Mary with the divine motherhood, it is at once evident that the latter cannot count as a proper distinguishing principle of the former. E.g., the Immaculate Conception may be viewed as a material preparation for this motherhood, but not as a necessary disposition. We can, therefore, connect it only by means of an *argumentum convenientiae* with the proposed main principle. From this principle we can deduce no more than a *convenientia* with regard to the active role of Mary in the work of redemption and in the distribution of graces.

Some theologians think they can maintain the divine motherhood as a basic principle by extending the concept of it. Instead of the abstract concept applying the formal ingredients of motherhood in general to being the Mother of God, they place the concrete (others say “adequate”) divine motherhood. But not all define this concrete motherhood of Mary in the same way. Cardinal Lepicier, for instance, premises the following stipulation: “Divina maternitas adaequate sumatur, scil. pro illo omni gratiarum

<sup>3</sup> *De Incarnatione*, q. 27, disp. I, sec. 2; Venice, 1746.

<sup>4</sup> *Report on the first Mary-days* (Tongerloo, Belgium, 1932), pp. 30–42.

<sup>5</sup> *Theotocologia catholica seu scientia de Virgine Maria Deiparente*, 1925.

et donorum cumulo, quem Matris Dei dignitas de lege Dei ordinaria secumfert." <sup>6</sup>

But how shall we determine which graces or privileges really belong to the dignity of the divine motherhood? For this motherhood itself cannot be taken as a norm for it, since the issue is precisely about those graces and privileges that are not contained in the formal concept of it and cannot be deduced from it by convincing proof. Therefore this norm again can be only the *convenientia*.

Father Bover <sup>7</sup> would define the concrete motherhood of God differently. To him, the supreme principle of Mariology is the divine motherhood such as it was historically realized, and is really represented in revelation, which makes of the Mother of God, the new Eve. But no matter how closely this state of being the new Eve may appear intertwined with that of being the Mother of God, the concept "co-operation with the Redeemer" which lies in the title of "new Eve," is and remains formally different from the concept of "motherhood of God." So that, as was remarked elsewhere by Professor Bittremieux, <sup>8</sup> we have here to deal with a double principle, and come to a solution that will be further discussed.

The second concept, "new Eve," by itself, is taken by some other Mariologists as a fundamental principle of Mariology. Billot had moved in that direction already. In the foremost part of his Mariology, or rather in the part of his commentary on the *Pars tertia* of St. Thomas (*De ingressu Christi in mundum*), he states the following thesis:

<sup>6</sup> A. M. Lepicier, *Tractatus de B.V. Matre Dei*, Paris, 1901.

<sup>7</sup> J. M. Bover, S.J., *Sintesis organica de la Mariologia en funcion de la Asociacion de Maria a la obra redentoria de Jesucristo*, Madrid, 1929.

<sup>8</sup> Bittremieux, "De principio supremo Mariologia," in *Ephemerides theologiae Lovanienses*, VIII (1931), 250.

“De Virgine Matre generaliter tenendum est, quod in ordine reparationis eum locum tenet, quem tenuit Eva in ordine perditionis, . . . quo fit ut novo Adae, id est Christo, indissolubili nexu ad dissolvenda diaboli opera coniungi debuerit nova Eva, id est Maria.”<sup>9</sup>

In a scholarly report at the Mary-days of Tongerlo, Belgium, in 1936, Father Deneffe defends the “new Eve” as the basic principle of Mariology;<sup>10</sup> he qualifies the title by adding, “considered in the full sense, as she is shown to us in the Sacred Scriptures and tradition,” i.e., as Mother of the God-man also.

We have difficulty in evading the impression that we have here a sort of *petitio principii*. In the concept of Mary as it appears concretely in revelation, there lies contained all that theology will ever be able to teach about Mary; but we are not for that reason allowed to take that concept itself of Mary as the basic principle of the theology regarding her. Theology seeks, as the ground for its systematic unity, a formal concept from which can be deduced and built up to an intelligible whole the entire complex of truths that form the concrete figure of the Mother of God. Certainly the concrete figure of Mary, taken from Sacred Scriptures and tradition, is the starting point of the theology concerning her, just as the revealed data is for every theological treatise; it is also the starting point in which that same figure, now penetrated with intelligibility, stands before us as a systematic whole. But it cannot be at the same time the inner principle of this intelligibility, any more than the revealed fact of the three Persons in the

<sup>9</sup> Billot, *De Verbo Incarnato commentarius in tertiam partem S. Thomae* (7th ed., Rome, 1927), p. 386.

<sup>10</sup> A. Deneffe, S.J., *Report on the 6th Mary-days* (Tongerloo, Belgium, 1937), pp. 70-82.

unity of the divine Being, and their mutual relations, is the supreme principle of the doctrine of the Trinity, but indeed, as Scheeben remarks, the principle that there is in God a *processio realis per intellectum et voluntatem*. "Starting from any article whatever of the revealed data about the Trinity," he says, "we can deduce from it a certain number of other truths, but only the proposition indicated contains a principle from which all other doctrines about the Trinity, objectively and completely, arise as from their root."

Formally speaking, we must say of Father Deneffe's principle as well as of that presented by Father Bover, that the concept of divine motherhood, although blended in the Sacred Scriptures and tradition into one concrete figure with the "New Eve," differs formally from the latter. To maintain the formal concept of the "New Eve" as the basic principle of Mariology, the task consequently rests on him to deduce from it the formal concept of the divine motherhood, which certainly cannot come about in any other way than on grounds of *convenientia*. Is it desirable, yes, even suitable, that we should give to Mary's highest privilege, that of being the Mother of God, the place of merely a deduced thesis in Mariology?

It is not surprising that at present many theologians, realizing the insufficiency of all these attempts to systematize Mariology under one main principle, come to the conclusion that we must absolutely accept two basic principles in Mariology: the divine motherhood and the concept of "New Eve," or, according to the formula of Father Terrien: Mary, Mother of God and mother of mankind. Professor Bittremieux was largely instrumental in making the *principium consortii*, as he calls it, find acceptance

next to the concept of Mother of God, with the Mariologists. For both principles have a far-reaching meaning, so that practically there is no single truth of Mariology that cannot be deduced from the one or the other. Furthermore, they are closely connected and mutually interdependent. The divine motherhood is entirely directed to the spiritual motherhood, and the latter finds its ontological basis in the former. However, this does not militate against the fact that the two concepts are formally different, and that no single strict reasoning allows the one to be deduced from the other. Complete unity is, therefore, not reached, and only when it would seem impossible to connect these two concepts in a higher synthesis, could we then content ourselves with this double principle.

It is this higher synthesis that is presented to us by Scheeben. He proceeds from the divine motherhood, but a more profound analysis of this article of revealed data makes him discover in that unique motherhood a formal aspect distinguishing this same motherhood, precisely as such, from every other human motherhood; namely, here the mother is, at the same time and inseparably, the bride of her Son. For it is absolutely proper to this unique motherhood that the Son, in His eternal existence as God, precedes the maternal actions; that the Son gives Himself to the mother of His own free will, in order to be clothed through her maternal actions with a nature equal to that of the mother.

If a human motherhood in its fullness can exist only on the grounds of a marriage in which the bride gives herself wholly and unconditionally to the bridegroom, in order to beget and educate the child in and with him, is it then conceivable that there does not lie at the root of this high-

est motherhood which excludes the cooperation of a male principle, the most complete, loving, and mutual surrender between the mother and Son, who gives Himself to her as *semen divinum*? Because among men the complete and essentially indissoluble mutual surrender of love of two persons has its solid form in the relationship between the bride and bridegroom, Scheeben does not hesitate, any more than does the liturgy in interpreting the Cantic of Canticles, to call this relation of Mary to the incarnating Word, which is inherent to her motherhood, a bridal one. In order to call Mary's basic privilege at the same time the main principle of Mariology, he speaks of a bridal motherhood of God, or a maternal state as bride of God. He thus unites into one formal principle the two qualities, which allowed the supporters of the last-mentioned solution to group all the Mariological truths: that of being the Mother of God, that and of being the new Eve. These two basic truths, which were regarded by them as two separate principles which could not be deduced from each other, are intrinsically united by Scheeben, as two truths really combined in Mary, but without essential connection, to one characteristic feature of Mary with two complementary aspects.

We take the liberty of stressing this unity, because it has been presented as if Scheeben united two formally different basic principles with words only, as if the formula "the bridal motherhood of God" were really synonymous with "Mary, Mother of God and bridal helper of Christ." But, according to Scheeben's concept, this separation is impossible: Mary's motherhood is essentially bridal, and her state as bride essentially maternal, just as man is inseparably a being of body and soul, and Christ a unity of

God and man. Not the individual *formalitates*, "mother" and "bride," are considered by him as the principle of the Mariological systematization, but their formal unity in the one basic principle. For Scheeben this being inseparably bride and mother, as contrasted with the one divine Person of the Word Incarnate, forms the distinguishing mark belonging to the person proper of Mary (her personal character), in which all her other privileges take root—the human interpretation of the eternal, simple idea of God, which underlies her creation and predestination.

Now, how much truth is in this principle? Is it so unassailable that we can safely take it as basis of the entire Mariology? Let us first prevent a misunderstanding: the one and only basis of certainty of all truths about Mary is and remains the divine revelation, as authentically presented to us by the infallible teaching authority of the Church. But a logical, characteristic principle of a theological treatise does not need to be a revealed truth: the theoretical basic principle of the doctrine about the Trinity, as mentioned before, is only theologically certain. It is sufficient that such a principle proceeds from revelation through an irrefutable reasoning. Its real use as a basic principle must be judged from the fact of whether it permits or forbids the arrangement of all truths which materially form a certain treatise, into one intrinsically coherent whole. With regard to the data about Mary, it will no doubt appear to all those who spare no pains to work their way through his masterly treatise, that the fundamental principle of Scheeben's Mariology does this indeed.

Scheeben's Mariology is by no means easy reading; it is a book to be studied. Therefore a reader will not find in

it material ready to hand for sermons on Mary; many thoughts, and even the fundamental principle, will perhaps never be accessible to the mass of simple and uneducated faithful. But we venture to promise confidently that whoever tries to enter into Scheeben's train of thought will find in it, together with a deeper insight into Mary's sublime significance for salvation, an inexhaustible treasure of vital worth and a firm foundation on which to build up in self and in others a solid devotion to the Queen of Heaven.

To make the reader acquainted with Scheeben's Mariological synthesis, we have thought it better to lay before him the original thesis almost in its entirety. Only a very small number of texts, which certainly were out of date have been left out. On the other hand, we have added to the Mariology proper those parts of the Christology that appeared indispensable to the complete understanding of the specifically Mariological theses, and that Scheeben himself refers to in the introduction to this part of his *Dogmatic Theology*. These parts were inserted under the title, "Christological Foundations of the Mariology," after the chapter with the introductory considerations.

In the translation, the greatest possible fidelity to the original was adhered to. To make the reading easier, Scheeben's long sentences were almost everywhere divided into shorter ones; with the same end in view, many paragraphs also were divided.

The references to the Fathers of the Church or to theologians, that appear with Scheeben in the text itself, are placed as footnotes, often amplified or rectified without mention of this alteration. As to the patristic quotations, we refer to volume and column of the Greek or Latin Pa-

tology of Migne by the abbreviation *PG* or *PL* respectively. Father A. Seeldrayers, S.J., was very helpful in looking up references and translating them from German into Flemish; and sincere thanks are extended to him here. The patristic texts themselves were rendered as they appear in Migne; where Scheeben's quotations differ from it, this fact is mentioned in a note.

In the additional notes, the greatest possible brevity was used; of the newer works in general, those only were cited which best give the present status of the question, and the place where the reader can find the latest literature about the subject treated.

Scheeben's theological work concerning Mary was rendered into Flemish by a competent translator, the Reverend H. B. van Waes, S.J. It was provided with the necessary annotations by the Reverend E. Druwé, S.J., who also wrote the introduction. The present English version is a translation of the Flemish.

In 1935, on the occasion of the hundredth anniversary of Scheeben's birth, Pope Pius XI recommended the study of Scheeben's ascetical theology and the imitation of his priestly virtues.

May the labor of this great theologian be gratefully received. It is sincerely to be hoped that, by means of this version, the influence of his theological aspirations will produce more abundant fruit over a wider field.

T. L. M. J. Geukers

# Contents

	PAGE
TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE . . . . .	iii

## PART I

### THE CONCEPT AND SOURCES OF MARIOLOGY

INTRODUCTION . . . . .	3
CHAPTER	
I. MARY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT . . . . .	9
II. MARY IN THE OLD TESTAMENT . . . . .	17
III. MARY IN TRADITION . . . . .	42
IV. LITERATURE ABOUT MARY . . . . .	49

## PART II

### CHRISTOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF MARIOLOGY

V. THE VIRGINAL CONCEPTION . . . . .	61
VI. THE VIRGINAL MOTHERHOOD . . . . .	102
VII. MARY'S PERPETUAL VIRGINITY . . . . .	110
VIII. THE DIVINE MOTHERHOOD . . . . .	132
IX. THE BRIDAL MOTHERHOOD . . . . .	154

## PART III

### THE BASIC PRINCIPLE OF MARIOLOGY

X. THE DISTINGUISHING MARK OF MARY'S PERSON . . . . .	187
XI. THE SOURCE OF MARY'S DIGNITY . . . . .	219

## APPENDIXES

I. THE PROTEVANGELIUM . . . . .	241
II. THE HUMAN PROCREATION . . . . .	245
III. THE <i>Actio Unitiva</i> ASCRIBED TO THE HOLY GHOST . . . . .	247
IV. THE ANNUNCIATION BY THE ANGEL . . . . .	249



**PART I**  
**THE CONCEPT AND SOURCES OF**  
**MARIOLOGY**



## Introduction <sup>1</sup>

**I**N THE Dogmatic system of the Catholic Church the Mother of Christ appears next to Christ, the new Adam, not merely as the living earth, of which He is formed, but, as the protevangelium <sup>2</sup> has given us to understand, she comes also into the foreground as the new Eve, i.e., a person who is connected with Christ through the most intimate and living communication, and who, in and by Him, presides over the whole universe, as Eve with Adam presided over the earthly world. With Christ she forms the cornerstone, the root as well as the crown of the supernatural order, and through her activity she has an intimate share in His work of redemption.

On the other hand, the mother of the Redeemer is the first and most perfect fruit of the redemption, through the personal richness of her supernatural life and through her activity. With regard to her dignity, virtue, and activity, she prefigures the grace of redemption, to be distributed to all other redeemed persons. In other words: Mary, the spiritual mother of each individual redeemed soul and of the Church as a whole, is the model both of the divine filiation of grace of redeemed persons and of the heavenly motherhood of the Church.

<sup>1</sup> Scheeben refers to the following literature: Suarez, *De Incarnatione*, II, q. 27, disp. I in prooem.; Theoph. Raynaud, *Diptycha Mariana*, prooem.; Malou, *L'Immaculée Conception*, especially chaps. 8-9.

<sup>2</sup> Gen. 3:15.

For all these reasons Mary occupies a place, essential and exalted, in the divine plan of the world as in the dogma and life of the Church. Mariology forms an organic part of dogmatics and it is treated as such in St. Thomas.

Yet, from both these points of view, Mariology has acquired a special significance through the contention of early and modern Protestantism against the Catholic doctrine of grace and the Church, with which the dispute about Mary's privileges in question went hand in hand. That is why only recently heresy instinctively attacked the Immaculate Conception of Mary together with the infallibility of the supreme head of the Church. It is quite correct for a Protestant scholar to think that Catholics glorify and defend in Mary their mystical conception of the Church as the mother and mediatrix of grace.

About Mary's place in the divine plan of the world, we should note what St. Bernard says:

In a substantial manner Christ effected salvation in the center of the earth, namely, in the womb of the Virgin Mary who is called the Center of the Earth because of her extraordinary characteristics. For to her as to the center, as to the altar of God, as to the cause of things, and as to the economy of the ages do they look who are in heaven and those in hell, and those who have gone before us, and those who are now, and those who shall follow: those in heaven that they may be restored, those in hell that they may be freed; those who have gone before us that they may be found faithful, and those who follow that they may be glorified. Therefore all generations shall call her blessed, the Mother of God, the Mistress of the World, the Queen of Heaven . . . who has given life and glory to all generations. For in her the angels find joy, the just grace, and the sinners forgiveness. Deservedly the eyes of all creatures are turned toward her, because in her, by

her, and from her the benign hand of God re-created that which He had created.<sup>3</sup>

Mary's exalted position in the dogmatic theology of the Church in the face of all heresies, forms the main idea of the old adage: Thou alone hast destroyed all the heresies in the whole world, or, she alone has brought to dust every heretical depravity. This thought corresponds with the protevangelium; the heresies are regarded as the seed, or the head of the serpent. Such expressions are found in the Fathers of more ancient times: e.g., "scepter of right faith" in Cyril of Alexandria, in a discourse delivered at Ephesus.<sup>4</sup> This happened because of the fact that the old heresies attacked Christology and that through the well-established position of Mary the clearest light was shed on all the aspects of Christology.<sup>5</sup>

This not only applies to the more modern heresies, so far as, by denying the ancient doctrine of the godhead of Christ, they deny in general the supernatural order in Christianity, but also to the specific Protestant heresies about grace and the Church. So far as Protestantism still believes in the divinity of Christ, it regards Mary only as the earth from which the first Adam has been taken, and not as a person who has the closest, mutually spiritual relations with Christ. This fits in completely with the doctrine of the Reformation, according to which human nature in general is as a "lump of clay," which was not changed through grace to its very essence and which could not cooperate in the reception of grace. According

<sup>3</sup> Serm. 2 de Pentec., 4; *PL*, CLXXXIII, 327. In St. Bernard the sentence begins with *Tunc iam*.

<sup>4</sup> *PG*, LXXVII, 992.

<sup>5</sup> For the meaning of the proverb, see in detail St. Peter Canisius, *De Deipara Virgine*, Bk. V, chap. 9.

to the Catholic concept, however, Mary represents the living, passive and active susceptibility to the regenerating grace. The Fathers acknowledge the significance that Mariology gives the doctrine of the Church to the extent that they delight to picture the latter in the image taken from the former.

As for the name "Mary," there can be no doubt, according to the whole analogy of revelation, that it must possess, as much as the name of the Redeemer, a meaning by virtue of divine inspiration, which corresponds to the dignity and position of her who bears it. Especially as the Fathers also attach such meaning to the traditional names of Mary's parents: Joachim ("preparation of the Lord"), Anna ("grace"). Yet it is not settled what this meaning is according to the etymology of the word.

The ancients considered the Hebrew "Mirjam" as a compound of two words: *jam* ("more") and *mar* (from *marar*, "to drop, drops"; or *marah*, "to be bitter"). The meaning of both words inclines toward *mor* (a bitter, dripping resin). Hence this explanation was given: "amarum mare, myrrha maris, stilla maris"; but, as it was rightly felt that "stilla" here does not imply much, it was later changed into "stella maris." Philologically all these explanations are weak, and theologically can be utilized only with difficulty.

The etymologists agree that the name has only one root. If the root *marah* is the basis of it, its meaning becomes either "bitterness" or "fatness." According to the modern way of speaking, this does not give an elegant meaning, it is true, but in its Eastern meaning it would fit in splendidly as characteristic of her who, as the seat of the "Anointed" pre-eminently, represents the "fullness of

grace" in an eminent manner. Others have recourse to the root *rum* ("to be exalted"), and interpret from it, "the exalted one," the "mistress"; in this way they apply the explanation of the Syrian Fathers.

The best and richest explanation undoubtedly is the one that St. Jerome<sup>6</sup> gives, viz.: "enlightening" or "their enlightening," from *jarah* ("jacere, effundere guttas et radios," hence "irrigare, illuminare"). It characterizes Mary's own position and activity, that is, her divine motherhood. In virtue of this privilege, according to the expression of the Church, she reflects as a spotless mirror the eternal light of the world, which is first poured into herself and illuminates her; as mother of the spiritual and heavenly life she is the mediatrix of the light of grace to mankind.

In this way the meaning "stella maris" is also submerged in the name "Mary." However, the full significance of the name "Mary" is first reflected in the "aurora" of the Cantic of Canticles and in the "woman clothed with the sun" of the Apocalypse. Besides, the name is closely related and is analogous to the names of the Redeemer, "Jesus" and "Christ." On the other hand it characterizes strikingly the one who bears it, as the antithesis of Eve; it formally places the new Eve as mother of the heavenly and spiritual life of men in contrast with the first Eve as mother of a purely natural life, and also of sin. For that very reason it represents Mary at the same time as the prototype of redeemed mankind and of the Church.

The term "Mariology," conceived in this way, would,

<sup>6</sup> St. Jerome, *Liber Interpretationis Hebraicorum Nominum*, PL, XXIII, 789; but in sec. 842 he gives preference to *stilla maris sive amarum mare*. From *stilla* originated later *stella*.

like "Christology," indicate not only the material object, but also the formal one, i.e., the complete content of this part of theology.<sup>7</sup>

#### THE STARTING POINT OF MARIOLOGY

The dogmatic doctrine regarding the mother of the Redeemer, so far as it is expressed in the definitions of the Church, may be regarded as the explanation and development of the words of the Apostles' Creed (in the old Roman form): "Natus de Spiritu Sancto et Maria Virgine." For this proves that Mary, as true Mother of Christ, is truly Mother of God; and on the other hand that, not only in this motherhood itself but also for the sake of this motherhood, she is in general and simply a virgin espoused to the Holy Ghost, one who in every respect, in spirit and in body, in a narrower as well as a broader sense, has always remained spotless and inviolate. In this way the definition of the Immaculate Conception of Mary can be correctly regarded as the ultimate explanation of her absolute virginity.

<sup>7</sup> To this day no further meaning of Mary's name is found. It was a girl's name much in use at that time. Probably no particular meaning was attached to it any longer. In any case the parallel Mariology-Christology could not hold, because "Christ" was an official name (the Anointed, Messiah), added to his proper name "Jesus." In that case the parallel should at least be *Jesuology*.

## CHAPTER I

### Mary in the New Testament

**A** PART from the history of the infancy and boyhood of Christ, the New Testament does not often mention the Blessed Virgin. We find Christ Himself refraining, as do the apostles, from definitely pointing out her exalted and influential position. On the contrary, some of His utterances, superficially considered, seem even to obscure the exalted state of Mary.

The reasons for this comparative obscurity of Mary in the books of the New Testament lie elsewhere. It does not mean in the least that Christ and the apostles have not recognized Mary's exceptional dignity; the seemingly disparaging utterances have in view only this end, to preclude an all too human conception of her motherhood.

On the other hand the praises of Mary from the lips of the angel at the Annunciation and of Elizabeth at the first acknowledgment of Mary's divine motherhood, hold in embryo all that can be said to glorify her. The picture that St. John draws of her at the beginning of the second part of the Apocalypse, where he borrows from her the features for his vision of the Church, is so magnificent that human imagination has never found words to improve upon it.

In the historical narrative of the New Testament, Mary often comes to the foreground significantly in circumstances such that she could and must show her exalted

position. It was thus she appeared at the presentation of Jesus in the Temple, and on the occasion of His first miracle, which took place at her intercession; again, at Jesus' expiatory death and in the upper room at Jerusalem, where the disciples came to pray before and at the time of the descent of the Holy Ghost.<sup>1</sup>

That Christ and the apostles do not explicitly throw light upon and celebrate the glory of Mary, is abundantly explained by the fact that the complete attention of the faithful was at first directed to Christ Himself; or rather, that His glory and therefore His personal eminence above that of His mother had to be established first, before there could be any question of the glory of the mother, which from His glory alone overflows on her. At the same time it is obvious that during Mary's lifetime her humility was to be respected, shielded, and secured.

Some explain the apparently disparaging utterances of Christ in this way, that they must serve to safeguard Mary from the danger of pride in her greatness. This is not correct. Just as in the case of Christ's glory and eminence, so was it here only a matter of practicing the virtue of humility, which was the more fitting to Mary since Jesus also wished to practice it to the fullest extent. Christ intended to show quite definitely that He stood toward Mary not in the same relation as an ordinary man to his mother; and He wished this shown not for her sake but for the sake of mankind. By making His own divine dignity felt, He pointed at the same time to the true form and meaning of Mary's motherhood as a divine motherhood.

<sup>1</sup> About the comparative obscurity of Mary in the Gospels, Scheeben refers to St. Peter Canisius, *De Deip. Virg.*, Bk. IV, chap. 24. See J. Spencer Northcote, *Mary in the Gospels*, London, 1867.

It is absurd to find something derogatory or a denial of Mary's maternal dignity in the fact that the Savior addresses her as "woman" at various times—at Cana and from the Cross—particularly since Christ, when He addressed her in that very manner from the Cross, gave evidence of His filial love toward her. The address merely implies that Christ did not speak as a child, placed under Mary's maternal care and authority as at Nazareth, but in the exercise of His divine dignity and mission. The Hebrew expression (corresponding to "What is it to me and to thee, woman?"), intended not so much for Mary herself as for the bystanders, means simply that Christ, with regard to His mission, is withdrawn from the law of filial obedience: more correctly, that He will not comply with the request of Mary as Son of man, who depends on her, but as a more exalted son, the Son of God. For the words do not exclude the favorable response, but include it. This is proved by the issue of the request as well as by the hint given by Mary to the waiters.

When, during the exercise of His ministry, Jesus was sought by His relatives who wished to speak to Him, He said: "My mother and My brethern are they who hear the word of God and do it."<sup>2</sup> Again, when the woman from the crowd called the body and the breasts of His mother blessed,<sup>3</sup> He pointed out that all without exception are blessed, who hear the word of God and keep it. On both occasions nothing was farther from His intention than to slight His mother. He preferred to discourage an all too human and carnal idea of the relationship of His mother to Himself, for this idea was linked up with a defective

<sup>2</sup> Luke 8:21; cf. Matt. 12:49; Mark 3:34.

<sup>3</sup> Luke 11:27.

and an entirely false understanding of His higher, divine nature; and in referring to the true character of this relationship He offered at the same time a practical lesson for His listeners.

In the first case (Luke 8:19 ff.), Christ's higher character as Son of the heavenly Father was apparently acknowledged by those present. But from this character it followed inevitably that Mary could become Mother of Christ, not as other mothers through the will of a man,<sup>4</sup> but only through obedience to the heavenly Father; her whole maternal relationship to Christ bears the characteristic of perfect surrender to the Father.

In the second case (Luke 11:27), the divinity of Christ was indeed not excluded in the exaltation of Mary. Neither was there any particular stress laid upon the fact that her motherhood distinguished itself from any other natural motherhood through anything else than the fact that it had as its final term a man who performed miracles. Hence Christ gives us to understand that the loftiness of motherhood rests in Mary on this, that she did not receive and bear a mere human being but the real Word of God; that she not only received it in her body but also in her spirit and spiritual love, or, that she also took it into her body and fed it rather through her spirit and spiritual love.<sup>5</sup>

The observation is rightly made, even by Luther in his commentary of 1518 on the Magnificat, that the Gospels in reality exalt Mary enough, inasmuch as they call her by the name "Mother of Jesus" eight different times. When this fact is observed, the praises of the angel and of Elizabeth speak for themselves.

<sup>4</sup> John 1:13.

<sup>5</sup> For all these texts, see St. Peter Canisius, *op. cit.*, Bk. IV, chaps. 18-23; Northcote, *op. cit.*, chaps. 8-11.

