

## THE MOTHERHOOD OF GOD

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**T**HE FATHERHOOD of God is an idea that is far from exhaustive of God's nature. Alone it would isolate God from a vast part of our own nature.' So wrote Dom Vonier, O.S.B. (in *The Divine Motherhood*, p. 90), and what he does not go on to say in so many words, though the idea is implicit in his book, is voiced by Fr Victor White, O.P., in his article on 'The Scandal of the Assumption' (*LIFE OF THE SPIRIT*, Nov.-Dec. 1950), when he says: 'Perhaps it [the definition of the Assumption] will lead the Church to closer consideration and ultimate formulation of the deep mystery of the "Motherhood of God". For by the Assumption Mary returns to her own eternal Source, and not she but God himself is the ultimate and eternal type of Motherhood, Womanhood, and even materiality.' In what follows there will be suggested, with much diffidence, one possible line of approach to a deeper understanding of this mystery.

To the idea of the Motherhood of God which, though not new, seems to be attracting greater interest in our day, two major objections have been raised: that it is untraditional and that it detracts from the honour and importance due to our blessed Lady whose divine motherhood, it is claimed, as it were supplements and counterbalances the Fatherhood of God. That the idea, though unfamiliar, is not untraditional will be shown in the course of this article, and the lie is already given to the second objection by the quotation above.

It is precisely in and through Mary that we shall come to understand something of this most sweet and gracious aspect of God's mystery; she is the Beatrice who will lead us whither we may catch a glimpse of the face of a Mother in the heart of the Godhead. For as St Grignon de Montfort says (*True Devotion*, III, 7, 4), 'Mary is altogether relative to God: and, indeed, I might well call her the relation to God. She only exists in reference to God. She is the echo of God, who says nothing, repeats nothing, but God.' This is little more than a paraphrase of Wisdom, 7, 26, which the Church applies to Mary: 'She is the brightness of eternal light, and the unspotted mirror of God's majesty, and the

image of his goodness'. In other words, Mary reflects God, she is a sign which points to him and more than a mere sign; a 'sacrament' which represents and communicates him in a manner unparalleled save by her Son who is God himself incarnate. She is most like God, has the greatest 'affinity' to God of any creature, and we can also say with all reverence that God is most like her. Not only the sacred humanity of Jesus which he received from her alone, but the very Godhead has in her its most perfect created image and reflection. 'Thy very face and form, dear Mother, speak to us of the Eternal!' (Newman.) But Mary is, as it were, Womanhood perfected and Motherhood personified.<sup>1</sup> 'God could make a greater world but he cannot make a more perfect Mother than the Mother of God.' (St Bonaventure, *Speculum*, c. 8.) From the Book of Genesis to the Apocalypse she appears repeatedly throughout the Bible as the Woman who is the Sign, a Woman who is a Mother while remaining a Virgin. And we who are blessed with the fullness of the revelation of that which is signified, know that she is the Mother of God as well as of man. 'The divine Motherhood', says Vonier (op. cit. p. 5), 'is the primary and central fact of Mary's election and predestination on the part of God. She is not a saint on whom the divine Motherhood was bestowed as an extra grace: she is the divine Mother to whom sanctity has been granted as the necessary spiritual complement . . .'<sup>2</sup> 'In the sweetness of the divine Motherhood there is revealed to us something that is not contained in the idea of the divine Fatherhood.' (ibid. p. 90.) 'If Christian theology has its smile, the divine Motherhood is that smile. Outside the clear vision of God nothing can reveal so vividly as does the divine Motherhood that side of God to the contemplation of which the Psalmist invites us when he says: "O taste and see that the Lord is sweet." (Ps. 33, 9).' (ibid. p. 84.)

Looking beyond Mary, therefore, we seek in God the 'ultimate and eternal prototype' of that Motherhood which was the *raison d'être* of her predestination and sanctification. And we seek, too, for an assurance that the Mother's love which she lavished on her Creator whom she brought forth, is creation's fullest and most perfect echo of the tenderness which God has for each of the

1 St John in his Gospel never speaks of her by her name but always as 'The Mother of Jesus'.

2 See also Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P. *The Mother of the Saviour and Our Interior Life*, passim but especially c. 1: 'The Divine Maternity: Its Eminent Dignity'.

creatures who are born of his love. That is to say: Is God in any sense 'Mother' in himself and is he 'motherly' towards us? Both reason and revelation would seem to answer 'yes' to either query.

The late Mgr John O'Connor wrote that 'Plato, according to Patmore, says that the supreme being *must* have a bit of motherhood in him'. (Unfortunately he gave no references; can any reader supply them?) '*Nemo tam Mater quam Deus*' is a dictum old enough to be attributed to Tertullian, though apparently falsely. In an early Christian document 'The Odes of Solomon', said to have been used in the composition of the Holy Saturday Office, God is made to say: 'I fashioned their members: My own breasts I prepared for them that they might drink my milk and live thereby.' (viii, 17.) Primitive man seems instinctively to 'feminise' certain aspects of inanimate being, seeing gender behind sex,<sup>3</sup> and to deify creation's feminine element in female goddesses, above all in the Mother Goddess. Even when the development of language has eliminated gender, as in our own, we still retain such turns of phrase as 'Mother Nature', 'Mother Earth', 'the womb of time'. In this idea of 'femininity' seems to be envisaged a certain passivity or, better, *receptivity*, and a fecundity which receives its vivifying principle from without. Some identify this with the scholastic concept of *materiality* or *potentiality*, equating the masculine element with *actuality*. And while woman is regarded as the highest embodiment and personification of this feminine, potential element in creation (cf. Patmore), though both are present in either sex, the creature as such is said to be feminine in regards to God. In Mary pronouncing her *Fiat* at the Annunciation and thereby laying herself completely open to the divine action so that the Wisdom of God became incarnate in her as the fruit of her womb, we have the perfect fulfilment of creaturely, womanly and motherly receptivity and its consequent fertility.

It is in virtue of the hypostatic union of the Word of God with human nature, wrought in Mary's womb at the moment of the Incarnation, that creation and womanhood in Mary's person reach as it were to the confines of the divinity and attain their most perfect likeness to God. But to what aspect of the divine life and activity is the resemblance closest? There can be neither male nor female in God, no materiality in the supreme *Spirit*, no potentiality

<sup>3</sup> cf. Fr Gerald Vann, O.P., in 'The Bread of Life', p. 46, *LIFE OF THE SPIRIT*, Aug./Sept., 1951.

in pure *act*. Maybe the inspired writer of Genesis supplies a clue to the answer. 'God created man to his own image: to the image of God he created him. Male and female he created them.' (c. 1, 27.) In this succinct account of the origin of the human race the diversity of the sexes seems to be closely connected with the image of God, and the same train of thought is followed by St John Chrysostom when speaking of marriage: 'A great mystery is being celebrated . . . They come together and two make one . . . *when they come together making not a lifeless image nor yet the image of anything on earth but of God himself.*' (On Col. 4, 12. Hom. 12. cf. Claudel, *Lord Teach Us to Pray*, p. 54.) He does not expressly develop the parallel but it is easy to do so without doing violence to his thought. Man and the woman who came forth from his side together form as it were one person, two in one flesh ('each one separately is imperfect for the procreation of children, each one is imperfect for the constitution of this present life', *ibid.* 13), and their common offspring proceeds from both as from a single person. ('He made of one, one: and again, having made these two one, he so maketh one, so that now also man is produced of one.' (*ibid.*.) But here, surely, is an image of the life of the Blessed Trinity itself, where from one Father comes forth the Son, receiving his being from him, and the Holy Spirit, the fruit of their mutual union and love, proceeds from both as from a single principle. In procreation man is nearer to God and co-operates with him more immediately than in any other purely human activity. Small wonder then, if the processions of Life and Love within the Trinity, the Beginning and End of all things, should be strongly mirrored in the life-producing act of human love. Since, therefore, man, the human father, is likened to and called after the Father after whom all paternity in heaven and on earth is named (Ephes. 3, 15), it seems equally legitimate to see in the position and function of woman, the mother, an analogy to that of the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. <sup>4</sup>

True, God is not 'Mother' in the human sense of the word, but neither is he 'Father' or anything else as we know it in its finite, created existence. Nor can there be *receptivity* in God who is Pure Act in the same sense as we see it in the active passivity of Mary 'receiving the word of the angel'. Yet to use the mystic's formula

<sup>4</sup> From another point of view man can be likened to the Word and woman to the Spirit.

for a deep theological principle: 'God is all that is good . . . and the good that everything hath it is he'. (Julian of Norwich, *Revelations of Divine Love*, c. 8.) Every particle of created being in the measure of its perfection shares in, reflects and communicates some aspect of the infinite goodness of God, its Cause and Source. (cf. St Thomas, *Summa*. I, 47, 1.) And conversely, every aspect of created perfection is found in an infinitely spiritualised and exalted mode—*eminenter*—in the inconceivable perfection of the Divine Being where '*quidquid habet, hoc est*'. Motherhood, therefore, must be in him since it is from him: and we can attribute to him the love of a Mother which is greatest (I-II, 27, 1) as confidently as we do that of a Father, Brother, Master, Bridegroom—especially since he has already done so himself.<sup>5</sup>

Again, every desire of the human soul is ultimately a desire for God who alone can satisfy its needs and yearnings: 'Thou hast made us for thyself, O God, and our hearts are restless until they rest in thee' (St Augustine). Therefore the longing for a mother's love and care which is one of the deepest instincts of the heart of man must, like all the rest, find its fulfilment in God. The eternal rest of the Beatific Vision is fittingly likened to the repose of the child in its mother's arms.<sup>6</sup> Holy Scripture says of Divine Wisdom: 'In the latter end thou shalt find rest in her' (Ecclus. 6, 29), and Wisdom Incarnate promised that in him we should find rest for our souls (Matth. 11, 29). Patmore, with his 'Woman is the ultimate rest of all things', seems once more to be in line with this train of thought.

Most of the Fathers of the Church who have broached the subject of Motherhood in God seems to have considered this highest and most touching form of human affection as the one best fitted to represent and suggest the infinitely superior 'too great' love which God has for each of his children.<sup>7</sup> Other spiritual

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Deut. 32, 11. Isaias, 46, 3; 49, 15; 66, 9; 12. Matth. 23, 27.

<sup>6</sup> e.g. St John of the Cross, *Spir. Cant.*, St. 26, Note: 'This is the very service he now renders the soul, comforting and caressing it as a Mother her child whom she nurtures in her bosom'.

<sup>7</sup> E.g. St Jerome, *In Isaiam*, Lib. 18 (in cap. 66, v. 13), PL. 24, 687-688. 'Misericordiam Creatori in creaturas suas, exemplo matrum discimus, quae liberos amore in sinu nutriendos, omnem superant caritatem'. Also *ibid.* Lib. 13 (in cap. 46, v. 3), PL. 24, 468. St Chrysostom, *Ad Stagirium ascetam a daemonio vexatum*, n. 5, PG. 47, 427: *Ibid.* *Ad eos qui scandalizati sunt ob adversitates*, Liber Unus, cap. 6, PL. 52, 488-489: Hom. 60 *ad pop. Ant.* (Fer. ii infra oct. corporis christi).

writers, ancient and modern, have from time to time used the same figure of speech.<sup>8</sup> But St Augustine does not scruple to go further, and in two passages at least he speaks explicitly of 'the Wisdom of God, our Mother', '*Sapientia Dei, mater nostra*'.<sup>9</sup> Nor does he consider that such an expression needs any excuse or explanation. Hugh of St Cher, a lesser though still eminent authority, is equally explicit. 'The Lord therefore is not only a mother, but more than a mother. He is a father in creating thee without labour, as the father begets without labour. He is also a mother in redeeming thee with difficulty and labour; for he brought us forth in travail on the cross. Likewise he is a brother by sharing our nature. And even a spouse, making us fruitful with good works. Hence Ecclus. 4, 11: 'Thou shalt be as an obedient son of the Most High and I will have mercy on thee more than a mother.' (in *Libro Isaiae*, c. 49, 15.)

Thus Julian of Norwich, whose profound and beautiful chapters on the Motherhood of God (57-63) deserve a separate study, was in safe and distinguished company when in the beholding of the working of the Blessed Trinity she understood three properties—Fatherhood, Motherhood and Lordhood (c. 58), so that 'as verily as God is our Father, so verily is God our Mother'. (c. 59.) Since her revelations deal with God's love for us, she is only concerned with the manifestations of his Motherhood *ad extra*, and these, like St Augustine, she ascribes to the Second Divine Person 'the deep Wisdom of the Trinity' (c. 58); for, she says, 'all the fair

8 e.g. St Francis de Sales, *The Spiritual Director of Devout and Religious Souls*, c. 34. Dom Pierre-Celestin Lou Tseng-Tsiang, *Ways of Confucius and Christ*, pp. 74-75. St Mechtild (*Select Revelations*, Eng. tr., 1873) has a curious allegory in which she sees Love personified as a 'fair Virgin' who at one time lifts God on high in her arms. Yet the Saint says that 'God is Love and Love is God' (p. 57). Elsewhere our Lord tells her: 'Thou shalt call My Love thy Mother and none other shall be thy mother. And as children suck their mother's breasts, even so shalt thou suck from My Love inward consolation and unutterable health, and My Love shall also feed thee, and clothe thee, and provide for thee in all thy wants, like a mother who provideth for her only daughter.' (p. 127.)

9 *Quaestionum Evangelium* Lib. 1, Quaest. 36: *In Johannem Tract.* 108, n. 6: 'Nam et in ipsis quae sumimus alimentis, usque adeo non est lacti contrarius solidus cibus, ut ipse lactescat, quo possit esse aptus infantibus, ad quos per matris vel nutricis provenit carnem: sicut fecit etiam *mater ipsa sapientia*, quae cum sit in excelsis angelorum solidus cibus, dignata est quodammodo lactescere parvulis, cum Verbum caro factum est.'

working and all the sweet natural office of dearworthy Motherhood is appropriate to the Second Person' (c. 59), so that 'This fair and lovely word MOTHER, it is so sweet and so kind in itself that it may not verily be said of none but him: and to her that is very Mother of him and of all'. (c. 60.)

It is true, as St Thomas says (I-II, 23, 2), that 'to produce any effect in creatures is the effect of the whole Trinity, by reason of the oneness of nature', but it is none the less legitimate to appropriate certain effects to one or other of the divine Persons. Therefore, just as we ascribe Fatherhood to the Father, though the whole Trinity adopts men as sons of God (*ibid.*), so it seems quite fitting to appropriate Motherhood to the Second Person. This is in spite of its appropriation to the Father in the Odes of Solomon: 'The Son is the cup and he who was milked is the Father: and the Holy Spirit milked him' (xix, 1); of our Lord's own words to Nicodemus: 'Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost . . .' (John 3, 5), and of St Catherine's remark in the *Treatise of Divine Providence* (omitted from Thorold's translation of her Dialogue), that 'the Holy Spirit, like a tender Mother, nourishes these men (who have renounced everything) on the breast of his divine charity'.<sup>10</sup>

For in the first place, as we have already shown, the relations of the Son to the Father and the Holy Spirit seem to be the most obvious exemplar of the position and function of woman, the mother, as regards her husband and child, as well as of the attitude of the creature as such towards God and of its response to his action. The whole economy of the Incarnation, whereby it is 'in Christ Jesus', as members of the Mystical Body of the Word made flesh, that man returns to God and is adopted into the life of the Blessed Trinity, seems to lend support to this suggestion. Again, when Holy Scripture personifies Wisdom in the form of a Woman—and Christ himself endorses this (Matth. 11, 20; Luke 11, 49)—the Church applies the same passages both to our Blessed Lady and to Eternal Wisdom, once more underlining the close affinity between her, the Woman, the Virgin Mother, and the Wisdom of God. (The inevitable paradoxes need not deter us. Christianity is built on them, beginning with the Man-God, and

<sup>10</sup> See also Père Bernadot, O.P., *Le Rôle Maternel du Saint Esprit in Notre Vie Divine*. (Cerf., 1936.)



Mary's part in the hypostatic union makes them inevitable in her case too. Dante's glorious line

*Vergine Madre, Figlia del tuo Figlio*

has numberless echoes and itself echoes a phrase of St Augustine.)<sup>11</sup> Perhaps the fact that the 3rd Antiphon at Lauds for the Circumcision compares Mary's untarnished virginity, i.e. her virginal Motherhood, to the burning bush in which the angel appeared to Moses, and that St Justin Martyr (1st Apology, c. 63) declares that this was a theophany of the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, may have some relevance here.

But if there is ample justification for seeking in Divine Wisdom the eternal prototype of all materiality, Womanhood and Motherhood, the appropriation to him of the Motherhood of the whole Trinity in respect of creatures would seem to be equally apt. For it is by the Wisdom of God that all things are conceived and created (cf. *S. Th.* I-II, 93, 1), and as known and loved by God they exist from all eternity 'in Verbo' as in the womb of God, being born of him when they are brought into actual existence by creation. And the same God 'in whom we live and move and have our being', the same Wisdom which created things, continues to conserve them and to direct them to their proper ends. This is Mother Julian's 'Motherhood in kind', and it would seem to be the inspiration of those writers who describe the spiritual life in terms of being as a child in its mother's arms (St Francis de Sales, loc. cit.) or even in the Mother's womb. (e.g. 'God is Like a Mother', by Père Dehau, O.P., LIFE OF THE SPIRIT, Nov. 1948).<sup>12</sup>

Then, when the Word was made Flesh—Mother Julian says that 'he arrayed and dight himself full ready in our poor flesh, himself to do the service and offices of Motherhood in all things' (c. 60)—he as it were bore us all with him as the members in the Head—'us all having enclosed in him' (ibid. c. 57)—so that Mary his Mother is truly ours too. Thus began the 'Motherhood of Grace' which culminated in his bringing us forth on the Cross like many another Mother who gives birth to her child at the cost of her own life.

11 *De Sancta Virginitate*, c. vi: [Maria] 'et Mater est et Virgo. Et mater quidem spiritu, non capitis nostri, quod est ipse Salvator, ex quo magis illa spiritualiter nata est.'

12 There is an original turn in the similitude as used by Bl. Marie-Thérèse de Soubiran: 'Our Lord treats me like a loving Mother who lifting her child in her arms, takes away everything so that the little one shall only look at her, only think of her, only love her'.



When Christ used the familiar figure of the woman in labour he applied it to the Apostles' grief at his coming departure, but its relevance to his own case was even more striking. For the dolours of his passion and death were indeed the birth-pangs of his Church, that 'new creature' who, like a Second Eve, came forth from his pierced side and opened heart on the Cross, or like a second Adam rose in and with him from the tomb as from the womb of Mother Earth.<sup>13</sup> Hugh of St Cher mentions this ghostly travail, the Carthusian mystic, Marguerite d'Oyngt (1310) described it in passionate language,<sup>14</sup> and our own Mother Julian treats of it in an equally beautiful if more restrained passage (c. 60). And while the whole Church is born of Christ on Calvary or rises with him on Easter morn, this 'regeneration' is effected in each individual soul by baptism where 'that water of salvation is at once your grave and your mother'. (St Cyril of Jerusalem, *On the Rites of Baptism*, II, p. 4.)

But a Mother's office is only begun with the birth of her child. Most of Mother Julian's chapters are concerned what with she calls the 'Motherhood of Working or of Mercy' in which she sees all God's dealings with the souls in terms of a mother feeding, tending, healing, teaching, correcting her child. It is most striking to note how far this corresponds to the picture of Wisdom which emerges from the Sapiential books, and how both are verified in the Gospel portrait of our Lord. St Paul says that at the Incarnation 'the goodness and kindness of God our Saviour appeared' (Titus, 3, 4), and we might add 'gentleness, meekness and compassion', all of them typically 'feminine' qualities. Nor should this be surprising from a psychological point of view, since Christ, having no human Father, would presumably 'take after' his Mother in a unique degree. Like Wisdom, he prepares a meal for his children and calls them to his table, feeding them with his own flesh and blood as does a mother with her milk. He teaches, corrects, comforts, heals. He embraces and caresses the little ones, literally fulfilling the lovely prophecy of Isaias (66, 12), 'You shall be carried at the breasts and upon the knees they shall carry you; as one whom a mother caresses, so will I comfort you.' His care for and devotion to his Apostles even at the hour of their betrayal and

<sup>13</sup> El Greco's *Agony in the Garden* is regarded as portraying Christ in travail with the Apostles, the Church in embryo, sleeping in the womb of time.

<sup>14</sup> Quoted in *Pax*, March 1935, p. 282.

after the Resurrection recalls another passage from the same prophet (49, 15): 'Can a mother forget her infant so as not to have pity on the son of her womb? And if she should forget, yet shall not I forget.' Yet the simile chosen by our Lord himself was that of the humble mother hen sheltering her brood under her wings and protecting them from all harm: 'Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together as the hen doth gather her chickens under her wing and thou wouldst not'. (Matth. 23, 27.)<sup>15</sup> Whenever we sing or hear at Compline that lovely versicle: 'Keep us, O Lord, as the apple of thine eye, and protect us under the shadow of thy wings', we have an echo of his words and a ready-made liturgical invocation to God, our eternal Mother.

Another point which could be laboured is the continuation of the allegory and paradox of Motherhood in the Church. Although a city, the Heavenly Jerusalem, she is also the Bride adorned for her husband and like Mary, her prototype, a Mother too. 'That Jerusalem which is our Mother', says St Paul (Gal, 4, 26), while St Augustine describes her as 'She who following his Mother daily brings forth his members and is a virgin still' (*De Fide Spe et Caritate*, 34). 'Holy Mother Church' we call her and are proud to be her children, spiritually born, nurtured, taught, corrected by her. But this Woman, while being like Mary the Bride and Helper of Christ, is also Christ himself, the Body of the Mystic Christ. So once more we are face-to-face with Christ our Mother, still nourishing, protecting, cherishing us all by his all-embracing love. The Wisdom of God conceiving and creating us, Wisdom Incarnate giving us spiritual birth by dying for us, the Mystical Christ nurturing and training us until we have reached the fullness of the age of Christ: and all is one Love, one Wisdom, one Mother, God himself.

15 St Augustine comments (*Quaest. Ev. loc. cit.*): 'Quod dixit Dominus ad Jerusalem, "Quoties volui congregare filios tuos, sicut gallina congregat filios suos sub alas, et noluisti?" Hoc genus animantis magnum affectum in filios habet, ita ut eorum infirmitate affecta et ipsa infirmetur; et quod difficile in ceteris animantibus invenies, alis suis filios protegens, contra milvum pugnet: sic etiam mater nostra Sapientia Dei, per carnis susceptionem infirmata quodammodo: (unde et Apostolus dicit, quod infirmum est Dei fortius hominibus;) protegit infirmitatem nostram, ut restitit diabolo, ne nos rapiat. In qua defensione, quod adversus milvum conatur affectu, haec adversus diabolum pacifici potestate.'

Abbot Vonier has said (op. cit. p. 101) that 'true civilisation is easily tested by its attitude towards motherhood'. If that be so, it is to be feared that our own cuts a sorry figure in such a test. Woman is esteemed for much that is great and valuable, but too often at the cost of that motherhood, physical or spiritual, without which she fails to be her true self or to fulfil her real vocation. Yet woman is the symbol and the mother the human school of that innate wisdom without which all other knowledge leads to folly and all 'progress' ends in destruction. Little use is all our knowledge, 'science' or more often mere information, without wisdom, that instinctive awareness of things in their highest causes which is ultimately a knowledge of God himself, from whom they come, to whom they lead, without whom they would cease to exist. When God came on earth he entrusted himself to the keeping of a woman, a human mother, and the phrase 'they found the child with his mother' is almost a refrain in the early pages of the Gospel. The order of things has not changed, and if the world could but rediscover the secret of true motherhood, it might the more easily rediscover its God who is Wisdom itself, 'the Mother of all good things' (cf. Wisdom, 8, 12). How shall this be done? Surely by finding first Mary, the Seat of Wisdom, the perfection of human motherhood and mirror of the divine. Happily there are signs that she, Queen of earth as well as of heaven and Mother of both God and men, is emerging from her Apocalyptic exile in the desert and claiming once more the love and loyalty of her children. While we acclaim with fresh honours the glories of her triumph in heaven, she makes her presence felt on earth as never before. Fitting it would be, therefore, for her to make better understood here below that mystery of God's life and love which in heaven she penetrates more deeply and reflects more gloriously than all the rest of creation combined.

To end, as we began, with a quotation from Fr Victor White's article: 'This deep mystery of the Motherhood of God . . . leaves traces in the records of many Christian and non-Christian mystics. . . . The fact that Gnostics, Cabbalists, Boehme, the Russian sociologists and others have presented unacceptable formulations of this obscure mystery (may we not have added to their number!) is not to say that it does not exist. It might seem that a clearer consciousness of it will be called for in any new Christian era that awaits our race; and that humanly speaking, a deeper awareness

of it will be necessary if the Gospel is ever to be made intelligible to the cultures of the East and its teeming millions.

As Christ, ascending into heaven, leads the way to God our eternal Father, perhaps Mary, assumed into the same heaven, will lead to deeper knowledge and love of God, our eternal Mother' (loc. cit.).

