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090 - Protestants, Catholics, and Mary

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Father Marie-Joseph Nicolas, O.P., was born on July 31, 1906. He received his secondary education at Bayonne, France, and earned a license in law at the University of Bordeaux. In 1926, he entered the novitiate of the Dominicans at St. Maximin and pursued a course of studies leading to ordination to the holy priesthood in 1932. Three years later he earned his doctorate in theology. Most of his scholarly life has been spent at the Institut Catholique de Toulouse, France, where he was professor of Dogma from 1936 to 1943 and again from 1954 to the present time.

He has filled most important posts in his own order: Master of Novices from 1941 to 1946, Provincial from 1946 to 1954, Prior of the Convent of Toulouse from 1957 to 1958, Regent of Studies for the Dominicans in the Toulouse region from 1958 to the present.

Academic honors have also come his way: the special Dominican degree of Master in Theology in 1954 and membership in the Pontifical Roman Academy.

A list of his articles and books would be too extensive to print here in toto. We simply list some of the more important articles which have appeared in the Revue Thomiste during the past twenty-five years.

"La Vierge Reine," 1939.
"L’ame religieuse russe selon Dostoievski," 1946.
"La foi vive chez sainte Thérèse de Lisieux.”
"La doctrine christologique de saint Léon le Grand.”

His latest works include "Le théologien et l’histoire," Revue Thomiste, 1961 and "L’Eucharistie," in the collection Je Sais, Je Crois (chez Fayard).

The selection for the Marian Library Studies this month is a translation of an address given at the University of Fribourg two years ago during a Church Unity Week. Its strong ecumenical spirit makes it especially appropriate at this time. The author has graciously accorded his permission for the translation and publication of his address. We are grateful to the Marianist seminarians of Regina Mundi, Fribourg, Switzerland, for the translation.
Protestants, Catholics, and Mary

Father Marie-Joseph Nicolas, O.P.

Honorable Rector, Reverend Fathers, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Some days ago I was talking to a Protestant minister friend of mine about the future Council: “For it to open the way to unity,” he said, “the Catholic Church would have to reconsider its position on the Blessed Virgin and on Papal infallibility.” I sensed such a desire for unity in his words, and such a fear that it would not be possible, plus the possibility that the Council we are awaiting might not make the step any easier, that I became sad for a moment, as one always does in view of all that separates us Christians. I thought to myself that, in fact, he had put his finger on the two principal obstacles between Protestants and Catholics: the Church as mediator, and Mary, the Blessed Virgin Mary. Retreat? Reconsider? It is impossible. What is possible, however, is to deepen, to penetrate our hearts with these truths and then try to make them better understood. It seemed to me that in the atmosphere of this Church Unity Octave, it would be good, above all for us Catholics, and perhaps, too, for the Protestants who, I hope, are in the audience tonight, to examine the inter-relations between these two truths, Mary and the Church, and to show that they are, as the Catholic Church professes, teaches and exposes them, inseparable. They are two aspects of one and the same mystery. Since understanding is the first condition of any dialogue I would like, this evening, to attempt to shed a little more light on this particular point.

The Church

First, let us recall the difference between the Catholic and Protestant conceptions of the Church. Protestantism admits the Church community. It does not admit the mediation of the Church. It admits that the Church forms an assembly, even corporately, visibly manifest, though it insists above all on the spiritual community, the assembly of souls possessing the same faith and the same grace. For the Protestant the Church is the assembly of the faithful, that is, those who receive grace and truth from on high. For him, wherever several have the true faith, there is the Church. It is the true faith, that is, that faith which is in conformity with the Scriptures and which comes from above, from the Holy Spirit which constitutes the Church. For the Catholic, the Church is that institution through which the grace and truth of Jesus Christ come to us. An example from Father Congar will enable us to understand this difference more clearly. Let us imagine a lake – a symbol of truth and grace. For
the Catholic, this lake is fed by a spring. This spring and the canals which channel the water from the spring to the lake, are the sacraments, the hierarchy, all the external means used by the Church. For the Protestant, this lake is fed from on high by the rain, by waters from heaven. Of course, in actual fact, the comparison is imperfect. Protestants themselves admit that the Bible comes to us by a certain “tradition” which thus helps nourish souls in truth and life; and the Catholic, too, knows that faith and truth descend from heaven and often directly enter our souls. But, with the exception of these nuances, the comparison stands— an image, so to speak, of our relations with Christ: vertical, for the Protestant; and horizontal, for the Catholic. Of course, it is clear that if we are linked to Christ by tradition (horizontally) through the various generations, we are also linked to Him directly (vertically) since He is the principal and actual author of grace. In any case, the difference between the Catholic and Protestant concepts of the Church is certainly here: the Church, a mediator of salvation or the Church simply a witness of salvation. In one of his writings Karl Barth compares the Church to John the Baptist in the famous Grunewald tableau, who points out, but does not give, Christ.

What is the basis of the Protestant notion? Here, I am perhaps venturing out too far. But, naturally, we are all trying our best to understand as we all hope to be understood. I ask pardon in advance, then, if, coming from the outside, my interpretation is not entirely exact. It seems, however, that we can say that the basis of the Protestant notion of the Church rests in these words: God alone, Christ alone, grace alone. No intermediaries between Christ and myself, between God and myself. We cannot say, therefore, that the soul, believing in what Christ does for it, is truly transformed by that adherence. In any case, the soul does not feel it is capable of performing good works that would be meritorious, that would make it holy and just. It is never just except by what Christ did for it, according to the degree of its belief. Man does not cooperate in his own salvation; he simply believes that he is saved. We all know—without which there would not even be any hope of unity—that in Protestantism there is a profoundly religious and Christian ideal: glorify God. To Him alone be all power and glory. The creature is nothing and ought to remain nothing, laying claim to nothing for itself. Pushed to an extreme, as in Calvin’s Protestantism, and, it would seem, in certain of Karl Barth’s writings, this annihilation of what the creature is that God might be glorified, takes on a rather terrifying character, though it loses nothing of its grandeur.

What is the basis of the Catholic notion? For Catholicism, human nature was not entirely corrupted by original sin. Above all, it is really restored by grace. Grace, which comes to us, of course, only through Jesus Christ, transforms our being, restores the essentials of the first creation, and gives us even more, and consequently—take note of this,
for it is the core of this entire lecture — it is by grace that the creature shares in the Creator, participates in the Redeemer. He becomes capable of cooperating with God. St. Thomas, among all other Catholic theologians, places this idea at the center of his theological doctrine. According to him — and this holds for the natural order as well — there exist secondary causes. If creatures add to creation something real which comes from them and for which they are, when they are free, truly responsible, then it is for this very profound reason that God created, so that the creature resemble Him both in His being and in His action. St. Thomas gives this very general rule which he applies on different occasions. For example, he asks himself: How can one man act on another man? And Thomas answers: in two principal ways: first, because man gives man life. He is father of his son, and then, because he gives this son truth by teaching him. To the questions: why are men not made immediately by God? Why are they not taught immediately by Him? Why are they made and taught through the intermediary of other men? Thomas answers: man resembles God all the more if, like Him, he gives life and truth. It is for this reason, he says, in a too little known passage of the Supplement to the Summa Theologica, that there are priests — men charged with and capable of transmitting grace to other men. God wills to communicate, already in the natural order but above all in the supernatural order, the beauty, the joy and the glory of giving. I will read the text to you in a very imperfect translation because it is very difficult to translate St. Thomas' Latin well (as a matter of fact, it is even difficult to translate St. Thomas' thought!) “God produced His works with the purpose of imprinting His resemblance on them. That is why, desirous of being represented in His works, not only in what He is in Himself, but also in as much as He gives to others, He impregnated all things, as if by a natural law, whereby even those creatures most removed from Him would be brought to their perfection by intermediaries. And not willing that this beauty be missing from the supernatural order, God inserted the same law there also. That is why some are charged with giving grace to others by the sacraments, so that in this way they might be like God in cooperating with Him.” (Supplement to Summa Theologica, Q. 34, art. 1) There you have the basis of the Catholic concept of the Church: a lofty notion of the creature which in no way lessens his entire dependance on the Creator as presented by Protestantism. Far from it. The creature receives his being, his ability to act, his responsibility, all his qualities from Him.

The Church and Mary

Now what I would like to have you understand is that it is in virtue of this same notion of the creature and his role that the Church understands Mary. This profound idea applies to Mary, but in a unique,
privileged way. Certain Protestants have clearly seen that. One of them has said that Catholics are defending their notion of the Church in defending Mary. And Karl Barth, in a whimsical moment, said: "If I were Pope, the first thing I would do would be to define the Co-Redemption of the Blessed Virgin." What he meant to say was that Mary's association in the redemptive work was at one and the same time the application and justification of the principle which explains the Catholic Church itself, and the role it feels it plays in the work of salvation. It is true. In Mary's case, as in the case of the Church, the point is: humanity cooperates in its own redemption. However, Mary's role is absolutely unique as it takes place prior to the existence of the sacramental, hierarchic Church. The Incarnation took place in Mary. It is through the Church that the fruit of the Incarnation is dispensed throughout the world. If you permit, I shall dwell somewhat on this phrase because it will help us to understand the difference between the role of Mary and the role of the Church. In Mary, with her cooperation, the very Incarnation of God took place. Through the Church, this Incarnation, once accomplished, bears its fruits throughout the ages in all men. Mary is prior to the Church, but Mary and the Church both cooperate in the essentially divine work of the Incarnation of the Word. Mary was the human means used to realize the Incarnation.

When our Protestant brethren have difficulty understanding the role we give to Mary, let them try not to look at Marian devotion in this or that of its forms, in this or that affirmation, more or less certain, about the Blessed Virgin, in a particular form of Marian spirituality. Let them not consider either, a certain statue or a certain pilgrimage. Let them not consider even Lourdes or Fatima. Rather let them meditate on the scene of the Annunciation such as it is reported in the Gospel. The Word was made flesh with the cooperation of a woman. The Word became flesh by becoming the child of a woman, and Mary not only collaborated physically in the conception of the body that the Word would assume, but also morally, spiritually. The angel who announced the mystery to her, asked at the same time for her consent, and enlightened her. Only then did Mary respond, "Fiat mihi - be it done to me according to thy word." This is in the gospel. All that is said of the Blessed Virgin in the Catholic Church is essentially based on this: Mary was the human instrument, possessed of free will and intelligence, joyous and free, for the realization of the saving Incarnation of the Word. Certain Protestants (I believe Karl Barth himself is among them) are willing to see in Mary the model of the faith of the Church. If it is true that we are all saved by faith in Christ, this woman was the first to have faith in Him at the very moment of His coming. This means that the cooperation of Mary is not simply a particular but a typical case of the cooperation of each man in his own salvation. The faith of Mary did not save her alone. It saved the world, because by means of this faith, the
Word was made flesh and became man. "Blessed art thou who hast believed," Elizabeth said to her, "because those things shall be accomplished that were spoken to thee by the Lord." With Mary, the creature began to cooperate with the Creator in that work which is the work par excellence, the union of the human with the divine. The idea that Mary cooperated in the Redemption when Jesus died on the cross comes out of the first idea that she cooperated in the initial mystery from which all the others proceed. The Word became flesh to save all men, therefore each one of us, and to take to Himself, in becoming man, the destiny of each man and die on the cross for each one of us. Since Mary cooperated in the Incarnation, her cooperation will continue to the very end, we believe. This has not been as clearly defined as the rest. Nevertheless, how can we fail to see in the presence of Mary at the foot of the Cross, so solemnly affirmed by St. John the Evangelist, the continuation of the initial Fiat? As St. Bonaventure said, when Mary stood erect at the foot of the cross, it was the whole Church that stood there erect, and all that was living in the Church, for at that hour Mary alone had faith in Christ. This is the foundation of all that we say about the Blessed Virgin.

Thus, the law of cooperation of creatures in their salvation which explains the Christian concept of the Church, also explains to us the profound character of the role of Mary, and permit us, not to go beyond the words of the Gospel, but to understand them, to place them within the immense context of the Divine plan. All that God has done in the order of nature carries with it this intention of mediation, the association of creatures in His work. All that God has done in the order of salvation is marked with the same intention. All that God has done with Mary is the most complete, the most beautiful realization of this same intention. It is this which permits us to understand why Catholic theologians are examining more and more closely at this moment the idea which certain Protestants are beginning to find inviting, namely, that Mary is the figure of the Church.

In Mary is realized more perfectly and more personally all that which is realized in the other members of the Church and that which is realized in the sacramental and hierarchical Church, in the Church as mediator. Mary is already in Her own personal being what the Church will be. She is the type of the Church by Her faith and also by her role, which is that of giving Christ to others. By her faith she typifies each faithful soul. By her mediation she typifies the sacramental and hierarchical church. She is also a type of the Church by her immaculate holiness and her plenitude of grace. The Church is also holy, although her members themselves are sinners. "Holy and immaculate" St. Paul said. May our Protestant brethren understand that this holiness which they find so astonishing when we attribute it to the Blessed Virgin is in profound harmony with all the rest. If Mary is the type of the Church most personally, most perfectly, and most completely, if it is first of all in her in
whom is realized the mystery of the destiny of the Church, then the “immaculate holiness” which should be that of the Church, shines out first of all in her. Certainly, like the church, she rose from the world of sinners without being herself a sinner. The concept of a plenitude of grace in Mary is nothing else but the vision of a soul, which, because of its nearness to Christ, was filled, with a superior kind of perfection, with all the graces that will be given to others. Mary is the first, the closest. She cooperates not only in this or that application of salvation, but in salvation itself. She is at the origin of salvation: it began in her womb and in her heart. For this reason it is normal that the source of grace which would spread over the entire world should first of all fill her in whom it had its birth.

Yet, Mary is IN the Church. The way I have explained things to you, you could very well object: “But, then she is outside of the church. She is absolutely above it.” Certainly, if I compare her to the sacramental and hierarchical Church, she came before it. The hierarchical and sacramental Church began at Pentecost. It is very certain that Mary already existed before the hierarchical and sacramental Church, since her role is intimately involved with the accomplishment of the Incarnation and the Redemption. Let us take note of one thing, however. The sacramental and hierarchical Church is only the earthly form of the Church. Before there was a hierarchy, before there were sacraments, as long as Jesus was on earth before leaving it to act through His ministers and His sacraments, the Church already existed. The Church came into being as soon as humanity was united to the Incarnate Word. The Church is humanity inasmuch as it is the spouse of the Incarnate Word. The Church is humanity, bound to the God-made-man and receiving from Him grace and life.

When did the Church begin? In the womb of Mary, because at that moment God took from her His humanity uniting it to Himself by grace. It was in Her that the Church began. An author of the Middle Ages has written, “consummatio Synagogae, inchoatio Ecclesiae.” Mary is the culmination of Israel and the beginning of the Church. The Church begins in Mary. It is wonderful to think, in this perspective, that when she was at the foot of the Cross erect in her faith and consent, it was already the Church in her that was present at the redeeming sacrifice, that consented to it, that approved of it, that shared in it, that said “yes” to the act that was accomplished for it. Certainly, we must recognize — and here we have a thought that is very delicate and salutary — that after Pentecost Mary lost herself in the midst of the faithful. Mary had no hierarchical function, no sacramental power — she received the Eucharistic bread as did all the first Christians at the simple ceremony of the breaking of the bread which is the origin of the Mass. She received the Eucharist like all the others. She did not preach, she did not teach. She did not spread abroad in the world the Light that was, nevertheless,
hers in a very special manner. Among the faithful she was silent; she listened. She was the example of those who act in the Church by pure charity and prayer. She was in the Church as one of the faithful. Yet, the Christ she received, the Word to which she listened, was He to whom she had given birth.

A sacrament presupposes the reality. A sacrament presupposes a living Christ, an historic Christ, a Christ born from the womb of Mary. Yes, she remained alone among all the others, the one who gave Christ to the world, the one who played her role in the birth of the sacramental and hierarchical Church by consenting to the redeeming sacrifice before any sacrament and before any hierarchy. Moreover, we should not be surprised if the Church in her living tradition perceived with certitude that Mary preceded the rest of the Church by her Assumption, by her presence in heaven with the glorious Christ. Even there, Mary is the type of the Church. She is anterior to the Church, but in her has begun what will happen to all of us. The mystery of the Assumption of Mary is the mystery of the assumption of the creature in which we will all participate. Our Protestant brethren know very well, as we do ourselves, that this assumption awaits all of us alike. We believe that we will rise from the dead to join Christ where He is. We think that she who has preceded the Church by her faith, she who preceded the Church in union with Christ, she who was there with Christ for the birth of the sacramental and hierarchical Church, preceded it also in its eternal destiny.

I hope, Ladies and Gentlemen, that you have formulated an objection, one which I have kept unanswered until now, because the answer will enlighten us regarding something that is essential. For, after all, you may say to me: “Certainly, God used a creature for the salvation of the world, but that creature was the humanity of Christ.” Most assuredly, there is a mediation between the divinity and everyone of us; the mediation, though, is that of Christ. Why should we add others to it who only cloud the picture and seem to render it useless? Is not the very principle we have enunciated, namely, that God associates creatures with Himself, sufficiently brought into play by the Incarnation itself, by the flesh God has assumed and made His instrument for giving grace and truth to men?

“Unus mediator Dei et hominum, homo Jesus Christus.” (I Tim. 2:5) “There is one mediator between God and men, the man Jesus Christ.” St. Paul has said this. Catholic theology repeats it today too. St. Thomas has an article based on this expression of St. Paul, and it is entitled: “Whether it is proper to Christ to be the mediator between God and man?” (III, Q. 26, art. 1) Is He not the only mediator? Yes, St. Thomas answers, but he adds: this does not prevent others from being called mediators in a secondary sense, inasmuch as they cooperate in the union of God and man in a manner that is dispositive and dependent upon Christ. Whether it be question of Mary, whether it be question of the Church in its sacraments, in its powers or in its preaching, it can only
be question of a mediation which is subordinate to that of Christ. We can find God only in Christ. The Church leads to Christ. Mary leads to Christ. And what Mary and the Church can do to lead us to Christ is itself either a simple disposition which prepares us — as when a priest preaches the word which disposes our soul by means of grace — or it is as simple instrument. The humanity of Christ is the true source of grace.

Whether there is question of Mary or of the Church, I repeat, there is only a secondary mediation. The mediator par excellence is Jesus Christ. We can say that Christ is mediator and redeemer. Of Mary as of the Church, we can only say that they are co-mediators, co-redeemers, because Mary and the Church cooperate in the redemptive mediation. As St. Thomas again says, “Christ alone is the perfective mediator.” He it is who really unites men with God. All the others only concur in this; Mary, however, in an unprecedented way, since the disposition she contributed to the salvation of men was a preparation of her whole being for the Incarnation. In her was realized humanity’s supreme preparedness so that God might come, be made flesh, and save.

But it is God who comes, God who is made flesh, God who saves. It is not Mary. She effaces herself before Him, as does the Church, the priest, and all created things, everything which is not Jesus Christ Himself.

We are about to put our finger on the key reason why the humanity of Jesus uses other intermediaries. I believe we ought to quote again at this point a most enlightening statement of St. Thomas. He asks himself why God had to become incarnate to save man. And he answers: God wishes that man be saved by man. But man could not save man, so God became man to make this possible. Now you understand that if it is true that God became man to enable man to save man, He is not going to dispense us from helping Him. On the contrary, Christ is going to multiply, if I may say so, the human instruments which will be united to Him; so that it may be more completely true that man saves himself but by the strength, by the power, by the grace which God has given him. It is for this reason that taking a woman as mother, uniting to Himself a woman, as an “adjutorium simile sibi,” He makes use of her maternity as much as possible in order that He be not alone in His work, that she save man with Him.

It is for this reason that He chose the apostles, that there are priests. It is for this reason that St. Paul could dare say, “I fill up in my flesh what is lacking to the sufferings of Christ for His body which is the Church.” (Col. 1:24) What can be lacking in the Passion of Christ? Indeed, nothing. It is supremely perfect. But what was lacking to it nevertheless, St. Thomas adds, was that it be suffered also by Paul. Paul had to participate. Christ could not be alone. Not only was Christ needed but so were Peter and Paul, you and I, who also participate, who suffer
and who offer it, aided and supported by the only one who can do so perfectly, Jesus Christ.

I have tried to show you the basis of both the ecclesiological and Marian doctrine of the Catholic Church, an association not only of the creature in general with the work of the creator, but of man with the work of salvation. Do we then have in the participation of the creature with God, a metaphysical principle at the basis of our comprehension of the Church and of the Blessed Virgin? In one sense, yes. This Catholic doctrine cannot be really well understood unless we understand that of participation. We must understand that the creature can resemble the creator and receive from Him the ability and power to act without becoming His rival. We must understand that we remain very dependent on Him whom we resemble, and that what we do, He first does in us. This doctrine leads us to a full realization of what it means to depend on God in all that we are and all that we do.

But we must also point out that it was to explain the Scriptures that the doctrine of participation, which is of itself metaphysical, was studied and meditated upon by the doctors of the Church. It is in the Scriptures that we see God making use of men. For example, it is said, "He who hears you, hears me," and "as My Father sent me, so also do I send you." In Scripture it is related that the angel was sent to this woman to announce to her that she would be the mother of the Savior and to ask her for an answer. And it is because we see God both in His work of nature and in Scripture always using human auxiliaries, and making His work depend so much on men — it is because of this that we stop and think.

Must we not, moreover, consider that the view (of which I have given a résumé) which Protestant theology has of the creature is itself somewhat metaphysical? This great separation between the created and the uncreated, this impossibility of transformation of the created by the uncreated and of communication between them — is not that also a metaphysical view of transcendence?

The human mind cannot avoid considering what God tells it either through His works or in the Scriptures. But above all, let us not think that our human intelligence can function in this matter unaided. Does not our whole doctrine on the Church and Mary come from this marriage — if I dare call it that — this union between the simple and personal reading of Scripture and the reflections of reason, docile to the Holy Spirit in the Church? Except for the influence of a common and living tradition guided by the magisterium, the true Marian and ecclesiological doctrine would never have developed.

It is here that we stand separated from our Protestant brethren. I can understand the Protestant fear of too much reasoning over Scripture, since they do it unaided. The development of this doctrine on the Church and Mary supposes that we attribute to the Church this power of guiding
us to the truth. This power is a part of its mediatory power such as we have just explained it.

What we also read in Scripture, and for which I give thanks and for which we should give thanks to our Protestant brethren for helping us to see there is this: to God alone be all power and glory. If it is true that God makes use of creatures, it is also true, I repeat, that the power and the glory are His alone. "What have you that you have not received?" St. Paul asks. Whether it has to do with Mary or with the sacraments, with priests, the Pope, tradition, with all that comes from the Church—all come to us through Christ, from God, Who is the source and origin of all. It is He who works in us both to will and to accomplish. All that creatures are and do comes from Him so that they are a further reason for giving Him praise and thanks and glory. In praising a creature, we are praising God. As the Blessed Virgin says in Her Magnificat, "He has regarded the lowliness of His handmaid and has done great things in me." Fecit—they are great things, indeed, but it is HE who has done them.

In conclusion, is what I have told you this evening encouraging or not from the point of view of ecumenism? I began with personal recollections. Some of you would have similar ones. "If the Catholic Church could only retreat a little on the question of the Blessed Virgin or on that of the Pope!" She cannot. In showing you the source of the divergence on these two points, Mary and the Church, I am aware of the fact that I have put in relief how greatly we are separated. There is no question of merely accidental differences which might never have existed. This is at the root of the original intuitions of Catholicism and of Protestantism.

However, it seems to me that in trying to show you exactly how the mystery of Mary and the mystery of the Church are bound together, how they form but two aspects of the same mystery, that I have shown you that we harm neither God nor Christ. We believe in the mediation of Mary, in the mediation of the Church. It seems to me that what we believe is for the glory of God. I believe it is already a great accomplishment in a dialogue when we make ourselves better understood, when we can hope that, after all, we will not be accused of adoring a creature or of slighting the grandeur of God. And perhaps also for us Catholics this deepening can lead us to new, less superficial, less sentimental, less material considerations on Mary and the Church.

I have told you that we cannot retreat. The Catholic Church never retreats—it advances. We cannot retreat, but we can be brought together. In attaching ourselves to what is more evangelical, more essential, by that very fact, we are brought a little closer together.

And if we cannot retreat, in a certain way, neither can the Protestants. But they also can advance, and they do advance somewhat, for, certain
of them, remember, are on their way to a rediscovery of Mary in Christianity.

In showing you that Mary is the highest realization of the Church, that thus she is on a level with the creature and with man, that such is her deepest meaning, in showing you that she was the first to go to Christ, the first to receive Him, I have perhaps thereby reunited one aspect of the Marian idea which is not repugnant to Protestants. Mary, as I said, is a figure of the Church. Of course, since they do not believe that the Church cooperates, they cannot believe that Mary does. But they can believe — they often do believe that Mary is an image, a model by her faith. Then, why not also in her purity, in her sanctity, in her preparation for the act of faith; since all these virtues are due to the special regard of God on her behalf and since no faith can live in us if not given by God?

Who knows? For the rest, let us wait for the Holy Spirit to make us understand, since He alone can, that the beings who are the most united to Christ, who are closest to Him, as Mary is, are likewise those who work most with Him.