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## The Divine Maternity in Sacred Scripture

Bernard J. Le Frois

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## THE THEME OF THE DIVINE MATERNITY IN THE SCRIPTURES

If the present article aimed merely at proving the Divine Maternity, we would turn at once to the pages of the Gospels. But revelation in the Scriptures is progressive. God gradually prepared His people for the great truths of Christianity. He planted a tiny grain in the Old Testament and let it ripen into the golden sheaf in the New. The bud which the prophets put forth in their writings blossoms into full flower in the Gospels. A portrait, drawn by the Holy Spirit in broad lines of old, is completed with the death of the last Apostle. It is incumbent on the exegete to treat Scripture as a whole, for God is its author in its entirety. In that unity of perspective let us examine the theme of the Divine Maternity, in order to appreciate its initial beginnings and its progressive development.<sup>1</sup>

The Divine Maternity is inseparably bound up with the Incarnation of God's Son, the Savior of mankind.<sup>2</sup> As the character of that Coming Savior clarifies, the portrait of His Mother becomes clearer, until in the bright daylight of the fullness of time the picture is complete, though perhaps not

<sup>1</sup> J. Schildenberger, O.S.B., *Vom Geheimnis des Gotteswortes*, Heidelberg, 1950, pp. 81-82; A. Gelin, P.S.S., *Les idées maitresses de l'Ancien Testament*, Paris, 1948, pp. 47-48. My contention is well brought out in an article which became available as this was about to go to press: E. May, O.F.M.Cap., *Mary in the Old Testament*, in *Mariology* (ed. J. Carol, O.F.M.), vol. 1, Milwaukee, 1954, pp. 53-56. He quotes an excellent passage from J. Arendzen, *Our Lady in the Old Testament*, in *Our Blessed Lady*, London, 1934, p. 10: "Divine revelation in the Old Testament . . . was then a living *progressive* revelation both by the spoken and the written Word, as it is now a living *completed* revelation contained both in Scripture and Tradition and maintained by the infallible Church."

<sup>2</sup> J. Bittremieux, *De notione divinae Maternitatis B.V.M.*, in *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovaniensis*, vol. 1, 1924, pp. 71-72.

even then fully appreciated. It is left to all generations to probe its depths and recognize its hidden value.<sup>3</sup>

## I. THE DIVINE MATERNITY IN PROPHECY

In the Old Testament, the Coming Messiah is described on the one hand as a true man, descended from the Patriarchs, and on the other hand, in some mysterious manner as endowed with divine attributes and possessing the very name of God (El),<sup>4</sup> an enigma that must have remained unsolved for many. In four passages, there looms up the figure of a Woman inseparably connected with the person of the Coming Messiah, and that Woman is His Mother: the Mother of the Warrior-Conqueror, the Mother of David's Lord, the Virgin-Mother of Emmanuel, and the Mother of the Shepherd-Ruler born in Bethlehem.

### (A) *The Mother of the Warrior-Conqueror (Gen. 3, 15)*

I will put enmity between you and the Woman  
between your seed and her seed;  
He shall crush your head, and you shall lie  
in wait for his heel.

<sup>3</sup> A. Bea, S.J., *Das Marienbild des Alten Bundes*, in *Katholische Marienkunde* (ed. P. Straeter, S.J.), vol. 1, Paderborn, 1947, pp. 24-29; D. Bertetto, S.D.B., *Maria nel domma cattolico*, Torino, 1950, pp. 6-54, 69-127. P. F. Ceuppens, O.P., *De Mariologia Biblica*, ed. 2a, Romae, 1951; A. Maas, S.J., article *Virgin Mary*, in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 15, col. 464-467; E. May, O.F.M.Cap., *art. cit.*, pp. 56-79; E. Messenger, *Our Lady in the Scriptures*, in *A Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture*, London, 1953, § 84-86; C. Moeller, *Doctrinal Aspects of Mariology*, in *Lumen Vitae*, vol. 8, pp. 227-238; M. Peinador, C.M.F., *De argumento scripturistico in Mariologia*, in *Ephemerides Mariologicae*, vol. 1, 1951, pp. 313-350; A. Schaefer, *The Mother of Jesus in Holy Scripture* (Engl. translation by Broassart), Cincinnati, 1913, pp. 89-107.

<sup>4</sup> A. Schaefer, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

Much has been written on this passage.<sup>5</sup> From an exegetical standpoint, the logical context seems to demand that the woman be Eve, or chiefly Eve, for the article (*hā*) seems to suppose someone mentioned before, who is none other than Eve, the conquered one. But it is the prophetic context rather than the logical context that is the key to correct interpretation in this instance. A recent study by Father Rigaux in *Revue Biblique* shows that the conquered woman is merely the point of departure.<sup>6</sup> Verses 14-15 are a prophecy, and in that prophecy, the Woman is intimately bound up with the eschatology and messianic import of the passage, which is totally one of Victory for the Woman and her Offspring. In subsequent messianic prophecies, the Woman who is intimately bound up with the Messiah in His victorious work of salvation is not the conquered woman but the Victorious Woman, a New Eve, the Mother of the Messiah.<sup>7</sup> Hence, the Mother of the Messiah appears on the scene in *Gen. 3, 15* in the *literal* sense.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup> For extensive bibliography see D. Unger, O.F.M.Cap., *The First-Gospel: Gen. 3, 15*, St. Bonaventure, N. Y., 1953; also E. May, O.F.M.Cap., in *Marian Studies*, vol. 3, 1952, pp. 114-120; Id., *art. cit.*, in *Mariology* (ed. J. Carol), pp. 57-60.

<sup>6</sup> R. Rigaux, O.F.M., *La Femme et son lignage dans Genèse 3, 14-15*, in *Revue Biblique*, vol. 61, 1954, pp. 321-348: "Dans la malédiction du Serpent, la Femme n'est Ève individu que comme au point de départ. Elle n'est mentionnée qu'en fonction d'une autre. La Femme est intimement liée à l'eschatologie et au messianisme de récit. L'union de la Femme au lignage est une association au Messie dans la Victoire sur le Serpent" (p. 345).

<sup>7</sup> Semitic mode of thought explains for Rigaux why the Woman is no longer Eve, the conquered one, but the Victorious Woman (p. 346). It is important to remember that the woman is first called Eve only in *Gen. 3, 20*. Before that she is simply "the woman".

<sup>8</sup> R. Rigaux, *art. cit.*, p. 345: "La Femme et son lignage, qui annoncent un Messie-homme, ont la relation de mère à fils. La Mère du Messie apparaît donc dans *Gen. 3, 14-15* au sens littéral. Retenons toujours que nous sommes en contexte prophétique et qu'il ne faut pas demander aux voyants les clartés des réalisations subséquentes." P. F. Ceuppens, O.P., in his second edition of *Mariologia Biblica*, Romae, 1951, also asserts on p. 16 that Mary is intended according to the fuller literal sense. The Magisterium has shown itself favorable

Yet it would be folly for the race of Adam to hope that one of its descendants could conquer the wily Tempter, when Adam himself, endowed with abundant gifts, suffered defeat; unless the Warrior-Conqueror, whom that Woman is to bring forth, is greater than the Serpent-Tempter. Here, in broad outlines, is the first glimpse of a Savior, greater than Satan, and of a New Eve who brings him forth.

(B) *The Mother of David's Lord* (Ps. 109, 1; Ps. 21, 10-11)

Not only was David promised a Favorite Royal Son in the person of the Coming Messiah (2 Sam. 7, 12), but he was even given an intimation of the transcendent nature of that Anointed One. David, himself, under the influence of the Holy Spirit (Mk. 12, 36) calls him his Lord, and says of him that he shares the throne of Yahweh: Yahweh said to my Lord: Sit at my right hand. (Ps. 109, 1.)

The Pharisees were very willing to acknowledge that the great Messias-King of Israel would be David's son, but they were stunned into silence when Jesus made them realize that David himself recognized in Him a person of superior dignity, (Mt. 22, 45) a dignity to which Jesus constantly laid claim.<sup>9</sup>

That same Messias cries out<sup>10</sup> in another messianic psalm:

to a Marian interpretation for Gen. 3, 15: Pius XII in *Munificentissimus Deus*, in *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, vol. 42, 1950, p. 768; also in *Fulgens Corona*, *ibid.*, vol. 45, 1953, p. 578. For Pius IX in *Ineffabilis Deus* cf. *Marianum*, vol. 13, 1951, pp. 369-395.

<sup>9</sup> All Israel awaited the great King, descendant of David, Messias. That is evident both from the New Testament (*Acts* 1, 6) and from the many apocryphal writings in use at the time. In view of that, the argument of Jesus would fall flat if He confronted the Pharisees with merely the messianic dignity of Israel's King. It has force only in connection with His claims which the Pharisees were well aware of (*Jn.* 5, 18; 8, 58; 10, 33). Cf. A. Jones, in *A Catholic Commentary*, § 713,d.

<sup>10</sup> The same person, the Messias, is speaking in both Ps. 109 and Ps. 21. It matters little whether David is the author of the latter psalm or not. The title of the psalm gives evidence to its antiquity.

(O Yahweh) you have been my guide since I was first formed,  
 my security at my mother's breast.  
 To you I was committed at birth,  
 from my mother's womb you are my God (Ps. 21, 10-11).

In this verse, the Messiah, who is David's Lord, refers four times to His birth from His Mother, and simultaneously to the fatherly care of His God.<sup>11</sup>

(C) *Virgin-Mother of Emmanuel, El Gibbor* (Is. 7, 14 and 9, 5)

At the time of the great prophets, the portrait becomes clearer. "Isaias saw his glory and he spoke of him," exclaimed St. John the Evangelist concerning Christ (Jn. 12, 41). But glory (*doxa*, *kābōd*) is the technical term for the manifestation of the divinity in theophanies. Hence, Father Stanley, S.J., in a recent article in *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* concludes: "St. John points out that the Seer had beheld the mystery of Christ's divinity".<sup>12</sup> In this light, the concatenation of Emmanuel prophecies in Isaias, chapters 7-12, yields its treasures. A child shall be given as a sign of victory to the house of David (7, 10-14); the character of that child is symbolized in the name Emmanuel, that is, God-is-on-our-side-to-help-us (7, 14). Emmanuel is Juda's King (8, 6) and He has the unique epithets of Wonder-Counsellor, Mighty God (El Gibbor), Prince of Peace, Father forever (9, 5). The

<sup>11</sup> Cf. P. F. Ceuppens, O.P., *De Prophetiis messianicis in Antiquo Testamento*, Romae, 1935, p. 361; T. Bird, in *A Catholic Commentary*, § 343, d.

<sup>12</sup> D. M. Stanley, S.J., *The Theme of the Servant of Yahweh in Primitive Christian Soteriology and its Transposition by St. Paul*, in *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, vol. 16, 1954, pp. 405-406: "What does John then mean when he says that Isaias beheld His glory? John points out that the Seer had beheld the mystery of Christ's divinity, manifested to him not only in the 'glory' he had beheld at the beginning of his prophetic career, but also in the vision of the passion and resurrection of Christ, Servant of Yahweh. . . ."

remnant of Israel will lean upon Yahweh and will return to El Gibbor, the Mighty God (10, 20-21).

Though of itself the name "Emmanuel" does not designate divinity as the nature of the child, the same child is the El Gibbor, and in the above concatenation, that contains a mystery to which no satisfactory explanation could be given until the fullness of time solved the mystery.<sup>13</sup>

The Mother of this Emmanuel-El Gibbor is the *Almāh*, the maiden in *Is.* 7, 14, an individual who becomes a mother in the true sense to this child, for she is envisioned as being with child, bringing him forth and naming this child. Of itself the word "*almāh*" designates a young unmarried maiden of marriageable age, presumed to be a virgin by the strict moral code of the Hebrews.<sup>14</sup> In the context, it is well chosen to designate one who is simultaneously both Virgin and Mother. That is how the Jewish translators of the Scriptures into Greek understood it, for they used the technical term *parthénos*,<sup>15</sup> and St. Matthew (1, 22-23) quotes *Is.* 7, 14 to prove his point that the Virgin-Birth of Jesus was foretold in the Old Testament.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Stated by no less an authority than the non-Catholic German exegete F. Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Prophecies of Isaiah* (translated from the 3rd. German ed.), London, 1891, p. 213: "El Gibbor ascribes to Him in some way Divine Being. El in *Isaias* is always the name of God and in *Is.* 10, 21 the same epithet is predicated of Yahweh." See E. Power, S.J., *A Catholic Commentary*, § 427, i; W. McClellan, S.J., *El Gibbor*, in *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, vol. 6, 1944, pp. 276-288.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. C. Lattey, S.J., in *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, vol. 8, 1946, pp. 369-376; vol. 9, 1947, pp. 89-95; 147-154. His theory of "compenetration" is neither convincing nor necessary, once it is clear that *Is.* 7, 15 speaks of the messianic attributes of justice and judgment, not merely of moral discernment obtained with the use of reason. See E. Power, *loc. cit.*

<sup>15</sup> "*Parthénos*" employed by the Septuagint Jewish translators about 200 B. C., betrays the orthodox Jewish conviction concerning the *Almah*. The Pharisees may have ignored it, for their interpretation of much of Scripture was along material and political lines.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. P. Toschi, *Maria*, in *Enciclopedia Cattolica* (Città del Vaticano, 1952), vol. 8, p. 78; A. Vaccari, S.J., *De signo Emmanuelis*, in *Verbum*

(D) *Mother of the Shepherd-Ruler Born in Bethlehem*  
(*Mich.* 5, 2-3)<sup>17</sup>

Micheas sees the Shepherd-Ruler born in Bethlehem and marching out in the cause of Yahweh:

But you, O Bethlehem Éphrata,  
who are little to be among the clans of Juda,  
from you shall come forth for me  
One who is to be Ruler in Israel. (5, 2)

Micheas ascribes to him a mysterious pre-existence, activities prior to his birth in Bethlehem:

His activities (or: goings out, Vg: egressus) are from of old,  
from ancient days (5, 2b).

Because it is God's plan to raise up a Savior, He will leave Israel to the mercy of her enemies until the time of His birth:

Therefore he shall give them up,  
Until the One who is to bear brings forth. (5, 3)

Again we see the mother who is to give birth to the Messiah. That is not Mother Sion, of the preceding chapter (4, 9-10), for Sion is never portrayed as giving birth to the individual Messiah.<sup>18</sup>

*Domini*, vol. 17, 1937, p. 466; M. Zerwick, S.J., in *Verbum Domini*, vol. 19, 1939, p. 249; E. May, O.F.M.Cap., in *Mariology* (ed. J. Carol, O.F.M.), vol. 1, *art. cit.*, pp. 62-65.

<sup>17</sup> P. F. Ceuppens, O.P., *De Prophetiis messianicis* . . . , p. 346; A. Robert, P.S.S., *La sainte Vierge dans l'Ancien Testament*, in *Maria* (ed. H. du Manoir), vol. 1, Paris, 1949, p. 38; K. Smyth, S.J., in *A Catholic Commentary*, § 535, g-h; E. May, *art. cit.*, pp. 65-67.

<sup>18</sup> F. P. Ceuppens, *Mariologia* . . . , p. 44.

And he shall stand and feed his flock,  
In the strength of Yahweh,  
in the majesty of the Name of Yahweh his God. (5, 4)

Micheas saw the Mother of the mysterious Shepherd-Ruler of Israel, who embodied in himself the marvels of divine majesty and might, so that the people dwell secure.

Then, a word on the memorable passage from Jeremias 31, 22:

Yahweh has created a new thing on the earth:  
A Woman cares for a man.

It is well known that many exegetes no longer hold this to be a messianic passage. Yet, it is an undeniable fact that the prophet describes something that is no less than a new creation,<sup>19</sup> the very words of St. Paul for the great work of the Incarnation (*Gal.* 6, 15). The entire context is messianic, and the word employed for "man" (*gēbēr*) is etymologically the same as Gibbor of *Is.* 9, 5, a title of the divinity. Hence, Father Lattey accepts the traditional view sustained by Father Knabenbauer, in which Jeremias envisions the Mighty One being cared for by motherly instinct and love.<sup>20</sup>

To resume: the theme of the Divine Maternity has its beginnings in the Old Testament. It clarifies as the image of the Coming Savior grows clearer. It ripens into maturity in the fullness of time.

## II. THE DIVINE MATERNITY IN REALITY

In explicit terms, the New Testament declares Mary to be the Mother of Jesus in the strict sense of the word,<sup>21</sup> for Mary

<sup>19</sup> The verb *bārā* is only used of divine actions, as in *Gen.* 1, 1.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. C. Lattey, S.J., *A Catholic Commentary*, § 462, f. A somewhat different aspect is presented by G. Closen, S.J., *Femina circumdabit virum*, in *Verbum Domini*, vol. 16, 1936, pp. 295-304.

<sup>21</sup> St. Thomas briefly defines motherhood in *Summa Theol.* III, q. 35, art. 4: "Ex hoc dicitur aliqua mulier alicuius mater quod eum concepit et genuit."

conceives Jesus (*Lk.* 1, 31), bears Him within her (*Lk.* 1, 42), brings Him forth (*Lk.* 2, 7; *Mt.* 1, 16), gives Him His name and brings Him up as her child (*Lk.* 2). Further, the New Testament maintains that Mary's Motherhood is a virginal Motherhood, for Mary conceived Jesus by the power of the Most High and the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit (*Mt.* 1, 18-25; *Lk.* 1, 35). Moreover, the New Testament proclaims Jesus, born of Mary, to be true God and true man, and that from the very moment of His conception. Not only does Christ bear witness to His own divine sonship in the metaphysical sense (*Jn.* 5, 18; 8, 58; 10, 33), but He works miracles to confirm it (*Jn.* 11, 42; 14, 11). Eyewitness St. John writes his Gospel to prove it (*Jn.* 1, 1-14; 20, 31), and St. Paul sees the divinity and humanity united in the very conception of Jesus (*Gal.* 4, 4; cf. *Rom.* 9, 5; *Phil.* 2, 6-7). Now since Mary conceived and gave birth to Him who is God's own Son in the metaphysical sense, Mary is truly the Mother of the Son of God, and since the Son of God is God, Mary is truly the Mother of God.<sup>22</sup> This is the general argument, conclusive and to the point. But let us take up individual passages in the order in which they were written, so as to get a better view of this august mystery.

(A) *The New Birth from the Virgin and the Spirit*  
(*Mt.* 1, 18-25)

On the very first page of the New Testament we are face to face with a brand new thing among the children of men,

<sup>22</sup> P. F. Ceuppens, *Mariologia* . . . , pp. 148-155; E. Dublanchy, article *Marie*, in *D.T.C.*, vol. 9, col. 2340; C. Feckes, *Die Gottesmutterchaft*, in *Katholische Marienkunde* (Sträter), vol. 2, p. 38; H. Lesêtre, article *Marie, Mère de Dieu*, in *Dict. de la Bible*, vol. 4, col. 793. G. Roschini, *La Madonna secondo la fede e la teologia*, vol. 2, Romae, 1954, pp. 164-166.

something unique in every way: the birth of Jesus from the Virgin and the Spirit:<sup>23</sup>

Joseph, son of David, fear not to take to yourself Mary  
your wife;  
for what is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit (1, 20).

From the entire passage, three facts stand out: 1. This marvelous birth makes Mary a true Mother, who nevertheless remains a Virgin. 2. This birth is accomplished by the all-powerful Holy Spirit of God. 3. The fruit of the Virgin, empowered by the Spirit of God to bring forth, is the promised Messiah, the Emmanuel. And finally, a fourth fact: in the conviction of St. Matthew, the inspired writer, this child is God.

St. Matthew wrote his Gospel years after the resurrection. Though intent on proving that Jesus is the promised Messiah, he also has His divinity in mind from the first page to the last. In this scene he carefully translates Emmanuel with the article: With us is *o theos*.<sup>24</sup> In 2, 11 the Magi offer incense to this Child, something even the pagans reserved for their gods.<sup>25</sup> Nine times he bestows on Him the title: Son of God.<sup>26</sup> Caiphas charges Him with blasphemy (26, 65). The Gospel ends with the command to baptize in the name of the three Divine Persons of the Godhead (28, 19).

The early Church soon coined the choice expression: Birth from the Virgin and the Spirit, and applied it both to the Son

<sup>23</sup> The absence of the article in Greek reflects the Semitic original. Cf. *Acts* 2, 4. 33; *Rom.* 8, 14.

<sup>24</sup> Emmanuel could just as well have been translated: *meth' hēmōn theos*.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. F. Prat, S.J., *Jesus Christ*, Milwaukee, 1950, vol. 1, p. 102; A. Jones, in *A Catholic Commentary*, § 681, f.

<sup>26</sup> The title "Son of God" in the singular is a special one. See note 37. St. Matthew gives it to Christ 9 times, St. John alone surpassing him with 11 times.

of God born of Mary and to all the sons of God in their rebirth.<sup>27</sup>

(B) *The Living Tabernacle of God* (Lk. 1, 28-35)

It is St. Luke who paints in detail the portrait of the Virgin Mother.<sup>28</sup> Light is first thrown on the scene by the presence of the heavenly Legate Gabriel (whose name is etymologically the same as the Isaian El Gibbor).<sup>29</sup> Then, in three steps, there unfolds the revelation of Mary's unique greatness:

1. The maiden is God's Beloved One (*kecharitōmenē*),<sup>30</sup> chosen, prepared and assisted by the Lord for a unique task:

Hail, Full of Grace, the Lord is with you. (1, 28)

2. Mary is to conceive and bear a son Jesus, the long expected Emmanuel,<sup>31</sup> the Favorite of Heaven, Son of David and heir to his throne, Ruler in Israel unto the everlasting ages. (1, 31-33)

<sup>27</sup> St. Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum* 17 (P.G. 10, 828A); *De Antichristo* 44-45 (Griechische christl. Schriftsteller, Hipp. 1/2, 28, 2-24); Cf. A. Mueller, *Ecclesia-Maria*, Freiburg im B., 1951, pp. 74-76.

<sup>28</sup> M. Peinador, C.M.F., *La Maternidad divina de María en el mensaje del ángel* (Luc. 1, 30-33-35), in *Estudios Marianos*, vol. 8, 1949, pp. 29-63; O. Bardenhewer, *Mariä Verkündigung*, Biblische Studien, vol. 10, Freiburg im B., 1905; A. Médebielle, *Annonciation*, in *Dict. de la Bible* (Suppl.), vol. 1, col. 262-297; M. Gruenthaner, S.J., article *Mary in the N.T.*, in *Mariology* (Carol), vol. 1, pp. 85-88.

<sup>29</sup> Gabriel from *gēbēr* (man as a strong one) and *El* (God).

<sup>30</sup> "*Kecharitōménē*" could well be a play on the name Maryam, if the name means "Beloved by Yahweh", as F. Zorell, S.J., suggests in his *Lexicon Biblicum*. Cf. *Eph.* 1, 6. Likewise, if it means "The Exalted One". Cf. R. Kugelman, C.P., *The Holy Name of Mary*, in *Mariology* (Carol), vol. 1, p. 421.

<sup>31</sup> Gabriel re-echoes the Emmanuel prophecy of *Is.* 7, 14 (see note 15) and employs the technical terms of true conception. Cf. *Gen.* 16, 11; *Jdg.* 13, 3.

And behold, you shall conceive in your womb,  
And give birth to a son,  
And you shall call His name Jesus.  
He shall be great,  
And shall be called Son of the Most High.  
And the Lord God will give Him the throne of David  
His Father;  
And He shall reign over the house of Jacob throughout  
all ages.  
And His Kingdom shall have no end. (1, 31-33)

Of John it was foretold that he would be great in the sight of the Lord (1, 15). The career of Jesus stretches beyond all bounds: He shall be great, simply and absolutely.<sup>32</sup>

3. Gabriel clarifies the manner of conception, and states that Mary, as Virgin, will be empowered by the Holy Spirit to conceive, and that her Emmanuel-Child shall be Son of God:

The Holy Spirit shall come upon you,  
And the Power of the Most High shall overshadow you;<sup>33</sup>  
And therefore, that which is born (of you)  
Shall be called Holy, Son of God.<sup>34</sup> (1, 35)

<sup>32</sup> A. Vonier, O.S.B., *The Divine Motherhood*, London, 1921, pp. 15-17. This small book can give a true and sublime appreciation of Mary's divine Motherhood.

<sup>33</sup> J.-M. Vosté, O.P., *De Conceptione Virginali Jesu Christi*, Romae, 1933, p. 13, and P. F. Ceuppens, O.P., *Mariologia* . . . , p. 75, interpret these phrases of divine power in general, and hence the Holy Spirit would not be meant in person. But M. Peinador, *art. cit.*, p. 39, shows that it is entirely Lucan and Pauline to combine "power of God" to "Holy Spirit" in the sense of the Divine Person. Cf. *Lk.* 24, 49; *Acts* 1, 8; 10, 38; *Rom.* 15, 19. A. Médebielle, *art. cit.*, col. 291, is convinced that St. Luke has the personal Holy Spirit in mind by reason of his parallel thought in *Acts* 1, 8.

<sup>34</sup> Neuter as subject agrees with *Mt.* 1, 20. Three possible translations are treated by J. M. Bover, S.J., *Quod nascetur (ex te) sanctum vocabitur Filius Dei (Luc. 1, 35)*, in *Biblica*, vol. 1, 1920, pp. 92-94; four reasons are given why the above translation is preferable. Thus also M. Peinador, *art. cit.*, p. 41; and P. F. Ceuppens, *Mariologia*, p. 75.

This is the climax of the message. It adds the final touches to the picture and completes the revelation.

Mary's Child, *shall be called* Son of God, "to be called" in Semitic idiom gives a true description of His mission or even of His personality (*Lk.* 1, 76; 15, 19).<sup>35</sup> But does the title "Son of God" refer to the child's messianic dignity or also to His divine dignity? The expression "sons of God" in the N. T. is predicated of the just (*Mt.* 5, 9; *Rom.* 8, 14; *Jn.* 1, 12), yet the singular is reserved for Christ. That the article is missing in our passage (*uios theou*) causes no surprise in these first two chapters with their Semitic coloring, for a noun in the construct state (son of) cannot take an article in Hebrew and Aramaic.<sup>36</sup> The title is not identical with that of the theocratic king of Israel, for the titles "Son of God" and "King of Israel" were not interchangeable.<sup>37</sup> "Son of God" has a deeper content which time would clarify. In the context it can only refer to the divinity of the child.<sup>38</sup> Are we to suppose that the angel, knowing full well the true nature of this Child, chooses to call Him by the title "Son of God" and yet restrict the meaning to "Messias"? Furthermore, the deciding factor is, what does St. Luke, the inspired writer, intend by this phrase? St. Luke wrote his Gospel at a time when the divinity of Christ was the cornerstone of the Faith. His precise use of expressions mani-

<sup>35</sup> Cf. A. Jones, in *A Catholic Commentary*, § 681, a.

<sup>36</sup> In this peculiarity of Hebrew grammar, the noun in construct (son of) loses its article and also its accent in favor of the second noun, which determines it and receives the emphasis. Here it is *God's* Son.

<sup>37</sup> M. J. Lagrange, O.P., *La conception surnaturelle du Christ d'après S. Luc*, in *Revue Biblique*, vol. 1, 1914, p. 194, states that the title is not a synonym of the theocratic king, but an august title reserved for this Child until the time when further revelation would develop the richness of its content in the proper sense. *Id.*, *Evangile selon S. Luc*, Paris, 1921, p. 34. Nathanael juxtaposes both titles (*Jn.* 1, 49).

<sup>38</sup> P. F. Ceuppens, *Mariologia* . . . : "ratione connexionis cum v. 33, expressio vocabitur Filius Dei constituit apertam affirmationem naturae divinae seu divinitatis pueri nascituri; Maria eo in sensu haec verba intellexit" (pp. 76-77 and 154).

feasts that he had the divinity of Christ in mind when writing this scene. By the use of "*episkiázsein*", he portrays Mary as the Living Ark of the Covenant with the divine Shekīna as the sign of the divine presence. For St. Luke, the Incarnation in Mary is the full realization of the Holy of Holies, God being in the midst of His people.<sup>39</sup> From the standpoint of inspiration, then, the Lucan passage 1, 29-35, constitutes the fullest portrait of the Divine Motherhood. St. Luke's description of the Child to be born of Mary, contains the angelic summary of the whole greatness of Jesus, and consequently of the whole greatness of Mary.<sup>40</sup>

(C) *Above All Women Blessed* (Lk. 1, 39-54)

When the Living Ark of the Covenant entered the home of Elizabeth and greeted her, the Holy Spirit employed Mary as His Living Sacrament of grace, conveying an abundance of divine gifts to Elizabeth and her child (1, 41). Filled with the Holy Spirit, Elizabeth broke out at once in the loud voice of prophetic chant:<sup>41</sup>

Blessed (*eulogēmenē*) are you among women  
and Blessed (*eulogēmenos*) is the Fruit of your womb!  
And why is this granted me  
That the mother of my Lord should come to me? (1, 42-43)

What did Elizabeth mean by the title "Lord"?<sup>42</sup> It is the

<sup>39</sup> F. M. Braun, O.P., *La Mère des Fidèles*, Paris, 1953, pp. 42-43 and note 39; E. Burrows, S.J., *The Gospel of the Infancy and other Biblical Essays*, London, 1940, pp. 47-58 and 101-110; R. Ginns, O.P., in *A Catholic Commentary*, § 748, d; M. Peinador, *art. cit.*, p. 39. E. Power, S.J., *In festo Annuntiationis*, in *Verbum Domini*, vol. 5, 1925, p. 73. A. Schaefer, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

<sup>40</sup> A. Vonier, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

<sup>41</sup> W. Bauer, *Woerterbuch zum N.T.*, Stuttgart, 1953, sub voce *kraugé*: A solemn proclaiming of truths.

<sup>42</sup> R. Rábanos, C.M., *De dónde a mí esto, que la madre de mi señor venga a mí?* (Luc. 1, 43), in *Estudios Marianos*, vol. 8, 1949, pp. 9-27.

translation of *Kyrios*, which the Septuagint as well as the New Testament employ for man as well as for God;<sup>43</sup> for man in the sense of master, for God (even without article) as a consistent translation of Yahweh or Adonai.<sup>44</sup> It can also mean "Messias".<sup>45</sup> In the present context, Lord means either Messiah or God. What did the Holy Spirit reveal to Elizabeth about Mary's Child, and consequently about the dignity of Mary?

Elizabeth betrays knowledge of the angel Gabriel's message to Mary, for she says to Mary in the next verse:

Blessed is she who believed that there would be  
a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord. (1, 45)

In this instance, Lord is equivalent to God, for Gabriel brought the message from heaven and God. Moreover, Mary breaks forth with the words:

My soul magnifies the Lord  
And my spirit rejoices in God my Savior (1, 47).

Both Elizabeth and Mary in the immediate context give the meaning "God" to the word "Lord". Would St. Luke have put the same word "Lord" on the lips of Elizabeth in the first instance and have his readers surmise that its meaning is to be restricted to "Messias",<sup>46</sup> when he could have employed another

<sup>43</sup> L. Cerfaux, *Adonai et Kyrios*, in *Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques*, vol. 20, 1931, p. 29; R. Rábanos, *art. cit.*, p. 15.

<sup>44</sup> G. Quell, *Der alttestamentliche Gottesname*, Kittels *Theologisches Woerterbuch zum N.T.*, Stuttgart, 1939, pp. 1056-57; W. Foerster, *ibid.*, 1085-1087.

<sup>45</sup> R. Rábanos, *art. cit.*, p. 17.

<sup>46</sup> Thus Maldonatus and Knabenbauer, followed by P. F. Ceuppens, *Mariologia*, pp. 95 and 115. The latter argues that St. Luke employs "*eulogēmenos*" for the Child as well as for the Mother (1, 42), when "*eulogētos*" would have to be used if it were a reference to the divinity of the Child. But the argument is not conclusive, for *eulogētos* is also used of Abram (*Gen.* 12, 2) and *eulogēmenos* of God's person and God's Name (*Job* 1, 21 LXX; *Dan.* 3, 52, 53 LXX; 3, 52-56 Theodotion).

word, such as "The Anointed One" (the Christ)? It is surely more acceptable to suppose with Père Buzy that the Holy Spirit revealed the mystery to Elizabeth in full, both the messianic and the divine prerogative of this Child.<sup>47</sup> St. Luke then uses the same word in the same context with the same meaning, and Mary is proclaimed to be the Mother of the Lord God.

(D) *Made of a Woman* (Gal. 4, 4)

St. Paul has one direct reference to the Divine Motherhood,<sup>48</sup> but in that one verse he sounds the death-knell of many ensuing heresies, especially that which denies that Mary is the Mother of God:<sup>49</sup>

When the fullness of time came,  
God sent His Son,  
Made (*genómenon*) from a Woman . . .  
in order that we might receive our adoption as sons.<sup>50</sup>

Paul could hardly have been more precise and exact: the pre-existence of the Son is clearly affirmed, as well as His mission in this world, the first act of which was to take on flesh (*genómenon*, Cf. *Rom.* 1, 3) from a Woman.<sup>51</sup> Hence, from that first moment of His conception Mary is Mother of God. And

<sup>47</sup> D. Buzy, *S. Jean Baptiste*, Paris, 1922, p. 39: "Puisque le Saint Esprit dévoile en ce moment à Elizabeth le mystère de Nazareth, il semble qu'il ne lui dévoile pas à demi, mais qu'il l'instruit, en premier lieu, des prérogatives messianiques et divins du Fils de Marie." Thus also R. Rábanos, *art. cit.*, pp. 25-27, and C. Feckes, *The Mystery of the Divine Motherhood*, London, 1939, p. 35.

<sup>48</sup> B. Orchard, in *A Catholic Commentary*, § 896, h.

<sup>49</sup> R. Cornely, S.J., *Epistola ad Galatas, Cursus S.S.*, Parisiis, 1909, p. 525.

<sup>50</sup> The exegesis of this passage is well given by F. Prat, S.J., *The Theology of St. Paul*, Westminster, 1952 (reprint), pp. 161-162.

<sup>51</sup> M. J. Lagrange, O.P., *Épître aux Galates*, Paris, 1918, p. 102: "La pré-existence est clairement affirmée. . . . Le Père l'envoie donc pour une mission dont le premier acte est de devenir fils de la Femme. *Genómenon* marque un mode nouveau revêtu par celui qui était déjà le Fils."

the purpose of His taking flesh was to make all of us be born anew of God.

(E) *As Portrayed by the Beloved Disciple*

1. The main purpose of the Fourth Gospel is to show that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by accepting Him, we share His life (1, 1. 13-13; 20, 31). Already in 2, 11 St. John says that Jesus began manifesting His glory at Cana in Galilee, "glory" being the technical term for the manifestation of the Divinity, as we have mentioned.<sup>52</sup> And it is at Cana that St. John mentions the Mother of Jesus for the first time, making her instrumental for this first manifestation of His glory, that is, His divinity.

2. In the Prologue St. John describes a virgin-birth:<sup>53</sup>

Born, not from blood, nor from carnal desire, nor from the will of man, but from God.

And the Word was made flesh. (1, 13-14)

Should the singular of the verb (*natus est*) be the original reading of the Greek, the passage refers to the Logos and is a clear testimony of the virgin-birth of the Word-made-flesh.<sup>54</sup> Should the plural verb (*nati sunt*) be the original wording (and that agrees better with Joannine thought throughout), it reveals the part that the Divine Motherhood plays in our rebirth in God.<sup>55</sup>

3. In *Ap.* 12, 1-5, the Woman clothed with the Sun is described in such a manner that the personal reference to Mary

<sup>52</sup> See note 12, above.

<sup>53</sup> Admitted by Harnack and T. Zahn. Cf. the present writer's article in *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, vol. 13, 1951, p. 427.

<sup>54</sup> The singular is upheld by M. E. Boismard, O.P., *Critique textuelle et citations patristiques*, in *Revue Biblique*, vol. 57, 1950, pp. 407-408.

<sup>55</sup> See the present author's article quoted above in note 53, p. 431.

is inescapable, and the divinity of the Child is expressly pointed out in verse 5 where the Child shares the throne of God.<sup>56</sup> But in this central chapter of the Apocalypse, the Divine Motherhood has become the Archetype for the gigantic work of the Church regenerating all men as sons of God, for Mary is portrayed as the perfect realization of the Church.<sup>57</sup> That work began when Mary gave the angel that momentous consent: "Be it done to me according to your word" (*Lk.* 1, 38).<sup>58</sup> And the Word was made flesh (*Jn.* 1, 14). This is the Virgin Mother from whom the Word took flesh.

BERNARD J. LE FROIS, S.V.D.,  
St. Mary's Seminary,  
Techny, Illinois.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. B. LeFrois, S.V.D., *The Woman Clothed with the Sun* (*Ap.* 12); *An Exegetical Study*, Rome, 1954, pp. 167, 204, 216-232.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 262.

<sup>58</sup> C. Vollert, S.J., *Mother of Divine Grace*, in *The American Ecclesiastical Review*, vol. 126, 1952, pp. 262-263.