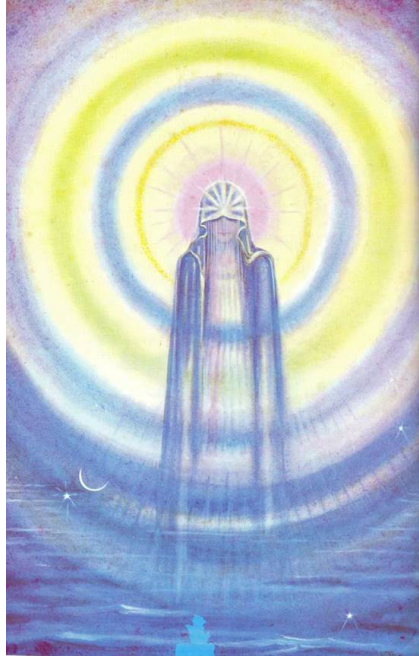


# Adept, Queen, Mother, Priestess: Mary in the Writings of Geoffrey Hodson

John F. Nash

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**The World Mother by Geoffrey Hodson**  
Illustrated by Ethelwynne M. Quail

## Summary

Important insights into the nature and roles of Mary, the mother of Jesus, were recorded by Theosophist Geoffrey Hodson in his esoteric diary, published posthumously as *Light of the Sanctuary*. They paint a vivid picture of Mary as Adept, Priestess, Queen of the Angels, Mother of the World, and an expression of the Feminine Aspect of Deity. She and her attendant devas preside over birth processes in the human, animal, and even vegetable kingdoms. This article examines Hodson's descriptions of her respective roles, along with the relationship he developed with Mary and the manner in which she revealed herself to him.

Hodson's writings on Mary make a significant contribution to Christian esotericism. Various degrees of support can be found among other

writers in mainstream Christianity, Buddhism, and modern esotericism. A new appreciation of Mary's role and work seems to be emerging in human consciousness, offering rich possibilities not only for esoteric study but also for Christian liturgy, devotion and discipleship. It both reflects and can further encourage the empowerment of women in modern society.

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## About the Author

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## Introduction

This article focuses on the Lady Mary,<sup>1</sup> mother of Jesus, as discussed by a single author in a single book. The author is Geoffrey Hodson (1886–1983): priest in the Liberal Catholic Church, Freemason, prominent esoteric writer and lecturer, and active member of the Theosophical Society for seven decades.<sup>2</sup> The book is *Light of the Sanctuary*, his “occult diary,” edited and published posthumously by his second wife Sandra.<sup>3</sup> Entries in the diary began in 1921 and continued to the month of his death. Although the records were originally intended for personal reflection, Hodson eventually consented to their publication and wrote an introduction that contains valuable biographical information.

Hodson and his sources saw Mary as a fifth-degree Initiate, Priestess, Queen of the Angels, Mother of the World, and an expression of the Feminine Aspect of Deity. The special relationship Hodson developed with her enabled him to offer unique insights into these several roles. He also described in some detail Mary’s appearance and demeanor when she appeared to him.

A few other authorities are cited to provide context. They fall into two main groups; the first represents modern esotericism, including the larger body of trans-Himalayan teachings; the second represents institutional religion, primarily Roman Catholicism, where Mary has a conspicuous place in beliefs and customs. Otherwise the power of Hodson’s own words, and of his sources on the inner planes, supports the article’s narrow focus. By its very nature the article is descriptive rather than analytical, though comments are made on a number of topics.

Geoffrey Hodson’s mother was a choir director in the Church of England, and he grew up in a religious environment. His faith faltered in his twenties. But Hodson acquired new insights into Christianity after reading Annie Besant’s *Esoteric Christianity*. Hodson joined the Theosophical Society in 1912, after attending a lecture by Besant, then the Society’s president. In his thirties or early forties he was ordained a

priest in the Liberal Catholic Church.<sup>4</sup> The L.C.C., whose bishops traced their lineage through the Old Catholic Church and in turn to Rome, functioned as a kind of religious subsidiary of the T.S. Its liturgy, crafted by Charles Leadbeater—former Anglican clergyman, prominent Theosophist, and the Church’s second presiding bishop—resembled that of Roman Catholicism and high-church Anglicanism.

Hodson’s clairvoyant gifts became apparent when he was a child and strengthened in adulthood. Besant’s lecture that prompted him to join the Theosophical Society also provided new understanding of those gifts and the worlds to which they gave access. Much of Hodson’s long career as a clairvoyant was devoted to the study of devas, ranging from lowly nature spirits to angelic beings of great stature. His books contain iconic images, created with the help of various artists, of archangels hovering over mountains and large bodies of water. He also became interested in the presence of angels, including *Gandharvas*, or music devas, at religious rituals and performances of classical music.<sup>5</sup>

The Archangel (*Maha-Deva*) Bethelda was Hodson’s primary teacher for many years. They first “met” when Hodson and his first wife, Jane, were studying nature spirits in a beech forest in Gloucestershire. Hodson also received teachings from the Masters Morya, Kuthumi, Serapis Bey, and Polidorus Isurenus. The Master Kuthumi spoke to him at his first meeting of the Esoteric Section of the T.S. in 1913, and thereafter Hodson identified Kuthumi as his own master.<sup>6</sup> Hodson received communications in full waking consciousness. When he was fifty-eight years old, Hodson was appointed amanuensis to the Master Polidorus. The “link now formed between us,” Polidorus explained,

will endure to the end, for I have been deputed as Their [“the Great Ones”] messenger when They do not wish to speak direct. No longer need you feel alone. You have drawn near to the heart of the work and are, in fact now received back into the Sanctuary.... I am the Elder Brother Who receives

the prodigal home, an old Friend Who worked and taught with you in your Egyptian and Alexandrian days.<sup>7</sup>

We understand that Polidorus is “an Adept of the Egyptian Branch of the Great White Brotherhood (the Brotherhood of Luxor),” and that one of his incarnations was as Philo of Alexandria.<sup>8</sup> He is the source most often quoted in *Light of the Sanctuary*.

Hodson’s willingness to name his sources was intended to reassure the esoteric community “that the Great Masters of the Wisdom have not withdrawn Their interest in the profoundly important movement established under Their Adeptic inspiration.” “May it not reasonably be presumed,” Hodson added, “that this will be continued for the ‘amelioration of the condition of man.’”<sup>9</sup> This reassurance may have been important because of a belief within the Theosophical Society that direct contacts with the Masters ceased soon after co-founder Helena Blavatsky’s death.<sup>10</sup>

In addition to the contacts with senior human and devic members of the Planetary Hierarchy, Hodson received communications and visitations from Mary herself. Statements attributed to her carry special weight in the present study, crowning teachings from other sources and Hodson’s own observations. We assume that, like other communications, those from Mary were received in full waking consciousness.

The portrayal of Mary in *Light of the Sanctuary* is markedly different from that in most of Hodson’s other works. Only a few scattered references in his own published books and articles reveal his dedication to Mary and the teachings concerning her. In general, his publications either do not mention Mary at all or present her as a symbolic, rather than real, figure.<sup>11</sup> Readers had to wait until five years after Hodson’s death to discover the richness of teachings summarized in this article. Did he miss opportunities to promote Mary and her message sooner? Hodson’s contacts with Mary, and the insights he gained, may have seemed too private to be shared. Perhaps he was concerned about glamour.

On the other hand, Hodson may have felt constrained by the Theosophical Society’s nonsectarian policies. He commented that discussion of Mary might be acceptable in “France ... and some other Catholic countries,” but not elsewhere.<sup>12</sup> Much of the T.S. membership was resistant to the Christianization movement, spearheaded by Besant, and skeptical of the Liberal Catholic Church. Indeed, Polidorus instructed Hodson on how to interpret Mary “Theosophically”—that is allegorically.<sup>13</sup> Also, we shall see that his intense devotion developed late in life, and he received the most important teachings from his mid-eighties onward. By that time he was living in New Zealand, where Roman Catholics were in a minority. The period in which he could possibly face criticism lasted less than a decade. During that period he wrote few books, and some, like *The Call to the Heights* (1976), simply addressed other topics.

Why should we place any credence in what Hodson had to say about Mary? Skeptics could argue that he was a fraud, was deluded, or had succumbed to glamour. Yet several factors suggest otherwise. Hodson served in the Theosophical Society for more than seventy years, lecturing throughout the world and making substantial contributions to the esoteric literature. He attained the 32nd degree in the Eastern Order of International Co-Freemasonry, and was ordained a priest in the Liberal Catholic Church. He was noted for his humility, mild manner, avoidance of controversy, and unpretentious lifestyle. Hodson stipulated that his diary should be published only after his death.

Alternatively, *Light of the Sanctuary* could be dismissed as a work of fiction, written by Sandra Hodson to glorify her late husband’s memory. But Geoffrey Hodson’s inner circle of coworkers, as well as senior members of the Theosophical Society, knew of his work. None came forward to dispute the diary’s authenticity or to question Sandra’s motives.

The diary’s authenticity and the credibility of Hodson’s testimony are persuasive. And Hodson himself comes across as an initiate of some standing.

## Hodson's Relationship with Mary

Geoffrey Hodson recorded one of the most profound statements about the Lady Mary in 1978. The Master Polidorus urged him: "Consider the three Offices—Queen, Priestess, and Mother of aspiring souls—the World Mother. Meditate upon the mystery of the deific Feminine Principle."<sup>14</sup> That statement forms the basis of our story and the basis of Geoffrey Hodson's relationship with the one to whom it refers.

The soul we know as Hodson established a relationship with Mary 2,000 years ago. He met her and the Master Jesus during an incarnation in Palestine. In a communication in 1945 Mary explained: "I was Miriam, the Mother of Jesus.... I knew you in that life and befriended you."<sup>15</sup> Then in 1975 she referred to an encounter with Jesus that was both tragic and transformative:

I first knew you in Nazareth when you came with your servant to visit My Son, Jesus. I witnessed the tragedy, your outbreak of indignation, your response to My Son's advice, your flood of tears for your deceased servant who died to save your life (received a spear-thrust from a Roman centurion). I heard My Son's promise and saw you as a young boy, departing dutifully for your home and duties awaiting you there.<sup>16</sup>

The circumstances of the servant's death, and what followed, can be found in a diary entry about a month earlier. The proto-Hodson, a boy of "about nine years old," and his "servant-guide," described as an Egyptian initiate-teacher, were in the crowd when Jesus and some disciples came through a town in Palestine. The excited crowd surged forward, pushing the boy into the back of a Roman soldier. The soldier turned around, preparing to stab the boy with his javelin, but the servant stepped forward to take the spear thrust. The proto-Hodson reacted angrily, whereupon Jesus stopped and spoke to him: "Do not abuse this man who was but doing his duty. Rather express gratitude for him who has done so much for you and now has given you his life, thereby saving yours."<sup>17</sup> Hodson recalled the experience:

As He spoke our eyes were linked together, as it were, and I felt a great longing to be admitted to His presence and group, saying, "Master, may I belong to You?", or some such words. His beautiful large brown eyes looked into mine, doubtless read my destiny, and declined, saying in effect, "Not yet, My son." The Master Jesus' skin was slightly browned, rather like a deep tan. He was very erect in carriage as He walked on down the street followed by a number of differently dressed people.<sup>18</sup>

Hodson added:

I arranged the burial of my guide and, remorsefully and sadly in one part of myself, and mystically elevated in another, I returned home as instructed and carried out my duties. At home, I had the same double consciousness of grief on the one hand and exaltation on the other since a mystical influence and, as it were, assurance had passed from the Master into my mind and heart, greatly elevating me. I longed to go to Him as I heard of His travelings about our land, but could not do so. Later on in that life I "came" to Jesus and worked for His cause for the rest of my life, having handed over all family duties to a younger brother. In doing His work, I traveled and taught. Ultimately, not being present in person, I heard of all that happened to Him, including His very brutal and untimely death.<sup>19</sup>

An elderly Hodson looked back on his childhood, noting with reverence that he grew up on "Bethlem Farm in the parish of Wainfleet-St Mary's," Lincolnshire, England: "born in Bethlehem ... under Our Blessed Lady's name."<sup>20</sup> When Hodson was eighty-nine years old, Mary reminded him: "I first knew you as an infant baptized in the church dedicated to Me at Wainfleet-St Mary; next, in that small church in the little square in Manchester, where you used to come to meditate and where I caused you to see My aura shining through and around My statue." The latter experience probably took place some time after 1912, when Hodson was in his late twenties.<sup>21</sup> Hodson does not identify the church. The statue

suggests that it was probably Roman Catholic, but an alternative is suggested later in the article.

Hodson's teachings on Mary span a period of more than fifty years. He shared brief but important insights into her roles as Queen and Mother in two books published in the late 1920s: *The Brotherhood of Angels and Men* (1927) and *The Angelic Hosts* (1928); examples will be cited in due course. But virtually everything we know of Hodson's relationship with Mary, and the teachings pertaining to her, comes from his diary; even then it forms only a small fraction of the book's total content.

Hodson was fifty-eight years old when he made his first explicit reference to Mary in *Light of the Sanctuary*—the communication in which she declared: "I was Miriam."<sup>22</sup> An accompanying reference to "Our Blessed Lady Mary" contrasted with "the Virgin Mary" and "the Madonna" in earlier works, showing a new level of devotion. His relationship with her was developing, or redeveloping, at that time, and would continue to develop over the years. Most of the diary entries relating to Mary were made during the last decade of Hodson's life. Yet Mary revealed in July 1975 that she had been working through him, perhaps unconsciously on his part, for half a century:

I assisted in your studies of prenatal life [*The Miracle of Birth*] .... As you perceived, I also came to you in the remains of the beech forest in Gloucestershire when you were exalted by your *Maha-Deva* Teacher Bethelda and you received and have since spread in many parts of the world My "Call," printed in your book, *The Brotherhood of Angels and of Men*.<sup>23</sup>

Mary's "Call," which will be discussed in its turn, recognized women's special place in her heart and urged chivalry toward all people.

The following month Hodson recorded a similar contact: "Today, while resting, I found myself thinking about the Blessed Lady Mary and then became aware of Her presence.... She reminded me of the experience of the study of the embryos and Her Presence when receiv-

ing *The Brotherhood of Angels and of Men*."<sup>24</sup> Mary expressed appreciation for his lecturing and healing work:

Now in your ninetieth bodily year we have communed, you have opened the mental lines of communication by your talk with its reverent references to Me. This has drawn Me much closer to you. Daily, I and My *Maha-Devas* and *Devis* [male and female Archangels?] respond to the empowered Invocations on behalf of the suffering world and those known to you who are sick and in need. Thus we are a "team," My direct coworker in the darkening world.<sup>25</sup>

Later, a "Highly Initiated Disciple of the Master Kuthumi" assured Hodson: "You have already drawn Her [Mary] very near to you by your full response to the unexpected transmission of a task from a former aspirant to Her work, which, of course, was no accident at all, but part of what might be called 'the Grand Design.'"<sup>26</sup>

In a communication to Hodson in 1945 Mary told him: "I have given you messages in this life" and urged: "Could you not collect all your writings of Me and publish them as an aid to My cause amongst men?"<sup>27</sup> It is unclear what messages and writings Mary was referring to, and, in any case, Hodson did not seem to respond to her plea.

Thirty years later Hodson received a more modest request to "give to and through the Theosophical world, and that of the Liberal Catholic Church, a statement affirming the authenticity of Her [Mary's] existence, and of Her complete reality as a Being." He continued: "I was also inspired to provide a philosophic and, based upon my experience, an occult exposition that would help the members of the above movements—and so humanity more truly to realize Her veritable existence."<sup>28</sup> Hodson's allegorical treatment may have filled the need for "an occult exposition." Except for his diary entries, however, he wrote little to affirm the authenticity of Mary's existence as a real being.

Hodson may have considered oral presentations the more suitable medium to disseminate

teachings on Mary. Sadly, none of the more-than-ninety recorded lectures in the Theosophical Society archives focuses on her.<sup>29</sup> What little we know of references to Mary in Hodson's lectures comes from comments made by his sources in *Light of the Sanctuary*. A lecture in 1975, for which Mary thanked him, has already been mentioned. The Master Polidorus gave Hodson instructions for a presentation to the Theosophical Convention in 1977: "[I]nclude much special information concerning the World Mother (the Blessed Lady Mary), bringing home Her importance both in this procedure and in the world. Use the lecture for this purpose."<sup>30</sup> Polidorus added:

Include your collected references to Our Lady and the various accounts of Her meditation offered to the Bishop of the Liberal Catholic Church in New Zealand. Consider xeroxing the manuscript "Our Lady," for presenting to each member of the youth group on the evening when you speak of Her to them.<sup>31</sup>

The following year, a "Highly Initiated Disciple of the Master Kuthumi" commented:

When speaking of beautiful divine Personages, such as the Madonna, you might perhaps show how Her title "Star of the Sea" refers to the Cosmic and abstract principle about which your Adept Teacher might speak. Thus, the Madonna principle, ideal, and Personage, may find its expression in your talks as it has for so long in your life.<sup>32</sup>

Also in 1978, the Master Polidorus urged Hodson to include "as many instances as possible of such contacts [with devic entities] as you have recently done most reverently concerning Her gracious Majesty, the World Mother, of Whom—particularly inspired—you spoke so beautifully after your lecture the other evening" at the Helena Petrovna Blavatsky Lodge of the T.S., Auckland, New Zealand.<sup>33</sup>

Whether or not Hodson made the best use of the knowledge he had received, Mary encouraged him and promised her support: "Please continue writing and draw upon Me when needed."<sup>34</sup> Mary was mindful of his declining strength, however. When Hodson was ninety-

two, he wrote in his diary: "At this point, the Blessed Lady Mary becomes visible before me ... and, as it were, reaches out and touches my head as if to warn and protect me from brain-fatigue."<sup>35</sup>

Hodson still lectured during the last two years of his life. The Master Morya offered the following advice in 1981:

[I]nclude the Blessed Lady Mary in your lecture and, if necessary, quote suitably from one of the prayers in the Liberal Catholic Church Liturgy. She is "ever within reach and ever present." Refer to Her as you have planned, very beautifully, perhaps with a reference to such benedictions to the human race as "Our Lady of Lourdes."<sup>36</sup>

Hodson delivered his last lecture on May 4, 1982, at the H.P.B. Lodge in Auckland. His last book, Volume II of *Music Forms*, was published in September.<sup>37</sup> Hodson passed away early the following year, shortly before his ninety-seventh birthday. His wife Sandra commented:

Geoffrey left us peacefully in the early morning of 23 January 1983. Our home seemed to me then, to be steeped in a blessed stillness and silence that nothing could disturb. Upon Geoffrey's face there was an expression of utter peace and joyous serenity—beyond any words. It was as though the Masters were so very close at this time. In looking back over our life together and before the world, I can testify that never once has he ever made any claim to greatness or to the superior powers which he most truly possessed. He was the most humble of men.<sup>38</sup>

Sandra Hodson inserted a note in 1977 that the Master Jesus and the Lady Mary visited her husband one more time; but she noted: "this is not recorded in *The Diary*."<sup>39</sup>

## Mary's Appearance and Demeanor

The Lady Mary visited, or revealed herself to Geoffrey Hodson several times on the physical, astral or mental level. He shared important information about her appearance and

demeanor during those encounters. For example, in a visitation on the mental level in 1945:

Our Lady ... appeared as a highly spiritual, wonderfully refined young lady of perhaps twenty-eight years. She spoke in a voice of compelling sweetness and beauty and with the most engaging charm .... Her shining blue aura seemed to enfold me for a moment, and its light to fill the room. A still peace pervaded me from the highest levels down to the physical. This experience seems like an answer to an unspoken wish, that I might again have contact with Her and receive direct assurance of the correctness of the teachings concerning Her. I now feel utterly sure and rededicate my life to Her service.<sup>40</sup>

Sandra Hodson later inserted an editorial note in the diary: “Geoffrey sees Our Lady at the Causal level as a very beautiful feminine Being surrounded by forces outraying from Her to produce a specially shaped and formed aura, with colorings of white, gold, rose, and sky blue, shot through and shining beyond with white radiance.”<sup>41</sup> Hodson himself commented on her appearance “in all Her wondrous blue.”<sup>42</sup>

Hodson published two, very similar, pictures of Mary in *The Kingdom of the Gods*. The one shown at the beginning of this article “symbolically portrays her in Her solar aspect, brooding in divine love over all worlds.”<sup>43</sup> It was painted according to Hodson’s instructions by South African artist, Ethelwynne M. Quail, who, in his words, “knew about Theosophy.”<sup>44</sup> Hodson was in South Africa in 1934–1935, and the picture may have been painted during that period. The work bears a noticeable resemblance to Nicholas Roerich’s “Mother of the World” (1924). Hodson does not refer to Roerich’s work, and whether he or Quail knew of, or were influenced by, it remains an open question.

Hodson assigned Mary a high status in the Planetary Hierarchy: “She is the highest possible imaginable spiritualized Queen.”<sup>45</sup> But he never felt overwhelmed or intimidated by her visitations: “One of the most remarkable at-

tributes of Our Lady Mary is Her complete humility. She did not, and does not, assume or appear in Her most exalted state as, for example, the Adept Queen of the Angels. I reverently responded to Her Presence as a visiting (if Adept) Friend.”<sup>46</sup> Indeed, it seems that Mary intentionally presents herself in the most suitable way to conduct her ministry:

Although the Lady Mary is no longer limited to expressions as a Person, having long ago won emancipation and liberation therefrom, for the sake of all mankind She does assume the restrictions of a highly spiritualized “Personality” in order to come as near as possible to those whom She helps.<sup>47</sup>

Despite the attitude of humility with which Mary presented herself, Hodson never questioned that she spoke with great authority.

Hodson’s descriptions of Mary may be compared with accounts of Marian apparitions and related phenomena in mainstream Christianity. The nature and circumstances of these latter vary enormously, from the visions, or “personal revelation,” of individual mystics; to the apparition of Our Lady of Zeitoun, Egypt, seen from 1968 to 1970 by thousands of people, including Muslim police and even President Gamal Abdel Nasser; to the weeping statue of Our Lady of Akita, Japan, seen in 1973 by millions of people on national television.

In the sixteenth-century an indigenous peasant named Juan Diego witnessed four apparitions of a “maiden” in Guadalupe, Mexico. The figure identified herself as Mary, “mother of the very true Deity.”<sup>48</sup> After his archbishop demanded a sign of authenticity, Mary instructed Diego to gather in his cloak flowers from a normally barren hilltop—in mid-winter. When Diego opened his cloak before the prelate, an image of Mary was imprinted on the fabric. The traditional depiction of Our Lady of Guadalupe shows her wearing a pink, patterned robe, covered by a deep-blue mantle emblazoned with stars.<sup>49</sup> It also shows rays of light radiating from the periphery of the image, calling to mind Hodson’s description of “forces outraying from Her to produce a specially shaped and formed aura.”

Bernadette Soubirous, a fourteen-year-old peasant girl, reported an apparition at Lourdes, France, in 1858. She saw “a lady ... wearing a white dress, a blue girdle and a yellow rose on each foot, the same color as the chain of her rosary; the beads of the rosary were white.”<sup>50</sup> Several more apparitions followed, including one in which Mary declared “I am the Immaculate Conception.”<sup>51</sup> After the last apparition, on July 16, 1858, Soubirous commented: “I have never seen her so beautiful before ... so lovely that, when you have seen her once, you would willingly die to see her again!”<sup>52</sup>

At Fátima in 1917, three Portuguese children “beheld a Lady all dressed in white. She was more brilliant than the sun, and radiated a light more clear and intense than a crystal glass filled with sparkling water, when the rays of the burning sun shine through it.”<sup>53</sup> Five more apparitions followed, the last, on October 13, 1917, accompanied by the alleged “miracle of the dancing sun,” to which thousands of people testified.

The colors ascribed to Mary’s raiment vary from one account to another, but all include blue, white, and brilliant light. A consensus of western devotional imagination, at least since Lourdes, shows her in a blue mantle over a white robe.<sup>54</sup> Hodson’s observations would fit easily into the spectrum of descriptions from mainstream Christianity.

Mary’s appearance is not totally unrelated to the expectations of those who see her. Perhaps people see a thoughtform of human construction. On the other hand, she may actually assume a form that people will recognize. Hodson commented: “The different visions and differing appearances and positions which people of various religions and countries attribute to the World Mother are all adaptations [sic] of visions and teachings chosen as most

suitable and given to these various members of world religions.”<sup>55</sup> He added that Mary “responds to and permits Herself to be mentally molded by our religious conceptions, and Who permits Herself to be seen in forms acceptable and helpful to those who are accorded the appropriate vision.”<sup>56</sup>

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People who have had powerful visions often comment that paintings and sculptures are inadequate to capture what they saw. Bernadette Soubirous felt that no artistic depiction could do Mary justice and was disappointed in the statue erected to commemorate the Lourdes apparitions.<sup>57</sup> Likewise, Hodson lamented over artistic depictions of

Mary: “None of them, even the most beautiful Madonna statue or picture, really portrays the official Holder of that Office of World Mother.”<sup>58</sup>

Hodson’s descriptions of Mary may also be compared to descriptions of another individuality revered in western religion: Sophia. Under her Hebrew name Chokmah, she emerged as a divine or semi-divine personage in the Wisdom literature of Hellenic Judaism.<sup>59</sup> For example, Chokmah/Sophia spoke to the reader of *Proverbs*: “The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was .... Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him.”<sup>60</sup> Sophia reemerged as a highly exalted figure in nineteenth-century Russia.<sup>61</sup> Russian poet Vladimir Solovyov (1853–1900) recalled a vision of her during Divine Liturgy, when he was nine years old:

Blue all around. Blue within my soul.  
Blue pierced with shafts of gold. In your hand a flower from other realms.  
You stood with radiant smile,  
Nodded to me and hidden in the mist.<sup>62</sup>



Sophia could almost be mistaken for Mary! Indeed, Pope John Paul stated in 1987: “In the mystery of Christ she [Mary] is present even ‘before the creation of the world,’ as the one whom the Father ‘has chosen’ as Mother of his Son.”<sup>63</sup> The statement bears such a close resemblance to the verses in *Proverbs* to suggest a conflation of Mary and Sophia.

### Mary as Initiate

The canonical gospels give no clue about the Lady Mary’s birth, childhood and upbringing. We first learn about her when she is betrothed to Joseph and the Archangel Gabriel’s announces that she will give birth to the Messiah. Yet Gabriel was able to say “Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.”<sup>64</sup> The Council of Ephesus (431 CE) decreed that Mary was *Theotokos* (literally “God-Bearer,” but translated in the West as “Mother of God”). And the Church of Rome determined that she must have been conceived without original sin. Clearly she was no ordinary woman, chosen at random to participate in the Redemption; she was already of some spiritual stature in anticipation of her contact with Jesus Christ. Or possibly she was exalted in her own right.

We learn more from the extra-canonical *Infancy Gospel of James*, written in about 145 CE. There we discover that Mary’s exalted status and potential were recognized when she was a child. Mary was presented to the temple at three years of age and lived there until she was twelve. She was taught by the priests and “received food from the hand of an angel.”<sup>65</sup> Essentially the same story appears in the *Qur’an*.<sup>66</sup> In one account Mary was taught by the Archangel Gabriel, which would imply that she already knew him when he appeared to her at the Annunciation.

Interestingly, the “Presentation of Mary in the Temple” is observed on November 21 as a feast day in the Roman Church. In the Eastern Orthodox Churches the feast is termed “The Entry of the Most Holy Theotokos into the Temple.” It is the only feast in the entire liturgical calendar inspired by passages in an extra-canonical text.<sup>67</sup>

Mary’s attributes, according to Christian tradition, were humility, purity and virginity. That last was based on Luke’s account of the Annunciation; Mary was “a virgin” and her response to the news that she would bear a child was “How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?”<sup>68</sup> “Born of the Virgin Mary” found its way into the Apostles’ Creed, and “Blessed Virgin” and “Mary, Ever Virgin” became familiar devotional accolades.<sup>69</sup>

The canonical gospels record that Mary stood at the foot of the Cross and witnessed the death of her son. Her participation in the redemptive sacrifice will be important when we discuss her role as Priestess. Meanwhile, an ancient Ethiopian text relates that Mary had an ecstatic experience at Calvary—one that esotericists would probably interpret as an initiation. She shared her experience with John the Beloved, who stood with her:

Hearken and I will tell thee an astounding and hidden mystery ... which my Lord and my Son, Jesus Christ my beloved one and my Redeemer, revealed unto me at Golgotha, at the time of the sixth hour .... A shining cloud came and bore me along and took me up into the third heaven, and it set me down at the boundary of the earth, and my Son appeared unto me. And He said unto me, “Peace be unto thee, O Mary, My mother, thou dwelling-place of God. Peace be unto thee, O virgin, who gavest birth to Me. From thy womb hath gone forth the river of peace. I will reveal unto thee an astounding wonder.”<sup>70</sup>

Mary continued at length, describing, among much else, the joys that lay ahead for the souls of the righteous, including her own.

Geoffrey Hodson never commented on Mary’s birth or upbringing; nor did he mention an ecstatic experience at Calvary.<sup>71</sup> But he affirmed that both Jesus and Mary attained the fifth initiation in their Palestinian lifetimes, the latter overcoming unusual challenges to do so:

Having been and being the Mother of Jesus in the reality of His appearance amongst men and His attainment of Adeptship whilst using that body, She did Herself at-

tain to Adeptship, took the Fifth Initiation in the Egyptian Mysteries, having also been trained in their Chaldean form, as a woman, meaning in a female body. The tests were very severe in those days, especially for beginners, even for males, but She passed through them all successfully, almost overriding them as it were, instead of being subjected to them. She was then one of earth's Adepts.<sup>72</sup>

We are not told whether Mary traveled to Egypt or elsewhere for the initiatory training, or whether it was available closer to home. In any event, the credibility of Hodson's knowledge of Mary's initiation into the Egyptian Mysteries is supported by two factors. His principal master-teacher was the Master Polidorus, associated with the Brotherhood of Luxor. And Hodson, who developed a close relationship with Mary, had his own ties with Egypt, including past lives.<sup>73</sup> Polidorus informed him on one occasion:

You began that path [of Light and of the Light-bringer] eight thousand years ago in Ancient Egypt and have followed it ever since. You found the Light and the doctrine of the Light in both male and female incarnations in Ancient Egypt and later on in Greece. Your path led through Palestine at the time of Christ.<sup>74</sup>

Polidorus added: "Then Alexandria and the Gnostics received you."<sup>75</sup> Contact with Gnosticism may have further stimulated Hodson's quest for esoteric knowledge. We are also told that the Hodson-soul's incarnations included "brief interludes of worldliness." Yet the "excursion was not all loss, as it brought knowledge and experience and set your will for this incarnation towards the occult life."<sup>76</sup>

Did Mary retain her gender after she became an Adept? Hodson contrasted Jesus' masculinity with Mary's femininity:

The Master Jesus was inherently a masculine Adept as far as His personality was concerned, though it should be remembered that this does not really apply at the *arupa* levels, where all Monads are sexless, even though certain predominances

might remain, especially for a time. Our Lady, on the other hand, may be described as Monadically and inherently feminine wherever personality was concerned.<sup>77</sup>

Juxtaposition of "Monadically and inherently" with "wherever personality was concerned" is puzzling. It is unclear whether Hodson believed that Mary's femininity applies only to the manner in which she presents herself or might be intrinsic to her very essence.

When Hodson made those comments in 1975, understanding of a distinction between gender and sex was less clear than it is today. Sex (male-female) is now viewed in the social sciences as a physical characteristic, and gender (masculine-feminine) as a characteristic that extends beyond, and may not even include, the physical.<sup>78</sup> Hodson tried to explain, using the traditional esoteric terminology of positive (active) and negative (passive, receptive) polarities:

Difference of sex can in no remotest sense be conceivably applied to Deity and Monads. However, certain cosmogonies, especially the Hindu, teach that a particular highly mystical cosmic energy does function as if oppositely polarized in the fulfillment of the Office of generation of universes. This does not imply male and female, of course, according to the normal human understanding, but rather the universal attributes of positivity, negativity, and a generative interaction.<sup>79</sup>

Evidently the alignment of Monads with positivity or negativity—or what we would now prefer to call masculinity or femininity—has deep roots and long-lasting consequences:

The Logoic self-differentiation has a profound effect upon the component Monads of the Logos, certain of Whom become more predominantly positive and others negative during the particular period of cosmogenesis or creation. This endures, and the great Being Whom we Christians refer to as Our Blessed Lady is Monadically, if one may so presume to think and say, negative, or is inherently of a polarity that is more negative than positive.<sup>80</sup>

Mary's attainment of Adeptship should lay to rest any lingering doubts that other individuals can attain the fifth initiation in a female body or can present themselves as female after becoming Adepts. It should be noted that doubts have mainly been confined to western esotericism. Multiple female Buddhas and Bodhisattvas are revered in Buddhism. Among them is Kuan Yin, often called the "Goddess of Compassion" and the patroness of many large temples in East Asia.

That said, Hodson explained that the human and devic kingdoms have masculine and feminine polarities, respectively, hastening to add that the "Orders of Beings are of equal evolutionary stature."<sup>81</sup> The respective polarities may tip the scales in favor of male Adepts in the human kingdom and female Adepts in the devic kingdom. Hodson's comment that the initiatory tests Mary faced were "very severe ... *even for males*"—implying that they were still more severe for females—may reflect that predisposition rather than any suggestion that the female form cannot endure the challenges of high initiation. We shall return to the issue of the polarities of the kingdoms in the next section.

Mary provided her own perspective on the nature and consciousness of an Adept, explaining how personality eventually gives way to a sense of all-pervading unity:

Adepts are no longer Themselves at all from this point of view, especially that of Offices assigned and fulfilled, even though traces of the last human personality remain, especially as long as the body lasts in which Adeptship was reached. "ALL ONENESS," alone, justly describes the consciousness and state of being of the Adept. Happy are those human beings who are beginning to experience foreshadowings of this surrender and mergence of self-ness in the ALL ONENESS which governs, rules utterly, the life and work of every Adept. Indeed, We are not "people" any longer but, to use "light" for a simile, are just as Rays emanating from within and radiating from without the Solar Logos, the Great Lord of Light.<sup>82</sup>

## Mary, Queen of the Angels

In 1975, Geoffrey Hodson declared that, after her death, the Lady Mary "left the human kingdom altogether and entered the Angelic Hierarchy, being naturally moved to do so, knowing that with Her nature She could best help onward the evolution of human beings and animals as a Member of the Angelic Hosts."<sup>83</sup>

Charles Leadbeater had made a similar claim half a century earlier, declaring that "finding the seven paths open before her, she [Mary] chose to enter the glorious Deva evolution and was received into it with great honor and distinction."<sup>84</sup> At about the same time, Hodson himself had proclaimed in *The Brotherhood of Angels and Men* that the angels who build human bodies in the mother's womb "have, as their Queen, a Holy One, who won freedom from the burden of the flesh and, ascending, joined the Angel Hosts."<sup>85</sup> He also recorded Mary's "Call," which included the following:

Uplift the women of your race till all are seen as queens, and to such queens let every man be as a king; that each may honor each, seeing the other's royalty. Let every home, however small, become a court, every son a knight, every child a page. Let all treat all with chivalry, honoring in each their royal parents, their kingly birth, for there is royal blood in every man; all are the children of the King.<sup>86</sup>

Mary's depiction of gender may be more sensible and nuanced than the explanations offered by today's social scientists—or by the Theosophical literature!

The notion of Mary's transition from the human to the angelic kingdom resonated across multiple esoteric traditions. Corinne Heline, whose background lay in Rosicrucianism as well as Theosophy, commented: "Upon the completion of her earth mission, the holy Virgin was lifted out of the human stream and translated into the angelic evolution."<sup>87</sup> She now enjoys a relationship not only with devas but also with the higher ranks of the vegetable kingdom—flowers:

The Blessed Lady is known as Queen of the Angels because of her intimate relationship with these bright beings. During each month of the yearly cycle the angels infuse the body of the earth with a particular emanation that manifests in certain rhythms of tone and color. In this pulsating color-music are formed the celestial patterns of the flower kingdom.<sup>88</sup>

Helene stressed that Mary did not abandon her human charges: “Although the Blessed Virgin now makes her home in the heaven world with the Angels, she spends much of her time on the earth plane working with humanity. Many have testified to seeing her.”<sup>89</sup>

As noted, the human kingdom has an overall “positive,” or masculine, polarity and the devic kingdom a “negative,” or feminine, polarity. Evidently Mary’s inherently Monadic femininity facilitated her transition to the devic kingdom—and continues to facilitate her maternal ministry. Transition from one to the other is possible; upon the attainment of Adeptship their respective members “are able to transcend the restrictions of either.” “Even so,” Hodson declared, “a tendency remains for the inherent polarity to endure and to be voluntarily responded to.”

Thus, Our Lady entered the Angelic Kingdom on attaining Adeptship, and has chosen to minister to mankind under the Parviti, true Kwan Yin, Ishtar, Hathor-Isis, Lady Mary Individualities. Thus, in Them, the maternal Spirit, the transcendently compassionate tenderness of all mothers, and indeed motherhood itself, is the predominating impress made upon all orders, communities, groups, and individuals upon whom She bestows Her ministrations. All of these Divine Beings are—for none of Them have disappeared—incarnations of Divine Motherhood.<sup>90</sup>

Devotional references to Mary’s royal status date back to antiquity. Traditionally she is believed to be the woman mentioned in *Revelation*: “[A] woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.”<sup>91</sup> The same chapter of

*Revelation* describes how the Archangel Michael defended her from diabolical attack. Medieval mystic Thomas à Kempis, author of the famous devotional text, *The Imitation of Christ*, urged people to bow at the name of Mary, as well as of Jesus.<sup>92</sup>

Three of the four medieval Marian anthems, sung at Compline, refer to Mary as Queen: the *Ave Regina Coelorum*, *Regina Coeli*, and *Salve Regina*. The first, used during Lent, begins (in English translation), “Hail, Queen of Heaven,” and the second, used during Eastertide, begins: “Queen of Heaven, rejoice, alleluia.” The *Salve Regina* will be mentioned later. Pope Pius XII declared that “Mary, the Virgin Mother of God ... is crowned in heavenly blessedness with the glory of a Queen.”<sup>93</sup> In proclaiming the queenship of Mary, Pius insisted: “We do not wish to propose a new truth to be believed by Christians, since the title and the arguments on which Mary’s queenly dignity ... are to be found in ancient documents of the Church and in the books of the sacred liturgy.”<sup>94</sup>

“Queen of the Angels” also has a long history. The chapel of Our Lady of the Angels at Portioncula, Italy, was built in the fourth century to house relics brought by hermits from the Holy Land; later it achieved fame through connections with Francis of Assisi. On the other side of the world, the mission of Nuestra Señora la Reina de los Ángeles (“Our Lady, Queen of the Angels”) was founded in 1784, subsequently developing into the city of Los Angeles, California. In 2011, Pope Benedict XVI affirmed that “the Angels encircle the august Queen of Victories, the Blessed Virgin Mary.”<sup>95</sup>

Hodson was encouraged to raise awareness not only of Mary as Queen of the Angels but of the deva evolution over which she reigns. *The Brotherhood of Angels and Men* and *The Kingdom of the Gods* present his most complete description of the devas. Interestingly, the former book asserts that the defining color of the “Angels of maternity and birth” is sky blue,<sup>96</sup> a predominant color of Mary’s vestments in recent apparitions and in visitations to Hodson himself.

The Master Polidorus spoke of several orders of devas in a communication to Hodson in 1966:

The strictly occult realms, the form-building, life-stimulating, and landscape *deva* and *devas* are most acceptable. *Gandharvas* should be placed in the first of these categories, because of their part in the operation of the Logos Principle. Actually, the Form-Builders are by far the largest Order, and of more public and general interest because they include those agencies which restore injured forms to the original pattern and shape under the operation of word-force.... Healing *devas* function under this principle of the restoration of form and the preservation of the exact pattern.<sup>97</sup>

In “the early 1970s,” the Archangel Bethelda complimented Hodson on his healing work and commented on the role of the angelic Queen and her ministering hosts:

[M]editation combined with healing invocations for suffering ones ... provide not only benediction and help for them, but also opportunities whereby the many Orders of Angels upon which you call may, and definitely do, collaborate. This is a service of priceless value in all its aspects and especially to the profoundly venerated Queen of the Angels Herself, and Her hosts.<sup>98</sup>

Volume II of *Music Forms*, published a few months before Hodson’s death, reported a clairvoyant study of musical compositions. Among the compositions he studied was Schubert’s “Ave Maria” (“Hail Mary”). Hodson commented on a performance of the work:

One beautiful angel, chiefly blue but with the colors of the song also noticeable, hovers in the air about two yards behind and slightly to the left of the singer, with its head at a similar distance above the singer’s head.... I presume the angel to be a representative member of the angelic order functional under that great angelic being Our Blessed Lady, and therefore a bearer of her blessing to and through the performer to the hearers.<sup>99</sup>

## Mary as World Mother

By the time Geoffrey Hodson commented on the World Mother in *Light of the Sanctuary*, a firm foundation had already been laid. The trans-Himalayan teachings brought to the West a wealth of wisdom from South Asia, including notions of the Mother of the World, sometimes identified with Kuan Yin. Soon the Mother was associated with Mary.

That influx of wisdom found resonance in Christianity, where Mary had long been regarded as Mother, not only of Jesus (and, as the Council of Ephesus insisted, God), but of all of us. Eastern Orthodox Christianity was familiar with the concept of Mary as Mother of the World. In the West, the *Salve Regina* (in English) begins: “Hail, holy Queen, Mother of mercy.” Another popular Roman Catholic prayer includes the words: “Mother of God, and our most gentle Queen and Mother.”<sup>100</sup> And in 1990, Pope John Paul II spoke of Mary as “Mother of the whole family of the children of God.”<sup>101</sup>

Helena Blavatsky asserted in *The Secret Doctrine* that the first manifestation from the transcendent and unknowable Brahman “has to be treated as a feminine principle .... The first emanation becomes the immaculate Mother from whom proceed all the gods, or the anthropomorphized creative forces.”<sup>102</sup>

We have seen that John Paul II spoke of Mary’s presence “before the creation of the world.” Annie Besant placed the World Mother, whom she identified with Mary, at the beginning of the Manvantara. “When the Logos comes forth from ‘the bosom of the Father,’” he makes

as it were a sphere enclosing the Divine Life, coming forth as a radiant orb of Deity, the Divine Substance, Spirit within and limitation, or Matter, without. This is the veil of matter which makes possible the birth of the Logos, Mary, the World-Mother, necessary for the manifestation in time of the Eternal, that Deity may manifest for the building of the worlds.<sup>103</sup>

In 1927 Hindu writer Nibaran Chandra Basu published a two-part article on the World Mother in *The Theosophist*.<sup>104</sup> The following year, Annie Besant declared March 24, the traditional feast of the Annunciation, to be World Mother Day.<sup>105</sup> Also in 1928 Charles Leadbeater declared that the World Mother serves as a senior member of the Planetary Hierarchy, with a mission that embraces the protection of women during childbirth:

The World-Mother ... is a mighty Being who is at the head of a great department of the organization and government of the world. She is in truth a mighty Angel, having under Her a vast host of subordinate Angels, whom She keeps perpetually employed in the work which is especially committed to Her .... [I]n a very real sense all the women of the world are under Her charge, and most especially so at the time of their greatest trial, when they are exercising the supreme function given to them by God, and thus becoming mothers.<sup>106</sup>

Leadbeater added “I think we shall not be far wrong if we regard the World-Mother, Our Lady of Light, as being of equal dignity with the Chohans who are Heads of the Rays.”<sup>107</sup> That would suggest that Mary has attained the sixth initiation. Leadbeater explained that Mary took on the symbolism and characteristics of a series of representations of the World Mother:

Our Lady of Light is hailed as Virgin, though Mother of All. She is thus the essence of the great sea of matter, and so She is symbolized as Aphrodite, the Sea-Queen, and as Mary, the Star of the Sea, and in pictures She is always dressed in the blue of the sea and of the sky. Because it is only by means of our passage through matter that we evolve, She is also to us Isis the Initiator, the Virgin-Mother of whom the Christ in us is born.... [She] is represented as Eve, descending into matter ... and then when She rises clear of matter, once more as Mary the Queen of heaven.<sup>108</sup>

Two years later Russian-born writer Helena Roerich, who embraced Buddhism, spoke of

the World Mother and stressed the need to recognize the Divine Feminine:

I attest that the Power adorning Our Universe is confirmed as Our Mother of the World—the Feminine Origin! .... Truly, the Feminine Origin is most beautiful! Verily, the pinnacle of Be-ness cannot exist without the Feminine Origin. How badly people have mutilated the great cosmic laws! How far people have departed from Truth!<sup>109</sup>

“Origin,” which appears frequently in Roerich’s writings, refers to an Aspect of the Godhead.

In Geoffrey Hodson’s early book, *The Brotherhood of Angels and Men* (1927), Mary spoke through the Archangel Bethelda: “In the Name of Him whom long ago I bore, I come to your aid. I have taken every woman into my heart, to hold there a part of her that through it I may help her in her time of need.”<sup>110</sup> Hodson commented in the same book: “She labors ever for the cause of human motherhood, and even now is bending all Her mighty strength and calling all Her Angel Court to labor for the upliftment of womanhood throughout the world.”<sup>111</sup> He elaborated in an article also published in 1927:

It is sufficient to say that the great orders of the angels stand ready to assist us in all our undertakings, providing that they are in accordance with the great plan: the power of the Lady Mary and Her hosts of angel servers is ready to be freely poured out in all work for the upliftment of the womanhood of the world and the exaltation of the ideals of love, marriage and parenthood.<sup>112</sup>

In *The Angelic Hosts*, published the following year, Hodson discussed Mary’s maternal role symbolically, in the context of the Water element:

[T]he divine Mother is for ever giving birth and, through Her, the life of the system is eternally renewed. The element of water is the eternal mother, the heavenly woman, the Virgin Mary, ever producing, yet ever immaculate, the Universal Isis, the goddess queen of the solar system, the spouse of the

solar deity. Her life is outpoured freely for the sustenance and nutrition of the system. She is the eternal and unsolvable mystery, for, remaining virginal and immaculate, yet is She ever pregnant and ever giving birth. The solar system is Her child which She nourishes upon Her bosom.<sup>113</sup>

Discussions in the Theosophical literature tended to relate the World Mother to a series of personages, like Kwan Yin, Isis, Hathor and Athena, as well as Mary. Hodson's first comment on the Mother in *Light of the Sanctuary*, in 1959, suggested that Kwan Yin and Mary might serve different root races—or the different regions of the world where those forms predominate:

It seems possible that there are two World Mothers, one for the Fourth Root Race and one for the Fifth Root Race. The former assumes the Kwan Yin individuality and the latter that of the Virgin Mary, whilst at the highest level the two are expressions of the one Divine Principle, like twin *Avatars* of the Feminine Aspect of Deity, in the main ministering to the East and the West.<sup>114</sup>

*Illuminations of the Mystery Tradition*, another book compiled from Hodson's writings and published posthumously, reemphasizes that World Mother is an office, rather than an individual. It also indicates that Mary succeeded Isis in that position:

That Official is the World Mother for a planet and a period, and the basis of truth in the successive ideas of the civilizations and religions of the world. There is such a Being, there is such an official, and Mary the mother of Jesus now holds that Office, as Isis held it in earlier days.<sup>115</sup>

Meanwhile, in *Light of the Sanctuary*, Hodson focused on what it means for Mary to hold the position of World Mother:

The Blessed Lady Mary ... moved by purest compassion and love, holds the whole of humanity in Her arms and at Her breast, nourishing it with spiritualizing life for the purpose of quickening the evolution of all sentient beings. The World Mother shares Herself with every mother—human and an-

imal—throughout the periods of the gestation and delivery of her offspring. Impersonally, She is also present and Herself helps the mother during her labor.<sup>116</sup>

*The Miracle of Birth* records Hodson's clairvoyant observations of pregnancy. Ranks of devic builders, he observed, construct the human vehicles and introduce the incarnating soul to its new habitat. And the builders are part of the World Mother's operations:

During investigations of the pre-natal life I constantly became aware of the presence and ministration of certain types of angels which were assisting in the dual process of construction of the new bodies—mental, emotional, etheric, and physical—and the induction into them of the reincarnating Ego .... A study of these angels revealed them as aspects of a great Intelligence which presides over and directs all maternal processes throughout Nature. The teachings ... relate this Being to the Divine Feminine or Mother Aspect of the Deity, of which she is a manifestation or representation.<sup>117</sup>

Through her legions of devic beings, Mary's mothering ministry extends even to the vegetable kingdom. Hodson wrote in his diary:

The totality of Archangels on this planet concerned with every process of Nature in which procreation, interior growth, birth, childhood, youth, and motherhood, including that in the animal and plant kingdoms in which some form of pollinization and subsequent developments occur, is under the general and also very real directive "Rulership" of the Holder of the Office of World Mother.<sup>118</sup>

Mary spoke about her ministry to all mothers, noting the special issues pertaining to pregnancy in the human kingdom:

[My ministry] encompasses the whole of femininity throughout the animal and human kingdoms, the extremely subtle and sensitive procedures of Nature during pregnancies in both kingdoms and, more especially in the human, the actual procedure of the delivery of the child and the experiences through which every mother passes.

In the animal kingdom this is reasonably natural, but in the human, for various reasons into which I will not go here—*karma* being the most important amongst them—assistance is necessary and is provided for the mental, astral, and physical bodies and nervous systems of every mother on earth. No single one is ever outside of the ministrations under Myself and sometimes by Myself supplied and applied by the angelic members associated with My Office of World Mother.<sup>119</sup>

The suggestion that karma has complicated human childbirth might call to mind God's curse on Eve: "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children."<sup>120</sup> But Hodson explained elsewhere that the cause is our lack of understanding of devic activity: "It is a lack of recognition of their [the building devas'] place and aid that has made childbirth ... a period of agony or death. When men invoke their aid, they will teach the human race how to bring forth their kind with joy."<sup>121</sup> Presumably women will have opportunities to do the same!

Mary acknowledged that only a few "mystics and occultists" know of her work on behalf of women in pregnancy. But "as the race evolves, humanity—especially women—will become more and more aware of these necessities and ministrations. Any published work, therefore, which draws attention to them now is of practical value to all mothers and mothers-to-be."<sup>122</sup>

The Master Polidorus urged Hodson to promote the World Mother Movement, which Annie Besant had spearheaded in 1928, along with her proclamation of World Mother Day:

[A] World Mother Movement would at this time be of great benefit to humanity, and would offer Her increasing opportunities and channels for the helping of mankind. Such groupings do exist in certain Roman Catholic institutions, such as the monastery and chapel of Einzedelin. More and more are needed, particularly with greater freedom of religious thinking, even though within the Christian faith.<sup>123</sup>

While it may have special significance for Christianity, the World Mother Movement can be embraced by multiple world religions. Polidorus continued:

The same, of course, is equally true in other religions in which a Feminine Aspect of Deity and a representative thereof is accepted and believed in. Whilst all forms of ministration would be included in the activities of such groups, the underlying principle would be the furtherance throughout the world of compassionate humaneness in every walk of life—so overwhelmingly needed at the present time.<sup>124</sup>

Polidorus added: "Our Lady suggests inclusions in articles and books being newly reprinted for the Liberal Catholic Church, and certainly an article in *The Theosophist*, leaving all possible room for freedom of thought."<sup>125</sup>

Mary's assumption of the office of World Mother—like her transition to the Deva Evolution—was a natural choice based on her Monadic femininity. "Each Adept," she explained,

pursues both a particular path of Self-expression that is decided largely by the nature of the Monad, and fulfils the associated duties sometimes but not always as an Adept Official. The Lords *Manu*, *Bodhisattva*, and *Maha-Chohan* and Their immediate Adept Collaborators are examples of this system. I in My turn, continuing to express innate Monadic accentuations, serve as far as I am capable in the Department known as "World Mother."<sup>126</sup>

A Department of World Mother would be a fourth, complementing the three—corresponding to the three Rays of Aspect—identified in the esoteric literature.<sup>127</sup>

Mary's "mothering" duties extend to the metaphorical birth of the Christ consciousness in the disciple's heart. Hodson explained: "Impersonally, She also is present and helps to bring about the mystical "birth" of the Christ consciousness within the Inner Self of every Initiate when admitted to membership of the Great White Brotherhood."<sup>128</sup> Earlier the Master Polidorus had remarked:



To perceive the Gospel story of the Annunciation and Virgin birth as an account (a quite intimately descriptive and instructive one) of the awakening from relative “slumber” of the Christ-Principle within the consciousness of a human being. This applies especially to those who have begun to experience the interior “birth,” and find themselves occasionally illumined, inspired, and increasingly interested in the living of the spiritual life amidst worldly activities.<sup>129</sup>

Mary ministers to women who are sick, as well as to those in pregnancy. This recognition was important to Hodson because of his healing ministry in the Liberal Catholic Church. Mary’s first visitation to him in 1945 came after he had sought her help in a healing: “I had invoked Her aid for a girl of nineteen during a healing service a few days previously and felt a response.”<sup>130</sup> Three decades later Mary affirmed: “Though I am concerned for all mankind, I am especially concerned on behalf of all your female patients.”<sup>131</sup>

In 1978, the Master Kuthumi commented: “Cruelty in the treatment of women, children, and animals, its evil and sheer ugliness, [would illustrate] the opposite of the ideal for which She [Mary] stands.”<sup>132</sup> Two years later Mary herself added: “Amongst the evils of the world, always add, when speaking upon this subject, the degradation of and the consequent suffering of women.”<sup>133</sup>

“Healing” may, of course, take the form of release from a physical body that can no longer sustain the indwelling life. Such an incident involved an initiated disciple of the Master Kuthumi “who had appealed to Geoffrey for help and guidance in the mental and spiritual aridity of later life.” In response Kuthumi of-

fered advice on preparing the woman for her death and eventual reincarnation:

From the point of view of her membership of the Brotherhood and her close links with more than one Master and the Blessed Lady Mary, it is important that before she is freed from her body later on she endeavors, as far as possible mentally, to bring to life again her memory of her time under her Initiate Teacher and of any experiences she may have passed through.<sup>134</sup>

Kuthumi added that reawakening such memories would spare the woman “many of the experiences, some of them not pleasant, of astral life after death.” It would also “greatly affect her next life, both in the

choice of parents and conditions and in the provision of opportunities to draw near to the Adept life of the planet ... and to the extremely important knowledge of both the existence of the Path and an opportunity to enter upon it once again.”<sup>135</sup> The woman temporarily lapsed from active discipleship; Hodson had past-life “excursions” into worldliness; and devotion to Mary in his most recent life may have lacked consistency. Few of us could boast of continuous, uninterrupted spiritual development.

## Mary and the Divine Feminine

Geoffrey Hodson referred to Mary as “incarnation of the Maternal Spirit of the Godhead.”<sup>136</sup> The Archangel Bethelda declared that she, as World Mother, “is to be revered most deeply and humbly.”<sup>137</sup> And as noted, the Master Polidorus referred to her as “Her gracious Majesty.” In *The Kingdom of the Gods*, understood to contain material from Hierarchical sources, Hodson commented: “The planetary World Mother is conceived ... as a

*A priest has the power to mystically produce the body of the Lord giving that body its sacramental form.... I allow myself to say that Mary is the first to say the Mass, by agreeing to the Incarnation and so preparing the victim ... Mary fulfills in advance the sacrifice of the cross by preparing what is required for it.... More than any priest she can point at her crucified Son and say: “This is my body!”*

highly-evolved Archangel Representative and Embodiment on earth of the Feminine Aspect of the Deity ... in whom all the highest qualities of womanhood and motherhood shine forth in their fullest perfection.”<sup>138</sup>

In 1941 Hodson wrote in his diary: “Behind all womanhood exists the Eternal Woman, the one divine manifestation as femininity .... Within and through the feminine personality is made manifest the spirit of femininity, the archetypal woman.”<sup>139</sup> He listed the archetypal qualities as follows:

They are sacrifice, tenderness, graciousness, divine radiance, heavenly fragrance, beauty, and grace. They are wisdom, fathomless as a still dark pool of infinite depth, profound compassion and intimate concern for all living things, ministration, healing love. They are joyous radiant girlhood, graceful womanhood, creative, preserving, and transforming motherhood.<sup>140</sup>

The archetype is partially realized in every woman but is fully realized in a female Adept like the World Mother. As a consequence, the Mother enjoys an intimate relationship with a Cosmic Feminine Principle from which the archetype derives:

In the holder of the divine Office of World Mother, a conscious union occurs between the archetypal woman fully manifest in the woman Adept and the cosmic principle of womanhood. This constitutes a descent, fiery, pentecostal, of the Eternal Woman into its own purified and exalted superhuman manifestation in time and space.<sup>141</sup>

The archetype evidently manifested in time and space when Mary “spoke in a voice of compelling sweetness and beauty and with the most engaging charm.”

Borrowing a term more familiar in Christology, Hodson declared that all women have the potential to share in the relationship with the Cosmic Principle:

The potentiality of this *hypostatic union* exists in every woman and is frequently foreshadowed throughout successive human lives as interior illuminations, won-

drous yet indescribable in visions ever beyond the possibility of communication to another. This is in part the mystery of womanhood, this the secret life of every woman, that on occasion she knows and is one with the Eternal Woman and has her mysterious life in that realm wherein She abides.<sup>142</sup>

In 1978, the Archangel Bethelda urged worship of the Divine Feminine—presumably by men as well as women—suggesting that it would inspire not only an important change in human consciousness but awareness of the universal dimensions of femininity:

Throughout the ages, Adept and Archangelic Teachers have placed before—and even caused to be built within—the human mind the concept and therefore the worship of a Feminine Aspect of Deity. One purpose for this teaching is to inspire devotion leading to the adoption of the concept of a perfect Divine Woman. The states of consciousness brought about in those who thus respond inwardly can grow towards the more abstract Feminine Principle in Nature. This principle pervades all creation from the mineral of the dense world to the formless aspects of Solar Systems, Universes, and Cosmoi.<sup>143</sup>

The Greek word used in the New Testament for “Godhead,” *Theotes*, is grammatically feminine.<sup>144</sup> Yet the Trinity traditionally has been presented as the union of two masculine persons and one of dubious gender.<sup>145</sup> Christians have generally felt uneasy about worshipping a Feminine Aspect of Deity; the whole Judeo-Christian ethos grew up around worship of a male God. In turn, Christian vocation has been to become a disciple of Jesus Christ. The Master Polidorus lent his support to that ideal:

[T]he devotee, if so moved, may accustom himself to live even as the disciples of old are said to have lived and even to be spiritually observant should the great Lord Himself appear or His words be heard: “Follow me and I will make you fishers of men.” Thus life may come to be lived as if always within the Presence of the Lord and

with the heart and soul ever turned towards Him, dedicated wholly to Him.<sup>146</sup>

Polidorus went on, however, to proclaim that becoming a disciple of Mary is equally valid: “Others may have found themselves also realizing beyond the slightest possible doubt, the existence of the Mother of Our Lord, the Blessed Lady Mary, and similarly devote themselves also to Her.”<sup>147</sup> Again, both men and women may be eligible. Earlier Hodson had written: “I now feel utterly sure and rededicate my life to Her service.” And he encouraged others to do the same: “This ministrations could become much more effective and general if increasing numbers of communities, groups, and individuals would especially recognize Our Lady, and both be gratefully recipient of Her benedictions and offer themselves as Her servers at the personal level.”<sup>148</sup>

Service is the *modus operandi* at all levels. Mary, World Mother and “planetary Queen of the Angels,” serves the Lord of the World, Sanat Kumara, “in what might be called, if one may so presume, His femininity-functions, extremely delicate and refined as they are in every kingdom.”<sup>149</sup> She has counterparts on other planets and in the solar system as an entity. At every level they function as feminine aspects of their respective Logoi:

Supraplanetary *Maha-Devis* fulfill the same Office for groups of planets in a Solar System upon which those functions have begun to take place and have continued to do so. Such a being—*Maha-Devi*—is in relationship and collaboration with the Solar Logos, as is the World Mother, Our Lady. This is also true, one presumes, of the *Maha-Devi* for the Solar System and relationship with, and the fulfillment of, Offices under the more Feminine Aspect of the Solar Logos.<sup>150</sup>

A channel of divine femininity seems to extend from the highest levels of reality of which we have any knowledge. In parallel with the hierarchy of Logoi, there is a hierarchy of *Maha-Devis*. We noted earlier that Blavatsky placed the Divine Feminine ahead of all other manifestations of the Brahman.<sup>151</sup> Nineteenth-century Theosophist and Hermeticist Anna

Kingsford, who influenced Annie Besant, described the relationship between Mary and the Godhead thus:

She appears as the Daughter, Mother, and Spouse of God. Exhibiting in a perfect Humanity the fullness of the life she has received of God, she is mystically styled the Blessed Virgin Mary, and in token of her Divine Motherhood and heavenly derivation and attributes, is represented as clad in celestial azure, and bearing in Her arms the infant Man, in whom, regenerate and reborn of Her own immaculate substance, the universe is redeemed. *In Her subsist inherently all the feminine qualities of the Godhead.*<sup>152</sup>

Interestingly, the phrase “Daughter, Mother, and Spouse of God” also appears in a Marian devotion promoted by the conservative Roman Catholic prelature *Opus Dei*.<sup>153</sup>

## Mary as Priestess

The Master Polidorus declared Mary to be “Queen, Priestess, and Mother,” adding enigmatically: “Meditate upon the mystery of the deific Feminine Principle and its triple function of Queen, Priestess, and Mother of aspiring souls.”<sup>154</sup> Emphasis on the triple function, as it applies both to Mary and to the Feminine Aspect of Deity, is evocative. In particular, the concept of “Priestess”—possibly with meaning at more than one level of reality—calls for detailed discussion.

Geoffrey Hodson and his sources spoke little about Mary as Priestess, but we note that the title was used in the ancient mystery schools, and Mary was initiated into the Egyptian Mysteries. Identifying Mary as a priestess links her not only with the Ancient Mysteries but, more importantly, with the Mysteries of the future. “The Lady Mary,” to use the honorific of the mystery schools, can be expected to preside, along with her angelic hosts, over ritual in the Aquarian Age.

The Egyptian Mysteries are believed to have developed as “sects” focused on the deities of particular regions and eras. Historians identify the Mysteries of Osiris and Isis as two principal forms.<sup>155</sup> The Master Polidorus explained

that the former, which have a masculine polarity, were associated more strongly with the human kingdom, and the latter, having a feminine polarity, with the devic kingdom. After encouraging meditation on the triple feminine functions, he identified the Master Rakoczy, Chohan of the Seventh Ray of Ceremonial Order, as the head of both forms of the Mysteries:

Then will be discovered the chart and course of life and the duties owed to the Master the Prince [Rakoczy], for He, as Head of the Seventh Ray, is Hierophant of the Mysteries of both the Feminine and Masculine Aspects of Hathor-Isis and of Osiris-Horus, of both the devic and the human Hierarchies.<sup>156</sup>

The Ancient Mysteries were also divided into the Lesser and Greater Mysteries, the one being preparatory to the other. The Christian sacraments are generally regarded as the successors of the Lesser Mysteries.<sup>157</sup> On one occasion the Master Polidorus took Hodson, “superphysically,” to “what appeared to be a library and museum of antiquities.” Hodson described what he learned:

I was shown some comparative passages in both the Liberal Catholic Church Liturgy and very old documents, some of which consisted of unbound sheets rather resembling the *Dead Sea Scrolls*. I was informed that these were preserved rituals of the Ancient Mysteries, more particularly Egyptian, and I think Chaldean and other countries in the Middle East. Although I could not read them, my “Friend” [Polidorus] helped me to distinguish certain parts of these ancient rituals which had correspondences with Christian liturgies, notably that of the Liberal Catholic Church.<sup>158</sup>

Unfortunately, Hodson did not identify what specific elements of Christian liturgies resemble the ancient rituals.

The Master Djwhal Khul, writing through Alice Bailey, predicted that the Greater Mysteries will be restored, sometime after 2025, “through the medium of the Church and the Masonic Fraternity,” and that Christ will serve as hierophant<sup>159</sup>—presumably taking over that

responsibility from the Master Rakoczy. Interestingly, Hodson was both a priest and a Freemason. Djwhal Khul saw the restoration of the Mysteries as part of a momentous unfolding of human consciousness that will also include establishment of a new world religion, externalization of the Hierarchy, and reappearance of the Christ. Perhaps Mary will serve as co-hierophant.

“Priestess” may be the most evocative of the roles Hodson and his sources assigned to Mary, and many traditional Christians might reject such a notion out of hand. Yet statements affirming Mary’s priestly status have been made through the ages. Elizabeth was “of the daughters of Aaron” (*Luke* 1:5), implying that she belonged to the priestly tribe of Levi. Her cousin Mary may also have been a Levite.

Mary recalled Hodson’s visits to that “small church in the little square in Manchester, where you used to come to meditate and where I caused you to see My aura shining through and around My statue.” That church may have been St Chrysostom’s, Church of England, which prides itself on devotion to Mary. It also advertises itself thus: “We rejoice in our Anglo Catholic tradition, affirming the ministry of women as priests and bishops in the Church.”<sup>160</sup> The Anglo-Catholic tradition within the Anglican Communion shares important features with the Liberal Catholic Church in which Hodson was ordained.<sup>161</sup>

The St Chrysostom’s Church website includes an article: “The Priesthood of Mary,” which presents four images, from the sixth to the fifteenth century, in which Mary is dressed in priestly vestments. An image from Croatia, dated 540 CE, shows Mary visiting Elizabeth: “Both women are wearing what look to be chasubles with the pallium visible beneath, denoting the highest priestly honor, worn only by the Pope or Bishop as a privilege.”<sup>162</sup> In an illustration from twelfth-century Germany, the Annunciation is depicted as Mary’s ordination: “There is ... a belief that through her ‘Yes,’ Mary made Christ present in the world, in her womb—as the priest makes Christ present in the words of consecration.”<sup>163</sup>

Another image focuses on the scene at the foot of the Cross when Mary receives the body of Jesus into her arms: “[W]hen his body is taken down from the Cross, Mary fulfils the role of the sacrificial priest; she offers up the sacrifice of her Son, her own flesh and blood to be the Bread of Life and she presents this to the world, as at Jesus’ birth, at Jesus’ death; Mary can say better than any priest, “This is my body, this is my blood.”<sup>164</sup>

Neither the images reproduced on the St Chrysostom’s website, nor the accompanying commentary, are isolated references to Mary’s priestly status. Prominent Roman Catholic churchmen have also affirmed Mary’s priestly role, focusing on her participation in the sacrifice of the Cross. For example, French priest Julien Lorient (1633–1715) declared:

Mary is a divine priestess, she is a great sacrificer who takes the place of all people and offers to God in their name the greatest and most worthy sacrifice that has ever been offered, presenting to him his unique Son, so holy, so pure, so innocent, which makes St Epiphanius call her the priestess of our religion .... Oh blessed virgin, you truly are the priestess of our religion; you have put together in one sacrifice, the most perfect sacrifice which the earth has ever offered.<sup>165</sup>

In 1866 Nicholas Wiseman, first Roman Catholic primate of England and Wales since the sixteenth century, declared:

Therefore does she [Mary] stand at the foot of the cross, that for lost man she may make a public and willing sacrifice of all that is dear to her on earth. Only she, His Mother, can thus put herself into strict uniformity with His Almighty Father.... [S]he became the priestess on the part of all mankind, who was allowed to accomplish the holocaust, which was considered too difficult and painful for Father Abraham, the sacrifice of a beloved child.<sup>166</sup>

Speaking at a Eucharistic congress at Lourdes in 1914, Bishop Jean Nazlian proclaimed:

Mary is also something greater than temples or tabernacles ... she is priest.... A

priest has the power to mystically produce the body of the Lord giving that body its sacramental form.... I allow myself to say that Mary is the first to say Mass, by agreeing to the Incarnation and so preparing the victim ... Mary fulfils in advance the sacrifice of the cross by preparing what is required for it .... More than any priest she can point at her crucified Son and say: “This is my body!” Mary is therefore not a priest who does not share in the sacrifice, but a priest who puts herself into the victim who is the heavenly bread.<sup>167</sup>

Not surprisingly the Roman Catholic establishment has tried to downplay any suggestion that Mary was actually a priest, or priestess, “in the ordinary sense of the word.”<sup>168</sup> Acknowledgement of her priestly status would play into the hands of those pressing for the ordination of women.<sup>169</sup>

## Concluding Remarks

*Light of the Sanctuary* records the close relationship Geoffrey Hodson developed with the Lady Mary, building upon an encounter with her and her son Jesus in an earlier lifetime. Hodson’s diary also makes important claims about Mary and reports visions, visitations, and communications from her. Hodson named other sources in the Planetary Hierarchy, including the Archangel (Maha-Deva) Bethelda and the Master Polidorus Isurenus. They described Mary as a high initiate, priestess, senior member of the Planetary Hierarchy, Queen of the Angels, Mother of the World, and an expression of the Feminine Aspect of Deity. Polidorus urged Hodson to “Meditate upon the mystery of the deific Feminine Principle.” We would benefit from doing likewise.

Mary appeared to Hodson in much the same way as she did in apparitions reported in western Christianity. In most cases she appeared how we would *expect* to see her; her vestments, or aura, were predominantly blue and white. She exhibited the utmost humility yet spoke with obvious authority.

The credibility of Hodson’s descriptions of Mary could be questioned, but, as discussed in the Introduction, we are persuaded to take

them seriously. Separately, Christians might question the high status Hodson and his sources assigned to Mary. The descriptions contrast sharply with Protestant indifference toward Mary. They even surpass the stature accorded her by the Roman and Eastern Orthodox Churches—which Protestants have accused of Mariolatry. Perhaps Hodson’s work can reassure those drawn to Marian devotional and intercessory practices that they have Hierarchical support. Meanwhile, the overall tenor of Hodson’s writings should refute any suggestion that his commitment to Christ was diminished by devotion to Mary. We recall his profound reaction to the encounter with Jesus in Palestine.

The elderly Hodson professed to “rededicate” his life to Mary’s service. Given his fame as a lecturer and writer, he may have missed opportunities to disseminate the knowledge he had acquired and promote devotion to Mary. Readers did not become aware of his insights until five years after his death. Hodson may have been constrained by Theosophical Society policies. But not even *The Inner Side of Church Worship*, addressed to the Liberal Catholic Church, refers to Mary; perhaps he was not ready to discuss her, or perhaps the Church was resistant to Marian teachings and devotion at that time. If so, the situation has changed; the discussion of Mary on an L.C.C. website contains language taken from Hodson’s diary, though he is not mentioned by name.<sup>170</sup>

The canonical gospels are silent about Mary’s early life and spiritual potential, but the *Infancy Gospel of James*—and the *Qur’an*—suggest that she was recognized in childhood as someone of great significance.<sup>171</sup> Surprisingly, the presentation of Mary in the temple at three years of age is honored in the liturgy of Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy, which otherwise distance themselves from the extracanonical texts.

Mary may have been an avatara who incarnated purposefully to give birth to the Master Jesus. In any event Hodson claimed that, in the lifetime when she gave birth to Jesus, Mary attained the fifth initiation and was admitted to the Brotherhood of Luxor. Charles Leadbeater

even suggested that Mary has now attained the sixth initiation, making her not just an Adept but a *Chohan*.

At the end of that life Mary made the transition from the human kingdom to the Deva Evolution, literally to reign as Queen of the Angels. While such a transition is rare, it may have been facilitated by Mary’s Monadic femininity and her attainment of Adeptship in a female body. The Deva Evolution is said to have a feminine polarity. Is “Queen” still an appropriate title in an age when monarchies may be considered anachronistic? Should we not refer to Mary as “President,” “Prime Minister,” or even “Chief Executive Officer”? No, “Queen” has timeless, archetypal meaning; it calls to mind serene majesty, supreme power combined with femininity.

Mary holds the office of Mother of the World, a position previously held by—or possibly shared with—Isis, Kuan Yin, and other personages known to world religions. Again her femininity is appropriate or necessary in that role. Mary and her hosts of ministering angels watch over women afflicted by sickness or abuse. As part of her maternal responsibilities Mary also presides over pregnancy and childbirth in the human and animal kingdoms, and even over processes like pollination in the vegetable kingdom. Of considerable significance is the role of bees in pollination, a collaborative and mutually rewarding activity that spans the animal and vegetable kingdoms.

As an Adept the World Mother enjoys an intimate relationship with the cosmic feminine principle and expresses its qualities and energies. But every woman, Hodson declared, has the potential to enter into a similar “hypostatic union” with that cosmic principle and can express more fully its archetypal qualities, like compassion, radiance and grace.

Hodson’s assertions relating to Mary receive various degrees of support from, or in some cases were anticipated by, the writings of other esoteric writers. His assertions regarding the World Mother, and a Feminine Aspect of Deity whose avatars occasionally visit our world, resonate with long traditions in the religions of South Asia. Indeed, insistence on an exclusive-

ly male or masculine God in the Abrahamic religions may be an anomaly in religious history, rather than the norm.

Hodson's work assisted in a larger process of Mary's self-revelation, along with the increased frequency of Marian apparitions reported by others. Why did she choose the twentieth century to reveal herself more intimately than ever before? Helena Roerich made a profound statement:

After Atlantis the Mother of the World veiled Her Face and forbade the pronouncement of Her Name until the hour of the constellations should strike. She has manifested Herself only partly. Never has She manifested herself on a planetary scale.<sup>172</sup>

The dawning of the Age of Aquarius—more than twelve centuries, or one-half of a zodiacal Great Year, since the final destruction of Atlantis—may well qualify as “the hour of the constellations.” Now we can name the one who currently holds the office of World Mother. And now she is manifesting herself as the “highest possible imaginable spiritualized Queen,” as well as revealing the extent of her global, multi-kingdom, maternal ministry.

On a more mundane, but not-unrelated, level, the new revelation comes at a time of rapidly evolving gender dynamics. The new knowledge has been revealed at a time when it would be understood and could promote and nurture the empowerment of women.<sup>173</sup> While women were relegated to inferior positions in society, the depiction of Mary as a powerful entity within the Planetary Hierarchy might have been impossible, or would have been dismissed as fanciful. Indeed the very existence of the Hierarchy was unknown in the West, but for a few initiates, until Helena Blavatsky and her contemporaries in the Theosophical Society shared their experiences. Now the understanding of Mary's status and work resonates with women's increasingly active role in society and tenure of positions of significant authority.

Recognition of the Lady Mary's role in the Hierarchy promises new avenues of disciple-

ship, complementing more familiar customs of discipleship to Masters in the human lifestream, or to the Lord Christ himself, and also complementing traditional customs of Marian devotion and intercession. The Master Polidorus and Hodson himself urged people to become disciples, or “servers,” of Mary, and Hodson added that opportunities exist for both men and women. Presumably such disciples would help promote the new knowledge of Mary and serve in her ministry to women, children, and members of the younger kingdoms. Certainly it would include the healing ministry. But it is unclear where Mary's “Department of World Mother” fits into the Hierarchy, as currently understood, or what ashram or ashrams might be forming within it.

The affirmation of Mary as Priestess is evocative, and we wish that Hodson had elaborated on the Master Polidorus' brief remarks. But authoritative sources in institutional Christianity have made similar affirmations. Artwork spanning many centuries depicts Mary vested to celebrate the Mass. One image suggests that she was “ordained” by the Archangel Gabriel at the Annunciation. Those images, as well as written works, show that Mary's role in the birth, life and death of Jesus has long been recognized as a priestly role.

Prominent churchmen have suggested that Mary's participation in the sacrifice of the Cross had strong Eucharistic associations. They even suggested that she was, and presumably remains, uniquely qualified to utter the words of consecration: “This is My Body, this is My Blood.” Images of Mary holding the body of the crucified Jesus—Michelangelo's *Pietà* immediately comes to mind—may be as relevant to the Eucharist as are images of Christ at the Last Supper. Acknowledgment of Mary's priestly role opens up rich opportunities for liturgical development and certainly supports the ordination of women.

Importantly, Hodson, along with Father Loriot and Cardinal Wiseman, described Mary as a *priestess*, not a priest. Sadly, the former term is still shunned in denominations where women serve in sacramental roles.<sup>174</sup> Emphasis on equality and interchangeability with male cler-

gy may have been justifiable in the short run, but “priestess” would communicate the unique contributions female clergy could make to Eucharistic ritual. The roles priestesses performed in the Ancient Mysteries were sex-specific. Esoteric writers have commented that the Christian sacraments are the successors of the Lesser Mysteries, and that the Greater Mysteries will be restored in the foreseeable future.

Geoffrey Hodson’s insights into Mary’s nature and role make a significant contribution to Christian esotericism. Perhaps they can have an even bigger impact by stimulating personal devotion, mystical contemplation, and sacred ritual. Other writers should examine his work, make it available to a larger audience, and seek further insights of their own. Hodson has left us a legacy of important knowledge; now we have opportunities to make use of it and build upon it. We are humbled that so much has been shared with us.

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<sup>1</sup> Tradition has not provided a suitable form of address for a female adept—a status which Mary allegedly attained. Neither “Master” nor “Mistress” seems appropriate, “Our Lady” seems too devotional, and “Virgin Mary” problematic. Some formal style is called for, and “the Lady Mary” has been adopted in this article. Hodson described Mary as a priestess, and “the Lady...” is said to have been the honorific of priestesses in the ancient mystery schools. In *Light of the Sanctuary* Hodson used styles such as “Our Lady Mary” and “The Blessed Lady Mary.”

<sup>2</sup> For a brief biography, albeit with a few factual errors, see John F. Nash, “Great Esotericists: Geoffrey Hodson (1886–1983),” *The Esoteric Quarterly* (Spring 2018), 79-84.

<sup>3</sup> Sandra Hodson (ed.), *Light of the Sanctuary: The Occult Diary of Geoffrey Hodson*, published posthumously, (Manila, Philippines: Theosophical Publishers, 1988). The book currently is out of print, but a complete online version is available at:

<http://www.minhtrietmoi.org/Theosophy/Hodson/Light%20of%20the%20sanctuary.htm> (Last accessed Nov. 12, 2018). Page numbers cited herein are from the print version.

<sup>4</sup> The present author has not been able to ascertain the date of Hodson’s ordination in the L.C.C. But *The Inner Side of Church Worship*

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(1930) is ascribed to “Fr. Geoffrey Hodson,” suggesting that his ordination took place prior to that date.

<sup>5</sup> See for example Geoffrey Hodson, *Clairvoyant Investigations* (Wheaton, IL: Theosophical Publishing House, 1984).

<sup>6</sup> S. Hodson (ed.), *Light Of The Sanctuary*, 42, 59, 92-94. We note that Helena Blavatsky and Alice Bailey also identified Kuthumi, Chohan and head of the second-ray ashram, as their Master.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 115.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 116. Parenthesis in original. The Master Serapis Bey is also a member of the Brotherhood of Luxor, while the Masters Morya and Kuthumi are associated with the trans-Himalayan Brotherhood.

<sup>9</sup> Geoffrey Hodson, Introduction to S. Hodson (ed.), *Light Of The Sanctuary*, xxiv. “Profoundly important movement” presumably was a reference to the Theosophical Society, to which Hodson was staunchly loyal.

<sup>10</sup> For example, many Theosophists dismissed Alice Bailey’s claims to be the amanuensis of the Master Djwhal Khul, insisting that he was not the “Djwal Kul” who had appeared to Leadbeater and others in India.

<sup>11</sup> Lists of Hodson’s articles and the books can be found at:

<https://www.minhtrietmoi.org/Theosophy/Hodson/Sharing%20the%20Light%20I.htm>, and <http://www.geoffreyhodson.com/Booklist-&-Media.html> (Last accessed Nov. 25, 2018).

<sup>12</sup> S. Hodson (ed.), *Light of the Sanctuary*, 219-220.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 272.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 413-414.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 116.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 266. Parenthesis in original.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 263.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 263-264.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 264.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 266. Conceivably, Hodson’s experiences in the church could have occurred during visits to Manchester in his youth. But he would have understood his devotional practice as “prayer” rather than meditation; the latter term was unfamiliar in mainstream Christianity at that time. More likely the experiences took place after 1912. That year he moved to Manchester and was exposed to eastern meditation practices in the Theosophical Society. Also by



- then his clairvoyant gifts had become more highly developed.
- 22 Hodson referred to the World Mother, without naming her, four years earlier. S. Hodson (ed.), *Light of the Sanctuary*, 82.
- 23 Ibid., 266.
- 24 Ibid., 267.
- 25 Ibid., 266. No transcript of his “talk” is available.
- 26 Ibid., 414. The “former aspirant” is not identified. Two possible candidates are Anna Kingsford and Annie Besant. The former passed away in 1888, and the latter in 1933. Hodson made a few significant references to Mary in the 1920s, but his lasting interest developed in the 1940s. “Unexpected” presumably referred to Hodson, at the personality level, since the transfer of responsibility seems to have been anticipated by the Hierarchy.
- 27 Ibid., 116.
- 28 Ibid., 267.
- 29 See:  
<https://www.theosophy.world/resource/audio/geoffrey-hodson-audio-archive> (last accessed Nov. 25, 2018). Either the relevant lectures were so few in number as to be overlooked, or the archivists determined that other lectures had greater lasting value.
- 30 S. Hodson (ed.), *Light of the Sanctuary*, 390. Parenthesis in original.
- 31 Ibid., 390. We do not know what was offered to the bishop, and efforts to find a copy of the manuscript failed
- 32 Ibid., 414.
- 33 Ibid., 421. No transcript or recording of the lecture could be found.
- 34 Ibid., 285.
- 35 Ibid., 418.
- 36 Ibid., 532-524. Again, no transcript or recording of the lecture could be located.
- 37 The two volumes of *Music Forms* are published together in Hodson, *Clairvoyant Investigations*.
- 38 S. Hodson (ed.), *Light of the Sanctuary*, 546.
- 39 Ibid., 378 fn. Italics in original.
- 40 Ibid., 115-116.
- 41 Ibid., 415.
- 42 Ibid., 418.
- 43 Hodson, *The Kingdom of the Gods*, plate 29 and p. 244. Reproduced by permission of the Theological Publishing House, Adyar, India. See also plate 28 in the same work.
- 44 S. Hodson (ed.), *Light of the Sanctuary*, 20-21.
- 45 Ibid., 267.
- 46 Ibid. Parenthesis in original.
- 47 Ibid., 268.
- 48 That description echoes the western interpretation (“Mother of God”) of the Greek *Theotokos*, as defined by the Council of Ephesus (431 CE).
- 49 See for example D. A. Brading, *Mexican Phoenix: Our Lady of Guadalupe. Image and Tradition over Five Centuries* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2001).
- 50 See for example “Biography of Bernadette Soubirous.” Online at: <https://www.biographyonline.net/spiritual/bernadette-soubirous.html> (Last accessed Aug. 11, 2018).
- 51 That message was interpreted as supportive of Pope Pius IX’s somewhat-controversial decree *Ineffabilis Deus* (1854). The decree proclaimed as infallible dogma the belief “that the most Blessed Virgin Mary, in the first instance of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege granted by Almighty God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the human race, was preserved free from all stain of original sin.” Belief in the Immaculate Conception is more widespread, and related devotion extends back to late antiquity, but the dogma is binding only within the Roman Church.
- 52 “Biography of Bernadette Soubirous.”
- 53 Louis Kondor (ed.), *Fatima in Lucia’s Own Words: Sister Lucia’s Memoirs* (transl.: Dominican Nuns of Perpetual Rosary, Fátima, Portugal: Secretariado Dos Pastorinhos, 2007), 174. Lúcia Santos, author of the memoirs, became a nun and lived to the age of 97. The other two children, her cousins Francisco and Jacinta Marto, died in the flu pandemic of 1918–1920.
- 54 By contrast, apparitions reported in the Eastern Orthodox Churches typically depict Mary wearing red robes.
- 55 S. Hodson (ed.), *Light of the Sanctuary*, 284.
- 56 Ibid.
- 57 “Biography of Bernadette Soubirous.”
- 58 S. Hodson (ed.), *Light of the Sanctuary*, 284.
- 59 *Chokmah* and *Sophia* are, respectively, the Hebrew and Greek words for “Wisdom.”
- 60 *Proverbs* 8:22-23, 30. All biblical citations are from the King James Bible.
- 61 “Sophia” has had many other faces. Gnosticism incorporated the semi-divine personage of *Proverbs* into its pantheon, often paired

with Christ. In early mainstream Christianity she was first nominated for Third Person of the Trinity, then masculinized and identified with Christ. Eastern Orthodoxy revered “St Sophia,” portrayed as a second-century CE widow and martyr with three daughters, Faith, Hope and Charity. In late 19th- and early 20th-century Russia, Sophia was seen as either the “nonhypostatic” essence of the Trinity or as a symbol for the universal church. Most recently she has been embraced as a goddess in western feminist theology. See for example John F. Nash, “Sophia: the Gnostic Heritage,” *The Esoteric Quarterly* (Fall 2009), 29-39.

<sup>62</sup> Vladimir Solovyov, “The Three Meetings,” Quoted in Eugenia Gourvitch, *Vladimir Solovyov: the Man and the Prophet* (Forest Row, UK: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1992), 25.

<sup>63</sup> John Paul II, Encyclical letter *Redemptoris Mater*: “On the Blessed Virgin Mary in the life of the Pilgrim Church,” March 25, 1987. John Paul’s assertion that Mary was present “before the creation” bears close scrutiny. Either it affirmed the preexistence of human souls—a viewpoint for which Origen of Alexandria was condemned as a heretic—or it suggested that she was in some way super-human.

<sup>64</sup> *Luke* 1:28.

<sup>65</sup> *Infancy Gospel of James*, (transl.: M.R. James), §§7-8.

<sup>66</sup> *Qur’an*, surah 3:35-38. Mary is greatly revered in Islam. She is mentioned more frequently in the *Qur’an* than in the New Testament.

<sup>67</sup> More generally, institutional Christianity regards those texts as apocryphal, inauthentic, even heretical.

<sup>68</sup> *Luke* 1:27, 34.

<sup>69</sup> The appeal to scripture to support Mary’s “perpetual virginity” is selective, ignoring references to Jesus’ siblings in *Mark* 6:3 and elsewhere. Moreover, the key reference to *Isaiah* 7:14: “A virgin shall conceive and bear a son,” is of questionable relevance. The Hebrew *alma*, translated as “virgin,” more correctly meant simply “a young woman.” The Greek equivalent *parthenos* could even mean “an independent mature woman.” The New Testament writers reinterpreted—or misinterpreted—those terms to mean “virgin” in the modern sense. Critics have suggested that the desire to make Mary a “virgin” arose from misogyny in the early church.

<sup>70</sup> *Homily of John the Son of Zebedee*; Brit. Mus. MS. Orient. No. 605, Fol. 94a. Reproduced in E. A. Wallis Budge (ed.), *Legends of Our Lady Mary the Perpetual Virgin and Her Mother Hanna* (London: Medici Society, 1922), 245ff. The Ethiopian Church is one of the oldest in Christendom.

<sup>71</sup> Hodson did mention the Annunciation story but would only concede that it was “not totally impossible.” Geoffrey Hodson, *The Christ Life from Nativity to Ascension*, (Wheaton, IL: Theosophical Publishing House, 1975), 31. In the same work he promoted the allegorical view that “Mary is a personification of the ‘vesture of light’ in which the threefold Divinity (the true man) is enrobed.”

<sup>72</sup> S. Hodson (ed.), *Light of the Sanctuary*, 267. The statement that Jesus attained the fifth initiation in Palestine contrasts with Alice Bailey’s claim that he did so later, as Apollonius of Tyana: *Initiation: Human and Solar* (New York: Lucis, 1922), 56-57. That claim is problematic because, according to consensus chronology, their lives overlapped.

<sup>73</sup> S. Hodson (ed.), *Light of the Sanctuary*, 184, 210-212.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 115.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 267-268. Italics in the original.

<sup>78</sup> See for example John F. Nash, “A Study of Gender, Part 1: Gender at the Human and Higher Levels,” *The Esoteric Quarterly* (Fall 2017), 61-89.

<sup>79</sup> S. Hodson (ed.), *Light of the Sanctuary*, 268. Today, many people take exception to the notion that women’s polarity is “negative.”

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 283-284, Capitalization in original.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 268.

<sup>84</sup> Charles W. Leadbeater, *The Masters and the Path* (Adyar, India: Theosophical Publishing House, 1925), 288. Leadbeater made a similar point in *The World Mother as Symbol and Fact* (Adyar, India: Theosophical Publishing House, 1928), 17-18.

<sup>85</sup> Geoffrey Hodson, *The Brotherhood of Angels and Men* (Adyar, India: Theosophical Publishing House, 1927), 5.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> Corinne Heline, *The Blessed Virgin Mary: Her Life and Mission* (Black Mountain, NC: New Age Press, 1971), 106-107.

- 88 Ibid., 115.  
 89 Ibid., 109.  
 90 S. Hodson (ed.), *Light of the Sanctuary*, 268.  
 91 *Revelation* 12:1. Note that the moon is a powerful feminine symbol.  
 92 Thomas à Kempis, *Founders of the New Devotion: Being the Lives of Gerard Grootte, Florentius Radewin and Their Followers*, English translation, (London: Kegan Paul, 1905), 64.  
 93 Pius XII, Encyclical letter *Ad Caeli Reginam*, "On the Queen of Heaven," Oct. 11, 1954, §1.  
 94 Ibid., §6.  
 95 Pope Benedict XVI, Angelus address, St Peter's Square, Sunday, October 2, 2011.  
 96 Hodson, *The Brotherhood of Angels and Men* (Pasadena, CA: Theosophical Publishing House, 1982), 82.  
 97 S. Hodson (ed.), *Light of the Sanctuary*, 219. Italics in original.  
 98 Ibid., 246.  
 99 Hodson, *Clairvoyant Investigations* (New York: Quest Books, 1995), 82.  
 100 "Prayer for England," composed by Cardinal Nicholas Wiseman (1802–1865), first Archbishop of Westminster, UK.  
 101 John Paul II, "Consecration of the Church and World to the Blessed Virgin Mary," Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, December 8, 1990.  
 102 Helena P. Blavatsky, *Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge of the Theosophical Society: Stanzas I & II* (London: Theosophical Publishing Society, 1889), 4.  
 103 Annie W. Besant, *Esoteric Christianity or The Lesser Mysteries* (Adyar, India: Theosophical Publishing House, 1901/1966, 140.  
 104 Nibaran Chandra Basu, "Dhurga: The World-Mother Aspect of God." *The Theosophist*, January 1927, 433-440; February 1927, 537-545.  
 105 Annie W. Besant, "The New Annunciation," Insert in *The Theosophist*, (vol. 49, June 1928).  
 106 Leadbeater, *The World Mother as Symbol and Fact* (Adyar, India: Theosophical Publishing House, 1949), 1.  
 107 Ibid., 4-5.  
 108 Ibid., 52-53.  
 109 Helena I. Roerich, *Infinity*, vol. 1 (New York: Agni Yoga Society, 1930), §156.  
 110 Hodson, *The Brotherhood of Angels and Men*, 5-6.  
 111 Ibid.
- 112 Geoffrey Hodson, "The Radiation of Power," *The Theosophist* (vol. 49, October 1927), 67ff.  
 113 Geoffrey Hodson, *The Angelic Hosts* (Adyar, India: Theosophical Publishing House, 1928), ch. V. Online at: <http://hpb.narod.ru/AngelicHosts.htm> (Last accessed Sept. 11, 2018).  
 114 S. Hodson (ed.), *Light of the Sanctuary*, 189. Italics in original.  
 115 Sandra Hodson (ed.), *Illuminations of the Mystery Tradition: Compiled from the Writings of Geoffrey Hodson* (Manila, Philippines: Theosophical Publishing House, 1992) 70.  
 116 S. Hodson (ed.), *Light of the Sanctuary*, 414-415.  
 117 Hodson, *The Miracle of Birth* (Pasadena, CA: Theosophical Publishing House, 1982), 75-76  
 118 S. Hodson (ed.), *Light of the Sanctuary*, 355.  
 119 Ibid., 284-285.  
 120 *Genesis* 3:16.  
 121 Hodson, *The Brotherhood of Angels and Men*, 5.  
 122 S. Hodson (ed.), *Light of the Sanctuary*, 285  
 123 Ibid., 269. "Einzedelin" is a reference to Einsiedeln Abbey, Switzerland, dedicated to Our Lady of the Hermits. Its Chapel of Our Lady, said to have been consecrated miraculously by Christ in 948, was a favored pilgrimage destination. A statue of the Madonna and Child, placed in the chapel in the 15th century, became a focus of great devotional attention.  
 124 Ibid.  
 125 Ibid.  
 126 Ibid., 284.  
 127 An organization chart of the Planetary Hierarchy is shown in Bailey, *Initiation, Human & Solar*, 49. A similar chart can be found in Leadbeater, *The Masters and the Path*, 286.  
 128 S. Hodson (ed.), *Light of the Sanctuary*, 414-415.  
 129 Ibid., 375. Parenthesis in original.  
 130 Ibid., 116.  
 131 Ibid., 365.  
 132 Ibid., 414.  
 133 Ibid., 460.  
 134 Ibid., 341.  
 135 Ibid.  
 136 Ibid., 414-415.  
 137 Ibid., 419.  
 138 Hodson, *The Kingdom of the Gods* (Adyar, India: Theosophical Publishing House, 1952), 244.  
 139 S. Hodson (ed.), *Light of the Sanctuary*, 81.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., 81-82. Lest it be thought that this was written by a teenager with romantic fantasies, Hodson was then 55 years old—halfway through a 40-year-long marriage to his first wife Jane, who suffered from Multiple Sclerosis.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid., 82.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid. Emphasis added. In Christian doctrine “hypostatic union” refers to the union of the human and divine natures in the person, or *hypostasis*, of Jesus Christ.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid., 420.

<sup>144</sup> The word appears in *Colossians* 2:9. The possible theological implications of the feminine gender have never been explored. It could be argued that grammatical gender is of little consequence, but the author of *Colossians* evidently preferred a feminine noun to a neuter or masculine one. Since that time mainstream theologians have tacitly assumed that God the Father is the Godhead, an assumption problematic on multiple counts.

<sup>145</sup> “The Holy Spirit” is grammatically feminine in Hebrew, neuter in Greek, and masculine in Latin.

<sup>146</sup> S. Hodson (ed.), *Light of the Sanctuary*, 375.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., 375-376.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid., 268-269.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid., 355.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid. Italics in original.

<sup>151</sup> The author is indebted to a reviewer for pointing out that Hinduism is not consistent in its view of the primacy of the Feminine Principle. Shaktism, to which Blavatsky’s philosophy seems more aligned, asserts that the Divine Feminine is the first emanation of the Brahman. But Brahmanical Hinduism asserts that goddesses serve as consorts, yielding power to their husband-gods.

<sup>152</sup> Anna B. Kingsford and Maitland, Edward, *The Perfect Way, or the Finding of Christ*, 3/e (New York: Cosimo, 2007), 55. Emphasis added. The book is a transcript of lectures Kingsford delivered in 1881-1882. The quote appears in a slightly different form in Kingsford, (same title), (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1882/2011), 56.

<sup>153</sup> Source: <https://opusdei.org/en-us/dailytext/mother-daughter-and-spouse-of-god/> (Last accessed Nov. 3, 2018).

<sup>154</sup> S. Hodson (ed.), *Light of the Sanctuary*, 413-414.

<sup>155</sup> See for example the works of Egyptologist Ernest A. Wallis Budge (1857–1934).

<sup>156</sup> S. Hodson (ed.), *Light of the Sanctuary*, 413-414.

<sup>157</sup> See for example Besant, *Esoteric Christianity or The Lesser Mysteries*, especially 222ff.

<sup>158</sup> S. Hodson (ed.), *Light of the Sanctuary*, 247.

<sup>159</sup> Alice A. Bailey, *The Externalization of the Hierarchy* (New York: Lucis, 1957), 514-515, 559.

<sup>160</sup> Source: <https://stchrysostoms.wordpress.com/about/> (Last accessed Nov. 22, 2018).

<sup>161</sup> We might note that Charles Leadbeater, presiding bishop of the L.C.C., opposed the ordination of women or at least sought to limit their roles. Commenting on the Mass, he declared: “this particular type of magic is not adapted to work through the feminine organism”—though he added: “Christ could make other arrangements when he returns.” *The Science of the Sacraments*, 349-350.

<sup>162</sup> “The Priesthood of Mary,” March 17, 2010. Online: <https://stchrysostoms.wordpress.com/2010/03/17/the-priesthood-of-mary/>. (Last accessed Nov. 22, 2018).

<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid.

<sup>165</sup> Julien Lorient, Sermon 10 on the Purification, ib. 316. Cited in: <http://www.womenpriests.org/mrpriest/loriot.a.sp>. Last accessed Nov. 22, 2018.

<sup>166</sup> Nicholas Wiseman, *Sermons on our Lord Jesus Christ and his Blessed Mother*, 2/e, (Dublin: Duffy, 1866), 342-343. [http://www.womenpriests.org/mrpriest/m\\_sacrif.asp](http://www.womenpriests.org/mrpriest/m_sacrif.asp). (Last accessed Nov. 22, 2018).

<sup>167</sup> Jean Nazlian, Proceedings of the 25th Congrès Eucharistique International, Lourdes (Paris: Secretariat General, 1914). Trans.: <http://www.womenpriests.org/mrpriest/bishop.s.asp>. Last accessed Sept. 5, 2018.

<sup>168</sup> Raniero Cantalamessa, “Mary, Mother and Model of the Priest,” Third Advent Sermon, 2009. Online at: [http://www.piercedhearts.org/scriptures/commen-taries\\_sunday/cantalamessa/advent\\_sermons/3\\_advent\\_sermon\\_2009.htm](http://www.piercedhearts.org/scriptures/commen-taries_sunday/cantalamessa/advent_sermons/3_advent_sermon_2009.htm) (Last accessed Nov. 22, 2018).

<sup>169</sup> Factors considered to disqualify women from ordination included menstruation and childbirth. Natal and menstrual blood were believed to defile the Sacrament. Uta Ranke Heinemann, *Eunuchs for the Kingdom of*

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*Heaven: Women, Sexuality and the Catholic Church* (New York: Penguin Books, 1990), 2-5.

<sup>170</sup> Liberal Catholic Church Pro-Cathedral of All Saints, Putney, UK. Online: <https://all-saints-lcc.weebly.com/the-holy-lady-mary.html> (Last accessed Nov. 22, 2018).

<sup>171</sup> Parallels can be drawn between the acknowledgement of Mary's sanctity at an early age and the identification of future Dalai Lamas in infancy.

<sup>172</sup> Helena I. Roerich, *Mother of the World* (New York: Agni Yoga Society, 1956), 10-12. A similar quote, but without the reference to "constellations," appears in *Leaves of Mor-ya's Garden, II* (New York: Agni Yoga Society, 1925), §220.

<sup>173</sup> Traditional Marian beliefs, practices and attitudes failed to promote the empowerment of

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women. Some countries, like Spain, Italy, and South America, have a long history of devotion and intercession to Mary but still harbor strong gender divides. On the other hand, Ireland, which has one of the strongest Marian traditions, has been a leader in choosing women to serve in positions of power. Two of the last three presidents of Ireland have been female.

<sup>174</sup> A reason commonly cited is that priestesses are associated with pagan religions, like Wicca. Setting aside the issue of whether that association might have negative connotations, it is worth noting that priests also officiate in the rituals of those religions.