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## Mariological Principles: Their Nature, Derivation, and Function

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## THE NATURE, DERIVATION AND FUNCTIONS OF MARIOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES

Mariology must be something of an enigma to our pragmatic age. To an age that has abandoned divine faith the study of one whose importance is known only through revelation is meaningless, and to a world so much concerned about the doing and making of things, a world that has no taste for the joy of simply knowing, Mariology must be an oddity out of the medieval past. For Mariology is almost totally speculative. With the exception of the section on Marian devotion there is very little we can do about Mariology except know it. It has no purpose outside the realms of cognition save internal devotion.

Yet to say that theology, of which Mariology is a part, is purposeless would be a grave error. Theology does answer a very fundamental human craving, namely, the human desire to know the Truth which exists in the divine mind. Theology which employs many words, makes many judgments, seeks out new truths from the ones already known, has but one single purpose: it seeks to express one truth: *I am Who am*.<sup>1</sup>

To achieve this purpose the theologian must ponder the Scriptures, investigate Tradition, follow the guidance of the magisterium of the Church and with accuracy of language state revealed truth. But this is not enough. The theologian, realizing the absolute simplicity of truth as it is in the divine mind, attempts to impose an organic unity among these many revealed truths, which unity is nothing other than an imitation of the simplicity of the divine thought. Indeed, one of the great contributions of Saint Thomas to the development of theology is this logical ordering of revealed truth.

The theologian brings about this divine-like unity in his

<sup>1</sup> Ex. 3:14.

discipline by seeking "some understanding of the mysteries . . . from the connection of the mysteries among themselves and with the last end of man."<sup>2</sup> The discovery of these connections of the mysteries consists in the finding of principle-conclusion relations among the mysteries of faith. When the theologian perfects his mind in this way, then he has something of the intuitive sweep of the divine vision.

The theological tract *De Maria* must have this same theological unity. Thus a full understanding of the part played by the principles of Mariology is necessary for its perfection. In this paper we hope to contribute to such an understanding.

To accomplish this we must seek to answer three questions: (1) what are the essential characteristics of principles used in Mariology?; (2) whence does the theologian derive these Mariological principles?; (3) what are the functions of these principles?

## I

### THE NATURE OF MARIOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES

In answer to our first question it is obvious that a Mariological truth that is to be dignified with the title "principle" must fit the classic definition of principle contained in the first chapter of the 5th book of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. In the 5th book Aristotle defines most of the important terms used in the science, such as, "principle," "cause," "substance," "accident" and so on. After investigating the use of the word "principle" (in Greek *Arche*, which can be rendered in English as either "principle" or "beginning"), as it signifies the beginning of local motion, the advantageous starting point of any process, the intrinsic and extrinsic beginnings of generation, and finally "that from which a thing is first known," he concludes that one common denominator is to be found in all

<sup>2</sup> Council of the Vatican, Sess. 3, chap. 4, *DB* 1796.

these various modes of signification, namely, "the first point from which a thing either is or comes to be or is known." Saint Thomas expresses the same idea with the axiom: "a principle is that from which another proceeds in any way."<sup>3</sup>

Both Aristotle and Saint Thomas are very careful to exclude from this definition the idea of causality. While it is true that every cause is a principle, the converse of the statement is false, for that which comes from a principle does not necessarily depend for its existence upon the principle. This is evident in the cognitive order. The premises in a dialectical syllogism do not cause the assent of the mind to the conclusion; while in a demonstrative syllogism they do.<sup>4</sup> Yet there exists a real mental discourse in dialectics, and principles in such syllogisms do lend intelligibility to the conclusion. We will apply this observation to Mariology when dealing with functions of Mariological principles; here we merely wish to point out that such discourse is a valid tool of theology, indeed it is used in many of the sciences.<sup>5</sup> In many theological tracts, for example Mariology, the theologian must resort to dialectics, if he is to achieve the organic unity that is the perfection of theology. It may be objected that a dialectical syllogism produces only probability and therefore the conclusions of Mariology would only be probable. However, a close examination of theological tracts, such as Christology and Mariology, shows that this is not the case. Although the syllogisms employed at times are productive of probability only, the conclusions of some of them are certain from another source, namely, revelation. Mariology, then, contains many truths that are certain because they are revealed and it

<sup>3</sup> Saint Thomas, *Summa theologiae*, 1a, 33, 1.

<sup>4</sup> F. X. Maquart, *Elementa philosophica; Logica* 1 (Paris, 1937) 174-175.

<sup>5</sup> B. Ashley, O.P., *The Role of the Philosophy of Nature in Catholic Liberal Education*, reprint from the *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophy Association* (Washington, D. C., 1956) 5-8.

achieves an organic unity through both dialectical and demonstrative discourse from principles.

These principles are reducible to two classes: proper and common. Like all sciences, Mariology uses truths which are proper to some other science (and being merely an integral part of theology, Mariology uses principles proper to other theological tracts) in order to develop the revealed truths about Mary. Common principles, of themselves, say nothing about Mary, and yet they are the instruments used by the theologian to expand what is either implicitly or virtually contained in the proper principles.

Principles from Metaphysics are frequently used by the Mariologist. It is obvious that the so-called Mariological axioms are simply the application of certain metaphysical principles to the divine maternity and Mary's association in the redemption. Does not the principle of Mary's eminence and her superiority to other saints flow from the metaphysical truth that the more proximate a thing is to its cause the more it participates in the cause? Is not the principle of convenience simply the application to Mariology of the doctrine on final causality? Would not the principle of Mary's analogy with Christ be unintelligible without the metaphysical doctrine of exemplary causality and the doctrine of analogy?

Natural philosophy also makes its contribution. The physical aspects of motherhood and virginity are obviously applicable. The psychological data on the human act certainly gives meaning to Mary's "fiat" and without knowledge of justice and the conditions of co-operation in a moral act, taken from Ethics, we would not be able to gain any scientific understanding of the doctrine of Mary's part in the redemption.

Mariology borrows, too, from other theological tracts. Notice the necessity of a knowledge of the Trinity in order to appreciate the full meaning of the divine maternity. The development of the doctrine of Mary's fullness of grace needs

the information offered in the tract *de gratia* and *de virtutibus*. Admitting the validity of the principle of Mary's analogy with Christ, then the principles involved in the tract *de Christo Salvatore* are necessary to Mariology.

These few examples clarify what we mean by the common principles of Mariology, but what is meant by its proper principles? "Proper," in the Thomistic sense, has been defined in its primary meaning as "not common with others, one's own, special, particular. . . ." <sup>6</sup> The proper principles of a science must be unique to the discipline in question; that is, they must say something about the formal object of the science, expressing either its essence or one of its properties. Furthermore, among such principles there exists an order of dignity. Thus in a science there is a prime proper principle, which is the definition of the object of the science,<sup>7</sup> and other principles which express the properties of the formal object more or less proximate to the essence. So in Mariology we should find propositions which are judgments about Mary, and among these there is one that is prime since it defines her in the supernatural order and to this we link all her other privileges and graces as properties are ordered to their essence.

This prime principle will have the characteristics of that which the philosophers call the "metaphysical constitutive" of a thing, namely, that by which the thing is first constituted and is distinguished from all other realities and which is the root from which all other properties flow.<sup>8</sup> Care is necessary here, for the theologian cannot demand that this prime principle fulfill these conditions as they are fulfilled in some other science; rather they will be fulfilled according to theology's own unique method. Therefore, the Mariologist cannot expect

<sup>6</sup> *A Lexicon of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, edited by Deferrari, Barry, McGuinness (Washington, D. C., 1948) 906-907.

<sup>7</sup> Saint Thomas, *Contra gentiles*, b. 3, c. 97.

<sup>8</sup> J. Gredt, O.S.B., *Elementa Philosophiae*, 2 (Fribourg, 1937) 212.

that all Marian privileges be deducible by strict demonstration, as all the divine attributes are deduced from the identification of God's essence with His existence in natural theology.<sup>9</sup> Rather, the logical order will involve all the methods employed by that which is uniquely wisdom.

What we have described so far is the characteristics of principles as they are found in any science. Are there some unique characteristics of principles in the theological science? In all other sciences the proper principles are within the reach of the human mind's power of understanding, but in theology the proper principles are beyond our powers of full comprehension, for they are the mysteries of faith.<sup>10</sup> To God and the blessed in heaven these principles are evident; but our theology in this life is subordinated to their theology, so that we hold these principles as true not because we see them but rather because of the assent of divine faith. Thus theology, in all its parts, is absolutely unique, for unlike any other science its proper principles are mysterious and inevident.

Perhaps some could be misled by reason of this fact into asserting that theology in all its parts is not really a science at all, but only a quasi mental discipline. For, they would argue, if the proper principles are completely beyond understanding, we can say absolutely nothing about them. But this is not true. The human mind in this life is not completely helpless in this matter. For the Vatican Council assures us that when the "mind enlightened by faith zealously, piously, and soberly probes [the mysteries], it does come to some understanding of these mysteries and that a most profitable one. . . ." <sup>11</sup> We can have sufficient understanding of the mysteries so as to discourse about them and from them; thus

<sup>9</sup> C. Vollert, S.J., *The Fundamental Principle of Mariology*, in *Mariology*, ed. J. B. Carol, O.F.M., 2 (Milwaukee, 1957) 35.

<sup>10</sup> *Summa theologiae*, 2a 2ae, 1, 7.

<sup>11</sup> Council of the Vatican, Sess. 3, chap. 4, *DB* 1796.

theology is truly a science but one whose principles are reducible to a higher science, namely to the vision of God and the saints.

What are the truths that God and the saints see and which we believe? Saint Thomas asserts that they are all reducible to two truths: "God's existence and His providence over the salvation of man, according to Hebrews xi: *He that cometh to God, must believe that He is, and is a rewarder to them that seek Him.*"<sup>12</sup> Saint Thomas further expounds this by saying that all the mysteries dealing with things that exist in God's eternity are reducible to the former; while those mysteries that happen in time are reducible to God's providence. Obviously, the mysteries about which Mariology treats are dispensations of God's providence and if they are to be properly understood in Mariology, then we can never remove them from their providential context. Thus Mariologists who limit their consideration to the internal elements of a Marian reality are at fault, for they are taking the mysteries of Mary out of the providential order. This same mistake can, of course, be made in the theology of Christ, for it is not sufficient to say only that the "Word became flesh," but we must also consider the divine decree that brought this about (the efficient cause) and the purpose of the Incarnation, namely, our redemption (its final cause). This certainly is why Saint Thomas introduces the question of purpose in the very first question of the *Tertia pars*. Therefore, the prime proper principle of Christology is the redemptive Incarnation, or if you will, the Incarnation as it exists in the concrete order of divine providence.

So, too, the proper principles of Mariology are to be considered not merely in an abstract fashion but in the concrete order of providence, as the renowned Jesuit Mariologist,

<sup>12</sup> *Summa theologiae*, 2a 2ae, 1, 7.



Father Joseph Bover, pointed out years ago.<sup>13</sup> The full meaning of the principle involves not only its internal elements but also the external: final and efficient causes. Viewed from this vantage point we can make several observations about all Mariological principles.

First of all, they are contingent since they are caused by the decrees of God's free will. Mary and her privileges are contingent in the sense that they are creaturely; their essence and existence are distinct. Further, the realities expressed by the proper principles of Mariology are contingent since they are supernatural, and the supernatural order is God's gratuitous gift to man. Even admitting the existence of the supernatural order, the redemptive order of which Mary is a part is not necessary to the supernatural, for if Saint Thomas is right, without Adam's sin there would have been no Incarnation. Strictly speaking, there could have been an Incarnation of the Son without Mary, for God could have created the body of the human nature of Christ without the instrumentality of a mother. The necessity of Mary is of the hypothetical kind resulting from that "one and the same decree" by which God willed the redemptive Incarnation. Such decrees can be known only from the sources of revelation and consequently we can see the importance of viewing the proper principles of Mariology in their scriptural and traditional context. Of this we will have more to say when dealing with the origin of Mariological principles.

Our principles must be seen also from the point of view of their final cause. God's will is not caused; its sole explanation is His own goodness. Yet His Will did effect a purposive order among creatures. The over-all purpose of creation is the external glory of God to which is ordained in its turn the redemption of mankind through the Incarnation of the Word.

<sup>13</sup> J. M. Bover, S.J., *Síntesis orgánica de la Mariología en función de la asociación de María a la obra redentora de Jesucristo*, in *EE* 12 (1929) 11-12.

To this the divine maternity is ordered, and all the other Marian privileges in their turn are ordered to Mary's motherhood. Quite obviously, we would have very poor theological principles unless we realized this purposeness to be found among them. We must be very careful in this matter, however; we must be very sure of the principle by which we discover such finality. The principle is simple; it is found in the *Summa* where Thomas deals with the "why" of the Incarnation. "Those things which come only from the divine will and which are above what is due to creatures cannot be known by us except they be found in the Sacred Scriptures, by which the divine will is known."<sup>14</sup> The principle is simple and yet its application involves all the techniques used in positive theology; for if we are to discover the divinely ordained purposes of Mariological principles, recourse is necessary to the study of Scripture, Tradition and the Magisterium. Once again we can see the importance of seeing Mariological principles in scriptural and traditional origins.

Mariological principles seen in this light of the concrete context of the providential order become the starting points for discourse. The full development of Mariology would never come about, unless its principles are so considered.

In answer to the question: "what are the characteristics of Mariological principles?" we may briefly summarize with the following conclusions.

1. A Mariological principle must be a proposition that is the starting of discourse, be that discourse dialectical or demonstrative.

2. Mariology uses principles in common with other sciences and theological tracts, and these are the instrumental causes of the development of the discipline.

3. The proper principles of Mariology are propositions of which Mary is the subject, asserting either the definition or

<sup>14</sup> *Summa theologiae*, 3a, 1, 3.

properties of Mary. Among these there is an inter-relation which is evolved through theological methods.

4. These proper principles are the mysteries of faith about Mary. Though mysterious, our minds can to some degree come to grips with them; thus we can discourse about them and from them. Further, they must be seen in the full context of the providential order which is discoverable in the founts of revelation.

## II.

### THE DERIVATION OF MARIOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES

In the Middle Ages, beginning with Saint Anselm and Saint Bernard, speculation about Mary began to assume the characteristics of an organized theological tract. This growth in Mariology has continued to evolve till our own age, when after the definition of the Immaculate Conception by Pius IX there appeared the phenomenon of Mariological texts, distinct from the rest of theology. Historically, we may ask where the theologians, who are responsible for this growth, derived their principles. As for the common principles, which are extrinsic to theology itself, these were borrowed mainly from the philosophy of Aristotle, and the other common principles came from other theological tracts, particularly *De Christo Salvatore*. The proper principles, on the other hand, were derived from the founts or sources of revelation.

Our main concern in this paper is the origin of proper principles. Further, we are not so much concerned with the history of search of early Mariologists for these principles; rather our concern is with why and how present-day Mariologists must seek out the origins of these proper principles.

Speculative theologians at times wonder why the proper principles of theology must be traced back to their origins.

Why would it not be enough merely to accept the classic statements of these principles as they are presented in scholastic theology? Certainly these scholastic statements are accurate enough in language to enable the theologian to discourse about them. Even though some speculative theologians have not only wondered about this but have even acted as if it were true we can never admit that such an attitude is correct.

The late Holy Father, Pius XII, certainly rejected the attitude in the encyclical *Humani generis*. He calls theology based on this attitude "sterile" and asserts, "the theologians must always have recourse to the sources of divine revelation . . ." and this for two reasons.<sup>15</sup> The first is based upon the theologian's duty to defend the Magisterium of the Church; "it is their duty to indicate how what is taught by the living Magisterium is found, either implicitly or explicitly, in Sacred Scripture and in Divine Tradition."<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, the theologian must contribute to progress in the science of theology; "both sources of doctrine divinely revealed, contain so many and such great treasures of truth that they are in fact never exhausted."<sup>17</sup> The Mariologist's search of the sources of revelation therefore, has a twofold purpose: the defense of the fact that his proper principles are truly revealed; and a deeper understanding of these principles by seeing them in their origins.

This papal statement just quoted implies that among the three sources of revelation a primacy is enjoyed by the Magisterium. He calls the Magisterium "living," which adjective he does not apply to Scripture and Tradition. He develops the idea of its primacy by showing that the Scriptures and Tradition are to be interpreted in the light of the Magisterium, the reverse of which he describes as a "method whereby clear

<sup>15</sup> Pius XII, Encyclical letter, *Humani generis*, DB 2314.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

things are explained from the obscure," which method is "wholly false."<sup>18</sup>

Applying this to Mariology we can say that the validity of its proper principles does not depend upon a historical research into the sources of Scripture and Tradition but rather upon the living Magisterium of the Church. These are truths of faith and our assent to them is caused by the authority of God revealing, and the *conditio sine qua non* by which we see the connection between them and that divine authority is the teaching Church. Thus the search that is the task of positive theology is not a procedure similar to that of history where one starts with an unproven hypothesis and through research into sources proves it.<sup>19</sup>

One may object that if the proper principles of Mariology are only those truths taught by the Church, then only a few would deserve the title of principle. For they could argue that only the Divine Maternity the Perpetual Virginity, the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption have been defined. This, however, is not so, for the Pope carefully points out that the Church's teaching function is exercised both extraordinarily (as in solemn papal definitions and decrees of General Councils) and ordinarily, and that this ordinary exercise does demand our assent.<sup>20</sup> He also insists that statements contained in papal encyclicals are of the ordinary Magisterium.

This, of course, is of tremendous importance to Mariology. Of all the many papal documents dealing with Mary since the reign of Pius IX only two contain solemn definitions, while the rest are statements of the ordinary Magisterium. Therefore, the many Rosary encyclicals of Leo XIII, and St. Pius X's *Ad diem illum laetissimum* which are of such value in

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.* and DB 2313.

establishing the principles of Mary's mediatory function, are legitimate sources of Mariological principles.

The positive theology of Mary must begin with a search of the Magisterium from which it establishes the certitude of its proper principles, yet it must not stop there, but go on to defend these principles and to further the understanding of them through the investigation of Scripture and Tradition.

When the Mariologist ponders the few scriptural texts that mention Mary and the various sources of tradition that teach about her, he must be very careful to adhere religiously to the proper methods of positive theology. There is always danger that he will let his heart run away with his head and, due to an imprudent devotion to Mary, try to make the Scriptures and Tradition assert what is not really contained in the text. His criterion should never be solely the beauty of the doctrine, or whether such and such doctrine contributes to Marian devotion. His method should be that of the positive theologian who calmly applies the rules of scholarship to the text of Scripture and the documents of Tradition.

In regard to the method of interpreting the Scriptures several points need to be stressed. The primacy of the literal sense must always be respected, which respect is manifested by a fidelity to the rules of hermeneutics. Many Scripture scholars, we believe, have suffered unfair criticism often at the hands of Mariologists because of this fidelity. In all honesty they have been unable to say that certain scriptural texts refer to Mary, and because of this they have been accused of lacking respect for the Mother of God. Further, the Mariologist must be careful not to employ too freely the typical sense. This sense certainly has value in theology and thus it is "the duty of the exegete to discover and expound not only the proper and 'literal' meaning of the words which the sacred writer intended and expressed, but also their spiritual significance, on condition of its being established that such

meaning has been given to them by God. For God alone was able to know this spiritual significance, and He alone could reveal it to us.”<sup>21</sup> The establishment of the fact that God has given a certain passage a spiritual sense must be based on the solid grounds of Scripture or Tradition.<sup>22</sup> Also, in dealing with the spiritual sense the Mariologist must carefully distinguish it from the accommodation of Scripture, even when one of the Fathers of the Church is the one who made the accommodation.

The Mariologist who strictly follows the rules of scholarship can contribute much to the tract, for of all portions of Mariology perhaps none shows greater promise of future development than scriptural Mariology. Modern Catholic exegesis is still in the process of growth with many problems seeking solution. For instance, the full import of the plenary literal sense is not yet known. We do know that the classic example of this sense is the application to Mary of the “woman” in Genesis 3:15. Many modern Scripture scholars found this as the only way to explain this passage in the light of a papal pronouncement which asserted that the “woman” is Mary. As development takes place in the understanding of this sense of Scripture perhaps many scholars who find difficulty in seeing Mary in the literal sense of certain disputed passages will agree that these passages are applicable to Mary. Perhaps, too, many of the interpretations of the Fathers, which seemed to be mere accommodations, will be understood as literal interpretations.

The possibility of further progress is also found in the treatment of Marian doctrines as found in Tradition. Several questions, such as the relationship between Tradition and Scripture and the evolution of dogma, are not yet fully understood. Therefore, as theologians increase their knowledge of

<sup>21</sup> Pius XII, Encyclical letter, *Divino afflante Spiritu*, DB 2293.

<sup>22</sup> J. Prado, *Propaedeutica Biblica* (Turin, 1949) 249.

these matters, undoubtedly greater insight into Mary in Tradition will result. Once again, as in Scriptural Mariology, this development will come by a strict adherence to the method of positive theology. Mariology dealing with Tradition offers many more difficulties than does Scriptural Mariology, for unlike Scripture, which can be the object of our direct scrutiny, oral tradition can be seen only indirectly as it was reflected in the early Christian art, in the liturgy, and in the writings of the Fathers. Yet, if Mariology is to progress and if it is to be vital, the Marian theologian must ceaselessly continue to delve into Tradition and the Scriptures.

One final remark is necessary on the question of the origins of Mariological principles. This is the question of terminology. Some may suggest that these principles should be stated in their scriptural language or in the words of the early Fathers. They seem to imply that these truths somehow suffer corruption when worded in the terms of scholastic theology. This attitude is really not a new thing in the Church. By reading the accounts of the Council of Nicea we discover churchmen who urged that the Council not state the truth of the Incarnation in any language save that of the Scriptures.<sup>23</sup> The Fathers of the Council rejected this and did state the mystery of the Incarnation in language borrowed from the Greeks; in other words, they invented a technical term, which had no scriptural usage and yet, because of its philosophical connotations, possessed a precision which was admirable for a statement of dogma. So, too, the Mariologist must use the technical language of the schools to state his proper principles. This is so because the language of Scripture and many of the Fathers is either that of historical narrative or controversy lacking in the precision that makes distinctions clear. The Scriptures and many of the works of the Fathers were never intended as scientific expositions of theology. The language

<sup>23</sup> P. Hughes, *A History of the Church*, 1 (New York, 1949) 191.



of scholastic philosophy, on the other hand, has this merit that it is precise and clear; there is no danger of mistaking its meaning and it has the approval of the Magisterium of the Church. This does not mean to rule out the possibility of progress through the invention of new technical terms; but these new terms must have the same quality of precision which is so evident in terms now in use.

To defend the glorious treasure of Marian truths presented to us by the Magisterium and to further the understanding of these truths the Mariologist must see them in their scriptural and patristic origins. Yet to stop at this point would be a task only half done. These truths, verified in the Magisterium, seen in the Scriptures and the Fathers, must be fully developed through the logical argumentations of scholastic theology. This brings us to our last question.

### III.

#### THE FUNCTION OF MARIOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES

In order to answer our third question: "what are the functions of Mariological principles?" we must discuss the nature of the habit of theology. This is so because the functions of these principles are simply the ways in which the human mind, perfected through the habit of theology, puts the principles to use.

Since theology is a habit of the speculative reason, obviously it must be one of the three speculative intellectual habits: wisdom, understanding, and science. No one has seriously suggested that it is merely the habit of understanding; yet a great number of theologians classify it as a science.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>24</sup> For a discussion of the theories of these theologians, consult F. Mufiz, O.P., *The Work of Theology* (Washington, 1953) 9-12. This is a translation by Patrick Reid, O.P., from an article appearing in the *Ang* 24 (1947) 93-123.

If theology is just a science, then it should be defined as the habit of mind which deals with conclusions of virtual revelation, demonstrating them through their proper principles, the articles of faith.

In an article appearing in the *Angelicum* (1947) Father Francisco Muñiz examines this common opinion about the nature of theology and rejects it as an inadequate explanation. He points out that if theology is merely the science of faith limited to the consideration of conclusions, as are all sciences, then there is no place in theology for judgments made about the principles themselves. Clearly theology, as it has come down through the ages, is not so constricted. It frequently leaves these conclusions aside and deals exclusively with the principles of faith. Father Muñiz proposes, and it seems to us rightly, that theology is better defined as "discursive wisdom, exercised under the light of divine revelation, on every truth revealed by God."<sup>25</sup> This wisdom includes within itself the functions of science and understanding.<sup>26</sup> It has the nature of science because it truly demonstrates conclusions through the principles; further, it has the function of understanding (the habit of first principles) because it explains and defends theology's first principles.

Father Muñiz has summarized this double function of theological wisdom in the simple phrase: "it not only discourses *from* the articles of faith, but it also discourses *about* them."<sup>27</sup> Discourse is used here analogously, for when one discourses about an article of faith, he is judging about it; while when he discourses from an article, the third act of the mind comes into play.

All of this is applicable to Mariology. The mind of the Marian theologian deals with the proper principles of the tract

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.* 28.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.* 18-27.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.* 25.

by making judgments about them and using them as the means of demonstrating conclusions. Let us deal with each in its turn.

In the judgment about the principles the theologian's purpose is at one and the same time defensive and explicative. "It belongs to one and the same science," says Saint Thomas, "to pursue one of two contraries and to oppose the other."<sup>28</sup> Thus the Mariologist pursues an understanding of the Marian articles of faith and at the same time defends them from the disbelief of heretics. This defense is fulfilled not merely by the disproving of the heretic's objections, but also by showing the credibility of the mysteries.

The judicative function of theology first tries to establish how these articles are found in the fonts of revelation. Of this we have already spoken when dealing with the derivation of Mariological principles through the methods of positive theology. We mention it again here simply to point out the unity of theology. Too often we mistakenly think of positive theology (including its Mariological sections) as if it were a separate science from scholastic theology (with its tract on Mary.) Positive theology is simply a function of the same intellectual habit of wisdom, which possesses other functions, which we classify under the name scholastic.

Positive theology judges about the principles as does scholastic theology, however, with a difference. The judgment of positive theology is about the principles, precisely as they are related to the fonts of revelation; while that of scholastic theology is directed to these same principles as they are in themselves. Thus, positive Mariology is concerned with the mystery of the divine maternity as it is stated in the Magisterium, the Scriptures and the Fathers; while scholastic Mariology deals with the same truth by attempting to ponder its content.

<sup>28</sup> Saint Thomas, *Summa contra gentiles*, bk. 1, ch. 1.

Scholastic theology gains insights into the mysteries chiefly through the establishment of analogies between the mysteries and natural realities. Thus, in Mariology we develop the contents of the divine maternity by comparing it with all that is known about motherhood in the physical, psychological and moral orders. Also in dealing with the doctrine of Mary's association with Christ in the work of redemption, we seek to establish an analogy by investigating the nature of moral co-operation.

These analogies are the explication of what is implicit in the terms of the principle. But Mariology must not be limited to this type of explication, otherwise it would be nothing more than a disorganized mass of developed yet unrelated doctrines. To use the words of the Vatican Council, we must also establish "the relation between the mysteries themselves."<sup>29</sup> In the development of these inter-relations between the mysteries a number of truths must be recalled.

First, we must remember that all mysteries of faith are implicit in two. This is the opinion of Saint Thomas stated when he dealt with the problem of the development of revelation.<sup>30</sup> He asserts, "every article is implicitly contained in those primary matters of faith, namely that it must be believed that God exists and there exists a providence working for the salvation of men." Reducible to the mystery of God's being are all the mysteries that bespeak the attributes that "eternally exist in God"; while in the divine providence are implicit all those mysteries of things which God has temporally dispensed for the salvation of man.<sup>31</sup> We must be careful of a misconception here. We must not think that if our knowledge were limited to the general notion that God has decreed the salvation of man, we would be capable of explicating what

<sup>29</sup> DB 1796.

<sup>30</sup> Saint Thomas, *Summa theologiae*, 2a 2ae, q. 1, a. 7.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

is implicit in it, namely the mysteries of the Incarnation, the Passion, the divine maternity and so on. While it is true that all these mysteries are implicit in God's decree of man's salvation, the decree for us is, nevertheless, mysterious, so that unless God explicated the mystery through further revelation, then we would have never known all the implications. But in fact He did unravel the implications through the continuation of revelation till the death of John the Apostle.

From this fact we can draw a very interesting conclusion. The function of explication in theology will be of two types. The first type is that by which we explicate what is implicit in a mystery through the formation of analogies; of this we have already spoken. The other type of explication is that by which we are able to see, through a consideration of one mystery as it is related to another, that God willed this mystery in view of the other and that it is truly implicit in this other. Perhaps an illustration from Mariology will clarify the point. If my knowledge were limited merely to the fact that Mary is the Mother of God, then all the cogitation in the world would not lead me to a knowledge of Mary's perpetual virginity. But in fact virginity is implied in the divine decree of Mary's motherhood and God himself has explicated this through revelation. Granted the fact of this further revelation, the theologian can see how the virginity is implied in the motherhood of Mary.

This second type of explication is pertinent to the theological function of relating one mystery to another. It involves two steps. First, the theologian must establish the fact that one mystery is implicit in the other, and then he must see the fittingness of such an arrangement. In the question of establishing the fact, we must remember that in those tracts, like Mariology, which deal with mysteries that are contingent happenings in time, the principles are reducible to the divine providence. Providence is the divine ordination of

all actions to their ultimate end. Consequently, when God decreed the salvation of men, He also decreed the other mysteries as means to this. Therefore, in establishing a fact that a providential mystery is implicit in another, we must look for a means-end relationship. By using the methods of positive theology we must look for a divine revelation about the purpose of the reality behind a mystery. Frequently this will not be explicitly revealed; yet we can always ask the question whether one decree would have occurred if another had not, because means are always willed because of an end. Thus, if from the text and context of the Scriptures and the Fathers it becomes obvious that mystery B would not have been willed except because mystery A was decreed, then we can conclude that mystery B is related to mystery A as a means to an end. In Mariology we have an interesting example: would Mary have been the associate in the work of redemption, if she were not the Mother of God? What does revelation tell us about this? We believe that the Scriptures, the Fathers and the Magisterium always speak of Mary's association in such a way that we can see that she would hold no such office if it were not for the fact of her divine maternity.

Once the fact has been established, we must go a step further and show why the one is a means to the other, its end. Here the so-called argument of convenience comes into play. A means must have something about its nature that gives it a special fittingness toward its end. Thus, in the nature of virginity we can find aspects that are conducive to the office of Mother of God. We can use the argument of convenience conversely by arguing from the end to the means. An end produces through the corresponding efficient cause a certain accidental modification of the means. We call this modification a modality. Thus, from the divine maternity a certain unique modality results in Mary's act of association in the

redemption that renders it different from all other types of association in this work.

It is to be noticed that these arguments of convenience are not demonstrative; they are, rather, what Logic calls dialectical arguments. Dialectics is the syllogism of the probable argument.<sup>32</sup> The conclusion that results from this argument does not enjoy certitude as does a conclusion of a demonstration. Yet it is truly a discourse from principle to conclusion, for we have already seen that a principle, having a wider extension than a cause, does not necessarily have to produce the mind's assent to the conclusion. This obviously is pertinent to the problem of the first principle of Mariology.

Further, we must see that it is one thing to use the dialectical argument as we have just described it and to use this type of argument which would result in a conclusion that is purely probable. All dialectical argument results in a conclusion that is only probable, yet it may be that from another source the conclusion is seen as certain. Thus in Mariology we may argue through dialectics from the divine maternity to the doctrine of Mary Mediatrix. By reason of the argument itself the doctrine is only probable, and yet from revelation we know the doctrine to be certain. On the other hand, we may argue dialectically from the fact of the coredemptive activity of Mary to the conclusion that she is the physical instrumental cause of grace in the soul. If, as many theologians contend, such a type of instrumentality has not been attributed to her by revelation, then the conclusion remains only probable.

Some may object that this use of dialectics establishes weak links between the mysteries and is really not worthy of science. Yet such an objection shows an ignorance of the sciences. Many sciences resort to dialectics as the means of organizing all the evident facts concerning the object of the

<sup>32</sup> F. X. Maquart, *op. cit.* 176.

science.<sup>33</sup> Particularly is this true of those sciences whose objects are obscure and can be expressed in a definition that is not essential but only descriptive. If this is true in the natural sciences, then certainly we can admit it of the science that deals with supernatural objects, which of necessity are mysterious to our minds. Furthermore, by insisting that only links that are strictly demonstrative be used in Mariology, they are causing a disunity in the tract. Then there would be not a single tract *De Maria* but many which would be mere appendages to sections of Christology. If Mariology were so divided, would not the chance of greater development be diminished? After all, the growth we have witnessed in the past one hundred years has partially resulted from the treatment of Marian doctrines in a unified tract.

The use of dialectics in Mariology is justified; it is truly an exercise of the judicative function of theology. It is judgments about the principles, the explication of what is implicit within them. Of course, it is only to God and the blessed that these implications are evident; but through revelation and the argument of convenience we are able to see something of these implications.

Let us now consider briefly the function of Mariology in its discourse *from* the principles. This involves the third act of the mind, reasoning. There is a difference here between that which is a real inference of a new truth and that which we mentioned above, which is an explication of what is actually contained in the truth we already know. In this latter the "new" truth is actually but confusedly contained in the principle; while in the case of the former the new truth is contained only in the power of the principle. This is a theological conclusion, strictly so called. The syllogism that is productive of this type of conclusion involves one premise of faith and

<sup>33</sup> B. M. Ashley, O.P., *The Arts of Learning and Communication* (Dubuque, 1958) 190-192.



another of reason. Many such syllogisms are employed in Mariology. For example: the divine maternity is a blood relationship to the Second Person of the Trinity. But affinity flows from consanguinity. Therefore, the divine maternity establishes in Mary a relation of affinity to the other Persons of the Trinity. Or: A formal co-operator must share the intention of the principal agent. But Mary is a formal co-operator with her Son in His act of redemption. Therefore, Mary shared the intention of her Son in His sacrifice. Of all the functions of scholastic theology this deductive process is that which is best known and, therefore, we need not labor it. All that we need to stress here is that it is not the only function of scholastic theology; it is not the only discourse that goes on in this sacred science. Much of the difficulty in the problem of Mariology's first principle is traceable to such a misconception.

### *Conclusion*

From this brief summary about principles in Mariology, it is obvious that the accomplished Mariologist is one who can see his principles in their origins, be that the natural sciences, other tracts in theology, or in the fonts of revelation, and also one who is able to speculate rightly about these principles. This demands that he be well acquainted with the methods of positive theology and know how to use the procedures of scholastic theology. That one man be an expert in both fields is a very rare occurrence. That being the case, progress in Mariology will result from the community effort of many theologians. This, of course, demands a mutual respect; the positive Mariologist must not deprecate the contribution of the scholastic Mariologist, but he must realize that, guided by the Magisterium, he is providing merely the raw material which the speculative theologian uses to build the edifice of

Mariology. Nor must the scholastic Mariologist work as if there were no need to see his principles in their origins. He must realize that a full understanding of his concrete principles is impossible without the findings of positive theology and that frequently the links between these principles can be seen only through the methods of positive theology. In Mariology and in all theology progress must go on, for to quote the Angelic Doctor: "since man's perfection consists in union with God, man should, by all the means in his power, mount up and strive to attain divine truths, so that his intellect may take delight in contemplation, and his reason in the investigation of the things of God, according to the prayer in Ps. 72:27: 'It is good for us to adhere to my God.' " <sup>84</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Saint Thomas, *Commentarium in Boët. De Trinitate*, 2, 1.