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THE IMAGE OF GOD AND PARENTAL IMAGES :
A DIALOGUE BETWEEN THEOLOGY AND PSYCHOLOGY

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Divinity
of the University of Glasgow for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy.

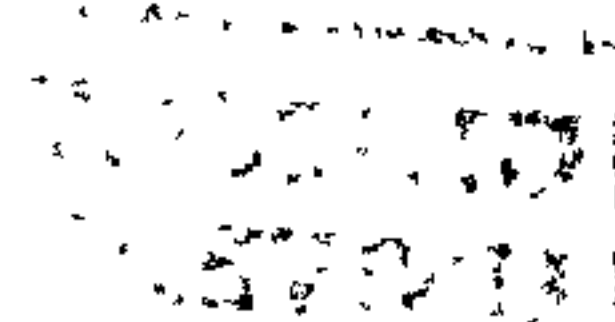
Stephen Gilbert Timothy BULKELEY

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Thesis

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Two Jesuits from Heythrop College London also deserve special mention, George Croft who first turned my attention to the question of the relation of the image of God and parental images, and Robert Murray whose correspondence has been most helpful.

Other scholars with whom I have corresponded are : Kari Elizabeth Borresen, Walter Brueggemann, Brian McNeil, Constance M. Parvey, V. Peter Pitts and Letty M. Russell.

For assistance with translation I am also indebted to Dorothy Lowe, and Charles J. O'Riley. For the opportunity of testing in Glasgow schools, I thank Muriel Logan and the Victoria Drive School, Kay Grant and the Kelvinhaugh P.S. and A. McIntyre and the Knightswood P.S. I am grateful to the Dr. William's Trust for financial assistance in the first year of this study.

Lastly, I am indebted to Avril Lang who produced the final typescript with such speed and care.

Despite the advice acknowledged above the errors, omissions and misunderstandings which this thesis contains are all my own work. The following words from page three of Murray (1975) apply with so much more force to my efforts than to his standard work on the Syriac Fathers :

" ... I have often had to work at the boundaries of my competence, relying on the studies of others and trying, as an amateur may, to bridge gaps between the fields of the various professionals. It is hoped that these limited investigations and provisional conclusions may help others to go deeper into this mysterious area which contains the key to many problems ..."

SUMMARY

Part One contains Psychological material and is concerned with the development of the image of God in the child's relationship with the parents. A picture of this development which fits well with the results of previous studies is presented. This is tested in a study of 754 children (aged 7-16 years), using a Semantic Differential measure. This study (the first to investigate this question directly with children) showed that, the image of God tends to be like that of both parents (0.1% level), but that the mean correlations decrease with age (0.1% level), and are weaker for boys (0.1% level). There was some tendency for the God-Father correlations to be higher (1% level).

Part Two is concerned to provide a basis for a Theology of the Motherhood of God. It argues that God is not male or 'masculine' in a sense in which 'he' is not female or 'feminine'; and that if 'he' is to be spoken of as father 'he' must be spoken of as mother in the same sense. It also discusses examples of the use of maternal language and imagery of God from biblical, patristic and medieval authors. This part collates examples from widely scattered sources, as well as presenting new material. (The place of Mary in this context is examined.) It also argues that if God is to be spoken of as mother, then this motherhood is trinitarian and must not be assigned to one hypostasis (person) alone.

Part Three suggests desirable extensions of these studies and indicates some implications of increased use of maternal language and imagery of God.

ABBREVIATIONS

- ANET = PRITCHARD, James Bennett (1969³) "Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament." Princeton; Princeton University Press.
- CC = Corpus Christianorum, Series Latine. Turnholt; Brepols.
- CC Cont Med = Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis. Turnholt; Brepols.
- CFS 2 = "The Works of Aelred of Rievaulx: Volume One." Spencer, Mass; Cistercian Publications (1971).
- CFS 3 = "The Works of William of St. Thierry: Volume One." Shannon; I.U.P. (1971)
- CFS 4 = "The Works of Bernard of Clairvaux: Volume Two: On the Song of Songs 1." Shannon; I.U.P. (1971)
- CFS 7 = "The Works of Bernard of Clairvaux: Volume Three; On the Song of Songs 11." Kalamazoo, Mich; Cistercian Publications (1976)
- CFS 8 & 32 = "Guerric of Igny: Liturgical Sermons." Shannon; I.U.P.(1971)
- CFS 14 = "Gilbert of Hoyland: Sermons on the Song of Songs, 1." Kalamazoo, Mich; Cistercian Publications (1978)
- CFS 21 = "Adam of Perseigne: The Letters of Adam of Perseigne: Volume 1." Kalamazoo, Mich; Cistercian Publications (1976)
- CCS = Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller. Berlin; Akademie Verlag.
- ICC = International Critical Commentary.
- PEAKE = BLACK, Matthew and ROWLEY, H.H. (Eds.) (1962) "Peake's Commentary on the Bible." London & Edinburgh; Nelson.
- PG = MIGNE, J-P "Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Graeca."
- PL = MIGNE, J-P "Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Latine."
- SC 66 = Adam de Perseigne "Lettres 1." Paris; Ed. Du Cerf (1960)
- SC 76 = Aelred of Rievaulx "La Vie de Recluse." Paris; Ed. Du Cerf (1961)
- SC 166 & 202 = Guerric of Igny "Sermons 2 Vols." Paris; Ed. Du Cerf (1973)
- TDNT = KITTEL, Gerhard (Ed.) (1964-) "Theological Dictionary of the New Testament." Grand Rapids; Eerdmans.

TDOT = BOTTERWECK, Johannes and RINGGREN, Helmer (Eds.) (1977-)
"Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament." Grand Rapids;
Eerdmans.

A.V. = Authorised Version.

J.B. = Jerusalem Bible.

N.E.B. = New English Bible.

R.S.V. = Revised Standard Version.

INTRODUCTION

The psychological investigation of religious phenomena often raises questions for Theology. The investigation of the similarity between the way people think about parents and the way they think of God, in particular, raises such questions. The psychologist says that the image of God is like both parents. However, we do not talk, commonly, of God the heavenly mother. Is such talk Theologically justifiable? For example, where does this similarity of the image of God and of mother come from, if not from worship and religious education?

This thesis is the result of such a process of dialogue between Psychology of Religion and Theology. Arranging the material in a neat, logical and convenient order has to a great extent obscured that dialogue. During the dialogue both the Psychological and the Theological studies also expanded independently of each other. Despite this, the dialogue is incomplete, as are the studies. Both areas independently and together beg to be extended in various directions.

To present the material in an orderly manner the first two parts are concerned with the material from the two disciplines. Part One contains a review of the theoretical and empirical investigations of Psychologists into the relationship between parents and how people see God, together with a report of my own study to test certain hypotheses concerning the origins and growth of the image of God in childhood. Part Two gives the Theological arguments for talk of God as mother, and looks at the precedents for the motherhood of God in the Bible and in Christian Tradition.

EXCURSUS ONE : "IMAGE" which follows this introduction explains and defends the use of the word "image" in this thesis. Image is a slippery word, it can have many different meanings and overtones. It needs, therefore, to be carefully defined. It is used in both the Theological and the Psychological parts of the thesis. It has the same meaning in both, but this meaning is different from ones which it sometimes has in either field. So the Excursus relates my definition to the uses other writers make of the word. It thus prepares the ground for the arguments in the body of the thesis.

PART ONE : "PSYCHOLOGY, PARENTAL IMAGES AND THE IMAGE OF GOD" contains four chapters. Two review the work of others. The other two present and discuss my own investigation with over 700 children.

CHAPTER ONE : "BACKGROUND AND THEORIES" begins by noticing that both father and mother are commonly used as images of the divine. It argues that this implies a Psychological need in humanity to relate to the divine as both mother and father. It looks at various theories which attempt to come to terms with this and explain it. The theories and theorists discussed are ;

(i) Freud, (ii) Bovet, (iii) Piaget, (iv) Erikson, (v) Vergote and Faber, (vi) Jung, (vii) Social Psychological Approaches, (viii) Cognitive Dissonance, (ix) Suttie, and (x) General Parental Projection Theories. In this chapter, as far as possible, the theories are presented in their own terms. For the sake of brevity the intention will be to outline the main thrust of each theory as it concerns our subject-matter. Choosing among the different approaches is left until the empirical evidence has been presented.

CHAPTER TWO : "REVIEW OF EMPIRICAL FINDINGS" examines the evidence which might tend to support or undermine these theories. There are two sections to the chapter. The first deals with "Developmental Studies". It reviews and summarises the evidence concerning the development in childhood of concepts of God and attitude towards God. Studies which relate such development to the child's relationship with parental figures are of most interest. Three studies are picked out for more detailed consideration, those conducted by Pitts, Peterman and Deconchy.

The other section deals with studies which have attempted to compare "Images of God and Parents, in Adults". The results of these studies are presented in chronological order together with a short explanation of the methods used. The chapter closes with four

conclusions which may be drawn from the studies reviewed.

CHAPTER THREE : "EMPIRICAL STUDY" presents an investigation of 754 children, whose ages range from seven to sixteen years. The results of this study are individual correlations of a child's image of God with his image of either parent. The intention is to see how the pattern of these changes with age and sex. Because of the number of children involved it is possible to treat the results statistically to arrive at such general conclusions. The presentation of the study is in three sections.

The first section concerns the "Choice of Measuring Instrument". It examines the available techniques and explains why the Semantic Differential was the most suitable in this case. It also explains how and why the particular scales used were selected.

"Subjects and Method" is the second section. It tells how the subjects were selected and gives a breakdown of the different groups by age and sex. It gives reasons for supposing that the results from one group are comparable with those from another. It describes the form of the Semantic Differential and how it was administered. Various difficulties which were encountered during the administration are related, together with the standardised way in which they were approached.

The study is concerned to measure the correlation between the images of God and of father and mother for these children of differing ages. In order to test various hypotheses it is concerned with how the pattern of these changes with age. These hypotheses are drawn from a picture of the development of the image of God in relationship with the parents. This picture uses concepts derived from some of the theoretical approaches previously discussed, together with the conclusions drawn from the empirical studies reviewed. This theoretical perspective and the hypotheses drawn from it are presented here.

The remaining section discusses the "Analysis of Results". When first presented the results are in the form of partly digested statistics (since the raw data occupy hundreds of pages.) The statistical methods used to analyse the data are described and the results presented.

CHAPTER FOUR : "DISCUSSION" considers how far the results confirm the hypotheses presented and fit with the theoretical perspective developed from other studies. Consideration will be given to points arising from this perspective and also from the studies reviewed in Chapter Two.

At the end of the chapter emphasis will be placed upon the theological questions which this material raises. In particular some consideration will be given to ; the important role of parents in the development of the image of God, the more general role of family, and the need for explicit maternal imagery in religious devotion.

PART TWO : "THE MOTHERHOOD OF GOD AND THEOLOGICAL TRADITION" begins with a chapter and excursus concerned more generally with the use of female imagery for God. There follow three chapters which review the uses made of maternal imagery for God in the Bible and Christian Theology. These are followed by a chapter on the place of Mary.

CHAPTER FIVE : "GOD AND GENDER" is concerned with the general and logically prior question of gender and God, in particular with the use of gender specific imagery of God. It therefore mentions the current debate concerning the use of feminine imagery of God. It will argue that the biblical and Christian view of God is as (i) beyond human limitations and categories, and (ii) source of both male and female in humanity ; and that therefore feminine and masculine gender specific images are both, as such, equally applicable and inapplicable to God.

EXCURSUS TWO: "WISDOM" complements Chapter Five by presenting the theological uses made of the feminine and motherly figure of wisdom. In particular it will note, how in certain strands of New Testament thought Christ is identified as Wisdom incarnate, and how some patristic writers contrast Word and Wisdom as Son and Spirit respectively. The later application of Wisdom texts, to Mary rather than to the Trinity, will also be remarked upon. Much of the material in this Excursus could have fitted well in the following chapters, however it seemed better to gather it together in one place here.

CHAPTER SIX : "THE BIBLE" presents the often unnoticed passages which use maternal imagery of God. Many of these use explicit maternal language, in some the maternal nature of the imagery is only implicit. Such imagery is traced in most strands of the Old Testament. In particular, attention is drawn to the later Isaianic tradition. The relatively few New Testament passages are noted and commented upon.

CHAPTER SEVEN : "THE PATRISTIC PERIOD" will not be concerned with the relative wealth of maternal references from heterodox circles. Rather it will concentrate in two areas: the feminine Holy Spirit in the early Syriac writings and the use of breast feeding images of God. (Special

attention will be given to Clement of Alexandria's relatively copious use of such imagery in the "Paedagogue").

CHAPTER EIGHT : "THE MIDDLE AGES". At this time, breast-feeding imagery and also other maternal imagery was used of God fairly extensively by certain writers ; notably Anselm, a number of twelfth century Cistercians, and especially Mother Julian of Norwich. This chapter will discuss these writers' use of maternal imagery and its significance.

CHAPTER NINE : "MARY AND DIVINE MOTHERHOOD" examines the role of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Roman Catholic thought and practice. It will argue that to a large extent she can and does meet the psychological need for a divine mother figure. It will also argue, on the other hand, that here psychological needs and theological standards are in conflict. An understanding of divine motherhood which is true to the Christian doctrines of God and man, worked out in the early centuries, will not centre on Mary.

CHAPTER TEN : "RETROSPECT ON PART TWO". By looking over the evidence presented in Part Two this chapter will attempt to lay foundations for Part Three. It will consider the precedents for use of maternal imagery of God. In particular, note will be taken that (i) Mariology cannot provide a theological answer to the psychological need ; (ii) Maternal imagery is used of all persons of the Trinity, and neither exclusively, nor predominantly, of one in particular.

PART THREE : "SYNTHESIS" contains only one chapter.

CHAPTER ELEVEN : "TOWARDS SPEAKING OF THE MOTHERHOOD OF THE TRINITY" will use the evidence of Part Two to point towards an answer to the major question raised by the evidence of Part One. It will argue, that, if there is to be a Christian understanding of God as motherly then it must be the motherhood of the Trinity which is explored. It will consider the implications of renewed talk of the motherhood of God and try to show that such talk has theological as well as psychological advantages.

This chapter will also point to ways (not already mentioned) in which this study raises new questions, which it does not answer. Thus it too, although predominantly theological will be concerned in part with psychological questions.

The NOTES for all chapters are found at this point.

The thesis concludes with a complete BIBLIOGRAPHY in which will

be found details of all the works referred to in the text and notes, together with the few other works which were of use in preparation of this thesis. The bibliography is arranged alphabetically by author. Works are referred to in the text by a name and date. Details of a particular work may be found easily by looking in the bibliography under the name. All works listed for a particular author are in date order of publication, where two works appeared in the same year they are given letters thus : Fiorenza (1975b).

EXCURSUS ONE :

"IMAGE"

The Use of the Term "Image" in this Thesis.

(1) Psychological

In the various sections of this thesis it is necessary to use a variety of technical terms, on the whole these are either of wide currency or are explained as they occur. However, the use of "image" which is of central importance to this study is strikingly different from its normal theological use (especially in the expression "the image of God"), and only used frequently in Psychology in another sense (of a visual perception). It therefore deserves a rather more lengthy discussion here, in particular in connection with other related terms of wide currency (e.g. Attitude and Concept).

Definition ; Image means here the totality of the way a person consistently thinks of, and reacts to, the person or thing concerned. Even before I explain the definition any further it may be helpful to notice that there is a comparatively familiar everyday use of the word in this sense. This comes from the world of public relations and advertising, thus : "We must make our product's image more dynamic."

This use of image, as the sum of someone's consistent reactions to the person or thing concerned, includes a wide range of components. For example, it will include attitudes. If one's attitude towards something is positive, then one's reactions to it are positive also. This is how we would define a favourable image. But image is not attitude. For example, if I like cars, I have a positive attitude towards them. However I might have a concept of car which includes the information that cars are large hard objects and that they move at high speeds. My reactions to a car will be shaped by this concept, on a motorway I shall expect to travel quickly from place to place, however if approached by a car when crossing the road I will run! My reaction to cars (as this rather over-simplified example indicates) is shaped by my concept of car, as well as by my attitude to cars. That is my image of cars includes both my concept of them and my attitude to them. Image, then includes both cognitive and affective components.

Concepts and attitudes, of course, themselves are related, and influence each other. For example, I cannot have a negative attitude towards something without having as part of my concept of it the information that it is dangerous, unpleasant, or undesirable in some other way. Cognitions and affects must always interrelate in many such ways when they concern the same thing. It is, therefore, useful sometimes to have a word which encompasses both, as 'image' does.

Image, as used here, is close in meaning to the various "mediating processes"¹ about which the various learning theorists hypothesize. Though it implies nothing concerning the underlying processes involved, e.g. classical and operant conditioning alone, or some other more complex symbolic function, or even some combination of these. If we take, for example, the formulation of Osgood;² we can say that the image of something is the sum of such mediation associated with that something. This is not a new definition of 'image', since Osgood's formulation is by its nature untestable, and itself difficult to define closely. It is, however, a further point of contact of 'image' with other terms and theoretical perspectives in Psychology.

The term 'symbol' is one which has been used in a similar sense by some writers. However, it seems to offer no advantage. Symbol itself also has other and different uses. I have come across no writer (at least no English-speaking writer) who has used 'symbol' to speak of the kind of topics dealt with in this thesis, (but see next paragraph), whilst several have used image,³ though without attempting a rigorous definition.

One of the major instigators of such research, Antoine Vergote, commonly uses the two terms 'symbol' and 'image' together in the expression "image-symbole", symbol-image, which he contrasts with "image-souvenir", memory-image. In his usage symbol-image is very close in practice to our use of image. It is interesting to note that, despite his initial preference for symbol as an abbreviation⁴ Vergote and his students often abbreviate the term to simply image.⁵

Our definition is not identical to Vergote's. The closest he gives to a definition is this:

"But we think that we can distinguish two levels: the memory-image, which represents the real father as the subject sees him ; and the symbol-image which represents the father according to the subject's desires." ⁶

Neither of these corresponds exactly with our 'image', though roughly memory-image is close to what we would call one's image of one's own father, whilst symbol-image is close to one's "image of what fathers should be". The father image in our sense is a combination of these along with one's other experiences of fatherhood, resulting in the way one thinks of, and reacts to, fathers or the word father.

The reader will note that at each stage of our comparison of image with other terms 'image' is seen as more inclusive. I must now indicate why such apparent loss of precision is preferred. In the case of Vergote's terminology, I would argue that I have shown in the paragraph above that there is a potential gain rather than loss of precision. Vergote distinguishes two aspects of the father image, whereas my usage can encompass and distinguish several. In the case of concept and attitude, (i) although it is true that these two terms, together with other elements perhaps, are collapsed into one 'image', the two may still, if appropriate, be extracted and considered separately, hence there is no loss of precision ; and (ii) in fact many studies which claim to investigate one or the other, blur the distinction in practice. (As I shall have cause to point out in the body of the thesis.) In the case of the 'mediating processes' the elements which I suggest compose 'image' are not in fact (as opposed to in theory) distinguished in any case, so 'image' would describe better the present state of the art. In each case upon investigation greater precision rather than less results from the use of image as defined above.

The Use of the Term "Image" in this Thesis.

(ii) Theological.

The term "image of God" is used in this thesis in the theological material also.⁷ It is used to denote the way in which some nominal analogy is intended to, or does, lead us to think of God. Thus to call God "King" leads to a particular way of thinking and speaking about God. This image of God as King will be like other talk of God but will emphasize certain aspects of that talk. Thus the image of God as King is distinguishable from the image of God as "Rock of Ages", for example.

The term image rather than analogy is preferred because it draws attention to the psychological implications of the use of analogical language. One's image of God as King, for example, will depend upon not only the context in which the name "King" is used, but also

upon such things as one's experience and understanding of Kingship, in particular what one knows of Kingship in the Bible. The use of the term analogy can give the impression that a purely objective process is taking place, (e.g. There is a word "King" which has a particular meaning, discoverable in a dictionary, and that this word is being used to throw light upon another less well understood word, "God") but this is not , in fact, what happens when such language is used.

To say this is not to deny the nice points made by Tavad⁸ concerning Language and Theology, in particular it is not to deny that as he points out :

"the sexist game has been played, I suspect, at the secondary level, not by metaphysicians who have carefully purified their concepts with the tools of analogical thinking, but by theological popularizers and by pastors, bishops, and priests whose preaching has shaped the popular theological language and the popular Christian mind." ⁹

It is rather to accept all this but to recognise that in this we are not concerned with the "carefully purified concepts" of metaphysicians but rather with the writings of pastors, bishops, priests and the like, since we are here concerned with theology as that study whose task is "to chart and clarify the meaning and content of Christian faith".¹⁰

The use of the term 'image' in the theological, as well as the psychological part of this thesis is also useful in another, but related way. The word image is often associated with the word symbol (in Theology as in Psychology). Thus this use of the word image draws attention to the underlying interest of the thesis to deal (not with philosophical or metaphysical ideas of God as he is but rather to deal) with God as revealed in a particular historical tradition of faith, and that talk of this God necessarily involves the use of symbolic language. Paul Tillich expressed this well :

"That which is the true ultimate transcends the realm of finite reality infinitely. Therefore, no finite reality can express it directly and properly. Religiously speaking, God transcends his own name. This is why the use of his name easily becomes an abuse or a blasphemy. Whatever we say about that which concerns us ultimately, whether or not we call it God, has a symbolic meaning. It points beyond itself while

participating in that to which it points. In no other way can faith express itself adequately. The language of faith is the language of symbols." ¹¹

This choice of the term 'image' gives notice, then, also of my underlying opposition to views of theology (and language) which make an absolute distinction between "spiritual" and "material", ¹² and commitment to a theology which makes use of the "Via Positiva" which of necessity "involves embodiment or the incarnation of value into that which can be sensed and described." ¹³

Summary

In this excursus I have defined the use of the word Image which is particular to this thesis. Image means the totality of the way a person consistently thinks of, or reacts to, the person or thing imaged. I have related this use to other writers' use of the word, and given reasons for its selection for both disciplines. I have also used the opportunity to give notice of certain underlying attitudes and intentions in the thesis.

PART ONE :

PSYCHOLOGY,

PARENTAL IMAGES AND THE IMAGE OF GOD.

CHAPTER ONE :

BACKGROUND AND THEORIES

Mother goddesses are a striking feature of the comparative or historical study of religions. As an indication of this we can note that the entry for 'Mother (Female Principle)' in a "Dictionary of Mythology, Folklore & Symbols"¹⁴ has over 300 names listed and that these come from some 70 cultures, from Abyssinia to the Zuni. This is one of the longest entries in the index, and one of the most culturally comprehensive.

E.O. James (1959) in what is still a standard work, "The Cult of the Mother Goddess", reviews and gives order to the archaeological and documentary evidence then available. It is worth quoting in part the reasons he gives for undertaking this work :

"Whether or not the Mother-goddess was the earliest manifestation of the concept of Deity, her symbolism unquestionably has been the most persistent feature in the archaeological record of the ancient world, from the sculptured Venuses of the Gravettian culture in the Upper Palaeolithic and the stylised images of the decorated caves, to the emblems and inscriptions of the cult when it became established in the Fertile Crescent, Western Asia, the Indus Valley, the Aegean and Crete between the fifth and third millennia B.C. Moreover, it is now becoming increasingly evident that in its dispersal from its cradleland in the Southern Russian steppe and Western Asia, it was destined to have a widespread influence and to play a very significant role in the subsequent development of the Ancient Near Eastern religions from India to the Mediterranean from Neolithic times to the Christian era. " ¹⁵

Since James wrote, excavations at Catal Hyuk and other ancient Anatolian sites have underlined both the antiquity and importance of this worship.

This thesis is not a work on the History of Religions, so I

shall not attempt to discuss such evidence any further, however the conclusions which James draws and his picture of the historical development of the Mother-goddess are worth noting ;

"From the foregoing survey of the Goddess cult in its many forms, phases and manifestations, the life-producing Mother as the personification of fecundity stands out clearly as the central figure. Behind her lay the mystery of birth and generation in the abstract, at first in the human and animal world with which Palaeolithic Man was mainly concerned in his struggle for existence and survival; then, when food-gathering gave place to food-production, in the vegetable kingdom where Mother-earth became the womb in which the crops were sown, and from which they were brought forth in due season. With the establishment of husbandry and the domestication of flocks and herds, however, the function of the male in the process of generation became more apparent and vital as the physiological facts concerning paternity were more clearly understood and recognised. Then the Mother-goddess was assigned a male partner, either in the capacity of her son and lover, or of brother and husband. Nevertheless, although he was the begetter of life he occupied a subordinate position to her, being in fact a secondary figure in the cultus." ¹⁶

Concerning paternal images of the divine, it is easy , if born and reared within the Christian culture, to assume that the use of the name Father for God is a distinctive feature of Christian faith. However, even a brief examination of the evidence indicates that this is not so. The theological understanding of this use of paternal imagery may well be distinctive, the simple fact of its use is not. A few examples will serve to illustrate this: Among the South East Australian Tribes the high God is commonly called Father, the Kunlin supreme deity, Bunjil, is usually spoken of as "Our Father" instead of "his other name, Bunjil". Among the Kurnai knowledge of the being equivalent to Bunjil is in the main restricted to the initiated males. Women know of his existence but know only his name "Our Father".

Somewhat similar Gods are found in Africa too : Cghene, the high God of the Isoko (Southern Nigeria) "is entirely beyond human comprehension, has never been seen, and is known only by his actions,

which have led men to speak of Cghene as 'him', because he is thought of as creator and therefore father of all the Isokos. He is spoken of as Our Father, never as My Father." 17

The Venda are a Bantu tribe of the Northern Transvaal, their High God is named, Raluvhimba. "The name is composed of the prefix Ra-, which is honourific and perhaps connected with the idea of 'Father' ; luvhimba is the eagle, the bird that soars aloft." He is addressed as 'Grandfather'. 18

The Pawnee, North American Plains Indians, speak thus about Tirawa : "The white man speaks of a heavenly Father ; we say Tirawa atius, the Father above, but we do not think of Tirawa as a person." 19

There seems little point in multiplying such examples, the point is made that the mother and the father are both common images and names for God or the divine. Most textbooks in this field will provide more detailed examples. It would seem that Freud was correct in seeing a strong paternal influence in Man's experience of God, but wrong in ignoring the comparable (stronger?) evidence of similar maternal influences.

It is as clear now as when G. Van Der Leeuw (1938) wrote that both maternal and paternal language and imagery are a common feature of the religious life of mankind, " In the history of religion"... there are.. "two great groups - the religions of the Father, who dwells in heaven and begets and acts, "outward force applying" (again to quote Goethe) ; and side by side with these the religions of the Mother living and giving birth in the Earth, in whose womb all process has both its beginning and its end. In no religion whatever is the mother or the father completely lacking." 20

Most authors who discuss this ubiquity of parental imagery assume that this is related to deep psychological needs in humanity. For example, with respect to the mother : " the Mother-goddess in her manifold forms and phases, accretions and transformations, occupied a dominant position because she and her cult met certain of the vital needs of mankind at all times." 21

I trust that this brief series of indications has been sufficient to convince the reader that some such needs do underlie the parental nature of such imagery of the divine, and to arouse curiosity concerning the way in which such imagery arises and develops in our lives as children.

I have not in this section written of the place of the mother in the Judaeo-Christian traditions. This will be a central concern of "Part Two". To speak of it here would be merely to duplicate that discussion.

Psychological Theories.

As we have just seen, the use of parental imagery concerning the divine is an extremely widespread or even ubiquitous phenomenon of religious life. It is also one which has been of particular significance in the cultures which have shaped modern western thought. As such it has, naturally, been of interest to psychological theorists concerned with religion. The relationship between the parents and the image of God has been an especially fertile area for psychodynamically oriented writers, and for those most concerned with developmental psychology.

(1) Freud

References to religion are scattered among many of the works of Sigmund Freud. The connection between human and divine fathers first appeared, in 1913, in "Totem and Taboo."²² In the last chapter of this book occurs the famous statement :

"The psycho-analysis of individual human beings, however, teaches us with quite special insistence that the God of each of them is formed in the likeness of his father, that his personal relation to God depends on his relation to his father in the flesh and oscillates and changes along with that relation, and that at bottom God is nothing other than an exalted father."²³

Despite the limited usefulness of the bulk of this book, owing to its dependence upon anthropological ideas and theories no longer generally acceptable, this suggestion, that God is a projected father-figure, along with the centrality of the Oedipus Complex, has been not only at the heart of Freud's own understanding of religion but also the stimulus to much of the empirical work in this area.

Freud took up these ideas again in both "Moses and Monotheism" and "The Future of an Illusion."²⁴

We shall now summarize briefly the content of this work as it

relates to our theme.

Culture is bound up with frustration (the fact that not all instincts can be satisfied). Culture began with the basic prohibitions (e.g. incest, cannibalism, murder). It is a function of culture to protect man against nature. However, in the forces of the elements, by disease and death, nature breaks through and confronts man with his helplessness. "With these forces nature rises up before us, sublime, pitiless, inexorable ; thus she brings again to our mind our weakness and helplessness...." "....life and the universe must be rid of their terrors." In this feeling of helplessness is the origin of all religion. This is the continuation of an infantile prototype: "....for once before one has been in such a state of helplessness : as a child in one's relationship to one's parents." ²⁵ Children growing up to culture experience neurosis, "this is because the child is unable to suppress by rational mental effort so many of those instinctual impulses which cannot later be turned to account, but has to check them by acts of repression, behind which there stands as a rule an anxiety motive." ²⁶

"In just the same way one might assume that in its development through the ages mankind as a whole experiences conditions which are analogous to the neuroses, and this for the same reasons, because in the ages of its ignorance and intellectual weakness it achieved by purely affective means the instinctual renunciations, indispensable for man's communal existence...." "Thus religion would be the universal obsessional neurosis of humanity. It, like the child's, originated in the Oedipus Complex, the relation to the father." "But these are just comparisons....individual psychology supplies us with no exact counterpart." ²⁷

Thus for Freud the Oedipus conflict is central to the maintenance of both culture and religion, between about age three to six years the child, in confrontation with the mother and the father, becomes conscious of reality, law etc. The father in particular through 'law' and prohibition 'jerks' the child out of his dreams of indistinct harmony and passive pleasure. Later he becomes an ideal figure with whom the child identifies.

Note should be taken of how central to Freud's view of religion

is the Oedipus Conflict, and the father-son relationship, so much so that culture and morality, and presumably religion, are only transmitted to women at second hand;

"The male seems to have taken the lead in all these moral acquisitions; and they seem to have then been transmitted to women by cross-inheritance."²⁸

It should also be noted that Freud himself did not intend that these theoretical approaches to religion should form part of the system of psycho-analysis. In his correspondence with Pfister concerning the publication of "The Future of an Illusion", he writes, "Let us be quite clear on the point that the views expressed in my book form no part of psycho-analytic theory."²⁹

Although his views have largely been worked out as explanations of the historic development of religions, he himself makes the comparison with individual development often enough for it to be legitimate to attempt to summarize his picture of the ontogenesis of the idea of God (and to make predictions from it, as we shall in Chapter III). One point of particular importance should be noted here, no matter how others have adapted his approach, Freud's own view of the origin of the image of God clearly contains little or no maternal reference.

(ii) Bovet

At about the same time, (1919), the Swiss educationalist P. Bovet published his conclusions based upon a study of personal documents and unstructured investigations with children, Bovet(1928). He begins by arguing that we must seek the origins of the 'religious sentiment' in the personal sentiments of children. Our religious understanding and experience as adults will be greatly influenced by our experiences of interpersonal relationships during our development. If this is so, then it is our 'filial' response to our parents which is all important. For the relationship with parental figures is the most significant in the young child's life. Believing this, Bovet must therefore argue against those who develop erotogenic theories of religion, (e.g. those who begin from sexual imagery in religious writings - the same procedure, he argues, could be used to promote an alimentary theory of religion!). He makes a sharp distinction between three kinds of love, filial, conjugal and maternal.

Bovet notes that young children appear to regard their parents

as omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent, and that these beliefs are most tenacious. Children require very blatant evidence of their parents limitations before they can accept them. Indeed these beliefs are not so much lost as transferred from the parents to the divine. He thinks that this change usually occurs around or soon after age six years.

Bovet encapsulates his picture of the origin of the image of God in the individual by saying :

"A child's first gods are his parents."

(iii) Piaget

Despite his prolific output Piaget has not given much direct attention to religious questions.³⁰ However in 'The Child's Conception of the World', and as a result of the studies reported there, he gives his support to the position adopted by Bovet (described above).

"The essence of religious emotion is in fact, a mingling sui generis of love and of fear which one can call respect. Now this respect is not to be explained except by the relations of the child with its parents. It is the filial sentiment itself."³¹ "...and our own data confirm in the clearest manner M. Bovet's thesis."³²

In so far then as we may say that Piaget has a view of the relation between the parents and the image of God it is the same as that of Bovet.³³

Elkind (1970) has made use of large elements from Piaget's general theories to build up a picture of 'the origins of religion in the child'. He argues that the central elements of religion (including the concept of God) form ready-made solutions to the adaptive problems centred on four major developmental cognitive need capacities; conservation, representation, relation and comprehension. However this development has nothing to say about the particular relation of parents and parental images to the development of the child's concept of God.

(iv) Erikson

One of the most influential of the 'second generation' of Freudian psychoanalysts, Erik H. Erikson, has made extensive references to religion in his general writings³⁴ and has developed an alternative scheme to describe the processes involved in the development of

religion in the individual. This is most clearly expounded in his book, "Young Man Luther, " ³⁵

The key concepts in Erikson's understanding of both human psychological development and the function of religion are "basic trust" and "Identity".

Basic trust is developed in the infant's first relationship, with its mother, and is essential to life. As Erikson puts it in his discussion of the role of the mother in 'Young Man Luther' :

"In that first relationship man learns something which most individuals who survive and remain sane can take for granted most of the time.I have called this early treasure 'basic trust' ;Basic trust in mutuality is that original 'optimism', that assumption that 'somebody is there', without which we cannot live."³⁶

In support of this last statement he refers to Spitz (1945). Basic trust is closely related to religion, which fulfils a similar role in the life of the mature person to that of the mother in infancy, promoting basic trust. This function is not unique to religion, however, but is shared to some extent with all 'ideologies' (Ideologies in Erikson's sense of a personally accepted weltanschauung, or better a system of thought which because it is accepted gives identity). For example on the same page, speaking of the end of adolescence and the establishment of identity, he writes ;

"At that point, an ideological formula, intelligible both in terms of individual development and of significant tradition must do for the young person what the mother did for the infant....

Of all the ideological systems however, only religion restores the earliest sense of appeal to a Provider, a Providence."

Discussing Erikson And two other general theorists of child development, Maier (1965) summarizes the connection between basic trust and religion in Erikson's thought thus :

"A great share of the unknown and recurrent sources of mistrust can find firm assurance only through various forms of religious beliefs later in life, while during the child's infancy it is his parent's faith and

conviction which assures his basic trust in, and genuine dependence upon, a well-being and order of his universe." 37

We have now considered one of the two major concepts of Erikson's theories as they relate to religion, basic trust. In this consideration we have had cause to mention the other, identity. For if basic trust is the presupposition of life (at very least of normal life) then 'identity' is the goal of maturity.

The struggle for identity is not for the young child, for the identity of the child is largely as child of these parents. It is when the child begins to gain independence from the parents that a personal sense of identity is needed. The one who seeks independence must find identity. To a great extent, then, although the mother is the guarantor of basic trust, it is she whom the child sees as barring the road to independence and identity.

Here, then, is one of the father's important roles. For a good father is able to guide and protect the child whilst the early steps to autonomy are taken. Further, a sense of identity includes elements of conscience and morality, and the developmental matrix of these is found in the relationship of child and father.

It is also, finally and paradoxically, over against the father that freedom and identity must be won. This is clearly so in the case of Luther as Erikson describes him, who all his life had to affirm his identity against his father.

Which leads naturally to our central interest, the relationship of the two parents, and parental images, to the image of God. Although Erikson has little to say about the divine image, the great deal which he says about religion provides sufficient hints to build up a picture which can be confirmed by at least one succinct page.³⁸

It is in union with the mother that the child first receives a sense of basic trust; and, at least in the early years, this is nurtured by the mother. It is a function of religion, and therefore of the divine image to sustain this basic trust in later years. So we may expect that the divine image will (firstly?) contain maternal elements, and that these will carry overtones of union, oneness with the divine, unconditional acceptance. Beyond this, it is the father who is primarily responsible for conscience and morality, and for guiding too. These, also, are later sustained by religion, and the divine image. Law and guidance come from God as they once originated

in the father. So we shall expect paternal elements in the divine image also, and expect these to carry a sense of obligation, demand and direction.

In the healthy person we shall expect religion, and the divine image as its personification, to contain both maternal and paternal elements and that neither shall be too predominant.

There is a third element to the divine image which Erikson recognizes,³⁹ but which seems poorly integrated into his system and added as an afterthought. The God of much eastern (and western?) mysticism, "the unborn core of creation, the - as it were, preparental - centre where God is pure nothing: ein lauter Nichts, in the words of Angelus Silesius."

(v) Vergote and Faber

We shall consider these two authors, briefly, in the same subsection, since both show strong psycho-analytic influence and come from within the same circles of continental Religious Psychology. Both writers are clergymen and also share a strong pastoral concern.

The Belgian priest/psychologist, Antoine Vergote, has set down his opinions concerning the parental aspects of the image of God in his book "The Religious Man", Vergote (1969), in particular Chapter three of Part one: "The Two Axes of Religion" is devoted to this question. He has also been responsible for one of the most detailed empirical investigations of this question.⁴⁰

Vergote is greatly influenced by Freud, but has also listened to others, like Jung, who are more aware of the religious significance of the mother symbol. He sees in religion two axes, maternal and paternal, and links both to our experience as young children. On the whole his description of the content of these 'axes' is similar to the pictures developed by Erikson and others (since most authors work with a common tradition of parental roles, to a great extent, this is to be expected). However, possibly because he sees little place for the maternal in the God of the Judaeo-Christian tradition, he gives a predominant place to the paternal influences. This is also a consistent finding of his empirical studies, but as we shall argue in the next section there is a suspicion that this is a construct of his measuring instrument.

For Vergote the image of God includes the content of the image of father, which in turn includes the content of that of mother.

The Dutch Reformed theologian, Heije Faber, in his work "Psychology of Religion", Faber(1976), is much influenced by the post-freudians. On pages 278-9 of this work he sets out briefly his conclusions concerning "the correlation between the image of the parent and the image of God." The empirical work which he has considered is far from complete, and seems to be indebted to Vergote (op cit.). However, his conclusions, informed as they are by his consideration of the major psycho-analytic writers, together with a wealth of pastoral experience, are well worth repeating.

His main comments are four-fold :

i) Experience of God correlates with experience of parents - this does not mean though , that this experience of God need be an infantile residue.

ii) Upbringing may affect the balance of paternal/maternal influence.

iii) Projection is the mechanism at work - this involves feelings not ideas. Despite Freud, this may be true of a mature personality.

iv) He makes "experimental" propositions concerning development :

(a) If projection is involved, this implies emancipation from the parents, and therefore the feelings involved "will only develop clearly in adolescence".

(b) Religious feelings are awakened in the relationship to the mother and projected on to a providing father as the child begins to emerge from the security of the family, at about age eight years.

(c) Faith which involves call and obedience develops on a basis of conscience (paternal) ; here, too, projection on to God begins around age eight, though hesitantly at first.

(d) At first talk about God is purely intellectual, religious feelings begin to emerge in the turmoil of the oedipal phase.

(e) The predominance of maternal feelings in the picture of God is connected with age, as well as upbringing and culture. Projection of maternal feelings after age eight years probably proceeds more quickly than the projection of feelings connected with the father.

(vi) Jung

Jung's writings are permeated with references to God, these are not confined to works which deal explicitly with religious topics. His work also has maternal and feminine elements in a central place. Indeed these two concerns are linked in his well known statements concerning the person of Mary in the Catholic dogma of the assumption

and those concerning the 'Tetraktys'. It is difficult, or impossible to separate his gnostic theology from his psychology, for the two are thoroughly intertwined, so much so that many have assumed, wrongly, that Jung identifies self with God.⁴¹ According to Jung :

"It is impossible for psychology to establish the difference between the image of God (or the 'self') and God himself.It is not possible to distinguish between symbols of God and symbols of the 'self' ; i.e. it is not possible to observe the distinction empirically." ⁴²

Jung is clearly concerned that most religious systems in the west (especially protestant Christianity) do not give expression to the feminine elements included in the religious experience which as an investigator of the Psyche he uncovers. His thought on this is, perhaps, most accessible in "Memories, Dreams, Reflections". ⁴³

A closer look at Jung's thought shows us that the place which he gives to the feminine principle in the godhead is very different from the maternal image, source of basic trust, loving union and the like which we have found in other writers. The fourth, female, principle in his godhead, (in addition to the clear, light, Trinity which is male), has more in common with the ambivalent goddesses of the east. For as well as uniting the feminine to the masculine it also unites evil and shadow to the good and the light.

However, Jung's thought is so complex and his system so self-contained, that it seems wiser in this thesis to follow the example of Michael Argyle, who writes :

"....there are several theories, such as those of Jung and Fromm, which have not been included. In fact an attempt was made to write sections on these theories, but it was found impossible to make any testable predictions from them." ⁴⁴

A view which he does not seem to have changed in the revised edition where their only reference to Jung is in the section entitled revealingly "Beyond Psychology". ⁴⁵

This brief summary may then be concluded with the explanation that Jung's thought, though fascinating, is unlikely to have any great relevance to our present study.

(vii) Social Psychological Approaches

There have been a number of attempts, particularly by North American authors, to make use of theories from general Social Psychology to describe and to make predictions concerning the development of the God concept. Particularly concerned with the role of parents in this development are the use of Social Learning Theory by Spilka⁴⁶ and Day's attempt⁴⁷ to make use of Symbolic Interaction Theory.

Spilka et al were deliberately seeking theoretical models in this area which lend themselves to relatively simple and direct testing. They suggest that in most cases the child's primary model will be the same-sex parent, and that the God image may be "a projection of the dominant parental model". From these assumptions they conclude that "regardless of personal preference, males should reveal noteworthy father to God correlations while parallel mother to God coefficients should be evident for females."

However it does not seem to me that Social Learning Theory necessarily claims that the dominant parental model will be the same-sex parent (the preferred parent will also at least, be a model to a significant degree, and the two will often, or usually?, be different). Secondly it seems undesirable to introduce notions of projection into what is intended to be a Social Learning Theory model. It would seem more consonant with the spirit of this theoretical position to predict that a child's image of God will correlate more highly with the image of God which is held by the preferred and same-sex parent. An area which no one has attempted to investigate,

Spilka et al also make predictions using the concept of self-esteem, and here they seem to be on firmer ground. They suggest that the image of God should be like that which the person has of themselves. "Man created God in his own image." However this area is one which is beyond the scope of this thesis.

Day, on the other hand, is not interested in testing a theoretical position, but rather in outlining the possibilities which it opens up in this area. First he summarizes Symbolic Interaction Theory and its major concepts, drawn from Mead (1956). He shows how these concepts relate to the development of the God image and in particular the importance of the parents in this development, not just as teachers but as models.

However, this theoretical perspective is not sufficiently worked

through, and leads to little in the way of clear predictions. If Day's work were extended and the implications worked out in more detail the predictions to be made would seem very close to those which Social Learning Theory would also make, and still beyond the scope of this study.

(viii) Cognitive Dissonance

The theory of Cognitive Dissonance as propounded by Festinger (1957) has been widely used in studies of attitude change. It can be used to make a simple but interesting prediction which relates to our area of study.

We shall summarize the theory only briefly, since excellent summaries are widely available in works on attitude change and many textbooks on Social Psychology.

If one cognitive element A, implies the negation of another, B, then A and B are said to be dissonant. Such dissonance leads to tension which motivates efforts towards consonance. Where some outside influence influences the retention of such an element, A, this is known as 'Forced Compliance'. In such a case the efforts towards consonance are said to be inversely proportional to the 'Justification', (the justification is the reward or threatened punishment which has induced the holding of A.)

This theory leads to the conclusion that religious persons, in particular those who identify with the Jewish or Christian traditions, will experience such dissonance if their image of God differs from that expressed in material valued by their tradition, e.g. Bible, hymns etc.. Talk of God as father is integral to such material, whilst talk of 'him' as mother is notably absent. Hence we could expect that few such persons would say that God was like a mother if asked explicitly, regardless of how maternal their image of God is seen to be when examined by non-explicit means. This effect should be stronger for the more religious persons and weaker for the less religious.

Forced compliance, if it is at issue here, would seem to strengthen the predicted effect, since the 'justification' involved would be likely to be small. Social support should also enhance this effect.

(ix) Suttie

Ian Suttie was an English Psychiatrist, who died before he could complete the further studies which were to have supported and completed the ideas which he introduced in his book "The Origins of Love and Hate", (Suttie, 1935), and unfortunately he left no school to continue this work.

Though he makes use of the central concepts of Freudian analysis e.g., and especially, the Oedipus Conflict, and though like Freud he is interested in the religions and customs of primitive man, in many ways his book is a reaction against Freud. Where Freud sees religion as an infantile regression and as the universal obsessional neurosis, Suttie stresses its healing role. Where Freud is patriarchal and even authoritarian, Suttie looks back to matriarchal cultures with longing, believing they stressed co-operation and love. Whilst Freud speaks of the Penis Envy of the female, Suttie stresses also a balancing Womb Envy in the male, in his thought male envy of the woman's power to bear children is a powerful force.

Love is humanity's primary need, and hate is the result of fear of its loss. Suttie was concerned therefore by the Taboo on Tenderness which he saw in contemporary society, and believed it a result of too early weaning, provoking insecurity by fear of loss of love. (In mankind, as opposed to womankind, this is reinforced by social conditioning.)

In his section on the history of religions Suttie distinguishes between Matriarchal and Patriarchal periods. In the first, the love, care and providence of the Earth Mother is to the forefront, in the latter, sin, guilt and retribution are the central themes. He sees in Christianity an attempt to combine the two tendencies, God is the freegiver and also the forgiver. For this reason he expands at some length on the parallels he discerns between the gospel miracles and a mother's care for her child.

For our purposes Suttie is so aware of the conditioning role of early training on religious (and indeed other) attitudes that in many ways he may be classed as an anticipation of views like those of Spiro and d'Andrade (see below). Though his views may also be said to predict a far greater maternal element in the image of God than Freud, for example, and most interestingly that this would be especially true for males. (In Chapter Two below we shall find that recent empirical studies show just such an effect.)

(x) General Parental Projection Theories

Ernest Jones, Freud's biographer, has suggested a less patriarchal version of the idea that God is a projected parental figure. In a paper on 'The Psychology of Religion' he writes:

"the religious life represents a dramatization on a cosmic plane of the emotions, fears and longings which arose in the child's relation to his parents." 48

As we shall see, this more general version of the theory has proved to fit more closely the results of empirical studies with adults (again see Chapter Two below).

Spiro and d'Andrade (1958) attempted to enlarge upon and test such a theoretical position by means of cross-cultural data. Their work was concerned with 'supernatural belief systems' in general, but in particular, and of most interest to us, they attempt to test the hypothesis that persons brought up in a culture where parents are punitive will worship punitive gods, whilst societies where parents are benevolent will worship benevolent gods.

They tested this hypothesis using child rearing data from Whiting and Child (1953) for eleven societies : Alor, Azande, Baiga, Dahomey, Hopi, Kurtatchi, Manus, Navaho, Thonga, Tikopia, Venda. They found significant confirmation for their theory.

CHAPTER TWO :

REVIEW OF EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

Developmental Studies

Partly because of educational needs, and in part due to the wealth of theoretical perspectives, the development of religious thought, and especially of, the concept of and attitudes towards God (the image of God), is a comparatively well researched area of the Psychology of Religion.

The influence of Piaget's studies upon so many areas of education has led to several attempts to use his methods⁴⁹ and theories.⁵⁰ However since none of these relate closely to our particular area of interest we shall leave them on one side.

As well as Piaget's 'semi-clinical interview' a wide variety of other methods has been used, including : other types of unstructured or semi-structured verbal investigation,⁵¹ pictures⁵² and children's letters to God.⁵³ Of the more structured methods, questionnaires have proved popular, in this, as in all other areas of Psychology.⁵⁴ Peterman(1966) used a Q-sorting technique,⁵⁵ whilst Deconchy's prize-winning research made use of Word Associations.⁵⁶

I have chosen three of these studies to consider in more detail, that of Pitts because it is one of the largest in scale (and non-denominational), of Peterman, because it is concerned with children's relationships with their parents, and Deconchy both for its quality, and because, as we shall see below, it throws an interesting perspective on the question of the relationship of parental images and the God image.

V. Peter Pitts selected children's drawings of God as his subject matter for a variety of reasons. Children of primary school age (the age he is concerned with) tend to think concretely, it is only as we get older that we become what, following Grombich, he calls "word men" instead of "image men". Thus asking a child of this age to draw is giving them a means of expression suited to their means of thinking and forming concepts. (We may note also how much adult Theology makes use of "pictures" and concrete analogies to point towards the

ineffable.) Pictures also provide a wealth of humorous anecdotal material which is useful in fleshing out the numerical 'bones' of such a study. For example he tells of a mother who objected to her son's attempt to draw God, "But that's impossible! Nobody knows what God looks like." To which the child replied, "They will when I'm through." This is a natural way to investigate children's concepts of God, whatever it may seem to adults.

The children, all of whom were receiving denominational religious instruction e.g. Sunday School, were drawn from seven religious groups : Jewish, Lutheran, Mennonite, Methodist, Mormon, Roman Catholic and Unitarian, and were in the first to third grades of school (six to ten years). Their drawings were analysed in two ways, subjectively (along with interview data for some children) and objectively by means of rating scales, A scores measuring anthropomorphism in the drawings, and Q scores the ratio of religious to non-religious imagery used. For the Roman Catholic sample data was also available on the overt religiousity of the parents, R scores.

The research reported to date was rather in the nature of a pilot study, but already some interesting results were obtained. The children's drawings showed clearly the influence of the different theologies of the groups to which they belonged. This influence showed not only in the subjective analysis, but also in the scale scores. For example, arranging the groups in order of decreasing A scores : Mormon, Lutheran, Mennonite, Methodist, Roman Catholic, Unitarian, Jewish ; whereas the comparable order for the Q scores is : Roman Catholic, Mennonite, Methodist, Lutheran, Jewish, Mormon, Unitarian.

A difference was also noticeable between the children under eight years and those of eight years and over. The younger children made more fragmented and vague pictures or gave scribblings or blank papers, whilst the older ones drew more clearly. (This was not related to ability to draw a person, the youngest had no difficulty in this.) Pitts concludes that the younger children "had some percept of what G-O-D was all about, but could not put that percept down on paper."

For the Roman Catholic group, (the only one for which the data was available), there was surprisingly little relation between the overt religiousity of the parents and the A or Q scores of their children's drawings.

Dan Jerome Peterman's purpose "was to undertake an extensive

investigation of Sigmund Freud's theory of religion." This was done retrospectively, i.e. using adolescent subjects rather than longitudinally by following the development across different ages.

He used five instruments :

i) A "Religious Background Questionnaire" to assess strength of belief in God, and extent of reliance on God for help and guidance.

ii) The "Attitudes toward Parents Research Inventory" to measure admiration for Father and Mother.

iii) A short form of "Barron's Ego Strength Scale."

iv) Rotter's "Internalization vs. Externalization of Control Scale."

v) A Q-sort of eighty-two items to assess the subject's image of God.

His results are not favourable to Freud's theory. Fear of the power of fate was negatively related to strength of belief in God for males, but not related for females. His major findings are of direct relevance to our study :

- 1) "Admiration of the father was significantly associated with strength of belief in God among both sexes but this relationship was not as strong as might have been expected according to Freud's theory. Furthermore, admiration of the mother, a variable not treated by Freud, was found to be an equally powerful predictor of religious beliefs."

If belief in God is related to admiration for parents, then, since people who believe in God are likely on the whole to admire 'him', we should expect that the image of God will be like both parental images in other respects too. (It is interesting to speculate in which direction, if either, the causality may exist here. Does admiration for parents predispose to belief in God, or does such belief promote admiration of parents? So far no one has attempted to investigate this.)

- 2) "When analyses were replicated within groups of Jewish, Catholic, Liberal-Moderate Protestant, and Conservative-Fundamentalist Protestant subjects the results suggested that the relative "femininity" or "masculinity" of a religion may be an important variable to consider

when one is trying to link attitudes toward parents with maintenance of belief in God. That is, if a religion stresses the role of female figures and attributes many predominantly feminine traits to God, then attitudes toward the mother function as important determinants of belief in God. When a religion is more masculinized, then attitudes toward the father play a greater role in determining continuance of strong religious beliefs."

The concept of the "Masculinity" or "Femininity" of religious bodies is one which crops up elsewhere.⁵⁷ The scanty data on denominational differences reviewed in the next section is ambivalent in its relationship to Peterman's finding. My own study, (see Chapter 3), will not be able to distinguish between different groups unfortunately. This is clearly an interesting idea worth further research.

Jean-Pierre Deconchy first reported the results of his research in a brief paper in *Lumen Vitae*,⁵⁸ however, since his work received the quinquennial prize for the Psychology of Religion the full report has been published, in French only.⁵⁹

With a very large sample of both boys and girls, aged eight to sixteen years, he used a word association approach obtaining five responses, in order, to the stimulus word God, and also to other stimuli, including mother and father. The induced responses were organized into twenty-nine thematic categories, including as two, unidentified and blank responses.

One section of the book of 1967 is of special interest to us; Part 2, Chapter 11, section F : "Les images parentales et la visée de Dieu." Here he notes, during what he calls the personalisation phase, how the responses for mother and father relate to those for God. (This phase is from about eleven to thirteen years for boys, and eleven to fourteen for girls.)

One part of this section, (a) "La similitude d'induits", is concerned with the frequency of similar responses to the three stimulus words. A striking example of this is Daniel, p.171, whose responses look like this :-

	1	2	3	4	5
Pere	Amour	Gentil	Aimer	Tendrement	-----
Mere	Amour	Sincere	Aimer	Tendrement	-----
Dieu	Amour	Grand	Aimer	Filialement	-----

When speaking of lordship it is the father-God comparison which is most striking, whilst the mother-God comparison is weak.

When labour activity is in mind the common pattern is, father - worker, mother - work, and God - creator.

In many cases the parallels are with the responses to God more intense, or more precise, e.g. :

comparative: mother/father - good, God - very good.⁶⁰
superlative: mother/father - good, God - best.
infinite: mother/father - good, God - infinitely good.
precision: mother/father - master or chief, God - master or chief
of the world.
mother/father - head of the household, God - head of
the world.

(these last two examples apply more to father than mother).

In some cases 'substantification' takes place, e.g. :

mother/father - good, God - goodness.
mother/father - to love, God - love.

In the next part, (b) "Les schèmes d'attitudes", Deconchy shows us that it is above all in the line of: strength, prestige, authority, etc. that the parallels between God and father are most marked.

In this part he also gives us some examples of the more rare opposites, e.g.,

mother/father - love, God - fear.
or mother/father - dead, God - alive.

In the earlier paper, Deconchy (1965), gave one important insight into the development of these parallels in the boys. "Until now" (between fourteen and fifteen years) "the activity of God had been essentially considered as paternal, but gradually it becomes maternal in tone."

So now we are in a position to summarize the development of the parallels he finds in the word association responses to mother and father with those for God. Such parallels begin to become reasonably frequent at about age eleven to fourteen for the girls, and at about

eleven to thirteen for the boys. For the boys there is then a change in tone (age fourteen to fifteen years) from predominantly paternal to maternal. He does not say what change if any follows the personalisation phase for the girls. The parallels between God and father were especially noticeable in the area of authority and power.

Some tentative conclusions may now be drawn concerning the development of, attitudes towards and concepts of, God which relate to the theme of this thesis:-

Attitudes :

- 1) Attitudes towards God are related to attitudes towards parents, Klingberg (1959), Peterman(1966) and Chartier & Goehner(1976).
- 2) Mothers and fathers are of comparable importance in the development of attitudes towards God, Peterman (1966).
- 3) Differences of religious group affiliation may affect the relative importance of each parent, Peterman (1966).

Concept :

- 1) It may be difficult to assess the child's concept of God below about eight years, Pitts (1976) and various Piagetian theorists.
- 2) Sex differences may be small, Klingberg(1959) ; though boys may have more punitive and authoritarian concepts of God than girls, Patino (1965).
- 3) As children get older, and especially in adolescence, their concept of God becomes more "personalised", Babin(1965) and Deconchy (1967).
- 4) At about fourteen to fifteen years boys begin to change from paternal to maternal concepts of God, Deconchy (1965).
- 5) Denominational teaching seems to be a major factor in developing the concept of God, whilst the attitude towards God is independent of "catechistic knowledge", Patino (1965) and Pitts(1976).

There are a couple of points arising from these conclusions which deserve comment here. Besides the distinction made above between attitudes to and concepts of, God; it is also necessary to distinguish between the child's concept of God, and the score achieved on some scale of "catechistic knowledge" and other similar scales which are concerned with what a child has learned of a particular set of views of God.

Each of these, as well maybe as other still finer distinctions, will be affected by different variables. Until someone can mount a large, well conducted study which investigates and adequately distinguishes between these then perhaps it is best to aim to investigate first the more diffuse image of God. (See Excursus One: "Image", above, for a definition and discussion of the use of this term here.) This is closer in any case to the range of practical concerns, which are not always concerned to distinguish so finely.

Indeed a closer examination of several of these studies reveals that although the author intends to investigate, for example, the concept of God, in fact he may use an instrument which reveals a strong affective bias (telling us a great deal about attitudes), and vice versa; or he may use a scale which is culturally biased (and so near to a measure of catechistic knowledge). This will be born in mind in the choice of measuring instrument in Chapter 3 below.

Images of God and Parents, in Adults

The first study to attempt to assess and measure the similarity of parental images with the image of God was that of Nelson and Jones (1957).⁶¹ They made use of the Q-sort, a technique devised by Stephenson (1953). Others since then have adopted this approach, so I shall outline its main features here.

Stephenson was concerned that most Psychology was based upon ignoring or minimizing differences between subjects. In particular, that studies using factor analysis were based upon correlations between tests summed over a large number of subjects. He suggested that the alternative approach, Q method, might often be more interesting, to give detailed attention to small numbers of people, in the extreme case one person. The so called Q-sort is an example of this Q methodology, an example devised by Stephenson himself.

Briefly, the subject is given a number of cards with statements printed on. The task is to sort these in a number of ways. For example, first to complete the sentence ...is like me/is unlike me, then is like I would like to be/ is like I do not wish to be. Each sort is forced into an approximation to a normal distribution, thus:

	Like								Unlike
Score:	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
Frequency:	2	4	5	8	10	8	5	4	0

(Number of cards = 48.)

Based upon Stephenson (1953).

In the case of Nelson and Jones (1957) the cards could complete the following statements: "When I think of God I ...", "When I think of Jesus I", "When I think of father I" and "When I think of mother I". The subject would sort first for one, then another of these, and the sorts for father, mother, God and Jesus can be compared.

Since they were using Q methods Nelson and Jones had only a small number of subjects, sixteen, these were drawn from a protestant Liberal Arts College.

Their major finding was that God was consistently seen to be more like mother than father.

Strunk (1959) conducted what was largely a replica of the previous study. His findings differed a little, but not strikingly so considering the small samples involved (in his case twenty). One new finding was that correlations were higher for the preferred parent.

Godin and Hallez (1964), in Belgium, also used this measure (translated into French). They not only confirmed the previous results, but were able to add precision. For example they found that the God-father correlation was highest for their group of Nuns, lower for the unmarried girls, and lower still for the older women. They confirmed that God was seen as more like the preferred parent, but added that the correlations were higher with both parents if neither was preferred. All correlations tended to weaken with increasing age of subject.

In the next year Fr. Godin reconsidered this study, and in particular the method used, Godin (1965). He expressed the following reservations:

(i) The statements used do not cover a sufficient range of feelings, in particular;

- (a) "unselfish and freely given love",
- (b) "less egocentric feelings such as admiration, wonder and gratitude",
- (c) "more definite negative feelings such as being coerced, anger, rebellion." ⁶²

(ii) No account is taken of the shift in meaning from passive to actively parental in older married subjects (who are often parents themselves), which leads to a more pronounced difference between the parental images.

(iii) There is a dearth of negative feelings expressed for either parent which further reduces their differentiation. (Possibly this is because such feelings could arouse a sense of guilt and so they are avoided?).

This is an appropriate time to add a comment of my own. The investigators have, on the whole, claimed to be investigating the concepts of parents and God. However the statements used in the Q-sort developed by Nelson and Jones and used by the others contain a great deal of material concerned explicitly with feelings. That is the measure used contains a mixture of cognitive and affective components. Therefore concept, a cognitive term, is not an appropriate word to use to name what is measured. As I have argued in the introduction above, a term is needed which includes both. Such a term is image. (Godin does sometimes use this term "image", but does not define it.) For this reason when discussing these studies I have used the term image which describes quite well what is being assessed, rather than concept, although this is what the investigators claim to measure.

Deconchy, whose major findings were discussed in the previous subsection, published an interesting paper which examined in some detail his findings in the light of the research we have just considered, Deconchy(1968). He had been struck by what Godin and Haliez call the 'chiasm' (a term borrowed from genetics). God is seen as more like the opposite sex parent.

He looked at the themes Divine Fatherhood, Virgin Mary, and Christ as Man, and investigated their "saturation in development or Delta factors." ⁶³ The results are indeed interesting: "the theme 'Divine Fatherhood' in the development of the idea of God acts more vigorously in girls than in boys." However it is the comparison of the role of the Virgin Mary in the development of the idea of God in boys, and of Christ as Man for the girls which is especially striking:

"The idea of 'Virgin Mary' with all the references it may comprise to the mother-image, the 'feminine' aim, even perhaps the unconscious sexual tendency, is a powerful factor of development for the idea of God in boys, whereas it plays practically no part in the development of the same idea in girls."

Roughly the reverse is found for the idea 'Christ as Man', though this is not quite as clearly insignificant for boys as 'Virgin Mary' is for girls (possibly because of cultural and educational influences).

Siegmán (1961) made use of the Semantic Differential method (discussed in the next chapter) as well as other measures in an attempt to test Freud's theory. Much of the study does not concern us here. For the part which interest us he used two samples, a predominantly female group of Israeli Jewish Students, and an all male group of Americans of mixed religious

background. He was not concerned to examine God-mother correlations (his study, like Froude's thesis, makes no mention of mother). The God-father correlations were insignificant except for the 'activity' factor for the Americans. However when they were separated into two groups, high and low on religiosity ratings it was found that for the low religiosity group the correlations were significant on all three factors.

Vergote et al (1969) marks the first publication in English of the results of the extensive work carried out at the Centre for the Psychology of Religion at Louvain. These studies, developing and making use of the Score-Dieu-Parent in its various forms, together with other work using the same instrument has been published, also, in the following papers: Vergote and Aubert (1972), Tamayo and Dugas (1974), Tamayo and Desjardins (1976) and, Keyser and Collins (1976).

As I explained in the Introduction, Vergote draws a distinction between the Memory Image of parents and the Symbol Image. (Roughly, the first is the parents as they are remembered, whilst the second has been influenced by social and cultural factors.) In all the reported studies the interest is in the Symbol Image.

The Score-Dieu-Parent is comprised of a series of adjectival phrases against which the subject has to rate the three images. The phrases were chosen as being either maternal or paternal from "Literature and Psychology", all may be applied to God also. Eighteen paternal and eighteen maternal items were selected for the final form of the scale. It should be noted that although some attempt was made to examine the validity of the scale, the maternal items were not in fact good at distinguishing between paternal and maternal images. (I shall return to this point later.) The test has been adapted and translated into Dutch and for use in North America in addition to the original French.

From his analysis of the basic results Vergote concludes that the father "has a more complex image" than the mother, but that the image of God is more complex than either. Thus the distance between God and father is less than the distance between God and mother. This is contrary to the previous findings. Vergote explains the difference by claiming that the statements used by the Q-sorters were too slanted towards qualities of intimacy and thus towards the mother. However his own list of qualities comprising the two scales were not chosen objectively either. We saw above that the "maternal" items were not good at distinguishing the two parental images. Vergote explains this by means of his conclusion that the father image is more complex, including the maternal items, along with others, which

in turn he concludes from the results obtained with the scale, a circular argument. An alternative view is that the "maternal" items, since they were bad at distinguishing the two images were rather general parental items, and that, therefore, the mother image has not been adequately tapped in Vergote's scales. This is my own feeling. It might be argued, though, that Keyser and Collins (1976) finding with this scale that Protestants have a more balanced (less paternal or more maternal) image of God might give some support to Vergote's interpretation. (Though it could be that their subjects in fact saw God as more maternal than paternal, had this been allowed to show up by the scale. In any case, the question of denominational differences is not clear cut. Rees (1967), appears to have found the reverse, Catholics more maternal, Protestants more paternal).

Other less ambiguous findings include: twenty year olds have a more maternal image of God than seventeen year olds, Arts students more than Science, and that there is no distinguishable difference between those with concrete versus abstract belief systems. Cross cultural studies are not yet advanced enough for useful conclusions to be drawn.

Nelson (1971) returned to this theme with a larger sample (84 subjects) which was also less culturally coherent than before. He confirmed the Godin and Hallez finding that God is seen as more like the preferred parent, and more like both when there is no preference.

Fleck, Day and Reilly (1974) were interested in the effect of age of conversion experience. Their subjects were students, and were divided into two groups, those converted before age ten years, then those converted after age seventeen years. There were higher correlations for those converted younger.

Chartier and Goehner (1976) were concerned to look at the effect of the adolescent's relationship with his parents on the image of God. In particular they found that a measure of Parent-Adolescent Communication was significantly related to the image of God as loving.

Spilka, Addison and Rosensohn (1975) used a battery of tests to attempt to distinguish between and to assess evidence which might support various theories of how the image of God arises. Despite the use of partial correlation techniques they were unsuccessful in this. However they did find relationships between some aspects of the various images with the influence of the other factors partialled out. This suggests that the time has come when attention should be directed towards particular aspects of the parental and God images. Rather than the kind of blanket study which has so far been

the norm in this field. (Though even the basic all-embracing work has not been done with children to date, see the next chapter.)

The following conclusions can perhaps be drawn with some confidence from the results so far :

- (i) The image of God is related to the images of both father and mother, Nelson and Jones (1957), Vergote et al (1969), Tamayo and Dugas (1974), Godin and Hallez (1964), Strunk (1959), Nelson (1971), Fleck, Day and Reilly (1974), and Keyser and Collins (1976).
- (ii) The image of God tends to be closer to that of the opposite sex parent, Godin and Hallez (1964), Strunk (1959) and Nelson (1971).
- (iii) God is seen as more like the preferred parent, Godin and Hallez (1964) and Nelson (1971).
- (iv) Correlations between the image of God and the image of either parent seem to decrease with age, Vergote et al (1969), Godin and Hallez (1964) and Ludwig, Weber and Iben (1974); and with age of conversion experience, Fleck, Day and Reilly (1974).

CHAPTER THREE :

EMPIRICAL STUDY

Choice of Measuring Instrument

The aim of the empirical study which forms the centre of Part One of this thesis is to investigate how the correlations of the image of God and the parental images change with age. In particular, to attempt to provide evidence which may support or contradict various hypotheses concerning the development of the image of God in relationship with the parents.⁶⁴

There are, therefore, two major criteria to be satisfied by any research instrument before it is of any potential for use in this study:

- (i) It must be able to cover as wide a range of ages as possible, ideally from as young as possible to sixteen years;
- (ii) It must be able to measure the correlations between the image of God and the parental images with good face validity and have proven reliability.

A wide variety of tests has been considered in addition to those already used with adults. A number of approaches were ruled out fairly quickly; for example, clustering methods⁶⁵ as being inappropriate to this study; others such as children's drawings⁶⁶ as being inappropriate for adolescents; and letters⁶⁷ seemed difficult to apply to compare the influence of paternal and maternal images.

Thus an originally wide choice was narrowed to three, the two most widely used above and one other:

- (i) Vergote's Score-Dieu-Parent.
- (ii) A Q-sort.
- (iii) A Semantic Differential.⁶⁸

Vergote's Score-Dieu-Parent:

As we saw above, Antoine Vergote and his colleagues have developed a sophisticated instrument designed specifically to investigate the question which interests us.

From a literature search they produced a list of two hundred and twenty-six qualities which could be used to describe parents.

Fifty-eight of these were maternal, one hundred and thirty-eight paternal, and thirty could be equally applied to either parent. They then asked a number of graduate students, from a variety of disciplines, to rate these items on a ten point scale to distinguish maternal and paternal items. Eighteen maternal and eighteen paternal items were chosen as being both distinctive and representative. The expression of the chosen items was modified following a number of discussion groups, giving the final instrument a high face validity. In a validity test these items significantly distinguished the maternal from the paternal images at the .01 level. This scale has been widely used in studies with adults, (see above).

Two further questions must be raised by the manner in which this instrument was developed. One, since the instrument was specially developed, how far are the results 'built in' to the very structure of the test? Two, and also of importance, since the initial forms of the test were developed in Belgium for a "Belgian Dutch-speaking population", and then transposed into American English, how far do cultural factors condition the instrument and hence the results? Neither of these objections has received an adequate answer as yet.

As far as its potential for modification for use with children is concerned, there are a number of problems. The greatest of these is the language, and indeed the concepts signified, many of the items are not readily adaptable for understanding by children. For example: "who brings out what is delicate and refined", "intuition", "systematic mind", "who takes the initiative"! Upon careful examination of the thirty-six items I can only conclude that after modification to the language level of eight year olds the test would be unrecognisable. Another problem is how far concepts elicited and validated with adults are applicable to children's parental images in any case.

In effect a new test would have to be developed, using the same approach as Vergote et al. This task is not only beyond the scope of the time and resources available, but in view of the criticisms I have levelled against this method, in particular the problem of circularity, I wonder if the effort would be worthwhile in any case.

Q-sorting

As we have seen the Q-methodology expounded by Stephenson found expression in a sorting technique which gave a wealth of data for each subject enabling statistically significant results to be obtained for

very small samples, indeed for even one subject.⁶⁹ In use, the Q-sort consists of a number of cards containing statements which could apply to any of the reference objects, (in this case, God, father, and mother). These have to be sorted by the subject as like or unlike each reference object in turn. The subject does not simply sort them into two piles however, but rather the sort is forced into an approximation to a normal distribution, thus:

	Like						Unlike			
Score:	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	
Frequency:	2	4	5	8	10	8	5	4	2	(n = 48)

In this way the subject has to make fine distinctions between the degree of applicability of particular statements. (It also makes the statistical treatment of results easier.)

This technique would be easily adaptable for use with various ages of children, only two modifications being required. First, and rather obvious, the statements to be sorted must be readily comprehensible to children of the ages being tested. Second, with younger children, the sort would need to be simplified to suit the age of the child. For example remove the forced normal distribution pattern e.g.:

	Like						Unlike			
Score:	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	
Frequency:	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	(n = 9)

or to give a larger sample of statements:

	Like						Unlike			
Score:	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	
Frequency:	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	(n = 18)

or even in an extreme case sorting into two piles. This would then be analogous to the Family Relations Test of Bene and Anthony (1957), and would therefore be applicable even to children who could not read. The Family Relations Test requires the child to 'post' statements into boxes representing different members of his family. Thus there are more than two "piles", however, he is deciding 'which person does this statement apply to best' in each case, and so the test is more complex than the "two pile" case of the Q-sort. If the Bene-Anthony is applicable to children who cannot read the cards for themselves, then there is no reason why a modified Q-sort should not be also.

The results of such modified forms would not contain the rich wealth of data provided by the standard form. This could be overcome to some extent by using a large number of subjects. In this case the method is no longer a Q-method and loses its major advantages.

There are, also, other problems. One is practical, the Q-sort, in whatever form, takes a long time to administer and must be given to each subject individually. This would place a severe restriction upon the number of subjects who could be included in the study. Since the Q-sort approach would require modification to suit different ages, it is not truly, in any one form, suited for a wide range of age. Use of this technique with adults in this area of study has not been without its critics. (See above). Finally, since the statements to be used must somehow be selected and composed by the experimenter this approach runs into the same problems of circularity as Vergote's, regardless of which forms were used.

Semantic Differential Methods:

Osgood and his colleagues at the University of Illinois gradually developed a scaling method which they called 'Semantic Differential'. Osgood's studies on synesthesia and his attempts to measure social stereotypes form the background against which this method came into being.

Osgood was concerned, as a learning theorist, with 'mediating processes'. Mediation is a blanket term which refers to the events which, are presumed to, take place within the organism intervening between stimulus and action. Osgood develops a complex, yet elegant, theoretical structure to describe how such processes might work in terms of learning theory. Other, less behaviourist psychologists may refer to the same "black box" events as symbolic processes, and so speak of ideas and insight and so on, instead of stimulus producing responses and the like.

The Semantic Differential method is an attempt to measure such processes.⁷⁰ In fact the theoretical background of this attempt is, at present, of less significance than it might appear; for we cannot investigate such processes inside the 'black box' with any degree of certainty. What does concern us is how far that attempt is successful at assessing the overall effect of such processes (whatever they are called). For this overall effect is what we have called image.⁷¹

Osgood, his colleagues and others have demonstrated time and

again the very high reliabilities found with these scales. They make out a good case for at least a kind of face validity. The wide range of subjects and areas of study where this technique has proved useful gives also a good base to argue that this technique does indeed assess (at least some important aspects of) image as defined above.

This method, as usually employed, is based upon three assumptions concerning the 'space' needed to describe meaning.⁷²

(i) This space may be described in terms of a series of bipolar scales, e.g., Good - Bad, Hard - Soft.

(ii) These scales may themselves be described adequately by a smaller number of bipolar dimensions.

(iii) In fact a very few dimensions, and hence few scales, will normally give an adequate description of this space.

The first of these assumptions has been questioned. It has been shown that not all such pairs are used in bipolar fashion by all subjects to describe all targets.⁷³ However, though it is true that some subjects would prefer to use some scales in a unipolar manner, very few subjects indeed seem to have any difficulty in using such scales in a bipolar sense. (It may be that the same words used in unipolar and bipolar scales may have different connotations.)

The other major source of criticism is from linguists who object to Osgood's use of the term 'meaning' to describe what he measures, and in particular his claim to reduce a major part of this 'meaning' to three factors. From our point of view it is interesting that one of the strongest and best informed of these critics recognizes "the possibilities it has opened for the systematic description of the 'affective' capabilities of words."⁷⁴ For my study it is of no importance if the Semantic Differential method takes little or no account of denotative meaning, for it does appear to be a good way of measuring image. Weinreich's statement quoted above only supports this view.

So, the Semantic Differential method is a good way of measuring image, with very high reliability, and good face validity. It is a method designed to be administered to groups, and to extract a good quantity of data in a comparatively short time. One question remains. How far is it applicable for use with a wide range of age of child?

Numerous studies have been successfully conducted with children using such measures.⁷⁵ Lilly, in his doctoral thesis, set out to

assess this method's usefulness in developmental studies. Briefly, he used subjects from third grade upwards (about nine years old) and found similar factors to those isolated by Osgood et al with adults. All his test-retest reliabilities were greater than .95.

As I have argued above, Vergote's instrument is not applicable for use with children. (His method would be, but would require more time than is available in developing the measuring instrument.) The Q-sort approach is adaptable but in the process it would lose its distinctive advantages, whilst still retaining its disadvantages. Both these methods contain a large subjective component in the choice of content, and so are open to charges of circularity. The Semantic Differential approach however is of proven, and very high reliability; proven usefulness in studies with children; suitable for group administration; and extracts a valuable amount of data in a short time. It was also developed to measure the very thing I intend to assess, image; the way a person thinks of and reacts to the target. It is therefore the approach which I have chosen to use.

Adaption and Choice of Scales:

Studies which have been conducted with children using Semantic Differential method have varied in several ways. Some have used seven point scales, as Osgood et al did with adults, one even used eleven point scales, whilst several have chosen to reduce the discriminations to be made by using only five points. The age at which class rather than individual testing has been introduced has also varied. The scales chosen for use have naturally varied greatly.

Concerning the number of potential points on the scale, I intend to adopt the most conservative stance. This should maximize the chance of getting the children to use all the scale points with comparable frequency. I shall therefore use only five point scales. The positions will be verbalized thus: very, quite, and not. The scales will then look something like this:-



Although it would be quite possible to use seven point scales with all but the younger children I plan to use five point scales with all

subjects, so that the results may be as strictly comparable as possible across all ages.

I have used the following criteria in the choice of bipolar adjectives to define the scales to be used:

(i) Pairs used and found suitable by other investigators.

(ii) All adjectives must have high frequency on the Thorndike and Lodge (1944) word count, and both thus, and taken at face value, be among those which will be easily comprehensible to a wide range of child.

(iii) Preference will be given to scales which have high factor loadings in studies with adults.⁷⁶

It is worth giving consideration to including along with such scales some new ones specially chosen to distinguish between maternal and paternal qualities. However many of the reasons given above for not attempting to fashion entirely such an instrument, like Vergote's Score-Dieu-Parent, would apply equally to attempts to introduce some such scales. There are two other reasons why this option is rejected, (a) the kind of scales already used are capable of distinguishing father and mother, (b) it seems probable that the combination of such scales with the limited number and range of targets would lead to a greater possibility of subjects deliberately choosing paternal items for God, as the socially acceptable response. (Specially chosen scales with high apparent applicability to mother or father might make such responses more likely, because easier.) For these reasons this option will not be taken up.

The following scales were chosen:⁷⁷

Happy - Sad π_0 =

Small - Big π_0 =⁷⁸

Cold - Hot π_0 =

Foolish - Wise π_0 =

Light - Heavy π_0 =

Kind - Cruel π_0 =

Fast - Slow π_0 =

Hard - Soft π_0 =

Calm - Excited

Ugly - Beautiful π_0 =

Weak - Strong π_0 =

Moving - Stopped

Good - Bad π_0 =

There are three ways in which I have considered modifying the administration procedures with the younger children.

(1) To give not only instructions but examples (e.g. Light et al (1965)) did this with their subjects aged 9 - 10 years and upwards ,

and found "no difficulty in administering the scales even at the youngest grade levels"). As I shall explain in the next section, I will give examples in the instructions to all ages of subject.

ii) To give not only instructions but also practice. So far as I know no previous study has used this approach, but in a small pilot study I found that the seven year olds in particular were more likely to make 'mistakes' on the first page, but thereafter coped well. I will give a practice sheet to all subjects from primary schools.

(iii) To administer the scales to the youngest children individually, and to read them aloud.⁷⁹ In the small scale pilot study mentioned above I found that with a practice sheet this was unnecessary even with the seven year olds. However to allow for reading difficulties I shall with the youngest subjects read out each pair of adjectives and get all the class to mark each scale together.

Details of the administration procedure used and the layout and printing of the scales will be found in the next section.

Subjects and Method

1) Subjects.

The subjects used in this study were drawn from two primary and one secondary school. These were state controlled schools within the city of Glasgow. It was not possible to use a secondary school together with those primary schools feeding it. However, all three schools seem to contain a fair 'mix' of pupils by ethnic origin, class etc..

The pupils were tested in class, as complete classes, using every pupil present at the time of testing. Where it was not possible to test every class in a particular year an attempt was made to ensure that no systematic bias was thus introduced.⁸⁰

There were 809 pupils tested altogether. Table One gives a breakdown by age and sex of those whose results comprise the final analysis. Details of those excluded are given below.

Table One: Subjects included in the final analyses

	BOYS	GIRLS	TOTALS
3rd. & 4th. year Secondary.	131	130	261
1st. & 2nd year Secondary.	158	118	276
Primary	116	101	217
Totals.	405	349	754

The primary children were all aged 7 - 11 years, 2 children aged 6 years, and 8 aged twelve were omitted from the final analysis, because at that stage it was planned that the analysis would be conducted by age in years.⁸¹

In addition to the 537 secondary pupils listed above, eleven were omitted from the analysis because they failed to indicate their sex, and 34 who either failed to complete the whole questionnaire or whose responses were patterned. These 34, less than 6%, will be discussed below.

2) The Measuring Instrument.

The Semantic Differential scales listed above were made up into booklets with an additional short sheet for information about the subject, e.g., age, sex and frequency of attendance at church or some other religious organization. A copy of the booklet is appended to this chapter. The 13 scales chosen each rated highly on one of the three main factors isolated by Osgood et al (1957). However, no two scales related to the same factor were placed next to each other, and their polarity was alternated. Thus, Happy - Sad (scale one) and Foolish - Wise (scale four) have high loadings on the evaluative factor, Happy and Wise being the direction of position valuation, these are on opposite sides of the page and two scales intervene.

Seven of the scales are on one sheet, and the remaining six on another. Thus there are six Semantic Differential Sheets in each booklet, two for each of the three persons with which this study is concerned, mother, father and God. The two sheets for each person

were always together, but the order of the persons varied. One half of the booklets were in the order: Mother, God, Father; the remaining half in the reverse order: Father, God, Mother.

The booklets used with the younger children, classes with average age about ten years and under, were composed of photographically enlarged Semantic Differential Scales on sheets 480mm x 255mm. This was intended to help poor readers.

3) Administration

(a) General

The instructions were given to complete classes as follows:-

"We use words to describe people, not just how they look, but how they act, what the person is like. On the papers in front of you there are pairs of words, one at each end of a line. The top pair is happy and sad. I want you to use these lines to describe people. I'll show you how it works.

Here are some more pairs on the board." (The pairs Short-Tall, Fat - Thin, Bald-Hairy have been written on the blackboard, laid out like those in the booklets.) "I'll show you how it works. I'll describe my friend Tom. Now, I must think," (pointing to the scales) "is Tom Short or Tall? Well, he is shorter than me, but taller than you. So I will say that he is quite tall; and put a cross here, like this. On the side of Tall, not Short, and over the 'quite', quite Tall."

The same procedure is followed for Fat - Thin, illustrating the very fat position, and also to illustrate the 'not' position, neither bald nor hairy.

"Now I want you to do some. Put one cross on each line. Do not put more than one cross on any line, but put one on every line.

This is not a test, there are no right or wrong answers. Except, the right answer is the one that describes what you think, and the wrong answer is one which tells what anyone else thinks.

Now work through the booklet one page at a time, describing the person named at the top of the page. There are two pages for each person, with different words to use.

Some of you may not have either a mother or a father, but you will all know people who have, so you have an idea of what fathers and mothers are like, so you can answer it that way.

If you have any difficulty, or don't understand anything, put your hand up and I will come and try to help."

(b) Variations with older and younger groups

For the primary classes a practice session was inserted after the examples and before the final instructions. Thus:-

"Now you are going to describe someone in this way on the first page. At first we will all do it together, so we must choose someone you all know, someone not in the room." (Here the class were encouraged to choose someone to describe, usually another teacher or the school janitor, the first three lines being done as a class, thereafter the children work on their own. Any child who seems to be having difficulty, or who appears to be making patterned or random responses is helped at this stage.)

For the youngest classes there is one further change. Each line is read out in turn, and each child makes their mark before the next line is commenced. This is intended to help the slow readers. One boy whose reading was very poor had individual help from his teacher.

With the older classes the instructions above were given in slightly more direct form, the content was the same.

(c) Difficulties and questions

In the primary schools there were very few difficulties or questions, apart from problems reading certain words, and a need for reassurance that the child was 'doing it right'.

In the secondary school questions often concerned the meaning of particular pairs, e.g. Cold - Hot when used to describe people. For these a standardized approach was used, i.e. "What would it mean to you if someone said, "(my mother , God, my father, as appropriate) is a cold person, or a hot person? Use the words the way that makes most sense to you."

Several subjects argued that since they did not believe in God they were unable to describe such a non-existent being. It was suggested to them that they had heard many people use the word, and must have some idea of what was meant by it, otherwise they couldn't not believe. So perhaps they could answer on that basis. Almost all then felt able to complete the booklet.

As was noted above, 34 secondary subjects were omitted because of incomplete or patterned responses.⁸² Several of these seem simply to have missed a page (and lacked motivation to check!).

The reasons given by the others (where reasons were given) were approximately evenly divided between those who said they lacked one parent and so couldn't answer and those who did not believe in God, or did not know what God was like. A number who gave such reasons were persuaded to complete the forms (see above), and so I believe that the small proportion of 'conscientious objectors' thus omitted from the study should not bias the results to any great extent.

4) Scoring

Each scale was scored from 0 - 4 e.g.,-

0	1	2	3	4
very	quite	not	quite	very

or vice versa. Thus giving 13 scores for each of mother, father and God for every subject.

The mean and the sum of squares about the mean was calculated for each person for each subject, and then using this data the correlation coefficient, r , for each pair of persons for each subject. That is the correlation between their image of father and mother, r_{f-m} ; mother and God, r_{m-g} ; and father and God, r_{f-g} .

Since the raw data comprises over 29,000 scores, and even the statistics calculated from these, some 6,800 figures, I have not listed them all here!

The next section describes the analyses to which these scores have been subjected, and displays the results of them.

5) Hypotheses

The studies reviewed in the previous chapter do not provide a clear picture of the development of the image of God in relation to the parental images. However, they do give sufficient facts to draw up a possible and likely picture, and thus hypotheses to be tested in the present study.

On the whole these findings fit well with the theoretical approach of Bovet and Piaget, and less well with any of the alternatives. They

also lead beyond this theory suggesting certain changes to be expected at later stages than Bovet was concerned with. I shall now describe the picture which is thus built up.

Bovet says that the image of God originates with children's realization that their parents are not omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent, and the resultant transference of feelings and ideas to God. If the children's images of God develop thus from their images of their parents at about age six, then these images together must initially almost determine the content of the God image. In terms of the present study, both mean r_{m-g} and mean r_{f-g} will be high and positive for the youngest group.

However studies with older subjects find that these correlations are not very high, and that they decrease with age. I expect to find a similar decrease in the present sample. For, if the God image begins with the parental images, other influences are important in its maintenance and development. Also, presumably, with increasing age and independence the parental images become progressively more realistic and hence less Godlike. (While a child's first gods may be his parents, it is a strange child who continues to view those parents as demi-gods indefinitely!) I expect, then, that both means for r_{m-g} and those for r_{f-g} will decrease with increasing age.

It is clear from the adult studies that at some point a sex difference must emerge. In these studies r_{m-g} tends to be higher for men, and r_{f-g} for women. It is, however by no means clear that such an effect should be expected in the younger age groups. Indeed such evidence as there is suggests that there will be no sex difference in these groups at least, and that if any difference is found in this study it will be only among the oldest group.⁸³

I will now summarize the hypotheses to be tested in this study:

Hypothesis One: Mean r_{m-g} and r_{f-g} will be positive for all groups.

Hypothesis Two: Mean r_{m-g} and r_{f-g} will decrease with increasing age, in both sexes.

Hypothesis Three: There will be no significant sex differences in mean r_{m-g} or mean r_{f-g} .

Hypothesis Four: If a sex difference is found it will only be in the oldest group. For boys r_{m-g} tending to be greater than r_{f-g} , and the reverse for girls.

Analysis of Results:

In this section I will present the analysis taking each hypothesis in turn, describing the method used and giving summary tables to display the conclusions. Following this I will present those findings which do not conform to the hypotheses presented above.

(a) Hypothesis One:

Mean r_{m-g} and r_{f-g} will be positive for all groups. (That for all levels of age tested, and for both sexes there will be a similarity between the image of God and both parental images.)

This hypothesis is tested in two stages. First for r_{m-g} and then for r_{f-g} . Student's t , the statistic used to test this hypothesis depends upon the number of subjects in the group, the standard deviation of the scores, and the mean scores. These quantities have therefore been calculated for each sub-group, for both r_{m-g} and r_{f-g} from the 1508 correlations produced by the preliminary analysis described above.

(1) r_{m-g}

All of the means in Table Two (below) are positive. The t scores in each case indicate that these means are significantly different from zero at beyond the .001 level. That is the probability that any of these sub-group means is different from zero by chance is 1,000 to 1 against.

As far as r_{m-g} is concerned Hypothesis One is confirmed.

(ii) r_{f-g}

As for the mean r_{m-g} scores in Table Three, all these sub-group means are positive and significantly different from zero at beyond the .001 level.

Hypothesis One therefore is strongly supported by the results of this study.

Table Two: Analysis of Mother - God correlations

Sex	BOYS				GIRLS			
Age	\bar{X}	s	m	t	\bar{X}	s	m	t
4th	.369	.393	30	5.143	.487	.355	33	7.881
3rd	.463	.333	101	13.973	.511	.322	97	15.630
2nd	.423	.365	48	8.029	.486	.390	33	7.159
1st	.489	.333	110	15.401	.588	.292	85	18.565
11	.576	.198	21	13.331	.499	.326	17	6.311
10	.517	.261	19	8.634	.715	.150	21	21.844
9	.428	.355	27	6.265	.560	.347	15	6.250
8	.591	.239	31	13.768	.579	.388	28	7.896
7	.540	.349	18	6.565	.641	.219	20	13.090

Table Three: Analysis of Father - God correlations

Sex	BOYS				GIRLS			
Age	\bar{X}	s	m	t	\bar{X}	s	m	t
4th	.434	.411	30	5.784	.596	.281	33	12.184
3rd	.521	.326	101	16.061	.623	.269	97	22.810
2nd	.333	.456	48	5.059	.500	.410	33	7.006
1st	.562	.336	110	17.534	.664	.296	85	20.682
11	.630	.240	21	12.030	.600	.229	17	10.803
10	.564	.311	19	7.901	.734	.137	21	24.552
9	.634	.253	27	13.021	.647	.340	15	7.370
8	.560	.361	31	8.637	.646	.342	28	9.995
7	.760	.196	18	16.451	.659	.294	20	10.024

(b) Hypothesis Two:

Mean r_{m-g} and r_{f-g} will decrease with increasing age, in both sexes, and;

Hypothesis Three:

There will be no significant sex differences in mean r_{m-g} or r_{f-g} , and;

Hypothesis Four:

If a sex difference is found it will only be in the oldest group. For boys r_{m-g} tending to be higher, and the reverse for girls.

These hypotheses are all tested by one analysis, a three-way analysis of variance, by age sex and the parental image with which the God image is compared (r_{m-g} or r_{f-g}). This analysis will enable us to partition the total variability to these factors and the various interactions between more than one of them, and to assess the significance of any effects which appear. There are repeated measures on the last named of these factors. (Every subject contributes scores to both r_{m-g} and r_{f-g} , but is of only one age and one sex.) Thus some of the quantities calculated and displayed in the table will involve the influence of the subjects (S) variability.

The number of subjects in each sub-group (m) in Tables Two and Three varies from fifteen (9 year old girls) to 110 (1st year boys). In order to make the groups large and of more similar size for this analysis, all the primary groups are collapsed into one, and the secondary groups paired 4th with 3rd, and 2nd with 1st. The mean scores and number of subjects for these new sub-groups are displayed in Table Four.

The quantities which had to be calculated for each group before the analysis could proceed are listed in Table Five. The symbols are conventional, but are explained in note 84.

Table Four: Grouping of Subjects and Mean Scores for ANOVA

	BOYS				GIRLS			
	m-g	m	f-g	m	m-g	m	f-g	m
4/3	.423	131	.501	131	.559	130	.616	130
2/1	.459	158	.492	158	.578	118	.618	118
Primary	.586	116	.622	116	.687	101	.659	101

Table Five: Totals for ANOVA

	BOYS		GIRLS		TOTAL	
	m-g	f-g	m-g	f-g	m-g	f-g
$\sum x$	55.352	65.641	72.685	80.099	128.037	145.740
4/3 $\sum x^2$	41.271	48.867	49.799	58.996	91.070	107.863
m	131	131	130	130	261	261
$\sum x$	72.568	77.804	68.248	72.940	140.816	150.744
2/1 $\sum x^2$	54.384	62.465	50.753	58.721	105.137	121.186
m	158	158	118	118	276	276
$\sum x$	67.995	72.104	69.337	66.587	137.332	138.691
Primary $\sum x^2$	50.200	54.858	51.006	52.106	101.206	106.964
m	116	116	101	101	217	217
$\sum x$	195.915	215.549	210.270	219.626	406.185	435.175
Totals $\sum x^2$	145.855	166.190	151.558	169.823	297.413	336.013
m	405	405	349	349	754	754

$$\sum_{age} \sum_{sex} (r_{m-g} + r_{f-g})^2 = 1174.424$$

The calculation of the various quantities needed in the analysis now follows:

A constant, K, occurs in most of the formulae for the Sums of Squares, $K = \left(\frac{\sum \text{age} \sum \text{sex} \times}{\sum \text{age} \sum \text{sex} \times m} \right)^2 = \frac{(406.185 + 435.175)^2}{1508} = 469.4208$

$$\text{ssSubjects} = \frac{1174.424}{2} - K = 117.791$$

$$\text{ssAge} = \frac{(128.037 + 145.740)^2}{2 \times 261} + \frac{(140.816 + 150.744)^2}{2 \times 276} + \frac{(137.332 + 138.691)^2}{2 \times 217} - K = 3.719$$

$$\text{ssSex} = \frac{(195.915 + 215.549)^2}{2 \times 405} + \frac{(210.270 + 219.626)^2}{2 \times 349} - K = 4.367$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{ssAge} \times \text{Sex} &= \frac{(55.352 + 65.641)^2}{2 \times 131} + \frac{(72.685 + 80.099)^2}{2 \times 130} + \frac{(72.568 + 77.248)^2}{2 \times 158} \\ &+ \frac{(68.248 + 72.940)^2}{2 \times 118} + \frac{(67.995 + 72.104)^2}{2 \times 116} + \frac{(69.337 + 66.587)^2}{2 \times 101} \\ &- K - \text{ssAge} - \text{ssSex} = 0.2355 \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{ssSubjects within groups} &= \text{ssSubjects} - \text{ssAge} - \text{ssAge} \times \text{Sex} - \text{ssSex} \\ &= 109.4695 \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{ssWithin Subjects} &= \text{ssT} - \text{ssSubjects} = 297.413 + 336.013 - K - 117.791 \\ &= 46.2142 \end{aligned}$$

$$\text{ssParent} = \frac{406.185^2}{754} + \frac{435.175^2}{754} - K = 0.5573$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{ssAge} \times \text{Parent} &= \frac{128.037^2}{261} + \frac{145.740^2}{261} + \frac{140.816^2}{276} + \frac{150.744^2}{276} + \frac{137.332^2}{217} \\ &+ \frac{138.691^2}{217} - K - \text{ssAge} - \text{ssParent} = 0.2245 \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{ssSex} \times \text{Parent} &= \frac{195.915^2}{405} + \frac{215.549^2}{405} + \frac{210.270^2}{349} + \frac{219.626^2}{349} - K - \text{ssSex} \\ &- \text{ssParent} = 0.0435 \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{ssAge} \times \text{Sex} \times \text{Parent} &= \frac{55.352^2}{131} + \frac{65.641^2}{131} + \frac{72.685^2}{130} + \frac{80.099^2}{130} \\ &+ \frac{72.568^2}{158} + \frac{77.804^2}{158} + \frac{68.248^2}{118} + \frac{72.940^2}{118} + \frac{67.995^2}{116} + \frac{72.104^2}{116} \end{aligned}$$

$$- \frac{69.337^2 - 66.587^2}{101} - K - ssAge - ssSex - ssParent - ssAge \times Sex$$

$$- ssAge \times Parent - ssSex \times Parent - 0.08127$$

$$ssParent \times \text{Subjects Within groups} - ssWithin \text{ Subjects} - ssParent \\ - ssAge \times Parent - ssSex \times Parent - ssAge \times Sex \times Parent - 45.308$$

Table Six gives this analysis in summary form, showing the appropriate F Ratios, and giving an indication of their level of significance.

Table Six: Analysis of Variance (whole sample) by Age, Sex and Parent;
Summary Table:

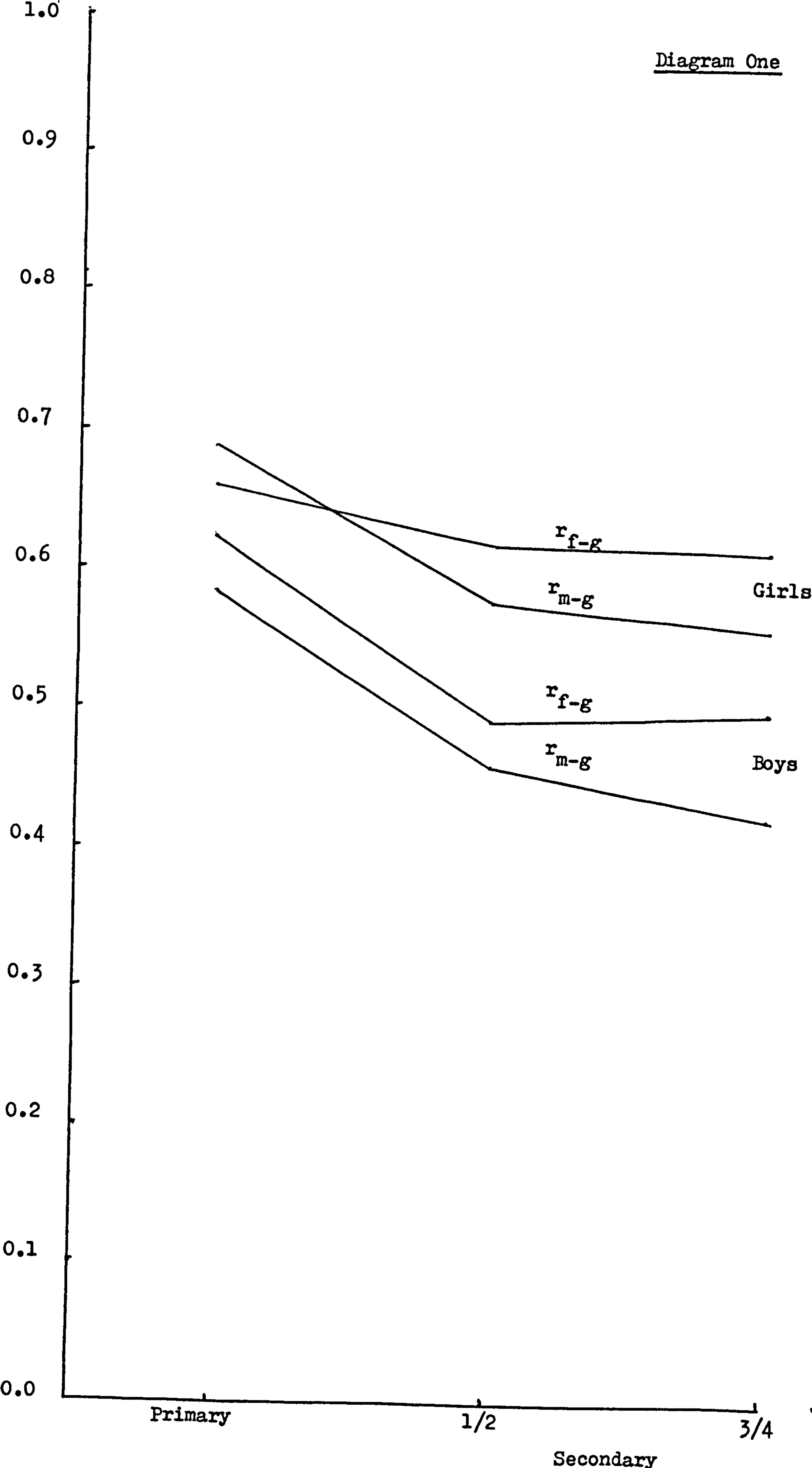
Source	df	SS	MS	F	Significance
Age	2	3.719	1.8595	12.706	p 0.001
Sex	1	4.367	4.367	29.840	p 0.001
Age x Sex	2	0.2357	0.1179	0.806	Not Significant
Subjects Within Groups	748	109.4695	0.14635		
Parent (m-g/f-g)	1	0.5573	0.5573	9.201	p 0.01
Age x Parent	2	0.2245	0.11225	1.853	Not Significant
Sex x Parent	1	0.0435	0.0435	0.718	Not Significant
Age x Sex x Parent	2	0.08127	0.04063	0.671	Not Significant
Parent x Subjects Within Groups	748	45.308	0.06057		

Each of the main effects of Age, Sex and Parent is significant.

None of the interactions are. The factors of Age and Sex are significant at beyond the 0.1 % level.

In order to show what kind of effects these are, the mean scores listed in Table Four , page 57, are presented in visual form in Diagram One.

Diagram One



From this diagram the Age effect is seen clearly as a decrease in mean correlations with increasing age.

The Sex and Parent effects are equally apparent. The mean correlations for Girls are higher, as are those for father - God. (There is a single exception to this last among the Primary Girls. Since the interactions are not significant however, no conclusions may be drawn from this.)

Hypothesis Two, that mean correlations for both mother - God, and father - God would decrease with increasing age in both sexes, is therefore confirmed by these results.

In connection with the Sex difference found, neither Hypothesis Three nor Hypothesis Four applies.

The person to describe on this page is *Father*

Put one X on each line across. Do not put more than one X on each line.
Put your X in the place that best describes the person named at the top.

Happy _____ Sad
very quite not quite very

Big _____ Small
very quite not quite very

Cold _____ Hot
very quite not quite very

Foolish _____ Wise
very quite not quite very


Light _____ Heavy
very quite not quite very


Kind _____ Cruel
very quite not quite very


Fast _____ Slow
very quite not quite very


The person to describe on this page is *Father*


Put one X on each line across. Do not put more than one X on each line.
Put your X in the place that best describes the person named at the top.


Hard  Soft
very quite not quite very

Calm  Excited
very quite not quite very

Ugly  Beautiful
very quite not quite very

Weak  Strong
very quite not quite very


Moving  Stopped
very quite not quite very


Good  Bad
very quite not quite very


The person to describe on this page is *God*


Put one X on each line across. Do not put more than one X on each line.


Put your X in the place that best describes the person named at the top.


Happy  Sad
very quite not quite very


Big  Small
very quite not quite very

Cold  Hot
very quite not quite very

Foolish  Wise
very quite not quite very


Light  Heavy
very quite not quite very


Kind  Cruel
very quite not quite very


Fast  Slow
very quite not quite very


The person to describe on this page is *God*


Put one X on each line across. Do not put more than one X on each line.
Put your X in the place that best describes the person named at the top.

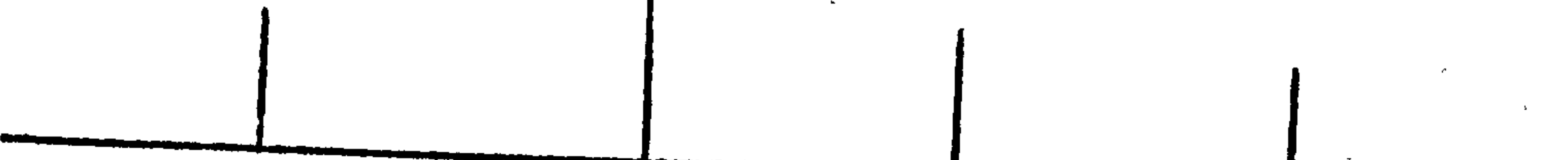
Hard  Soft
very quite not quite very

Calm  Excited
very quite not quite very

Ugly  Beautiful
very quite not quite very

Weak  Strong
very quite not quite very


Moving  Stopped
very quite not quite very


Good  Bad
very quite not quite very

The person to describe on this page is *Mother*


Put one X on each line across. Do not put more than one X on each line.


Put your X in the place that best describes the person named at the top.


Happy  Sad
very quite not quite very


Big  Small
very quite not quite very

Cold  Hot
very quite not quite very

Foolish  Wise
very quite not quite very


Light  Heavy
very quite not quite very


Kind  Cruel
very quite not quite very


Fast  Slow
very quite not quite very


The person to describe on this page is *Mother*


Put one X on each line across. Do not put more than one X on each line.
Put your X in the place that best describes the person named at the top.


Hard  Soft
very quite not quite very

Calm  Excited
very quite not quite very

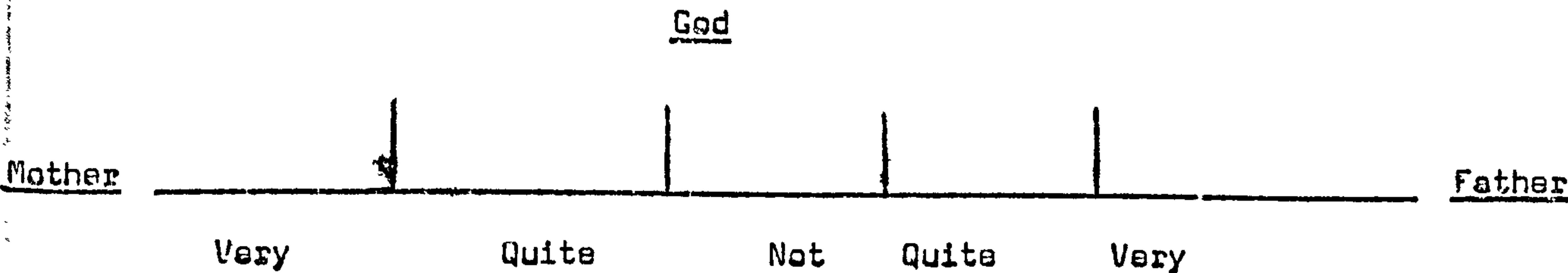
Ugly  Beautiful
very quite not quite very

Weak  Strong
very quite not quite very

Moving  Stopped
very quite not quite very

Good  Bad
very quite not quite very

Do you think that God is more like a Mother or a Father?



Name: _____

Age: _____

Boy / Girl.

Do you go to Church or Sunday School, how often?

Every Week / Usually / Sometimes / Never.

CHAPTER FOUR :

DISCUSSION.

This section is in two parts. First a discussion of some issues directly related to the results just presented, in particular their relation to the theoretical perspective outlined above. The second part is a more general look at some of the implications which this perspective (in so far as it is confirmed by this study) might have in a Christian context. One of these issues will be taken up in more theological fashion, and at greater length, later on.

(1) Discussion of Results

As we have seen the results of the present study confirm Hypotheses One and Two. They thus confirm the broad sweep of the theoretical position towards which the review sections lead.

Hypothesis One was confirmed with an impressive degree of certainty. For children of all ages, from seven year olds to school leaving age, the image of God is like the images of both father and mother.⁸⁵

This confirmation of Hypothesis One fits well with the idea that the young child models his image of God, initially, upon his parents. Hypothesis Two, that the magnitude of these correlations will decrease with age is also strongly confirmed. This too is what we should expect. For if the child initially models his image of God upon his human parents, equally clearly this modelling will have less influence as years pass.⁸⁶

If the results of this study strongly confirm Hypotheses One and Two, and thus the theoretical perspective outlined; then the results with respect to Hypotheses Three and Four are more ambiguous. Neither Hypothesis is confirmed. There is a very significant sex difference, but this is not of the kind expected and predicted.

The prediction of a difference in the oldest group was made on the basis of the adult studies reviewed, and it was suggested that this would show in the oldest group on the basis of Deconchy, 1965. It would, therefore, be not at odds with the theory, and compatible with Deconchy if such a difference were only found with a slightly

older group still.⁸⁷ It is also possible that since the technique used is different from the adult studies (and Deconchy) that this may be responsible for different results.

The sex difference which is found, both correlations being significantly higher for girls, may be due to two different factors. First it is possible, as some have argued, that women (and girls also?) have a more loving and parental image of God, whilst men (and boys?) would have a more punishing and judgemental one.⁸⁸ If this is the case then the particular sex difference which is found here may be due to the choice of adjectives for the Semantic Differential. This would be so if those chosen did not allow sufficiently for 'the fear of the Lord' and similar feelings towards parents to be expressed; thus provoking artificially low correlations for the boys. Alternatively this difference could be due to a difference in response styles on the Semantic Differential; if girls favour extreme responses this would produce spuriously higher correlations.⁸⁹

The finding that the father image is significantly closer to the image of God than is the mother image is also unexpected. The obvious explanation is that this be taken at face value. The image of God is more of father than mother. This could be because of the way in which these images develop, or could be a response to the teaching that God is a heavenly father. (In either case it is only surprising in the sense that many of the adult studies do not find such a consistent difference.) The, non-significant, increase in this difference with age, if confirmed, would tend to support the feeling that this may be due to teaching.

However, since such a difference is only noted previously by researchers using variants (translations) of Vergote's measuring instrument it is possible that such differences are due to characteristics of the measure used.

(11) Points arising from the Theoretical Perspective

The picture which is being built up of the psychological development of the image of God shows this originating from the young child's realization that his parents are limited. Thus in young children a very large part of the image of God is derived from the parental images. Over the years as the child learns more about both God and parents this association weakens. Nonetheless, even by

school-leaving age the average of the correlations is still significantly positive, and still the actual correlations found in almost every case show a marked association between the images. The balance of these associations may be affected by teaching and worship which stress the fatherhood of God, thus producing an idea of God which is nearer to father than mother.

This picture has a number of implications, we shall look at three: the important role of parents in religious development, the importance of family life, and the possibility that maternal imagery should be introduced into worship and teaching.

(a) The Important Role of Parents

If the findings of this study, together with some of the findings reviewed previously, are correct, then the theory that the parental images provide (a large part of) the earliest content of the image of God is likely to be correct. In this case the awesome responsibility of parents is clearly seen. How the child sees them determines, at least to a great extent, how he may see God.

This theory says that parents determine, by how they act and by the kind of people they seem to be, the kind of God in which a child can believe. Indeed, since human life is normally one of gradual rather than catastrophic change, they to some extent condition the God to whom the adolescent and adult is either committed indifferent or opposed.⁹⁰ (Indeed, if the correlations for the oldest group in this study, and for adults in other studies, are a fair measure, then conditioning it to a great extent well beyond childhood.)

It is proven that this is so in certain specific instances. For example, as we have seen, Peterman (1966) found that admiration for parents was related to strength of belief in God, Chartier & Goehner (1976) that communication between parent and adolescent was related to belief in God as loving, and Spiro & d'Andrade (1958) that certain aspects of cultural beliefs in divine beings were related to prevalent child rearing practices! Erikson's use of his concept of 'basic trust' suggests that whether one is able to relate to the divine as loving may well in part be conditioned by first infantile experiences of mother as dependable or the reverse.

If such general factors present in the parent-child relationship can affect the kind of God in whom the child, and later the adult, may trust, then how great is the effect of explicit and implicit

religious teaching and behaviour likely to be!

Little or no hard evidence is available, but common sense and anecdotal material suggest that the effects are profound. In the absence of such hard evidence, a personal illustration may help. When I was quite young, perhaps about six or seven years old, I attended with my father a communion service. This was a rare event as we children were usually playing outside whilst the sacrament was celebrated. At that age religious understanding is limited, but one has a profound sense of the mysterious. This sense was aroused by the quietness and intensity of the people around as they shared the cubes of bread and swallowed the pink liquid from the medicine glasses. I am convinced that this incident together with another similar one is to some extent responsible for the strength of my feelings for sacramental worship, feelings quite uncharacteristic in a Baptist.

The parent's role in forming and nurturing the image of God, as well as guiding the growth of other interrelated religious ideas and experience, is astoundingly complete. The average correlation of parental images to the image of God at age seven is about 0.680, which means that some 46% of the variability in scores on the thirteen scales for the image of God is predictable from the parental image. These figures are based upon the mean scores. Individual children score substantially lower or higher than this.

So we can see that this influence is not an automatic fact. Some children produce very low correlations. Some even negative ones, which indicates that for that child God is the opposite to that parent (to some consistent extent). There is great variability between parents, few children see both as equally like God. Indeed some have negative scores for one parent alongside high positive scores for the other.

The parent's influence is great, but not automatic. We do not as yet know very much about what factors influence the extent to which a particular parent determines the child's image of God. It is also undoubtedly true that some parents influence the image of God in undesirable ways. It would, for example, be difficult for a child whose early experience with mother has not produced a sense of basic trust to develop an image of a loving dependable God.

The parent's influence is great, but not total, nor insurmountable. It is not complete even for the youngest children. The image of God differs from the parental images even on merely thirteen scales

(and the images are more complex than this, one supposes!) Neither is it insurmountable, children quickly learn that God is different from parents. Some even learn that God is unlike, or opposite to both parents (thus producing two negative correlations).

Our knowledge of the precise relationships of various kinds of parent-child interaction to religious feelings and understanding is slight. In view, however, of the importance of these relationships it would be most desirable to learn more. This would not only extend our theoretical understanding of the Psychology of Religion, but would enable better advice to be given to parents. A great part of the parent's influence would seem to be on the level of feelings rather than knowledge. Hence, the work on religious understanding, which is basic to religious teaching is of little help here.

This point may be illustrated by reference to the question of prayer. Parents are often, doubtless rightly, encouraged to pray with their children as well as teaching them to pray. A substantial literature is available on the development of children's understanding of prayer.⁹¹ Such work is of great potential use in guiding teaching about prayer, but of far less help in guiding praying with children which has their future commitment in mind.

Fortunately it is likely that the things which matter most are the parent's sincerity and the like, rather than the explicit content of what is said. Such evidence as there is, suggests that the factors which lead to strong belief in a loving God are also the kind of factors which are generally thought desirable in a parent-child relationship; love, communication etc.. It is also fortunate that in this area as in so many others human beings are resilient. Even bad relationships do not necessarily mar the chance of mature belief.⁹²

(b) The Role of the Family

The importance of a young child's family relationships for normal development has become one of the best researched areas of Developmental Psychology, following Bowlby's report to the World Health Organization in 1951.⁹³ This work collected evidence of the harmful effects of "maternal deprivation" on child development.

The research which it prompted represents a variety of viewpoints and theoretical approaches. As a result of all this research the basic ideas can now be refined considerably. Although there is

still debate about many detailed matters a wide degree of agreement is discernible. Rutter(1972) provides a detailed and careful reconstruction of this area of agreement, at least as it relates to the results in childhood of such deprivations.

The early studies⁹⁴ were often badly controlled, and hence failed to convince those who were not already convinced. There was also a tendency to lump together a wide variety of kinds of inadequacy in the mother-child relationship, and hence a lack of precision. Later work, however, is correcting these defects. In addition the importance of other (than mother-child) relationships has been demonstrated.

Writing of the conclusions which "we may now take for granted" , Rutter (1972), page 121, includes: Intellectual impairment, delinquency, affectionless psychopathy and dwarfism as results of different kinds of lack or deprivation in these early relationships. These kind of results may be related to inadequate relationships of the young child with a variety of significant others: "the father, the mother, brothers and sisters, friends, school teachers and others." ⁹⁵

Because of the detailed latter work of Bowlby, Rutter and others we can now point to specific factors which the young child requires in relationships if normal psychological development is to occur. It is also beginning to be possible to link particular kinds of deficiency to particular kinds of consequence.⁹⁶

It is interesting to note the way in which the theoretical position which is supported by this present study meshes with this more general work. We have seen that the image of God develops within a family context and is influenced by the child's parental images. Thus we may assume that inadequate early relationships (especially with parents) will lead to problems in the development of a normal image of God. (Bettelheim speculated that non-familial upbringing in the Kibbutzim may lead to atheism, though it should be noted that he sees belief in God as oppressive.⁹⁷)

We are not at the stage where predictions may be made concerning the kinds of difficulty or impairment in the development of the image of God which are to be linked with particular kinds of inadequate relationships. Beyond, that is, the suggestion from this and other studies that at least in the early years some kind of correspondence would be expected. The studies upon which such predictions could be based have yet to be conducted.

The suggestion that the quality of thinking and feeling about God is related to the quality of family life tends to reinforce the traditional religious (at least traditional within the Judaeo-Christian tradition) stress on the importance of the family. This stress may be illustrated by brief quotes from the entry "Family" in a fairly recent dictionary of Christian ethics.⁹⁸

This begins: "The family has played a central role in the Christian view of life...", and speaks of the biblical underpinning of this:

"Throughout the Old Testament we find that the family is supported by customs and laws, and the Jews were notable for the strength of their family feeling."..."the concept of the family plays a large part in" (Jesus') "recorded words....He took the positive elements of Jewish Tradition with regard to the family and extended them so as to deepen their meaning and to apply them more widely."

After a brief mention of modern proponents of non-familial child rearing the last paragraph begins:

"This attitude raises ethical questions which Christians must face and grapple with in the second half of the twentieth century."

One aspect of this grappling which has not as yet received explicit and detailed attention is this of the family as the natural locus for the development of the image of God. The emotional response of Christians when family life is threatened, seen for example in the pleas in the House of Lords by bishops for a Minister of State for the family, has, it would seem, a purely religious basis in fact.

(c) The Need for Explicit Maternal Imagery

The image of God develops in correlation with both parental images. Both mother and father seem to have somewhat similar importance.⁹⁹ However the language and imagery used of God in Christian worship and teaching is, almost?, exclusively male, and where parental, paternal. There is a tension apparent here.

If the theoretical interpretation given above of the correlations of the parental images with the image of God is correct, and since there are overall very significant mother-God correlations, then we should expect there to be some kind of psychological need to express the

"motherhood of God". (This term is chosen as parallel to the familiar "fatherhood of God".)

In a later section I shall examine in more detail the theological possibilities and implications of this motherhood of God. Here I am concerned to show that there are indications that such a need exists in fact.

The most obvious and indeed vociferous calls for a broadening of our language and imagery in this context have come from the 'Feminist Theologians'. They have claimed that use of only male expressions leads to a distancing of God from women, that such exclusive use is contrary to any idea of God as transcendent, and that the content of such exclusively male symbolism is in danger of making God out to be an oppressor.

In particular, and related to this, within the context of the campaign for the ordination of women, the theological meaning of the use of such imagery has been a lively issue. Much of the discussion centered around these fairly recent challenges will be considered in the theological sections below. From our present psychological perspective they are of less significance as indicators of the kind of need about which we are talking than is a much more ancient tendency which we shall look at next.

Since the middle ages and until very recently Mary the mother of Jesus has come to hold an increasingly prominent place in Roman Catholic worship and devotion. Since Mary is honoured precisely as mother it is relevant to look at that place here. (A more detailed examination of the place of Mary is given elsewhere, here I shall restrict myself to a look at the rise of Mariology as an expression of the need for a religious maternal symbol.)

Mary is honoured as mother of Christ and as mother of the church, mother of all the faithful. She is honoured with a devotion which is in many ways between that offered to the saints and the worship offered to God. These facts alone would be sufficient to lend some strength to the idea that in her cult we may see an expression of the need for a heavenly mother. They are, however, supported by more precise evidence.

The Catholic psychologist Antoine Vergote, who as we have already seen has been responsible for much of the empirical work on parental images and the image of God, writes:

"Moreover, it is an everyday occurrence in the life of a practising Catholic to distinguish between the functions

attributed to God and those attributed to the Virgin Mary. The image of God is depicted in conformity with a law-making Father, a distant Judge, whereas the Virgin fulfils the role of a divinised mother..."¹⁰⁰

Firmly empirical evidence supporting this comes from Jean-Pierre Deconchy who as we saw above found that the idea "Virgin Mary" was "a powerful factor of development for the idea of God in boys."

The evidence that the Blessed Virgin Mary may meet the supposed need for a sense of the motherhood of God does not only come from psychologists however, spiritual writers also are aware of this need and of how Mary may answer it. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin in his comments on certain ideas concerning the doctrine of the assumption, wrote of the need to correct a dreadfully masculinized conception of Godhead, and saw this need being met in the rise of mariology.¹⁰¹ Adult studies find that men's image of God is more maternal than that of women. If this rise of mariology is a response to a need for a heavenly mother figure, then we should expect it to appeal more to men than women. Teilhard de Chardin claims to note just such an effect:

"But my own conviction, on the contrary, is that this remarkable ascension of the marial alongside the christological is principally the work of men."¹⁰²

He goes on to cite as examples Saints Bernard, Francis de Sales, Louis of Gonzaga, Berchmans etc..

Figures for the ratio of women to men in different denominations are of interest in this context. For example, the figures given by Argyle and Beit-Hallahmi (1975) show, for both Britain and the United States of America, a higher proportion of men in the Catholic than the Protestant churches. This also would fit well with the supposition that there is a psychological need, which is stronger in men, to have a heavenly mother figure, and that the Blessed Virgin Mary to some extent answers this need for Catholics.

In their study Keyser and Collins(1976) find that Catholics have an image of God which is less maternal than that of Protestants. They interpret this as an effect of Catholic devotion to Mary transferring maternal qualities from God to Mary.

The conclusion that there is a psychological need for a heavenly mother figure, seems to be strongly supported by such evidence. That there is a feeling that God is in a sense maternal, as well as paternal,

is implied by the present and other empirical studies. The question is therefore raised of how this feeling may be expressed.

I shall argue in the chapter concerned with Mariology that even in Catholic thought Mary does not provide a theologically nor a psychologically satisfactory way of meeting this need. In the remainder of the Theological Chapters I shall be concerned to show, (i) that it makes as good theological sense to speak of the motherhood of God as of his fatherhood, (ii) that such language has on occasion been used by biblical and later Christian writers, (iii) that extended use of such language would influence our image of God, and that this influence is not in itself undesirable.

PART TWO :

THE MOTHERHOOD OF GOD
AND
THEOLOGICAL TRADITION

CHAPTER FIVE :

GOD AND GENDER

Before we can give consideration to questions concerning the use of maternal imagery of God the (theo)logically prior question of God and gender must be faced. In order to do this we shall look at four areas: (i) Feminist Theologians' critiques of "Patriarchal Language" and a reply; (ii) Is the God of the Old Testament male/masculine? ; (iii) Does Jesus' use of "Father" and by his own maleness imply God is masculine not feminine? and (iv) What is the significance of the bridal imagery of the Bible ?

In each of these areas it will be necessary to bear in mind the distinction between the sexual biological terms male/female, and the terms feminine/masculine. Masculine and feminine are terms of gender rather than sex. In many languages gender is a largely linguistic phenomenon. Modern English has what is termed "natural gender". This means that in English the terms feminine and masculine also apply to the characteristics which are often associated with the two sexes. This peculiarity is taken account of in the definitions given for the terms in certain bilingual dictionaries. For example, in an English-French dictionary, feminine is defined as *féminin, tendre, délicat*.¹⁰³ Some of these masculine or feminine characteristics may be biologically sex-linked, but most are culturally determined. (Where I refer to "gender" in inverted commas I refer to such character, rather than to grammatical gender).

(i) Feminist Theologians have noted, that language to some extent reflects culture, that language is the tool of socialization. For this reason, they claim, language perpetuates culture. They are also aware that language has not only a denotative function but that it gives connotations and value to objects.¹⁰⁴ In particular they are concerned with the way in which language moulds and circumscribes thought, or as Letty M. Russell puts it more positively :

"The changing of language has the power to change the way people think about and name the world." "The singing of a hymn in which a mixture of female and male pronouns are

used to speak of God and the human beings present may have the same proleptic effect." Namely, it "helps symbolize the presence of a coming God who is beyond all distinctions of male and female." ¹⁰⁵

Since language has such an effect upon what is, and indeed can be, thought, it is argued the masculine and male dominated language in use has circumscribed theology and religious experience.

Much of the argument aroused by such statements has shown little awareness of philosophical or linguistic analysis. A notable exception is Tavard's critique of such views.¹⁰⁶ He points out, first, that the view of the relationship between language and culture presented by the feminist theologians is at best oversimplified, and possibly completely unreal. He argues that there is evidence of a lack of correlation between linguistic equality (e.g. Turkish has only one gender) and a society which is "liberal as far as women were concerned." ¹⁰⁷

He also argues that grammatical gender does not have implications of sex. For example:

"That gender is simply a taxonomic denomination that is unrelated to sex appears clearly from the fact that Swahili distinguishes among six different genders, none of which corresponds to male or female." ¹⁰⁸

However, neither this, nor the sixteen genders of the Bantu, nor even the French ability to speak of "Madame le Ministre", implies anything about the actual meaning of gender in Modern English. As we have seen, and as the "Shorter Oxford Dictionary" notes, Modern English "has 'natural' as opposed to 'grammatical' gender i.e. nouns are masculine, feminine or neuter according as the objects they denote are male, female or of neither sex." ¹⁰⁹

Similarly, Tavard claims that objections to the use of 'man' and 'he' as generic terms are unfounded as: (a) this usage is inevitable in English, since, unlike many other languages, independent generic terms are not available, and (b) that, "In any case, it is evident, from a look at Hebrew, Greek, Roman or Germanic civilizations, that the use of two terms does not mitigate the male domination of society".¹¹⁰ To argue as he does that 'man' is "a word with two meanings, the sense being determined " by the context,¹¹¹ may be grammatically and linguistically impeccable. Like most of his arguments thus far, however, it seems to ignore the non-grammatical dimension to the meaning of

language.

He is not unaware of such a dimension :

"The meaning of language, taken not as a theoretical possibility of communication but as actually communicating information from one person to others, is not to be discovered by an objective analysis of the rules of semantics and syntax at work in a discourse, but by investigation of the explicit or implicit, conscious or unconscious intention of the speaker. From this perspective language reveals, besides the generally accepted meaning of the terms used as interpreted in keeping with generally accepted grammatical rules, the state of mind of the speaker. Wittgenstein encapsulated this insight in the notion of "language games"." 112

He is aware that what language means is more than a matter of dictionaries and grammars, but he does not believe that changes in the use of language will result in changes in sexual bias :

"Were I a Turk, I could still play a sexist game with a language which does not express the distinction between "he" and "she" : my bias could affect the tone of my voice, my smile, the twinkle in my eye, the gesture I make, the many non-linguistic signs which accompany my speech." 113

This means that in fact the problem is at "a deeper meta-linguistic symbolic level".¹¹⁴ The basic question, is then, one of the psychological meaning of theological language and images. Here we should note that in theological writing of the past few centuries (with the exception of a few heterodox or little known authors) the imagery used of God has never been feminine or female, but always male or impersonal. At precisely this level of imagery, theology has spoken of God in exclusively male terms, calling 'him', "Father", "King" and "Lord", and naming is related to knowing.¹¹⁵ Exclusively male naming of God implies knowing a God who is in some sense male.

C.S. Lewis makes exactly this point, from the opposite point of view in the context of the possibility of ordination of women :

"Why should a woman not in this sense represent God? Certainly not because she is necessarily, or even

probably, less holy or less charitable or stupider than a man. In that sense she may be as "God-like" as a man; and a given woman much more so than a given man. The sense in which she cannot represent God will perhaps be plainer if we look at the thing the other way round.

"Suppose the reformer stops saying that a good woman may be like God and begins saying that God is like a good woman. Suppose he says that we might just as well pray to "Our Mother which art in heaven" as to "Our Father". Suppose he suggests that the Incarnation might just as well have taken a female as a male form, and the Second Person of the Trinity be as well called the Daughter as the Son. Suppose, finally, that the mystical marriage were reversed, that the Church were the Bridegroom and Christ the Bride." 116

In the context of the same issue a statement by the Episcopal Bishop of California, and a reply, are of interest as typifying two points of view.¹¹⁷ Bishop Myers argues that the priest is a "God symbol" and that for this reason women may not be ordained. He does not intend his argument to be understood crudely as implying that God is biologically male :

"Of course, this does not mean that God is a male. The biblical language is the language of analogy. It is imperfect even as all human imagery of God must be imperfect. Nevertheless, it has meaning. The male image about God pertains to the divine initiative in creation. Initiative is in itself a male rather than a female attribute." 118

It is patently untrue that initiative is "a male rather than female attribute". It is true that female initiatives may be different from male in style. They are, perhaps, less forceful and more persuasive in character, preferring agreement to compulsion, often. To say female initiative is characteristically different, is not to say that initiative is a male attribute. Surely, every experience of true relationship of man and woman makes nonsense of this statement. It should be noted that this argument confuses masculine and feminine with male and female. To label a person female does not deny that she has some masculine characteristics. To label another male does not deny he has some feminine characteristics. Indeed in surveys of the masculinity and femininity of

various groups and professions clergymen are among the least masculine.¹¹⁹

It would seem, then, that this kind of argument against the ordination of women, whilst truly not meaning that God is male, must at least imply that God is masculine rather than feminine.

So, whilst it is generally agreed that God is not male, there are those who would claim that there are grounds for saying that in some sense god is masculine. We must examine these grounds.

(ii) Yahweh as Masculine From the point of view of grammatical gender the God of the Old Testament, whatever word is used, is treated as a masculine singular noun. The faith of the Old Testament is expressed in a milieu where the sexuality of divinities was pronounced, and in particular in distinction from Canaanite fertility cultus. It must, therefore, be asked whether this grammatical masculinity is accidental or essential to the Old Testament. In Hebrew there are two genders only, masculine and feminine, and so indeterminate or neuter was not an option.

The name Yahweh is consistently masculine singular. The other most common word used of God, Elohim, has a rather strange plural form but is treated as masculine singular. It has often been suggested that this word has its origin as some kind of bisexual plural.¹²⁰ It is true that the word is used in biblical Hebrew of a goddess, see 1 Kings 11^{5,33}. Elohim is also the word used in Genesis 1²⁶⁻²⁷ of the creation of humanity in the image of God.¹²¹ Nonetheless, such a suggestion is no more than a curiosity, since it can not be proven, and since Elohim is always masculine. (As equally are the less frequent suggestions that the final Hē of YHWH is a feminine ending.¹²²)

The Hebrews then were compelled by their language to choose whether to call God she or he,¹²³ there was no alternative to such a choice. In the context of such a strongly patriarchal and androcentric culture, the choice of 'she' was hardly to be expected.¹²⁴ Thus the grammatical gender may not imply that God was thereby intended to be thought of as masculine in the wider sense. To decide this we must look at the imagery used of him.

"The panoply of domains from which titles and imagery of the deity are drawn throughout the Ancient Near East is the same basic repertory that Israel draws upon. In Israel, however, there is a decided diminution of analogies from nature and an emphatic concentration of the analogies in the historical and social domains, with particular focus on the deity as leader, ruler, and

defender of his people." ¹²⁵

The contrast between Yahweh and the "Gods of Canaan" is not to be found primarily at the level of imagery and myth but rather of their meaning. For the origins of Hebrew religion are self-consciously in the experience of the Exodus and covenant. ¹²⁶

In the Near East in the late bronze age (14th and 15th centuries B.C.) structures of authority and of society were legitimated and made rigid by systems of myth and religion which were parallel to them, Hanson(1975). However there were those who chose to live outside these systems, those with itchy feet, the dissatisfied, the dispossessed and the plain rebellious, these were referred to as 'apiru. They were not in origin a separate tribe or nation, but were united only as outsiders. This unity led to the possibility of referring to them alongside established semi-nomadic tribes as if they were a tribal group, Albright(1968,p 64ff). They seem to have made their living as donkey caravanners, mercenaries or bandits according to the prevailing employment situation. Under Moses, slaves in Egypt "opted out" and thus became 'apiru. ¹²⁷ A god of the 'apiru, outside the social and power structures, could not be a king with a heavenly court of similar beings, he must be radically different from the deities of Canaan and Egypt. His primary realm is the history of the oppressed and not the mythology of the oppressor.

This difference affects the use of imagery of Yahweh :

"A series of socio-political epithets may be used to designate Yahweh-El(ohim), for example, as King (melek), sir or honoured one ('adōn), shepherd (rō'eh), judge (shōphēt or dayyān), father ('av), warrior ('Ish mīlhāmāh or gibbōr) and even master or owner (ba'al). But these epithets are used sparingly and reticently, probably because of various negative connotations already firmly rooted in Canaanite socio-political and religious praxis and ideology - connotations which Israel struggled to purge from its own conception of deity or at least to limit sharply in usage." ¹²⁸

Thus, although Yahweh is responsible for the fertility of the land, and of the womb ¹²⁹; "He" is neither the exact counterpart of Ba'al nor Astarte for "He" needs no partner. To quote Gottwald again :

"...as Israel reflected on the gender of the deity it was not in sexual-biological categories but rather in terms of

the indivisibility and completeness of the deity. Yahweh has no consort and does not sire Israelite "sons" and "daughters" but creates a people by adoption." ¹³⁰

Thus when the Old Testament makes use of human parental imagery of God, imagery which is of necessity sex-specific i.e. Father or Mother, the concern is not with the sexual aspect. ¹³¹ Rather the concern is with the covenant relationship, thus Jeremiah 3 ^{19,22}. This is also true of the use of marital imagery by, especially, Hosea. Even such sex-specific imagery in which the sexual aspect is prominent is not intended to speak of Yahweh as masculine (or feminine in the case of, for example, the mother imagery we shall examine below).

The normative view of Yahweh in the Old Testament, then, sees "him" in contrast to the sexual gods and goddesses of surrounding cultures. Although "he" is grammatically of masculine gender, in no other sense is "he" either male not female, or masculine not feminine. ¹³² (It was precisely in the unapproved, popular, syncretistic religion that Yahweh was seen as male, the equivalent of Ba'al; and in opposition to which so much of the Old Testament is written. ¹³³)

(iii) Jesus' maleness is used in the context of debate about the ordination of women in a way which implies that there is a sense in which God (or at least the second person of the Trinity ¹³⁴) has essentially male characteristics. His choice of "Father" as name for God is also appealed to in this context in a way which implies the essentially male character of God.

Clearly the maleness of the incarnate Christ is not in dispute. The question is, then, does this fact about Jesus imply something about the nature of God (or of the second person of the Trinity)? Is the maleness of the son asarkos implied by his maleness ensarkos? Is a masculine character essential to the being of the son?

It is clear that certain characteristics of Jesus are not, thus essential, but are indeed "accident". For example, one would not, presumably, claim that the son asarkos is a Jew or has certain genetic characteristics such as eye colour or body shape as essential to "him". Such characteristics are clearly accident.

Some argue from Jesus' maleness for an exclusively male priesthood. Does such an argument mean that masculinity is an essential characteristic of the Son? For example, Myers writes :

"The sexuality of Christ is no accident nor is his masculinity incidental."¹³⁵
To be fair, Myers here is using accident in the popular sense, for he continues : "This is the divine choice." If there is choice, then, in the technical sense, the sexuality (and in particular the masculinity) of Christ is accident. It implies nothing about the nature of God.¹³⁶

Does Jesus' choice of Father as name for God imply more? In the context of this same debate Rutler admits: "God...includes in his being maleness and femaleness together" but adds "God taught us to call Him... not Mother as the primitives liked to do, but Father."¹³⁷ Here there is a clear statement that God is in no sense male not female, followed by an equally clear implication that masculine rather than feminine characteristics are alone properly applied to "him".¹³⁸

Clearly, since he says "God...includes in his being maleness and femaleness together" the fatherhood of God is not to be taken in any literal sense. Equally, since it is we who are to call him Father it cannot be that here the intra-trinitarian Father-Son relation is in view. What is meant then, is that Fatherhood is an analogy or metaphor of Godhead.¹³⁹

Discussions of theological language and in particular of the use of analogy to speak of God look back at the classic work of Thomas Aquinas.¹⁴⁰ He, first, stresses that human language is applicable to God in some sense. This is so, not least, because certain qualities pre-exist in god, "although in a higher way than we can understand or signify."¹⁴¹ So, although :

"In this life we cannot understand the essence of God as he is in himself, we can however understand it as it is represented by the perfections of his creatures; and this is how the words we use can signify it."¹⁴²

However, this means that the words which we use of God can neither be used wholly univocally nor yet are they used completely equivocally, rather positive theological language is analogy or metaphor.

These are distinguished in the article titled "are words predicated of God or of creatures?"¹⁴³,

"Thus all words used metaphorically of God apply primarily to creatures and secondarily to God. When used of God they signify merely a certain parallelism between God and the creature." Thus "if we speak of God as a 'lion' we only mean that, like a lion, he is mighty in his deeds. It is

obvious that the meaning of such a word as applied to God depends on and is secondary to the meaning it has when used of creatures." 144

So, to say that Father is an analogy of God, is to say that, what fathers ought perfectly to be, God is transcendentally. If Father were merely a metaphor for God, then it would be some aspect of fatherhood which we were likening to God. Theology, traditionally, has seen Fatherhood as analogy not metaphor. It is not merely that fathers are source of life nor merely a father's love which is like God, but fatherhood itself:

"For this reason I bend my knees to the Father, from whom all fatherhood in heaven and on earth is named."¹⁴⁵ Eph. 3¹⁴⁻¹⁵.

What of motherhood, is motherhood analogy or metaphor? It is true that in the biblical and patristic references to God as motherly, particular aspects of motherliness are in view in each case. Thus for example, in Isaiah 66¹³ it is the comforting of a mother which is in view:

"As a mother comforts her son, so will I myself comfort you."

and in other places her feeding. Indeed most of these uses are in English similies not even metaphors. Is mother, then, merely to be used metaphorically of God, as lion or rock may be used; whilst father is a true analogy?

We shall first examine this possibility by logic and then return to the traditions :-

Suppose that (i) 'Father' is appropriately used as an analogue of God (i.e. everything about true fatherhood has its transcendent source in God)

(ii) 'Mother' is not appropriately used in this way but only metaphorically. (i.e. only certain aspects of motherhood may be used to picture God, others are inappropriate.)

But

(a) Fathers are parents. Fatherhood implies parenthood.

Then

(since (i) above 'Father' is analogue not metaphor only) God's fatherhood includes the element of parenthood.¹⁴⁶

But

(b) Human parenting is incomplete as father alone. (This is not only true biologically. It is true psychologically and theologically also, Genesis 1²⁷, Exodus 20¹² etc)

Now terms may only be used analogically of God if "their perfections belong primarily to God," (though in a transcendent way).

Father as analogue of God includes parenting, (a) above,
Parenting is incomplete without mother, (b) above.

Therefore 'Father' as analogue of God implies 'Mother' as analogue.
Alone neither can be analogue, only metaphor.

This conclusion is arrived at logically from the distinction of metaphor and analogue made by Thomas Aquinas, together with the assumption that human parenting is incomplete, less than perfect, if of one parent alone. It will be backed up by a brief look at the way in which, in fact, parenthood is used to speak of God.¹⁴⁷

Firstly, we should note that in practice it is usually one aspect of fathering which is in view in any particular context. When Jesus likens God to the loving Father in the parable (Luke 15¹¹⁻³²) it is the constancy of a father's love which is in view¹⁴⁸ not, for example, a father's discipline, though this is view in Hebrews 12^{5ff}. Such examples could be multiplied, and together they would include many, or most, aspects of fathering.

Along with this we should note that many different aspects of mothering are used in like manner. For example in Isaiah 66¹³, as we have seen, a mother's comforting is in view; whilst in 42¹⁴ the inability of a mother in labour to restrain her cries is the subject; in 49^{14f} a mother's love with its constancy; in Clement's Paedagogue 1,6 it is her gift of food and in later mediaeval thought the pain of childbirth. Motherhood is in fact treated as an analogue of God.

In case neither the logical nor the other approach is persuasive, let us examine the consequences of saying that Fatherhood is an analogue of God whilst Motherhood is only metaphor. The distinction between fathers and mothers is simple. Fathers are male and by definition beget children. Mothers are female and by definition bear children. To say one is analogue, the other not, must be to say that this distinction is significant for our understanding of God. God then, would not bear but beget, would be male not female. Such a male begetting god would not be the God of either Old or New Testaments. Such a god is merely a Ba'al.

(iv) Bridal Imagery. One area which we have not discussed is the way in which the Bible uses marriage as a metaphor of the relation of God and his people. Consistently the human partner is the bride. In Hosea Yahweh is likened to Israel's husband, in the New Testament Christ is husband to the church. It is often said that this choice of imagery (God is never the bride ¹⁴⁹) means that God relates to humanity as man to woman.

This imagery must be metaphor not analogy. For man and woman are both of the same species whilst God and humanity are not.¹⁵⁰ Thus the analogy would be as God is to creature (his people) so creature (man) is to creature (woman). This would imply that man transcends woman as God transcends his people. Clearly this aspect, transcendence, of God's relation to his people is not in view here. This is a metaphoric expression, and as metaphor certain aspects only, of the husband-wife relation are likened to aspects of the God-his people relation. Is the masculine-feminine aspect one of these ?

There is one passage in the New Testament where clearly it is. (1 Corinthians 11²⁻¹⁶, although not strictly a passage using marital imagery of God it is related to them. Paul speaks of a hierarchy. God is 'head' of Christ, who is 'head' of man, who is 'head' of woman.) This hierarchy is in view, too, in Ephesians 5^{22ff};

"Wives be subject to your husbands as to the Lord;
for the man is the head of the woman, just as Christ
also is the head of the church."

The metaphor is used in two ways here, of both love and headship. The headship metaphor is clearly culturally conditioned. The Tchambuli, for example, would see the woman as 'head' of the man.¹⁵¹ If this letter had been written to the Tchambuli, then, the metaphor would have to have read:

Husbands, be subject to your wives as to the Lord;
for the woman is the head of the man, just as Christ
also is head of the church.

This marriage imagery is metaphor not analogy. It is culturally determined. Therefore it can tell us nothing about the 'gender' of God (though it can speak of his headship and love).

Summary

- (a) Male-female is a biological/sexual distinction, feminine-masculine is one of gender or social role.
- (b) God is not male rather than female (section i).
- (c) In the Old Testament God is neither male or masculine, nor female or feminine (section ii).
- (d) The sex of Jesus implies nothing about the 'gender' of God. (section iii).
- (e) Using Thomas Aquinas' distinction of analogy and metaphor, if Father is an analogy of God then Mother is equally (section iii).
- (f) Marital imagery is metaphor and not analogue, the sexual content is culturally determined and so implies nothing about the 'gender' of God (section iv).

The conclusion of this chapter, then, is that God is in no sense male or masculine unless in an equal sense 'he' is female or feminine.¹⁵² (Though in certain cultural contexts imagery using the distinction of sex or 'gender' may be useful as metaphor and simile.)

EXCURSUS TWO :

WISDOM

Words which name attributes of God - wisdom, word, spirit, etc., - especially where these are used as periphrases for God, tend to take on life of their own! ¹⁵³ This process is often referred to as hypostatization. In many religious traditions a further stage is found and the attribute becomes at last a god(ess) worshipped alongside others. ¹⁵⁴

This process occurred in Judaism. Wisdom is the most developed example, both within the Hebrew canon as in the later works. The figure of Wisdom is of interest for this study firstly because she is feminine, ¹⁵⁵ and more important a motherly figure toward the sage who seeks her. ¹⁵⁶ She is also of interest because mythopoeic and speculative ideas and imagery about her are taken up by writers in the New Testament to speak of Jesus, and later by the church in its developing mariology and ecclesiology. Also of interest are the close parallels which can be traced between wisdom texts and the cult and hymns of mother goddesses whose worship was widespread (e.g. Ishtar and Isis). Because of these special interests, the account which follows does not attempt to be a full or rounded description of the place of wisdom, and the reader is warned that many important areas are left unmentioned. In considering the figure of Wisdom in Judaism we will concentrate upon the major wisdom literature of both the Hebrew and the Greek canon, i.e. especially Prov., Sir., Wis. (Job and Ecc. are less relevant to our interests.)

Proverbs; Personified Wisdom

Wisdom is personified in the context of hymnic and devotional writing, thus a wide variety of imagery clusters around her. Different and even contradictory images may be present in the same context. For example, Sir.15², a verse which, as we have noted above, speaks of Wisdom as mother to her students, parallels this with the image of the bride :

"She will come out to meet him like a mother;
she will receive him like a young bride."

Thus it is impossible to build up a systematic account of personified Wisdom ¹⁵⁷. Indeed such an account would fail to do justice to the

variety and wealth of imagery in the material. It may be useful to give a brief examination to some of the primary passages in turn.

The earliest occurrences of the figure of Wisdom are found in Prov. 1-9.¹⁵⁸ In particular Prov. 1,20-33; 8,1-36 and 9,1-6.

In Prov. 1,20 ff Wisdom is pictured crying aloud in the busy public places of the city, v 20 f. Her message is, in its form, reminiscent of prophetic reproof and threat¹⁵⁹, but the language is more suited to a teacher of wisdom¹⁶⁰, as is the content, in particular the threat with its implication that the retribution is the result of inexorable law rather than the personal decision of Yahweh, v 29 ff.

Although at the beginning of this passage it is possible to argue that this picture of Wisdom is merely a literary device, by the end this is less easy to sustain.

e.g. v 28 "When they call upon me, I will not answer them;
when they search for me, they shall not find me."

or v 26 "I in my turn will laugh at your doom and deride
when terror comes upon you."

However, whatever the precise nature of this picture of Wisdom as the preacher spurned and the divine figure watching the inevitable destruction of the foolish, there are themes here which recur in the bolder personifications of later literature. In particular that of the hiddenness of rejected wisdom¹⁶¹.

Prov. 8 begins in similar fashion to 1²⁰ ff. Although here the message is one of invitation rather than reproach, and it is precisely to "every man" even to the "simple fools" and "stupid people" vv 4 and 5. She speaks clearly and plainly v 6. Much of what Wisdom has to say in vv 1-21 would be quite at home in the earliest traditions of practical wisdom, e.g. v 12. McKane traces in these verses also the influence of later reinterpretation of that tradition, in particular by moralizing it¹⁶². He would appear to envisage that the passage itself is a deposit of both older and newer traditions. That such layers can be determined in vv 1-21 is far from clear, as McKane is aware pp348-9 : "I do not wish to draw any literary-historical conclusions from all this....One should be satisfied with asking what light the chapter throws on the history of the wisdom tradition".

However there is a much clearer case for dissociation of vv 22-31 from the rest of the chapter. There is here a dramatic shift of image,

in place of the street preacher we have the pre-existent heavenly being. Where before Wisdom was concerned with the mundane affairs of men, albeit kings and princes, now she is at the side of the creator, "his darling and delight", v 30. This discontinuity of content was noticed very early and has led to an editorial linking of the two sections in the Septuagint, where v 21 "If I declare to you the things of daily occurrence, I shall remember to recount the things of old".¹⁶³

The precise meaning of verses 22-31 has been much debated, and several words and phrases suggest differing interpretations. In particular, v 30, the word 'āmōn gives scope for a variety of emendments and interpretations, thus for example, the various translations give : N.E.B. "darling", J.B. and R.S.V. "Master craftsman", A.V. "one brought up with him".¹⁶⁴ To take the two extreme cases, (both among the more favoured by commentators), Wisdom is either architect to God and co-creator of the world, or the nurseling who plays before God in whom he delights as he does in the rest of creation. In v 22 there is also an important area of debate. Is Wisdom created or begotten by God (or even acquired) ? In verses 24 and 25 the reference is less contentious, here Wisdom says she was "born" before ocean or hills existed.

One thing the passage hammers home time and again, Wisdom exists "before all else" v 22, "before the earth itself" v 23, she was there when oceans, land and heaven were created vv24-29. During all of God's creative activity she was "at his side" v 30. About this pre-existence of Wisdom there is no debate and this is the prime message of these verses.

She who calls to man offering her truth and instruction is not the only one by whom kings rule, but is the one who was before the world began, the companion of the creator and his delight.

The "Loose Woman"

At first sight in the closing verses of the chapter Wisdom has returned to the more mundane level of vv 1-21 and is again modelled on the teacher. She begins vv32a and 33 :

"Now my sons, listen to me, listen to instruction and grow wise, do not reject it".

Compare e.g. Prov. 4¹ :

"Listen, my sons, to a father's instruction".

Wisdom like the teacher stresses the value of accepting her teaching.

However no human teacher claims boldly "he who finds me finds life" v 35. For life is the gift of God. (Gen. 2⁷, Deut. 30¹⁵ ff etc.) McKane¹⁶⁵ sees here a reference back to the end of Chapter 7 where the house of the "loose woman" is referred to as "the entrance to Sheol, which leads down to the halls of death". Prov. 7²⁷. He who listens to Wisdom, "watching daily at"(her)"threshold with his eyes on the doorway" 8³⁴, finds life. He who enters the house of the "loose woman" "hurts himself", indeed he hates Wisdom and is "in love with death" 8³⁶.

There are further parallels between the two chapters which point up the contrast between the figures of the "loose woman" and Wisdom.¹⁶⁶ The story in both begins with a woman accosting simple fools 7⁷ and 8⁵ (the same word *peti* is used in each case). In Chapter 7 the "loose woman" is found skulking at street corners, v 12, at dusk, v 9, and offers brazen seduction vv13-21, to her victim, v 22ff. By contrast, in Chapter 8 Wisdom stands in the busiest places and calls aloud to all who will listen, v 2 and 3, she speaks openly and all she says is right, v 8, and straightforward, v 9. Those who listen and follow her by waiting at the threshold of her house "win favour with the LORD" v 35.

Many interpretations of Chapter 7 suggest that the "loose woman" is to be thought of as a devotee of the cult of Astarte. Such interpretations note particularly v 14, often reading "Today I am to fulfil my vows", and therefore making of the seduction a *heiros gamos*¹⁶⁷. Such a cultic interpretation may also be felt to give better account to the strength of feeling the writer exhibits. Against it, however, are the widespread warnings in both Hebrew and foreign wisdom literature against adultery.

A common feature of the passages warning against the "loose woman" in Proverbs 1-9 is the warning that "she leads to Sheol and death" (Prov. 2¹⁶⁻¹⁹, 5³⁻⁶ and 7^{nb27}). In one other passage there is such a warning but no reference to Sheol and death (6²⁰⁻³⁵). These verses are of special interest and the proponents of a cultic interpretation of the "loose woman" passages are able to detect and point up differences between such passages and those where the concern is with warnings against adultery such as might be found in international wisdom. These differences can, they claim, be detected within 6²⁰⁻³⁵. The differences are between 6²⁰⁻²⁶ (and the other "loose woman" passages i.e. 2¹⁶ ff, 5, 7) and 6²⁷⁻³⁵.¹⁶⁸ Verses 27-35 warn of the wrath of an injured husband. In the "loose woman" sections, life and death/Sheol is the issue, nb v 23 in this section. The phrase "neighbour's wife" and the verb "to commit

adultery" do not occur in the "loose woman" passages but occur here, v 29 and 32. Since the "loose woman" is clearly married, 6³⁶, 7¹⁹, it is strange (though admittedly an argument from silence) that neither term occurs. So, there is a difference of content to be discerned between 6²⁷⁻³⁵ and the "loose woman" passages, although it is true that this difference is not so marked as to present more than a suggestion of markedly different concerns. There is one further difference which coinciding with these hints is most significant. The "loose woman" passages are all in the second person¹⁶⁹ giving the effect of direct address by parent or teacher. Verses 27-35 are in the third person referring to a "man" and "he".¹⁷⁰

There are a number of passages with this theme in the sentence literature, later in the book. These, like 6²⁷⁻³⁵, are impersonal and do not contain imperatives. These features are precisely the reverse of those used by McKane to distinguish instruction. By these criteria 6²⁷⁻³⁵ is not instruction, but 6²⁰⁻²⁶ and the other "loose woman" passages are. The conclusion is clear, these two sections in Chapter six are not integral but placed together by an editor because they seem to deal with the same theme.

The "Loose Woman" and the Cult of Astarte

We are, then, left with the question of whether the "loose woman" passages are concerned with the cultic act of performing a hieros gamos with a devotee of Astarte or whether these too are concerned with the areligious moral question of adultery. It is true, as McKane argues, that within the international genre of instruction there are passages warning against adultery. Although it is not clear that all of these are free of cultic reference¹⁷¹.

McKane, himself, sees features borrowed from Canaanite mythology in these passages. He suggests that the references to death and Sheol should be understood in the light of Mot, god of death (whose throat is pictured as the gateway to Sheol) and the chthonic deities (rpūm) or denizens of the underworld (Heb : r^epā'Im). In support of this he adduces not only a passage from the Ba'al myth but also Isa. 5¹⁴, Hab. 2⁵ (Ps. 5¹⁰, Jonah 2³).¹⁷²

This explanation of the meaning and mythological overtones of the references to the entrance to Sheol would seem to have some value. However it should be noted that it would not exclude a cultic interpretation

of the acts of the "loose woman", rather the contrary, for what more suitable than that the perils of traffic with one "foreign" deity should be described in terms of another.

The most clear suggestions that a cultic offence is envisaged are found in Chapters 7 and 2. In 7¹⁴ the "loose woman" speaks of her sacrifice and her vows. The normal practice was for some of the meat of the offering to be eaten at home as a part of the festival.¹⁷³ A contrast is provided with verse 22 where the simpleton himself has become the sacrifice.¹⁷⁴ This makes sense best if the intercourse itself is a part of the cultic act. Cultic terminology also occurs in 5¹⁴, where the expression "public assembly" is a cultic term.¹⁷⁵

In 2¹⁷ the woman is described as one:

"who forsakes the teaching of her childhood and has forgotten the covenant of her God" ;

it is thus that, v 18 :

"her path¹⁷⁶ runs downhill toward death, and her course is set for the land of the dead".

This is the only occurrence of the covenant with God in the wisdom books of the Hebrew canon. It is conceivable that marital sin is in view as forgetting the covenant of God. It seems to me that this unique¹⁷⁷ occurrence of covenant terminology is better explained if the offence is worship of Astarte/Ishtar.

This concern for a cultic offence is felt by some to be foreign to the spirit of wisdom; and more at home in prophetic or deuteronomic circles. It should be noted that McKane and others find traces of a prophetic or Yahwistic re-interpretation of wisdom and that there is evidence of such re-interpretation in the book of Proverbs. Also a similarity to Deuteronomy and legal piety is often noted in these "loose woman" passages on other grounds.

For example, similarities are noticed between 6²⁰ ff and Deut. 6⁴⁻⁷.¹⁷⁸ McKane also adds Deut. 11¹⁹ which has the same order as Proverbs here. He writes of this passage : "it looks as if figures of speech which are redolent of the piety inspired by the law have been imported into Instruction."¹⁷⁹ Both Rylaarsdam and McKane also note similarities with Deuteronomy in 7³, which McKane says "is phrased in a way closely resembling passages which deal with law and covenant."¹⁸⁰

Wisdom and Her Rival

It is often suggested that the figure of the "loose woman" is drawn as a contrast to Wisdom. Such a contrast is clearly and boldly drawn in 9¹⁻⁶, 13-18. It is a passage devoted to personified Wisdom which we have not yet examined. Such a contrast is found (though less clearly) in the passages we have just examined. In Chapter 7 note verse 4, Wisdom is the "sister" who will save one from the "loose woman". The "sister" may well be intended as wife or lover.¹⁸¹ If this is so, then the contrast is sharper, Wisdom the true beloved is contrasted with the seductress. In Chapter 8, as we have seen, commentators find a contrast with the "loose woman" in verse 36.

The gifts Wisdom gives to those who "hold her fast" 3¹⁸ and "embrace" and "cherish" her 4⁸, are riches, life and honour 3¹⁴⁻¹⁸, 4⁷⁻⁹. These are precisely the opposite of the dangers of consorting with the "loose woman", which are poverty 5¹⁰⁻¹¹ (6^{26?}), dishonour 5⁹ & 14 and death 2¹⁸⁻¹⁹, 5⁵⁻⁶ and 7²⁶⁻²⁷.

Because of this contrasting of Wisdom and the "loose woman" we may see her in "Lady Stupidity" in 9¹⁰⁻¹⁸. This identification then makes clear the reference in v 17 :

"Stolen water is sweet and bread got by stealth tastes good."

This is a proverbial reference to the adultery she has in mind with the simpleton, for the drink she offers is not stolen nor is there a hint of stealth in her offer of food. Stupidity of Chapter 9 is related closely to the "loose woman" of Chapter 7 and Wisdom's feast 9¹⁻⁶ continues the contrast begun in Chapter 8. Wisdom like the "loose woman" offers a feast of meat ¹⁸² and spiced wine.

There is one striking difference between the story of the "loose woman" 7⁶⁻²³ and the account of Wisdom 8 and 9¹⁻⁶. Wisdom sends out "her maidens" to invite the fool in. These maidens may be seen as counterparts of the devotees of Astarte, they are young women, therefore not wisdom teachers, although they speak like such teachers, save perhaps in verse 5, words which would sit easily on the lips of devotees of the goddess of love. Interestingly, here, McKane accepts an interpretation in terms of contrast of Wisdom with the Astarte cult.¹⁸³

As we have noted, imagery in these passages is diffuse and divergent rather than coherent. Thus, although the most usual contrast is between the untutored young man who succumbs to the wiles of the devotee of Astarte and the similar young man who seeks faithfully for Wisdom ;

in this passage, 9¹⁻⁶, Wisdom is contrasted with Astarte herself.¹⁸⁴

The Personification of Wisdom and the Cult of Astarte

We have now reached the point where we may draw conclusions concerning the relationship between the cult of a "love goddess"¹⁸⁵ and the use of the figure of Wisdom in Prov. 1-9. I have argued consistently above that the pictures of Wisdom in the passages where she is personified are drawn in deliberate opposition to the worship of a goddess among the Hebrews. This would seem to hold even for the shorter and more doubtful passages 3¹³⁻¹⁸ and 4⁷⁻⁹ (see p 91)

This is the view of Ringgren (1947) supporting the theory of Bostrom. Ringgren writes : ¹⁸⁶

"Consequently, Prov.1-9 is formed as a conscious contrast to a cult, hostile towards Yahweh. Behind the "foreign women" the goddess, whom they represent in the cult, is visible. Wisdom is described with traits reminding one of the foreign goddess. She is presented as a contrast to Astarte and her pernicious cult. Wisdom is a substitute for the love goddess and her cult and a protection against them, and we have here "one of the roots of the figure of Wisdom", since the hypostatized wisdom of Yahweh has been given features borrowed from the mother goddess."

Although McKane has disagreed with the detail of this interpretation in almost every case; and, although he does not see the "loose woman" as a devotee of Astarte; nonetheless he believes that in Chapter 9,

"The difficulty of imposing a clear interpretation on vv 1-6 stems basically from the circumstance that in these verses Wisdom is deliberately drawn as a rival to the goddess of love or her devotee (the representation seems to waver in this regard) and that she can only be imperfectly accommodated to this manner of portrayal". ¹⁸⁹

We have, then, two alternative positions regarding the relationship of the foreign goddess to the personification of Wisdom. The one, that this personification and the pictures which result are in conscious opposition to such a cult. The other, that the goddess cult has influenced one of these pictures (but not the others) and that it is not, even indirectly, responsible for the personification of Wisdom.

I find the more consistent of these views the one which makes best sense, as I have argued above. However, on either view the cult of the foreign goddess has influenced the earliest examples we have of Wisdom personified. Wisdom is seen as a rival to and protectress against the goddess.¹⁹⁰ We shall see below that this tendency continues in the later books also.

Wisdom in Ecclesiasticus

There are, basically, four passages in Ecclesiasticus which present the kind of extended personification of Wisdom which we found in Proverbs. These are 4¹¹⁻¹⁹ (which should perhaps be read with 6¹⁸⁻³¹, see below), 14^{20-15⁸}, 24 and 51¹³ ff. Of these passages Chapter 24 is the most important and extensive. We shall examine it first therefore.

Chapter 24 is very different in tone from the passages we examined in Proverbs. Wisdom's self-praise here begins v 3 and 4 :

"I came forth from the mouth of the Most High,
and covered the earth like a mist.
I dwelt in high places,
and my throne was in a pillar of cloud." 191

The chapter continues with a description of Wisdom's seeking for a home among humankind (all of whom were under her authority v 6b) and being instructed by the "Creator of all things" to make her home in Israel, vv 7-12. She continues to praise herself, appealing to people to come to her vv 19-22 :

"Come to me, you who desire me,
and eat your fill of my fruit.
The memory of me is sweeter than syrup,
and the possession of me sweeter than honey dripping
from the comb.
Whoever feeds on me will be hungry for more,
and whoever drinks from me will thirst for more.
To obey me is to be safe from disgrace;
those who work in wisdom will not go astray."

After a note in which Ben Sirach identifies Wisdom with the Torah, he continues her praises in the third person, likening her to rivers in full flood, to the ocean deeps themselves, vv 23-29. In v 30ff Wisdom herself again begins to speak taking up this theme and closing with the words :

"I will again make discipline shine like the dawn,
 so that its light may be seen from afar.
 I will again pour out doctrine like prophecy
 and bequeath it to future generations.
 Truly, my labour has not been for myself alone
 but for all seekers of wisdom." vv 32-34.

This passage has often been compared to the Aretologies of Isis, that is hymns of praise to herself, of which we have several versions from the Hellenistic period.¹⁹² This begins "I am Isis, the ruler of every land". It speaks much of her activities as "Lawgiver" who "made strong the right". Her role in giving order to the cosmos ("I divided the earth from the heaven. I showed the stars their paths" etc.) and to family relationships is prominent. So, also, is her association with rivers and sea. It closes thus : "I overcome Fate. Fate hearkens to me. Hail, O Egypt, that nourished me! "

Even from such a brief summary, similarities of content will be noticed to Sir. 24. There is one marked difference in literary character, however. In the Isis Aretologies time and again almost every line begins with the personal pronoun (egō) ¹⁹³. The resulting stress I, I, I, is not found in Sir. 24, where only 3 verses out of 32 have lines beginning with this stressed I. This reflects a different emphasis in Ecclesiasticus where, in contrast to the Aretology's sole purpose of exalting the goddess, Wisdom seeks also to point beyond herself to the Most High, the Creator who sent her (v 8).

This concern, however, is restricted to vv 8-12 and 23. It is, therefore possible to argue, as Conzelmann does ¹⁹⁴ that much of the rest of the material reflects Isis. In particular he argues that :

"Verses 3-6 (7) are nothing but a hymn to Isis, taken up almost literally and retouched lightly at only one or two points." ¹⁹⁵

His argument rests upon two contentions:

- (1) That there is nothing specifically Jewish in this section.
- (11) That Egyptian material may be shown to elucidate almost every line.

I shall not discuss either Conzelmann's evidence or the arguments which may be brought against it, in full. Three sentences seem crucial, vv 3a, 4b and 5.

Verse 3a reads : "I came forth from the mouth of the Most High" ¹⁹⁶

which as Conzelmann notes is a feature of Egyptian theogony and cosmogony as would be the 'mist' of the following line.¹⁹⁷ It is true that there is a striking resemblance to an Egyptian motif here, however, an alternative background is possible. The N.E.B. seems to have Genesis in mind¹⁹⁸ in rendering this "I am the word which was spoken by the Most High; it was I who covered the earth like a mist." Interpreting Wisdom, "who comes forth from the mouth of the Most High", as the creative word of Gen. 1, and as either, the spirit of God hovering over the waters¹⁹⁹ or as the flood or mist of the second creation account.²⁰⁰

Verse 4b, "my throne was in a pillar of cloud", is at first sight a clear reference to the Exodus,²⁰¹ although even here second thoughts allow another interpretation: "Sophia/Isis reigns on a pillar of cloud, i.e. in heaven."²⁰² The only evidence offered in support of an Egyptian background to this "pillar of cloud" is in terms of deities seated on papyrus stalks.²⁰³ This is not convincing.

Verse 5, especially 5a :

"Alone I have made the circuit of the vault of heaven and have walked in the depths of the abyss."

on the other hand is of more interest. Conzelmann notes²⁰⁴ this 'alone', monā, is a pronounced feature of the Isis cult.²⁰⁵ So much so that it becomes almost a theological affirmation about her. The cosmological background here could be either Egyptian or Old Testament. If, however, we play down the significance of the use of monā in the context of praise of the goddess and attempt to understand this verse by means of its O.T. parallels, the results are interesting. The Hebrew equivalent of this *guron* (N.E.B.: the sky, R.S.V.: the vault of heaven) is found in only three places, :

Isa. 40²² "God sits throned on the vaulted roof of earth whose inhabitants are like grasshoppers."

Job 22^{14b} "he walks to and fro on the vault of heaven" (referring to God vv 12-13).

Prov. 8²⁷ "When he established the heavens, I was there, when he drew a circle on the face of the deep," (the context here is of Wisdom's presence at creation).

The context in each case is of creator and creation,²⁰⁶ and in each the incomparable grandeur of God is the intent. The closest parallel is Job 22¹⁴ where it is God who walks on the vault or circuit

of heaven. In Prov. 8²⁷ the only context where Wisdom is in view, the intent is surely that some of this grandeur rub off on her because of her association with the creator. In Sir. 24 the thought is bolder, like God she walks the vault of heaven. If this is the background, the use of, and stress on, ²⁰⁷monā is doubly strange; for she walks the very throne of the creator alone.

The Bracket Passages 4¹¹⁻¹⁹ and 6¹⁸⁻³¹

The two passages in praise of Wisdom 4¹¹⁻¹⁹ and 6¹⁸⁻³¹ which bracket a collection of proverbial advice on conduct, are themselves linked in theme. 4¹¹⁻¹⁹ begins with the gifts Wisdom offers:

"Wisdom raises her sons to greatness

and cares for those who seek her.

To love her is to love life;

to rise early for her sake is to be filled with joy.

The man who attains her will win recognition;" 4^{11-13a}

not only from men but from God himself:

"the Lord's blessing rests upon every place she enters.

To serve her is to serve the Holy One.

and the Lord loves those who love her." 4^{13b-14}

However, these promises are only for the worthy, Wisdom must test the mettle of the young who claim to love her, 4¹⁷:

"At first she will lead him by devious ways,

filling him with craven fears.

Her discipline will be a torment to him,

and her decrees a hard test." ²⁰⁸

When trust is established by this testing:

"Then she will come straight back to him again and

gladden him,

and reveal her secrets to him." 4¹⁸

The passage closes on a note of warning:

"But, if he strays from her, she will desert him

and abandon him to his fate." 4¹⁹.

6^{18 ff} is likewise concerned with "Wisdom's discipline" which can seem "harsh" v 20. Indeed the pupil is exhorted to put his feet in her fetters, his neck in her collar and not to chafe at her bonds vv 24 and 25.

If you wish to be a disciple of Wisdom, you must :

"Come to her whole-heartedly,
and keep to her ways with all your might.
Follow her track, and she will make herself known to you;
once you have grasped her, never let her go." vv 26-27

For "in the end" the one who submits to the testing will find rest and joy :

"Her fetters will become your strong defence
and her collar a gorgeous robe.
Her yoke is a golden ornament
and her bonds a purple cord.
You shall put her on like a gorgeous robe
and wear her like a splendid crown." vv 29-31.

The change from a time of testing to being dressed in glorious robes (stolān doxēs) and wearing a crown of celebration (stephanon agalliamatos) is reminiscent of initiation into the mystery of Isis. The only detailed and complete account we have of this, is from a later century, in Book XI of the "Metamorphoses" of Apuleius of Madauros. This work is from the second century A.D.²⁰⁹ As a whole it is probably based on a lost Greek text, which we can know only through Apuleius and an epitome "Lucius or Ass" attributed to Lucian. Book XI which contains the Isis material is the largest of the sections of the Metamorphoses not present in the epitome. It probably reflects Apuleius' own experience.²¹⁰ Whilst this is only strictly evidence for the second century, like the Aretology, such traditions often remain little changed over longer periods.²¹¹

The parallels to our passage in this account are striking. After his metamorphosis but whilst he is still uninitiate the priest encourages him saying : "After enduring many different troubles.....at last, Lucius, you have come to the haven of Rest and the Altar of Mercy" ²¹² and encourages him to : "Accept of your own free will the yoke of service" to the goddess. ²¹³ As we saw above Wisdom, too, offers rest to those who accept her yoke and endure harsh discipline.

At the close of his initiation he receives new clothing so that

"I attracted attention by reason of my tunic; it was only of linen, but bore sumtious decorations. Further, from my shoulders, behind my back down to my heels, there hung

a precious cloak....my head was garlanded gracefully by
a crown of gleaming palm whose leaves stood out like rays." 214

The text hints at the identification of the initiate with the goddess. 215
Indeed Lucius' magnificent new attire is reminiscent of that of Isis
in his dream (Chapters 3 and 4). One detail of Isis' clothing which is
not mentioned in connection with the new initiate is footwear. Isis
wears "sandals woven with leaves of victorious palm". 216

Wisdom, too, is a "haven of rest" to her disciple (v 28a, compare
Apuleius 277³), and her collar becomes a gorgeous robe (29b), indeed the
disciple is to become so identified with her that he puts her on like a
gorgeous robe and wears her like a splendid crown (v 31, compare Apuleius
Chapter 24). Then her yoke becomes a golden ornament (v 30a, compare
Apuleius 278¹). Ben Sirach promises that "her fetters will become your
strong defence" (v 29a); it is interesting to compare this with the
sandals of Isis, woven with leaves of "victorious palm".

However, whilst it seems possible that this passage has been
influenced by Isis initiation, it nonetheless has been firmly adapted to
its Jewish home for 30b refers to the bonds which are to become "a purple
cord". Here the only possible parallel is not with Isis but with
Num. 15³⁸⁻⁴⁰. Wisdom's bonds are the Lord's commands.

In the Epilogue²¹⁷, Chapter 51, verses 13 ff is another passage of interest
to us. In the version found in the Greek text and that of the Hebrew
fragments, which form the basis of modern translations, vv 13-22 appear
to be an autobiographical hymn of praise to Wisdom and the God who gives
her. However a strikingly different Hebrew version was found with other
biblical and non-biblical psalms at Qumran. This text is generally
recognized to be "earlier and more reliable than that of the Cairo
Ganizah". 218

For example, verse 13 is the same, but verse 14a reads in the
Qumran version : "She came to me in her beauty" instead of "In the fore-
court of the sanctuary I laid claim to her". Verse 18 provides a good
example of the difference in tone between the versions.

11 QPs^a has "I purposed to make sport

I was zealous for pleasure (or good) without pause" 219

N.E.B. "I determined to practise what I had learnt:

I pursued goodness, and shall never regret it."

There are in all differences in 11 lines in vv13-20. In every case the effect is that 11 QPs^a reads as a far from prudish love poem, whilst the other versions are a rather bland hymn of praise. We have noted that the Qumran text is likely to be not only older but "more accurate". A further hint that the other text we have is a bowdlerized version of this comes from the Syriac and medieval Hebrew in Verse 13 which read :

"My bowels are stir like a firepot for her
to gaze upon her,
that I may own her, a pleasant possession."

The text of Ecclesiasticus seems initially to have ended with Chapter 50. The hymnic material in 51 being added later, vv 1-12 most likely by Ben Sirach himself,²²⁰ as also vv 23 ff on grounds of style and content. If so it seems likely that 13-22 should also be assigned to him. What is less clear is which version, though the evidence suggests strongly that the erotic poem is the original. (It is of course even possible that the other version is also due to Ben Sirach adapting his own material, which could have been criticized as too explicit.²²¹

There are other examples of Wisdom being spoken of as the beloved. In particular this theme is developed in the book of Wisdom. Sir.14²²⁻¹⁵⁸ is often interpreted in this way.

It is interesting that both these passages, Sir. 14²²ff and the 11 QPs^a version of Sir. 51¹³ff include the image of Wisdom as mother in a context where she is lover. Sir. 15² :

"She will come out to meet him like a mother;
she will receive him like a young bride."

and 11 QPs^a 6a = 51^{17a} :

"and she became for me a nurse (literally "one who gives suck")".
It would seem that like the goddess Wisdom is both lover and mother.

We have noticed in several passages from Ecclesiasticus similar parallels between Wisdom and the goddess Isis. This cult spread across, first, the Hellenistic world, and later the Roman Empire in the west as well. This expansion beyond Egypt, and the Hellenizing (with the introduction or expansion of 'mystery' features) of the cult began following the conquest of Egypt by Alexander, and was encouraged by the Ptolomies.²²² It was thus well under way at the time Ecclesiasticus was written. This perhaps accounts for the goddess against whom Wisdom is a defence and in contrast to whom she is modelled being Isis rather than Ishtar/Astarte as

Isis and "The Wisdom of Solomon"

If the parallels between Wisdom in Ecclesiasticus and Isis were comparatively scant and often susceptible to other interpretation, we shall find less doubt in Wisdom.²²⁴

As part of a detailed analysis of various Hellenistic features in the book, Reese (1970) discusses the possible influence of Isis on certain passages. In particular, as we shall see, he notes a similarity of form and a striking fifty plus parallels of content between Isis material and "the book of Wisdom proper" 6¹²⁻¹⁶ and 6^{21-10²¹}.

The nature of Wisdom and imagery used about her is very different in Wisdom from the picture drawn of her in Proverbs and Ecclesiasticus. Wisdom is the object of intimate personal experience, and must be sought. As in the earlier works the image of lover is used to express this, e.g. in 6^{12 ff}, 7²⁸ and above all 8²⁻¹⁶. However in comparison with the vivid concreteness of the earlier pictures the thought here is very abstract and intellectualized.

In Chapter 6, for example, we are told that "Wisdom shines bright and never fades" and so "she is easily discerned by those who love her, and by those who seek her she is found," v 12. The only concrete image in this passage which describes the mutual seeking of Wisdom and her disciple is in v 14b which reads "for he will find her seated at his door". This passage may perhaps be compared with Prov. 1^{20 ff}, as an indication of the more philosophical and abstract thought of Wisdom. Keeping Wisdom's laws "is a warrant of immortality", which "brings a man near to God" v 19. Immortality (Greek : also incorruptibility, purity etc.) "brings a man near to God" and thus "to kingly stature" vv 19 and 20. It is the goal to which Wisdom brings her disciples, compare the cruder image of "life" in the earlier works.²²⁵

This change is especially pronounced in 7^{22b ff}. Note the list of the twenty-one attributes of Wisdom, clearly as for Philo so for Pseudo-Solomon Wisdom is many-named. This abstract praise of Wisdom continues and we learn, for example that :

"She is the brightness that streams from everlasting light, the flawless mirror of the active power of God and the image of his goodness" v 26.

There are in this passage, despite its thoroughly Jewish idea of the God whose wisdom she is, several echoes of Isis. Not least that Isis, too, is many named.²²⁶ Of her, also, it might be said that :

"She is but one, yet can do everything; herself
unchanging, she makes all things new; age after age she
enters into holy souls, and makes them.... friends and
prophets" v 27.

Indeed, Wisdom is perhaps greater than the goddess, for whereas Isis can say :

"I showed the paths of the stars.
I ordered the course of the sun and the moon....
I am in the rays of the sun
I inspect the courses of the sun".²²⁷

of Wisdom we read :

"She is more radiant than the sun, and surpasses every
constellation; compared with the light of day, she is
found to excel;" v 29.

The whole structure of 6¹²-10²¹ may be compared with that of the Aretology. This begins with a statement of who she is, progresses via a description of her powers and acts, and continues to list her "works". This is also the pattern of the classical Greek hymn, such a structure is clearly to be distinguished in our book. The Nature of Wisdom is presented first especially 7^{22b-30}, her powers and acts for the King are the subject of Chapter 8 and Chapter 10 deals with her benefits to mankind from creation onward.

That this similarity of form and kind of content is no accident is demonstrated beyond doubt by Reese (1970). He takes some fifty or more ideas from this section of Wisdom and shows parallels to them from the Aretology and other Isis material. This extensive argument is thoroughly convincing.

However, it should not be thought that Pseudo-Solomon has simply taken over Isis material and uncritically referred it to Wisdom. This would be far from the truth. For example Wis. 8^{15a} reads :

"Grim tyrants will be frightened when they hear of me".

There are similar statements in both the Cyme Aretology and the Oxyrhynchus litany.²²⁸ The second half of verse 15 tells how Wisdom makes the King

brave on the battlefield. Here again there are parallels from Cyme and Oxyrhynchus.²²⁹ The parallel in the second half of the verse is indeed between Wisdom and Isis, but in the first half it is the King who inspires fear in the tyrants and thus is like Isis.

Thus it would seem that Pseudo-Solomon shares ideas and imagery with the Isis material. However Wisdom in Wisdom is not simply the goddess adapted to be fitted in to a Jewish system. Rather ideas and imagery are taken and used, sometimes of Wisdom directly, sometimes in other ways to extol her glory and hence the glory of God to whom she belongs.

We have seen that the goal of the seeker in Wisdom is an intimate personal relationship with Wisdom. This relationship can be characterized by two words, *symbiōsis* and *paredros*, by both of which Wisdom is linked to God as well as man.

Symbiōsis is found in Chapter 8 at verse 3, 9 and 16. The primary meaning of the noun *symbios* in Hellenistic Greek is spouse - for which it is the ordinary word.²³⁰ In the writings of the fathers it can also be used for monastic community or for persons living together asexually.²³¹ These would seem to be derivative uses. In Chapter 8, in the context of verse 2 :

"Wisdom I loved; I sought her out when I was young and longed to win her for my bride, and I fell in love with her beauty."

Verse 9a :

"So I determined to bring her home to live with me",²³²

is another way of repeating 2b "longed to win her for my bride."

Symbiōsis also occurs in verse 16 :

"When I come home, I shall find rest with her; for there is no bitterness in her company, no pain in life with her, only gladness and joy".²³²

Here too the image is of the sage married to Wisdom. The N.E.B. heads this section with the words "The King's desire for Wisdom as his Bride", which indicates that it, too, sees "life with" Wisdom as marriage.

The other occurrence of this word, v 3, is one for which the idea of marriage causes difficulty :

"She adds lustre to her noble birth, because it is given her to live with God, and the Lord of all things has

accepted her".²³²

Clarke's argument here²³³ seems awkward. He notes that "the Greek term for live with God may suggest a conjugal relationship", but claims that "in contemporary Greek it often meant only companionship", and that "the latter translation is preferable here, to avoid any suggestion that wisdom was both God's wife and man's bride". Whilst it is true that the apparent suggestion of a double marriage may be a difficult image, it is quite clear that Wisdom is indeed, and precisely, subios to both God, v 3 and man, vv 9 and 16, in this chapter. The use of the same term to describe the relationship is surely not accidental ! The normal Greek usage combined with the introductory verse 2 suggest that the image in mind is that of husband and wife.

The term paredros is more complex. Though often in such contexts translated throne-partner,²³⁴ the usual usage implies more often assistant or lieutenant than partner.²³⁵ There are two interesting common uses which relate especially well to Wisdom - "counsellor" and in legal usage - "assessor". (The term also occurs in the Isis Aretologies in two places, the verb at Cyme 45 and the noun at Andros 139). The image of Wisdom as the counsellor by the throne of God is one we examined before, in particular her role in creation may be seen thus. This would seem to be the thought in 9⁴ where the term paredros is used. Verses 1 and 2 read :

"God of our fathers, merciful Lord, who hast made all things by thy word, and in thy wisdom hast fashioned man".²³⁶

The purpose for which God has fashioned man by his wisdom is that he might :

"be steward of the world...and...administer justice" v 3.

Therefore Pseudo-Solomon prays "Give me wisdom, who sits beside thy throne." v 4a. In creation Wisdom is God's paredros (sits beside his throne v 4a), his counsellor and lieutenant, but man is to be steward of the world and administer justice for God therefore he too needs Wisdom as paredros.

That Wisdom is paredros to man as to God is confirmed by 6¹⁴ which reads:

"the man who rises early in search of her will not grow weary in the quest, for he will find her seated at his door", (for he will find "paredron" at his door.²³⁷).

For Pseudo-Solomon Wisdom may be for man what she is to God,

sumbios and paredros, thus man is brought near to God 6¹⁷⁻¹⁹. In Chapter 6 man is the viceroy of God's Kingly power, v 3 and 4, therefore subject to severe judgement v 3 ff. So he needs the Wisdom of God as paredros (counsellor and assessor). We have noted above that this is the substance of the argument in Chapter 9¹ ff where Wisdom is indeed called God's paredros. In Chapter 8, the sumbios passage, the argument is similar. Wisdom "adds lustre to her noble birth" (as first born of God's creation, Prov. 8²²) "because it is given to her to live with God" 8^{3a} (sumbiōsin). Therefore the wise man "determined to bring her home to live with" him (sumbiōsin), "knowing she would be" "counsellor" and "comfort" v 9. "Through her" he will "have immortality" v 13a. Verse 17 sums up this argument thus :

"I thought this over in my mind, and I perceived that in kinship with Wisdom lies immortality".

Of course Wisdom is no back door to immortality, nearness to God, for there is "no way to gain possession of her except by gift of God". v 21a. Thus here too Wisdom is different from Isis in that she points beyond herself.

Old Testament²³⁸ Wisdom : Concluding Remarks.

In our examination of the use of personified Wisdom in Proverbs, Ecclesiasticus and the Wisdom of Solomon, we have, on the whole, looked at each book on its own and have not attempted to draw together conclusions into a coherent picture. That is the function of this section.

The use of the image of Lady Wisdom does not seem to develop from some already existing structured myth. Those scholars who try to produce a genealogy of "the Wisdom Myth" seem to be chasing a red herring. We have found different mythological backgrounds in different books. Different and often contradicting pictures come to the fore according to the needs of the context. Conzelmann is aware of the arguments, he notes that "Egypt, Canaan, Babylonia, and Persia have all been suggested as the place of origin of the concept."²³⁹ He also notes the variety of imagery used of her.²⁴⁰ He concludes his review thus : "It is consequently methodologically impossible to look for the ancestry of one goddess, 'Wisdom', and her myth."²⁴¹ However his own solution is equally unsatisfactory. To "look for one genuine goddess with her myth and then for the mythical revision of it in (pre-Hellenistic and) Hellenistic syncretism"²⁴² does not answer the case. Isis (his candidate) can not

account for the picture of Wisdom we find in Proverbs as well as a goddess of the Ishtar/Astarte type (even if we ignore the late date of the Isis material). To note that at some later date Isis was identified with such goddesses²⁴³ is no answer.

Rather than one goddess, however syncretistic, or myth, we have here to do with theologians of Judaism who from within her wisdom traditions borrow mythological formulations and imagery from whatever sources are to hand to serve their purpose. A process Fiorenza calls "Reflective Mythology."²⁴⁴ "Reflective Mythology ... uses the language and concepts of myths for theological reasons."²⁴⁵

We can trace such a process at work in the books we have examined. From the first tentative personification of Wisdom as a peripatetic teacher, Prov. 1²⁰ ff, she draws to herself imagery and mythological features from a wide variety of sources. These sources seem to include e.g. Astarte/Ishtar, Isis, Ma'at, the myth of the Tree of Life, and material from Jewish history, legal piety and erotic poetry. The needs which prompt such borrowings also differ. The most common would seem to be to counter the appeal of the cult of a foreign goddess, this would seem to be the case most strongly in Proverbs (see above) and perhaps in Wisdom too.²⁴⁶

Wisdom as Mother

It is true that marital and erotic imagery is common in the personification of Wisdom in these books, whilst explicitly maternal references are rare, though she clearly shows maternal features which are recognized by those who examine her character.²⁴⁷ (In the slightly later Jewish writings of Philo the maternal references are well developed). This emphasis upon a conjugal image would be difficult to explain solely in the context of Jewish piety as expressed in the Old Testament. However it is to be expected if, as we have argued above, the figure of Wisdom was drawn initially in contrast to the goddess Ishtar/Astarte. It is interesting that even within those passages where she is pictured as a bride, maternal features emerge.²⁴⁸

It is not surprising, indeed it is consequent upon the very nature of the wisdom tradition that this should be so. "My son", or "my sons", is the usual form of address of the wisdom literature²⁴⁹ (e.g. Prov. 2¹, 3^{1,11} etc., Sir. 2¹, 3¹ etc.). Presumably, therefore, it was also a normal form of address of teacher to pupil. So it is a natural form for

Wisdom to use when addressing her pupils e.g. Prov. 8³² ff. More than this, however, it is likely that not all such occurrences in Proverbs are to be understood in the context of school. In some contexts, clearly, home is the environment in view and the "my son" address is, in the first instance, literal. This is clearly so in Proverbs 1⁸ ff for example.²⁵⁰ Much of such homely instruction would have come from the mother.²⁵¹ Prov. 1⁸ presupposes this :

"Attend, my son, to your father's instruction
and do not reject the teaching of your mother".

That such maternal teaching was not restricted to young children may be seen in Prov. 31¹ ff; note vs. 1-2 :

"Sayings of Lemuel King of Massa, which his mother taught him :
What, O my son, what shall I say to you, you, the child of my
womb and answer to my prayers?"

The content of the following teaching is inappropriate to a child. Here the motherhood of the teacher may be taken literally, however as we saw above "mother" like "father" is used as an honorary title for those who are wise and give counsel.²⁵² The classic²⁵³ example of this usage for father is Joseph's statement to his brothers in Gen. 45⁸ :

"He" (God) "has made me a father to Pharaoh".²⁵⁴

De Boer argues that mother is used in a similar way. In particular he notes Judges 5⁷ where Deborah describes herself as "a mother in Israel", and sees support in Job 17¹³ ff, Ezek. 21²⁶ and 2 Sam 20¹⁴⁻²³. Wisdom, herself is the supreme counsellor (indeed she is on occasion pictured as the counsellor of God himself), the "mother" of all who attend to her teaching.

The motherly nature of Wisdom is to be seen in her care for her children. For example she is guide and protector in Proverbs 1²⁰ ff, 4⁶ etc.. In a later, more comprehensive passage her role of saviour and guardian is extolled in a review of the history of the people of God from Adam to Exodus. (Wis. 10).

"Wisdom it was who kept guard over the first father of
the human race,
when he alone had yet been made; she saved him after
his fall", ²⁵⁵ Wis. 10¹.

"When the earth was flooded because of him, wisdom again saved it, steering the righteous man by a paltry piece of wood", ^{255,256} Wis. 10⁴ (Noah).

"It was she, when a good man was a fugitive from his brother's anger, who guided him on the straight path" ²⁵⁵ 10¹⁰ a & b.

In such verses this passage extols and explains Wisdom's role as guide and saviour.

Proverbs 6²⁰ ff is a parental context, 6²⁰ reads :

"My son, observe your father's commands and do not reject the teaching of your mother".

These are identified with law (Torah) in vv 21 and 23 (see e.g. McKane op cit ad loc). However verse 22 is of interest, it reads :

"Wherever you turn, she will guide you;
when you lie in bed, she will watch over you,
and when you wake she will talk with you".

There are clearly textual problems here, note e.g. the abrupt change from plural v 21 to singular v 22. The New English Bible transposes this verse to 5¹⁹. Most commentators (and e.g. the Jerusalem Bible) prefer to emend feminine singular to plural. However it can be argued that the verse is clearly part of its context in 6²⁰ ff. It is a paraphrase of Dt. 11¹⁹ (c/cst Dt 6⁷) :

"Teach them to your children, and speak of them indoors and out of doors, when you lie down and when you rise".

If this is so, then :

- (1) The context is, precisely, that of Law (Torah) and parental instruction, which describes exactly 6²⁰ ff. Therefore this verse (22) is in place in 20 ff and the New English Bible emendation is wrong ;
- (2) The last line of 6²² is parallel to Dt. 11¹⁹ and 6⁷ therefore it should not be excised. (contra e.g. Whybray op cit p 48 ²⁵⁷ and Toy (1899) p 133 ff).

The question remains whether it is then necessary to emend to plural. This overcomes the apparent abrupt change of subject, and allows a free and easy sense to the passage. Thus it is favoured by the Revised Standard Version and the Jerusalem Bible. The activities in

this verse : guardian whilst asleep and instructor, are clearly (even without the context of v 20) parental. It seems possible that here parental teaching, Torah and Wisdom are identified. Thus the feminine singular 'she' equals Wisdom. This interpretation is not only possible, but has the advantage of requiring no textual emendations. If this is correct, then here Wisdom has a parental character²⁵⁸ (feminine therefore maternal).

Wisdom is like a mother, one who provides food for her children in e.g. Sir. 1¹⁶ f and Prov. 9¹⁻⁶ etc.. Wisdom is comforter in Wis.8 especially vv 9 and 16. Wisdom may be seen as both bride and mother. It must be stressed that neither image alone can account for the full wealth of the picture of Wisdom presented in the books. For above all, it is she who takes the initiative, in a most unwifely fashion (for that time and place!)²⁵⁹

She is spoken of explicitly as mother in Ecclesiasticus, in 4¹¹ ff for example :

"Wisdom raises her sons to greatness
and cares for those who seek her" (Sir. 4¹¹).

The following verses contain many of the typical Wisdom themes. For instance, verse 12 would not be out of place in a bridal context :

"To love her is to love life ;
to rise early for her sake is to be filled with joy".

The only occurrence of the word mother is at 15² :

"She" (Wis. 15¹) "will come out to meet him like a mother".
(15^{2a}).

Here as we have come to expect 2a is paralleled by 2b :

"she will receive him like a young bride",

presenting the images of mother and bride in the same verse, Wisdom is indeed the "Eternal Woman", or the archetype of womanhood. The remainder of this passage (15¹⁻⁸) however shows clearly the relation between this mother/bride and her pupil :

"He will lean on her and not fall ;
he will rely on her to save him from disgrace".

Verse 4 could describe a "young bride", although it seems better understood as a description of a mother. The following verse is totally

inappropriate to describe a Hebrew bride :

"She will promote him above his neighbours,
and find word for him when he speaks in the assembly". (15⁵).

In Chapter 24 a later addition ²⁶⁰verse 18 (found only in some manuscripts) ascribes to Wisdom an abstract motherhood, she is mother of virtues given to the elect :

"I give birth to noble love, reverence, knowledge and
holy hope ;
and I give all these my eternal progeny to God's elect". (24¹⁸)

I have tried in this section to show that, although explicit naming of Wisdom as mother is confined to Ecclesiasticus, all personification of Wisdom is necessarily imbued with maternal overtones. Personified Wisdom is teacher and counsellor, by her very name and nature; by gender and tradition she was she not he; therefore to speak the name of Wisdom was to think of her as motherly. This motherliness is made explicit in Ecclesiasticus, but not in the more philosophical "Wisdom of Solomon". This is because of the nature of that book and its arguments rather than because the image had lost its power. We can see this from the way in which Philo speaks of Wisdom ²⁶¹as mother, and perhaps more interestingly have evidence for the traditional/proverbial character of this imagery in Christian circles in the first century. Luke 7³⁵ reads :

"Wisdom is justified by all her children". ²⁶²

This may be assumed in context to be a proverbial saying, or at least to express a commonplace idea. (If the Matthean parallel reading, "deeds" for "children", is original then the contention that this, Lukan, version of the saying is proverbial is only heightened. ²⁶³

Wisdom and Christ in the New Testament

Wisdom as a figure closely identified with God, from "before creation" and yet in some way distinct from God ; In a sense divine, yet not the one God ; associated with God beyond this world, yet intimately associated with man ; a figure who seeks and saves ; this Wisdom, was naturally of interest to the writers of the New Testament as they sought to make sense of the person and claims of Jesus of Nazareth.

In the following pages we shall look at the ways in which the figure of Lady Wisdom (and the mythological theology which surrounded her) is used to develop the early Christian understanding of Christ. As we

shall see, a connection between Wisdom and Jesus was made very early; it shows some signs of being well developed by the time of the earliest New Testament books (the Pauline letters).

Wisdom and Pauline Christology

Paul speaks of Christ as the Wisdom of God in 1 Corinthians Chapter one.²⁶⁴

"He" (Christ crucified) "is the power of God and the wisdom of God." 1 Cor. 1^{24b}.

"But you are related to God in Christ Jesus, who as God's gift became wisdom for us, and righteous and sanctification and redemption too."²⁶⁵ 1 Cor. 1³⁰.

In these early chapters of 1 Corinthians the word wisdom is used in many different senses. For example ; it may refer to skill (a skill which in context has a negative value) as in 1¹⁷ "the language of worldly wisdom", (Barrett : "rhetorical skill", Greek "sophia logou"); or, the wisdom of the world (Gk. "tān sophian tou kosmov" 1²⁰) may be contrasted with and destroyed by the wisdom of God (Gk. "tā sophia tou theou" 1²¹) as in for example 1¹⁹⁻²²; this wisdom though secret, 2⁷, is imparted to the mature by the Spirit 2^{12 f}, and is powerful with God's power and spirit 2^{4f}.

Paul clearly does not intend to identify Christ with "the wisdom of the world" or as skill, but rather as the secret wisdom which the spirit reveals. To say this, however, does not necessarily imply that Paul is here identifying Christ with personified Wisdom. Barrett understands Paul's usage in this way in verse 30 (though strangely not at verse 24)²⁶⁶, and others assume it without question.²⁶⁷ To demonstrate this we would require evidence that Paul's view of Christ appropriates language and functions connected with personified Wisdom. These passages provide no such evidence (save possibly the description of wisdom as hidden)²⁶⁸ and so despite their directness are not strong evidence for such identification. Other, less direct, passages provide such evidence, however.

In the context of the debate over food sacrificed to idols, Paul writes :

"well then, about eating this consecrated food: of course, as you say, 'a false god has no existence in the real world. There is no god but one.' For indeed, if there be so-called gods, whether in heaven

or on earth - as indeed there are many 'gods' and many 'lords' - yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom all being comes, towards whom we move; and there is one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came to be, and we through him." 1 Cor. 8⁴⁻⁶

The role of Christ in creation and redemption, verse 6, is strikingly like that of wisdom. Thus Conzelmann, Barrett and Hering all see pre-existent Wisdom here. Orr and Walther²⁶⁹, on the other hand, take up a suggestion of Langhammer²⁷⁰, that this view of Christ as mediator in creation has another background.

Psalm 110 :

"The LORD said to my lord,
'You shall sit at my right hand
when (or until or while) I make your enemies the
footstool under your feet' " (Ps. 110¹).

This psalm is, indeed, alluded to very often in the New Testament.²⁷¹
It must have been a very early and popular Christian proof text.²⁷²

This suggestion is interesting, and clearly Ps. 110 had a profound influence upon the use of the title 'Lord' of Jesus in the early church. However, normally in the passages which make direct reference to Ps. 110 in the New Testament is the Lord's role in creation and new creation/redemption in view. The context is his power and glory at the right hand of God²⁷³ and in particular the way God has raised him to this state²⁷⁴ (and thus, Acts 2^{36b}; "has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.)

In Hebrews 1 both this passage and the son's role in creation are in view together.

"But in this the final age he has spoken to us in the Son whom he has made heir to the whole universe, and through whom he created all orders of existence: the Son who is the effulgence of God's splendour and the stamp of God's very being, and sustains the universe by his word of power. When he had brought about the purgation of sins, he took his seat at the right hand of Majesty on high, raised as far above the angels, as the title he has inherited is superior to theirs". Heb. 1²⁻⁴.

However, there are here clear echoes of Wisdom (Wis. 7^{26 f}) e.g. the use of "effulgence" (Gk. *apaugasma*) and it is from this identification

of Christ as Wisdom that his role in creation stems.²⁷⁵

The similarity of these two passages, far from suggesting Ps.110 as background to Paul's thought rather strengthens the case of Wisdom as that background in 1 Cor.8⁶. Conzelmann²⁷⁶ speaks of a logos/eikōn/sophia Christology ("word/image²⁷⁷/wisdom") referring²⁷⁸ to Jn. 1¹ ff and Col. 1¹⁵ ff. (We shall be discussing these passages below).

In passing we should note one further passage from 1 Corinthians. The reference to Christ as "rock" in 10⁴ is compared with a similar identification of Wisdom in Philo and the Wisdom of Solomon.²⁷⁹

There is one passage of interest in 2 Corinthians, for following the suggestion of Feuillet²⁸⁰ we will read 2 Cor. 3¹⁸ with 4⁴⁻⁶. The context is concerned with the old and the new dispensations, the Spirit versus the letter of the law, and in particular with the glory which shone on Moses' face when he received the tablets of stone. In such a context 3¹⁶ reads:

"However, as Scripture says of Moses, 'whenever he turns to the Lord the veil is removed'. (or: as Scripture says, when one turns to the Lord the veil is removed.)"

Verse 17 explains :

"Now the Lord of whom this passage speaks is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."

Verse 18 contains a major problem in translation, the verb katoptrizomenoi is not common and it has been argued may mean either reflect as in a mirror, or see as in a mirror. Although the evidence of ancient versions and usage seem to support 'see' rather than 'reflect' and despite Barrett's conviction that the contrast of Christian and Jew means the argument also demands 'see' ²⁸¹; nonetheless N.E.B. for example ²⁸² reads:

"we all reflect as in a mirror the splendour of the Lord".

Three verses later Paul returns to the theme of veiling, and in this continuing context writes of those on the way to perdition.

"Their unbelieving minds are so blinded by the god of this passing age, that the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the very image of God, cannot dawn upon them and bring them light." 2 Cor. 4⁴.

Here it is without question Christ "who is the (very²⁸³) image of God". For this reason, in addition to those summarized above, it would seem

right to read the same thought in 3¹⁸, thus :

"But we all, with unveiled face, behold as in a glass
the glory of the Lord, and are transformed into the
same image, from glory to glory, as from the Lord,
the Spirit." 284

The verses 3¹⁸ - 4⁶, then, present an argument which has as one premise the idea of Christ as image of God. There are, perhaps, two plausible backgrounds for such Christological use of the term "image of God" (eikōn tou theou). First, we may see Genesis 1²⁶⁻⁷ which speaks of the creation of humanity in the image of God; Or second, we may think of Wisdom "the flawless mirror of the active power of God and the image of his goodness".²⁸⁵

It is true that Paul can speak in 1 Cor. 11⁷ of "a man" (anār) as being "the image and glory of God".²⁸⁶ However, elsewhere Paul is not concerned with humanity as the image of God but rather with the new humanity transformed into the image of Christ, Rom. 8²⁹, 1 Cor. 15⁴⁹ and Col. 3¹⁰. Furthermore, 1 Cor. 11⁷ is not in a passage concerned with Christ as second man/Adam, indeed the passage has no Christological interest at all, nor does 3¹⁸ - 4⁶ give any indication that here Paul's thought is of Christ as second Adam/new man.

On the other hand, the conjunction of several terms reminiscent of Wis. 7²⁵ ff is striking, glory, mirror, image, light.²⁸⁷ Clearly Paul has the figure of Wisdom in mind here, (he may also, indeed, have his conversion experience of the light of Christ in view and his talk of Christ as image of God may well be responsible for the reminiscence of creation in verse 6). The main Christological thought here is of Christ the wisdom of God who reveals God to men by entering their lives, the mirror of his active power and image of his goodness, who makes all things new.

These passages from the Corinthian correspondence show quite clearly that Paul made use of Wisdom speculation and in particular of the idea of Wisdom/Christ as the image of God. These letters are quite early, and are undoubtedly by Paul himself. The locus classicus for such a Christology however is Colossians 1¹⁵ ff. This hymn (or hymn fragment) is not by the same author as the rest of the letter,²⁸⁸ (whether Paul or some member of the Pauline school). It will therefore be dealt with in the context of New Testament Hymns, see below.

The meaning for Paul of the identification of Christ as the wisdom or image of God is clear from these verses in Corinthians. As Feuillet puts it :

"Christ is the perfect image of God, first of all because in him God is very adequately represented and very authentically revealed".²⁸⁹

This usage also has the advantage of linking the Lord who appeared to Paul on the Damascus road with the Lord, the God , of Israel whilst yet not making of him a second God nor completely identifying him with God. (1 Cor. 8⁶, 2 Cor. 3¹⁸⁻⁴⁶). By this means Paul is able to speak of Christ as present in the history of Israel (1 Cor. 10⁴). In addition, and of special relevance to the church at Corinth, he is able to contrast the knowledge the Christian has through Christ, the hidden Wisdom of God and the "knowledge" and "wisdom" of this world. (1 Cor. 1-2).

Christological Hymns in the New Testament Epistles.

Paul was not the first to develop such a Christology, indeed such thought seems to have been widespread in the early church. This may be demonstrated by an examination of some of the hymnic fragments preserved in the epistles.²⁹⁰ This is not the place for a detailed discussion of all such passages,²⁹¹ rather I shall present a summary of their content²⁹² and some brief discussion of their background.

The common and recurring elements (all found in several of these passages, none found in all) may be summarized as follows :

- 1) Image of God, effulgence of his splendour etc.
(Heb. 1³, Col. 1^{15,17}, also Phil. 2⁶)
- 2) Mediator of Creation (Col. 1¹⁶)²⁹³
- 3) Sustains creation (Col. 1^{17 f}; Heb. 1³)
- 4) Descends to earth (Phil. 2⁷; 1 Tim. 3¹⁶; 1 Pet. 3¹⁸ and perhaps implied elsewhere)
- 5) Dies (Phil. 2⁸; Col. 1¹⁸; 1 Pet. 3¹⁸)²⁹⁴
- 6) Made alive/vindicated (Col. 1¹⁸; 1 Tim. 3¹⁶; 1 Pet. 3¹⁸)
- 7) Reconciles (Col. 1²⁰; Eph. 2¹⁴⁻¹⁶)
- 8) Rules from heaven/right hand of God (Phil. 2^{9 ff}; 1 Pet. 3²²; Heb. 1³)

It is rightly pointed out that the first four of these are reminiscent of the Figure of Wisdom, and probably have Jewish wisdom speculation as their background.²⁹⁵ The other four however can find no prefiguring here, for their content, which is said to be similar to gnostic emphases (especially 7 and 8).²⁹⁶

Such similarity may be explained in several ways, e.g. :

- (a) The New Testament influenced later Gnostic material.
- (b) Gnostic ideas influenced the New Testament.
- (c) Jewish ideas were developed in various directions including Christianity and Gnosticism.

All three kinds of interrelation seem to have occurred. Beyond doubt many gnostic writings were influenced by the New Testament, and other Christian traditions. It also seems clear that gnostic ideas influenced the New Testament in particular John's gospel and Paul's letters.²⁹⁷ Equally Jewish ideas were taken up in both Christian and gnostic writings, as we have seen above Paul made use of wisdom speculation, such speculation could however be developed in quite another direction in various gnostic systems.

If we accept that the combination of all these elements, 1-8, must have a pre-Christian source, then we must accept that in this case the New Testament has borrowed from a developed gnostic myth.²⁹⁸ However if we can accept that under the impact of the "Christ event" early Christians could combine more than one strand of Old Testament thought, then there is no such need. As we have had cause to note before, hymnic material regularly takes up and uses a variety of imagery and does not restrict itself to one image or source. The fact of Jesus' death together with the widespread use of Psalm 110 noted above, for example, would be sufficient background. For our purposes it is in any case enough to note that these hymns reflect a type of Christology which makes use of thought of Christ as the Wisdom of God as she was pictured in Hellenistic Judaism.

Sanders makes a most interesting use of Mowinckel's study "Psalms and Wisdom".²⁹⁹ Very briefly the argument runs thus: Later Jewish psalms had as their "sitz im leben" not the cult but the devotions of the wise. Thus they exhibit increasing wisdom emphases. This process is visible in the Old Testament but is carried further in e.g. Ecclesiasticus and Psalms of Solomon. One further development of this may be seen in the fulfillment psalms of the Lukan prologue. Here, however, the psalm is no longer in the realm of the wisdom school, indeed Mowinckel does not speak of any trace of such psalms in the New Testament. Sanders, however notes that the

New Testament Christological hymns he has been examining (and likewise some of the Odes of Solomon) may be seen as stemming "from the milieu of this psalmography of the Wisdom school", in particular they retain somewhat the form of "didactic thanksgiving psalms".³⁰⁰ The connection may be illustrated by a comparison of Sir. 51 and Col. 1¹²⁻²⁰ which has preserved the explicit form of thanksgiving.³⁰¹

Thus the New Testament Christological hymns embedded in the epistles derive their form and (at least) much of their content from wisdom circles. It is not strange, then, to find in some of them evidence of a kind of "Wisdom Christology".

Q, MATTHEW AND LUKE

The inferred sayings source common to both Matthew and Luke, Q, by its very nature as a collection of sayings falls within a recognizable "gattung" of literature, "the sayings of ...".³⁰² The "sitz im leben" of such a "gattung" is the wisdom tradition. The form of individual sayings in Q often exhibit a wisdom influence.³⁰³ Despite this pronounced influence of the wisdom tradition, and its conforming to a wisdom "gattung", nevertheless the relationship of Jesus and personified Wisdom in Q is not the simple identification we found in Paul. Rather, in Q, Jesus is seen as the "primus inter pares" of the succession of Wisdom's prophets.³⁰⁴ The idea that such prophets are bound to meet with rejection also has precedents in the wisdom tradition where Wisdom herself meets rejection.³⁰⁵

Wisdom Sends Prophets - Luke 11⁴⁹⁻⁵¹; Matthew 23³⁴⁻³⁶.

The Q passage Luke 11⁴⁹⁻⁵¹; Matthew 23³⁴⁻³⁶ speaks of such a succession of prophets :-

"This is why the Wisdom of God said, 'I will send them prophets and messengers; and some of these they will persecute and kill'; so that this generation will have to answer for the blood of all the prophets shed since the foundation of the world; from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah who perished between the altar and the sanctuary. I tell you, this generation will have to answer for it all." Luke 11⁴⁹⁻⁵¹.

Compare this with Mt. 23³⁴⁻³⁶. The major difference is that whilst in Matthew this saying is ascribed to Jesus' own authority: "I send", in Luke Jesus refers the words to "the Wisdom of God". The other significant difference stems from this, in Luke the prophets are sent

to "them", in Matthew the second person is used.

The Q version must have been more closely followed by Luke and the changes introduced in Matthew here, because ³⁰⁶

- (1) The use of the third person in Luke is inappropriate for an address to the crowd whereas the Matthean second person would fit in the Lukan context.
- (2) Wise men and teachers do not appear together elsewhere in Matthew - but they fit into a Wisdom setting.
- (3) To change Wisdom of God to I makes better sense than to change I to Wisdom of God which would be motiveless.

The introductory phrase "the Wisdom of God said" has been given various meanings. The most likely, in the context of Q, is that personified Wisdom is meant.³⁰⁷ So in Q we have an oracle of Wisdom which seems to view Jesus as one of her prophets. Matthew seems to see Jesus as Wisdom incarnate³⁰⁸ and so tidies up to read "I" here.

Yet Wisdom is Justified - Matthew 11²⁻¹⁹; Luke 7¹⁸⁻³⁵.

Again, for our purposes, a difference of one word, relating to wisdom, between the two versions³⁰⁹ may affect the sense. In the climax of this lengthy passage³¹⁰ (Lk. 7³⁵; Mt. 11^{19c}) Matthew reads 'deeds' where Luke has 'children'.³¹¹

Again the Lukan reading, children, is to be preferred as the Q version because in its present position it fits well with the children (psidia) in the parable Matthew 11¹⁶; Luke 7³².

Luke 7²⁹⁻³⁰ has no parallel in Matthew, and is unlikely to be from Q.³¹² Thus Q, omitting these verses, sees John and Jesus as being Wisdom's children, despite their different styles she is justified by both (in contrast to those who will neither "dance" nor "mourn"). Luke reads children with Q, but by the addition of these verses understands Wisdom's children as those who justify God (v 29) by their response to John and Jesus.³¹³

Matthew's alteration of children to deeds on the other hand echoes his earlier theme of "the deeds of Christ" (v 2). Thereby Matthew sharpens the association of Jesus and Wisdom, or "the deeds of Christ"³¹⁴ have now become the deeds of Wisdom.

The Lament over Jerusalem - Matthew 23³⁷⁻³⁹; Luke 13³⁴⁻³⁵.

This passage is generally agreed to be from Q, though given very different settings in the two gospels. Matthew places it at the end of the woes to the Pharisees, after the passage concerning the sending of the prophets which we examined above (i.e. after agreed Q material). In Luke the setting is earlier, following a warning by "a number of Pharisees" that Jesus was in danger (i.e. between blocks of L material). Either evangelist could have chosen the present position because of verbal similarity. In Matthew the link would be "send", "prophet" and "kill", in Luke the primary similarity is the name "Jerusalem".

Unlike the previous passages we have looked at here it is more likely that Matthew has been more faithful to Q in his positioning of the saying because : (1) In Luke, Jerusalem is not the setting for the previous saying, Luke 11⁴⁹⁻⁵¹; Matthew 23³⁴⁻³⁶ so this lament would fit there less well. (2) In the present setting in Luke, however, it serves his plan for it looks forward to the fulfillment of "Blessings on him who comes in the name of the Lord!" v 35b for Jesus is making his way towards Jerusalem v 22. (3) In Luke the saying is surrounded by L material whereas in Matthew it is embedded in a Q context which it fits well, (a), the mother bird image is more appropriate to Wisdom than to Jesus, as (b) also "How often".

It is likely that the major difference in wording the "from now on" (ap arti) which appears in Matthew but not in Luke, (Mt. 23³⁹; Lk.13³⁵) is an addition by the former since (1) There is no precedent for a return of Wisdom³¹⁵ and (11) It makes sense only in the context of a gospel narrative, whereas the Lukan version makes sense alone.³¹⁶

This concluding verse is often said to be a product of the latest stage in the transmission of Q³¹⁷ for at least it begins the identification of Jesus with Wisdom. This beginning is sharpened greatly by Matthew, who makes the forsaking of the "house" to be Jesus' own departure that day. This makes Jesus himself to be the Wisdom of God whose hiddenness or absence is the burden of the warning.³¹⁸

Thanksgiving to the Father - Matthew 11^{25 f}; Luke 10^{21 f}

In Matthew this thanksgiving consists neatly of three parts: the introductory Benediction vv 25-26, elaboration of content v 27, appeal to the listener vv 28-30. Various interpretations have been based on this threefold structure.³¹⁹ But this threefold structure is unlikely to have

been present in Q for (1) verses 28-30 have no parallel in Luke, although their content would be most compatible in that gospel³²⁰ and (2) a parallel to these verses is however found as a detached logion in the Gospel of Thomas.³²¹ (3) Luke follows 10²¹⁻²² with a Q saying which Matthew has adapted (13^{16 f}) to fit with a quotation from Is. 6^{9 f} at Matthew 13^{14 f}. The Q material is more likely to follow the pattern of Luke.

In Matthew the thanksgiving in its threefold form is very reminiscent of the canonical version of Sir. 51. This begins with thanksgiving to God verses 1 - 12 (compare Matthew 11²⁵⁻²⁶ especially note Sir. 51^{1a} "I thank thee my Lord and King" and Matthew 11^{25b} "I thank thee Father,³²² Lord of heaven and earth".) The middle section of both passages concerns God's revelation by Wisdom (Sir. 51¹³⁻²²) and by the Son (Matthew 11²⁷).

The closing words in Matthew have a more than thematic similarity. In both there is an invitation to "learn from me" (Mt. 11²⁹) or "Come to me, you who need instruction" (Sir. 51^{23a}), the content of the invitation to learn in both cases involves taking an easy "Yoke"³²³, and the "rest" it brings (Mt. 11³⁰, Sir. 51^{27b} of 6²⁸⁻³¹ especially verse 28a). The striking difference between the two invitations and thanksgivings is that whilst Ben Sirach extols Wisdom, in Matthew it is Jesus himself who is the revealer and who offers his yoke.

Thus, by the addition of this invitation here, Matthew has not only heightened the Wisdom flavour of the passage³²⁴ but has also identified Jesus as the Wisdom of God.

Let us review what we have been saying concerning the relation of Jesus and Wisdom in Q, Matthew and Luke :

- (1) Q makes use of the idea of Wisdom sending prophets, and sees Jesus (and John) as such.
- (2) It is possible that by the latest stage in the transmission of Q there was a tendency to identify Jesus and Wisdom more closely.³²⁵
- (3) Matthew regularly sharpens this Q material so that Jesus is the Wisdom of God incarnate.
- (4) There is no sign that Luke is concerned with such a "Wisdom Christology", but rather, he may be tending to identify Wisdom with the Spirit who is present in Jesus.

THE JOHANNINE PROLOGUE - WORD AND WISDOM.

Various suggestions have been made in numerous books and articles of the background to the use of "word" in the prologue to the Fourth Gospel. The basic discussion is between those who see here, primarily or exclusively, ideas with their background in Jewish tradition, and those who seek a wider background in some form of gnostic redeemer myth.³²⁶

It is generally recognised that the prologue consists of (at least) two layers, poetic fragments and material composed to link these into the rest of the work. Precisely how much of the prologue, as we have it, is part of the original hymn is a matter of lively debate.³²⁷ It is also debatable whether the hymnic material was composed by the author of the gospel, in the same circle or was simply taken up (and adapted?) from some other source.

Jewish thought provides at least a starting point for the kind of use this hymn makes of the name "word" (logos). In the study we have mentioned above in the context of Old Testament Wisdom, Ringgren (1947) is also concerned to demonstrate an almost parallel hypostatization of "word" in Ancient Israel.³²⁸ The evidence for such a hypostatization of "word" which goes beyond a literary personification is less strong than for wisdom, though not entirely absent especially from later Jewish thought.³²⁹

We have had cause to note before the tendency for imagery and mythological ideas to come together from disparate sources around the figure of Wisdom. The wider collocation of, for example, Word and Wisdom is interesting. Word and Wisdom are associated in the Ras Shamra texts, e.g. the sentence : "Thy word, O El, is wisdom" is found at 11 AB IV, 41 and V AB E, 38. They are also related in later Jewish thought. In Sir. 24³ Wisdom declares : "I come forth from the mouth of the Most High",³³⁰ which the N.E.B. for example interprets "I am the word which was spoken by the Most High". In Philo, logos and sophia are so closely identified that logos has begun to take over the functions and place of the earlier figure of Wisdom.³³¹

There are grounds for supposing that in a parallel way 'word' takes the place of 'wisdom' in the prologue. Note, for example, how there are more close parallels between this 'word' and wisdom literature than with the "logos" in Philo.³³² The term 'logos' then, provided the writer of the hymn with a word familiar to Hellenistic readers (especially through its stoic use, which has some affinities with the use here) yet which

could carry a wealth of Semitic overtones and imagery. It may also be, as Engelsman and others suggest, that the masculine gender of 'logos' was felt to apply more smoothly to Jesus than the feminine 'sophia' especially as she had attracted such a wealth of exclusively female imagery (bride, mother, nurse etc). If this is so then this prologue would be an early attempt to de-feminize Wisdom Christology.

THE PATRISTIC PERIOD

Whilst it was still possible for the Fathers to make use of the title/name Wisdom of Christ; other New Testament names such as Son and 'Logos' quickly eclipsed its use.³³³ In particular, in the works of the Apologists and Irenaeus, the use made of the philosophically respectable title of 'logos' was one factor leading to an identification of Wisdom and Spirit.³³⁴

Theophilus of Antioch, in particular, in his Apology to Autolycus can speak of Word and Wisdom as Son and Spirit respectively.³³⁵ Since theology of God as "Triad" or "Trinity" was only then being developed, the thought is often confused. For example Theophilus writes :

"God, then, having His own Word internal (endiatheton) within His own bowels, begat Him, emitting Him along with His own Wisdom before all things. He had this Word as a helper in the things that were created by Him, and by Him He made all things. He is called "governing principle" (archā), because He rules, and is Lord of all things fashioned by Him. He, then, being Spirit of God and governing principle, and Wisdom, and power of the highest, came down upon the prophets, and through them spoke of the creation of the world and of all other things. For the prophets were not when the world came into existence, but the wisdom of God which was in Him, and His holy Word which was always present with Him."³³⁶

In Irenaeus this idea is developed in conjunction with his thought of the Son and Spirit as the "hands" of God by which he acts in and above all creates the world :

"That we should know that He who made, and formed, and breathed in them the breath of life, and nourishes us by means of the creation, establishing all things by His Word, and binding them together by His Wisdom - this is He who is the only true God."³³⁷

"For His offspring and His similitude do minster to Him
in every respect; that is the Son and the Holy Spirit,
the Word and Wisdom." ³³⁸

Such thought is developed at greater length in IV 20, 1-3. Here he explicitly links both Word and Wisdom to the "us" of Genesis 1²⁶ :

"For with Him were always present the Word and Wisdom,
the Son and the Spirit, by whom and in whom, freely and
spontaneously, He made all things, to whom also He speaks
saying, 'let us make man after our image and likeness'." ³³⁹

In passing he begins to distinguish their functions for whilst God
"made all things by the Word", he "adorned them by Wisdom", ³⁴⁰ He goes on
to "demonstrate" ³⁴¹ by means of Proverbs 8¹⁹⁻³¹ that the Spirit (Wisdom)
was present with the Father "anterior to all creation" as the Son was always
with him.

The more far-reaching change in the use of Wisdom texts, though,
occurred later, following the Arian controversy. The passage of Proverbs 8,
which as we have just seen was used by Irenaeus to demonstrate that the
Spirit (Wisdom) was with the Father "anterior to all creation", was
appealed to by both sides. In particular the Arians could argue that the
Son (to whom this passage refers for he is the wisdom of God) was created,
before all else, but not co-eternal with the Father. ³⁴² Newman suggested ³⁴³
that this potential use of the passages when interpreted in a Christological
sense was the motive behind the transference of these texts to Mary in
the following centuries, and a major impetus to her cult.

Whatever the cause, it is true that in the liturgies of East and
West the wisdom texts are pre-eminently used on Marian feasts. For example,
in the Jerusalem Bible Lectionary two of the five occurrences of passages
where Wisdom is personified occur as alternatives in the Common of the
Blessed Virgin Mary. Likewise, in the breviary, Wisdom texts are often
used for Marian feasts.

This application of wisdom texts is possible where Mary is a highly,
heavenly figure - in Protestant traditions they have tended to remain unused
for lack of such a figure. ³⁴⁴ (they have tended not to be reapplied to
Christ, perhaps because Wisdom is so clearly female.) This matter of
Wisdom and Mary being identified will be raised again in Chapter Nine
below.

SOPHIOLOGY

In one more recent strand of theology, Wisdom (Sophia) has brought a feminine and maternal element into thought of the godhead, in the work of the Russian sophiologists, in particular Sergius Bulgakov.³⁴⁵

Bulgakov's thought was much influenced by the protestant mystic philosopher Jacob Boehme³⁴⁶ (1575-1624), and was also influenced by Vladimir Solovyev.³⁴⁷ Central to his thought is the identification of Sophia with the very substance (ousia) of the godhead, thus:

"The tri-personal God has his own self-revelation. His nature or ousia, constitutes his intrinsic Wisdom and Glory alike, which we accordingly unite under one general term, Sophia. God not only possesses in Sophia the principle of his self-revelation, but it is this Sophia which is his eternal divine life, the sum and unity of all his attributes".³⁴⁸

His thought is made more complex, however, by the close association between Sophia and the self-revelation of God in Son and Spirit, whom he sees as being in some sense feminine in contrast to the masculine "logos".

"These masculine and feminine principles, in which is imprinted the image of the divine Sophia, of prototypal humanity, are in created language the distinction and unity of the Logos and the Holy Spirit in Sophia ... The Holy Spirit rests on the Logos, and the Logos abides in Her bosom. The Holy Spirit is the life, and the love, and the reality of the Word, just as the Logos is for Her the determining content, the sense, thought and meaning, the Truth and existence in the Truth ... All these correlations have a parallel (neither more nor less) in that "bi-unity" of the spirit of man in which the masculine, solar principle of thought, of the Logos, is united with the feminine principle of reception, of creative fulfillment, of beauty." ³⁴⁹

This paralleling of human and divine is reflected in a further complication to his thought, reminiscent of Boehme. For he speaks of a creaturely Sophia who is the image of divine Sophia, thus he can say :

"The eternal Sophia, the mother of the world ...cannot be adequately revealed in the Logos or the Spirit but requires both for its manifestation, likewise the creaturely Sophia

in humanity is man and woman." 350

Bulgakov attempted to develop his Sophiology in line with patristic insights and in conformity with the teaching of the church. However, his thought was deemed to be unorthodox and as a result little attention has been paid to it. There are signs though of an increase of interest in his work.³⁵¹

CONCLUSION

This rather lengthy excursus has been included because Wisdom has been across the years a means of speaking of God as feminine and motherly in the Judaeo-Christian Tradition.³⁵² (Motherly, not least because even when spoken of as the ousia of God she is closely associated with Mary, the mother of God and of all the faithful.)³⁵³

It is far from clear how far the complex and abstruse sophiological thought of Bulgakov, or even some of the Fathers, would enable us to speak of God as mother today. What should be clear from the foregoing summaries is that :

- (1) Wisdom in the Old Testament provided a way of speaking of the divine in feminine and motherly terms.
- (2) The New Testament made great use of these texts for Christological purposes, thus to some degree giving precedent for speaking of the second person of the Trinity (as in a sense feminine and) as motherly.³⁵⁴
- (3) Likewise the early patristic use of these texts gives precedent for using such language of the Spirit.

Discussion of the significance of such precedents for theology today will be found after the more direct evidence has been presented.

CHAPTER SIX :

"THE BIBLE"

The Bible is the product of an androcentric patriarchal society. The Old Testament is the literary deposit of a religious culture which to some extent excluded women from full participation. It is not, therefore, strange that there is evidence in the text (or its transmission) that masculine gender was regarded as more reverent.³⁵⁵ Nor would it be strange if, in view of the greater honour accorded to the male, male imagery is preferred for God. In fact a surprising amount of feminine, and particularly maternal, imagery is used of God, as we shall see below.

That this is so would seem to be due to two factors. The first would be the psychological need, we have discerned, to relate to the divine as to a mother and father, this is common to all humanity. The second is due to the biblical view of God.

The God to whom the Bible bears witness is first and foremost personal. For here is no remote God of Philosophy, but one who loves and chastises, who is full of wrath or forgiving. Indeed this personal quality is so marked that often God seems to share in human changeability and passions. Eichrodt in his "Theology of the Old Testament" links this personal nature with the revelation of God as 'one with a name', for this (having a name) is the archetype of all self-revelation, and self-revelation, sharing one's self is of the essence of personhood.

This view of God leads inevitably to the use of anthropomorphic language and imagery, for we have no other terms to describe the actions of personality. It is worth quoting Eichrodt at some length here :

"An unprejudiced evaluation of the Old Testament's humanizing of the deity leads us to see, however, that in fact it is not the spiritual nature of God which is the foundation of Old Testament faith. It is his personhood - a personhood which is fully alive, and a life which is fully personal, and which is involuntarily thought of in terms of the human personality. There can be no doubt that among the great mass of the people, and especially in the earlier period, the deity was frequently conceived as restricted to physical modes of living and self-manifestation. They understood the anthropomorphic expressions in a quite

literal and concrete way, and so managed to acquire a most inadequate conception of the divine supremacy.

It is, however, obvious that this deficiency was not regarded by the leading spirits in Israel as particularly dangerous. It is precisely the prophets who use such an abundance of anthropomorphic and anthropopathic expressions for God's activities, that anyone trained in philosophical thinking cannot but be constantly scandalized." 356

This personal, and hence of necessity, anthropomorphic way of talking and thinking about God is central also to the New Testament. For example, the richly human imagery of Jesus' parables, or passages like Hebrews 12⁷⁻¹¹. Indeed at the heart of the New Testament is God in human form, Jesus himself.

Human language and imagery is necessary for talking about one who is personal, yet it is clearly, at least, not the whole truth of biblical witness to God. Such language is necessary, but in the last analysis it has no reality, for God is other than human :

"God is not a mortal that he should lie,
not a man that he should change his mind." Numbers 23^{19a}.

There are a number of similar passages, for example 1 Samuel 15²⁹, and Hosea 11⁹. Tavard's interpretation of the use of "Heavenly" to qualify God's Fatherhood in the Lord's Prayer makes a similar point :

"God is beyond all genus. Nothing that is connoted by fatherhood in human experience applies to Him, which is the exact reason why the New Testament, in the Lord's Prayer, qualifies fatherhood with "heavenhood" "

"As a result, to speak of fatherhood in God is to negate human fatherhood as a proper image of God. Likewise, to speak of a motherhood of God - an expression which is not unheard of in classical authors, both mystics and theologians - is to negate human motherhood as a proper image of God. All that is said by this type of language is this: in our human experience of fatherhood, of motherhood, especially when lived and understood in the light of the Christian revelation, there is trace of an element that places us on the right direction to relate to God and to understand this relationship." 357

Thus although human language and imagery is used in all talk of God in the Bible, and although such talk is frequently, consistently and almost exclusively, in masculine terms it should not be taken as implying that the God so talked about is male. This assertion has been argued, logically, in the previous chapter. Here it will be defended on other grounds.

The Old Testament religion was expressed and developed in the vicinity of, and in contrast to Canaanite religion.³⁵⁸ The two prime traditions of the Old Testament are also the two most distinctive features of Yahweh. These are the traditions of Exodus and Covenant. Yahweh is one who covenants with his people, and one who sets them free. Thus, the promises and demands of this God of Sinai and Exodus are the continual background to most of the Old Testament.

The Old Testament is not concerned to profess Yahweh's asexuality, and certainly not to profess a male sexual god, a Ba'al. These are, quite simply, not at issue for either the prophets, poets, or pentateuch. The issue is Yahweh the God who frees and covenants, and the people he loves. Thus the prophets and poets of the Hebrews are free to use any imagery which suits this purpose, masculine, feminine, animal, human, animate or inanimate, even at times borrowing the mythology of the fertility cult itself.

New Testament theology is also first of all concerned with the loving, redeeming, power of God and with human response to God's acts. The New Testament centres on and attempts to make sense of the "Christ Event". The prime concern of the New Testament writers is Christ and what he means. Since Jesus was a man we should expect that this fact will limit the use of feminine imagery. We should expect this also, since making sense of God in Christ is the central interest and therefore all other talk of God is of secondary interest.

There are two distinct sections in this chapter. The first looks at the explicit and implicit use of maternal imagery of God in the Old and New Testaments, to provide some groundwork for the later discussion of "The Motherhood of the Trinity". The other looks back at our supposed psychological need for a divine mother and reviews the other evidence of the Old Testament which indicates the reality of such a need.

A/ Biblical Uses of Maternal Imagery.

(1) More Direct Maternal Imagery

In poetic contexts in the Old Testament motherhood is one of many similies and metaphors used to depict God. Such explicit maternal imagery is found in Psalms and the later Isaianic traditions³⁵⁹ in particular. Since there is no obvious way of classifying most of this material it will be discussed in the order found in the English Bible, except that discussions of certain recurrent material will be kept in one place.

"The Song of Moses" : Deuteronomy 32.³⁶⁰ Since our concern is solely with the use of maternal imagery verse eighteen is the most important :

"You forsook the rock³⁶¹ who begot you
and cared nothing for God who brought you to birth."

The second line with its use of the verb "chil", which carries overtones of the writhing pain of childbirth is clearly maternal. "Yalad", translated by beget, in the first line, may refer to either parent equally. Mayes notes³⁶² that the only other occurrence of this verb in this form with Yahweh as subject is at Numbers 11¹² (As we shall see in that passage it refers to Yahweh as mother but only by implication³⁶³.) Thus the imagery of this verse may be of Yahweh as both mother and father, or it may be of Yahweh as mother only. In either case Yahweh is pictured as the mother of Israel from whom Israel has turned away.

Certainly the picture of Yahweh as father is also present in this passage (whether in this verse or not).

Verse six :-

"Is this how you repay the LORD,
you brutish and stupid people?
Is he not your father who formed you?
Did he not make you and establish you?"

In this song of the faithful God, the "Rock", and his unfaithful people, both pictures drive home how unnatural is Israel's desertion of his God. It is like a child who turns from her parents. Some commentators see the combination of fatherly with motherly language as "bold"³⁶⁴, however, as we shall have cause to note time and again such mixing of seemingly incompatible metaphor is common in religious poetry.³⁶⁵ The linking of the two parents is most restrained use of metaphor in such a context.

As we have noted the Song is about God the "Rock". The use of this name for God is crucial to this hymn, note how often it recurs (vv 4, 13, 15, 18, 30, 31 & 37 and, though a different word in Hebrew v 13 again). The intention behind its choice is difficult to define (its use is coloured for modern ears by such hymns as Rock of Ages etc.) The sense of strength, protection and faithfulness is without doubt present, here as in many other places, where it is used of God. However in this Song (and elsewhere in the Old Testament) other elements are prominent too.

Of the seventy-five occurrences of the word (tsur) thirty-six are unarguably references to God - the word is often used as a name for Him. Of the remainder, two are in close association with him (or may refer to Him)³⁶⁶, the rest to literal rock, but often these are altars or the rocks from which Yahweh gives water, honey or oil to his people. In the Old Testament then, the word is thus very closely associated with God.

Perhaps a score of these occurrences of the word are in verses or passages in which some scholars discern maternal imagery. The two most clear maternal references are; here, where "the rock that begot/bore you" is paralleled by "the God who gave you birth"; and Isaiah 51¹ where the reference is to Sarah and Abraham.

The 'Rock' here is not only the one who gives birth (v 18) but also the source of Yahweh's gifts of "honey" and "oil". (Rocks are similarly associated with Yahweh's provision of honey for his people in the Exodus in Psalm 81¹⁶ and of milk and honey to Job 29⁶).³⁶⁷

Craigie suggests that the word 'Rock' is a prominent theme of the Song because it is intended to indicate the personal and intimate aspect of devotion to the Lord.³⁶⁸ We have already noted that it seems to imply Yahweh's dependability and protection, and may be used in speaking of his providence. Put together these characteristics are strongly reminiscent of descriptions of a parent's role. Although they are far from exclusively maternal it is of interest to compare these overtones of 'rock' in this hymn into Erikson's idea of "Basic Trust" (which is related to later religious belief) and the characteristics in a mother which inculcate it in an infant.³⁶⁹

There is another prominent theme here with maternal overtones. This is the picture of the bird watching the nest³⁷⁰ and caring for the young in verse eleven :

"as an eagle watches over its nest,
hovers above its young,
spreads its pinions and takes them up,
and carries them upon its wings."

Examples of such a mode of teaching of fledgelings by a parent have been recorded.³⁷¹ Driver³⁷² sees this picture as illustrating "Jehovah's paternal affection." However in the absence of more exact information from the naturalists (note 371 above) the text itself does not suggest this. In particular the verb in the second line (rachaph), which as we have seen above carries in Syriac the meaning of protective hovering, in later writing (at least) is explicitly maternal. Examples of this are given by Brock :

"who like a mother, hovers"

"hovered over ... and brought him up like a compassionate mother".³⁷³

We shall return to this question of the implication of rachaph/rahhep in the next chapter, and to the image of wings in connection with the similar but possibly distinct imagery of the Psalms, and to Jesus' use of the mother bird picture in this section. For now we will leave the picture of the parental care of the vulture/eagle and look at the next few verses.

God's gracious provision of every kind of food and drink is vividly pictured in verses thirteen and fourteen. Like the most loving and indulgent mother³⁷⁴ Yahweh provides all kinds of food and drink for the beloved child :

"and fed him on the harvest of the fields;
he satisfied him with honey from the crags
and oil from the flinty rock,
curds from the cattle, milk from the ewes,
the fat of lambs' kidneys,
of rams, the breed of Bashan, and of goats,
with the finest flour of wheat;
and he drank wine from the blood of the grape." Dt. 32^{13b-14}.

The extent of this loving providence makes Israel's desertion of Yahweh all the more unnatural :

"Jacob ate and was well fed,
Jeshurun grew fat and unruly,
he grew fat, he grew bloated and sleek.
He forsook God who made him,

and dishonoured the Rock of his salvation." Dt. 32¹⁵

The enormity of the rebellion against the loving parent is recounted in the next verses :

"They roused his jealousy with foreign gods
and provoked him with abominable practices.
They sacrificed to foreign demons that are no gods,
gods who were strangers to them;
they took up with new gods from their neighbours,
gods whom your fathers did not acknowledge." Dt. 32¹⁶⁻¹⁷

This is summarized in a direct denunciation :

"You were unmindful of the Rock that begot (or bore) you,
and you forgot the God who gave you birth." 375 Dt. 32¹⁸

Even the patience of the mother who laboured to give birth to the beloved child has limits therefore :

"The LORD saw and spurned them;
his own sons and daughters provoked him.
'I will hide my face from them,' he said;
'let me see what their end will be,
for they are a mutinous generation,
sons who are not to be trusted.' " Dt. 32¹⁹⁻²⁰

To summarize, in this passage Yahweh's faithful love and care for Israel is extolled to bring home their senseless "desertion" of him. To this end 'he' is described as both father, verse 6 (and 18a ?), and mother, verse 18 (and 11 ff ?) to his people. This loving caring parenthood is summed up in the name "Rock", verses 4, 15 and 18, (and 13?) which continues as a theme in the rest of the hymn.

Psalms 131 is only three verses long. Verse two reads :

"No; I submit myself, I account myself lowly,
as a weaned child clinging to its mother."

All commentators recognize the image in a similar way, e.g.

"Having passed through the distressing change from breast to hand feeding, the child can rest contentedly on his mother ... The singer imagines his soul as a distinct entity which he has likewise brought through distressful complaining to a quiet trust." 376

The question which is not always answered in the same way is

'trust in whom?' Or in other words does this psalm invite a mother/God comparison?

Weiser's comment here is interesting :

"The poet characterizes his present state of peace of mind by an attractive image: his soul rests on God's heart and finds its happiness in intimate communion with him, not like an infant crying loudly for his mother's breast, but like a weaned child that quietly rests by his mother's side, happy being with her. Here his heart has found rest; he knows himself to be safe with God and to be sheltered in the love of his heavenly Father." 377

In the lines quoted and in the following comments Weiser answers our question in the affirmative, the psalm does invite a comparison of God and mother. It is strangely interesting, then, to hear him refer to this motherly God as heavenly Father.

Dahood not only recognizes this comparison, but makes it more explicit. Following Phoenician parallels he repoints the text, and translates :

"like an infant with its mother:
like an infant with him is my soul". 378

However, whether we accept this repointing or not it is clear that here mother is likened to God. The metaphor here, is (to my knowledge) unique.³⁷⁹ The calm of a weaned child snuggled to the mother is like the calm we find in relationship to God. The picture is beautiful and expressive.

Psalm 27¹⁰ does not demand lengthy discussion. The meaning is clear, God's love is more constant even than that of father and mother. The Psalm as a whole may³⁸⁰ or may not³⁸¹ be by two hands. This verse may³⁸² or may not³⁸³ be a later addition. None of these possibilities alters the meaning which is independent of context. Yahweh's love is like, but transcends, that of mother and father, both.

Mother Bird Imagery has already been mentioned in the context of the "Song of Moses". The most explicitly motherly occurrence of bird imagery is in the New Testament. There, there is a saying of Jesus lamenting over Jerusalem (Matthew 23³⁷⁻⁹; Luke 13³⁴⁻⁵). The use of this imagery :

"How often have I longed to gather your children, as a

hen gathers her brood under her wings; but you would not let me."

may well be inspired by the use of wing and hen imagery in the Psalms.

The word, kanaph, which is most commonly translated by wing (etc) seems to imply covering and protection. It is used figuratively of extremities and especially of corners, skirts etc. of garments; these uses account for some score or more of the hundred or so occurrences in the Old Testament. Of the remainder, about a score refer to the wings of birds. This leaves about half of the total, in some ten of which the word refers to Yahweh, the remaining forty or so refer to the wings of the cherubim.

The references to Yahweh are of interest. Most of these occur in Psalms. Six of these³⁸⁴ (plus a similar reference in Ruth 2¹²) contain the idea of protection and care. It is there that we find an Old Testament background to the lament over Jerusalem. We shall examine each briefly in turn. Thus as we can see the cherubim in the temple are likely to provide, at least, part of the content of the imagery when this word is applied to God. The word is used more often of cherubim than in any other context in the Old Testament, and the applications to Yahweh are mainly in the context of psalms, and so probably of temple worship.

Nonetheless, the protective and trusting element which is present in each case suggests that this usage itself may be influenced by the picture of a mother bird sheltering her young.

Psalms 17⁸ links the image of protection in the "shadow" of Yahweh's "wings" with the image of the "apple of his eye" which is found also in Deuteronomy 32¹⁰ where the bird and wing imagery appears in the next verse, see above, though in a rather different sense.

"Keep me like the apple of thine eye;
hide me in the shadow of thy wings." Psalms 17⁸

Briggs in the I.C.C. notes that the "shadow of thy wings" imagery is :

"usually referred to the care of the mother bird for her young ... of Dt. 32¹¹, although the working out of the simile is different." ³⁸⁵

However he prefers to see here :

"the cherubic wings of the most Holy Place of the temple

in accord with the frequent conception that in the temple itself is a sure refuge for the people of God, involving the idea that the protecting cherubic wings extended their influence to the holy temple and the holy city and its inhabitants." 385

This is no doubt correct, but one must ask, from whence comes this idea that cherubic wings are protective? 386 Clearly, ultimately the idea that wings are protective comes from the protection offered by birds to their young, and although male birds may well be involved in such activities it is usually thought of as motherly, (e.g. Matthew 23³⁷⁻⁹; Luke 13³⁴⁻⁵). So, whilst not denying that the association of Yahweh with the cherubim is the prime reference here, clearly also there is a reference to birds which is motherly.

Thus Weiser comments that the two word pictures of verse eight :

"show the psalmist's childlike and tender affection for God." 387

Eaton also notes :

"the figure, "of the apple of the eye", expresses the utmost intimacy and tenderness ... The metaphor of 'wings' suggests a bird protecting its young".

He continues by noting Egyptian parallels, then continues :

"The wings of the cherubim in the Temple (1 Kings 8^{6f}) may have been regarded in a similar way." 388

Before drawing any conclusions about the use of the picture: "in the shadow of thy wings", an examination should be made of the other passages concerned.

Psalm 36⁷ fits well in the context of this song praising the love of God, verses 5 ff, with its setting in the cult of the sanctuary.³⁸⁹ (Note the references to "the rich plenty of" God's "house", life and light etc.³⁹⁰). Before noting one other element of the content in detail it is worth quoting Weiser on the tone of this part of the psalm :

"The poet makes an attempt ... to define and praise the immeasurable greatness of the loving kindness, faithfulness and righteousness of God ... in this he uses words ... inspired by wonder and awe, joyful gratitude and humble trust ...

The subsequent verses are saturated with the warm affection

of a heart that rejoices in its own blessed experience of God. Is it not man's supreme and ultimate happiness that that grace of God which embraces the whole world stoops down to him, and that men on their part may come into the presence of that majestic God in order to be able to take refuge in him, just as the little chicks do under the wings of their mother? " 391

Such comments following the tone of the psalm itself might almost have been written with the relationship of an infant to its mother in mind. In this context the reference to the sheltering wings of the mother bird merely serves to make explicit what is perhaps implicit.³⁹²

This feeling tone makes it more likely that alongside the initial stimulus of the cherubim in the temple the figure of sheltering wings suggests, and was perhaps intended to suggest, a motherly bird sheltering her young. (As in the picture in the gospels.³⁹³)

Before leaving this psalm we must note that Yahweh, of the "unfailing love" whose wings shelter all, is also the one who provides "rich plenty" and "water from the flowing stream" "the fountain of Life" :

"how precious is thy unfailing love!

Gods and men seek refuge in the shadow of thy wings.

They are filled with the rich plenty of thy house,
and thou givest them water from the flowing stream
of thy delights;

for with thee is the fountain of life," Psalm 36^{7-9a}.

This theme of Yahweh provider of food and drink is one we have had cause to note above, on the "Song of Moses", and will return to discuss in more detail below, on Numbers 11.

Psalm 57 where there is a similar reference to "the shadow of thy wings" in verse one is of little help in seeking the meaning of the phrase, except that the verb (chanan), be gracious, is one we shall discuss in the next section.³⁹⁴

Psalm 61⁴ again uses the picture of Yahweh's protective wings in the context of the sanctuary :

"In thy tent will I make my home for ever

and find my shelter under the cover of thy wings." Psalm 61⁴

Note also the mention of vows in the next verse.

Psalm 63⁷ once again the context is the sanctuary and its worship:

"So longing, I come before thee in the sanctuary" Psalm 63^{2a}

Two other points are worth mentioning however. Once again, the picture is in close proximity to talk of God's provision of food and water, and again the "intimate communion" of the psalmist and his God is noticeable:

"This communion with God has become for him such a basic and immediate necessity of life that it 'satiates' him as if it were the richest food, incessantly occupying his mind, even at night, with meditation on God, and continually leading him during that meditation to the blessed realization of all that the helpful grace and protection of God, which he is now able to enjoy, mean to him." 395

Psalm 91⁴ is seen by Briggs once again as a gloss³⁹⁶ but as we shall see this is unnecessary. This Psalm is another marked by its sense of trust and tenderness. Anderson, for example, calls it a "psalm of trust".³⁹⁷

In this Psalm the image of shelter in the shadow of Yahweh's wings is not incidental, and although it may have been suggested by the cherubim in the temple they are clearly not the prime reference.³⁹⁸ Note how verse one looks forward to the picture in verse four.³⁹⁹

"You that live in the shelter of the Most High
and lodge under the shadow of the Almighty," Psalm 91¹.

The early verses also fit well with the idea of a small bird in need of protection :

"he himself will snatch you away
from fowler's snare or raging tempest." verse 3.

The N.E.B. interprets the terror of verse 5 as :

"you shall not fear the hunter's trap by night"

in the light of :

"or the arrow that flies by day," Psalm 91⁵.

Thus it is clear that at least for this psalmist the picture of Yahweh's protection afforded in verse 4 :

"He will cover you with his pinions,
and you shall find safety beneath his wings;" Psalm 91⁴,

whatever else it may include or be suggested by is a picture of the

parent bird protecting its young.

In the context of this beautiful tender trusting psalm it is no wonder if one assumes that here is the picture of a mother :

"Just as the mother-bird protects her young brood by spreading her wings over them (c.f. Deut. 32¹¹; Matt. 23³⁷), so God covers the godly in every kind of danger, and they find in him a shelter in which to hide. The divine and the human aspect of the relationship based on trust are here placed side by side in a way that shows how closely they are related to each other, and impart to the whole a note which is both strong and intimately tender: " 400

Ruth 2¹² is the only remaining passage we should look at in the attempt to see if this shadow of Yahweh's wings picture provides us with the same motherly imagery as Jesus' mother-hen and her chicks. The verse reads :

"The LORD reward your deed; may the LORD the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge, give you all that you deserve." Ruth 2¹².

There is here no question of the immediate context providing a clue to the interpretation. Though it is interesting that Gray (1967) notes the possibility that here the reference may be to not "wings" but "skirts" and to the use of such imagery of offering protection (and marriage 3⁹). But note also that the word is not singular in either place here (it is elsewhere where the skirt of a garment is meant) so there are grounds for reading wings in both cases and seeing 3⁹ as a reference back to the protection in 2¹² rather than a simple proposal of marriage on Ruth's part.

In either case the use of "wings" in Ruth 2¹² is a little help in determining the content of the imagery except that it does provide an example of the use of this picture in other than a cultic, temple context.

God the Mother-bird The Old Testament references to the sheltering wings of God, probably stem from the presence of the cherubim in the temple. Hence ultimately the picture is common to all the Ancient Near East. However it is far from clear that this exhausts the content of the imagery. This is most obviously true in Psalm 91. It is likely that the thought of young birds is indeed present in these passages as at Deuteronomy 32¹¹, and probable that the thought is of a mother-bird, (note the picture of a mother-hen, but also would seem to contain the

same imagery as a major part of their content.

In the Later Isaianic Tradition, there are a number of passages of interest to us, here we shall examine three : Isaiah 42^{14ff}, 49^{7ff}, 66^{esp.13}. In the next section we shall look at one or two other passages from Isaiah 40ff, together these uses of maternal imagery make the work of Deutero-Isaiah and the still later Isaianic tradition the place where maternal imagery is used most often in the Old Testament.⁴⁰¹

Isaiah 42¹⁴ reads :

"Long have I lain still,
I kept silence and held myself in check;
now I will cry like a woman in labour,
whimpering, panting and gasping."

The imagery of the woman in labour is both clear and explicit in English, with the references to gasping and panting. Whybray however suggests that this is heightened by the very poetic structure and style of the Hebrew.⁴⁰²

The picture stresses the contrast of silent waiting and unrestrained (indeed unrestrainable) noise and activity. All this the prophet is saying is the birth pangs of something new. The apparent inactivity of Yahweh was really the last stage of pregnancy, the waiting has seemed long, but now amid cries and strife something new is coming to birth.

"Then will I lead blind men on their way
and guide them by paths they do not know;
I will turn darkness into light before them
and straighten their twisting roads.
All this I will do and leave nothing undone. Isaiah 42¹⁶

It is not clear whether the previous section, verses 10-13, the hymn of praise to Yahweh the Warrior (N.B. 13a), are part of a continuous unit with verses fourteen to seventeen. Clearly verse thirteen with its reminiscence of holy warrior mythology is linked by subject at least with our section; note verse fifteen :

"I will lay waste mountains and hills
and shrivel all their green herbs;
I will turn rivers into desert wastes
and dry up all the pools." Isaiah 42¹⁵.

This verse tells of the destruction which the wrath of Yahweh will bring to Israel's enemies. It takes up the vigorous and violent aspect

of the woman in labour imagery of the previous verse. We should note that pagan mother goddesses (usually?) have a shadow side, with a violent and destructive element present. Here Yahweh's bringing to birth of a new age is pictured in such terms. An example of this would be the bloodthirstiness of the Canaanite goddess Anath. Here Yahweh's bringing to birth of a new age is pictured in such terms. (It is thus probable that verses ten onwards do form one unit).

In this passage then (whether it runs from verse ten or only from verse fourteen) Yahweh is pictured as a woman in labour, mother-to-be of the new age. It is conceivable that the violent imagery of the content is influenced by the mythology of a goddess e.g. Anath. Maternal imagery is usually used to speak of the intimate trusting relation of people to God or of the steadfast tenacity of 'his' love, here a new element is added, the violent passionate thrashing and cries of labour.

Isaiah 49^{14ff} here (again?) the complaint of Zion :

"But Zion says,

"The LORD has forsaken me; my God has forgotten me." verse 14.

is met by Yahweh's claim to be like a mother :

"Can a woman forget the infant at her breast,

or a loving mother the child of her womb?

Even these forget, yet I will not forget you." verse 15.⁴⁰³

Here, however, the imagery is once again of the mother's faithful tenacious love.

God's motherly love for 'his' people is more constant than a human mother's. It is unlikely that a mother should forget the child she has given birth to, unthinkable that she should ignore the infant at her breast; but even if she can Yahweh will never forget his city. For :

"Your walls are always before my eyes,

I have engraved them on the palms of my hands." verse 16.

North⁴⁰⁴ makes the interesting observation that he feels that :

"Nowhere in the Old Test "(sic)" except Jer. 31²⁰, is the love of Yahweh for his people so poignantly expressed as here."

Jeremiah 31²⁰, as well as being another powerful and tender expression of God's love, is also another passage which uses parental imagery:

"Is Ephraim still my dear son,

a child in whom I delight?

As often as I turn my back on him
I still remember him;
and so my heart yearns for him,
I am filled with tenderness towards him.
This is the very word of the LORD." Jeremiah 31²⁰.

Although commentators tend to assume that here God is pictured as Father, this may well not be accurate enough. Here it is sufficient to note the tenderness and emotion of the passage which could suggest motherliness at least as well. We shall return to this passage below for more detailed discussion.

Returning to Isaiah 49, beyond the simile of God's love transcending a mother's in verse fourteen, Zion is herself a mother in verses twenty onwards. This too is proof of God's love. (God's motherliness and Zion's are associated also in Chapter 66, see below).

Isaiah 66⁷⁻¹⁴ begins with the picture of a miraculous and unexpected birth. Zion the deserted has sons, without the normal waiting and labour:

"Shall a woman bear a child without pains?
give birth to a son before the onset of labour?
Who has heard of anything like this?
Who has seen any such thing?
Shall a country be born after one day's labour,
shall a nation be brought to birth all in a moment?
But Zion, at the onset of her pangs, bore her sons." Isaiah 66⁷⁻⁸.

This picture, like much in this passage takes up and reworks the promises of Deutero-Isaiah. In particular compare 49^{18ff} (see above) and 54^{1ff}. Notice how whilst the basic picture is the same, barren deserted Zion bears sons, the meaning and expression are markedly different. For example, in 49^{18ff}, Zion was mother unaware that she had children, here the emphasis is on the marvellous nature of the coming to birth of Zion's sons.

The miraculous nature of these sons is taken up and explained in the next verse:

"Shall I bring to the point of birth and not deliver?
the LORD says :
shall I who deliver close the womb?
your God has spoken." Isaiah 66⁹.

The promise will be fulfilled, the children will be born although there are but scant signs, for the midwife is Yahweh.⁴⁰⁵

Verse ten responds to this promise with a call to rejoicing, which leads to a rather different image of mother Zion:

"Then you may suck and be fed from the breasts that give comfort,
delighting in her plentiful milk." Isaiah 66¹¹.

Zion here is the nursing mother whose breasts give comfort and plenty. Here again the image probably comes from Chapter 49, verse twenty-three.⁴⁰⁶

Formally, verse twelve is separated from verse eleven. It begins with for (ki) and thus should introduce the grounds of the call to the rejoicing demanded in verse ten.⁴⁰⁷ However in fact verses twelve to fourteen are a kind of fuller description of what has gone before drawn from a variety of sources.⁴⁰⁸

Verse twelve, for example, closely follows verse eleven borrowing from the previous verse of Chapter forty-nine, (verse 22). It is a good example of the way logically different metaphors cling together, for it reads :

"For thus says the LORD:
I will send peace flowing over her like a river,
and the wealth of nations like a stream in flood;
it shall suckle you,
and you shall be carried in their arms
and dandled on their knees." Isaiah 66¹².

The next verse is however the important one for our purposes. It is the most emphatic ascription of motherly imagery to Yahweh in the Old Testament.⁴⁰⁹ It reads :

"As a mother comforts her son,
so will I myself comfort you,
and you shall find comfort in Jerusalem." Is. 66¹³.

The idea of Yahweh's motherly love probably comes from 49¹⁵. It takes up a key word of Deutero-Isaiah's, comfort, (niham) found also in verse thirteen. That the word does not occur in Chapter forty-nine illustrates the freedom with which the author of our passage approaches the older material.⁴¹⁰

The "son" in this verse is of indeterminate age (Hebrew, Ke'ish, as a man⁴¹¹) though probably here a grown-up son is in view. In any case Yahweh brings his people to birth and delivers them (verse 9) but more,

he 'comforts' as a mother (verse 13). Yahweh's motherly comfort once again includes wrath to his foes (verse 14c)⁴¹².

It is fitting that this most explicit use of motherly imagery of Yahweh which is developed from such imagery used by Second-Isaiah should close this section. However, before looking at the less explicit occurrences of such imagery, it is also fitting to note briefly how this "Yahweh like a mother" picture fits with other Deutero-Isaianic themes.

We have just noted how a later writer linked such imagery with a favourite word, comfort. His fondness for this word brings us close to the heart of his message. Westermann puts it like this :

"The unique feature of the prophecy of Deutero-Isaiah is this, the hour summoned him to the task of proclaiming salvation, and nothing but salvation, to his people."⁴¹³

It has been suggested, more than once, that such offer of salvation is more characteristic of mother religion than father religion.⁴¹⁴ The motherly character of this promise of salvation is well illustrated by Whybray's summary :

"now they were to be the recipients of every kind of good fortune, which Yahweh would unsparingly pour upon them; and nothing would ever again disturb this life of unalloyed happiness."⁴¹⁵

This is strikingly like the descriptions of the affective character of mother-religion (see note 415 for reference).

Again Whybray writes :

"Deutero-Isaiah also sought to persuade his audience of Yahweh's willingness to come to their aid by stressing his past faithfulness to his chosen people and his redemption and forgiving nature."⁴¹⁶

This too is very well pictured by a mother's forgiving love, the prophet was aware of this and thus made use of the imagery in a freer way than anyone before him (in the Old Testament tradition).

(2) Other Maternal Imagery

Here we shall look at: a passage where by implication God is mother of the people of Israel, and this will lead to a motherly activity commonly ascribed to God; a cluster of words with maternal connections used commonly of God; together with some other passages of interest.

Numbers 11^{4ff} is an account of the people's moaning about the quality of the provisions in the wilderness and of Moses' subsequent complaint to God.⁴¹⁷ It is Moses' complaint which is of interest to us :

11: "He said to the LORD, 'Why hast thou brought trouble on thy servant? How have I displeased the LORD that I am burdened with the care of this whole people? 12: Am I their mother? Have I brought them into the world, and am I called upon to carry them in my bosom, like a nurse with her babies, to the land promised by thee on oath to their fathers? 13: Where am I to find meat to give them all? They pester me with their wailing and their "Give us meat to eat." 14: This whole people is a burden too heavy for me; I cannot carry it alone. 15: If that is thy purpose for me, then kill me outright. But if I have won thy favour, let me suffer this trouble at thy hands no longer.' "

Numbers 11¹¹⁻¹⁵.

The core of Moses' argument is quite clear. It is expressed in the rhetorical questions of verse twelve. Noth comments :

" ... the assertion, cast in the form of a rhetorical question, that he, Moses, is, after all, not the people's mother and is, therefore, not obliged to fulfil maternal duties towards them. Implicit in this is the very unusual idea that Yahweh himself is Israel's mother. In view of the usual avoidance in the Old Testament of personal concepts of the relationship between God and people, such as are known in the religions of the surrounding peoples, even the statement that Israel is Yahweh's son is rare (Ex. 4²²; Hos. 11¹). It is, however, extremely rare to express the connection between Yahweh and Israel by the idea of motherhood, thereby, even indirectly, attributing to Yahweh the concept of femininity (c.f. nevertheless, expressions such as those in Isa. 49¹⁵, 66¹³). In v. 12ba the image alters slightly while Moses complains that he is supposed to be the nurse charged by the mother with the

care of the child (in spite of its masculine form, 'omēn must, in the context, have a feminine sense)." 418

Thus the N.E.B. is interpretative in adding the word 'mother' to this verse but the interpretation is an accurate one. Moses argues by means of two images which are closely related: motherhood and nursing, the writer clearly intends an answer to the rhetorical questions which would imply that Yahweh was rightly the mother and the nurse of his people. 419

The context of this argument is the provision of food for the people, they complain about the monotony of manna, day in day out. Thus it is the even less common picture of Yahweh as mother and nurse which is evoked here rather than father. 420

The theme of God as provider of food is a common one, (e.g. Hos. 11⁴; Ps. 36⁸, 63⁵, 81^{10,16}, 136²⁵ & Deut. 32^{13f}) 421. Particularly common is the reminder that it was Yahweh who provided food and drink in the desert of the exodus, (e.g. Ps. 78^{15ff}; Is. 48²¹ etc.). God also undertakes other woman's work. For example, he is midwife, Ps. 22⁹⁻¹⁰, 71⁶ etc. 422 In this context it is perhaps significant that the word used to describe the relation of the woman to man in Gen. 2¹⁸ & 20 ('ezer), helper, is elsewhere in the Old Testament used of God (the only exception to this is at Isa. 30⁵ where the reference is to Egypt as no helper).

Yahweh and the Womb 423 The verb racham (to have compassion or mercy); adjective rachum (compassionate, merciful) and the plural form rachamim (compassion, mercy, love) are semantically related to rechem or rachem (womb). The link is stronger than an accident of etymology. To demonstrate that this is so Tribble refers to two passages, 1 Kings 3^{16ff} and Genesis 43²⁹⁻³⁰. In the latter place :

"And he lifted up his eyes, and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, "Is this your youngest brother, of whom you spoke to me? God be gracious to you, my son ! " Then Joseph made haste, for his heart yearned for his brother, and he sought a place to weep. And he entered his chamber and wept there."

Genesis 43²⁹⁻³⁰, R.S.V.

The interesting point is that Benjamin is described as "his mother's son" thus perhaps preserving or reflecting the connection between Joseph's "heart yearning" and motherhood (i.e. between rachamim and rechem).

In the former passage which concerns the quarrel between two women over a child, neither is referred to as mother (of either infant) until one has proved it by her love (rachamim) only then is the word 'mother' used.

The plural form of the noun (rachamim) is used of humans but rarely, it seems probable that it often contains an implicit comparison with a mother's love.⁴²⁴ The adjective (rachûm) is used exclusively of God, in all but two instances ⁴²⁵ with (chanum) gracious.⁴²⁶

Holladay, noticing that grace is in the Old Testament a quality especially associated with fathers and kings, makes the most interesting suggestion that "it is at least possible that 'merciful' was understood to be a motherly attribute, and 'gracious' a fatherly attribute of God." ⁴²⁷ This suggestion would fit well with the tendency, which we have remarked already, for use of motherly language of God to be associated with fatherly language.⁴²⁸

Holladay's suggestion is diametrically opposite to that of Terrien who writes :

"It is probable that the verb itself, chanan, from which derives the noun chen, 'grace' meant originally 'to long for', in the sense of the maternal instinct." ⁴²⁹

Terrien provides no evidence to support the assertion. Tribble on the same suggestion refers to Terrien and also to a forthcoming volume of the T.D.O.T. , she claims that Pederson (ref. at n. 424 above) "proposed a maternal meaning for the term hannûn also " ⁴³⁰. However on these pages Pederson refers only to rachamim and his index also gives no reference which leads one to suppose he provides any grounds for Terrien's assertion. In the absence of such grounds, I prefer the suggestion of Holladay which fits well with the use of grace etc. in the Old Testament and also provides a sophisticated balance to the formula compassionate and gracious (rachûm wechanun). Such a balance of maternal and paternal overtones is nice (i.e. gives precision and accuracy) both theologically and poetically, in a way which is suitable in such a brief formula.

Tribble⁴³¹ also gives an interesting and detailed exegesis of Jeremiah 31^{15ff}. This very complexity and ingenuity will ensure that the detail will fail to convince everyone, but the most important points are clear.

As the passage now stands it is full of feminine imagery. It begins with the weeping of Rachel, the mother :

"These are the words of the LORD :

Hark, lamentation is heard in Ramah, and bitter weeping,
Rachel weeping for her sons,
She refuses to be comforted : they are no more."

Jeremiah 31¹⁵

this is followed by Yahweh's comfort to her :

"These are the words of the LORD :

Cease your loud weeping,
shed no more tears ;
for there shall be a reward for your toil,
they shall return from the land of the enemy,
You shall leave descendents after you;
your sons shall return to their own land." Jer. 31¹⁶⁻¹⁷

whereupon the "son", Ephraim, for whom she was weeping expresses due repentance :

"I listened; Ephraim was rocking in his grief :

'Thou hast trained me to the yoke like an unbroken calf,
and now I am trained;
restore me, let me return,
for thou, LORD, art my God.
Though I broke loose I have repented :
now that I am tamed I beat my breast ;
in shame and remorse
I reproach myself for the sins of my youth.'"

Jeremiah 31¹⁸⁻¹⁹

The centre of the passage is verse twenty which expresses Yahweh's tender affection for the child Ephraim, this verse is the key one, we shall return to it in detail below :

"Is Ephraim still my dear son,
a child in whom I delight?

As often as I turn my back on him
I still remember him ;
and so my heart yearns for him,
I am filled with tenderness towards him.

This is the very word of the LORD." Jer. 31²⁰.

Following this are words addressed to "Virgin Israel" calling upon her to return, and a final enigmatic comment :

"Build cairns to mark your way,
 set up sign-posts;
 make sure of the road,
 the path which you will tread.
 Come back, virgin Israel,
 come back to your cities.
 How long will you twist and turn, my wayward child?
 For the LORD has created a new thing in the earth:
 a woman turned into a man." Jer. 31²¹⁻²²

Tribble's exegesis is well worth examining for although complex it gives a neat account of the odd features of the passage in its present form, and also of the closing obscure words. However for our purposes this exegesis is largely beside the point, it is sufficient to note the motherly context of the passage, with its talk of Mother Rachel's tears, and of Ephraim the wayward son and Israel the apostate or backsliding daughter.⁴³²

Verse twenty begins with a rhetorical question:

"Is Ephraim still my dear son,
 a child in whom I delight?" Jer. 31^{20ab}.

The precise interpretation of the next pair of lines varies but in any case in view of the second line the effect is of reiterating the divine love.⁴³³;

"As often as I turn my back on him
 I still remember him ; Jer. 31^{20cd}.

Thus far, the verse expresses Yahweh's parental love for son Ephraim. The next line pair suggest that this love, like Rachel's is motherly. The N.E.B. goes some way towards reflecting this, compare R.S.V. :

"Therefore my heart yearns for him;
 I will surely have mercy on him, says the LORD."
 Jer. 31^{20ef} (R.S.V.)

with :

"and so my heart yearns for him,
 I am filled with tenderness towards him." Jer. 31^{20ef} (N.E.B.)

The effect is difficult to capture in English, depending as it does on echoes of meaning in words and phrases. Below is the fairly literal A.V. translation with the Hebrew (transliterated) placed in brackets where attention is drawn to such potentially motherly echoes :

"therefore my bowels are troubled (hamû me'ay) for him;
I will surely have mercy upon him (rachem 'arachumennû).

Trible discusses another occurrence of the phrase from the first line in Song of Songs 5⁴ (noting also Is. 16¹¹)⁴³⁴. To these may be added similar references in Isaiah 63¹⁵ and Lamentations 1²⁰ and 2¹¹. In Lamentations the phrase refers to Lady Zion and to the Virgins of Jerusalem; in the book of Isaiah it refers, as here in Jeremiah, to Yahweh; and as Trible notes in the Song it is used not of compassion but of erotic feelings :

"When my beloved slipped his hand through the latch-hole,
my bowels stirred within me.
When I arose to open for my beloved,
my hands dripped with myrrh;
the liquid myrrh from my fingers
ran over the knobs of the bolt." Cant. 5⁴⁻⁵.

Thus when the phrase does not refer to Yahweh it refers to female subjects in a most intimate way, with implications of love play or motherhood (note Lamentations 2^{11b} & 12 and reference to orphans in 1²⁰). Thus it is not unreasonable in context to interpret the phrase in a motherly way here.⁴³⁵

The other line with its emphasis on the verb racham, must again surely retain some of its possible motherly force in this context of mother Rachel's weeping in Ramah.

The close juxtaposition of these words (me'ay often means womb; the verbal root rchm, repeated, semantically related to the noun racham, womb, and sometimes/often used in maternal contexts) together with this context tends to confirm the suggestion that here they should be thought of as carrying a maternal meaning.

Thus Trible's translation :

"Is Ephraim my dear son? my darling child?

For the more I speak of him,
the more I do remember him.⁴³⁶

Therefore, my womb trembles for him;

I will truly show motherly-compassion upon him.

Oracle of Yahweh".⁴³⁷

does not greatly exaggerate the way in which the passage ascribes motherly love to Yahweh's feeling for his people. Perhaps in modern English the phrase "my womb trembles" (hamû me'ay) might be more smoothly rendered "my maternal instincts are aroused", or perhaps "I feel motherly towards him."

In Chapter Five , above, reference was made to the way in which Yahweh was seen as responsible for the fertility of the land and of the womb. Such an association must have been made in parallel and contrast to the religion of the Canaanite peoples. At note 129 above, in addition to references to Yahweh's role in giving fertility, attention was drawn to the way in which the use of the word 'ashtoreth' in Deuteronomy (7¹³ but see also 28⁴, 18, 51) for the offspring of flocks indicated the close association of the goddess of that name with birth. (Such an association may also be indicated by the very numerous female clay figurines, often decidedly pregnant, found all over the area. Also by the incantation charm from the 7th century B.C. invoking her aid in childbirth.⁴³⁸)

Yahweh likewise is associated not only with the productivity of land and flocks but also with fertility of the womb. It is he who opens the barren womb (e.g. Genesis 29³¹) or makes barren (e.g. Genesis 20¹⁸, 30²). The fruit of the womb is the blessing of God (e.g. Psalm 127³) which may be withdrawn (Hosea 9¹¹, 14). Thus the phrase "blessings of the womb" (Genesis 49²⁵ cf Deuteronomy 7¹³, 28⁴) ⁴³⁹ is linked to him. Yahweh not only forms in the womb (Job 31¹⁵, Isaiah 44^{2,24}, Jeremiah 1⁵) but his care is present from birth (Job 10¹⁸; Psalm 71⁶) onward (Psalm 139¹³; Isaiah 46³⁻⁴).

Genesis 49²⁵, a passage just cited where God is associated with the blessings of the womb also contains the interesting possibility of a pun on the name Shadday :

"By the God of your father - so may he help you,
by God Almighty (Shadday) - so may he bless you
with the blessings of heaven above,
the blessings of the deep that lurks below.
The blessings of breast (shadayim) and womb(raham).

Genesis 49²⁵.

If this pun is deliberate, as Tribble suggests, then it would tend to confirm the feeling that here once again there is a nice balance of fatherly and motherly. Compare the explicit association "God of your father" 49^{25a} and the "Blessings of your father" 49^{26a} with the motherly "The blessings of breast and womb" 49^{25b} (associated with God even more closely if the pun is taken into account).

Psalm 22 was not mentioned above, but it provides an especially clear and full picture of the relation of Yahweh and womb :

" 'He threw himself on the LORD for rescue;
let the LORD deliver him, for he holds him dear! '
But thou art he who drew me from the womb,

who laid me at my mother's breast.
Upon thee was I cast at birth;
from my mother's womb thou hast been my God."
Psalm 22⁸⁻¹⁰.

Here Yahweh like the experienced older woman "draws" from the womb and lays the infant at the mother's breast, place of security and trust (mabetichi).

"Yet thou art he who took me from the womb;
thou didst keep me safe upon my mother's breasts."
Psalm 22⁹ R.S.V.

This security and the trust it evokes, found upon ('al) the mother's breasts is parallel to that sought from God :

"Upon thee was I cast at birth;" Psalm 22¹⁰.

As Tribble points out⁴⁴⁰ the poetic structure of verses 9-10, a balanced abba with the divine "you" at beginning, middle and end, first hints at the gulf between human mother and God, but then closely associates them. Note the distance in verse nine between the divine 'you' ('attah) first word pair in line one, and the word 'mother' ('immi) last word in line two. In verse ten, when they have been paralleled in meaning, they come together ('immi 'eli) my mother, my God. This delicate handling of imagery is related to the structure of the whole Psalm. Weiser commenting on verses nine to eleven writes :

"Now, too, he is able to do what had been impossible for him before, namely to stretch out his hand to that God in prayer. Whereas he had previously only perceived the unbridgeable distance which separated him from God, he now feels as if he experiences for the first time how the hand of God takes hold of him".⁴⁴¹

Deutero-Isaiah The connection between Yahweh who forms and Yahweh the (go'el) redeemer (or close relative who gives protection) is a noteworthy feature of the thought of Deutero-Isaiah (e.g. especially Isaiah 43^{1,5-7,14-15}, 44^{21f,24}, 49⁵⁻⁷). In particular it is noteworthy that this forming by Yahweh is no impersonal creation, but is forming as son or daughter, e.g. :

"I will say to the north, 'Give them up',
and to the south, 'Do not hold them back.'
Bring my sons and daughters from afar,

bring them from the ends of the earth;
bring every one who is called by my name,
all whom I have created; whom I have formed,
all whom I have made for my glory.'" Isaiah 43⁶⁻⁷.

Especially clear is 44²⁴ :

"Thus says the LORD, your redeemer, (go'el)
who formed you from the womb (mibeten)" Isaiah 44^{24ab} (R.S.V.)

Yahweh is the close relative who protects (go'el) is parent (e.g. 43⁶⁻⁷)
and is associated with formation "from the womb" (mibeten).

This is not only a witness to the close association of Yahweh and
womb but also another example of the way in which the thought of Deutero-
Isaiah is steeped in maternal overtones.

Also of interest in this connection is Isaiah 46³⁻⁴ :

3: "listen to me house of Jacob
and all the remnant of the house of Israel,
a load on me from your birth (minni-beten),
carried by me from the womb (minni-racham),
4: till you grow old I am He,
and when white hairs come, I will carry you still;
I have made you ('asitf) and I will bear the burden,
I will carry you and bring you to safety (wa'amallet)".

In the second half of verse three Yahweh's support of the remnant of Israel
is linked to the womb (both beten -belly and racham - womb). In verse four
his bearing is linked to his making⁴⁴², and his carrying to his saving
(malat). The protection and care of Yahweh, associated with the protection
and care received in the womb, extends from the womb (minni-racham) to the
white hairs of age.

A similar association of making, forming in the womb and Yahweh's
help is found in Isaiah 44² :

"Thus says the LORD your maker,
your helper, who fashioned you from birth:
have no fear, Jacob my servant,
Jeshurun whom I have chosen," 44³.

Several of the words and themes which we have been remarking in
Deutero-Isaiah are taken up in a psalm in Isaiah 63^{7ff}. This psalm begins
with a section which states its intention thus :

"I will recount the LORD's acts of unfailing love
and the LORD's praises as High God,
all that the LORD has done for us
and his great goodness to the house of Israel," 63^{7abcd}

this goodness comprises :

"all that he has done for them in his tenderness (rachamim)
and by his many acts of love". 63^{7ef}

The next verse indicates that the people thus tenderly loved are regarded
as his sons :

"He said, 'Surely they are my people,
my sons who will not play me false';
and he became their deliverer (lemôshî'a)
in all their troubles. 63⁸

This tender loving God regards them as sons and so he redeems them (ge'alam)
and carries them :

"It was no envoy, no angel, but he himself that delivered them;
he himself ransomed them by his love and pity,
lifted them up and carried them
through all the years gone by." 63⁹.

The remainder of the first part rehearses God's goodness in their history
and their rebellion. Explaining how and why God the tender loving parent
(motherly loving? rachamim, verse 7) becomes their "enemy" :

"Yet they rebelled and grieved his holy spirit;
only then was he changed into their enemy
and himself fought against them." 63¹⁰

Thus the second part begins with an appeal :

"Look down from heaven and behold
from the heights where thou dwellest holy and glorious.
Where is thy Zeal, thy valour,
thy burning and tender love?" Isaiah 63¹⁵.

The last line is of interest. It is closely parallel to that which we
discussed in connection with Jeremiah 31²⁰. Hamôn me'êka is parallel to
the phrase we translated there as : 'my maternal instincts are aroused'
this is followed by 'and your tender love' (werachamêka). So this line
might loosely but not without reason be translated "your maternal instinct
and your motherly love". 444

As we should have come to expect by now the next verse provides the complementary fatherly language ⁴⁴⁵;

"Stand not aloof; for thou art our father,
though Abraham does not know us nor Israel acknowledge us.
Thou, LORD, art our father;
thy name is our Ransomer from of old." 63¹⁶.

The verse also links this parental love of Yahweh with his activity as Redeemer (N.E.B. Ransomer), go'alenu, of his children.

The Balance of Parental Imagery. Frequently in this chapter attention has been drawn to the way in which many passages balance fatherly and motherly language and imagery. We have suggested that such balance is nice both psychologically and theologically. It is nice psychologically for obvious reasons. It is nice theologically not only in sophisticated philosophical or logical terms, but also in terms of Hebrew culture. We have noted how Hebrew religion was expressed in a certain religious milieu. The surrounding cultures worshipped gods and goddesses, these could be called mother and father. Hebrew religion wished to ascribe all divine functions to Yahweh. Thus he was the reality of what could be falsely ascribed to such idols :

"they say 'You are our father' to a block of wood
and cry 'Mother' to a stone.
But on me they have turned their backs
and averted their faces from me.
And now on the day of disaster they say,
'Rise up and save us.'" Jeremiah 2²⁷.

Another passage not previously mentioned with such balancing imagery which refers fathering and mothering in an abstract metaphoric way to God is Job 38^{28f}.

This balance of imagery is so common that it suggests that a re-examination of certain passages usually thought to describe the fatherhood of God may in fact speak of his parenthood in a more general way.

As an example of this we shall look at Hosea chapter eleven. This is clearly a passage about Yahweh the parent :

"When Israel was a boy, I loved him;
I called my son out of Egypt;" Hosea 11¹.

It presents God's parental love with typically Hosean warmth and tenderness. Some commentators see this passage as paternal, Yahweh the great father,

e.g. Mays (1969) titles this section "The divine father". However, Wolff upon whom Mays seems to some extent dependent here, is rather less definite in ruling out a maternal reference. After noting, but dismissing, Wisdom parallels from surrounding cultures, he says :

"Hosea's world of thought is that of Canaanite myth and culture which had exerted its influence upon Israel. According to Canaanite concepts, the father and mother deity belong together. Hosea freely forms and develops his concepts as he struggles against the Canaanite religion." 446

If Mays sees this passage as wholly paternal, Tribble (1973) is able to argue for a wholly maternal interpretation. She notes the activities described : (i) teaching the child to walk, (ii) healing tender wounds and (iii) feeding the hungry infant; and claims that these were each activities belonging to the mother, rather than the father, in ancient Israel.

"It was I who taught Ephraim to walk,
I who had taken them in my arms;
but they did not know that I harnessed them in
leading-strings
and led them with bonds of love -
that I had lifted them like a little child to my cheek,
that I had bent down to feed them." Hosea 11³⁻⁴

However she is probably stretching her exegesis too far when she notes the use of 'ish rather than 'adam in verse 9 and reads a sexual meaning into this :

"... for I am God and not a man" Hosea 11^{9c}.

The whole intimate and tender ethos of this passage may well be thought to support the particular arguments mentioned above. Thus for example :

"How can I give you up, Ephraim,
how surrender you, Israel?
How can I make you like Admah
or treat you as Zeboyim?
My heart is changed within me,
my remorse kindles already." Hosea 11⁸.

Thus in a passage usually spoken of as illustrating God's fatherly love there is much which is suggestive of a motherly interpretation. Hosea

has not made it explicit which parent is in view. Remembering the frequency of passages which seem to balance maternal and paternal; perhaps this passage, too, is best thought of as telling out the motherly fatherly love of God.

Although some of the passages and uses of imagery discussed above are ambiguous and might well be interpreted in a non-maternal way, I believe that even at the most critical view of the evidence presented the following conclusions emerge clearly :

- (i) The prophets and poets of the Old Testament did make use of the image of mother to help bring God alive in their words.
- (ii) Such uses of maternal imagery are more frequent than has usually been recognized.
- (iii) Although used less, and less explicitly, than paternal imagery and language, the use of the mother image is comparable (its more reticent use is to be expected culturally).
- (iv) There is a tendency for motherly and fatherly imagery to appear together. (This is especially true of motherly imagery).
- (v) Motherly language and imagery is particularly more frequent in the later Isaianic tradition. It fits well with the message and ethos of Deutero-Isaiah and is taken up from there into Chapters 55-56.

New Testament use of Maternal Imagery

So far we have only discussed one New Testament passage: Jesus' use of mother-hen imagery in the 'Lament over Jerusalem'. There are a few other passages to which reference ought to be made. First however it is worth noting two points :

- (i) To reiterate what was said above that the intense Christocentricity of the New Testament makes all other talk of God of secondary interest. For this reason and because the New Testament is so relatively short we might expect less use of motherly language.⁴⁴⁷
- (ii) Jesus' use of Father as name for God (see note 447 above) effectively blocks possible use of mother language.

The first passages we shall mention, are then not ascriptions of motherly character to God, but passages which suggested such use of imagery in later writers.

Paul describes himself in his apostolic role as a woman in labour :

"For my children you are, and I am in travail ($\bar{o}dino$)
with you over again until you take the shape ($morphotha$)
of Christ." Galatians 4¹⁹.

or more literally :

"My children,⁴⁴⁸ with whom I am again in labour until
Christ is formed in you."

The imagery of Paul as a mother in labour is quite clear, $\bar{o}dino$ permits no
other understanding of the verse.⁴⁴⁹

As we shall see in the next chapter this passage was taken up by
Augustine and the imagery applied to the Lord as well as his apostle,
likewise Anselm reading this verse with Jesus' "Lament over Jerusalem" can
speak of both Paul and Christ as, similarly, mothers.

Another strand of Paul's motherly thought of himself is more widely
applied to God and Christ. Paul describes himself as feeding milk rather
than meat to the immature (1 Corinthians 3¹⁻³; 1 Thessalonians 2⁷⁻⁸; the
imagery is found also in Hebrews 5¹²⁻¹³ and 1 Peter 2²⁻³). As we shall see
this image, too, was taken up, and indeed was much more frequently used, of
God in various ways as well as of human teachers and authority figures.

In 1 Thessalonians Paul after speaking well of his readers acclaims
his own apostleship. He writes briefly of his struggles and his deter-
mination to receive no pay from his converts. He points out that he has
sought neither honours nor favour, save from God. Then he writes :

"but we were as gentle with you as a nurse caring fondly for
her children. With such yearning love we chose to impart to
you not only the gospel of God but our very selves, so dear
had you become to us." 1 Thessalonians 2⁷⁻⁸

About the central imagery of these verses there is little problem.
The word, $trophos$, is used of a wet nurse or of a mother before the child
is weaned.⁴⁵⁰ The $heutās$ referring to the children suggests that mother
is intended here.⁴⁵¹ The word rendered caring fondly (N.E.B.), taking care
(R.S.V.), cherish (A.V.) is of interest. $Thalpo$ meant to warm and is used
in the LXX of mother-bird (Deuteronomy 22⁶) with eggs or young, thus also
to cherish as here and at Ephesians 5²⁹ (of Christ's care of the Church).
This tender maternal tone (matching the content) may have been indicated
earlier in the verse if we read gentle (\bar{apioi}) with N.E.B., R.S.V. etc. The
alternative reading infants ($nāpioi$) is however both better attested and a
noun (to balance apostles). Whatever, the mood of maternal love continues
in the next verse.⁴⁵² Paul was glad to give to them not only the gospel

but his very self (Psuchē life, soul etc.)

The imagery of breast-feeding recurs in 1 Corinthians 3, but there the intention of the picture is different. The Corinthian church was divided by wealth and allegiance (1 Corinthians 11¹⁷⁻²², 1^{10ff} and verse 4 of this chapter). The Corinthians seem to lay great store by Wisdom and perhaps have accused Paul of holding back the deeper things of the faith.

In this context Paul accuses :

"For my part, my brothers, I could not speak to you as I should speak to people who have the Spirit. I had to deal with you on the merely natural plane, as infants in Christ."

1 Corinthians 3¹.

That they were but "infants in Christ" entails consequences 453:

"And so I gave you milk to drink, instead of solid food, for which you were not yet ready. Indeed, you are still not ready for it, for you are still on the merely natural plane." 1 Corinthians 3².

They are not yet ready for the full "Wisdom of God" for that Wisdom is Christ crucified who brings reconciliation, and they are divided and quarrelsome :

"Can you not see that while there is jealousy and strife among you, you are living on the purely human level of your lower nature? When one says, 'I am Paul's man', and another, 'I am for Apollos', are you not all too human?" 1 Corinthians 3³⁻⁴.

Here Paul does not call himself mother or nurse, for he is not concerned with his apostolic loving care for them but rather to encourage them to grow up. Thus the imagery here stresses the contrast milk-real food (brōma), whereas in 1 Thessalonians the emphasis was on the mother's tender love.

Milk-feeding imagery occurs in two non-Pauline contexts in the New Testament. In 1 Peter 2^{2f} the image is used in a positive way again, whereas Hebrews 5¹¹⁻¹⁴ is very similar to the last passage in content. The author has deeper teaching for which his readers are not ready :

"About Melchizedek we have much to say, much that is difficult to explain, now that you have grown so dull of hearing."

Hebrews 5¹¹.

Although some time has passed and they themselves should be teachers they are stuck at the first principles of the A.B.C. (ta stoicheia tas archas) :

"For indeed, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the ABC of God's oracles over again; it has come to this, that you need milk instead of solid food." Hebrews 5¹².

But this need of milk is infantile. They should grow up :

"Anyone who lives on milk, being an infant, does not know what is right. But grown men can take solid food; their perceptions are trained by long use to discriminate between good and evil." Hebrews 5¹³⁻¹⁴.

In particular they are immature morally, (logou dikaiosunās verse 13 probably means something like "a principle of righteousness", N.E.B. "what is right" verse 14 expands this.)

This passage is closely parallel to 1 Corinthians 3¹⁻³, in particular the disqualification from solid food is moral, and the word nāpios, infant (as well as milk, gala) occurs in each passage.⁴⁵⁴

The use of the same imagery in 1 Peter is totally different. Here the central point of the milk imagery is the purity and goodness of milk as food for the newborn and the strength of their instinctive desire for it :

"Like the newborn infants you are, you must crave for pure milk (spiritual milk, I mean), so that you may thrive upon it to your souls' health". 1 Peter 2².

The stress upon the newness of the "newborn infants" (artigennāta brephā) fits well with the baptismal content of the letter.⁴⁵⁵ It leads naturally to the thought of the food of such "newborn infants" the "pure" (adolos) milk which they crave (epipothāsate).

The readers are exhorted similarly to crave pure spiritual milk. The translation spiritual (of logikon) is far from perfect, note the discussion in the previous verses of being "born anew ... through the living and enduring word of God." (dia logou zōntos theou kai menontos)⁴⁵⁶

1 Peter 1²³.

Upon this pure milk (the gospel preached to them, 1 Peter 1²⁵) they will thrive to their soul's health (N.E.B., Greek reads auxāthate eis sōtārian, you may grow to salvation), for :

"Surely you have tasted that the Lord is good." 1 Peter 2³.

In this passage milk is not the food of infants which the readers should have outgrown (as in Hebrews 5¹²; 1 Corinthians 3²) but rather the

word of the Lord (1^{23,25}) which was preached as gospel to them (1²⁵) indeed it is the very Lord himself (2³). As such for 1 Peter milk is good not merely for the first steps at the ABC of faith but so that they "may grow up to salvation" (R.S.V. 1 Peter 2²).

We have seen how this image of Christian teaching as milk-feeding is used in various ways by the New Testament. We shall see, in the next two chapters, how it was taken up and applied to God in certain patristic authors and particularly in the Middle Ages. Here it remains only to examine briefly the sources of this imagery.

It is frequently suggested that this imagery was a commonplace of Hellenistic paedogogy and philosophy⁴⁵⁷ and the mystery religions⁴⁵⁸. Others see a (more) adequate background in Jewish thought noting especially the frequency of use in Philo and the Rabbis.⁴⁵⁹

There is a detailed and balanced discussion of these possibilities in Kelly (1969)⁴⁶⁰ who is particularly struck by the Palestinian and Jewish background. In addition to Philo and Qumran⁴⁶¹ he notes the parallels in the Odes of Solomon⁴⁶² and especially the way in which Psalm 34 "was present in his" (the author of 1 Peter's) "mind as he wrote the letter" and is quoted here, verse 3.

The imagery of teaching as milk-feeding and of a nursing mother is not foreign to a Semitic background, nor strange to Greek philosophy, indeed it is a natural experience, and as such a natural metaphor. As we shall see in the next chapter it was used by the highly Semitic "Odes of Solomon" and by the highly philosophic Clement of Alexandria, and referred to God. This reference was taken up by others, not least in the twelfth century, as we shall see in Chapter Eight.

We have already discussed Jesus' "Lament over Jerusalem", there are a few other gospel passages which deserve mention here. In particular the parable of the lost coin, Luke 15⁸⁻¹⁰ (and with it the parable of the leaven, Luke 13²⁰⁻²¹; Matthew 13³³). In the lost coin the attention is focussed upon the woman's joy, this is paralleled to God's joy over a repentant sinner.⁴⁶³ Matthew has the other 'lost' story, the sheep, but does not have this. Luke pairs the two thus comparing God's joy to that of a man and a woman. In patristic exegesis the woman, like the housewife in the parable of the leaven, was often seen as the church. As we shall see however, Cyril of Jerusalem and Romanos Melodes saw the woman as Christ the wisdom of God.

This leads naturally to the suggestions which have been made that

Jesus reveals the feminine and motherly love of God in action (as by his words he speaks of the love of the 'Father'). This suggestion crops up in several places but in particular it is made at some length by the Jungian analyst Ulanov⁴⁶⁴ and by Ochs⁴⁶⁵.

Ochs argues from the character of Jesus (with his gentleness, tenderness etc.); and from the nature of the salvation he proclaimed ("Based upon being a child of God" and upon love rather than upon "merit"). She claims that :

"Christ could, under some circumstances, be understood to represent the feminine aspect of God." ⁴⁶⁶

Ulanov on the other hand is concerned as much with the method as with the content of Jesus' teaching. She writes :

"In contrast to the frequent criticism that Christianity neglects the feminine, I would say instead that much of the message of Jesus and his means of communicating it through symbol, parable, and living what he preached are expressions of the feminine modality of consciousness and spirit" ⁴⁶⁷

but must admit :

"The feminine quality of the Gospels is not explicit, but it is there for us if we have eyes to see it". ⁴⁶⁸

Such ideas are suggestive. In particular they help to account for the psychological finding that the image of God is like the image of either parent and not (or not often or greatly) more like that of a father. They also fit well with the findings that Christian clergymen are more feminine in their social attitudes.

However there has been little attempt to demonstrate such assertions in any systematic way. ⁴⁶⁹ Therefore, at least at present, each reader must assess them on a priori heuristic grounds.

Related to this, loosely, is the way in which certain authors interpret Galatians 3²⁸ :

26: "For through faith you are all sons of God in union with Christ Jesus. 27: Baptized into union with him, you have all put on Christ as a garment. 28: There is no such thing as Jew and Greek, slave and freeman, male and female; for you are all one person in Christ Jesus." Galatians 3²⁶⁻²⁸.

A comparison of this passage with the parallels in 1 Corinthians 12¹³ and Colossians 3¹¹ suggests that Paul is referring to a formula from the

baptismal ritual.⁴⁷⁰ Since :

- (i) Each of these contexts shows a certain similarity of pattern, this pattern is simple, though there are differences of wording and content.
- (ii) Baptism is mentioned in each case, but is not the major topic of discussion.
- (iii) The formulae stand out, like slogans in context.⁴⁷¹

It is probable, then, that Paul here refers to a baptismal formula that in Christ human divisions and distinctions are overcome. Whether or not this idea is pre-Pauline in this sense, it was taken up in later thought. On occasion it was interpreted as implying a kind of mystical androgyny. This idea occurs in orthodox as well as gnostic works, e.g. Meeks quotes Maximus the Confessor :

"For he" (Christ) "unified Man, mystically abolishing by the Spirit the differences between male and female and, in place of the two with their peculiar passions, constituting one free with respect to nature." ⁴⁷²

Such an interpretation suggests clearly that, at least for those who hold it, Christ is not seen as embodying any kind of exclusively male divinity

There are also two words used in John's gospel which it has been suggested are relevant to our thesis. The first is from 1¹⁸ :

"No one has ever seen God; but God's only Son, he who is nearest to the Father's heart, he has made him known." John 1¹⁸.

The N.E.B. "nearest the Father's heart" translates the Greek "eis ton kolpon tou patros". The word 'kolpos', A.V., R.S.V. etc., bosom, has been felt by some to suggest a maternal relation of 'Father' to 'Son'. ⁴⁷³ However the maternal picture of infant at the mother's breast is clearly not the first intention here for :

- (i) The intention is to stress that the beloved (monogenēs) has seen (knows fully) the Father and can make him known, no infant can fully know the mother.
- (ii) The word is frequently used in thoroughly masculine contexts, in this gospel of John lying at Jesus' kolpos, and in Luke twice of Abraham's kolpos. The language is also common in Greek and Latin texts.⁴⁷⁴

The other is from 7^{38b} :

"As Scripture says, 'Streams of living water shall flow out from within him.'" John 7^{38b}.

The phrase of interest "ek tās koillias autou", "out from within him", is difficult. First no biblical passage provides a sufficiently clear match to command any measure of agreement, (therefore the Old Testament original cannot be used to gauge the meaning of 'koillias' here). Second it is unclear what is intended by 'koillias'. It can mean, for example, womb, body, stomach, inner person, a cavity etc.. There are a variety of suggestions, in particular of mistranslations etc. of Aramaic originals.⁴⁷⁵ The suggestions which fit best with possible Old Testament texts are those which see koillia as a reference to Jerusalem.⁴⁷⁶ In any case the picture is almost certainly not that of water flowing from Jesus' womb.⁴⁷⁷

In the New Testament then, as we expected, there is far less evidence of maternal, or indeed any kind of female, imagery applied to God. We have one example of a saying attributed to Jesus in which he speaks of himself as like a mother-hen.⁴⁷⁸ Two parables, one of which in particular, likens God to a housewife;⁴⁷⁹ together with suggestions that the tone and tendency of the revelation of God in Christ fits well with motherly as well as fatherly characteristics. There are also the five passages from the epistles which use motherly language which as we shall see below, were used in later exegesis to speak of God in a motherly way.

B/ Psychological Need for a Divine Mother:
Other Old Testament Evidence.

So far in this chapter we have been concerned with those strands of biblical thought which use or may use maternal imagery of God (with the exception of some of the New Testament material which uses this imagery of human figures). We have found, especially in the Old Testament, some evidence that God could be pictured as a motherly figure. However on its own this evidence would scarcely be sufficient to support our supposed psychological need for maternal imagery of the divine. There is in the Old Testament, however, also other evidence of such a need.

There is evidence that the popular religion of the pre-exilic monarchy was open to the inclusion of worship of goddesses (or a goddess) alongside Yahweh. In particular there is evidence of a more extensive worship of 'Asherah' than of Ba'al, and evidence that such worship was often felt to be compatible with the worship of Yahweh.

Attempts to uncover traces of the worship of other gods among the Hebrews are made less precise by the strict editing of the traditions by those who wish to project their own firmly monotheistic Yahwism onto the

past history of their people. Thus, for example, the Books of the Law presuppose near full development of such faith even in the Mosaic period. Deuteronomy for instance (produced in a circle related to that which produced the books of Kings in which we shall be much interested) assumes only one centre for sacrifice; a situation certainly not applicable to the kingdom of Israel, and probably not in Judah either, in pre-exilic times. (Whether Josaiah's reform truly restricted sacrifice to the temple in Jerusalem is debatable, but in any case hardly weakens the point being made.) Similar tendencies are discernible in the work of the Chronicler as well as the Deuteronomic history.

However, sufficient traces do remain for the reconstruction of a very different picture. In particular there is widespread evidence for the worship and popularity of 'Asherah' among the Hebrews from their entry into the land until the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C..

There is far more evidence concerning the nature and mythology of the goddess available from non-Hebrew materials, as we should expect. According to the Ras Shamra texts she was the consort of El, and mother of Ba'al and Anath. Hence she was the chief goddess. Indeed Elath (= goddess) is used interchangeably as her name, e.g. :

"He cries to Asherah and her children,
to Elath and the band of her kindred." 480

It would also seem that she could be regarded as the consort of her son Ba'al.⁴⁸¹ Her titles included 'lady of the sea' and 'creatix of the gods', this last on account of her motherhood of some seventy gods and goddesses; it seems probable that she was called 'Queen of Heaven' at least in some times and places. (It is not without significance to note the parallels of some of her titles with those of the Madonna in Catholic worship).

In the Amarna letters, also of the 14th century B.C., the names of Asherah and of Anath/Astarte interchange, indicating that even among her devotees there was a lack of distinction between these two.⁴⁸² Certainly there is such a lack of distinction in the Bible where Asherah, Anath and Astarte seem to be thought of as one and the same.

Rather as the Blessed Virgin Mary is today venerated in local manifestations, and becomes the patroness of particular places or causes, (e.g. Our Lady of Lourdes), so Asherah could be localized, e.g. Asherah of Tyre, or Elath of Sidon.

In the Bible the word Asherah seems to be used specially of the cult objects around which the worship of the goddess centred. These seem to have been carved wooden objects planted in the ground, judging by the words used in connection with their installation and removal :

Make: 1 Kings 14¹⁵, 16³³; 11 Kings 17²⁶, 21³; and 11 Chron. 33³.

Set up: 11 Kings 17¹⁰; 11 Chron. 33¹⁹; and Isaiah 27⁹.

Build: 1 Kings 14²³.

Plant: Deuteronomy 16²¹.

Cut down: Judges 6^{25,28,30}; 11 Kings 18⁴, 23¹⁴; and Exodus 34¹³.

Hew down: 11 Chron. 14², 31¹; and Deuteronomy 7⁵.

Break into pieces: 11 Chron. 34^{4,7}.

Burn: 11 Kings 23¹⁵; Judges 6²⁶; and Deuteronomy 12³.

Remove: 11 Chron. 17⁶, 19³.

Uproot: Micah 5¹³.

There also seem to have been portable Asherahs (11 Kings 23⁶)

In addition to the difficulty posed by later exilic and post-exilic redaction we can now see why archeology is of little help in assessing the importance of goddess worship amongst the Hebrews. By their very nature wooden objects survive poorly. Even those which may have avoided destruction by Yahwistic reformers will have been destroyed by time.

The very numerous clay figurines which have been found all over the area may provide an indication of her popularity. (Though such an interpretation is by no means the only one possible for these figures.) There is an extra-biblical text to use her name, which highlights her connection with motherhood, human as well as divine. It is an incantation on a kind of charm, from the 7th century B.C.. It invokes her aid in childbirth.⁴⁸³

There is some evidence that even before the period of the monarchy Asherah may have been worshipped in the homes and shrines of the Hebrew settlers, e.g. The story of Gideon, Judges 6²⁵⁻³², and the references in Judges 3⁵⁻⁷. However such references are usually, like Judges 3⁷, deemed to be the work of a later redactor and so of reduced value as a witness to the practice of the early period. As we shall see below, it is more likely that such practices became popular with the rise of a monarchy among the Hebrews like that of the surrounding nations.

The most likely time for the first official introduction of Asherah worship is early in the reign of Solomon⁴⁸⁴. For although there is only a brief mention of this in 1 Kings, and that ascribed to the King's dotage, I take this to be influenced by wishful thinking (or pastoral necessity?) on

the part of the historian. Solomon was both too great a King, like David his father king over all the people, and too renowned for his wisdom for the deuteronomists to welcome the idea that he knowingly and in full possession of his faculties introduced such cults. (In any case they reserve this sin for Jeroboam, a regular theme of this work).

Both the politics of Solomon's reign and the details of the construction of the temple make the alternative interpretation more likely.

(a) Solomon was, unlike Saul or David, a king of the standard oriental pattern. It seems plausible then that he would use the traditional myths to support and legitimize this,⁴⁸⁵ especially since this relationship to the power structures was precisely one of the major points of difference between Yahweh and the traditional gods and goddesses of the land.⁴⁸⁶

(b) Solomon's foreign marriages were made early in his career, and it was then that he had most need of the support of these princesses' nations. Hence it was then, too, that he was most likely to seek to win their favour by introducing their cultic practices.

(c) Solomon's temple was built with great help from Hiram of Tyre. Its pattern is very like that of local parallels. Tyre was one of the centres of the Asherah cult.

If such arguments carry weight then it may well have been Solomon himself who introduced her cult into the temple from its erection. Even if this interpretation is erroneous it was still he who first gave that cult official status among the Hebrews, 1 Kings 11⁵. As we shall see below this status was seldom effectively challenged during the pre-exilic period.

The Northern Kingdom - Asherah in Israel.

The rise of Jeroboam, the popular candidate who took the larger Northern Kingdom, Israel, from Solomon's son, was predicted by Ahijah. Despite this early seal of approval from a Yahwist prophet, it is he whom the deuteronomic authors/editors of Kings blame for the worship of Asherah in Israel, as well as other deviations from pure Yahwism. Other, later, kings are castigated for following his example, e.g. 1 Kings 15³⁴ :

"He did what was wrong in the sight of the LORD and followed in Jeroboam's footsteps, repeating the sin which he had led Israel to commit."

For the following thirty-five years, and the reigns of five kings, there is no change; each is accused of following the sinful example of Jeroboam.

The next king, Ahab, was married to Jezebel, a princess of Sidon, during his reign the worship of Asherah seems to have flourished. He set

up an Asherah, as well as a temple of Ba'al with an altar to him (1 Kings 16³³). He allowed Jezebel to support four hundred prophets of Asherah (18¹⁹). It would appear that during his reign the worship of Asherah was a firmly established part of the official religion of Israel. There is no evidence that this official position was changed significantly even after the victory by Elijah over the prophets of Ba'al. Although at this time it seems to have been to Yahweh, not Ba'al, to whom Ahab turned for advice in war, 1 Kings 20 and 22. Yahweh was returned to his position as Israel's God, but the worship of Asherah, Ba'al's consort continued, one is led to wonder what the relationship between Yahweh and Asherah was thought to be at this time.

Ahab was succeeded by two sons, who followed in the family tradition, except that the second, Jehoram, did away with the pillar of Ba'al which his father had made, 11 Kings 3², he does not appear to have given up Asherah worship, however. This strengthens the presumption that some accommodation to Asherah was made in the Yahweh worship of the time.

Jehu came to power, overthrowing Ahab's successors, as the result of a coup supported by the strict Yahwists, including the Rechabites (11 Kings 9¹⁻¹³, 10¹⁵⁻¹⁷) and one of his first acts was to slaughter the prophets, priests and worshippers of Ba'al, (10¹⁸⁻²⁷). There is no record, however, of his taking any action against Asherah or her devotees. It was the removal of Ba'al and of the family of Ahab which Yahweh required, and that alone, (10²⁸⁻³⁰).

For the next seventy years Israel was ruled by the descendants of Jehu, and as far as we can tell Asherah retained her place, (11 Kings 13⁶).

After a one month 'reign' by one, Shallum, he in turn was overthrown by Menahem who was succeeded by his son. They introduced no marked changes in the religious life of Israel (11 Kings 15^{18 & 24}).

From then until the fall of Samaria there was little change, (11 Kings 15²⁸, but note also 17²).

Thus we see that for the entire two hundred and ten years of the existence of the Northern Kingdom, Israel, Asherah was publicly worshipped. For most of this time it seems plausible that her worship was a part of the official cult of the kingdom. How her worship may have been related to that of Yahweh we shall discuss below, after looking at the situation in the Southern Kingdom, Judah.

Asherah in Judah.

In the Southern Kingdom, Judah, also, the worship of Asherah was far more popular than a first glance at the account suggests. Her first two kings are singled out as Asherah worshippers (1 Kings 14²²⁻²³, and 15³).

Asa the third, however, was a more exclusive Yahwist, he deprived his grandmother of her title as Queen Mother on account of her allegiance to Asherah. It was this grandmother, Ma'acah, who may well have been the first to introduce an Asherah into the Jerusalem Temple (11 Chron. 15¹⁶), if Solomon had not done so from the start.

Neither Asa's zeal, nor that of his son Jehoshaphat, extended to removing the popular Asherah shrines across the land (1 Kings 15¹⁴ and 22⁴⁴). Unless we follow the Chronicler, who writes that Jehoshaphat "once again ... did away with the high places and Asherahs in Judah" (11 Chron. 17⁶ R.S.V. C/cst. 1 Kings 22⁴⁴).

In any case his son, Jehoram, married into Ahab's family and followed his example, (11 Kings 8¹⁸), a state of affairs which continued until Jehoash was placed upon the throne (thirteen years later). At first he followed the advice of his tutor, a priest of Yahweh, although neither he nor his successors abolished the high places (11 Kings 12³, 14³⁻⁴, 15³⁻⁴, and 15³⁴⁻³⁵). However, according to the Chronicler upon the death of his mentor he reintroduced Asherah and other idols.

Ahaz went further and "followed the example of the Kings of Israel" (1 Kings 16³⁻⁴). After a reign of twenty years this change was reversed by his son Hezekiah who introduced the most stringent reforms up to that time. The account of this gives a strong indication that an Asherah was at that time standing in the temple of Solomon, for it speaks of how he "cut down the Asherah and broke into pieces the Brazen Serpent which Moses had made, for unto those days the children of Israel used to burn incense to it, and it was called Nehushtan" (11 Kings 18⁴ R.S.V.). If the serpent was in the temple, as seems likely, then from the way they are referred to together it is likely also that the Asherah was too, the use of the definite article and the singular, reinforce this conclusion.

Hezekiah's son, Manasseh, however, is castigated by the deuteronomic historian as the worst of the kings (11 Kings 21²⁻³). He introduced and supported all kinds of foreign gods, among his sins was the setting up of an Asherah "like Ahab's", in the temple (11 Kings 21^{3 & 7}). His son Amon followed in his steps (11 Kings 21²¹).

For the first eighteen years of the reign of Amon's son, Josiah, there

were no changes. However with the "discovery" of a book of the law during temple repairs the most drastic and thorough of reforms began, one which wholly met the demands of the later historians, (11 Kings 22³). The cult objects of Ba'al and Asherah were removed (22⁴) as were their priests (22⁵) not only from Jerusalem but in all the surrounding country as well. The Asherah in the temple gets special mention (23⁶). Even Solomon's high place for Astarte/Asherah (see above) is desecrated, (11 Kings 23¹³).

As a sidelight from all this it is interesting to note that when Josiah's zeal takes him across into what used to be Israel, he finds an Asherah still, or once more, standing in Bethel, although the calf images of Yahweh set up by Jeroboam have been removed or destroyed during the turmoil, and not replaced.

The remaining kings of Judah are recorded as having 'done what displeased Yahweh', and although Asherah is not specifically mentioned we can probably assume that she resumed her usual place.

So, in summary, Asherah was officially removed from all shrines for, at most, the 29 years of Hezekiah's reign and for thirteen years during that of Josiah. A total of forty-two years. Her worship was to some extent disapproved of, but tolerated during the reigns of: Asa, forty-one years; Jehoshaphat, twenty-two years; Jehoash, thirty-nine years; Amaziah, fifteen years; Uzziah, forty-one years; and Jotham, four years. A total of one hundred and sixty-two years. Whereas, she had a part in the official court cultus during the reigns of: Rehoboam, eighteen years; Abijah, two years; Jehoram, seven years; Ahaziah, one year; Athaliah, six years; Ahaz, twenty years; Manasseh, forty-five years; Amon, two years; and the first eighteen years of Josiah's reign. A total of One hundred and nineteen years, to which can probably be added most of the twenty-two years following Josiah's death.

Thus for only some forty years out of some three hundred and fifty was the worship of Asherah suppressed in Judah. While for at least one hundred, and if we follow the conclusion of Patai ⁴⁸⁷, for two hundred and thirty-six years it received official approval, and for much of this time formed a regular part of the worship of the Jerusalem temple.

Asherah, Ba'al and Yahweh.

As well as the crude numerical picture developed above of the popularity and official status of the Cult of Asherah in the two kingdoms for much of their history, the evidence we have concerning the attitude of the ardent Yahwists towards her is significant.

For example in the story of Elijah and the prophets of Ba'al, although

there were four hundred prophets of Asherah, they take no part in the contest, and they are not executed along with the prophets of Ba'al. Clearly they were not regarded in the same light as the prophets of Ba'al. This hints at the suggestion that the conflict was between Yahweh and Ba'al, and that Asherah was at home with either! Raphael Patai ⁴⁸⁸ concludes his discussion of this story thus :

"It would appear then, that only Ba'al was considered by Elijah (and strict Yahwists in general) as a dangerous rival of Yahweh, while the goddess Asherah was regarded as his inevitable, necessary, or at any rate tolerable, female counterpart."

This conclusion seems to be too strongly worded, especially as one drawn by an argument from silence from one story. However, after looking at some further evidence, I will argue that (i) for much of the monarchic period Asherah was popularly so regarded, and (ii) that the prophetic circles of the period did not often oppose that position, but rather seem to have tolerated it.

The story of the rise of Jehu is instructive in this context. Jehu achieved power as the result of a coup which was supported by the most ardent Yahwist circles. His only named supporters were, Elisha (through the agency of one of his disciples), the equerry Bidkar, and a Rechabite, Jehonadab.

After settling the political issue by having all of Ahab's family killed, Jehu turned his attention to the religious issue with equal ruthlessness. He took steps to ensure that all the priests, prophets, and devotees of Ba'al were gathered in the temple of Ba'al. He then ordered them all killed, and the temple and cult objects destroyed. Having done this, he had done all that Yahweh required (10²⁸⁻³⁰).

There is no record in the accounts of his reign of his having taken action against Asherah, or of his having been exhorted to do so by his supporters. It would seem, at this period, that Asherah was acceptable, if not welcomed, by even the Rechabite and prophetic circles!

In the background to this it should be noted that Yahweh is often named Elohim. (Two of the strands of tradition in the pentateuch are distinguished, in part, by their differential use of these names.) Elohim is a plural word, but a singular form, El, occurs frequently in the poetic books, as well as elsewhere less often. El was the high god of the Canaanites, and husband to Asherah. In the Old Testament the occurrences of the name mostly concern the God of the Hebrews. Two hundred and twelve

such occurrences are translated 'God' in the A.V., in the main these are in parallelism to Yahweh; and only sixteen occurrences are translated god or idol.

It is interesting in view of this concurrence of name to note that the popularity of El declined as that of Ba'al (his son) rose. There was conflict between the two gods, and finally Asherah became the consort of the victor, Ba'al. This seems to add a further perspective to the conflict of Yahweh and Ba'al in Israel and Judah, and to the apparent neutrality of Asherah, with the suggestion that she may have been thought of as Yahweh's consort, with Yahweh to some extent being identified with El, the Canaanite deity.

The correspondence of biblical records concerning Yahweh and the Ugaritic texts concerning El have been noted by, for example, Gray⁴⁸⁹. He discusses these correspondences in some detail, but refrains from drawing any firm conclusion. The probability of popular piety, and indeed official cultus, in the pre-exilic period, giving to Yahweh a female consort has been widely aired, for example by Graham and May (1936), Morgenstern (1945) and more recently by for example Patai (1967).

The picture which has been built up above, on the basis of the accounts in Kings and Chronicles, is of necessity uncertain in many respects. However, the popularity of Asherah among the people is clear, as is her regular worship at local shrines. It is also clear that her image stood in the temple for long periods, (though the exact dates are open to dispute), and that her worship was a normative part of the cult of the kingdom of Israel throughout its history. What is less clear is the extent to which such worship implied that Yahweh was regarded as having and needing a female consort.⁴⁹⁰

This picture is supported by a few explicit references in the pre-exilic prophets, e.g. Isaiah 17⁸, 27⁹; Jeremiah 17²; and Micah 5¹⁴.⁴⁹¹ Jeremiah 17^{7ff} gives a good picture of the popularity of worship of "the Queen of Heaven" with all the family. However, possibly for the reasons given above, it is the cult of Ba'al which bears the brunt of the prophetic attacks.

Jeremiah 17^{7ff} not only gives a good picture of the widespread appeal of the cult of the "Queen of Heaven", but also of the growing confidence of this appeal to Yahweh alone, and thus of the ultimate incompatibility of worship of a goddess (or of goddesses) alongside him, which is evident in the prophetic and deuteronomic writings of pre-exilic times, and which comes to full flower in the exile and restoration.

Conclusions

Precedent for talk of God as motherly is more extensive in the Old Testament than is usually recognized. It is most common in poetic contexts and especially in the later Isaianic tradition. (Such language is generally found in contexts which show both a strength of devotional feeling and a depth of theological thought. It is not unfair to claim that on the whole such language is found in the "high points" of Old Testament thought). Such maternal language is used rarely in the New Testament (very rarely of God), but there are reasons which help to account for this. The biblical tradition gives little support indeed for views of God as male/masculine in a sense which excludes 'his' being female/feminine, indeed sexual categories are on the whole avoided.⁴⁹²

Evidence for a need of divine motherliness is probably not only to be found in these 'high points' of the Old Testament but also in its record of the Israelites' failures (in particular their devotion to 'foreign' goddesses).

CHAPTER SEVEN :

THE PATRISTIC PERIOD .

This chapter is concerned with examples of the use of maternal imagery in the orthodox writers of the first few centuries. Only passing reference will be made to the relatively extensive use of motherly language and titles in the various gnostic systems.⁴⁹³ There are two major strands to the material which we shall examine. Firstly there is that which stems from some of the biblical passages we have looked at above, in particular from the New Testament milk-feeding texts. Secondly, there is the use of motherly language of the Spirit in the early Syriac writers, together with the (related?) use of womb imagery in connection with baptism.⁴⁹⁴

Because of the multidisciplinary nature of this thesis the coverage of this material is not exhaustive.⁴⁹⁵ For the Greek and Latin Fathers I have concentrated upon the better known authors and in particular on the most extensive out-working of the milk feeding theme in Clement of Alexandria. We shall deal with the more important of these authors in roughly chronological order.

Irenaeus, Bp. of Lyons

We have seen, in Excursus Two: "Wisdom", above, how Irenaeus speaks of the Spirit as the Wisdom of God in parallel to the Son - his Word. Some other features of Irenaeus' use of imagery when speaking of the Spirit are of interest. There is one passage, more usually quoted in connection with his doctrine of the church⁴⁹⁶, where the Spirit's presence is brought into close connection with the imagery of being nourished at the mother's breasts.

The Gnostics, he argues, do not have the open tradition of the Church and so are not anchored to true faith. God sets apart leaders and other means through which the Spirit works. Thus those who cut themselves off from tradition "defraud themselves of life" :

"For where the Church is, there is the Spirit of God; and where the Spirit of God is, there are the Church and all grace; for the Spirit is truth. So those who do not share in the Spirit neither receive life giving nourishment at the mother's breasts, nor enjoy the clear fountain issuing from the body of Christ" ⁴⁹⁷

He closes the section by noting that those who cut themselves off from the Spirit thereby cut themselves off from 'instruction'. Thus it is likely that the milk feeding imagery, here applied to the Spirit, stems from the similar imagery in 1 Peter discussed in the previous chapter.⁴⁹⁸

Earlier whilst discussing the reasons why there are four, no more or less, gospels he took up the protecting wing imagery of the Psalms and says of the Spirit, that he was "sent" over all the earth, protecting us with his wings."⁴⁹⁹

Later however is a longer passage which speaks more generally of God breastfeeding humanity, where the breast-milk of the Word is contrasted with the bread which is the Spirit. The context is Irenaeus' explanation of why God did not make humanity perfect from the beginning. The passage is again seen by at least one modern writer as typifying one strand of Irenaeus' thought.⁵⁰⁰

Arguing that whilst "all things are possible" for God, Irenaeus notes that creation is young compared with God and unaccustomed to perfect discipline. He continues :

"Thus, as a mother is certainly able to offer her infant grown-up food, but an infant is not yet able to take solids; also in the same way God himself was certainly able to have given Man perfection from the beginning, but Man was not able to take it, being but in infancy."

Thus also our Lord came to us, with his glory dimmed, in a form we could apprehend :

"and thus , as if we were infants, the perfect bread of the Father offered himself to us as milk, when he appeared as (Second) Man. So that we being nourished by the breast, that is his flesh, and by this milk-feeding being accustomed to eat and drink the Word of God, we might be able to retain the bread of immortality, that is the Spirit of the Father."⁵⁰¹

In the next section Irenaeus goes on to use this distinction, of milk-incarnation of Christ, and bread - the Spirit of the Father, to explain 1 Corinthians 3². Thus his use of imagery is clearly indebted to the New Testament and is at the level of poetry rather than philosophy. (Note the unsystematic way he uses the image and the way that in the two passages we have looked at, the two very different uses of 1 Corinthians 3² and 1 Peter 2² are alternately the background.) However unlike the New Testament writers Irenaeus clearly applies this imagery to God. The breasts and the milk are

God's, in one are associated with the Spirit and in the other with Christ.

Clement of Alexandria

The tone and content of Clement's writings are warm and convey his wide sympathies. Well educated and cosmopolitan Clement did not cease to be a Greek philosopher but rather continued to seek wisdom wherever it was to be found. In the Stromata he expressed it thus :

"So the way of truth is single, but into it, as into a perennial river, streams flow from every side."⁵⁰²

The breadth of his sympathy is also illustrated by his attitude towards women. Thus there is a section of the Tutor entitled :

"That the Word is Tutor of Men and Woman alike."⁵⁰³

This section begins :

"So then, welcoming still more this good obedience, let us give ourselves to the Lord, fastening ourselves well to what is firmest, faith in him, and understanding that the goodness of man and woman is the same."⁵⁰⁴

He stresses that they have the same God and Tutor (Christ) and share virtues and abilities, but although he speaks of marriage as "an equal yoke", in marriage alone there is distinction, but in this world only, for even this distinction is wiped out in the world to come.⁵⁰⁵ This hymn⁵⁰⁶ to the equality of the sexes before God is not unique but reflects Clement's regular attitude. This attitude is striking in its context in the second century.⁵⁰⁷

This chapter with its stress upon the equality of women and men leads to a discussion headed :

"That all who walk in the way of truth are children of God."⁵⁰⁸

Again by the title Clement's openness is displayed. The content, in fact, is more concerned to demonstrate the childhood of the children of God. He cites a variety of scriptures to support his view that Christians are rightly called children. His use of Isaiah 40¹¹ is a good example :⁵⁰⁹

"And so, he also calls us lambs, the Spirit speaking through Isaiah is a sure witness : 'He will shepherd his sheep like a shepherd (poiman poimanei to poimnion autou), in his arm he will gather the lambs.' Further this is made more tender by the choice of 'lambs' for the sheep."

Clement's love of learning clearly shows through in the next lines

where he presents a non-scriptural argument :

"And we honour the most beautiful and perfect things in life, teaching and tutoring (paideian kai paidogōgian), taking their names from the word child (paidikāi)" 510.

The true Christians are not merely children, but have the simplicity of infants :

"Therefore, those who know the only God as father are rightly called children, they are simple, innocent and infants, lovers of the horns of unicorns." 511.

His exegesis of 1 Thessalonians 2⁷ is of interest here :

"This the blessed Paul most clearly pointed out saying: 'we could have been heavy on you as Christ's apostles but we were gentle among you as one who nurses her infants cherishes them'. The infant (nāpios) then is gentle (āpios), and is therefore more tender, tender and sincere and straightforward, direct and straight in mind; this is the basis of simplicity and of truth." 512.

Later, having spoken of the way in which those who are sharers in the Word are assimilated to the incorruptible and have within them the truth and Wisdom which never change, he quotes from Isaiah 66¹² f:

"It is said 'Their children shall be carried on their shoulders and comforted on their knees; as one whom a mother comforts, thus will I comfort you.' The mother draws close her children, and we seek our mother, the church." 513

He closes the chapter with reference to Christ, whose coming was foretold by Isaiah as a child, an infant, as wonderful counsellor, mighty God etc.(Isaiah 9⁶) and comments :

"What a great God, what a perfect child! The Son in the Father and the Father in the Son; so, how can the teaching of this 'child' be less than perfect, teaching which reaches to all his children, since he tutors all his infants." 514

The next chapter is the most important for this thesis, it is concerned to show that calling disciples children and even infants need not imply that they are in the early stages of perfection in contrast to those gnostics who are adult and have full knowledge.

In the early lines of the chapter Clement announces his bold thesis to answer these carping critics, he writes :

"By rebirth, in any case, we immediately received perfection, for which we were eager." 515

There follow logical and scriptural defences of this claim in the course of which Clement makes a finer distinction :

"For time and eternity are not the same thing, nor are the attempt and the goal, though both are concerned with one thing and one person is concerned with both. So, in a manner of speaking, it is like this, faith is the attempt born in time, but the goal is the firm establishment of what is promised in eternity." 516

However, Clement's bold claim of the perfecting by God's act of the Christian leads to difficulties when set alongside his claim of the titles infant, child and lamb in the previous chapter (and indeed his whole theme of Christ the Tutor, paidōgōgus). The two claims must be reconciled, as he demonstrates with a dominical quotation :

"So then, rejoicing in the Spirit, Jesus said, 'I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and of earth, because you hid these things from the wise and clever, and revealed them to infants.' Our Master and Tutor calls us infants, who are more open to salvation than the wise, the ones who are puffed up and think themselves wise." 517

In particular the idea of infants as fed on the milk of the word "from the tender-loving breasts" is so important to Clement that he devotes the rest of the chapter, about two-thirds of the whole, to discussing it.

This image is so central and important that Clement is unable to accept the obvious meaning of Paul's use of the imagery in 1 Corinthians 3². Thus he writes :

"It does not seem to me that this verse should be taken up in the Jewish way, for I oppose to it the scripture; 'I will bring you into the good land, flowing with milk and honey'." 518

Now, if the goal is a land flowing with milk and honey, then milk can not be written off as imperfect and childish, Paul must mean something else. So, how to read Paul?

"I have given you milk to drink in Christ' then a little pause and we add 'like infants', so that by separating these phrases a bit, we may accept it thus: I have taught you, in Christ, with simple, truthful and natural food, spiritual food; for such is the lifegiving milk, which flows from the tender-loving breasts." 519

The contrasted solids, he writes :

"Could well stand for the face to face manifest revelation of eternity." 520

There is also a lengthy discussion of the natural history of lactation which further demonstrates his point. The biology of this is, of course, only of antiquarian concern today, however it clearly stresses that lactation is linked to motherhood, and so for Clement the image of milk feeding is far from impersonal. Milk feeding is a demonstration of the natural wonders of motherhood - blood and air are transmuted into pure gentle food, the stuff of life - and of the mother's love.

After this discussion of natural science however Clement is overcome by the wonder of God's love in the incarnation of Christ and the nurturing of the Church, and of Mary the mother of Christ; and all these ideas are bundled together in a welter of exclamation and imagery :

"O mystic marvel ! The universal Father is one, and one the universal Word; and the Holy Spirit is one, and the same everywhere, and one is the only virgin mother. I love to call her the Church. This mother, when alone, had not milk, because alone she was not a woman. But she is at once virgin and mother - pure as a virgin, loving as a mother. And calling her children to her, she nurses them with holy milk, viz. with the Word for childhood. Therefore she had not milk; for the milk was this child fair and comely, the body of Christ, which nourishes by the Word the young brood, which the Lord Himself brought forth in throes of the flesh, which the Lord Himself swathed in His precious blood. O amazing birth! O holy swaddling bands! The Word is all to the child, both father and mother, and tutor and nurse." 521

He explains what he is talking about more logically :

"But if you do not wish to understand it this way, perhaps in a less partial way, take it like this : Our flesh represents the Holy Spirit, for it was created by him; Our blood points

to the Word, for the Word has been transfused into life as rich blood. The Lord is the union of both, he is the food of infants, (the Lord who is Spirit and Word). The food - i.e. the Lord Jesus - i.e. the Word of God - Spirit made flesh, flesh sanctified to heaven. This food is the Father's milk, the infants are fed by this only. For the Word, the beloved and our nurse, shed his blood for us, to save humanity. Through him, believing in God, we seek the Word - the Father's 'breast which banishes care'. It is fitting, that the Word alone should supply us infants with the milk of love, that those who suck this breast alone are truly blessed." 522

Thus for Clement the only God, the Father cares and loves like a mother, from his 'tender-loving breasts' comes the milk of the Word which banishes care (as an infant is careless at his mother's breast). According to the science of the second century milk was formed of the mother's blood mixed with air, similarly the Lord Jesus is formed by the mixing or union (krasis) of the Word and the Spirit (pneuma - breath, mind or spirit). So whilst the milk of the Word comes from "the breasts of the Father", so also, the Word is our wet-nurse whose blood (the blood of Christ 'shed to save humanity') mixed or united with the Spirit forms the milk, the 'fitting food' for 'infants'.

Later on the natural history of motherhood is used more directly to express and illustrate the mother-love of God and the tutoring of Christ :

"and the original food is milk; by which a woman is shown to have given birth and truly to be a mother, by which also she receives a magic charm of love. For this reason, speaking mystically through the apostle the Holy Spirit reveals in the Lord's name: 'I gave you milk to drink'. For, if we have been reborn into Christ, the one who gave birth to us gives us his own milk, the Word; then it is fitting that the one who has given birth should straightaway provide food to the new born." 523

It is by feeding the infant at her breast that a human mother brings to fruition what she began in giving birth and is truly seen as a mother. Whilst the child sucks at the breast a strong bond of love develops between mother and child. So Paul's words "I gave you milk to drink" are no less than the very word of the Lord revealed by the Spirit. For we have been reborn of God, and no less than a human mother God feeds us from himself, giving himself to us in Christ.

This discussion of the mother-love of God who suckles 'his' new-born infants is no passing image which Clement is led to expound because of a Pauline text which those who claim superior gnosis have used to challenge his picture of Christ as the Tutor and the Christian as infant. This is shown not only by the sheer length of his discussion, nor only by its exuberance in places (for at times we have seen Clement does get carried away by the possibilities of this mother imagery) for he returns to this theme elsewhere.

In particular at the close of "the Tutor" Clement says :

"It were right that, having got to this point, we should offer to the Lord the reward of due thanksgiving - praise suitable to His fair instruction" (Païdōgōgias, Tutoring). 524

There follows a hymn to the Tutor. The second half of which is comprised of epithet upon epithet in praise of the Tutoring of the Word, his guiding and protecting. The hymn begins :

"Bridle of untrained colts,
Wing of unwandering birds,
Ship's sure helm. (or reading nāpion for nāon;
true guide of infants)
Shepherd of royal lambs."

This sets the tone, the hymn is concerned with the one who cares for, guides, and protects the young, small and the infant. Among the pictures which recur are shepherd, mother-bird, saviour and helm or bridle. The whole tone is of great warmth and affection.

The closing stanzas read :

"Footsteps of Christ,
Way of Heaven.
Eternal Word
boundless Age,
everlasting light,
mercy's fount,
craftsman of goodness
by whose honoured life
God's praise is sung.
Christ Jesus,
milk of heaven
from the sweet breasts
of the bride of grace.

Squeezed
from your wisdom.
The childlike
with tender mouths
are cherished,
filled with
the dewy spirit
of the Word's breasts,
chant simple praises
sing true hymns
to Christ the King
as dutiful offering
for life giving teaching,

let us sing together
let us send forth simply
the mighty child.

O Christ-born
Choir of Peace,
O temperate people
let us celebrate together
the God of Peace.⁵²⁵

The prominence of maternal and especially breast feeding language in this closing hymn to the Tutor is another indication of the importance Clement attaches to such imagery.

God is not Male, indeed 'he' is both mother and father.

Although very few of the overtly maternal passages of the Old Testament provoke interesting comment in later authors, nonetheless there are occasions where material of interest to us appears in Patristic commentaries, usually where one of the New Testament passages we examined in the last chapter is linked with some apparently irrelevant Old Testament verse. Even though the linkage between the two passages may be traditional it does not always lead to thought of God as motherly.

In this context it is of interest to compare Eusebius' comments on Isaiah 40¹⁰⁻¹¹ with the later comments of Jerome. Both authors interpret the meaning in a similar way and both make use of Galatians 4¹⁹ to speak of "those who are with young", verse 11 (A.V.), as the apostles, who Paul says are in travail with their disciples.⁵²⁶

Jerome's thought is led beyond this. He remembers that the "forming of Christ" in the Christian, which Paul awaits, is the work of the Spirit, and that the Holy Spirit is of feminine gender in Semitic languages.⁵²⁷ He also quotes Psalm 123² seeing in the mistress the Holy Spirit,⁵²⁸ and the Gospel of the Hebrews logion in which Christ speaks of the Holy Spirit as his mother :

"Even so did my mother, the Holy Spirit, take me." ⁵²⁹

But, he says, no-one need be offended by such language for whilst in Semitic languages the Spirit is feminine, Latin uses masculine gender, and Greek neuter. This shows that sexuality does not apply to the Godhead (In divinitate enim nullus est sexus). ⁵³⁰

This recognition that sexual distinction has no place in the Godhead is a common one in the fathers. Gregory of Nyssa in a Homily on the Song of Songs expresses it in an interesting way. The verse (Cant. 3¹¹) refers to Solomon being crowned by his mother rather than his father. This he sees as an indication (or reminder) that :

"God is neither male nor female". 531

He goes on to note that in Christ human sexual distinctions are also overcome as Paul writes in Galatians 3²⁸.

John Chrysostom in his Homily on Matthew comments on Matthew 24³¹ and speaks of the richness of Christ who is :

"Father, brother, bridegroom, dwelling-place, food, raiment, root, foundation" etc. etc., closing with "brother, sister and mother". 532

This list is reminiscent of the similar lists in Clement, for the believer Christ is all things, and in all things, of the titles to be applied to him not the least is mother. Chrysostom's opponent Cyril of Alexandria, also has a passage of interest. He sees the housewife in the parable of the lost coin as Christ, "the Wisdom of God the Father, that is the Son". (He quotes Galatians 4¹⁹ also, but not to support the identification of the woman as Christ, but rather to indicate that through Christ we are transformed into the image of God, as the coin bears the image of a King).⁵³³ In this whole section Cyril is concerned to stress the gentleness of Christ.⁵³⁴

Among the Latin Fathers there is an interesting passage in Ambrose. He combines his very free version of Jeremiah 18^{13f} which speaks of teats from the rock with 1 Corinthians 10⁴ "that rock is Christ" to speak of Christ as Virgin Mother and mother of virgins, he whose own mother was a virgin.⁵³⁵

In such patristic exegesis of biblical texts, for our purposes, Augustine's comments on Psalm 102⁶⁻⁷ are of particular interest. In his attempt to give meaning to the image of the "Pelican in the wilderness" he takes up both Jesus' use of mother hen and Paul's use of pregnancy imagery.

For his second explanation ⁵³⁶ Augustine says :

"Let us turn to our Lord Himself, if perchance it be Himself, and so it may be better to recognize Himself as the pelican in the wilderness, as the owl in the ruinous walls, and as the lone sparrow on the housetop. Let that poor one, our Head, speak unto us; let the poor of His own will speak unto the poor of necessity. Let us not pass over what is said, or even read, of this bird, that is, the pelican; not rashly asserting any thing, but yet not passing over what has been left to be read and uttered by those who have written it. Do ye so hear, that if it be true, it may agree; if false, it may not hold.

These birds are said to slay their young with blows of their beaks, and for three days to mourn them when slain by themselves in the nest: after which they say the mother wounds herself deeply, and pours forth her blood over her young, bathed in which they recover life. This may be true, it may be false: yet if it be true, see how it agreeth with Him, who gave us life by His blood. It agreeth with Him in that the mother's flesh recalleth to life her young with her blood; it agreeth well. For he calleth Himself a hen brooding over her young: 'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not.' For He hath the authority of a father and the affection of a mother: even as Paul is both father and mother; not through himself, but through the Gospel: father, where he saith, 'For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Jesus Christ, yet have ye not many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the Gospel'; and mother where he saith, 'My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you'. If, then, it be so truly, this bird doth closely resemble the flesh of Christ, by whose blood we have been called to life." 537

Thus the legendary pelican leads Augustine to two of the maternal passages of the New Testament. Jesus' own words are backed up by Paul who could speak of himself as both father and mother. This comparison of Paul as mother and Christ as mother is taken up in the Middle Ages and linked with the milk feeding theme, as we shall see.

Augustine also makes use of maternal imagery of Christ in his "In Iohannis Evangelium Tractatus" first at 15⁶ - where he refers to Matthew 23³⁷ and says of all birds we can see that a hen is a mother because she looks worn out, so with Christ he wearies himself for us his children in the Incarnation; at 16² he says that John drank truth from the bosom of the Lord and at 21¹ he also takes up the breast feeding theme speaking of the love of Christ, Son of God and Son of Man, "cherishing and nourishing them that suck the breast and grow by loving." 538

Syriac Imagery

As Jerome reminded his readers (see above) the word for Spirit in the Semitic languages is feminine. Thus in these languages it is natural that the Holy Spirit should be spoken of as 'she'. Although the Christian church began in Palestine, very soon the majority of churches were Greek or Latin

speaking, however in one area a Semitic speaking church developed, the language was Syriac (a dialect of Aramaic). The fathers who wrote in this language retained also an eastern or Asian style of thought, this :

"is expressed almost entirely through typology and imagery, either traditional or freely invented." 539

and also :

"Our authors are typically Semitic in the way they order their matter. An argument proceeds not by exhausting topics successively but with frequent inclusio, circling round on itself like a conversation round a fire, gradually advancing and going deeper." 540

Thus it is reasonable to expect in them more thought and imagery of a feminine kind attached to the Spirit. The quotation from the Gospel of the Hebrews which we came across in Jerome suggests also that we might expect motherly imagery of the Spirit from such sources.⁵⁴¹ Murray devotes two sections of his book to an examination of the use of mother imagery in the early Syriac writers, however Brock warns that it is easy to overrate the significance of the feminine gender of ruha (spirit).⁵⁴² Whilst this caution should be observed, there is substantial interesting material in Brock's own book, some of which we shall have cause to quote. Concerning the early period Murray's conclusions seem well founded and generally acceptable to Syriac scholars.⁵⁴³

The Odes of Solomon

The interpretation of the Odes of Solomon⁵⁴⁴ is notoriously difficult. They have been seen as pre-Christian Jewish works, perhaps retouched by Christian editors, as thoroughly gnostic or as the product of early Jewish Christianity. It is unclear even what was their original language. However despite the incorporation of some of them into the gnostic "Pistis Sophia" suggestions of a gnostic origin no longer command as much support, and the tendency is to see them as Christian, or possibly Jewish-Christian in origin.⁵⁴⁵

Two of these Odes contain milk-feeding imagery which in its complexity and confusion of imagery, together with its emotional overtones is most similar to some of the passages in Clement and Irenaeus and to 1 Peter 2²⁻³.

Ode 8¹⁴ reads :

"I fashioned their members,
 And my own breasts I prepared for them,
 That they might drink my holy milk and live by it." 546

Bernard provides examples of representation of the Word as milk in the second and third centuries.⁵⁴⁷ In addition to some of the passages in Clement and Irenaeus which we have discussed above, he also mentions the baptismal custom of giving water "in deo patre", milk and honey, "et domino Jesu Christo" and wine "et spiritu sancto et sancta ecclesia" attested in the Egyptian Church Order.⁵⁴⁸ Charlesworth, however, suggests that "the Odist's imagery is more subtle and lacks the sacramental dimension of the Fathers." 549 It is true that there are such eucharistic hints in Irenaeus, but in Clement it is the tutoring of the Word which is primarily in view.

In these Odes the imagery of milk is again present at 19¹⁻⁵ :

- 1: "A cup of milk was offered to me,
 And I drank it in the sweetness of the Lord's kindness.
- 2: The Son is the cup,
 And the Father is He who was milked;
 And the Holy Spirit is She who milked Him;
- 3: Because His breasts were full,
 And it was undesirable that His milk should be
 ineffectually released.
- 4: The Holy Spirit opened Her bosom,
 And mixed the milk of the two breasts of the Father.
- 5: Then She gave the mixture to the generation without
 their knowing,
 And those who have received (it) are in the perfection
 of the right hand." 550

Here in some ways the use of imagery is very close to Clement. The breasts are the Father's, who gives milk to the Christian. However the imagery is at first sight more complex, the Son is the cup, but as Bernard suggests the usual image in the Odes is milk = Word (as in the biblical and patristic parallels). However note how in the preceeding verse the phrase "A cup of milk" is used; perhaps, here, cup = cup of milk and so the Son = milk in keeping with the usual use of imagery. The reference in vv 1-5 would seem to develop from the, supposed, baptismal cup of milk in v 1 to the incarnation of the Son vv 4-5 which leads to baptismal regeneration v 5b, full circle. The thought of the incarnation perhaps suggests and leads to the hymn to the Virgin v 6ff.

Breast imagery is also used in 14² :

1: "As the eyes of a son upon his father,

So are my eyes, O Lord, at all times towards Thee.

2: Because my breasts and my pleasure are with Thee." 551

Ode 14¹⁻²

This imagery, though strange to modern ears, would not have been strange to Clement. He could write of the 'care-soothing breasts' of God. This is no doubt the thought here. If so, then the translation 'consolations' for 'breasts' which Charlesworth discusses would render the sense, if not the imagery.

The thought forms of the Odist in these breast/milk passages are, then, very close to those of Clement. These examples strengthen the idea that such imagery was not strange in the church of the early centuries but indeed had a wide currency.

The imagery which the Odist associates with the Spirit will lead us away from Clement and towards the more definitely Syriac material still to be discussed. In these Odes the Spirit is spoken of with feminine gender, in common with other early Syriac writings, because of the baptismal context of the hymns she is often likened to a dove.⁵⁵² For example in Ode 28¹ :

"As the wings of doves over their nestlings,

And the mouths of their nestlings towards their mouths,

So also are the wings of the Spirit over my heart." 553

Here the motherly activity of the Spirit is implied (note the use of nestlings, and of feeding imagery in line two). The Spirit as dove also appears in 24¹ with reference to Jesus' baptism. The imagery of the Spirit as being/having protecting wings is also, as we have seen, found in Irenaeus. The motherly content of this image in this context is not unnatural, for baptism is rebirth and if God is present at baptism, in the Spirit, as a dove, then it is natural that 'she' should be spoken of in a motherly way. The motherliness comes out in Ode 36 :

"She brought me forth before the face of the Lord;

and although a son of man, I was named the illuminated one,
the son of God;" 554 Ode 36³.

"For according to the greatness of the Most High She made me:

and according to His own newness has He renewed me; and He
anointed me from His own perfection: " 554 Ode 36⁵.

Here I have chosen to prefer Bernard's translation of verse 3, since,

despite Charlesworth's arguments⁵⁵⁵, I am not persuaded that v 3ff should be seen as a speech of Christ rather than of the baptized Christian. Baptism is spoken of as enlightenment and perfection, in Clement, and there is no reason to exclude such language here. In baptism, the Spirit gives birth to the Christian, and although he is merely human enlightens him and makes of him a son of God. This seems to be the gist of the Odist's thought here, it can be paralleled, not only in certain aspects from Clement etc., but even more closely, as we shall see in later Syriac writings.

There is a further rather different example of the use of maternal themes in the Odes which deserves mention. In Ode 35, in a context full of words suggesting calmness and peace, we read :

"And I was carried like a child by its mother;
And He gave me milk, the dew of the Lord."⁵⁵⁶ Ode 35⁵.

Here are united the theme of milk-feeding and the later-Isaianic theme of the motherhood of God as his carrying.⁵⁵⁷ Here there is no thought of the maternal Spirit, and equally the idea of God's motherhood goes beyond merely the use of feeding imagery suggested by baptismal practice.

Early Syriac Writers and Syriac Liturgies.

In addition to what has been said above about the feminine gender of the Spirit certain other observations may help to prepare for the discussion to follow. In particular, a word most frequently used of the Spirit by Syriac writers as a kind of technical term⁵⁵⁸, rahhef, hover, although it is used of the Spirit only once in the Syriac bible (Genesis 1²) is common in the Syriac Fathers. Elsewhere in the Syriac bible "it translates the Hebrew 'have pity or compassion on' in several places (e.g. Isaiah 27¹¹, 30¹⁸; Jeremiah 13¹⁴)."⁵⁵⁹ (The Hebrew word in these cases is interestingly racham, see the previous chapter).

Murray suggests Deuteronomy 32¹¹ as another biblical source of the use of this word of the Spirit.⁵⁶⁰ Here the eagle hovering over its young would be seen as a type of the Spirit, in line with the use of bird imagery generally of 'her'.

The idea of the Spirit's hovering is often found in connection with baptism. For example Aphrahat writes :

"From Baptism we receive the Spirit of Christ, and in the same hour that the priests invoke the Spirit, 'she' opens the heavens and descends, and hovers over the waters, and those who are baptized put 'her' on. From all who are born of a body the

Spirit is absent till they come to birth by water, and then receive the Holy Spirit." 561

This idea is also found in Ephrem :

"The Holy Spirit has brooded in baptism, and mystically has given birth to eagles (virgins and prelates), and to fishes (celibates and intercessors) " 562.

Here the Spirit's hovering is linked to her giving birth.

This link is natural enough. Baptism is a new birth, a spiritual as opposed to a fleshly birth (John 3⁴⁻⁷). Thus the water of baptism is often pictured as a womb, or as a mother. Brock cites examples from Ephrem and later writers as well as liturgical evidence.⁵⁶³

This rebirth in the womb of baptism also leads to use of the phrase "womb of the Spirit" e.g. :

"Blessed are you, Lord God, through whose great and indescribable gift this water has been sanctified by the coming of your Holy Spirit so that it has become the womb of the Spirit that gives birth to the new man out of the old." 564

This phrase also occurs, for example, in the Syrian Orthodox service attributed to Timothy :

"Yea, we beseech you, Father of mercies and God of all comfort, send your living Spirit and sanctify this water, and may it become the womb of the Spirit that gives rebirth anew to mankind who are baptized in it." 565

With this is linked the idea that in baptism we receive from the Spirit the 'gift of sonship' :

"The Father sent the Spirit of his Son into men's hearts, and through the Spirit we truly call the Father 'our Father'." 566

Brook continues :

"Jacob of Serugh is here expressing one of the most important aspects of the gift of the Spirit, as far as Syrian tradition is concerned." 567

In the earlier tradition this involves little more than the New Testament idea of the believer as child of God. For example Aphrahat uses the twin ideas of being child of God and brother of Christ without expansion in Dem. 6, 1.⁵⁶⁸

Since this gift of sonship is such an important part of baptism the Lord's Prayer is an important part of the liturgy.⁵⁶⁹ This complex of ideas is associated with that of baptism as mother :

"Baptism has become for us a new mother, and through her we become children to the Father, who may call him 'our Father' lovingly ... From Eve we were of dust, and children of death, from this new mother we are children of God. From now on we have a Father in heaven, whom we can in confidence address as 'our Father' ... If Eve's birthgiving was still operative, our 'father' would be in Sheol, and not in heaven." 570

Baptism, by the action of God and in particular through the 'hovering' of the Spirit and 'her' mixing in the water, becomes for us a womb to spiritual birth, a mother. But the Spirit 'herself' can be spoken of as mother, just as in the Gospel of the Hebrews, though such references are very rare.

Aphrahat in Dem. 18¹⁰ writes :

"Who is it that leaves father and mother to take a wife? The meaning is this. As long as a man has not taken a wife he loves and reveres God his father and the Holy Spirit his mother, and he has no other love. But when a man takes a wife he leaves his father and his mother, those whom I have designated above" 571.

The idea is also expressed in the Macarian Homilies (though not in the related *liber Graduum*) :

"The homilist says of men after the Fall, 'they did not look on the true, heavenly Father, or the good kind Mother, the grace of the Spirit, nor the sweet and longed-for Brother, the Lord'," 572

again, Christians are :

"sons of the heavenly Adam, a new race, children of the Holy Spirit, light-filled brothers of Christ" 573.

and elsewhere they speak of :

"the grace of the Spirit, the Mother of the saints" 574.

Later :

"Sahdona, writing about 600, speaks of the man 'who has been held worthy of the hovering of the all-holy Spirit, who, like a mother, hovers over us as she gives sanctification and through

her hovering over us, we are made worthy of sonship'. Nearly three centuries later Moshe bar Kepha describes in a homily how the Holy Spirit 'hovered over John the Baptist and brought him up like a compassionate mother'." 575

However the possibilities of this tendency of thought were never widely exploited, perhaps as Brock argues because of the "pagan triads consisting of father, mother and son (e.g. at Palmyra, Hatra)" 576 or perhaps as Murray suggests in part "because the human need to find the feminine close to the Godhead ... became increasingly satisfied by growing devotion to Mary and the Church", 577 A possibility to which Murray draws attention but does not explore, which explains at least Ephrem's avoidance of the explicit use of the name mother 578 of the Spirit, is to be found in the hymn he devotes to "mocking at Bardaisan's doctrines about the Holy Spirit" this included the idea that the Spirit was mother (perhaps with Atargatis, a moon-mother-goddess, in the background). 579 The presence of this imagery in such quarters, and among the gnostic sects may well have dissuaded the orthodox from making more extensive use of it.

Breast-feeding imagery such as we found in the Greek and Latin fathers, stemming from the New Testament is found not only in the Odes of Solomon (see above) but also in later writers. For example Narsai writes :

"They suck the Spirit after the birth of Baptism; and according to the birth is also the nourishment that is high and exalted." 580

Here, as in Clement, spiritual rebirth is linked to spiritual feeding. However in this comparatively later writer the imagery is attached to the eucharist and to mother church :

"In the way of spiritual life he begins to travel; and, like spiritual beings, he lives by spiritual food. His mystical birth takes place in a manner spiritual; and according to his birth is the nourishment also that is prepared for him. New is his birth, and exceeding strange to them of earth; and there is no measure to the greatness of the food with which he is nourished. As milk he sucks the divine mysteries, and by degrees they lead him, as a child, to the things to come. A spiritual mother (sc. the Church) prepares spiritual milk for his life; and instead of the breasts she puts to his mouth the Body and Blood." 581

The Womb of the Father

This phrase occurs in Syriac Liturgy in connection with the sending of the Spirit. Some texts of the Syrian Orthodox baptismal service (which is usually attributed to Severus) contain the epiclesis :

"Have mercy on us, O God the Father almighty, and send upon us and upon this water that is being consecrated, from your dwelling that is prepared, from your infinite womb, the Paraclete, your Holy Spirit, the establisher, lord and life-giver". 582

Here the Spirit is described as being sent from the "infinite womb" of the Father. A similar picture is found in connection with the Word in the Apologists (Justin, Tatian, Athenagoras and Theophilus of Antioch). Their imagery concerning the *logos endiathetis* has been expressed thus :

"This internal Word who lives in the womb of God, like the embryo in the womb of his mother ...". 583

Clement expresses this idea rather beautifully in his only known sermon :

"Behold the mysteries of love, and then you will have a vision of the bosom of the Father, whom the only-begotten God alone declared. God in His very self is love, and for love's sake He became visible to us. And while the unspeakable part of Him is Father, the part that has sympathy with us is Mother. By His loving the Father became of woman's nature, a great proof of which is He whom He begat from Himself; and the fruit that is born of love is love." 584

The thought that God the Father is our Mother too, is also neatly expressed, though more tersely, in a hymn of Synesios in the fifth century :

"Thou art Father, thou art Mother;
thou art male, thou art female;
thou the voice, thou the silence;
thou art the very nature of fruitful nature." 585

Though here it is God's relation to the whole cosmos rather than the relation of persons of the Trinity which is in view.

An image similar to that of Clement and the Apologists seems to be implied in some later discussions of the Athanasian creed which speaks of the Son as begotten in eternity from the substance of the Father, as in time from the substance of his mother.⁵⁸⁶ This idea of a parallel between the Father in relation to the Son and Mary as mother is taken up again recently

in the context of the debate over the "Community of Women and Men in the Church" called for by the W.C.C.

Summary

Thus we find, in different places and with differing degrees of sophistication, that maternal imagery is used of all three persons of the Godhead, sometimes singly, sometimes together. Behind all, Jerome's slogan "in divinitate nullus est sexus" is far from a unique thought in the Fathers. This awareness that Fatherly and Filial language and use of masculine (or of the Spirit neuter or feminine) gender was merely language, of a God who was beyond such language, gives a freedom in the use of imagery which seems often to have been lost today.⁵⁸⁷

These uses of maternal imagery by patristic authors are seldom at all systematic, the exception to this is one of the earliest, Clement. He has a picture of the feeding of the motherly Trinity which involves the Breasts of the Father producing milk for the infants from the blood of Christ and the air - the Spirit (pneuma).

In the following chapter we shall see how some of these ideas were developed in the Middle Ages.

CHAPTER EIGHT :

THE MIDDLE AGES

By the Middle Ages mother-language and maternal imagery had found a niche in devotional literature. Such language used a variety of figures. For example, Bernard uses such language of Jesus, Moses, Peter, Paul, Prelates or Abbots, Himself and of Charity also.⁵⁸⁸ With reference to God it is particularly used of Christ. Many of these references are seen by editors as being influenced by Anselm's 'Prayer to St. Paul'.⁵⁸⁹ Although often patristic influences may be present (the references to patristic use of maternal imagery are scanty in writers on the medieval period since they are not easily available.⁵⁹⁰) These works have also been unaware of the full extent of Old Testament use of mother-imagery of God and so fail to recognize always the possibility of biblical roots for the idea of "Christ my mother".⁵⁹¹ Thus all talk of Christ as mother in the Middle Ages tends to be referred to Anselm, because of the wide circulation of his prayers his influence is likely to have been extensive, but perhaps not all other such thought need be referred back to Oratio 65 as source.

We shall now examine the material :

Anselm (1033-1109)

Anselm's "Prayer to St. Paul" ⁵⁹² leads the reader on a pilgrimage of faith. The first stage is to realise one's sin and unworthiness. That one has no reason in oneself to allow one to dare to pray. Even the invitation of Christ - delivered by Paul - to faith is no sure ground, for faith is weak and uncertain. If we must rely upon our own faith then we are 'dead'.

At this point Anselm appeals to St. Paul :

"O St. Paul, where is he that was called

the nurse of the faithful, caressing his sons?

Who is that affectionate mother who declares everywhere

that she is in labour for her sons?

Sweet nurse, sweet mother,

who are the sons you are in labour with, and nurse,

but those whom by teaching the faith of Christ

you bear and instruct?

Or who is a Christian after your teaching

who is not born into the faith and established in it by you?

And if in that blessed faith we are born
and nursed by other apostles also,
it is most of all by you,
for you have laboured and done more than them in all this;
so if they are our mothers, you are our greatest mother." 593

A mother cannot neglect the needs and cries of her child. Therefore
Anselm asks Paul to :

"offer your dead son again, to be raised up by him
who by his death gives life to his servants." 594

This leads to the thought that Jesus also calls himself a mother :

"And you, Jesus, are you not also a mother?
Are you not the mother who, like a hen
gathers her chickens under her wings?" 595

and he is also a mother in a more profound way than Paul and the others :

"You have died more than they, that they may labour to bear.
It is by your death that they have been born,
for if you had not been in labour,
you could not have borne death;
and if you had not died, you would not have brought forth.
For, longing to bear sons into life,
you tasted of death,
and by dying you begot them.
You did this in your own self,
your servants by your commands and help.
You as the author, they as the ministers.
So you, Lord God, are the great mother." 596

Christ is mother of these other mothers and as mother bears the pains of
childbirth on the cross. This is the centre of Anselm's thought of Christ
as mother, by his death on the cross Jesus can offer new life - rebirth.
His pains on the cross are labour pains - the birth pangs of the new
humanity. As we shall see this idea is not at the centre of all medieval
thought of Christ as mother, much of it returns to the patristic theme of
Christ the nurse who feeds the infants.

Next, Anselm notes that both Paul and Jesus are fathers as well as
mothers :

"Then both of you are mothers.
Even if you are fathers, you are also mothers." 597

and shows how he distinguishes between the two :

"Therefore you are fathers by your effect
and mothers by your affection.

Fathers by your authority, mothers by your kindness.
Fathers by your teaching, mothers by your mercy." 598

The Prayer concludes with the thought that a mother is incapable of turning away her child, and therefore in quiet confidence in Christ :

"Christ, my mother,
you gather your chickens under your wings;
this dead chicken of yours puts himself under those wings.
For by your gentleness the badly frightened are comforted,
by your sweet smell the despairing are revived,
your warmth gives life to the dead,
your touch justifies sinners.
Mother, know again your dead son,
both by the sign of your cross and the voice of his confession.
Warm your chicken, give life to your dead man,
justify your sinner.
Let your terrified one be consoled by you;
despairing of himself, let him be comforted by you;
and in your whole and unceasing grace
let him be refashioned by you.
For from you flows consolation for sinners;
to you the blessing for ages and ages. Amen." 599

It is interesting to compare this prayer with a passage from the later more theological "Monologion". He introduces what he has to say thus :

"I should now like to infer, if I can, that the Supreme Spirit is most truly father and the Word most truly son. Yet, I think I ought not to by-pass the question of which set of terms is more suitable for them - "father and son" or "mother and daughter" - for there is no sexual distinction in the Supreme Spirit and the Word." 600

He is clear that neither sex is 'better' (noting that among some species of bird the female is bigger and stronger). "But ... because the first and principal cause of offspring is always the father," 601 he concludes that father is the more appropriate term to use of God.

It will be useful before we look at any other writers to briefly summarize and synthesize the content of these two passages with respect to talk of God as mother.

- (1) "There is no sexual distinction in God."
- (2) The terms 'father' and 'son' are more appropriate than 'mother and 'daughter' because the male is the first and principal cause of offspring.⁶⁰²
- (3) However the male terms are not so much to be preferred that he cannot speak quite freely of Christ as mother,⁶⁰³ and draw confident trust in God from this image.

Bernard of Clairvaux (1090 - 1153)

As we noted above Bernard makes the most extensive use of maternal imagery.⁶⁰⁴ In contrast though to his exuberant use of such imagery of all kinds of saints and biblical and ecclesiastical figures, his use of maternal imagery of Christ is most restrained.

His sermon on the Song of Songs number nine, section 9 provides a good example for the purpose of comparison. He begins :

"Why should we not allow that these words may faithfully be applied to those that are cared for by a mother or a nurse, as children are?"⁶⁰⁵

This is followed by an extensive discussion of the church as mother and her duty to feed from her breasts which God refills :

"Here is a further reason why I insist that the breasts of the bride are superior to worldly or carnal love; the numbers who drink of them, however great, cannot exhaust their content; their flow is never suspended, for they draw unceasingly from the inward fountains of charity. Out of her heart shall flow rivers of water, there will be a spring inside her, welling up to eternal life."⁶⁰⁶

During this he compares at some length the "delights that" these "breasts distil" with the "pleasures of the flesh".

By comparison, the reference he makes in the same sermon, interpreting the breasts of the bridegroom as "proofs of" (Jesus') "kindness"⁶⁰⁷, is brief and unexpanded.

In Sermon 45⁴ there is a most interesting image, he pictures Christ saying :

"... but like that guileless bird who builds her nest in the crevices of the rock, you are content to be unpretentious, to linger near my wounds ..."⁶⁰⁸

As Bernard uses it, this image is not maternal at all, however it is taken up and used by others in a way which seems to imply a return to the womb. (We shall come across such usage below).

That Bernard's use of maternal language and imagery of Christ is brief and understated can also be seen in his letter to Hugh, ⁶⁰⁹ he writes :

"If you feel the stings of temptation, lift your eyes to the serpent on the staff, and draw life from the wounds of Christ. He will be your mother, and you will be his son. The nails which cleave his hands and feet, must also pass through yours." ⁶¹⁰

After a reference to the Lord as Father he compares this parental God with human parents (by the sound of it Hugh's parents were less than overjoyed by his vocation to the cloister!) :

"Do not be moved by the tears of demented parents who weep because from being a child of wrath you have become a child of God." ⁶¹¹

The most striking feature of Bernard's use of maternal imagery of Christ, then, is its terse and unadorned character. This is so particularly in comparison with his other use of such imagery. Nevertheless as we shall see, he was in this as in other matters influential, others took up his hints in a far less restrained way.

William of St. Thierry (1085-1148)

We noted above Bernard's use of the imagery of hiding in the wound in Christ's side. William developed this imagery. He writes first :

"The soldier's spear opened the side of" (Christ) "and from it flowed the mysteries of redemption ...through that open door" (we) "may enter whole, O Jesus, even into your heart ..." ⁶¹²

This imagery becomes more overtly maternal in a later meditation, where it is linked also to sheltering wing imagery :

"Blessed the souls whom you have hidden in your heart that inmost hiding-place so that your arms overshadow them from the disquieting of men and they only hope in your covering and fostering wings." ⁶¹³

We shall come across yet more explicit use of such imagery below.

William also takes up the New Testament milk-feeding imagery in Meditation 10 but like the patristic authors applies it to Christ. ⁶¹⁴

Aelred of Rievaulx (1109-1167)

In his "De Institutione" Aelred in two places makes use of nursing imagery of Christ. Speaking of the furnishings of the cell, he says of the crucifix on the altar :

"his outspread arms will invite you to embrace Him,
his naked breasts will feed you with the milk of sweetness
to console you." 615

Later in the same work he combines this with the hiding in Christ's wounds theme. Speaking of the blood and water which flowed from Christ's side (John 19³⁴) he says :

"The blood is changed into wine to gladden you, the water into
milk to nourish you. From the rock streams have flowed for
you," 616

and continues :

"wounds have been made in his limbs, holes in the wall of his
body, in which like a dove, you may hide while you kiss them
one by one." 616

This is clearly influenced by Bernard, but note not only the presence of milk imagery but also how the language is changing. Bernard merely linked Christ's wounds with the image of a dove building its nest in clefts in the rock. William speaks of being hid in Christ's heart (in medio cordis) but Aelred speaks of hiding in "holes in the wall of his body": "in maceria corporis caverna."

Guerric of Igny

Two of Guerric's 'Liturgical Sermons' are of particular interest to us, though there is interesting material elsewhere also. In Sermon 4 for Palm Sunday, Guerric takes up this theme of hiding in the wounds in Christ's side. He begins, following Bernard by seeing the "clefts of the Rock" as the wounds of Christ.⁶¹⁷ However he lays stress on the idea of entering Christ :

"Rather do not fly only to him but into him." 618

and expands on this :

"For in his loving kindness and his compassion he opened his
side in order that the blood of the wound might give you life,
the warmth of his body revive you, the breath of his heart
flow into you as if through a free and open passage. There

you will lie hidden in safety until wickedness passes by.
there (t(sic)) you will certainly not freeze, since in the
bowels of Christ charity does not grow cold. There you will
abound in delights. There you will overflow with joys, at
least then when your mortality and that of all the members
of his body have been swallowed up by the life of the
head." 619

This is a far cry from the starting point in Bernard, and the imagery stresses the warming and lifegiving properties of being in the bowels of Christ. This is understandably seen by some as thinly veiled womb language. Indeed to a psycho-analyst the closing sentences quoted above speak clearly of a desire to return to the womb; with the neverfailing comfort and peace of incorporation in the mother.

This imagery recurs in the Sermon for the Saturday of the Second week of Lent, again with the stress on being in the bowels of Christ and thus incorporated into him :

"He draws them into his very bowels and makes them his members". 620

The lengthy milk-feeding text in the Second Sermon for Saints Peter and Paul may well have been influenced by Anselm. 621

Like Anselm he begins from the Pauline milk-feeding passages and is so impressed that he can write :

"It was not so much that he possessed breasts as that he was all of him a breast; he abounded with such a wealth of loving kindness that he yearned not only to impart the milk of his spirit in its totality to his children but also to give them his body." 622

That he thinks of Jesus as the supreme mother first becomes clear indirectly :

"For when Christ went back to heaven, leaving the little flock of his disciples, and had not yet sent his Spirit with which the wombs and the breasts of the saints were to be impregnated". 623

Then this is made clear directly 624 in an expansion upon Bernard's thought; before, like Anselm, he makes clear that Christ is both father and mother, and shows us what he sees to be the difference between the parents :

"He is a father in virtue of natural creation or of the new birth which comes through grace, and also in virtue of the authority with which he instructs. He is a mother, too, in the mildness of his affections, and a nurse because he is so attentive to the care such a duty imposes." 625

Gilbert of Hoyland

Like most of the later Cistercians, Gilbert takes up imagery and ideas from St. Bernard and extends them. In his case this is particularly appropriate in his Sermons on the Song of Songs, since these continue the series begun by the great saint.

In the early sermons there is simply a reference to the apostles as mothers taking up and applying the Pauline text. This is in 12³ :

"This is the chamber of the apostles who begot us in Christ. Paul is like a mother when he says: 'My little children, with whom I am in labour until Christ be formed in you'. The 'mother' then you know." 626

Later on, however, he makes more extensive use of a cluster of maternal images. Taking up the hiding theme from Bernard, and the familiar milk-feeding theme (he applies this to both Christ and the Church). To Christ he says :

"By your providence, Lord, this interchange goes on, the alternation between meditation and consolation. Is he not blessed for whom all moments of life take this course, either preserved in Christ's wounds of love or fed by the merciful breasts? If sometimes intoxicated by the abundance 627 of your house, O Lord, I seem to take away from the full breast; so, often, I am beset by the wear and tear of daily life, so that now I am parched, where before the abundant 627 milk of knowledge and grace fell like dew. Happy indeed are those who can experience this holy interchange so as to penetrate the heart of wisdom and the hidden place and return filled with food received at the plentiful 627 breasts." 628

The maternal imagery continues, but applied to the church :

"She is the true spouse who so varies the quality and kind of their food. Therefore with excess of contemplation is entwined soon with milk of knowledge and doctrine. How beautiful are thy breasts. The eye of the pure and the beautiful breasts. Therefore he is one they are many because many must be the

temperatures of the milk to suit the different needs of the recipient" ...⁶²⁹

The discussion continues in this manner for the rest of the section.

This section with its two parts illustrates well, how, for these Cistercians there is the closest link between the maternity of Christ and the motherly activity of the church, as the previous quote illustrated the way in which this motherhood of the church is seen especially in Apostles and in the contemporary apostolic ministry of the church.

The Thirteenth Century

From this century there are several examples of the use of maternal imagery in devotional writings. In particular such imagery is found in writings by or addressed to women. (It is noticeable that the earlier material we have examined is by and large by men and for men.⁶³⁰)

However the two prime examples of this from England are in related works, "On Ureisun of Ure Louerde" and the "Ancrene Riwle". Both are related to the "Katherine Group".⁶³¹ The writings thus grouped together are not only related in their address, being intended primarily for women, but also in coming from the West Midlands at the turn of the twelfth to thirteenth centuries. It is generally agreed that these works show a Cistercian influence. Since there is so much evidence of maternal thought of Christ in so many twelfth century writings we may probably trace this thought here to a stimulus from this direction.

The Ancrene Riwle contains two passages where such imagery is used of Christ. Both of these, however, use the basic image in a different way, in one passage there are echoes of Augustine but the other seems to have no direct fore-runner.

The most novel is the first to appear :

"The sixth comfort is: that Our Lord when he allowed that we were tempted, was playing with us as the mother with her young darling. She fled from him and left him alone. He looks round about and calls, "Mummy, Mummy," and cries a little and then with wide spread arms she leapt laughing out, hugged him, kissed him and wiped his eyes. Right so Our Lord let us alone for a while and withdrew his grace, his comfort and his mercy; so that we did not find sweetness in anything that we did well. No savour of heart, and though at that point Our Lord did not love us any the less; He did all for the great love that he had for us." ⁶³²

I have found no evidence for this picture of God as a playful mother, surprising and delighting her child and teaching trust, in earlier works: though as we shall see similar imagery recurs in Julian of Norwich.

The other maternal passage in the *Ancrene Riwe* occurs in the context of a discussion of four chief kinds of love found in this world, friendship, love of man and woman, maternal love and that between body and soul.⁶³³ Of the third kind, motherly love, we read :

"Now, of the third love: If a child had such a disease that he needed a bath of blood before he could be healed, it would indeed be great love for the mother to make him such a bath. This Our Lord did for us that were so sick of sin and so marked by it that nothing could heal or clean us but his blood alone. For so he willed it, his love made us such a bath." ⁶³⁴

This idea is so similar to that which we found in Augustine, with his thought of the pelican, and so different from all the other imagery which we have examined that it seems likely that this is its ultimate source. However the author makes no attempt to link it to the same verse from Psalms, rather he chooses one of the best known mother-love passages from Isaiah :

"That is, he loved us more than any mother did her child. He said it himself, through Isaiah: 'Can a mother forget the son of her womb etc.' Can a mother forget her child, he said; and though she do it I will not forget ever. Then afterwards he said the reason: 'I have written you on my hands'. I have, he said, painted you on my hands. So he did with red blood upon the cross." ⁶³⁵

The passage from "On Ureisun of Ure Louerde" has similarities to Aelred's work for anchoresses (the passage was quoted above⁶³⁶) however the imagery is more homely than Aelred's and is more like the first of our quotations from the "*Ancrene Riwe*" in this respect. Of Christ on the cross we are told :

"he openeth them" (his arms) "as doth the mother her arms to embrace her beloved child. Yea, of a truth! And thou, dear Lord, goest spiritually toward us and to thy darlings with the same embrace as the mother to her children." ⁶³⁷

On the continent in this century two women religious stand out in their use of maternal language of God.

Marguerite d'Oyngt was prioress of the Carthusians of Poleteins near

Lyons. Her works contain several allusions to Christ as mother. First she says :

"You know, Gracious Lord ... you are the life of my soul, I neither have nor desire to have father or mother save you." 638

She also writes in solely maternal language :

"Are you not mother to me and indeed more than mother? My mother carried me and she laboured to give birth to me for one day, or one night; while you, beautiful and gracious Lord, were troubled for me not only for a single night or day. Yes, you laboured more than thirty years. Ha! beautiful and gracious Lord, how you travailed for me in love, all your life; but when the time drew near to give birth, the toil was so great that your holy sweat fell to earth from your body as drops of blood ..." 639

This theme that Christ's love in giving birth on the cross is even beyond a mother's is found also elsewhere in her work. 640

Mechtilde d'Hackeborn a contemporary of Marguerite's also uses mother as a title of God :

"I am your father in creation; I am mother in redemption; I am brother in the royal dispensation; I am sister in sweet communion." 641

But when she expands this it is in a different way; she perceives the Lord addressing her :

"My love will be your mother, and thus just as sons suck their mothers, so you suck inner consolation and indescribable sweetness from her, and she will give you food and drink, and clothe you. She will care for you with all that is necessary, just as a mother does her only son." 642

This thought of the thirteenth century can be seen to be developing from mere occasional use of maternal imagery of God to a more consistent thought of the Motherhood of God. This thought came to flower in England in the message of an English anchoress in the fourteenth century.

The Fourteenth Century

Julian of Norwich

This century was a particularly fruitful period in England for mystic writings. Among these the "Revelations of Divine Love" from Julian,

anchoress of Norwich stand out for their simplicity yet depth of understanding. The material is found in two versions one much longer than the other. The most favoured opinion is that the latter is an earlier draft, the longer version speaks of itself as the result of almost twenty years reflection and further 'enlightenment'.⁶⁴³ The highly developed use of maternal language and imagery belongs to the longer version and so should be seen as one of the ways in which Julian attempted to work out the meaning of her revelations.

In this longer version the major additional material is found between revelations fourteen and fifteen. Chapter 44 begins with the words: "In all these revelations ...", by the content also the following chapters are not so clearly related to the fourteenth revelation. They are probably rather to be seen as more general reflections.⁶⁴⁴ The key idea of these chapters (44-63) is summed up in the words :

"I may make all thing well, I can make all thing well, I will make all thing well, and I shall make all thing well; and thou shalt see for thyself that all manner of thing shall be well." ⁶⁴⁵

It is in the working out and attempt to understand and express this that the idea of motherhood emerges. Julian's sense of God's love is so great that she sees it in operation even in our failure ('all manner of thing shall be well'). In Chapter 48 she says therefore :

"Mercy works in us, keeping us, and turning everything to good account. Mercy, through love, allows us to fail, at least in part, and the measure of our failure is the measure of our fall, and because we fall we die. For inevitably we die when our sight or awareness of him who is our life fails. Our failure is dreadful, our fall shameful, our dying lamentable, yet never once does that dear eye of love and pity cease to regard us, nor his mercy fail." ⁶⁴⁶

For Julian there is only one human image which will suffice for this kind of merciful God :

"For I beheld the property of mercy, and I beheld the property of grace: which have two manners of working in one love. Mercy is a pitiful" (= compassionate) "property which belongeth to the Motherhood in tender love; and grace is a worshipful property which belongeth to the royal lordship in the same love." ⁶⁴⁷

It is then her deep trust that in God "all manner of thing shall be well" that leads Julian to seek some way of speaking of his infinite mercy

which will not limit it. Like Anselm, faced with a similar problem, she chooses to speak of motherhood as the imagery most suitable to catch this quality.⁶⁴⁸

This hint in passing that Motherhood is to be found in God is taken up and developed in Chapters 54-63. There is however one other 'throwaway line' before this in Chapter 52, where she says :

"In this way I saw that God was rejoicing to be our Father; rejoicing too to be our Mother; and rejoicing yet again to be our true Husband, with our soul his beloved wife. And Christ rejoices to be our Brother, and our Saviour too." ⁶⁴⁹

God she says is Father, Mother and Spouse⁶⁵⁰, while Christ is our Brother and Saviour.

Motherhood in the Trinity is the unifying theme of Chapters 54-63. They are like all Julian's thought in their ardently Trinitarian character. This theme is summed up for the first time in Chapter 54 :

"For the almighty truth of the Trinity is our Father: he makes us and preserves us in himself; the deep wisdom of the Trinity is our Mother, in whom we are enfolded; the great goodness of the Trinity is our Lord, and we are enfolded by him too, and he by us. We are enfolded alike in the Father, in the Son, and in the Holy Spirit. And the Father is enfolded in us, the Son too, and the Holy Spirit as well: all mightiness all wisdom, all goodness - one God, one Lord." ⁶⁵¹

Thought of the threefold nature of God as Truth, Wisdom and Love occurred earlier in the work (e.g. Ch. 44). It may well be that thinking of Christ as Wisdom made it easier for her to develop thought of him as mother to a greater extent than others who were more likely to begin from thought of him as Word, Son or Lord.

The paragraph just quoted from is very important, it provides at once a summary and a starting point for Julian's thought of Christ as our Mother and of the motherliness of God. It will perhaps be useful to summarize it and then to open it out by means of a word which Julian does not use.⁶⁵²

G Father - creator and preserver - Truth of Trinity

O Mother - in whom we are enfolded - Wisdom of Trinity

D Lord - in whom we are enfolded - Goodness of Trinity who is enfolded in us.

Charles Williams makes great use of the term coinherence in his talk of Christianity and of God.⁶⁵³ Christians are in Christ a coinherence and the Trinity is the self coinherence of God. In a sense this is the idea towards which Julian is pointing, with her talk of enfolding. The Father is the source of our being, the Mother enfolds us (Christ gives us new birth) the Lord, the Holy Spirit enfolds us drawing us into God, but is also enfolded in us. Thus the human and divine coinhere. This coinherence is the result of the Trinitarian work of creation, salvation and deification (to use a patristic term more favoured in East than West, in the more cautious language preferred in the West 'sanctification') thus it is coinherence with the whole Trinity :

"We are enfolded alike in the Father, in the Son and in the Holy Spirit. And the Father is enfolded in us, the Son too and the Holy Spirit as well."⁶⁵⁴

Christ is the Archetype of Motherhood, for Julian his motherhood is primary and all other motherhood reflects his. This is made most clear in Chapter 60. The previous chapter ended with the thought that Jesus is the mother of all our being :

"So we see that Jesus is the true Mother of our nature, for he made us. He is our Mother, too, by grace, because he took our created nature upon himself. All the lovely deeds and tender services that beloved motherhood implies are appropriate to the Second Person."⁶⁵⁵

Chapter 60 begins with this thought and goes on to affirm that as Christ is mother of all our being, so too he is our mother in every way :

"We know that our own mother's bearing of us was a bearing to pain and death, but what does Jesus, our true Mother, do? Why, he, All-love, bears us to joy and eternal life! Blessings on him! Thus he carries us within himself in love. And he is in labour until the time has fully come for him to suffer the sharpest pangs and most appalling pain possible - and in the end he dies. ... The human mother will suckle her child with her own milk, but our beloved Mother, Jesus, feeds us with himself ... The human mother may put her child tenderly to her breasts but our tender mother Jesus simply leads us into his blessed breast through his open side, and there gives us a glimpse of the Godhead and heavenly joy - the inner certainty of eternal bliss."⁶⁵⁶

However even this, saying that Christ is mother in every way and mother of our whole being, is to reverse the proper order, for motherhood is first of all a property of God and only secondarily and derivatively of humans :

"This fine and lovely word Mother is so sweet and so much its own that it cannot properly be used of any but him, and of her who is his own true Mother - and ours. In essence motherhood means love and kindness, wisdom, knowledge, goodness." 657

Here the motherhood of Mary, the mother of God, is spoken of on a par with Christ's. However, this is not quite what Julian means, as we can see in Chapter 57, where she speaks more of the motherhood of Mary :

"So our Lady is our Mother too and, in Christ, we are incorporated in her, and born of her. She who is the Mother of our Saviour is Mother of all who are to be saved in our Saviour. Indeed, our Saviour himself is our Mother for we are for ever being born of him, and shall never be delivered!" 658

In other words Mary is our mother because she is mother of the Son who is supremely our mother. 659

This primacy of the motherhood of Christ also colours Julian's use of the image of the church as mother; in Chapter 61 :

"Moreover he wills that we should hold tight to the Faith of Holy Church, and find there in that Communion of Saints our dearest Mother, who comforts us because she really understands. Individuals may often break down - or so it seems to them - but the whole body of Holy Church is unbreakable, whether in the past, present, or future. So it is a good, sound, grace-bringing thing to resolve, humbly but firmly, to be fastened and united to Holy Church our Mother, - in other words, to Jesus Christ." 660

This primacy of the motherhood seen in Christ is not only true of the theoretical kind of motherhood of Mary and Church, all human motherhood also points to him :

"A mother's is the most intimate, willing, and dependable of all services, because it is the truest of all. None has been able to fulfil it properly but Christ, and he alone can." 661

This motherly love of Christ is seen even in the absence of God. Julian like all religious persons experiences sometimes (often?) a sense of the absence of God. Even here she sees the mother-love of Christ in action;

indeed here her thought is most bold, for she sees this motherly love even in our failing and sinning :

"A kind, loving mother who understands and knows the needs of her child will look after it tenderly just because it is the nature of a mother to do so. As the child grows older she changes her methods - but not her love. Older still, she allows the child to be punished so that its faults are corrected and its virtues and graces developed. This way of doing things, with much else that is right and good, is our Lord at work in those who are doing them. Thus he is our Mother in nature, working by his grace in our lower part, for the sake of the higher." 662

Indeed because motherly love, mercy and grace are so constant and dependable Julian is able to have confidence even to claim that the motherhood of Christ may be seen at work in evil and opposition to God :

"All this blessedness is ours through mercy and grace. We would never have had it or known it if goodness (that is, God) had not been opposed. It is because of this that we enjoy this bliss. Wickedness was allowed to rise up against goodness, and the goodness of mercy and grace rose up against wickedness and then turned it all into goodness and honour, at least as far as those who are to be saved are concerned. For it is the way of God to set good against evil. So Jesus Christ who sets good against evil is our real Mother." 663

We have noted that Julian's thought is deeply Trinitarian, but so far it has been almost exclusively the motherhood of Christ of which we have spoken. This is Julian's emphasis too, but she does also make it clear that hers is a Trinitarian Theology of the Motherhood of God. In Chapter 58 she expands on the 'working' of the Trinity as Creator, Saviour and the One who gives reward and rest. Then she notes that :

"Our life too is threefold. In the first stage we have our being, in the second our growth, and in the third our perfection." 664

This of course corresponds to the threefold character of God, for :

"The first is nature, the second mercy and the third grace." 664

Or better, as she concludes in Chapter 59, in parallel to our threefold life which involves creation, salvation and perfection stands the threefold motherhood of God :

"I came to realize that there were three ways of looking at God's motherhood: the first is based on the fact that our nature is made; the second is found in the assumption of that nature - there begins the motherhood of grace; the third is the motherhood of work which flows out over all by that same grace - the length and breadth and height and depth of it is everlasting. And so is his love." 665

This understanding of the motherhood of God does not conflict with but rather complements his fatherhood. In Chapter 60 after, as we have seen, discussing the relation of human motherhood to the Motherhood of Christ she sums up :

"And in this I saw that all our duty that we owe, by God's bidding, to Fatherhood and Motherhood, for (reason of) God's Fatherhood and Motherhood is fulfilled in true loving of God;" 666

or again speaking of the breadth of God's love :

"He is the true Father and Mother of what things are by nature." 667

The Sources which scholars have suggested for Julian's thought are various. She herself leaves no direct clues for the only work which she is known to quote apart from the Bible is Gregory's 'Life of Benedict'. It is likely that the Ancrene Riwe played its part, and as was suggested above, probable that Augustine had a share. 668 Anna Maria Reynolds, one of the most noted students of Julian, believed that apart from the biblical passages (which, as I have shown in Chapter 6 above are more extensive than Reynolds, for example, realized) :

"the anchoress's immediate inspiration may have been Eckhart". 669

The passage to which she refers tells us that :

"according to Meister Eckhart, God is not only Father of all good things but he is mother of all things to boot. He is Father for he is the cause of all things and their creator. He is the mother of all things as well, for when creatures have gotten their being from him he still stays with creatures to keep them in being". 670

This seems unlikely in view of (a) the dissimilarity of their thought, in Julian it is precisely God as Father who is both creator and sustainer, and (b) Eckhart's teaching was, in part condemned by Pope John in 1329 (before Julian's birth) which resulted in comparatively restricted circulation of his works.

Borresen ⁶⁷¹ rightly notes the parallels to some of her ideas to be found in patristic and earlier medieval writings, and seems to imply that these reached Julian directly or indirectly through the general religious climate or culture of the day. However whilst noting such parallels she is also well aware of the novel aspect of Julian's work. Both points are worth stressing, Julian's theology of the Motherhood of God is part of a wider tradition which has its roots in the Bible, but it is also new in that it is a theology of the Motherhood of God rather than merely a using of maternal imagery of God. Whatever Julian intended, and there are useful caveats in several works especially Thouless (1924) against hardening a mystic's revelations into a rigid system of doctrine, whatever the intention, she produced the first attempt to use the idea of motherhood as a central element in a coherent theology. It is also so far as I am aware the only such attempt on such a scale to date. What she says, then, will be of special value in the concluding chapters.

The Monk of Farne, ⁶⁷² roughly Julian's contemporary, also a comparatively solitary religious, provides an interesting comparison with her. It is in his "Meditation addressed to Christ crucified" that he makes use of maternal ideas.

Like Julian he believes he has received a revelation from God, he feels that what he has to say does not come of his own authority, indeed he is aware that if it is felt by others to do so it will be rejected.

"What am I to say? Shall I keep silence or speak? Hold my peace or give utterance? For what thou showest me is exceedingly profound, and being defiled I dare not speak of such matters. Speak thou then for me, O Lord." ⁶⁷³

However, confident that his revelation is from the Lord, he tells it :

"I should rightly be held in contempt if I announced this as coming from myself and not from thee. To the best of my belief thou answerest that the sign which I have sought is this:

'All day long I stretch out my hands on the cross towards thee, O man, to embrace thee, I bow down my head to kiss thee when I have embraced thee, I open my side to draw thee into my heart after this kiss, that we may be two in one flesh. There can be safety for thee nowhere else but in me, when the day of wrath and judgement comes. See, I have shown thee the sign thou didst beg; know then how much I love, and fly quickly to me.'" ⁶⁷⁴

This "exceedingly profound" revelation of the love of God in Christ on the cross prompts exclamations of delight and wonder before he attempts to expound it. The explanation is this :

"Even so it is with mothers who love their little children tenderly; if these happen to be at a distance from them, and want to run to them quickly, they are wont to stretch out their arms and bend down their heads. Then the little ones, taught in a natural way by this gesture, run and throw themselves into their mothers' arms, and the latter bestow trinkets on them, or, if they are not yet weaned, give them the breast.

Christ our Lord does the same with us. He stretches out his hands to embrace us, bows down his head to kiss us, and opens his side to give us suck; and though it is blood which he offers us to suck we believe that it is health-giving and sweeter than honey and the honeycomb. Do not wean me, good Jesus, from the breasts of thy consolation as long as I live in this world, for all who suffer this abide in death, as thou thyself didst testify in the gospel saying: 'Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you.'" 675

He puts up a possible objection to this, namely that the position of Christ on the cross was chance, his arms spread by nails, his head bowed in death, his side opened by a lance. His reply is that one cannot assert that the 'Almighty' died against his will, but that rather every aspect of his dying is the choice and plan of God. He asserts on the contrary that he did all these things to demonstrate his condescending love. 676

There then follows a discursive exposition of the details of what has been said. Much of this is of little relevance for this thesis, but it is worth noting some points. He asks :

"What does it mean that those who have fled to Christ, and been embraced, kissed and drawn into his body, are suckled by him, to follow up the order of the aforesaid metaphor, and what precious gift do they receive from him?" 677

He explains this image of being suckled by Christ with another :

"To the question what they suck from him I reply with the Scriptures: 'Honey from the rock' and sweetness from Christ. Only those who have actually experienced the sweet savour of

this rock know this sweetness, for it is a hidden manna,
unknown to all who have not tasted it." ⁶⁷⁸

At first he explains entering Christ's side in a variety of non-maternal ways using imagery drawn from the Bible and the fathers. But then he writes :

"But I also need to enter again into the womb of my Lord,
and be reborn unto life eternal, if I am to be amongst the
members of the Church whose names are in the book of life.
For the Church must return thither whence she came forth, and
to enter into her reward must be born again of him who first
gave her birth that she might merit. For this reason the days
on which the saints departed from this world to go to Christ
are called their birthdays." ⁶⁷⁹

It is clear from this that he is less comfortable and free than Julian in his use of motherly language and seeks to soften it by adapting elements of the whole to other more familiar language and metaphor (the transformation of suckling to honey from the rock is a good example of this.) Nonetheless, the image of Christ as mother is very important to him. This is seen not only by the way in which he uses it to convey the central meaning of his revelation, but also is hinted at much earlier in the revelation where he chooses a maternal passage from the Bible to indicate the unbreakability of God's covenant with humanity⁶⁸⁰ (the passage is Isaiah 49¹⁵, largely ignored by patristic authors but taken up by the Ancrene Riwe).

The other difference from Julian in his handling of this imagery is his far greater dependence upon traditional elements. Although his use of maternal language and pictures is more extended than is common, almost every line can be paralleled closely in earlier writings quoted in this chapter, whereas Julian's use of the image is very innovative, though probably prompted by elements of the earlier tradition. This difference is not wholly a function of the wider range of material available to him even on Farne,⁶⁸¹ but rather first of all because Julian is using the image in a more radical and thoroughgoing way.

(In passing it is interesting to notice that, like Julian he tends to play down Mary's role,⁶⁸² and that like her he shows a warmth of human understanding not always characteristic of medieval writings from secluded religious.⁶⁸³)

In short the Monk of Farne provides a useful background to Julian, he shows that her ideas were not eccentric and cut off from the tradition and

ideas of her day, but he also provides a less bright background against which her true individuality may sparkle.

In England, at least, thought of Christ as mother was not confined to cloister and anchorage, there are several examples of such language to be found in religious lyrics of the later Middle Ages. One of the most often quoted is the poem with the refrain: "Quia Amore Languo".⁶⁸⁴ Within this poem varied imagery is used of Christ (in particular it is interesting that the image can shift from lover to mother and then return to lover⁶⁸⁵). One verse of this poetic meditation on the passion reads :

"My spouse is in hir chambre, hald your pease,
make no noyse, but lat hyr slepe.
My babe shall sofre noo disease,
I may not here my dere childe wepe,
For with my pape I shall hyr kepe.
No wonder though I tend hyr to,
Thys hoole in my side had never ben so depe,
But quia amore languo." ⁶⁸⁶

Similar material is quoted from a collection published at the turn of this century, from a fifteenth century manuscript.⁶⁸⁷

Summary

We have looked at some of the, comparatively widespread, uses of mother language and imagery of Christ (and also of the, less frequent, more general references to God the Father or the Spirit in this way) in the Middle Ages.⁶⁸⁸ From this survey it is clear that although the title of Cabassut's ⁶⁸⁹ paper, "Une dévotion médiévale peu connue: la dévotion à 'Jésus notre mère'" was perhaps overstated in its implication of a recognized 'devotion', more recent research has confirmed his work and extended it.

There was a widespread tradition in the Middle Ages in Western Europe of using a variety of maternal language and imagery of Christ. This tradition was particularly strong in England. The roots of this are in the Bible and patristic writings, but also new and distinctively medieval themes emerge. This tradition reaches its fullest flowering in Julian of Norwich.

Beyond the Middle Ages

Although mother imagery is less commonly applied to God in more recent centuries, the idea has at times been found helpful. Not least by Martin Luther,⁶⁹⁰ where maternal elements are found especially in his Christological thought.

Siggins argues that it is possible to discuss :

"a quite remarkable balancing of masculine and feminine archetypes in Luther's imagery, and especially at the heart of his teaching, in his Christological imagery." ⁶⁹¹

The presence of motherly (and more generally 'feminine') themes seem in part, at the very least, to stem from biblical imagery :

"But alongside these cosmic, martial, regal and aggressive themes is an even richer strain of images of intimacy and nurture. Christ is the brood-hen: "Look at the hen and her chickens and you will see Christ and yourself painted and depicted better than any painter could picture them" (10/1/1.280,11). He nourishes us with his strength as a hen feeds her chickens and warms them with her own body (45.154,1). Christ is faith's jewel, " ... my heart's crown, my heart's joy, my ruby" (40/1.167,24; 18.141,12). He is an inexhaustible fountain of living waters (10/1/2.430,36). Scripture speaks richly of the maternal mercy of Christ, in which he cherishes and bears us just as a mother cherishes her tiny child and caresses it (13.508,16)". ⁶⁹²

"A mother's heart and love cannot forget her children - it is against nature. She would go through fire for her children. See how much labour women expend on making food, giving milk, keeping watch over a child; God compares himself to that passion. 'I will not desert you, for I am the womb that bore you, and I cannot let you go'" (31/2.405,1)." ⁶⁹³

A very different example, of a coolly rational approach, is found in John Wilkins (1614-1672) an early or founder member of the Royal Society and Bishop of Chester. ⁶⁹⁴ He argued that one should not speak of God as Father but rather as Parent.

Cabassut cites neither of these, but gives French Catholic examples reaching into this century. On the whole, though, the heyday of such devotion was between the turn of the millenium and the reformation and counter-reformation.

CHAPTER NINE :

"MARY AND DIVINE MOTHERHOOD"

This chapter begins with an attempt to discover and present the place of Mary in Roman Catholic theology and devotion. The emphasis is upon how far Mary does, can and should provide a divine mother figure. The suggestion that Mary can provide an answer to the psychological and theological questions raised earlier in the thesis will then receive critical attention.⁶⁹⁵

The Place of Mary in Catholic Thought⁶⁹⁶

It is commonly acknowledged that Roman Catholic devotion and piety give a prominent place to Mary the Mother of Jesus, and as we shall see both theology and worship speak of her in more general motherly terms. It is natural then, that many authors should suggest that devotion to Mary, to some extent, fulfils the need for female and in particular for maternal elements in the Godhead, or perhaps more fairly that these needs are displaced onto Mary.

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin wrote that it is a fact of the history of spirituality that those with the greatest devotion to the Virgin were men, and believes that this is due to her role in fulfilling the need to correct "a dreadfully masculinized" conception of the Godhead.⁶⁹⁷ When speaking of the, soon to be announced, dogma of the Assumption of the B.V.M. he wrote:

"I am too conscious of the bio-psychological necessity of the "Marian" (to counterbalance the "masculinity" of Yahweh) not to feel the profound need for this gesture."⁶⁹⁸

Thus it would seem that, to some extent, Mary can express the feminine and maternal side of God for at least one eminent Catholic thinker. Two "Evangelical Protestant" authors explain it thus :

"It is suggested that in seeing Mary in the divine capacity" (sic.) "of Mother of God, the maternal qualities of deity are transferred from God the Father to Mary. This establishes a divine dichotomy - God as Father and Mary as Mother."⁶⁹⁹

A similar suggestion comes from the Catholic psychologist Antoine Vergote :

"Moreover, it is an everyday occurrence in the life of a practising Catholic to distinguish between the functions attributed to God and those attributed to the Virgin Mary.

The image of God is depicted in conformity with a law-making Father, a distant Judge, whereas the Virgin fulfils the role of a divinized mother ..."⁷⁰⁰

We shall now look at what there is in Marian theology and cult which gives ground for these suggestions.

Marian Doctrine and Divine Motherhood.

1) Some specific themes:

First we shall look at some specific themes widespread in Mariological writings and later look at some less explicit or less widespread hints and suggestions to be found there.

(a) Mary and the Church

Mary is a symbol of the Church, and thus Catholic exegetes often interpret New Testament passages concerning Mary with reference to the Church e.g. the scene at the crucifixion where Christ gives Mary to John as mother and vice-versa (this interpretation is implicit for example in the footnote to the Jerusalem Bible at this point⁷⁰¹). This identification is to be found in the documents of the Second Vatican Council, attached to the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church is a final chapter, "The B.V.M., Mother of God, in the Mystery of Christ and the Church." It is noticeable that there is no separate Mariological document.

This identification, or should we say symbolism, it is not always clear which is in view and the two approaches shade into each other, and individual authors are not themselves always consistent, this linking, then, is connected with and probably stems from several of the themes discussed below, in particular; the ancient typology of Mary as a second Eve; exegesis of the Woman in Revelation 12, (with respect to both Mary and the Church); and of the Old Testament talk of the Virgin daughter of Zion and indeed Zion herself likewise in this double fashion. This is one of the few areas of Mariology to have been developed by Protestant authors.⁷⁰²

It is a development of this identification, however, which is of greater significance for us, Mary is the Mother of the Faithful, as the Church is. This is so logically, for Mary is the Mother of Christ and the Church is the Body of Christ; and is so symbolically, for example in the words of Christ on the cross :

"It has always been the Church's interpretation that Christ indicated in the person of John the human race, and in particular those who would be faithful to him. And most truly is Mary the Church's mother, and guide, and the queen of apostles."⁷⁰³

The interpretation of the Woman of Revelation 12 (see below) as Mary also helps support this image of Mary as the mother of the faithful, as does talk of Mary as a second Eve (again see below). Talk of Mary as 'Mother of the Church' has received more recent papal approval, too, in the declaration of Paul VI on Nov. 21st.1964.

This bare fact of Mary's motherhood of the faithful can be developed by consideration of many of the titles given her, especially the debated co-redemptrix, but also some of those approved by Vatican II, for example : Advocate and Mediatrix. Mary's motherhood of the faithful is a major theme of almost every section of the book "Our Lady and the Church" by Hugo Rahner who gives a good and balanced idea of how this idea can be developed.

(b) The Woman of Revelation 12.

The portentous vision of Revelation Chapter 12 concerns a woman, who bears a male child, destined to rule. There is a war in heaven between Michael and the dragon, and an earthly pursuit of the woman by the dragon. The chapter closes with a reference to 'the rest of her children, that is all who obey God's commandments and bear witness for Jesus.'

In view of her giving birth to the male child who 'was to rule all the nations with an iron sceptre' and who was 'taken straight up to God and to his throne' it is small wonder that the woman is often taken as being the Virgin Mary.⁷⁰⁴ Though it is noticeable that the footnotes to the Standard Edition of the Jerusalem Bible make no reference to this possibility, concentrating entirely on the more certain reference to the woman as a figure of Israel.

Whilst it may be clear that in the Jewish origins of the material used in this chapter Mary is not personally in view, and whilst in a scholarly sense it may be doubtful how far the Christian author of Revelation intends a direct reference to her as the woman, it is also clear that the many who see such a reference are not stretching the text. Mary is the mother who gave birth to the Messiah. If this is so then it is not wrong to say that she is the same mother who in v 17 has other children, "all who obey God's commandments and bear witness for Jesus." This is clearly the interpretation of Catholic Mariology, which also sees signs of her heavenly glory in the first reference to the woman 'adorned with the sun, standing on the moon, and with the twelve stars on her head for a crown'.

Here again Mary is seen as mother of the faithful, crowned with heavenly glory.

(c) Wisdom

The personalized figure of Wisdom occupied an increasingly high place in Jewish thought. She is identified with Shekinah living in Zion, and with Torah. In Wisdom 7^{25ff} she is linked closely to God himself, in language which was taken up by the author to the Hebrews (1³) and referred to Christ.⁷⁰⁵

This tendency to interpret the highest that is said of Wisdom as referring to Christ is one which was relatively short-lived in the Church. At the time of the Arian controversy it was discovered that this interpretation was dangerous, giving a weapon to the Arian party, for Wisdom is always a created being and subordinate to God. A new interpretation was needed, because of this danger Wisdom began to be interpreted as a type of the Blessed Virgin Mary.⁷⁰⁶

Thus ⁷⁰⁷ the first churches dedicated to Sancta Sophia (e.g. in Constantinople) use the name as a title of Christ, only later does it become an act of homage to Mary (e.g. Novgorod).

However once begun this tendency becomes firmly established in both the theology and liturgy of East and West. Mary is that wisdom which in the highest expressions is alongside God almost as another self.

The mother of the faithful, is then one who is throned in heaven alongside God almost as another self!

(d) Mary and Redemption.

Mary is the mother of the faithful at least in part because of her share in their redemption. This title of Mary's of Co-redemptrix, though much disputed, is not, if used with care, foreign to Catholic doctrine.

For example Louis Bouyer argues the case thus :

"The act by which we are redeemed"(can)"have had but one subject, the Incarnate God ... But this does not mean that mankind is saved without its own co-operation. Since salvation is our restoration to the liberty of the sons of God, it would be meaningless to hold that we are saved without any action on our part. Consequently in so far as we are the objects of redemption, we are also co-redeemers. And since no one is saved, or saves himself, alone, but all together are saved in Christ, as we are all together lost in Adam, when we co-operate in our own redemption, we co-operate in that of all the rest. Inasmuch as we are all co-redeemers, we are all co-mediators.

If this is true of each of us, it must, obviously, be true eminently of our Lady ..."(but there is a "special")"unique way in which Mary is associated with the work of redemption." 708

"In this,"(at the foot of the cross)"as in every other respect, her unique place in God's plan and its execution derives solely from the fact of her motherhood. It is because she could not be the Mother of Christ, of God made man, without also being mother of the new race of men destined to be born in Him, that Mary, on Calvary, was associated in all that took place there as no one else could be, for what happened there was the fulfilment of her own travail." 709

(e) Mary as Second Eve.

Since the patristic period (e.g. the idea is prominent in Irenaeus) one way of understanding Mary's place in the divine economy is as a Second Eve. For Mary was the woman whose obedience helped to undo the consequences of the disobedience of the first woman. There are indeed also many parallels between the narrative in Genesis 3 and the Annunciation in Luke 1. There is the fact of a conversation between a woman and an angel (the serpent = Satan, a fallen angel), which involves an appeal to doubt or to faith. There is the contrast between disbelief and disobedience on one hand and belief and obedience on the other.

This way of understanding Mary's role, as a second Eve, to Christ the second Adam, finds some support in the parallels in Rev.12 with Gen.1, (noted in the margin to the Jerusalem Bible).

It fits well with talk of Mary as Co-redemptrix without implying divinity to her, and has been popular in most periods of Christian thought. In its turn, it helps to strengthen the image of Mary as our mother (as well as Christ's).

11) Some hints and tendencies.

First we shall notice some hints that Mary may be thought of as the Throne of Godhead, and compare this with information about cults of mother goddesses; then we shall return to the vexed question of how nearly Mary may be said to have a divine status in Catholic thought.

(a) The Throne of Godhead.

Hugo Rahner in the middle of his comparatively restrained account of Marian theology lets slip a tantalizing hint when he says: "The Mother of God is also the Foederis Arca, the ark of the covenant."

On the nature and meaning of the Ark in the Old Testament, the most probable conclusion is that it was one of the class of cult objects, unoccupied thrones of the deity, of which examples are found in the Ancient Near East which correspond closely to it in construction. ⁷¹⁰

This hint that Mary may sometimes be thought of as a throne of divinity may be linked up with the more general suggestion found in the liturgy that Mary is compared with the temple. This idea is found especially in the feast of presentation, and is sometimes taken up in doctrinal works e.g.:

"The feast of presentation is based precisely on this idea, which itself underlies a far more sublime conception, namely, that since Mary has become truly the Temple of God ..." ⁷¹¹

which is itself closely linked to the understanding of Mary as fulfilling what is written about Zion in the Old Testament. By taking these hints and ideas together in this way we are not surprised to find the idea of Mary as the throne of God can become fully explicit, as for example :

"They"(i.e. "the Fathers")"celebrated the august Virgin as the spotless dove (cant 6 : 8), and the holy Jerusalem, and the exalted throne of God, and the ark and house of holiness, which eternal wisdom built for herself (Prov. 9 : 1), and as that Queen who, abounding in delights and leaning on her beloved (Cant 8 : 5), came forth from the mouth of the Most High (Ecc. 24 : 5), entirely perfect, beautiful, most dear to God, and never stained with the least blemish." ⁷¹²

Mary is often pictured as enthroning the infant Jesus, an image closely comparable to those of the mother goddesses of the world enthroning their divine sons. Whilst noting such passing comparisons of Mary with the mothers of gods who were themselves divine we should not fail to note another of Mary's titles which she shares with the fertility goddesses of the ancient world, that of Queen of Heaven. ⁷¹³ It is interesting that the English translator of Rene Laurentin's "Court traite de theologie mariale" chooses to add to the title thus: "Queen of Heaven: A short treatise on Marian Theology".

All of which leads naturally to the next section where we shall approach the question of the doctrinal position of Mary and in particular how nearly she may be said to have divine status in Catholic thought.

(111) Mary and divinity.

At the start of this discussion we must note that orthodox Catholic thought has never intended to give to Mary divine status, and that those who

allege this misunderstand what is intended.

The dogma concerning Mary states :

- "(i) As the mother of Jesus Christ Mary is the mother of God and as such remained ever virgin (the dogma of Mary's perpetual virginity).
- (ii) Mary is holy thanks to an unmerited gift of God: from the beginning she was preserved untouched by original sin, by grace and through the merits of Christ (the dogma of the immaculate conception, defined by Pius IX on 8 December, 1854, DS 2803).
- (iii) Mary, body and soul, is with the resurrected Christ (the dogma of the assumption, defined by Pius XII on 1 November, 1950, DS 3903)." 714

Though there is sufficient here to give rise to vigorous debate, there is no ground for the accusation that Mary is regarded as divine in Catholic thought. The grounds for this suspicion come from the nature of her veneration (see below) and from some of the less guarded, or more enthusiastic authors. That some Catholic writing about Mary gives ground for use of terms like quasi-divine is probably beyond dispute, listen to Louis Bouyer (from a passage concerned with the term co-redemptrix) :

"There is to be seen, at times, a tendency to define Mary's part in the redemption as if she were, by contrast with us, a cause of the outpouring of grace

All that the Saints, and even the Church as well, can do is to distribute the graces acquired by the Redeemer. Mary, however, is said to co-operate with him in their acquisition.

This seems to us yet another unfortunate error, to raise Mary to the place of the divine, so justifying Protestants in their objections. If it is not exactly a violation of Catholic doctrine, it shows, at any rate, a failure to appreciate certain very important theological concepts, since these are used in a very loose and debased sense." 715

For our present purposes we are not concerned to debate precisely how Catholic theology defines or describes Mary's place, but rather to indicate from such works the kind of attitudes such works may indicate or induce in the ordinary Catholic. We shall return to this question in greater depth in the conclusion following a look at Mary's place in worship.

Mary in the liturgy and private worship.

There are some fourteen Marian festivals in the Catholic calendar, of greater or lesser importance. The most striking and often repeated feature common to all of this material is the worshippers' need for Mary's prayers. To choose but one example, from the 'Common of the Blessed Virgin Mary' 1, Opening Prayer :

"Lord,
take away the sins of your people.
May the prayers of Mary the mother of your son help us.
for alone and unaided we cannot hope to please you." 716

This example could be repeated, with varying emphasis, from almost any of the Marian Feasts.

Alongside this need for her intercession, is the feeling that she provides an inspiration and example for us of what humanity should be. Again one example from among the many, from the 'Common of the Blessed Virgin Mary' 1, Prayer after Communion :

"May her faith and love
inspire us to serve you more faithfully
in the work of salvation."

Still a recurring theme though not quite as ubiquitous is the suggestion that as well as interceding and providing an example for us Mary may herself protect us. Our example is from the same service, where the alternative Opening Prayer included the words :

"We rejoice in the protection of the holy Virgin Mary."

These themes of intercession, example and protection form the general background in all of the Marian liturgies, they are modified and added to according to the special emphases of particular occasions. We shall now pick up some of these, in particular those emphases which relate to Mary as mother of the faithful, or to her exaltation.

The Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God; 1st. January.

This is a part of the season of Christmastide, and as the name and occasion imply the emphasis is upon Mary's motherhood of our Lord. However as the Prayer after Communion suggests we are not to forget that Mary is mother of the Church too :

"Father,
as we proclaim the Virgin Mary
to be the mother of Christ and the mother of the Church,
may our communion with her Son
bring us to salvation."

The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary; 15th August.

This feast is concerned with Mary's being raised to heavenly glory,
and this glorification is reflected in the prayers e.g. :

"All honour to you, Mary! Today you were raised above the
choirs of angels to lasting glory with Christ."

and the Opening Prayer links this glory with her intercession :

"Almighty God,
you gave a humble Virgin
the privilege of being the mother of your Son,
and crowned her with the glory of heaven.
May the prayers of the Virgin Mary
bring us to the salvation of Christ
and raise us up to eternal life."

In the Mass during the Day, the Prayer after Communion suggests that her
exalted place is such that our hope of heaven is connected with her prayers :

"Lord,
may we who receive this sacrament of salvation
be led to the glory of heaven
by the prayers of the Virgin Mary."

The Queenship of Mary; 22nd August.

A few days later in the year this exaltation is again the theme and
here it is explicitly linked to her motherhood of the faithful, in the
Opening Prayer :

"Father,
you have given us the mother of your Son
to be our Queen and mother.
With the support of her prayers
may we come to share the glory of your children in the kingdom
of heaven."

The Entrance Antiphon for this occasion comes from Psalm 45 (44) (a
psalm which is quoted in Hebrews concerning Christ) :

"The Queen stands at your right hand arrayed in cloth of gold."

Our Lady of Sorrows; 15th September.

This day commemorates Mary's place at the cross of Christ, and her share in his sufferings. The liturgy remembers also the calling of the whole church to be 'united with Christ in his suffering and death', like Mary; and also how from his cross Jesus gave Mary to be our mother too :
Opening Prayer :

"Father,

as your Son was raised on the cross, his mother Mary stood
by him, sharing his sufferings.

May your Church be united with Christ
in his suffering and death
and so come to share in his rising to new life ..."

Prayer over the Gifts :

"God of Mercy,

receive the prayers and gifts we offer
in praise of your name
on this feast of the Virgin Mary.

While she stood beside the cross of Jesus
you gave her to us as our loving mother."

The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary; 8th December.

For this solemnity which commemorates the doctrine that Mary was conceived without taint of original sin so that she might be a pure vessel to bear the Divine Son , the Opening Prayer may include :

"the image of the Virgin is found in the Church."

We have picked up occasional references in the Marian Liturgies to her motherhood not only of Christ but of all of the faithful, and to her exaltation and glory. Most of these references are from days of obligation, and so presumably become a familiar part of the worship-life of the faithful Catholic. All of this however must be set in the far more frequent background themes of Mary's intercession for the worshippers, her example to them, and to a lesser extent her aid and protection for these themes are present in almost every one of these festivals, (although we have only illustrated them from the Common).

In more private devotion, too, Mary can have a prominent place. For example of the four prayers of preparation for mass included in the Missal

one is addressed to Mary. It speaks to her in terms most appropriate to an exalted mother figure, thus :

"Mother of mercy and love,
Blessed Virgin Mary,
I am a poor and unworth sinner,
I turn to you in confidence and love ..."

One of the six thanksgivings after the mass, likewise :

"Mother, ask God to forgive my sins ..."

The Rosary:

Since the middle ages the rosary has had associations with Mary, both in the words and the mysteries. This form of devotion consists of decades of 'Hail Mary's preceded by the Lord's Prayer and followed by the Gloria, while the words are being repeated various Mysteries, events in the life of Jesus or his Mother, are meditated upon. The fifteen decades, and fifteen mysteries are divided into three groups. The joyful mysteries are : the annunciation, visitation, nativity, presentation in the temple and finding in the temple; The glorious mysteries are : the resurrection, ascension, descent of the Holy Spirit, assumption of the Virgin and her coronation; The middle group, the sorrowful mysteries concern Christ's sufferings and do not directly concern Mary.

It will readily be seen that the frequent use of this form of devotion will confirm Mary's high place and her connection with the "mysteries of the faith".

There is also a shorter form of Rosary where the meditations concern 'the seven sorrows of Mary'.

Changes in Liturgy and Custom.

Since a change in the rules of fasting in the late fifties made Mass in the evenings possible as a common feature of parish life there has been a decline in the popularity of services such as Benediction. In such services the rosary played a prominent part.

This change has probably been reinforced by the more fundamental changes introduced following Vatican II, especially but not only the use of the vernacular, which have led to far greater participation by the congregation in the worship of the mass. This has reduced the need for the more personal forms of devotion which often included the rosary.

A further influence in this direction has been the charismatic movement, although this has led to a greater stress upon personal devotions

again, these because of the strong redemption emphasis, have not returned to their markedly Marian character.

The changes in the festivals themselves have been less consistent in their direction, whilst the annunciation (3rd. April) now concentrated less on Mary, the circumcision (1st. January) has become the celebration of Mary as Mother of God.

Mary in the Office:

The Office of Night Prayer (Compline), in the Interim Version of the New Roman Breviary ⁷¹⁷, concludes each day with a "Marian Antiphon" these are new translations of old hymns. They address Mary as "Mother of Mercy", "Holy Queen", "Queen of Heaven", and as the "open door to heaven" and generally in terms most appropriate to an exalted heavenly mother with tender affection and supplication.

Mary in Hymns:

The Saint Andrew's Hymnbook ⁷¹⁸, authorized by the Archbishops and Bishops of Scotland in 1964, in its preface quotes Pope Pius XII, thus :

"They"(the hymns)"must be in complete accord with the teaching of the Catholic faith, setting it out properly and explaining it."

Hymns, as the preface goes on to recognize, can be a personal and popular means of nourishing faith; and often reflect better the faith of the people than the tomes of scholars. Many of the hymns from the Marian section of this book illustrate well feelings of warm affection and need towards our mother, Mary. From these it may be useful to quote two :

"Mother Mary! at thine altar
We thy little children kneel;
With a faith that cannot falter,
To thy goodness we appeal.
We are seeking for a mother
O'er the earth so waste and wide,
And from off His cross our Brother
Points to Mary by His side.

2 We have seen thy picture often
With thy little Babe in arms,
And it ever seemed to soften
All our sorrows with its charms;
So we want thee for our Mother,

In thy gentle arms to rest,
And to share with Him our Brother
That sweet pillow on thy breast.

3 We have none but thee to love us
With a Mother's fondling care;
And our Father, God above us,
Bids us fly for refuge there.
All the world is dark before us,
We must out into its strife;
If thy fondness watch not o'er us,
Oh, how sad will be our life!

4 So we take thee for our Mother,
And we claim our right to be,
By the gift of our dear Brother,
Loving Children unto thee;
And our humble consecration
Thou wilt surely not despise,
From thy bright and lofty station
Close to Jesus in the skies.

(F.W. Faber, 1814-63.) 719

And :

"Look down, O Mother Mary,
From thy bright throne above;
Cast down upon thy children
One only glance of love;
And if a heart so tender
With pity flows not o'er,
Then turn away, O Mother,
And look on us no more.
Look down, etc.

2 See how, ungrateful sinners,
We stand before thy Son;
His loving heart upbraids us
The evil we have done.
But if thou wilt appease Him,
Speak for us but one word;
For thus thou can'st obtain us
The pardon of our Lord.
Look down, etc.

3 O Mary, dearest Mother,
 If thou wouldst have us live,
 Say we are thy children,
 And Jesus will forgive.
 Our sins make us unworthy
 That title still to bear,
 But thou art still our Mother;
 Then show a mother's care.
 Look down, etc.

4 Unfold to us thy mantle,
 There stay we without fear;
 What evil can befall us
 If, Mother, thou art near?
 O kindest, dearest Mother,
 Thy sinful children save;
 Look down on us with pity,
 Who thy protection crave.
 Look down etc.

(St. Alphonsus, 1696-1787. Tr., E.Vaughan, C.SS.R., 1827-1908.)⁷²⁰

For our present purposes we have been able to avoid asking the questions in most heated debate between churches. We have been concerned solely with how far in Catholic thought Mary may be said to fulfil the role of a divine Mother, nor are we concerned to define in exactly what sense the adjective divine may be used of her, (for our purposes it is sufficient to use the term to mean something like: pertaining to the heavenly realm; which Mary, Queen of Heaven, clearly does.).

Little needs to be said by way of conclusion to defend the contention that the Virgin Mary is seen and prayed to as just such a heavenly Mother. This has been shown on almost every page above. Clearly the quotations from Teilhard de Chardin, and Antoine Vergote with which we introduced our discussion do reflect accurately Mary's function in Catholic devotion.

It is interesting to notice the similarities between Mary and pagan mother goddesses. Her titles are often the same as theirs, e.g. Queen of Heaven is also a title of Isis, Hera, Astarte, Juno, Allat, Ishtar, Rusa, etc.; Star of the Sea, also of Isis, Aphrodite etc.. She shares with many of them the role of pleading with God and with her Son on behalf of the worshippers, and like them, too, she appears in localized forms, e.g. Our Lady of Lourdes, Our Lady of Aberdeen.

This, too, helps to confirm that Mary fills the need for a divine Mother. Whether Mary as Mother is so in contradistinction to God the Heavenly Father (see verse 3 of the first hymn quoted above) or whether she helps to draw attention to this aspect of godhead is still open to some debate, (since, so far studies of denominational differences in the perception of godhead have led to diametrically opposite conclusions).

Mary and the Psychological Need for a Divine Mother:

Whatever the origins of the 'Maid of Bethlehem' it is clear that she is now, in Catholic thought, a Mother in heaven able to intercede powerfully for us. Pope Paul VI wrote recently :

"we contemplate her who, seated beside the King of Ages, shine (sic) forth as Queen and intercedes as Mother".⁷²¹

Thus Mary is well able to meet and satisfy this need. She is indeed the descendent of all the divine mothers worshipped by mankind down the ages. In one sense this is all that needs to be said on the psychological side, yet it would be irresponsible to avoid examining the cost.

Catholic theology has always been careful to remember the origins of the Queen of Heaven. She is not a heavenly being from eternity, but rather "she has been appointed by God to be Queen of Heaven and earth."⁷²² In contrast to her son, God made flesh for us, Mary is human in origin. This has psychological consequences, Christ is God - Mary is human. Psychologically if not theologically this implies that God is male and humanity female. It does this in a more forceful and direct way than any of the other influences in this direction.

That this is so may be seen by even a cursory examination of some of the less carefully theological works on Mary and by most of the Catholic or Orthodox works on the theology of womanhood. For example, to choose a work whose care and moderation yet great devotion to Mary are well-known, Louis Bouyer writes :

"Femininity, on the contrary, even in its highest realization, motherhood, is a sign of the absolute distinction from God of the creature as such."⁷²³

Although the harshness of this is moderated somewhat by what he has to say about the Spirit :

"Thus, from one point of view, the procession of the Holy Ghost is seen to be the perfection of the divine unity, which is such that there is no need to postulate in God any-

thing that corresponds to femininity, a sign of the essential incompleteness of the creature. But, from another point of view, this procession is seen to be what in God corresponds to femininity on the human level in its highest attainment. Or rather, let us say, this very femininity, which the Creator established as an element in the finite creature, capable of sinning, is seen, in ultimate analysis, as the providential way of bringing about what, in God, is realized in quite a different way: without tension, without division to be overcome, by the procession of the Spirit.

This alone provides the explanation of the attribution, so strange at first sight, yet undoubted, of feminine characteristics to the Holy Ghost in revelation." 724

Mary alone, in any theology which desires to remain orthodox, is liable to produce such an effect - the more she is exalted the greater the danger that womanhood will be devalued. As Bouyer hints and some others are beginning to suggest it is only where there is a more or less recognized feminine element in the godhead that this psychological equation is weakened.

Thus in the last analysis Mary alone cannot provide a psychologically satisfactory answer to the need for a divine mother. For unless there is motherhood in God any human motherhood may only be raised to quasi-divine status at the expense of all other motherhood.

Mary and the Motherhood of God:

The theological need to speak of motherhood in God as we speak of fatherhood in God (Chapter Five: "God and Gender") can not be met by any orthodox Marian thought alone. Such thought has consistently and carefully refused to speak of Mary as God, thus her motherhood however miraculous, wondrous and unique, whilst it may make her mother of God cannot make God a mother in any sense.

On the other hand, when the motherhood of God is recognized and spoken of, then the place of Mary need no longer be a stumbling block in inter-church relations. For to speak of God as mother removes the psychological fuel from the fires of the more extreme (and to Protestants, distasteful) kinds of Marian devotion; and on the other hand will enable the Protestants to see and to understand in Mary a supreme revelation of God, and thus to be less cold and cautious in their approach to her. 725

This thought leads to a more positive approach. Mary the mother of God is a vessel uniquely chosen by God as a means of his self disclosure

to man. As such she must occupy a special (indeed unique) place in the realm of merely human revelation of what God is like. 726

Thus Mariology, if my presentation has been a reasonable fair one, critically understood, points beyond itself to the true understanding of divine motherhood which must be of the Motherhood of God.

CHAPTER TEN :

"RETROSPECT ON PART TWO."

This chapter is intended to provide a brief summary of some of the conclusions reached and evidence presented in the preceeding chapters and excursus; and to begin to find a pattern in this material. I shall not attempt to represent the material of these chapters in an equal way, but in such a way as to make clear the thesis for which I am arguing. (Which I believe stems naturally from this evidence.)

A) Is God 'masculine'?

One of the shortest chapters of the thesis is that entitled "God and Gender", (it is short because in a sense its subject matter is outside the range of this thesis) but its theme is a necessary prerequisite for all that follows. If God is 'masculine' in any sense which excludes 'his' being 'feminine' then any talk of God as mother is at most an interesting quirk like Amos talking of him as a roaring lion, and of precisely as little theological or practical significance.

That there is a prima facie case to be answered here is simply indicated. (1) We speak of God as Father and Son, not Mother and Daughter, (2) God is head over humanity, (3) 'he' takes the initiative.

In summary form the various arguments against such a case⁷²⁷ boil down to one. A god who is 'masculine' is not the source, summary (anakephalaia), and exemplar of all that is best in humanity. He is not God but merely a god, (the god of a part of the world not God of all). In particular a god who is Father in a way 'he' is not Mother is thus spoken of by analogy to a maimed and partial human experience. Full parenting demands both parents, a one parent family is less than a perfect human family.

God, then, transcends sexuality, and our God-language ought to transcend 'the rhetoric of Sexuality'. Mother-language is essential if father-language is to be properly used of God.⁷²⁸

B) Precedents

If we grant that mother-language is necessary⁷²⁹, then we must ask what precedents exist for the use of such language? If there are not such precedents then to advocate such language is to advocate a novelty or even a new religion.⁷³⁰

1/ The Bible.

Both Excursus Two and Chapter Six contain biblical material. The Wisdom material is relegated to an Excursus because in a strict sense this provides no theological precedent for speaking of the motherhood of God. Wisdom, however closely associated with God, was not God. Whilst her motherliness provides evidence for the need of religious people for such a dimension in the divine, and of one poetic and beautiful way of meeting this need,⁷³¹ it does not directly enable or encourage us to speak of God as mother. It is indirectly of great importance, however, for when Christ is spoken of as the Wisdom of God we are then enabled and encouraged to speak of him as mother (as for example Julian in fact does.)

Chapter Six contains the meat as far as this present stage of the thesis is concerned. Whether or not all of the arguments and examples of the use of motherly language from the Old Testament are accepted, it is clear that there is a far more extensive use of such imagery than is usually recognized. In view of the extent of this material it seems clear that the question is not; Is there any kind of biblical precedent for the use of mother language of God? but rather: what theological significance does this usage have? Is it theologically different from the use of other imagery such as animals or inanimate objects?

There are two lines of reply. First, we must notice the extent of mother imagery. It is true that some non-human imagery is similarly extensive. An example is the use of Rock language and imagery. It would impoverish our hymn-books and liturgies if we were to exclude all Rock imagery. The image is still a useful one for expressing the firm unchangeability and dependability of God.⁷³² In this sense this is an argument for greater use of maternal imagery. However, secondly, unconsciously such questions go deeper. There is an implied comparison with Father imagery which is seen as normative of God in a way other imagery is not.⁷³³ That use of Father cannot be normative in a sense Mother is not has, I hope, been amply demonstrated in Chapter Five.

The biblical uses of maternal imagery are often in a context which will lead the Christian to see portrayed what we may call the Motherhood of the Father. It should be noted, though, that in later Isaianic passages this imagery is commonly associated with talk of God as redeemer. We may thus choose to see here the motherhood of Christ being prefigured. The Wisdom material may be seen as prefiguring either the motherhood of Christ or of the Spirit. (The latter seems to me to make more sense since the role of Wisdom is in many ways like that of the Holy Spirit, the indwelling

sanctifying presence of God, the inspirer of our response to God.) 734

With the exception of Jesus' lament over Jerusalem the New Testament material is of interest because of the later developments of the imagery it suggests.

2/ The Fathers.

One of the striking features of the patristic material reviewed in Chapter Seven concerns the question of gender specific imagery and God. Although our survey was restricted to uses of the word mother or of maternal imagery there were an impressive number of passages which make it quite clear that the fathers were in no sense limited to male language to picture God. It is also significant that this is as true of authors renowned for their almost narrow and inflexible orthodoxy, such as Jerome,⁷³⁵ as of those whose wider sympathies leave them more suspect. Thus it is clear that these fathers would have no truck with the modern notion that feminine imagery is inappropriate to the Christian God.⁷³⁶

It is quite clear from this evidence that in different situations and for different reasons motherly language and imagery, in particular, is freely applied to God. Such language and imagery is also used freely of each person of the Trinity (less of the Spirit, unless we give greater weight to the Syriac hints than seems justified; but then there tends to be less talk of the Spirit in Christian theology overall.)

Clement of Alexandria is the only patristic writer to develop from this occasional use of maternal language and imagery the beginnings of a theology of the Motherhood of God. It is therefore worth summarizing his thought at greater length.

He begins from thought of the Christian as a child - innocent and simple, requiring tenderness and gentleness - this leads him to the image of mother. In particular he is drawn to the image of the mother feeding her child, (with all the overtones this conjures up - e.g. his phrase 'tender-loving breasts'). This image is applied to the Church by whom the Christian, child, is nurtured and above all to God the Father, from whose tender-loving breasts comes the Lord Jesus the milk, the product of the mingling of the Spirit and the Word. He also speaks of the Word as mother and hence nurse, and of Christ giving us (new) birth and hence milk.

It is clear that Clement's use of this imagery is, then, far from systematic. It is of interest to examine this more closely. Later western thought tends to prefer abstract words to concrete images; and also, when

using imagery to use it in clearly defined ways.⁷³⁷ An image will be either an allegory, an analogy, a metaphor or a simile, for example, and the manner of reasoning from it will vary in each case, for they have different logical properties.

Clement does not use imagery in such a logical and rigid manner, nor as we have seen did the Syriac fathers.⁷³⁸ Rather, to use Murray's picture,⁷³⁹ he treats the image of the breastfeeding mother like a jewel which he holds up to the light and turns revealing new facets of truth.

3/ Medieval.

As we saw in Chapter eight, medieval devotional writers tended to take up certain aspects of maternal imagery and develop them in great detail, often in conjunction with other imagery. Mother imagery was very rarely applied to the Father or the Spirit, and so appears to be related particularly to the humanity of Christ. Thus at first sight this provides little basis for a theology of the motherhood of God, as distinct from a way of speaking of the humanity of Christ. However two points should be made in reply. Firstly we have learned to speak of the humanity of God in a fuller way in the twentieth century, and more important, in the thought of Julian much of the groundwork for a theology of the motherhood of God has been prepared. Her ideas may well be exceptional, though they are, as we saw, part of and not distinct from a tradition. If they do not provide an authoritative underpinning for such a theology, they do provide several useful insights which ought to be incorporated :

- (1) Such a theology is Trinitarian.
- (2) The use of the idea of enfolding (or coinherence).
- (3) A maternal image of God can speak to all areas of theology, and need not be restricted to a few, e.g. Creation, Atonement, Sanctification, The Absence of God, Evil etc.

Although she tries hard to avoid it her work also illustrates a danger to beware of, namely that in such a theology the emotional content of the image can tend to swamp some other normative element in Christian doctrine. As for example Julian tends to fail to take sin seriously as a barrier between God and humanity, though the contrary example of Anselm shows that this particular danger is not a necessary consequence of using the image.

C) The Trinity and the Motherhood of God.

We have noted in passing in the previous chapters that attempts have been made to speak of one person of the Trinity as mother or as feminine. Especially, prompted by the feminist critique of conventional theology some

have looked to the Spirit to fill this role.⁷⁴⁰ To introduce sexual differentiation into the Trinity in this way is to divide the being of God (his ousia), God is then no longer one but merely three.

In formulating the doctrine of God as Trinity several complex distinctions must be made. Chief of these is in some way to distinguish ousia (substantia, substance) and hypostasis (persona, person) - how is the threeness of God to be discerned whilst not destroying the unity?

To talk of the Father and Son as masculine and the Spirit as feminine is to introduce sexual distinction into the ousia in a way it is not found in the hypostases. Thus the godhead is sexually divided and humanity is in the image of God as separated into male and female rather than as female and male together. It would be in the division of humanity that God was mirrored rather than in humanity as relationship. Thus to speak of one 'person' of the Trinity as feminine is to divide the godhead and leads to polytheism not Trinity.

Yet maleness or femaleness is intrinsic to all our experience of humanity. We do not know what it is to be human except as we know what it is to be woman or man.⁷⁴¹ Human experience of sexual distinction is so basic that unless it is posited of all 'persons' equally it militates against seeing the three as really and fully one.

Paradoxically, also, to speak of sexual distinction in the Trinity in this way is to absolutise it. It is to give eternal significance to the division. In Christ there may be no male or female (Paul), in heaven, no marrying or giving in marriage (Gospels), yet in God there is sexual distinction.

Thus talk of God as mother as well as father (as masculine as well as feminine) must be talk of each 'person' as both; and as both together each shares the one divine 'substance' (ousia). This also fits with the experience of divine motherliness, which is seen in God three and one. It is seen in the persistent tender love and in the pain of the source of all, in the God who carries in 'his' womb 'his' second self the God who reveals 'himself' to humanity. It is seen in the bearing of us to new birth by God on the cross, in 'his' tender redeeming saving love. It is seen in the God who enfolds us in 'himself' and to 'himself', who gently and quietly prompts us to respond to 'him'. To this threefold experience of the, unitary, motherliness of God the authors quoted in the preceeding chapters bear witness.

God in 'his' dealings with humanity is often experienced as motherly.

We have argued on the basis of the evidence collected in the previous chapters that this motherly character must be attributed to the godhead as such and so found in each 'person' of the Trinity. There is also an intratrinitarian motherhood of God. In particular this has been seen in the 'circuminsession' of the Word and later in the eternal 'generation' of the Son. However there are hints that this too is a Trinitarian rather than a hypostatic motherhood. The Spirit's overshadowing of Mary has been seen as a kind of divine mothering of Christ, paralleling the human motherhood of Mary.

Here we are on very 'speculative' ground, but there are also hints which might be taken up from the Sophiological thought of the Orthodox tradition. In particular, that what is said of the mutual relationship of the three in one, of perichoresis (what someone has called 'the mutual dance of love in God'), can be thought of as a mutual mothering. This is perhaps more clear if we use the more modern term coinherence. For if each person is said to inhere in the others then a way of picturing this relationship is to speak of mutual motherhood.

Thus I would argue that :

- (i) God is mother in the same sense 'he' is father.
- (ii) That the motherliness of God towards humanity is to be found in the nature of the Godhead itself (the ousia of God) and not alone in any one hypostasis.
- (iii) That the intratrinitarian relationship of the hypostases may also be seen as a kind of mutual mothering.

PART THREE :

SYNTHESIS

CHAPTER ELEVEN :

SYNTHESIS

In one sense the title of this chapter is over-ambitious, for it does not attempt to present a grand design working together all the ideas and themes of the first two parts of the thesis. On the other hand the conclusions, pointers and hopes, presented here are very much the result of the earlier dialogue and it would be difficult to disentangle the elements which are due to the two parts. In the same way that earlier the thesis was divided by the subject-matter and method of investigation into two parts, so here I have done the same. For example, I begin by making suggestions of ways in which the study in Part One ought to be extended. This further investigation would also use the methods of empirical psychology to investigate psychological questions. However, as I shall indicate such a study would also contribute towards the developments on the more theological side, and was in part suggested by a perceived need from this direction for more precise and contemporary information. (In the same way many of the ideas in the second section were suggested by psychological needs or have been influenced by psychological emphases.)

1/ EXTENSIONS TO PART ONE

The Chiasm

One major question raised by the results of the Empirical Study reported in Part One cries out for further investigation. At what age does the expected 'chiasm' begin to show? or is such a 'chiasm' not found with this measuring instrument in a Scottish sample? ⁷⁴² It would be difficult to find a strictly comparable group (life ceases to try to be comprehensive when we leave school). The traditional source of subjects, undergraduate students, is far too biased by for example I.Q. Perhaps the best method would be to choose a mixture of apprentice 'day-release' and more academic students from a Further Education College.

Simply to give such a sample the existing Semantic Differential scales would be adequate to detect such an effect if it were present. However such an effect could be an artefact of the measuring instrument used in previous studies or its absence could be an artefact of these Semantic Differential scales. It would therefore be desirable to develop some more absolute method of assessment. The most promising potential method would be to develop a scale of statements which distinguish between the two parents

(as they are seen in the target culture.)

A Mat-Pat Scale

Such a scale, a Mat-Pat Scale, could be developed thus : First a small number of people from the target population (in this case children and young adults of Glasgow) would be asked to give lists of a few words or phrases which describe and differentiate mother and father. From these replies a number of items would be developed including as far as possible the content of all suggestions. (It might also be desirable to add other possible items, suggested for example by those of Vergote and his collaborators.)

These items would then be given to another sample with both father and mother as targets, and the scales which best consistently discriminated between the parents would comprise the final M-P.S. When standardized such a scale would give a reasonably absolute ⁷⁴³ measure which could be used alongside the Semantic Differential scales as a check on their bias (such scales would however only be applicable to the new sample and to the older subjects from the earlier samples and so would not have been possible for the study reported in Part One.)

Family Background

No attempt was made in the reported study to examine or distinguish features of the family background and experience of the subjects. This was because until basic overall work had been done there was little point in attempting to refine it. Now that such a crude survey is available it would be useful to examine this in some greater detail. For example two simple questions would elicit useful distinctions. By asking: 'Who lives in your home? Are there any other people in your family who don't live with you?' for example, a measure of the survival and presence in the home of father and mother figures could be ascertained. The addition of some questions to investigate perceived parental religious belief and behaviour would also be useful. For example : 'Does your father/mother believe in God? Does your mother/father go to church/synagogue/mosque/temple etc.?', would provide some useful if crude distinctions.

More Information in the Existing Data

There is also potentially in the data already collected more information. For example, by isolating the scales which are highly loaded on the evaluative factor it would be possible to assess parental preference and examine its effect on the results. A factor analysis of the data would also have given some pointers towards the content of the images and how this differs. (The Mat-Pat Scale would do this in a much more sophisticated way,

but would also require extensive new data collection.) 744

Relevance to Theology

Such extensions of the study would be of relevance to Theology in two ways. By distinguishing the socially-perceived images of mother and father the development of a Mat-Pat Scale would enable the Theologian to have a better idea of how in fact talk of God as mother would influence the God image. Thus he would have a clearer idea of its potential significance, strengths and dangers.

On the more practical side such developments would extend considerably our understanding of how the image of God develops and of the role of parents in this. It might therefore help to provoke or suggest elements of a theology of family life which could help to promote full and healthy developments of the image of God in children. This could be of use pastorally in suggesting areas of tension or potential problems in the growth of the God image in people with incomplete or unfortunate family experience. For example if it were found that mother was particularly associated with ideas of providence, then the pastor could be alerted to the possibility that people with impaired experience of mothering might have difficulty experiencing and understanding the providence of God. The example is simple and fairly crude, but it ought to indicate the kind of potential value of such research.

2/ EXTENSION OF PART TWO

A. Methodology

(1) A Parabolic Theology

In the course of Part Two we have noticed more than once how talk of God as motherly tends to lead to the use of imagery, symbolic language and the presence of story and example in the context. This feature of mother contexts is sufficiently regular as to suggest that it is not a chance occurrence, but rather intrinsic to the character of the mother image.⁷⁴⁵

If some such effect is at work then the Theology of the Motherhood of God will probably be, in style, a parabolic Theology. It will make full use of imagery and story. We have noted, above, in passing, that the use of imagery and a more symbolic style is characteristic also of Asian theology.⁷⁴⁶ The relative dearth of maternal language about God in recent centuries may therefore be related to the very strong association of western culture and Christian Theology in this period. It is only in the very recent past that there have been the beginnings of a strong revolt against this cultural

imperialism of the west in Theology. It is too early to predict what effect the developing strength of Asian and African church and theologies may have on this area of thought about God.

The need and opportunity of speaking of the motherhood of God and of a greater use of imagery and a more parabolic style may perhaps be harnessed together.⁷⁴⁷

(2) A Motherly Style of Theologising

Mothers are regarded as nurturant and supportive, regardless of the possible results of developing a Mat-Pat Scale, this much is clear. It is appropriate that the method of Theology should reflect its content. Thus it would be appropriate for a Theology of the Motherhood of God to be conducted in a manner which reflects such a maternal role.

A Theology of the Motherhood of God then ought to be no attempt to impose dogma from a position of strength. Rather its methods ought to be those of partnership and dialogue. Such a Theology might well take up Murray's description of the method of the early Syriac fathers as its characteristic approach. Their Theology, he says :

"proceeds not by exhausting topics necessarily but with frequent 'inclusio', circling round on itself like a conversation round a fire, gradually advancing and going deeper."⁷⁴⁸

This paradigm, of Theology as a fireside chat, is in some important ways similar to the role of theology as defined by Aulén :

"The task of theology is to chart and clarify the meaning and content of Christian faith. ... This task would be twisted and distorted if theology laid claim to be able to say more than faith can say with its symbol language, that is to say, if theology laid claim to give an exact definition of the being of God."⁷⁴⁹

Taken literally Aulén's definition could lead to a static theology enshrining only the insights of the past and formalizing them, (though I do not believe this is his intention). If, however his definition is understood by means of Murray's image the result, though still tied firmly to the experience and faith of the church, is more dynamic. It is characteristic of a fireside chat that in the course of discussion new insights and ideas emerge.

In a tentative way the approach and development of this thesis reflects this kind of method. Though, constrained by the form and requirements of an

academic thesis, it is the work of one author, it still manages to point towards such a method of theology. First it is the result of internal (conscious and unconscious) conversations between the different training and periods of the author's life. For example it is the result of a dialogue between Psychologist and Theologian, it contains echoes of childhood experiences and in particular the internalized 'voice' of father has been an influence. Externally it has benefitted from talk with wife and supervisor as well as others (e.g. members of staff from the Theology faculty and Psychology and Statistics departments) and from innumerable casual conversations. It has also been the result of more or less one-sided conversations with the scholars whose books and papers, and some two-sided by letters, have helped shape the result. Such a sense of dialogue must be strong in any thesis, however the nature of the subject and the choice of method has made it particularly strong here.

B. Content

A theology based upon an image of God which consciously gives a prominent place to 'his' motherliness will tend towards certain styles and kinds of approach to particular issues. If mother and father images are characteristically different, then a theology which is based consciously upon both images will be characteristically different from one which intends to be based on father alone.⁷⁵⁰ The major argument of Part Two was that such a difference would not be a radical break with tradition. Here I intend to suggest what some such differences might be and to show that in detailed practice they (as well as their foundation) need not be unorthodox. (That, indeed, as with the style A(1) above they are often one with existing tendencies in doctrinal emphasis).

Vergote lists the "characteristics proper to the parental images" which emerged in his studies. The maternal qualities were :

"interiority, depth, intensity, refuge; she is welcoming, affectionate, tender, attentive, patient; she shares the child's interests, surrounds him with care, knows how to wait, cares for, is always there, shows up what is delicate, allows the child to be child, welcomes and shelters." ⁷⁵¹

Such an image of mother is reminiscent of the descriptions given of Jesus as the man for others, the servant of God etc. The stress on this way of seeing Christ has in its turn led to talk of God in this kind of way. One example would be the Theology of Jan Millich Lochmann with his slogan of the "solidarity God".

It is also true that the characteristics listed for mother contrast with those given for father in that the maternal list shows more clearly the parent's openness to hurt inflicted by the child. Thus a theology which gives real expression to the motherliness of God will be congenial to those theologies which speak of the pain or the 'pathos' of God.⁷⁵²

The distinctive character of mother in these lists also gives greater emphasis to the responsiveness of the parent to the child's changing needs, desires and feelings. It almost seems, to read the lists, as if father is what he is, whilst mother is as she is for the child. There are tendencies in this direction too in modern theology. The most obvious examples are the various Anglo-Saxon attempts to speak of a Process Theology, but also all efforts to take seriously talk of God as love or even as loving must at least contain some semblance of change in God. Any talk of God as in relationship to humanity, responding in love, 'living' can be at home easily with the image of mother. Like the image of father, mother incorporates also the faithful trustworthy dependability which surely is what talk of 'him' as unchangeable has sought to protect.

Even less than father the image of mother fits poorly with talk of judges, courts, victors and warfare. So there will be certain styles of theory of atonement which will be preferred in conjunction with a sense of the Motherhood of God. To use the categories of a well-known and fairly comprehensive recent treatment these might be "the all-embracing compassion", "the all-inclusive forgiveness" and "the image of perfect integration."⁷⁵³

I do not wish to appear to be saying that a doctrine of the motherhood of God would validate these styles and approaches to general theological problems over against others, nor to seem to imply that the currently fashionable status of some of these validates talk of God as mother. Rather simply to note that one consequence of increased use of maternal language and imagery of God would be to facilitate such style and approaches.

It is the nature of the cultural history of much of the world with its suppression, oppression, silencing and devaluing of the feminine and female which :

(a) has tended to strengthen or produce the perceived differences between mother and father.

and (b) has tended in parallel with this to neglect or deny the correlated approaches in Christian theology.

Thus a rediscovery of the ability to speak of God as mother would tend to support and be supported by such tendencies in theology which

emphasize the openness to hurt, the weakness, the tenderness and softness of God; not because these are necessarily feminine or motherly characteristics,⁷⁵⁴ but because they have been, and to some extent still are, seen as such in the cultures in terms of which theology is framed and expressed.

Theology of the Motherhood of God would, however, have a definite effect, and a necessary (unavoidable, or intrinsic) one, upon one area of thought at least. The theology of Mary, the Mother of God, cannot be approached in the same way by either Protestant or Catholic if God is thought of as mother in the same sense that 'he' is father. For both, the theology of the Motherhood of God would have a profoundly liberating effect.

For the Catholic a true understanding of the Motherhood of God would remove the need for Mary to meet the psychological need for a divine mother figure. For this reason much of the warmth of Marian devotion could be transferred to the motherly God. This would free Mariology from its tendency towards worship. With the dangers of Mariolatry thus greatly reduced the theologian would be free to explore the rich tradition of Marian thought, without pressure from half-conscious desires and fears. (The devotional colouring of much Mariological thought is very evident to even a cursory exploration of the subject.)

The liberating effect of this would be particularly evident in the relationship of Marian thought to women. The psychological pressure to elevate and adore Mary is balanced by a theological need to retain a distinction between God and humanity, in this case between God and Mary. Therefore Mariological thought has often spoken of Mary as the symbol or archetype of humanity. This is especially true of her in her obedient and submissive role. This leads to the equations human, earthly, matter = Mary = female; divine, heavenly, spirit = God = male.

Thus it has often been true that paradoxically devotion to the 'eternal feminine' in Mary the Mother of God has led to a devaluing of real women, a granting to them of only a secondary role.⁷⁵⁵ The feminist critiques of the results of the Marian thought also alert to a potential danger in talk of God as mother. Reverence for Mary in her role as mother has often led to a valuing of woman only as mother, or to seeing motherhood as the true pattern of all womanhood. (To be more accurate: reverence for Mary as Virgin Mother can lead to the idea that true Christian woman must be either virgin or mother, excluding other ways of being woman.) A similar danger is inherent in a Theology of the Motherhood of God. The only sure defence against it would be to ensure that as Father is not the only male imagery, so Mother does not become the only female imagery used of God. It

is desirable to make this danger quite explicit in a thesis concerned with parental imaging of the divine. However to explore the possibilities or consequences further would be beyond the scope of this thesis.

For Catholic thought of Mary, then, the chief benefit of a Theology of the Motherhood of God would be to set Mariology free from psychological pressures to become truly theo-logical.

For Protestant thought the reverse is the case. Freed from the perceived danger of Mariolatry a new exploration of the devotional and theological place of Mary could be made.

Since Protestants are by tradition so strongly aware of the excesses and dangers in Mariological thought, Protestant talk of Mary is usually coldly formal, and indeed almost non-existent.⁷⁵⁶ A profound understanding of God as mother would relieve the psychological pressure to divinize Mary. Thus it would set the Protestant theologian free to explore Mary's role as at the same time a human type of the motherliness of God and also as exemplar of proper human responsiveness to the will of God. The gestation of Christ is a profound symbol of God's motherly mode of relating to the world. In this pregnancy Mary's place is central. The rejection and suffering of the servants of God in the Old Testament, (notably of Jeremiah) can be seen by the Christian as prefiguring or illustrating the meaning of the redemptive suffering of Christ. So Mary's bearing and mothering of God may be seen as a deep and divinely given illustration of God's motherliness.⁷⁵⁷

C. More Detailed Investigations

Part Two of this thesis represents, so far as I can discover, the only attempt to draw together the work being done in various areas of theology on the use of maternal imagery of God. From this it is clear that more detailed exploration of this theme would be useful in most of these areas.

As a result of the work of several American scholars, most notably Phyllis Tribble, there is a growing awareness of the use of such language and imagery in the Old Testament. This has led to fairly extensive references to occurrences of such imagery; however, the work upon which this is based is largely piecemeal. There is need for a more systematic and critical appraisal and ordering of this material. In particular there is a need : (a) to bring the resources of the various kinds of critical scholarship to bear in order that any pattern in the traditio-historical contexts of such usage might emerge; and (b) to investigate the theological contexts of such occurrences in such a way as to throw light on the perceived meaning of this imagery and thus its place (or potential place) in a biblical theology.

Some attempts are also being made to examine the patristic use of such imagery. The extended version of Borresen's paper will be a useful contribution to this when her health permits her to prepare it for publication. However since her primary method of discovering potential references involves tracing references to biblical verses with maternal possibilities via the "Biblica Patristica", and since as we have shown a proportion of the material cannot be located in this way, there is scope here for a wider search as well as a more detailed study of known material. Indeed, one of the interesting features of the present collection of patristic material is that there is more of this than has been noticed and that such references occur in unexpected places. Thus here a continued search for material alongside a more detailed examination of existing references would be helpful.

For the medieval period it is primarily an analysis in greater depth which is needed. Bynum's paper on the twelfth century Cistercians ⁷⁵⁸ shows how a careful analysis can detect themes and patterns in the perceived meaning of maternal imagery, and also illustrates the value of looking at the wider sociological and historic context. There is then scope for such an investigation of the whole of this material, and also probably for an exposition in greater depth of Julian's more theological development of the image.

D. Liturgy and Devotion

Alongside this detailed theological and historical spadework there is a non-academic area where the results of this thesis, if accepted, would call for a new emphasis. Part Two was about the use of maternal imagery of God. It has demonstrated that such imagery was used, more or less freely, in the past and argued that it is theologically possible and even desirable that such imagery should be used more widely today. Part One of the thesis has in part demonstrated that such usage could help to meet deep psychological needs. Thus it would be desirable from the point of view argued for here if there were to be a wider use of motherly language and imagery in the church.

In particular motherly language and imagery could provide a new resource (at least new in terms of recent thought, as has been shown above it is in fact a venerable and traditional way of speaking of God) for Christian devotion. Such a revival of maternal elements in the worship of God is not only desirable as the restoration of some past and forgotten devotion. Rather it is desirable for its side-effect of liberating our image of God from a masculine straightjacket. As I have suggested above it ought, therefore, to be a part of a wider exploration of the feminine elements in religious devotion.

Such an expansion of religious consciousness is likely to come about as the result of two related influences. Firstly as a direct result of current feminist agitation in the church. Such agitation has taken two directions. Negatively it has drawn attention to the excessively, stiflingly patriarchal character of so much that is said and done in church. This critique is also supported by some of the greatest theological thinkers. We have referred above (in Chapter Nine) to Teilhard de Chardin's comments in this connection. More recently still the German Catholic Hans Urs von Balthasar has written :

"Without mariology Christianity threatens imperceptibly to become inhuman. The Church becomes functionalistic, soulless, a hectic enterprise without any point of rest, estranged from its true nature by the planners. And because in this manly-masculine world, all that we have is one ideology replacing another, everything becomes polemical, critical, bitter, humourless, and ultimately boring, and people in their masses run away from such a Church." 759

He sees "The Marian Principle" as the potential salvation from this excessive masculinity. How much more effective, though, an understanding of the femininity (and in particular the motherhood) of God could be. Among Protestant theologians Paul Tillich is the most notable to notice the danger of this excessive masculinity. The final section of Part IV of his 'Systematic Theology' is concerned with the Trinity, the closing chapter of this is entitled "Reopening the Trinitarian Problem". However these closing pages of Part IV are concerned almost exclusively with the way in which "the female element in the symbolic expression of ultimate concern was largely eliminated" in Protestant thought.⁷⁶⁰ Recognizing that Mary does not provide a potential answer he writes :

"The question can only be whether there are elements in genuine Protestant symbolism which transcend the alternative male-female and which are capable of being developed over against a one-sided male-determined symbolism." 761

He suggests that the concept "ground of being" in its symbolic meaning :

"points to the mother-quality of giving birth, carrying and embracing, and, at the same time, of calling back, resisting independence of the created, and swallowing it." 762

Thus :

"The attempt to show that nothing can be said about God theologically before the statement is made that he is the

power of being in all being is, at the same time, a way of reducing the predominance of the male element in the symbolization of the divine." 763

He goes on to suggest that the femininity or better the transcendence of sexually limited imagery of the Logos and Spirit are also important.

Although, these examples show that it is not only 'feminist' writers who are aware of the danger, in fact it is the writings of these last which have begun to alert the church more widely to the excessively masculine character of much of its thought and practice. Wider recognition of the validity and importance of these criticisms is likely to lead to greater openness to use of female (including Motherly) imagery of God. 764

Secondly, the work of the feminist theologians can have a less direct effect. Stemming from both this more negative and from the positive side of their arguments there is a growing awareness of the gender imbalance of Christian practice and theological expression and alongside this a willingness to consider ways of changing it. 765 This tendency if it continues to operate will reduce the discomfort and even embarrassment experienced by many when the idea of the Motherhood of God is broached. 766 The positive effort to avoid sexist language and to balance gender-specific imagery could, in combination with increased awareness of the spiritual impoverishment of one-sided language and imagery, lead to greater use of maternal (among other feminine) talk of God.

In particular the passages of the Old Testament which make use of maternal imagery could be more widely included in the Lectionary readings, and some encouragement given to comment on these in a way which does not avoid or ignore their maternal and feminine content. It may be useful here to illustrate this point in a negative way. In a fairly recent and widely used "Commentary on the Sunday Lectionary" the comments on the Eighth Sunday of the Year are typical. The Old Testament reading is Isaiah 49¹⁴⁻¹⁵ :

"For Zion was saying, 'Yahweh has abandoned me,
the Lord has forgotten me',
Does a woman forget her baby at the breast,
or fail to cherish the son of her womb?
Yet even if these forget,
I will never forget you." (J.B.)

The brief introduction to the readings recognizes the evident motherly character of this :

"You will notice that the first reading today is very short.

It is worth listening to that reading carefully. In a very striking way it tells us how God cares for us: even if a woman were to forget the baby at her breast, "I will never forget you." It is a theme echoed in the Gospel reading." 767

However the comment on the passage itself begins the de-maternalising process saying only that :

"No human agency for good or evil will ever separate God from the people he loves." 768

This de-maternalising is complete in the closing sermon suggestions which make explicit the fatherliness of God but do not hint at 'his' motherliness. 769

If the reverse process were to occur and the maternal elements were deliberately highlighted in commenting on the Old Testament passages, then the motherly as well as the fatherly content of the Gospel could be noted. Such a change would naturally lead to, and find mutual reinforcement in, the use of mother language and imagery in prayers.

A necessary, or at least a desirable, first step in this process would be for scholarly commentaries to recognize and draw attention to the use of maternal (and other feminine) imagery of God. It would also help if New Testament commentators were aware of and made (even passing) reference to the way in which maternal and breast-feeding themes in the epistles were taken up by later writers and applied to God. For it is these scholarly presentations which influence directly or indirectly the popular works and above all the sermons and homilies, and prayers and liturgy which feed the piety of the people of God.

E. Towards a Theology of the Motherhood of God.

Theology is the explanation and working out in words of the Church's thought and devotion to God. Some such definition would be very widely acceptable to theologians of strikingly different backgrounds and methods. 770

In this sense there cannot yet be a true, contemporary Theology of the Motherhood of God. Mother-language is not a common part of the contemporary God-language of the Church. Therefore the final concluding section of this thesis must be titled "Towards a Theology of the Motherhood of God". It is only if the views argued for in the bulk of the thesis (especially in Part Two) become widely accepted and if the kind of developments hoped for and

outlined in the preceeding section occur that a developed Theology of the Motherhood of God will be possible.

This thesis was begun as a dialogue between theology and psychology concerning Parental Images and the Image of God. It has become an argument for the possibility and desirability of theological talk of God as Mother. In particular its theological side begins the groundwork upon which an orthodox Christian Theology of the Motherhood of God could be created. As I have explained, by the very nature of the task it can be no more than such a beginning. Yet sufficient arguments and evidence have been presented, I believe, to provide such a groundwork. In particular the following theses have been argued :

- (i) Psychologically the Image of God arises from the experience of the child of relationship to both parents.
- (ii) Theologically, psychologically and indeed simply logically God must be spoken of as Mother if 'he' is to be spoken of as Father (and in the same sense).
- (iii) Talk of God as motherly has been found in surprising abundance in the Bible and later Christian Tradition.
- (iv) Such talk is, to use the categories of Christian Theology, Trinitarian and not merely hypostatic.

Certain potential consequences of such talk of God as mother have been noted.⁷⁷¹ The potential psychological liberation for both women and men in the ability to use maternal imagery alongside paternal and thus to make conscious the motherhood and indeed the femininity of God has not received explicit attention but, as should by now be clear, is great.

NOTES

Excursus One : "Image"

- (1) See Wright, Taylor et al (1970) p 310 ff.
- (2) Osgood (1953) esp. p 392 ff.
- (3) e.g. Godin and Haliez (1964); Deconchy (1968); Vergote et al (1969); Benson and Spilka (1973); Fleck, Day and Reilly (1974); Chartier and Goehner (1976); Keyser and Collins (1976) and Tamayo and Desjardins (1976).
- (4) Vergote (1969)
- (5) See the first footnote to each of : Vergote et al (1969) and Vergote and Aubert (1972).
- (6) Vergote (1969) p 172, but see that whole section.
- (7) In certain contexts it has its usual reference back to Gen. 1 and the creation of humanity "in the image of God". In Excursus Two it reflects biblical descriptions of Wisdom or Christ as "the image (eikōn) of God". Such uses are quite clear in context and are, by their contexts distinguishable from the use discussed here.
- (8) Tavard (1975)
- (9) op cit p 718.
- (10) Aulén (1970) p 90, N.B. Aulén makes use of the expression "image of God" in much the same sense as I have defined the term here.
- (11) Tillich (1957) p 44.
- (12) As e.g. Moll (1966) who writes : "Words, in spite of their phonetic nature, are spiritual, while pictures and sculptures are sensual and therefore always require matter". p 20.
- (13) The quote is from Holmes (1976).

NOTES

Chapter One : "Background and Theories"

- (14) Jobes (1961 & 1962) see the "Subject Index" Vol. 3.
- (15) op cit p 11.
- (16) op cit p 228
- (17) From J.W. Telch quoted in Eliade, (1967) pp 6-7.
- (18) From the section 'Baluvhimba, the High God of the Venda' in Eliade op cit.
- (19) From the section "'Tirawa', the Supreme God of the Pawnee", Eliade, op cit.
- (20) op cit p 99.
- (21) James (1959), last sentence.
- (22) Freud (1950)
- (23) op cit p 147.
- (24) Freud (1928)
- (25) op cit Ch. 3.
- (26) op cit Ch. 8.
- (27) loc cit.
- (28) Freud (1923) p 37.
- (29) Letter dated 26-11-1927, Freud (1963) pp 117 f.
- (30) There are apparently two papers, referred to by Elkind (1970), but the references to these are insufficient, and I am still attempting to find them (Piaget, 1923 & 1930).
- (31) Piaget (1929) p 378.
- (32) op cit p 379.
- (33) Provided always that the second of the papers referred to (footnote 30) contains no surprises.
- (34) e.g. Erikson (1959) & (1965).
- (35) Erikson (1958) especially in Ch. 8, "Epilogue".
- (36) op cit p 114.

- (37) Mair (1965) p 32.
- (38) Erikson (1958) pp 257-8.
- (39) op cit p 258.
- (40) Vergote et al (1967); Vergote et al (1969); Vergote & Aubert (1972); Tamayo & Dugas (1974); Tamayo & Desjardins (1976); and less directly, Keyser & Collins (1976).
- (41) See the appendix by Gebhard Frei in White (1952) pp 254 ff. especially the quotation from Jung's letter dated 22nd September, 1944 (p 258).
- (42) Footnote 30 pp 265-6 of the work referred to in Note 41 above, contains this in a quotation from a letter of Jung's dated 13th January, 1948.
- (43) Jung (1963) Ch. VII especially pp 227 ff.
- (44) Argyle (1958) p 173.
- (45) Argyle & Beit-Hallahmi (1975) p 206.
- (46) e.g. Spilka et al (1975).
- (47) Day (1975).
- (48) Jones (1926) p 195.

NOTES

Chapter Two : "Review of Empirical Findings"

- (49) Especially, Goldman (1964).
- (50) e.g. Elkind (1970); and Williams (1971).
- (51) Notably Klingberg (1959).
- (52) e.g. Harms (1944) and the continuing study by Pitts (1976 & 1977).
- (53) Ludwig, Weber and Iben (1974).
- (54) e.g. Graebner (1964); Patino (1965).
- (55) The Q-sort method is described below.
- (56) Deconchy (1965, 1967 & 1968).
- (57) e.g. Teilhard de Chardin (1955); Faber (1976).
- (58) Deconchy (1965).
- (59) Deconchy (1967).
- (60) This section illustrates the problems of translation, where exact parallels for overtones of meaning do not exist.
- (61) Their study, like many reviewed here, claims to be concerned with concepts rather than images, however I shall argue below that in fact image is a better description of what the measure assesses, see discussion of Godin (1965) below.
- (62) This translation is thanks to Dorothy Lowe, a colleague of my wife's.
- (63) "A theme 'strongly saturated in the Factor Delta' is a theme which, between 8 and 16 years, is integrated in an impelling and harmonious way into the total structure of the idea of God, and which, for this reason, can be considered as a driving force of this development. The saturation of a theme in the Factor Delta and the frequency of its appearance (at a given age or at all the ages considered) are thus two essentially different notions." Deconchy (1968) footnote (1).

NOTES

Chapter Three : "Empirical Study"

- (64) See the next section.
- (65) Levelt (1970).
- (66) e.g. Pitts (1976), discussed above, and I believe a Master's Thesis by S.R. Loveless : "A Comparative Study of the Child's Concept of God and His Concept of Father as Revealed by Drawings." referred to by Pitts in a letter. As yet unseen.
- (67) Ludwig, Weber and Iben (1974).
- (68) Osgood, Suci and Tannenbaum (1957).
- (69) For the use of Q-sorts in this area of study see above.
- (70) Osgood, Suci and Tannenbaum (1957).
- (71) See Excursus One : "Image" above.
- (72) Osgood uses the term 'meaning' to denote what is measured by a Semantic Differential. This has often been criticised, e.g. see below. I believe IMAGE is a better term, at least in this context.
- (73) Green and Gottfried (1965).
- (74) Weinreich (1958).
- (75) e.g. Donahoe (1961); Light, Zax and Cardiner (1965); and Lilly (1965).
- (76) According to Osgood, Suci & Tannenbaum (1957). This preference is given for two reasons: first, the factors found with children are similar in content to those found with adults; and second, that such scales are the ones most likely to have a high information content.
- (77) The symbol \times beside any pair indicates this pair used by Light et al (1965); the symbol Θ , used by Donahoe (1961); and π , used by Seigman (1961) in his study with adults.
- (78) The word 'large' was used in the previous studies but changed here for the simpler 'big'.
- (79) e.g. Donahoe (1961) did this with a five point scale for his 7 year old subjects, but bot with his 9 year olds.

- (80) This only really applies to the second and fourth years of the secondary school, since the primary classes were not streamed. It should also be noted that these two groups are combined with the first and third years respectively, (the incomplete years, 2 & 4, were approximately one-third the numbers of the complete ones, 1 & 3).
- (81) The explanation for this change of policy will be found in the Results section, below.
- (82) e.g. where all or most replies are in the central position. (To have included these would have biased the statistical analysis.)
- (83) In particular, Deconchy (1965) says such a differentiation only begins at about age fourteen to fifteen.
- (84) $\sum x$ is the total of all the scores in that subgroup ($\sum x$ for the group 4/3 Boys m-g is the total of all the mother-God correlations for all the boys in the 4th and 3rd years.)
 $\sum x^2$ is the sum of the squared scores (which is not the same as the sum of the scores squared which would be $(\sum x)^2$.)
 $\sum_{age} \sum_{sex} (r_{m-g} + r_{f-g})^2$ is the overall sum of the squared sum of r_{m-g} and r_{f-g} for each subject.
df = Degrees of Freedom, ss = Sums of Squares. (Both terms are explained in statistics texts).

For our present purposes it is sufficient to note that

$\frac{ss}{df}$ = the Mean Square, MS, which is an estimate of the variance, and that a ratio of two Mean Squares is known as an F ratio, and gives a measure of significance, in terms of the probability that the two sample variances are drawn from the same population.

NOTES

Chapter Four : "Discussion"

- (85) The statistic used, correlation, does not in itself permit talk of causation. On the basis of such correlations alone one may not say that the image of mother or father or both cause or influence elements in the image of God. The causality could be in the reverse direction, the child's image of God could cause or influence elements in his parental images. Or, again, there could be some other factor which underlies, and causes or influences both the divine and the parental images, and thus their similarities, correlations. Such arguments were common in the debate about smoking and cancer, until data other than correlational became available.

However, two other facts, at least, encourage such a causal or influential interpretation. First, these data are as predicted by such a theoretical position, whilst no alternative theory (e.g. one in terms of other factors) is available to explain these data. And, second, there is other data which makes such an interpretation likely, (for example: Peterman (1966); and Chartier and Goehner (1976), as well as the qualitative observations of Piaget (1929); and especially the cross cultural study of Spiro and d'Andrade (1958). So, since data from such sources already shows that the parents influence the content of the image of God, and since no alternative theory is available to explain this data, it is justifiable to interpret them in such a manner.

- (86) For a brief account see section (ii) below.
- (87) Deconchy was working in a different culture, with a different technique, and a different kind of sample, from Church schools rather than state schools, some slight difference in the age of onset of these sex differences may therefore be expected.
- (88) Larsen and Knapp (1964).
- (89) Light, Zax & Gardiner (1965) found no sex difference in prevalence of extreme response styles in their sample of children. This result weakens severely this possibility here, although they were using ink blots and not persons as stimuli to be rated.

- (90) Catastrophe is used here in the technical sense of a sudden, discontinuous, change in the behaviour of a system. There is no implied value judgement about whether the catastrophe is good or bad etc.

Conversion is often described as a revolutionary change, but this revolution often occurs slowly. In any case it is questionable whether or to what extent the image of God changes on conversion. It is at least arguable that what changes is the commitment to this God, with perhaps a change of warmth or coldness of feeling.

- (91) e.g. Long, Elkind & Spilka (1967).
- (92) See for example Erikson (1958), a study of Martin Luther.
- (93) The most accessible form of this work is an abridged edition with additional chapters by Ainsworth, herself a major contributor to the debate, Bowlby (1953 & 1965).
- (94) e.g. Spitz (1945) above.
- (95) Rutter op cit p 125.
- (96) This brief discussion, and indeed most of the studies themselves, take it for granted that these relationship needs are best met within a family. (Usually a nuclear family of contemporary western pattern.)
- Some evidence suggests that this is not necessarily so, for example, Bettelheim (1969) as a result of a brief study of child raising in an Israeli kibbutz suggests that other patterns though producing different results may well be no less 'good'.
- (97) Bettelheim (1969) p 304.
- (98) Waddams (1967)
- (99) The present study shows lower, but still high, mother to God correlations. Studies with adults tend to confirm the significance of both parental images.
- (100) Vergote (1969a) p 186.
- (101) Teilhard de Chardin (1955), p 8 : "Le fond (et l'intérêt) de la question mariale (du 'fait marial') c'est à mon avis, de trahir un irrésistible besoin chrétien de 'féminiser' (fût-ce par une atmosphère ou enveloppe externe) un Dieu (Iahvé) horriblement masculinisé. - Ce qui est simplement une des faces présentes

de la sur-découverte de Dieu : Dieu à la fois 'cosmisé' et 'feminisé' en réaction contre un certain 'paternalisme néolithique' trop souvent présentée comme l'essence définitive de L'Evangile."

- (102) op cit p 8 : "Mais ma conviction à moi, au contraire, est que cette ascension si remarquable du Marial à côté du Christique est principalement l'oeuvre des hommes."

NOTES

Chapter Five : "God and Gender"

- (103) Cestre and Guibillon (1957) p 165.
- (104) e.g. Zabolai-Csehme (1975) section "Patriarchal Language".
- (105) Russell (1976) p 47 (order changed).
- (106) Tavard (1975)
- (107) op cit pp 704-706.
- (108) op cit p 706.
- (109) Shorter Oxford Dictionary (1975) : entry "Gender".
- (110) Tavard (1975) p 709.
- (111) op cit p 709.
- (112) op cit p 710.
- (113) op cit p 712.
- (114) op cit p 713.
- (115) Clark (1978) p 16.
- (116) Lewis (1971) p 193.
- (117) Myers (1972) and Wolf (1972).
- (118) Myers (1972) p 230.
- (119) e.g. Terman and Miles (1936).
- (120) e.g. Bennet (1972-3), but see especially the discussion in Gottwald (1980) n. 628 & p 684-5.
- (121) But note the suggestion of Von Rad (1961) p 57 & (1962) p 145 that in the context of the plural "let us make" elohim here are the "angelic court".
- (122) See Vos (n.d.) pp 37 ff.
- (123) See e.g. Brueggemann (1977) p 755.
- (124) As an indication of how unlikely note that, in its present form, there are hundreds of places where the Hebrew Old Testament uses masculine forms instead of feminine with feminine nouns. The intention appears to be to express reverence for these anomalies occur with respect to sacred and religiously significant objects. See Slonim (1938-9). Pfeiffer (1941) sees these anomalies as

emendations to the text pp 86-87.

- (125) Cottwald (1980) p 682.
- (126) On this whole section see the well-ordered paper of Brueggemann (1977) especially concerning the relationship of various styles of O.T. scholarship with views of Yahweh's sexuality.
- (127) See Mendenhall (1970)
- (128) Cottwald (1980) p 683.
- (129) e.g. Gen. 49²⁵; Deut. 28^{3f} cf 7¹³. N.B. use of "Ashtaroth" here for the offspring of the sheep, Ashtaroth is usually used of a local fertility goddess, Judges 10⁶. This use is presumably proverbial from her association with such births is clear indication of how Yahweh has taken over her function.
- (130) op cit p 685.
- (131) See discussion of Yahweh as Father in Brueggemann (1977) p 753 ff.
- (132) Thus in Hosea 2¹⁶ "he" is 'ish (man/husband) not ba'al (lord/husband), (as Brueggemann (1977) p 759 notes, Ba'al is male too), compare Hos. 11^{9o} where Yahweh is 'el (god) and not 'ish (man).
- (133) see e.g. Patai (1967) & Reed (1949).
- (134) This distinction ought to be unnecessary except that certain writers take up over-enthusiastically the patristic references which apply feminine imagery and analogy to the Spirit. e.g. Hopko (1975) and even suggest that the Spirit is feminine in some sense to the masculine in some sense Father and Son. e.g. Swidler (1975). For a rebuttal see below, on the Trinity.
- (135) Myers (1972) p 230.
- (136) Whether, then, it implies anything about the possibility of women priests is not an issue germane to this thesis. I suspect that to truly argue for an exclusively male priesthood one must argue that maleness (or at least masculinity) is an essential characteristic of the Son. For our purposes, it is sufficient to note, however, that Myers and others stop short of this.
- (137) Rutler (n.d.) p 58.
- (138) The phrase "as the primitives liked to do" referring to some of the highest cultures of the ancient world is sufficiently polemic to indicate the intention.

- (139) The distinction between analogy and metaphor will be discussed in the following paragraphs. Theology has traditionally thought of Fatherhood as analogy, and one could argue that Motherhood is used merely as metaphor. In which case God would be Father in a sense in which 'he' is not Mother. This also will be discussed below.
- (140) Summa Theologiae Ia qu.13. The translation used below is that of McCabe (see bibliography under Aquinas, Thomas.)
- (141) op cit Ia qu.13 art. 2 quote from pp 54-55.
- (142) op cit Ia qu.13 art. 2 pp 56-57.
- (143) op cit Ia qu.13 art. 6.
- (144) op cit Ia qu.13 art. 6 pp 68-69.
- (145) My trans., N.E.B. reads "family" for patria, which obscures the relation to patār.
- (146) At least by Thomas Aquinas' definition, see above.
- (147) For the use of Mother see more complete presentation in Chs. 6, 7 and 8 below.
- (148) See Jeremias (1963) pp 128ff.
- (149) Unless Wisdom the young bride is considered here.
- (150) This is still true even if we define God as the soul of humanity (or some such) for still God-humanity is not the same as man-woman.
- (151) See Margaret Mead's classic study, Mead (1935).
- (152) The Church of Scotland Report, "The Role of Men and Women in Church and Society", expresses a similar conclusion thus :
- "It is often assumed that since we are taught to call God our father it follows that God is male; but to attribute fatherhood to one person of the Trinity is not thereby to attribute gender to God. To do so is to give a false, humanistic understanding to the concept of 'person'. Nor does the maleness of Jesus imply that God has a particular gender." Church of Scotland (1978) 21.
- (The word gender is, clearly, used here in the sense of masculine or feminine character rather than grammatically.)

NOTES

Excursus Two : Wisdom

- (153) See e.g. Ringgren (1947).
- (154) Again for examples of this from the ancient Near East see Ringgren (1947). Hindu philosophy would seem to regard all its pantheon in this light, whatever the historical origins of some of the deities. See for example K.M. Panikkar (1966) pp 369-370 and W. Benjamin (1968) entry "God".
- (155) By gender in both Hebrew and Greek, and by person and image not only in Judaism but in other surrounding cultures. Wisdom as masculine is found, strangely, in the Kabbalah, but not until the middle ages, see e.g. Loewe pp 625-626.
- (156) e.g. explicitly in Sir. 15².
- (157) Wisdom with a capital W will be used for personified wisdom, lower case for the more general literature.
- (158) There is disagreement over the date of this material. Until recently the strong consensus was that all of this material was post exilic. The reasons primarily concerned the form of the material, although the content was felt to confirm this. Recently however, the recognition that much of this material is "Instruction" a literary type with very ancient examples in other cultures (see McKane, (1970)) has led to a re-appraisal of the possibility that much of the material in these chapters could have a pre-exilic origin. Whichever view is adopted, in these chapters are the earliest descriptions of the lady Wisdom.
- (159) Rylaarsdam (1962) and McKane (1970), ad loc.
- (160) However note for example the prophetic "I in my turn" c/cst Jer. 4,12; 7,11; Hos. 4,6. Also "How long?" c/cst Jer. 4^{14,21}; Hos. 8⁵ etc., and "turn ye" (A.V. v 23). See Whybray (1965) p 77 nl, McKane (1970) p 273 f and Rylaarsdam (1962) 393d.
- (161) A theme which some scholars would see as part of a "Wisdom myth" which perhaps develops later into various gnostic myths. See e.g. Bultmann (1971) p 22 f. c/cst Conzelmann (1971).
- (162) McKane (1970) p 342 ff, especially 348-349.
- (163) McKane (1970) p 351.

- (164) P.A.H. de Boer's suggestion "mother official" is of particular interest. He argues that both Father and also Mother are used as titles for a counsellor, citing a variety of passages as evidence, including for mother, Judges 5⁷, 2 Sam. 20¹⁴⁻²³, Ezek. 21²⁶, Job 17¹³ ff, in particular he notes the role of Queen-Mother (e.g. 2 Chro. 22³, 1 K 2¹⁹ ff) and the frequent expression "the name of his mother was so and so". He also argues that the context of 8²² ff presents Wisdom as counsellor at God's court. Thus his emendation in v 30 to 'immon, lit. little mother, mother-official or counsellor, makes fair sense. (de Boer (1955) esp. p 69 f).
- (165) op cit p 359.
- (166) Noted for example by Rylaarsdam op cit 394 k.
- (167) Or sacred marriage, consummated between strangers in honour of the goddess, sometimes in the temple precincts, not only by hierodules but by married persons also.
- (168) This view is summarized and contradicted by McKane op cit pp 326-331. c/cst Whybray (1965) p 49.
- (169) In vh 7, verses 6-23 are in the third person but are set in a parental "you" context vv1-5 and 24-27 is an exemplary story.
- (170) With the exception of v 35b which may be explained, in context, as an impersonal "you" meaning "one".
- (171) Ringgren, (1947) p 135f.
- (172) McKane op cit pp 287 f, 269 f and 341.
- (173) Toy (1899) ad loc. etc.
- (174) Rylaarsdam op cit ad loc.
- (175) Rylaarsdam op cit ad loc.
- (176) Prob. rdg. ; Heb. house.
- (177) The covenant with God features prominently in Sir. but never in Job, Prov., or Ecc.
- (178) Rylaarsdam op cit 394 g.
- (179) op cit p 327.
- (180) op cit p 333, also Toy (1899) ad loc.
- (181) C/cst the usage in Song of songs. We shall find this Wisdom as "sister" who is wife or lover again when we examine Sir. and Wis.

- (182) Meat is normally only eaten in a sacrificial cultic context. Heaton (1956) p 85 f, Toy (1899) ad loc. (Is Deut. 12¹⁵ relaxing this? Rylaarsdam op cit 394 j.)
- (183) op cit p 360-365.
- (184) Or following McKane's reasoning perhaps better a high priestess of Astarte (loc cit).
- (185) e.g. Ishtar, Astarte etc., the name given will suggest the date envisaged for Prov. 1-9, but will have little further significance since the myths and cults of these goddesses are all very much the same.
- (186) op cit p 134.
- (189) op cit p 364.
- (190) Whybray (1965) has not been referred to often above. His thesis that the passages we have been concerned with form part of two distinct stages of theologising addition to the discourses has little importance for the discussion above. The majority of our passages form part of his Stage 1. The view outlined here is also broadly compatible with his picture of the motives and influences on the development of Wisdom. See esp. op cit. p 87 ff.
- (191) These verses are quoted from R.S.V. not N.E.B. The R.S.V. translation is more literal and we shall make reference to v3 later, the point would be obscured in the N.E.B. version.
- (192) A comparison of the Greek texts is to be found in Harder(1943). A translation of the most complete version, that from Cyme in Asia Minor, is given in Grant (1953) pp 131-3.
- The similarities of this material to personified Wisdom is discussed, in a general way, by e.g. Knox (1937) and Ringgren(1947) pp 144 ff. A more detailed analysis of Sir. 24 in relation to Isis was first made by Conzelmann (1971) see especially sections 11 and 111.
- (193) which might normally be omitted as included in the verb.
- (194) loc cit.
- (195) op cit p 234.
- (196) R.S.V. The Greek reads : "Egō apo stomatos hypsistou exālthon". N.E.B. translates interpretively "I am the word which was spoken by the Most High".

- (197) op cit n 28. Or see e.g. R.T. Rundle Clark (1960).
- (198) Snaith (1974) p 121.
- (199) Gen. 1², thus J.B. footnote.
- (200) Gen. 2⁶, thus Snaith op cit.
- (201) Thus Conzelmann op cit n 27 p 235.
- (202) op cit p 235-6.
- (203) op cit n 29.
- (204) op cit n 36.
- (205) Not Isis only. It is a common element in the devotion of 'virgin' mother deities. The fact that they are to themselves, alone, not dependent on other deities would seem to be that which causes them to be spoken of as virgin.
- (206) So Westermann (1969) p 56.
- (207) Last word in the line.
- (208) The last line of this verse is omitted, because according to the Greek text the testing continues ('eōs ou̇ enpisteusȧ tā psuchā autou) "Until she trusts him " R.S.V.
The Hebrew text here reverses the roles, it is the seekers' faithfulness which is determinative. It is unclear which reading is to be preferred.
- (209) For a discussion of the debate over more precise dating, see Griffiths (1975) pp 7-14.
- (210) See Griffiths (1975) p 1 ff.
- (211) It seems likely, for example, that the cult of Isis had been established in Rome since the time of Sulla c 100 B.C. op cit p 343-345.
- (212) Metamorphosis XI, 277¹⁻³.
- (213) XI, 278¹.
- (214) XI, 285²²-286⁴.
- (215) See e.g. Griffiths op cit p 316-317.
- (216) XI, 269⁶⁻⁷. Griffiths argues for an Egyptian origin for this detail, pp 135-137.
- (217) According to Snaith op cit p 257 this chapter was probably added "by Ben Sira himself".

- (218) Snaith op cit p 260, for a translation and discussion see Sanders (1967) pp 112-117.
- (219) For translation see Sanders op cit. Difference between 11 QPs^a and Hebrew text underlined. Greek reads "dīenoāthān gar tou poiāsaī autān, Kai egālōsa to agathon, kai ou mā aischunthō".
- (220) Snaith op cit ad loc.
- (221) This would account nicely for the existence of two Hebrew versions with only the later appearing in Greek.
- (222) See Witt (1971) especially Ch. 1V.
- (223) For greater detail in discussion Isis parallels in Sir. see: Conzelmann (1971), Ringgren (1947) pp 143 ff, Engelsman (1979) Chs. 4 and 5.
- (224) Wisdom or Wis. refers to "The Wisdom of Solomon". Wisdom (W in upper case) as before to personified wisdom/Sophia.
- (225) Although N.B. Wisdom also can use riches, respect and power as the measure of the gift of Wisdom when the biblical account of Solomon's dream is in view i.e. 7¹¹ ff and 8¹⁰ ff.
- (226) See e.g. Apuleius XI Chs 2-5.
- (227) Aretology in Harder op cit. p 20-21 lines 13 and 14, 44 and 45.
- (228) See Reese op cit p 49. Cyme 23 Oxyrhynchus 239-243.
- (229) Reese op cit p 48. Cyme 39 Oxy. litany 158.
- (230) See e.g. Liddell et al (1940) ad loc and J and L Robert (1961) and (1962).
- (231) See Lampe (1961) ad loc.
- (232) Translation of gumbiōsis is underlined.
- (233) Clarke (1973) ad loc.
- (234) e.g. Reese op cit p 46.
- (235) Liddell et al ad loc.
- (236) R.S.V. , by thy wisdom.
- (237) Paredron gar 'eurāsu tōn pulōn autou.
- (238) Old Testament is used here in the wide sense to include the deuterocanonical or apocryphal writings, Sir. and Wis.
- (239) op cit p 230-231 and N.B. notes 6-9.

- (240) op cit p 232-233.
- (241) op cit p 233. See also Fiorenza (1975) for another statement of the arguments against such an attempt.
- (242) op cit loc cit.
- (243) op cit p 234.
- (244) Fiorenza (1975a) p 27ff.
- (245) op cit p 33.
- (246) e.g. Clarke (1973) p 4 sees as the first group of readers to whom this book was addressed "those fellow Jews who had abandoned the faith of their fathers" in particular those in Egypt. As also the introduction to this book in J.B.
- (247) see e.g. Conzelmann (1971) p 233 and 234.
- (248) e.g. Sir. 51^{13ff} (recognized as such a passage even without the evidence of 11QPs^a). In the bowdlerized version Wisdom is consistently pictured as bride, although she seems strangely to be superior to her husband. More strikingly, though, in the erotic 11 QPs^a version the line corresponding to 17^a reads: "and she became for me a nurse (lit: one who gives suck)" thus in the two very different versions of this poem to Wisdom, maternal elements enter the bridal/erotic imagery.
- In particular, in most of such passages the "bride" seems to be the dominant partner. This was not the norm in ancient Israel! (De Vaux op cit p 26ff).
- (249) Of the instruction type, if not of the more reflective kind in e.g. Job, Ecc. and Wis.
- (250) See McKane op cit ad loc.
- (251) De Vaux (1961) p 48f or Heaton (1956) p 178.
- (252) following de Boer (1955) p 56ff.
- (253) e.g. de Boer op cit p 57, de Vaux op cit p 49, and elsewhere.
- (254) Von Rad (1963) ad loc gives an Egyptian parallel to this, see also ANET 428. This usage is still common in Israel at a much later date, see 1 Macc. 2⁶⁵ : "Now here is Symeon, your brother; I knew him to be wise in counsel: always listen to him, for he shall be a father to you."
- (255) Underlinings added.

- (256) R.S.V.
- (257) However, Whybray (1972) seems to accept N.E.B. emendation p 41 L37.
- (258) If Whybray (1965) is correct, this point still stands for the final stage of the text if not for the "original".
- (259) e.g. Prov. 8³² ff, Wis. 6¹³, 7¹² etc.
- (260) "stressing religious virtues given to Jews only", Snaith op cit ad loc.
- (261) We shall not examine Philo's understanding of Wisdom here for lack of space. However several of the books referred to in the next section usefully review this.
- (262) R.S.V., N.E.B. is interpretative here.
- (263) On this see below.
- (264) see e.g. Héring (1962) pp 10-13; Barrett (1971) pp 59f.
- (265) Barrett's translation op cit p 50. N.E.B. reads "You are in Christ Jesus by God's act, for God has made him our wisdom; he is our righteousness; in him we are consecrated and set free".
- (266) op cit ad loc.
- (267) As Héring op cit p 13.
- (268) Feuillet (1966) p 258f identifies this hidden wisdom of 2⁶ ff as Christ, however see also e.g. Conzelmann (1975) ad loc and Héring op cit ad loc.
- (269) Orr and Walther (1976) p 231.
- (270) For refs. see previous note. (These articles are in German and I have not consulted them).
- (271) Eaton (1967) gives 15 passages though a few seem doubtful.
- (272) The use of which may be dominical, see for example on Mk 12³⁶; Cranfield (1963) ad loc; but see Bultmann (1952) p 28, 49, (& 121 ff) or Nineham (1969) ad loc.
- (273) Acts 2³² ff; Heb. 1² & 13, 5⁶, 7-12; 1 Cor. 15²³ ff; Eph. 1²⁰ ff; Col. 3¹⁸ and 1 Pet. 3²² as well as Mk. 12³⁶ and parallels.
- (274) Resurrection is in view in Acts 2³² ff, 1 Cor. 15²⁵ ff, Eph. 1²⁰ ff, Col. 3¹⁸ and 1 Pet. 3²².

- (275) Note the use here as at 1 Cor. 8⁶ of di'ou to describe the role.
- (276) op cit p 145.
- (277) Paul's use of "image" will be discussed below in the context of 2 Cor. 3¹⁷⁻¹⁸ and 4⁴⁻⁶; and Col. 1¹⁵ ff.
- (278) loc cit N. 49.
- (279) Legum Allegoriae 2: 21 & 86. Wis. 11⁴, see Davies (1962) p 152 f (he gives ref. as Wis. 2⁴ but must mean 11⁴ :) or Conzelmann (1975) ad loc. In Wis. there is rather an association of Wisdom with the giving of the water and presence on the journeying than an identification with the rock as such, see Feuillet (1966) p 107 f or (1973) p 17 ff.
- (280) Feuillet (1966) Ch. 5, (1973) p 22 ff. So also Barrett (1973) ad loc.
- (281) loc cit.
- (282) J.B. also gives "reflect".
- (283) In Greek eikōn - image N.E.B. needs to add 'very' to contrast Christ in 4⁴ with "we all", 3¹⁸. R.S.V. which translates beholding (not reflecting) in 3¹⁸ may in 4⁴ translate weakly eikōn as "likeness".
- (284) Barrett's translation op cit p 110.
- (285) See Wis. 7²⁶.
- (286) In the context of his horror at female indecency in church.
- (287) Also note as Wisdom "enters into holy souls, and makes them God's friends and prophets" as here: "caused his light to shine within us, to give the light of revelation - the revelation of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ". 2 Cor. 4⁶.
- (288) See e.g. Lohse (1971) p 418.
- (289) Feuillet (1966) p 157 literal translation of original Fr. "le Christ est l'image parfaite de Dieu tout d'abord parce qu'en lui Dieu est très adéquatement représenté et très authentiquement révélé.
- (290) i.e. Phil. 2⁶⁻¹¹, Col. 1¹⁵⁻²⁰, Eph. 2¹⁴⁻¹⁶, 1 Tim. 3¹⁶, Heb. 1³, 1 Pet. 1²⁰, 3¹⁸⁻²². N.B. these fragments are not restricted to the Pauline tradition. The Johannine Prologue will be discussed elsewhere.

- (291) For such discussion see: Sanders (1971); Fiorenza (1975a); Feuillet (1973) in addition to works cited below with reference to specific passages.
- (292) Based upon the eightfold pattern of Sanders (1971) and Fiorenza (1975a) though modified somewhat.
- (293) See also Jn. 1³ and ? 1 Cor. 8⁶.
- (294) Also Eph. 2¹⁶ and Heb. 1³ ?
- (295) See Sanders (1971) Part 2 and Fiorenza (1975a).
- (296) His death is perhaps not stressed there, but is such a primary fact about Jesus that it requires no other background to explain its presence.
- (297) Though the kind of influence is hotly debated.
- (298) To argue for a pre-Christian Jewish association of these ideas involves dubious assumptions concerning the date of e.g. Odes of Solomon.
- (299) Sanders op cit Ch. 8, Mowinckel (1955).
- (300) op cit p 135.
- (301) op cit p 135 f.
- (302) Robinson (1971) provides sound arguments for such a "gattung" which he calls "Sayings of the Wise". He finds examples in e.g. Proverbs, Pirke Aboth, Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, Ethiopian Enoch, as well as Q and the Gospel of Thomas.
- (303) See e.g. Edwards (1976) Ch. V.
- (304) Wis. 7²⁷, 10 f; Lk. 11⁴⁹⁻⁵¹; Mt. 23³⁴⁻³⁶.
- (305) i.e. Prov. 1²⁰ ff; Enoch 42¹⁻² c/cat 2 Esdras 5¹⁰.
- (306) See e.g. Schweizer (1975) p 435.
- (307) Suggs (1970) argues against several: (1) not a circumlocution for Jesus - verbs would then be wrong. (2) not "God in his wisdom" - this is not found elsewhere and would ignore Wisdom speculation. (3) not lost book "The Wisdom of God" - the oracle of doom would then have literary subject; also following usual quotation formulae this would mean a book written by Wisdom.

Another suggestion is found in Leaney (1966²), he suggests this is a variant of the Rabbinic "the Holy Spirit says" or "Divine righteousness says". Ellis (1966) likewise suggests that

here Luke equates Wisdom and Spirit (cf Acts 11³¹, 21¹⁵ c/cst 12¹¹). In practice this is similar to Suggs' (and most other commentators) conclusion that this is, for Q at least, a quotation of an Oracle of Doom attributed to personified Wisdom, like for example that in Prov. 1²⁰ ff. The source cannot be identified.

(308) See also below.

(309) The textual variants are likely to be caused by accomodation of one gospel to the other.

(310) Generally reckoned basically a Q unit, but see Albright and Mann (1971) p 140-141.

(311) Suggestions that both *ergōn* and *teknōn* may go back to a common Aramaic original are attractive, but complex, see e.g. Jeremias (1963) p 162 n44. *Tōn ergōn autās* would be 'obhadhaih, pre-Lukan tradition took this as 'abhdhaih and translated 'oi paides autās later, for some reason, emended to *tōn teknōn autās*. As we shall see there is a simpler explanation.

(312) So e.g. Manson (1949) p 70.

(313) This fits well with Ellis's view (see above) that Luke equates Wisdom with the Holy Spirit.

(314) On these see Held in Bornkamm, Barth & Held (1963) esp. p 250 ff. Note esp.: (1) The Christological intent of this passage (p 250). (2) The mission of the disciples is included in "the deeds of Christ" (p 250 & 252).

The disciples are sent out by Christ, for Mt. Christ equals Wisdom therefore the mission of the disciples, too, is part of the deeds of Wisdom in v 19.

(315) Schweizer (1975) p 437.

(316) Preferring parousia rather than Palm Sunday.

(317) e.g. Schweizer loc cit.

(318) On such an absence of wisdom see: Bar. 4¹⁻⁴ with 4¹² (for an older but less close example see Prov. 1²⁰ f).

(319) See Suggs (1970) ad loc for summary and references.

(320) Manson (1949) p 185.

(321) Saying 90 plate 96 lines 16-20. E.T. in e.g. Grant & Freedman (1960).

- (322) N.B. Sir. 51^{10a} "I cried, 'Lord, thou art my Father' ;".
- (323) Sir. 51^{27a} "See for yourselves how little were my labours".
- (324) N.B. "wise-foolish" etc. The formal resemblance is of particular interest in view of the suggestion, noted above, that it is to such "thanksgivings of the wisdom school" that the Christological Hymns embedded in the New Testament are related in "Gattung".
- (325) See on Mt. 23³⁹; Lk. 13³⁵ above.
- (326) The discussion of these views will be most cursory. The main arguments may be found in Dodd (1953); Brown (1971) ad loc and especially Appendix 11 p 519 ff; Schnackenburg (1968) ad loc and esp. Excursus 1 p 481 ff; Bultmann (1971) ad loc; there is a useful review in Sanders (1971) Ch. 2. It will be seen that I have inclined towards the views of the authors listed first above, and see Wisdom (and word) in Jewish thought as the most important influence in shaping the concept of 'logos' in the prologue. However, to say this is the most important influence implies that other influences also are significant (the stoic logos, filtered through Alexandria? and perhaps a gnostic type climate of redeemer speculation).
- (327) See commentaries ad loc.
- (328) Similar to that which he finds in other cultures in the ancient Near East.
- (329) See Ringgren (1947).
- (330) R.S.V.
- (331) See e.g. Engelsman (1979) Ch. 5.
- (332) See Dodd (1953) pp 274-277.
- (333) Though not entirely, Origen, for example, speaks of Wisdom as a favourite title for Christ.
- (334) This identification has precedents in the Wisdom literature.
- (335) See Theophilus "Ad Autolycum" 1,7; 11,15 & 11,18.
- (336) Theophilus "Ad Autolycum" 11, 10. Where possible translations of the Fathers are from Ante Nicene Christian Library, for details see bibliography.
- (337) Irenaeus Adv. Haer. 111,24,2.
- (338) op cit 1V,24,2.

- (339) op cit 1V,20,1.
- (340) op cit 1V,20,2.
- (341) op cit 1V,20,3.
- (342) On this see Kelly (1968⁴) Ch. 1X esp. pp 226 ff. Grillmeir (1975²) pp 217 ff.
- (343) Newman (1845).
- (344) For example, "The Taizé Office" (1966) does not use Prov. 8 for its Marian feast, but rather in the regular course of the lectionary.
- (345) On whom see Tavard (1973) p 164 ff. and Newmann (1978) as well as Bulgakov (1937).
- (346) My information about Boehme is second-hand from Brinton (1931).
- (347) See for example Solovyev (1945).
- (348) Bulgakov (1937) p 87.
- (349) Quoted by Newmann (1978) p 51.
- (350) Quoted by Tavard (1973) p 164.
- (351) See Newmann (1978) p 73.
- (352) This nonetheless comes out especially in Boehme who makes great use of the image of pregnancy as well as of the virgin-mother-bride (see Brinton (1931) pp 178 ff and 200 ff).
- (353) Newmann (1978) section "Hagia Sophia, the house of Wisdom, and the Theotokos" or Brinton (1931) quoting Boehme (Inc. 1:11) p 200-201 "the Virgin, the Heavenly Wisdom ... the Virgin is thus not only the bride of the soul, she is the mother of the reborn.... out of the same virginity from which Christ was born must we all be born".
- (354) Further precedents for such talk of the motherhood of the Trinity will be considered below (Ch. 6-8).

NOTES

Chapter Six : "The Bible"

- (355) See Slonim (1938-9) and Pfeiffer (1948²) p 86.
- (356) Eichrodt (1961) pp 211-212.
- (357) Tavard (1975) pp 716-717.
- (358) This is true whatever we make of the trend in scholarship towards stressing the common elements in imagery, mythology and cult between the Hebrews and other cultures of the Ancient Near East. On this, and the older pattern of stressing the "againstness" of Yahweh and the "gods of Canaan", in relation to questions of Yahweh's sexuality see Brueggemann (1977). This paper also brings out the contemporary reference of such debate.
- (359) Is. 42¹⁴, 49^{14f} & 66¹³ i.e. within material called Deutero-or Trito-Isaiah.
- (360) The Song does not exactly coincide with the chapter division, however the difference is of no significance for our purposes and so Dt. 32 will be used as shorthand for "The Song of Moses".
- (361) N.E.B. footnote, and literal translation.
- (362) Mayes (1979) p 388.
- (363) See the discussion of this passage in the next section.
- (364) e.g. Driver (1902³).
- (365) Note for example the 'anchor' which goes through the 'veil' in Heb. 6¹⁹. Even more striking is the elaboration of this in Priscilla Owen's hymn "Will your Anchor Hold?", here she not only has the anchor "fastened to the Rock" (in the chorus) but also within the veil (v.3).
- (366) Is. 30²⁹, 51¹.
- (367) Whether or not the primary reference of "honey from the rock" is to the habit of Palestinian bees of nesting in cracks in rocks, thus Driver (1902³) p 359 & Mayes (1979) p 386, this provision was clearly associated with Yahweh's provision.
- (368) Craigie (1976) ad loc.
- (369) See above Ch. One.
- (370) The reading "watches over" depends upon a textual emendation of

the M.T. following LXX see Mayes (1979) ad loc, but the sense is in any case there in the next line where the verb (rachaph) is the same as that used of the Spirit in Gen.1² and in Syriac, frequently of the watchful care of both the Spirit and of Angels, see Brock (1979) pp 3f & 6 and Driver (1902³) p 358.

(371) Driver (1958) & Loenstamm (1969).

(372) Driver (1902³) p 357 (underlining of paternal added).

(373) Brock (1979) pp 3-4. Murray (1975) is also aware of the motherliness of this word, of the 7 references to rahhēp and rūhhāpâ in his index, in four he makes reference to the motherly overtones of the word or its context. Note also the usage in Odes of Solomon 28¹⁻² :

"As the wings of doves over their nestlings,
And the mouths of their nestlings towards their mouths,
So also are the wings of the Spirit over my heart.
My heart continually refreshes itself and leaps for joy,
Like the babe who leaps for joy in his mother's womb."
Trans. Charlesworth (1977) p 108.

(374) See below on Numbers 11.

(375) R.S.V.

(376) Eaton (1967) p 291.

(377) Weiser (1962) p 777.

(378) Dahood (1968-70) Vol. III pp 238 ff.

(379) There is, for example, no reference to this verse in the *Biblica Patristica*, which indicates that the metaphor was not taken up by the fathers.

(380) Thus Briggs (1906) p 237.

(381) Thus Eaton (1967) p 85.

(382) Briggs (1906) p 241 on grounds of metre.

(383) As Weiser (1962), for example, seems to suppose p 253.

(384) Psalm 17⁸; 36⁷; 57¹; 61⁴; 63⁷; 91⁴.

(385) Briggs (1906) p 130.

(386) The answer in part of course is that there is a widespread tradition of such creatures protecting the King which seems to spread from Assyria south and west, occurring in Egypt also.

See e.g. Keel (1978) pp 190-192. But we must still ask from where comes the idea that wings are protective?

- (387) Weiser (1962) p 181. Underlining added.
- (388) Eaton (1967) p 60.
- (389) Contra Briggs (1906) p 319 who saw the reference to the shadow of thy wings here as a gloss "which is striking and difficult to explain in this context."
- (390) See ad loc Eaton (1967), Weiser (1962) & Anderson (1962).
- (391) Weiser (1962) p 309 underlinings added.
- (392) I am not trying to suggest here that the Psalm was composed with, or that the modern commentator intends, a conscious reference to God's motherhood. However I do suggest that both speak of God's love in terms which are influenced by the feelings which a mother's loving evokes.
- (393) Though not, of course, a hen which was a late introduction to Palestine (c. 2nd century B.C.?)
- (394) See also Terrien (1973).
- (395) Weiser (1962) p 458.
- (396) Briggs (1907) p 280.
- (397) Anderson (1962) 378b.
- (398) So Anderson op cit loc cit "Though there may be an allusion to the sanctuary, the meaning is primarily the divine protection" (on v.1).
- (399) Briggs (1907) seems well aware of this (see his references to the passages we have just discussed when he comments on verse one p 279) but still can see the picture in verse four as a gloss.
- (400) Weiser (1962) p 607 underlining added.
- (401) We shall note later how this perhaps fits with other emphases in the theology of Second Isaiah.
- (402) Whybray (1975) p 78 :
 "The simile of the woman in travail, which is reinforced in the Hebrew by a breathless and convulsive style which seems ugly to modern western taste ..."
- (403) Note the use of racham in this verse. The word is related to the common word for womb, we shall be returning to the suggestion that it may itself carry motherly overtones.

- (404) North (1964) p 194.
- (405) On Yahweh as midwife see below, next section. (The line from Psalm 118²³ would make a fitting commentary on this verse "This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes". This would be particularly appropriate if as some commentators suggest the Psalm was written for the rededication of the temple, and thus celebrated the events prophesised here!)
- (406) This imagery was also used in 60¹⁶ in a rather different way (see also 66¹² below). On this use and adoption of imagery and ideas from Deutero-Isaiah here and generally in this passage see esp. Whybray (1975) ad loc.
- (407) Thus Whybray (1975).
- (408) Westermann (1969) p 420.
- (409) As Westermann (1969) is aware. His quotation from Kessler brings this out though it gives a false impression of the extent to which feminine and especially motherly character is ascribed to God elsewhere.
- (410) As, too, his changes in application of imagery.
- (411) Whybray (1975) p 286 notes the possibility that 'ish can mean male child e.g. Gen. 4¹.
- (412) See on 42^{14ff} above.
- (413) Westermann (1969) p 9.
- (414) By esp. psychoanalytically oriented authors e.g. Vergote (1969^a) or the comparative work of Van der Leeuw (1964²), for a recent discussion see esp. Ochs (1977).
- (415) Whybray (1975) p 30. In short a return to the womb, or at least the mother's breast. See section 1 of Ch. 3 of Vergote (1969^a).
- (416) Whybray (1975) p 34.
- (417) At least as the text now stands. Commentators agree in attributing the whole to J, but many discern either different levels or possibly a removing of certain verses from another context. These possibilities would have but little effect on our argument. On Numbers 11 see Tribble (1973) esp. p 32 and on this and other themes in this section Tribble (1978) Chs. 2 & 3.

- (418) Noth (1968) pp 86-87 N.B. Noth does not, contra Tribble (1978) p 69 & (p 71) n 23 interpret 'ōmēn as 'immōn and therefore the reference to being a nurse as "The beloved mother herself caresses the sucking baby."
- (419) With Noth etc. reading nurse here (see previous footnote) on this occasion we cannot but see the need for the emendation to 'immōn here. Although the word is masculine, cf. Is. 49²³, (referring to Moses and Yahweh this is understandable) nonetheless the reference is presumably to the act of giving suck n.b. next paragraph.
- (420) Heaton (1956) pp 80f. See Prov. 31^{14ff}; 11 Sam. 13⁷⁻¹⁰ etc.
- (421) See above on Ps. 36 & 63 and Dt. 32, and below on Hos. 11.
- (422) We shall return to Yahweh's relation to the womb and birth below; on Ps. 71⁶ note N.E.B. footnote. De Vaux (1965²) pp 42f in his discussion of Hebrew midwifery makes the point that fathers were probably not normally present at births.
- (423) This section is very dependent on Tribble (1978) although I have tried as far as possible to check and assess her arguments which are presented here largely in summary form.
- (424) Thus also e.g. Pederson (1926) p 309 (but see also his note p 525) and Holladay (1976).
- (425) Dt. 4³¹ & Ps. 78³⁸.
- (426) Ex. 34⁶, 2 Ch. 30⁹; Neh. 9^{17, 31}; Ps. 86¹⁵, 103⁸, 111⁴, 112⁴, 145⁸; Joel 2¹³; Jon. 4².
- (427) Holladay (1976).
- (428) See also towards the end of this chapter.
- (429) Terrien (1973) p 328.
- (430) Tribble (1978) p 57 n 18.
- (431) op cit pp 40-50.
- (432) habath hashōbebah N.E.B. "wayward child"; Tribble "turnabout daughter".
- (433) see Tribble p 44 for discussion, it is difficult in context to read this negatively, and so I do not feel obliged to argue the case here.
- (434) op cit p 45.

- (435) Clearly the love of Yahweh for son Ephraim is not erotic as in Cant. 5^{4f} but is motherly like that of Rachel.
- (436) Though here possibly better to follow N.E.B.:
 "As often as I turn my back upon him
 I still remember him."
 This note of ambivalence need not weaken the motherly content of the whole for surely it is of the essence of true motherly love that it continues despite estrangements and the need to punish (precisely in a way that, in literature at least, is not so universally true of fatherly love).
- (437) Tribble (1978) p 45.
- (438) Reed (1949) pp 80, 81 & 87.
- (439) Tribble has an interesting suggestion in connection with this verse, see below, Tribble (1978) p 61f.
- (440) op cit p 60f.
- (441) Weiser (1962) p 222.
- (442) Accepting reading, contra suggestions to read nasu'ti or 'amastî to continue the carrying theme. See e.g. Westermann (1969) p 177 and Whybray (1975) p 115.
- (443) Note the use of the pet name Jeshurun only found here and in the last chapters of Dt. (i.e. at Dt. 32¹⁵ referred to above, the Song of Moses and 33^{5,26}.)
- (444) This may overstress the motherly overtones, but the alternative translations e.g. N.E.B. disguise them.
- (445) Which is thoroughly explicit as opposed to the allusive mother language. This difference is of course understandable in such a patriarchal androcentric culture.
- (446) Wolff (1974) ad loc.
- (447) This argument, of course, would also produce an expectation of little father language. In fact the reverse is true. "Father", or "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ", becomes a new name for God.

We have argued above that this usage logically and theologically needs to imply motherhood also. However this does not answer the question of why such father language is so exclusive in the N.T. The major answer is that this usage goes back to Jesus teaching, hand in hand with this go the effects of culture.

There is no simple answer to the problem this poses for the major thesis of this thesis. There are, however, pointers :

- (1) Jesus' life and teaching demonstrates a humanity which is not masculine-opposed-to-feminine. Indeed in terms of his (and to a lesser extent our) culture he was a very 'feminine' man. (Not effeminate nor female, but rather displaying gentleness, tenderness, humility, intuition etc.)
- (2) In a sense, by his life and teaching Jesus demonstrates the motherhood of the Father, (as well as the Fatherhood of God). Note the frequency with which the Father is pictured as tender, gentle etc.
- (3) Christianity was in opposition to and competition with religious systems which made great use of mother images and language, e.g. Isis and certain gnostic systems, (the evidence in this case is somewhat later in date than the N.T.). For this reason mother language might have been avoided.
- (4) The tradition speaks often of Mary as Jesus' mother, but seldom of Joseph as his father, in these circumstances to speak of God as motherly would lead to the danger of thinking of Jesus' mother-in-the-flesh as divine.
- (5) The very fact of Jesus' choice of 'father' makes any use of motherly language much less likely. The way Jesus speaks of the Father, however, suggests that he is no exclusive male god. (see 2 above).

- (448) Clement of Alexandria (Stromata III,99,2) and certain eastern texts read *tekna* (diminutive) little children so R.S.V. and some commentators. The difference has little effect on the image we are interested in since this changes anyway immediately.
- (449) Whether the image changes again and if so, how, is subject to debate. The precise imagery associated with Christ being formed (*morphōthēi*) is not clear. It may imply that the Galatians are in a sense pregnant with Christ, see Burton (1920) p 248f. If this is what Paul means, which I doubt, it is not taken up by the tradition in the way the main imagery is.
- (450) See e.g. Best (1972) pp 101-102.
- (451) Paul certainly regarded converts as his own children see e.g. verse 11; although it is not certain that *heautās* must be interpreted this way, see e.g. Frame (1912) p 101, it is both grammatically and by sense the more likely.

- (452) The derivation (and meaning) of *homeiromenoi* is far from clear, but the imagery of "gladness in sharing his very self" is.
- (453) It is likely that here the imagery of milkfeeding is suggested by that of "infants in Christ", *nāpiois en Christōi*, such a chain of association may have been responsible for the imagery in 1 Thess. 2⁷ also (if *nāpioi* is correct there).
- (454) Bruce (1964) ad loc asks "Was our author influenced here by that passage in 1 Corinthians?" However the imagery is a commonplace and relates to everyday experience, Knox (1939) p 101 n 1, Barrett (1971²) ad loc, but see also below on the background to the imagery in these passages.
- (455) That Baptism is in mind frequently in this letter is accepted today by most commentators. To say this does not necessarily assume the more detailed liturgical theories of the origin of material in 1 Peter. This verse seems to assume that the readers' baptism was recent.
- (456) See especially Kelly (1969) ad loc. But note stress is on the idea 'word of God' not on the word 'logos', in the following verses *hr̄ma* is used following LXX of Is. 40⁶⁻⁸.
- (457) See Moffatt (1924) pp 70-71 noting particularly Philo's use of this imagery, cf Best (1972) p 101, who mentions that the cynics often spoke of a good philosopher as a gentle nurse. Barrett (1971²) misreads Knox (1939) and gives the impression that Knox gives more examples than he does. See Knox (1939) p 101 n esp. for refs. to the mystery religions.
- (458) See Knox (1939) p 101 n and TDNT art. *gala* (on 1 Pet. 2). Schlier in the TDNT makes the interesting point that "The Egyptian king enjoys the milk of Isis and becomes immortal".
- (459) See Knox op cit ad loc, and Robinson and Plummer (1914²).
- (460) Kelly (1969) p 85f.
- (461) See also Best (1972) p 101.
- (462) See next chapter for details and discussion.
- (463) See e.g. Jeremias (1963^{rev.}) p 132ff.
- (464) Ulanov (1971) esp. in Chs. 13 and 14.
- (465) Ochs (1977).

- (466) Ochs op cit p 27.
- (467) Ulanov (1971) p 304.
- (468) op cit p 305.
- (469) It is beyond both the title of this thesis and the time available to begin such an attempt here.
- (470) c.f. Rom. 10¹² on this see Meeks (1974).
- (471) These points are not so true of Rom. 10¹² where the pattern is less clear and the relevant words are more closely embedded in context. This need not however militate against the baptismal formula conclusion, since if the formula were sufficiently common to be used in three places, it would have been sufficiently part of Paul's mental furniture to be echoed more loosely in Romans (and Galatians 5⁶ ?).
- (472) op cit ref. given as Maximus the Confessor Questiones ad Thalassium 48 Migne P.G. 90, 436 A.
- (473) See e.g. Tavard (1973) p 40 ff, see also Schnackenburg ad loc.
- (474) See Bultmann (1971) p 82 n2 for assertion and refs. or Bernard ad loc.
- (475) In particular modern commentators note that koilia is used instead of kordia in some places in LXX and as a textual variant in N.T. see esp. TDNT. For general discussion almost any recent commentary e.g. Lindars (1972) ad loc.
- (476) Either as e.g. mistranslation of Aramaic "from her midst" or as koilia = navel (Jerusalem was spoken of as the "Navel of the World") see Bultmann (1971) loc cit and Lightfoot (1956) ad loc. Unless 38b is ascribed to a later ecclesiastical editor, so Bultmann, it is difficult to find grounds for the equation believers = Zion/Jerusalem.
- (477) Even if the phrase is referred to Jesus which is less likely.
- (478) See also the discussion in Excursus Two, where it was suggested that earlier in the tradition this might have been a saying of Wisdom.
- (479) Which in that culture implies normally a mother.
- (480) Pritchard (1955) p 131.
- (481) e.g. the biblical evidence of the proximity of their cults, for a discussion and further evidence see James (1959) Ch. III.
- (482) Albright (1942) p 78.

- (483) Reed (1949) pp 80-81 and 87.
- (484) According to 1 Kg. 11⁵ it was Astarte whom Solomon began to follow. However the goddess in question is referred to as "Astarte, the goddess of the Sidonians" as we have seen this was a title/name of Asherah.
- (485) Hanson (1975).
- (486) e.g. Mendenhall (1970).
- (487) Patai (1967), upon whom, with Reed (1949) this account is based.
- (488) op cit ad loc.
- (489) Gray (1957) esp. pp 113-120.
- (490) Nor is it certain the extent to which references to Anat-Yahu in the Elephantine Papiri imply such a view in that community, scholars' views are widely diverse on this point. The evidence for such a worship of Yahweh with consort among the Jews of the military colony at Elephantine, on the first cataract of the Nile, probably supports such a view of popular religious ideas. However such an interpretation of this evidence is open to question. (See the index to a History of Israel for the period, e.g. Bright for discussion).
- (491) The reading "(I am) his Anat and his Ashera(h)", for Hosea 14^{8(9)b} which is favoured by some of the older commentators no longer finds favour, "more ingenious than correct" etc. However it is clear that much that Hosea has to say about Israel's idolatry concerns Asherah worship.
- (492) Jesus' use of Father includes too many feminine or maternal elements to be a true exception to this.

NOTES

Chapter Seven : The Patristic Period

- (493) The extent and variety of such imagery has become more clear to us since the discovery and publication of the texts from Nag Hammadi. See e.g. Pagels (1976).
- (494) These strands are found together in the Odes of Solomon, see Charlesworth (1977). These will be treated with the Syriac material, although the original language is uncertain, see Murray (1975) p 24f. They have not been excluded along with the material of gnostic origin, the reasons for this will be given below.
- (495) Indeed for the Syriac writings I am way out of my depth and have had to rely heavily upon two secondary works, the excellent survey of Symbols of Church and Kingdom, Murray (1975) and Brock (1979) on the Holy Spirit in the Syrian Baptismal Tradition.
- (496) e.g. Kelly (1968⁴) p 192.
- (497) Harvey (1857) Vol. 2, p 132.
- (498) Note that there too the milk is teaching leading to life. (As in 1 Peter 2² there is no thought here of the contrast milk - solid food).
- (499) Harvey (1857) Vol. 2, p 50.
- (500) Hick (1968) p 218 uses this passage as the first illustration of what he sees as the Irenaeus Type of Theodicy. (He quotes the Ante-Nicene Library translation but for some reason gives the ref. as 1V, 39, 1, p 218 n 2; in A.N.L. ref. is 1V, 38, 1.
- (501) Harvey (1857) Vol 2, p 292-3.
- (502) Stahlin (1905-9) Vol. 2, p 18 L 8-10 (Stromata 1, V).
- (503) op cit Vol. 1, p 95 L 25 (Paedagogus 1, 1V).
- (504) op cit Vol. 1, p 95 L 26 - p 96 L 2.
- (505) op cit Vol. 1, p 96 L 2-8.
- (506) The style with its breathless echoing of what is shared is not well described by such pedestrian words as paragraph or passage.
- (507) So striking that some seek its origin in some gnostic circle, e.g. Pagels (1976) pp 302-3, it is however equally possible, given Clement's evident character, that it results rather from his

independent outworking of the meaning of his Christian faith
(dependent for example on Galatians 3²⁸ and Luke 20³⁴).

- (508) Stahlin (1905-9) p 96 L 22-3. (Paedagogus 1, V)
- (509) Chosen because the verse is one which other later authors use in an interesting way. op cit p 99 L 13-17. (Paedagogus 1, V).
- (510) op cit p 99 L 18-20. (Paedagogus 1, V).
- (511) op cit p 100 L 3-4. (Paedagogus 1, V) The last phrase contains in Greek a complex multivalent pun, and seems to have been always difficult. According to Wilson (1868) p 125 n 3: "Theodoret explains this to mean that, as the animal referred to has only one horn, so those brought up in the practice of piety worship only one God." This indeed takes account of the pun on theon monon (only God) and monokeruton (unicorn) also akeraioi (innocent, simple etc.).
- (512) op cit p 101 L 8-13 (Paedagogus 1, V).
- (513) op cit p 102 L 10-13 (Paedagogus 1, V).
- (514) op cit p 104 L 13-16 (Paedagogus 1, V).
- (515) op cit p 104 L 28 - p 105 L 1 (Paedagogus 1, VI).
- (516) op cit p 107 L 5-8 (Paedagogus 1, VI).
- (517) op cit p 109 L 5-10 (Paedagogus 1, VI).
- (518) op cit p 110 L 29-31 (Paedagogus 1, VI).
- (519) op cit p 111 L 2-7 (Paedagogus 1, VI).
- (520) op cit p 111 L 32-34 (Paedagogus 1, VI).
- (521) op cit p 111 L 10-22 (Paedagogus 1, VI) quoted from trans. of Wilson (1868) p 142.
- (522) op cit p 115 L 29 - p 116 L 10 (Paedagogus 1, VI).
- (523) op cit p 119 L 14-20 (Paedagogus 1, VI).
- (524) op cit p 291 L 14-16 from trans., of Wilson (1868) p 342.
- (525) Stahlin (1905) p 292 L 32-65.
- (526) Eusebius "In Esaiam" on 40¹⁰⁻¹¹ Ziegler (1975) pp 252-3 and Jerome "In Esaiam" in C.C. Series Latine LXXIII pp 458-9.
- (527) C.C. Series Latine LXXIII p 459 L 69-71.
- (528) op cit p 459 L 75-77.
- (529) op cit p 459 L 79.

- (530) op cit p 459 L 80ff quote from L 82-3.
- (531) The passage we are discussing is to be found in Migne P.G.44, 916 from Homily VII "In Cantica Canticorum", the quotation is from B and reads "epeidā gar oute arrān, oute thālu to theion esti".
- (532) Migne P.G.58, 700. Chrysostom Hom. in Matth. 76, 5.
- (533) Migne P.G.72, 800 C-D.
- (534) op cit 797D and 800A and 801A "and with boundless acclamation praise the great gentleness of the Saviour". (The Syriac version has also an introduction lacking in Migne's Greek Text which includes the words "The two parables that follow close upon one another" (the lost sheep and coin) "depict to us an image of the divine gentleness." Smith (1859) p 495).
- (535) Ambrose, "De Virginibus" 1, 5 esp. 22 PL 16, Col. 205-6.
- (536) Augustine "Enarrationes in Psalmos" 101, 8. C.C. 40, 1431-1432. E.T. Wilkins (1853) pp 8-11 esp. pp 9 & 10.
- (537) Wilkins (1853) pp 9-10.
- (538) Augustine "In Iohannis Evangelium Tractatus" C.C. 36: 15⁷, p 153; 16² p 165; and 21, p 212.
- (539) Murray (1975) p 1.
- (540) op cit p 2.
- (541) The quotation is numbered Fragment 3 in Hennecke (1963) pp 158-163, in full it reads: "even so did my mother, the Holy Spirit, take me by one of my hairs and carry me away to the great mountain Tabor". It is cited by Origen (twice) and also in two other places by Jerome.
- (542) Brock (1979) p 4: "For the majority of writers, however, it would be unwise to stress their consciousness of the femininity of the Spirit ... It is in fact quite likely that the existence in second and third century Mesopotamia of a number of pagan triads consisting of father, mother and son (e.g. at Palmyra, Hatra), may have acted as a deterrent against the development of this sort of imagery in ecclesiastical circles."
- (543) There is apparently to be a revised edition of this book sometime, with various corrections. However in a letter dated 1.v.80. Fr. Murray indicated to me that there was only one correction which affects the relevant sections, this concerns the iconographical examples at the top of p 320 and has been taken into account.

- (544) Which, if perhaps not the earliest, are in many ways the most primitive of the works considered in this section.
- (545) e.g. Charlesworth (1977) Preface. Murray (1975) pp 25 & 317.
- (546) Charlesworth (1977) p 42 (40).
- (547) Bernard (1912) pp 67f.
- (548) And echoed in Clement? Paedagogus 1, V. Stahlin (1907) p 120 L 16-26.
- (549) Charlesworth (1977) p 44.
- (550) op cit p 82 (81).
- (551) op cit pp 65-66.
- (552) We have not argued for this interpretation since it now seems widely accepted that such an interpretation fits many, most or all of these odes; that the Holy Spirit is dove in Jesus' baptism is in view is argued by Bernard (1912) pp 102-4.
- (553) Charlesworth (1977) p 108 (107).
- (554) Bernard (1912) pp 120-1.
- (555) Charlesworth (1977) pp 127-8.
- (556) op cit p 124.
- (557) Their linking here may be due to the assonance of three roots in this verse with one in the previous line, see Charlesworth (1977) p 125 n 8.
- (558) Brock (1979) p 6.
- (559) op cit loc cit.
- (560) Murray (1975) p 313.
- (561) Dem. VI, translation quoted from Murray (1975) p 143.
- (562) Bernard (1912) p 121. See also H. Epiph VI, 1, H. Epiph VII, 16. E.T. by a Mr. Johnston in Gwynn (1898).
- (563) Brock (1979) pp 84-87. To these add e.g. H. Epiph VII⁹.
- (564) Prayer common to both Syrian Orthodox and Maronite services, see Brock (1979) p 84.
- (565) Quoted in Brock (1979) p 71.
- (566) op cit p 53.
- (567) op cit loc cit.

- (568) E.T. by a Mr. Johnston in Gwynn (1898) pp 362-3.
- (569) Brock (1979) p 54.
- (570) Jacob of Serugh quoted by Brock (1979) p 54.
- (571) Quoted by Murray (1975) p 143 also in Brock (1979) p 3.
- (572) Murray (1975) p 318.
- (573) op cit loc cit.
- (574) op cit p 318 n 3.
- (575) Brock (1979) pp 3-4.
- (576) op cit p 4.
- (577) Murray (1975) p 319.
- (578) Unless Nicholl (1952) is correct in his unsupported assertion that: St. Ephraim the Syrian, proclaimed a Doctor of the Church in 1920, speaks of the Holy Spirit as "Mother in God", the "eternal Woman in God". This assertion is made in n 1 p 90 in the context of a discussion of Kierkegaard's failure to relate to his mother and consequent (according to Nicholl) "failure to wholly reintegrate himself into God".
- (579) Murray (1975) p 318.
- (580) Trans. quoted from Connolly (1909) p 95.
- (581) op cit p 52.
- (582) Brock (1979) p 72.
- (583) A. Chollet in "Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique" 11² art circuminsession col. 2529. My trans., French reads: "Ce Verbe intérieur qui vit au sein de Dieu, comme L'embryon au sein de sa mère ..."
- (584) Trans. from Butterworth (1919) = Stahlin (1909) p 183 L 31 - p 184 L 4.
- (585) From Migne P.G. 66 col. 1593 L 63-66.
- (586) "ex substantia patris ... ex substantia matris."
- (587) Thus it is possible for those who argue against the ordination of women to do so on the grounds that God is Father and Christ male, grounds which were unheard of in the tradition of the church. Indeed in the Didascalia the deacon is seen as representing Christ whilst the deaconess should be honoured in the place of the Holy Spirit, neatly reversing the contemporary argument.

NOTES

Chapter Eight : "The Middle Ages"

- (588) See Bynum (1977) p 261 n 15 for refs.
- (589) Oration 10 (or 65 in older editions e.g. Migne; Anselm's prayers were so popular that they soon attracted imitators.)
- (590) The exception to this is a scholar from Oslo, Kari Elizabeth Borresen, who read a paper "The Patristic Use of Female Metaphors Describing God" to the 1979 conference in Oxford. She collects maternal references from Augustine, Jerome, Gregory of Nyssa, Irenaeus, Clement and the Odes of Solomon. This work has not yet been published. I am grateful to Fr. Murray for telling me of it and loaning me his copy.
- (591) McLaughlin (1975) for example lists only Isa.49⁵ & Mt. 23³⁷.
Wolters (1966) in the Introduction to his translation of Julian's Revelations could write dismissively "It is true that there can be found some sort of scriptural warrant for regarding God as our Mother (e.g. Isaiah XLIX, 1,15; LXVI, 13; Matt. XXIII, 37), but such as it is, it is far too flimsy for any doctrine to be built upon it."
- (592) Numbered 10 in Ward (1973) or before modern critical scholarship Oratio 65.
- (593) Ward (1973) p 152 l 358-372. Note the careful architecture of the prayer. Anselm has prepared for this at the start :
"Among Christians you were like a nurse
who not only cared for her sons,
but in some way brought them forth a second time,
with careful and marvellous tenderness." p 141 L 9-12.
- (594) op cit p 153 L 381-2.
- (595) op cit p 153 L 397-9.
- (596) op cit p 153 L 404 - p 154 L 415.
- (597) op cit p 154 L 416-7.
- (598) op cit p 154 L 421-424.
- (599) op cit p 155 L 470 - p 156 L 486.
- (600) Hopkins & Richardson (1974) pp 55-56.
- (601) op cit loc cit.

- (602) It is interesting to wonder what Anselm would have concluded were he writing with current understanding of biology, rather than thinking as his contemporaries did of the fetus developing from a 'homunculus' in the male seed.
- (603) This assumes that Anselm's ideas did not change. There is no reason to suppose that the passage in the Monologion Ch. 42 is intended to correct his earlier prayer.
- (604) Bynum (1977) gives an excellent review of the extent and content of this esp. pp 261-264.
- (605) CFS 4, p 59.
- (606) op cit p 60.
- (607) op cit p 57f.
- (608) CFS 7, p 235.
- (609) To Hugh, a Novice, who later became Abbot of Bonneval. Migne P.L. 182 Letter 322.
- (610) James (1953) Letter 378 p 449. In Latin the central sentence reads: "Ipse erit tibi in matrem, et tu eris ei in filium." P.L. 182 col. 527 C.
- (611) op cit loc cit.
- (612) William of St. Thierry: Meditation 6¹¹, Migne P.L. 180 col. 225 B - 226 A. Trans. from CFS 3 p 131 (by Sister Penelope).
- (613) P.L. 180 col. 230 C. Trans. from CFS 3 p 141. N.B. Latin: "In abscondito abscondite illius absconisti, in medio cordis tui."
- (614) 10⁴ P.L. 180 col. 236 A.
- (615) S.C. 76, p 104. Trans. from CFS 2, p 73.
- (616) op cit, p 140 E.T. p 90.
- (617) S.C. 202, p 210.
- (618) S.C. 202, p 212, L 153-4. Trans. from CFS 32, p 78.
- (619) S.C. 202, p 214, L 160-7. Trans. from CFS 32, p 78.
- (620) S.C. 202, p 30, L 60. Trans. from CFS 8, p 142.
- (621) S.C. 202, Sermon 45; some of the imagery is not to be found in Anselm. In particular the thought of the Holy Spirit as the milk of Christ's breasts. (S.C. 202, p 386). Which is more similar to some of the patristic material e.g. Irenaeus⁴⁹⁷.

- (622) S.C. 202, p 382. Trans. from CFS 32 p 154.
- (623) op cit loc cit.
- (624) S.C. 202, p 384, L 48-52.
- (625) Trans. from CFS 32, p 155.
- (626) Gilbert of Hoyland's "Sermons on the Song of Songs" are to be found in P.L. 184. The translation here is from CFS 14, p 152.
- (627) The word in Latin has the same stem as that for breast.
- (628) P.L. 184, col. 161 B-C from Sermon 31².
- (629) P.L. 184, col. 161 C-D from Sermon 31² continues previous quote.
- (630) Because he concentrates on this later material Bugge (1975) writes : "the depiction of Christ as female is not uncommon in devotional writing for women." p 101. (As Bynum notes there are, in the twelfth century, at least two examples of such imagery in writings for women; Adam de Perseigne S.C. 66, p 108, trans. in CFS 21, p 93; and the passage of Aelred's quoted above n 615; and also one example of a woman using such imagery).
- (631) Legends of St's Katherine, Margaret and Juliana together with various works such as those with which we are concerned. See Bugge (1975).
- (632) Day (1952) p 103, L 5-16.
- (633) See op cit p 179 the fourth kind sounds a trifle strange to modern ears, it is found on p 180-181. The idea develops into thought of the wooing of Our Lord.
- (634) op cit p 180, L 12-18.
- (635) op cit p 180, L 25-32. The biblical quotations are in Latin in the original.
- (636) See above n 615.
- (637) Quoted from Bugge (1975) p 100.
- (638) Quoted in Cabassut (1949) p 7 (in Latin).
- (639) ditto. c/est modern version (trans. from French?) in McLaughlin (1975) n 19.
- (640) See Cabassut op cit loc cit & McLaughlin op cit p 235 (373).
- (641) Quoted in Cabassut op cit p 8 (in Latin).
- (642) op cit loc cit.

- (643) Ch. 51, Wolters (1966) p 144; Warrack (1901) p 110. N.B. In future references to Julian are either from Wolters' version (which is more thoroughly modernized), in which case the page ref. for Warrack's version will be in brackets after the ref. for Wolters. Or the quote is from Warrack in which case the page ref. for Wolters is in brackets.
- (644) op cit p 130 (93), Warrack gives them a general heading "Anent certain points in the foregoing fourteen revelations". Wolters, though he does not thus separate them from the material most directly connected to revelation fourteen, does seem to notice a kind of break here (p 42f), and the echoes of earlier concerns too.
- (645) Warrack(1901) p 62 (107). N.B. The words are from an earlier chapter and are found in the shorter version also. They are central to all Julian's thought not just that of Chs. 44-63.
- (646) Wolters (1966) p 136 (101).
- (647) Warrack (1901) p 102 (136).
- (648) One of the weaknesses of Julian's thought, as theology, is that she fails to be able to seem to take sin seriously as a barrier to this mercy. Anselm begins from his sense of sin and radical separation from God, and hence this poses no problem in his prayer, because Julian begins from this superabundant mercy, sin and separation vanish almost to insignificance.
- (649) Wolters (1966) p 151 (122).
- (650) Warrack here has spouse but Wolters has adapted to husband.
- (651) Wolters (1966) p 157-8 (131).
- (652) Indeed could not use, for it was not coined until the nineteenth century.
- (653) Williams (1939) see his index for refs.
- (654) Wolters (1966) p 158 (131).
- (655) Wolters (1966) p 168 (148).
- (656) op cit p 169-170 (150-1).
- (657) op cit p 170 (151).
- (658) op cit p 164 (139-140).
- (659) This is not so paradoxical as the thought beloved by the Syriac fathers, for example, that Mary gave birth to the Son who gave (new) birth to her!

- (660) op cit p 173 (154-5).
- (661) op cit p 169 (149-150).
- (662) op cit p 170-1 (151).
- (663) op cit p 167 (147).
- (664) op cit p 165 (145).
- (665) op cit p 168 (148-9).
- (666) Warrack (1901) p 151 (171).
- (667) Wolters (1966) p 174 (156).
- (668) It is generally noted that there was an Augustinian friary nearby, and that much of her thought has overtones of his work.
- (669) Reynolds (1952) p 21.
- (670) Eckhart (1924) p 427 saying 41.
- (671) Borresen (1978) esp. pp 321-324 also conclusion.
- (672) His name is not known for certain. For historical background and a translation of his writings see Farmer (1961).
- (673) op cit p 63.
- (674) op cit p 64.
- (675) op cit pp 64-5.
- (676) op cit pp 65f.
- (677) op cit p 69.
- (678) loc cit.
- (679) op cit p 73.
- (680) op cit p 41.
- (681) Farmer (1961) attempts to indicate the range of works available to him, this seems to have been surprisingly extensive.
- (682) e.g. p 56 where he criticizes, or corrects, a Marian Hymn which implied that she had a share in suffering for our salvation (the correction is of course quite orthodox, but perhaps indicates that he has less need than many of his contemporaries to elevate Mary the mother).
- (683) e.g. whilst telling of a virgin who died "as a result of her ardent love for Christ" he notes, in passing, that the parents' grief was only "somewhat mitigated" by their joy at the holiness of their child. (This humane warmth is also a feature of Clement's writings).

- (684) e.g. Woolf (1968) pp 189ff, Gray (1972) pp 143ff.
- (685) See Woolf (1968) p 190.
- (686) Gray (1972) pp 143f.
- (687) Benson, Robert Hugh "A Book of the Love of Jesus, A Collection of Ancient English Devotions in Prose and Verse" (London, 1904) so far I have not been able to locate a copy, passages are quoted in McLaughlin (1975) and referred to in Cabassut (1949), who also notes that the original is Lambeth Codex 546.
- (688) For a discussion of the wider uses of maternal themes in theology and devotional writings, and of the intention and overtones of meaning behind such language, see esp. Bynum (1977), concentrating on the 12th century Cistercian writers.
- (689) Cabassut (1949).
- (690) As Siggins (1978) demonstrates. His paper is also of interest because he links the theological statements with Luther's home and upbringing.
- (691) op cit p 148.
- (692) op cit p 149.
- (693) op cit p 150.
- (694) Hall (1978).

NOTES

Chapter Nine : Mary and Divine Motherhood

- (695) I have attempted to make this critique (and the selection of Marian writings upon which it is based) a fair and sympathetic one - though this is difficult for a Protestant! The criticism may seem like a blanket condemnation. This is not intended - I hope later to show how, backed by a theological understanding of the motherhood of God, Mary's place in theology may be more full than is usually allowed in Protestant thought.
- (696) Throughout this work the term Catholic (with a capital C) is used of persons or things associated with those churches in communion with the Church of Rome. With a small c, catholic retains its dictionary definition of universal or widespread.
- (697) From letter to Maryse Choisey, *Psyché*, 10, p 8 (1955).
- (698) From letter to Père Pierre Leroy, 8th August, 1950, quoted in Lubac (1971).
- (699) Keyser and Collins (1976) p 78.
- (700) Antoine Vergote (1969) p 186.
- (701) Jerusalem Bible, Standard Edition, (1966) p 189, footnote 1; and is common in Patristic and Medieval writings.
- (702) e.g. M. Thurian, "Mary, Mother of our Lord" E.T. of Marie Mere du Seigneur, *Figure de l'Eglise*".
- (703) Pope Leo XIII "Adjutricem populi" (1895), quoted in Rahner (1961).
- (704) e.g. N. Turner in "Peake's Commentary on the Bible".
- (705) See Excursus Two above on "Wisdom" and "Wisdom Christologies".
- (706) This argument is developed by Newman (1974). This is a reprint of 1845 edition.
- (707) Louis Bouyer (1960) Appendix to Ch. 3, p 47.
- (708) op cit p 163.
- (709) op cit p 164.
- (710) For discussion and references see Eichrodt (1961) Vol. 1 pp 107-108 and footnotes 1 & 2 on p 108.
- (711) Bouyer op cit pp 131-2. The underlining is not original but is added to draw attention to the relevant words.

- (712) Pius IX (1946) p 12.
- (713) This is noted by Leeuw (1964) p 98.
- (714) "The Common Catechism, A Christian Book of Faith" (1975) p 621.
- (715) Bouyer op cit p 167.
- (716) All quotations in this section, unless otherwise stated, are from the currently approved missal.
- (717) "The Prayer of the Church: Interim Version of the New Roman Breviary", (1972).
- (718) "St. Andrew's Hymnal: Authorized by the Archbishops and Bishops of Scotland for use in the Scottish Dioceses", (1964).
- (719) op cit Hymn No. 148.
- (720) op cit Hymn No. 144.
- (721) Paul VI (1974) p 20.
- (722) Pius IX (1946) p 12.
- (723) Bouyer (1960) p 188.
- (724) op cit p 189.
- (725) Engelman (1979) also makes a similar point.
- (726) It is, of course, true that Jesus is the fully human revelation of God, but he, theology agrees, is not merely human. Using the phrase 'merely human' in the sense that the channel is merely human, for of course in any revelation of God the agent is divine!

NOTES

Chapter Ten : "Retrospect on Part Two."

- (727) Some of which are presented in detail in Chapter Five:
"God and Gender."
- (728) This is not to exclude gender specific imagery, nor to say that one can never call God e.g. 'King' without in the same breath naming God 'Queen' also. It is to say that exclusive use of exclusive language cannot speak truly of God, only of some exclusive god.
- (729) And psychologically parental language seems necessary. Talk of the Fatherhood of God is an important part of the Christian tradition and we have just argued that exclusive Father-language is inadequate to speak of God.
- (730) It may be that such a religion would be superior, that is beside the present point, it would be different, and I wish to argue that orthodox Christian theology can talk thus of God as mother.
- (731) And therefore rightly has a place in this thesis.
- (732) e.g. hymns such as "Rock of Ages" still speak powerfully today. The psalms which speak of God the dependable protecting rock are a valuable part of Christian spirituality still.
- (733) This is doubtless a result of Jesus' use of the word.
- (734) N.B. This is to impose categories of Trinitarian thought totally foreign to the material, no suggestion is to be implied that the material is intended in this way! It is however of great interest that applying, post facto, such criteria to this material does not lead to one person of the Trinity alone.
- (735) Who, incidently but significantly, is today gaining notoriety as a virulent misogynist.
- (736) This despite the fact that it is those who call themselves 'conservative', 'catholic' or 'Orthodox' who appeal to such an idea today in the debate over ordination.
- (737) At least in theory. In practise as we saw for example in Chapter Five, there is a tendency to be lax in this, whilst still assuming such categories.

- (738) Nor do modern Asian writers tend to use imagery in this way either. Compare some of the works of Asian theology with the manner of western thought. See esp. Hargreaves (1972), this is also noted (often in passing) by other western commentators.
- (739) Murray (1975) p 2, he is speaking of the Syriac Fathers not Clement but the imagery applies to Clement well.
- (740) The earlier twentieth century suggestion of Jung on psychological grounds of a Quaternity, was at variance with all of Christian tradition so that it provoked very little favourable discussion, as a theological option.
- (741) I am unaware of any research which suggests that even those with hemaphroditic bodily characteristics are able to overcome or avoid this. Certainly those who act as, wish to be, or become (in some surgical sense at least) the other sex do not weaken, rather they strengthen the point being made.

NOTES

Chapter Eleven : "Synthesis."

- (742) This term 'chiasm' was borrowed from genetics by Godin and Hallez (1964) to speak of the way in which God was perceived as more like the parent of the opposite sex. According to later work by Deconchy this effect is only found in older samples. It did not occur even in the oldest group in the present study.
- (743) An ungrammatical phrase but one which conveys the meaning intended.
- (744) Neither of these was attempted because mechanical assistance with data processing was limited to a programmable calculator capable of storing a programme of only 36 steps. This meant that the limited extraction of information attempted took up several months of steady work on top of the time spent marking and recording the data. I hope that these extra stages of analysis might be possible in the future if I could obtain access to a micro-computer. (With such a machine and suitable programmes a few weeks should suffice to complete these and any other approaches which suggest themselves.)
- (745) Or perhaps more likely to the female or 'feminine' nature of such talk. Many writers both ancient and modern suggest that the distinction between logos and sophia, reason and intuition, systematics and story is related to the different characters of man and woman. I am aware that most such suggestions are far too sweeping and that many, especially many feminists, would wish to reject any such suggestions out of hand. Nor do I wish to claim that such differences (if some difference along these lines can be allowed as a fact of experience) are an inherent part of maleness or femaleness. Rather I wish (a) to note that as a fact of experience and as tendencies, no more, that some differences along these lines are apparent, (b) to value equally the two kinds of cognitive style and suggest that either alone is incomplete, and (c) to suggest that, for cultural reasons at least, a Theology of the Motherhood of God may well find the style of imagery etc. more appropriate (at least today and in this culture).
- (746) It may well be that the differences spoken of above (esp. in previous note) are only characteristic of western culture. This may be because the distinction has no absolute basis at all, or it may be because other cultures have been better at retaining the strengths of both styles whereas the west has suppressed and devalued the 'feminine' style.

- (747) In the west, particularly in North America there has recently been a fashion for speaking of theology as story and narrative. This, too, is a related tendency. (In the terms of those who have spoken of e.g. Matrist and Patrist tendencies in culture the theological culture of the west seems to have been entering a more Matrist phase generally in recent years.)
- (748) Murray (1975) p 2.
- (749) Aulen (1970) p 90. The first sentence of this was quoted with approval in Excursus One at the beginning of this thesis.
- (750) As has been noted above. e.g. C.S. Lewis quotation on p 76.
- (751) Vergote (1969) p 176. In the absence of a more recent, or British such investigation his is the best and most objective such list available to my knowledge. The Mat-Pat Scale, see above, would of course, if developed, serve this purpose admirably.
- (752) Notably Kitamori (1965), also contemporary German "Theologies of the Cross" see e.g. Moltmann (1974) pp 267ff esp. pp 270ff.
- (753) Dillistone (1968) Chs. VI-VIII pp 216ff.
- (754) To some extent the thought of openness to suffering and pain is a natural consequence of thought of motherhood (and therefore not culturally conditioned) for the act of becoming a mother is the bearing of new life through struggle and pain (the pain and certainly the unpleasantness and hurt of childbirth can be reduced, of course, by social, psychological and medical techniques, but to some degree birthing is always bearing.)
- (755) An interesting example of this is Arnold (1963). This often quoted Theology of Sexuality is permeated by the Woman-receptive helpmeet-Blessed Virgin Mary way of thinking, as a result it often seems to come from some strange culture where man and woman are different species. Fiorenza (1975b) finds one interesting exception to this tendency, Bridget of Sweden who used the place of Mary among the apostles (Acts 2) to justify an abbess leading and ruling a community of women and men. (op cit p 621.)
- (756) The most notable exception to this is the work of Max Thurian already noted, as would be expected from a member of the ecumenical community of Taizé. Thurian (1963) manages to combine much that is good from the Catholic tradition with a Protestant caution which avoids over-zealous devotion.

- (757) Again to follow up this thought in greater detail would lead beyond the bounds of this thesis.
- (758) Bynum (1977).
- (759) Balthasar (1975) p 72.
- (760) Tillich (1968) Vol. 3 p 312.
- (761) op cit pp 312-3.
- (762) op cit p 313.
- (763) op cit. p 313.
- (764) The argument of this thesis differs from the Catholics referred to by seeing the answer not in Mariology but in Theology more narrowly defined. It differs from Tillich in being far less abstractly philosophical and in looking for an answer at the level of concrete imagery. Since it is clear that this is in fact the level of devotion of even sophisticated Christians much of the time, changes in imagery can influence the more metaphysical kinds of theological thought as well as vice-versa.
- (765) This willingness may seem woefully inadequate in the face of centuries of oppression, particularly in Britain where such willingness is less evident and the politely but patronisingly dismissive smile more common. Some feminists may see even the attempts which have been made as mere cosmetic exercises, whilst in fact all continues unchanged. Nonetheless, some efforts have been made to reduce or eliminate sexist language in the Church, particularly in North America. However one evaluates these this tendency may well produce a greater openness to feminine imagery applied to God and thus to the idea of God as mother.
- (766) This discomfort or embarrassment is well illustrated by McLaughlin (1975) with quotes from Cabassut (1949) p 235, Woolf (1968) pp 190-1, and a reference to a paper by Anna Marie Reynolds which apparently manages to discuss Julian's "Spirituality" for 10 pages referring only to the motherhood of the Church (not Christ!). She also refers to the Foreword to the Ward (1973) edition of Anselm's Prayers and Meditations. (McLaughlin speaks of Sister Benedicta Ward as author of this passage, in fact it is by Prof. Southern). The passage is worth quoting in full :

"Then he stumbles on some words of St. Paul in his Epistles to the Thessalonians and Galatians which suggest the contrasting images of a nurse and a woman in labour. With this flimsy aid Anslem finds a new approach to St. Paul, now depicted as a tender nurse and mother. There is indeed a faint absurdity in this double image, but it serves to provide a climax for the prayer by suggesting a further image of Jesus dying in spiritual childbirth so that his children in the faith may live. The two images are then combined, and tossed to and fro - 'both Paul and Jesus are mothers, both are fathers too' - until the prayer ends in a general sense of consolation.

This small example brings out the baroque side of Anslem's prayers - the sometimes wild extravagance of the word-play and association of ideas. In the curious ambiguity of mother and father images it also contains a hint of the psychological complications of Anslem's life; he was a man who had lost his mother and quarrelled with his father, and he was always seeking to replace them in his spiritual life."

Prof. R.W. Southern in Ward (1973) p 11 (underlining added.)

(767) Coughlan and Purdue (1972) p 140.

(768) op cit p 140.

(769) This in the context also of a gospel reading which though it refers to God as Heavenly Father nonetheless speaks of his providence in the comparatively motherly aspects of provision of food and clothing. (Mt. 6²⁴⁻³⁴).

(770) e.g. In addition to Aulén, quoted above, as examples of this : MacQuarrie (1966) p vii opens his preface thus :

"Christian theology seeks to think the Church's faith as a coherent whole."

and Barth (1936) p 1 introduces his Church Dogmatics with the heading:

"THE TASK OF DOGMATICS"

"As a theological discipline, dogmatics is the scientific test to which the Christian Church puts herself regarding the language about God which is peculiar to her."

(771) One of the clearest of these is the possibility of breaking the "Mariological deadlock" between Protestant and Catholic.

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